New Mexico is committed to creating and sustaining an early learning system that focuses on building high-quality, comprehensive, community programs that form a continuum of integrated services. This commitment reflects the goal adopted by the New Mexico Early Learning Advisory Council that “every child in New Mexico will have an equal opportunity for success in school, based upon equitable access to an aligned and high-quality early learning system.”

Early childhood public policy reforms are built upon the belief that families and community must be the platform from which all efforts are launched. We believe that all work must be informed and driven by a deep respect for the diverse values and cultures of New Mexico’s families. Although New Mexico has been at the forefront of the movement to create standards within the early childhood system, the state has taken great care to ensure that these standards do not impose a standardization of practice upon individual children, their families, or the communities in which they live. Rather, it is the state’s experience that these guidelines provide a framework allowing programs to flourish, as well as allowing for the implementation of unique and appropriate programs, which are based on the strengths of each community. In this way, community-specific programs are able to reflect the history, culture, language, and traditions that must be preserved and strengthened to support each and every child’s success.

New Mexico is creating a coordinated system under the Early Childhood Education and Care Department. This approach focuses on building high-quality, comprehensive, community programs that are able to work together when provided with a common focus. New Mexico’s early learning system ensures that each child has equitable access to appropriate services and supports that acknowledge their uniqueness and enable them to reach their full potential.

**New Mexico’s Early Learning System**

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New Mexico’s systematic approach acknowledges and respects the uniqueness of each community, each family, and each child and has led to the establishment of the Guiding Principles for the Full Participation of Young Children in New Mexico’s Early Learning System. The FOCUS Quality Framework reflects these Guiding Principles.
Guiding Principles for the Full Participation of Young Children in New Mexico’s Early Learning System

Every child in New Mexico has diverse strengths rooted in his or her family’s unique culture, heritage, language, beliefs, and circumstances. Early learning programs, that support the full participation of every child, build on these strengths. They do so by promoting a sense of belonging, by supporting positive social relationships, and by enabling families and professionals to gain advocacy skills that positively impact the life of every child.

We believe that . . .
• Every child has unique gifts and abilities that are to be celebrated and nurtured.
• The early years hold enormous promise for every child to reach his or her full potential.
• Every child learns within the context of relationships and through playful interactions within their environment.
• All children and their families deserve equitable access to appropriate services and to supports that acknowledge their uniqueness and enable them to reach their full potential.

Therefore, we are committed to . . .
• Valuing and embracing all children and their families.
• Involving families and communities as partners and decision makers.
• Overcoming biases to build trust and establish collaborative partnerships that benefit children, their families, and the professionals who work with them.
• Providing choice, flexibility, and continuity of services and supports for families within communities.
• Making a variety of services and supports available, so all children have access to—and can participate in—opportunities that are both respectful of and responsive to their family experiences, culture, beliefs, abilities, and circumstances.
• Advancing advocacy efforts for inclusive practices that build upon unique child, family, and community strengths and are accountable to every child and their family.

We will . . .
• Promote every New Mexico citizen’s understanding of the importance of high-quality, inclusive, early childhood programs and practices.
• Support interactions and relationships that foster self-reflection.
• Utilize information about the growth, development, and experiences of individual children and families for program and curriculum development and improvement.
• Continuously improve services and supports by evaluating current practices and incorporating effective methods, models, and research in our work with children and families.
• Promote the establishment of aligned services and supports that build on both the unique assets of each child and that acknowledge the strengths of children’s and families’ heritage, language, and culture.
• Ensure that services and supports are provided by people who reflect the diversity of the community, are well educated, and are well compensated.
• Establish an integrated, multi-disciplinary system of professional development, training, and technical assistance that supports the design, implementation, and evaluation of practices that are respectful of—and responsive to—each child and family.

(The Guiding Principles and all FOCUS documents can be found at http://www.cdd.unm.edu/ecln/ped-focus/)
What is the FOCUS: Essential Elements of Quality?

