

Voluntary Prekindergarten and School Readiness Plus Statutory Program Requirements

The purpose of a voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) or school readiness plus (SRP) program is to prepare children for success as they enter kindergarten in the following year. Programs must meet the following requirements in their district or charter school, as well as at mixed delivery sites.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Requirements

- Provide instruction through play-based learning to foster children's social and emotional development, cognitive development, physical and motor development, and language and literacy skills, including the native language and literacy skills of English learners, to the extent practicable.
- Measure each child's cognitive and social skills using a formative measure aligned to the state's early learning standards when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program, screening and progress monitoring measures, and others from the state-approved menu of kindergarten entry profile (KEP) measures. View the list of [KEP Approved Assessment Tools](#).
- Provide comprehensive program content including the implementation of curriculum, assessment, and instructional strategies aligned with the state early learning standards, and kindergarten through grade 3 academic standards. View the Parent Aware list of [aligned curricula](#).
- Provide instructional content and activities that are of sufficient length and intensity to address learning needs including offering a program with at least 350 hours of instruction per school year for a prekindergarten student.
- Provide voluntary prekindergarten instructional staff salaries comparable to the salaries of local kindergarten through grade 12 instructional staff.
- Coordinate appropriate kindergarten transition with families, community-based prekindergarten programs, and school district kindergarten programs.
- Involve parents in program planning and transition planning by implementing parent engagement strategies that include culturally and linguistically responsive activities in prekindergarten through third grade that are aligned with early childhood family education under section 124D.13.
- Coordinate with relevant community-based services, including health and social service agencies, to ensure children have access to comprehensive services.
- Coordinate with all relevant school district programs and services including early childhood special education and programs that serve homeless students and English learners.
- Ensure staff-to-child ratios of 1-to-10 and a maximum group size of 20 children.

- Provide high-quality coordinated professional development, training, and coaching for both school district and community-based early learning providers that is informed by a measure of adult-child interactions and enables teachers to be highly knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, native and English language development programs, and instruction.
- Implement strategies that support the alignment of professional development, instruction, assessments, and prekindergarten through grade 3 curricula.
 - A voluntary prekindergarten program must have teachers knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, native and English language programs, and instruction.
 - Districts and charter schools must include their strategy for implementing and measuring the impact of their voluntary prekindergarten program under section 120B.11 and provide results in their world's best workforce annual summary to the commissioner of education.
- Use voluntary prekindergarten dollars for eligible children. An eligible child:
 - Is four years of age as of September 1 in the calendar year in which the school year commences; is eligible to participate in a voluntary prekindergarten program free of charge.
 - Must complete a health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment under sections 121A.16 to 121A.19, and provide documentation of required immunizations under section 121A.15.
- Adhere to statute 124D.8957 Prekindergarten through Grade 12 Parental Rights.
- Provide student level entry and exit data to MDE through MDE (Measuring Impact Tool) or locally designed evaluation and data collection model.
- Maintain current program and student information in applicable MDE reporting systems, including: MARSS, STARS, UFARs, MN Common Course Catalog, etc. Documentation that supports the voluntary prekindergarten student data reported in MARSS, e.g., school calendar, attendance, EL status, economic indicator, etc., will be kept on file and available for audit for at least three years after the close of the fiscal year.
- If contracting with mixed delivery sites, a plan for mixed delivery must be available upon request by July 1, 2019 and all mixed delivery sites must be within the school district's boundaries. A signed contract must be on file with both parties defining roles and responsibilities related to voluntary prekindergarten operation.
- All revenue received from voluntary prekindergarten must be used to supplement not supplant existing state, federal, and local revenue for prekindergarten activities.
- Must record expenditures attributable to voluntary prekindergarten pupils according to guidelines prepared by the commissioner under section 127A.17.
- Sites and programs included in the district/charter school Parent Aware automatic rating must maintain documents showing compliance with all voluntary prekindergarten standards and/or school readiness standards. Lead teachers must have on file their age-appropriate license, or 10 hours of training in the Knowledge and Competency Framework Developmentally Appropriate Learning Experiences, and all lead teachers must submit 10 hours of Parent Aware approved assessment training within the last five years.

School Readiness Plus Requirements

- Assess each child's cognitive and social skills with a comprehensive child assessment instrument when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program to improve program planning and implementation, communicate with parents, and promote kindergarten readiness.
- Provide comprehensive program content and intentional instructional practice aligned with the state early childhood learning guidelines and kindergarten standards and based on early childhood research and professional practice that is focused on children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills and development and prepares children for the transition to kindergarten, including early literacy and language skills.
- Coordinate appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers.
- Involve parents in program planning and decision-making.
- Coordinate with relevant community-based services.
- Cooperate with adult basic education programs and other adult literacy programs.
- Ensure staff-to-child ratios of 1-to-10 and a maximum group size of 20 children with at least one licensed teacher.
- Have teachers knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, native and English language development programs, and instruction.
- Provide instructional content and activities that are of sufficient length and intensity to address learning needs including offering a program with at least 350 hours of instruction per school year for a prekindergarten student.
- Use school readiness plus dollars for eligible children. An eligible child:
 - Is four years of age as of September 1 in the calendar year in which the school year commences and has one or more risk factors including: Qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch; Is an English language learner; is homeless; has an individualized education program, or individual interagency intervention plan; is identified through health and developmental screening under [Minnesota Statutes, sections 121A.16 to 121.19](#), with a potential risk factor that may influence learning; or is in foster care is eligible to participate in a school readiness plus program free of charge.
 - Must complete a health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment under sections 121A.16 to 121A.19, and provide documentation of required immunizations under section 121A.15.
- Adhere to statute 124D.8957 Prekindergarten through Grade 12 Parental Rights.
- Maintain current program and student information in applicable MDE reporting systems, including: STARS, MARSS, UFARs, MN Common Course Catalog, etc. Documentation that supports the school readiness plus student data reported in MARSS, e.g., school calendar, attendance, EL status, economic indicator, etc., will be kept on file and available for audit for at least three years after the close of the fiscal year. (NOTE: In the case of a mixed delivery partnership, the district or charter school will be responsible for the input of information provided by the partner.)

- If contracting with mixed delivery sites, each party must have a signed contract for mixed delivery on file by the start of the program and all mixed delivery sites must be within the school district's boundaries. The signed contract must define roles and responsibilities related to school readiness plus program operations.
- All revenue received from school readiness plus programming must be used to supplement not supplant existing state, federal, and local revenue for prekindergarten activities.
- Must record expenditures attributable to school readiness plus pupils according to guidelines prepared by the commissioner under section 127A.17.