The FOCUS: Essential Elements of Quality, New Mexico’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), provides early childhood program personnel with the criteria, tools, and resources they need to improve the quality of their program. These quality improvements focus on children’s growth, development, and learning—so that each child has an equitable opportunity to be successful when they enter school. This document contains the FOCUS: Essential Elements of Quality that provide a framework for public school preschool programs as they strive to make quality improvements. Together, the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines - Essential Indicators with Rubrics and the FOCUS: Essential Elements of Quality provide Common Early Learning Program Standards, a standardized process for continuous quality improvement and standardized criteria for a common quality rating and improvement system.

Just as the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines—Essential Indicators with Rubrics provide a framework of criteria regarding children’s growth, development, and learning that educators rely on to plan curriculum, the FOCUS: Essential Elements of Quality provides a framework of criteria that program personnel can use to plan quality improvements to their program.

FOCUS is designed to ensure that many more children, from birth through age five, have access to dramatically improved early-learning programs so that they enter school with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions they need to be successful. Through the use of a program improvement and quality rating system, early learning programs will increase their ability to focus on children’s learning, improve their practice, and—as a result of that improvement in practice—improve each child’s growth, development, and potential with kindergarten readiness in mind.
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Preschool Program Participation Requirements

All New Mexico public education preschool programs (PreK, Special Education 619, and Title I) will participate in the FOCUS QRIS. Programs will also collaborate within district to support children in inclusive environments. The Public Education Department’s (PED’s) expectation is that programs will continue to be in substantial compliance with the applicable state rules, standards, and federal regulations that govern the program, services provided, and fiscal responsibilities. Each classroom must provide a minimum of 450 clock hours of instructional time. PreK programs funded for extended-day services must provide 900 clock hours of instructional time. Meals and outdoor play are important learning opportunities and are counted as instructional time. For extended day programs that provide a rest period, only 30 minutes of the rest period may count toward instructional time.

Participation in the FOCUS QRIS requires engaging in a continuous quality improvement process that includes an action plan with specific goals to meet the 5-Star Criteria. Programs will have up to two years from the start of FOCUS implementation to meet the 5 Star Criteria.

Exemplary Practices Recognition

Preschool programs that provide evidence of meeting at least 70 points (70 percent) of the Exemplary Practices in a specific area of the Foundations of Quality-Full Participation of Each Child, in addition to meeting the 5 Star Criteria, will also be recognized as an Exemplary Program in that area.
### FOCUS ESSENTIAL ELEMENT I: FOUNDATIONS OF QUALITY

#### A. FULL PARTICIPATION OF EACH CHILD

1. **Family Engagement - See Appendix B**

   **Definition:** Family engagement is essential for enhancing children’s learning and family well-being. Family engagement occurs when there is an on-going, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership between families and their children’s early childhood education programs (Halgunseth et al., 2009).

   **Rationale:** Positive family-program connections have been linked to greater academic motivation, grade promotion, and socio-emotional skills across all young children, including those from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds (Christenson, 2000; Mantzicopoulos, 2003; McWayne et al., 2004).

2. **Family-Centered Practices**

   1. The preschool program and classrooms reflect a welcoming environment for families including:
      a. Greeting families as they drop off/pick up children
      b. Displaying family and child photographs, with parental consent if required, throughout the classroom
      c. Ensuring that posters and signs are clear and in families’ home languages

   2. The Preschool Home Visit Information form, developmental screening, lesson plan, IEP, ECO, and family-teacher summary report all reflect collaboration with the family in decision-making related to their child’s education.

   3. The preschool classroom and program staff offer a variety of opportunities for families to participate in classroom and program activities, and they encourage family members to share cultural heritage and practices, stories, activities, holiday celebrations, and languages spoken in the home in order to integrate these aspects into classroom activities.

   4. Families participate in the annual preschool-specific quality survey, as part of the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.

   5. Each school has a process to identify parents, who are not proficient in English, and provides them with free language assistance services, such as translated materials and/or an interpreter, for all school-related information. The interpreter has to be proficient in the target language as well as trained in the ethics and confidentiality of the role. Students, siblings, friends and untrained staff would not be considered as qualified to interpret. (English Learner Toolkit, 2015)

3. **Family Capacity Building Practices**

   1. Preschool program staff document 90 hours of family engagement that includes the following three required categories of activities:
      a. At least one home visit annually per child. The program will offer an alternate location for homeless or migratory families
      b. Three family/teacher conferences annually per child
      c. A minimum of four annual family engagement activities/events outside of classroom hours—activities must relate to an Essential Indicator (EI).

   2. Program administrators must develop and revise, in partnership with families, a Family Preschool Handbook* that represents their program population. Every effort is made to provide the materials in the family’s home language. The handbook **must** include information in the following nine categories:

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*The Public Education Department (PED) Family Preschool Handbook can be completed as a section in the District or School Handbook.*
5 Star Criteria—Family Engagement (Cont.)

a. **Family engagement approach.** A plan that defines and describes the program’s family engagement approach and value for soliciting, documenting, and engaging families as an effective way to support each child’s full potential.

b. **Admissions and enrollment policy.** Procedures for eligibility, recruitment, enrollment, and attendance to include the following:
   - Methods by which children are recruited and families are informed of the availability of the preschool program.
   - Methods by which program personnel work with the local school district’s on-going Child Find policies and procedures, including the LEA Child Find contact information to support the year-round, ongoing Child Find process.
   - The application process and selection criteria.
   - Priorities for enrollment, including immunization records.
   - How children are enrolled and dis-enrolled.
   - How children—who do not have existing individualized education programs (IEPs)—are screened and referred to Child Find.
   - How the district identifies, refers, and supports preschool age children who may be homeless or migratory (ESSA p. 171), including practices that protect student privacy. Programs will utilize the New Mexico Student Enrollment Form.
   - A non-discrimination policy and a process for reporting concerns.

c. **Collaboration and coordination.** Evidence of Memorandum of Understanding (with Head Start or other early childhood providers) per the new early childhood coordination requirements as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

d. **Curriculum and practices.** A description of the program’s developmentally appropriate, inclusive, classroom practices and evidence-based curriculum model.

e. **Transportation.** Procedures for transportation of children (if applicable). Please note:
   - Children with disabilities must be provided transportation the same way children without disabilities are provided transportation. A child with a disability cannot be denied transportation. Denial of services is considered a denial of free appropriate public education (FAPE).
   - Transportation for children with disabilities can be considered a related service and part of the child’s IEP. The IEP can specify specialized equipment such as ramps, lifts, etc.
   - LEAs must provide transportation services to homeless children to the school of origin, which includes public preschools [McKinney-Vento Act Section 722(g)(3)(I)(i)].

f. **Screenings.** Procedures for developmental and health screenings, including the methods by which results are shared with families, the time frame within which results are provided to families, and the means by which follow-up occurs; information regarding all preschool services provided to families requiring such services (including special education preschool services).

g. **Referrals.** Procedures for referring children with suspected developmental delays and/or disabilities in a timely manner to the district’s Year Round Child Find services, including the ongoing process that occurs between Child Find events (e.g., Child Find events or round-up).

h. **Transition plans.** A detailed transition plan for supporting children moving into and on to kindergarten. This is a general transition plan and does not replace the individual transition plan required for children who are transitioning from IDEA Part C (Early Intervention/Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Programs) to IDEA Part B (Preschool Special Education Programs).

i. **Food service.** Procedures for meals and snacks, including a statement that all food served by the preschool program must be prepared by the district/school/program nutrition staff or food service contractor. Procedure must include how families inform school personnel and how school personnel are made knowledgeable about each child’s special nutritional needs, including allergies, medical conditions, and physician requests for dietary restrictions. Exception: food prepared as part of a developmentally appropriate classroom activity.
Exemplary Practices—Family Engagement Rubric

1. Families complete an evaluation at the end of each family engagement activity. Program staff compile results and incorporate the data into their CQI plan. (10 pts)

2. Program staff hold a minimum of six family engagement activities annually, with at least three of those activities based on family input and recommendations for topics. (10 pts)

3. Program personnel implement a systematic plan to engage fathers and male family members as active participants in the child’s education. (15 pts)

4. Program personnel develop and staff a family resource center that
   • houses a lending library of resources for parenting and typical and atypical child development;
   • offers family learning activities and games; and
   • provides access to a computer with internet capabilities. (25 pts)

5. Program staff provide resources to assist families to document their child’s growth and development in the natural routines and activities in the home. (10 pts)

6. Program personnel provide a community resource guide to connect families with local services and supports. (5 pts)

7. Program staff offer family supports (financial literacy, nutrition, parenting, literacy, language classes, fatherhood and male caregiver initiatives) that are
   • Flexible;
   • Culturally and linguistically relevant; and
   • Responsive to family-identified preferences and styles. (25 pts)
2. Inclusive Practices for Children with Diverse Abilities

**Definition:** The directive to segregate children with disabilities as seldom as possible, as set out in 34 CFR 300.114 (a)(2). Inclusion in early childhood programs refers to including children with disabilities in early childhood programs, together with their peers without disabilities; holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities, facilitated by individualized accommodations; and using evidence-based services and supports to foster their development (cognitive, language, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional), friendships with peers, and sense of belonging. This applies to all young children with disabilities, from those with the mildest disabilities, to those with the most significant disabilities. (US Department of Health and Human Services, US Department of Education Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs, September 14, 2015).

**Rationale:** Being meaningfully included as a member of society is the first step to equal opportunity and is every person’s right—a right supported by our laws. There are at least three other reasons to include children with disabilities. Research indicates that early childhood inclusion is beneficial to children with and without disabilities. Additionally, preliminary research into the financial costs of operating inclusive early childhood programs shows that it is not necessarily more expensive than operating separate early childhood programs for children with disabilities. Finally, meaningful inclusion can support children with disabilities in reaching their full potential, resulting in broad societal benefits, including higher productivity in adulthood and fewer resources spent on interventions and public assistance later in life. It is the PED's position that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive, high-quality, early childhood programs, where they are provided individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations (US Department of Health and Human Services, US Department of Education Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs, September 14, 2015).

**5 Star Criteria**

**Identification, Access, and Support**

1. There is a written plan in the Family Preschool Handbook that describes how the program identifies and serves children with, or suspected of having, a developmental delay and/or disability. The plan includes policies and procedures that are outlined with roles and responsibilities specific to the program. The plan is not a repeat of the regulations. The plan describes how regulations are implemented. The seven categories of the plan include the following:

   a. **Access and Support.** Policies to ensure that children of all abilities have access to the general education program and are supported, so they are able to participate. The eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance plan includes strategies for recruiting and placement of children with developmental delays and/or disabilities—including children entering the program from an IDEA Part C program—into classrooms with same age peers without developmental delays or disabilities.

   b. **Developmental screenings.** Developmental screenings (including a social emotional component) that must occur within the first three months of attendance. **Note:** Developmental screenings are not required for children who have been identified for services under an IDEA Part B program and have an IEP, because they have already received a developmental screening.

      - Children with disabilities who received services under IDEA Part C must be referred for a Part B evaluation.
      - An IEP must be in place by the child’s third birthday. NMAC 6.31.2.11A1 and New Mexico Transition Guidance Document. IDEA Part C information (that is current within six months) should be considered as part of the evaluation for Part B; it cannot be used solely to determine eligibility for Part B.

   c. **Child Find.** Participation in Child Find activities with local IDEA Part C and Part B Programs. **Note:** Child Find is not a onetime event (i.e., a Child Find round up). It happens all year long as an ongoing intake process.

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1 This section relies for its information primarily on US DOH and US DOE (2015).
d. **Refer and Connect.** How program staff, with parental written consent and prior written notice, refer and connect families to the IDEA Part B Child Find Program in the local school district when
   - The child scores as in need of further evaluation on the developmental screening (referrals shall not be delayed due to lack of evaluation services, but must be processed in a timely manner) and/or
   - The family or teacher has concerns regarding a child’s development;

e. **Referral Packet.** In collaboration with families, a referral packet will be completed for use by evaluators. This Child Find Packet should include the following items: Developmental screenings that include a social emotional component such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire® (ASQ®), the ASQ with the social-emotional component ASQ-SE®, Denver Developmental Screening, HELPS, the Brigance®—an age-appropriate screener only, a well-child screening, and vision and hearing screenings. In addition if a child has been enrolled into a program, the packet includes the online Early Childhood Observation Tool (ECOT), classroom strategies, anecdotal progress notes, and a copy of the Home Visit form;

f. **Child Find Screening Process.** How program staff assist and support the child and family throughout the Child Find process. Child Find takes the place of a student assistant team (SAT) meeting. (Guidance Memo April 2016—RTI cannot be used to delay or deny the evaluation process pursuant to 34 CFR 300.304-300.311);

g. **Initial Evaluation Time Frame.** How program staff ensure that the initial evaluation for special education is completed within 60 days of parental consent, in accordance with 34 CFR § 300.301. Note: Parental consent should not be signed at the day of evaluation, as it signals a delay in the identification process. Parental consent should be obtained in a timely manner after referral, Child Find, or transition from Part C to Part B. There must be no undue delay in the evaluation process. NMAC 6.31.2.10 (A)(B).

h. **IEP Goal Achievement.** How program staff—and particularly the classroom teacher—support the achievement of goals in the child’s IEP through classroom activities and learning centers.
Provision of Inclusive Settings

1. As part of the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) plan, program staff will use the Inclusive Practices Checklist.

2. All children, including those with delays and/or disabilities, are general education students first. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) presumes that the first placement option considered for each child with a disability is the regular classroom the child would attend if they did not have a disability (natural environment). At a minimum, inclusive preschool classrooms will maintain a 60/40 ratio of typically/ atypically developing students. Programs should strive for a 75/25 ratio.

3. Based on the child’s need for services, they could be enrolled in more than one early care and education setting. Options could include a combination of private/nonprofit and public school special education preschool programs. However, a child may not be enrolled in two NM PreK programs concurrently. NM PreK and Title I preschool programs are not community programs but rather are considered part of the local education agency (LEA)—also known as the district.

4. Children, including those with delays or disabilities who also have behavioral needs, must not be dismissed (i.e., dis-enrolled, suspended, or expelled) from the preschool program solely because of their behavioral needs, unless the child is evaluated by the district’s multidisciplinary team personnel, and an IEP is developed or amended to specify placement in another setting. Children with disabilities who are suspended for 10 cumulative days must have a manifestation determination, in accordance with 34 CFR § 300.500(e). Removal for longer than 10 days is considered a change of placement, and the child is still entitled to a free and public education (FAPE).

5. If so indicated in a child’s IEP, preschool program personnel must modify the indoor and outdoor physical and learning environments (soliciting support from facilities/maintenance department) to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities and developmental delays, with supports from appropriate service providers.

6. When planning for the succeeding school year, programs shall consider that some classrooms may require a smaller group size based on the nature and severity of the needs of the children with delays and/or disabilities.

Participation

1. With written parental consent, the child’s early care and education providers—including those from private/non-profit settings—are active partners in the IEP process, including placement, coordination of services, goal-setting, and consultation with additional education providers.

2. In collaboration and consultation with the Part C/Part B service providers, educators develop and embed IEP goals and objectives into the daily schedule, classroom, and lesson planning.

3. Therapists, to the maximum extent possible, provide therapies in the natural environment and incorporate same-age peers without an IEP in the activities, as long as the students with disabilities receive their services as written on their IEPs and are not denied FAPE.

4. The team of adults providing services will ensure children receive adequate and appropriate supports and services. The team is comprised of the general education teacher, special education teacher, and related service providers.

Transition From IDEA Part C To IDEA Part B

With parental written consent, the school district engages the child’s early care and education providers—including those from private/non-profit settings—to actively participate in supporting the child’s IEP process, early childhood outcomes process, and the individual transition in or out plan, as required by IDEA. LEAs must request all third-party documents from original agencies due to HIPPA and FERPA requirements.
1. Programs use the results of the Inclusive Practices Checklist to develop a timeline to ensure progress towards more inclusive settings. The program provides evidence of working towards natural proportions (the inclusion of children with disabilities in proportion to their presence in the general population) of children with and without IEPs in the same classroom.
   - 70 percent of children in the classroom do not have IEPs. (10 pts)
   - 80 percent of children in the classroom do not have IEPS. (15 pts)

2. Preschool program staff—including district special education staff; general education staff, which includes private child care and Head Start staff; families; and ancillary service provider(s)—have at least quarterly, regularly scheduled meeting times to review individual child progress and update or revise strategies and modifications needed to support the ongoing, full participation of each child in activities and daily routines. (10 pts)

3. The program provides documentation of systematic, ongoing staff training in areas of developmental delays and disabilities, including positive behavior supports. (10 pts)

4. At least 50 percent of teachers hold BOTH an early childhood and the highly qualified special education PreK–12 licenses. (10 points)

5. The school district and the private childcare or Head Start facility have mutually entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide special education services in the private and Head Start settings, in compliance with IDEA according to 34 CFR § 300.114-117. (10 pts)

6. As a first option, special education services are embedded in everyday routines, as opposed to working with children in separate settings or pulling children out of their setting for specialized instruction. Same-age, non-identified peers are included in instructional opportunities. (10 pts)

7. Program procedures have clearly demonstrated re-allocation or the braiding of funds to support increased access to inclusive settings that meet the individualized learning and developmental needs of children with disabilities. (10 pts)

8. Program staff implement quality IEPs. (25 pts)
   - 80 percent of teachers and administrators have completed Writing Quality Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Goals using the Early Learning Guidelines (ELG) training.
   - 80 percent of teachers and administrators are utilizing the Developing Quality IEPs Technical Manual published by the PED Special Education Bureau.
   - IEP goals for the early childhood outcomes (ECO) categories of positive social relationships, acquires and uses knowledge, and takes appropriate actions to meet needs are derived from the New Mexico ELGs.
   - If a child is not placed in the general education setting (S1), the IEP documents evidence that
     - S1 was tried and assessment showed regression; and
     - Practices were adjusted within S1 and assessed prior to considering another placement.
3. Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Instruction

**Definition:** Culture refers to deep patterns of values, beliefs, practices and traditions that have been complied and normalized over a period of time, setting the standard for what is normal and expected (Muhammad & Hollie, 2012). This socially acquired knowledge may be learned and is shared among individuals in the homes, communities, and/or institutions (USDA Health and Human Services and Department of Education, 2017).

**Rationale:** Every child in New Mexico has diverse strengths rooted in their family's unique culture, heritage, language, beliefs, and circumstances. (State of New Mexico, Children, Youth and Families Department, 2010). Through their home language and culture, families share a sense of identity and belonging (McCabe et al, 2013). Simultaneously and obviously, children whose home language is other than English have many similarities with children whose culture differs and whose home language is English. Dual language learners (DLLs) are learning two or more languages and will need linguistic supports. It is essential teachers have knowledge of second language acquisition to be able to support the students appropriately and to be able to offer the best learning opportunities and environment for a successful school career for all students under their care. Information about how to support DLLs is essential for teachers to understand and incorporate strategies into the curriculum so that they can provide the best learning opportunities and best ensure their DLL’s future success in school and in life.

## 5 Star Criteria

### Culture And Language

1. The program, classroom environment, and materials reflect the culture, language, identity, and reality of the children, families, and communities served.
2. The program administration makes every effort to recruit staff who reflect the cultures and languages of families served.
3. A process is in place to ensure translators and interpreters participate in IEP and other meetings, including family-teacher conferences and home visits. The interpreter must be proficient in the target language as well as trained in the ethics and confidentiality of the role. Students, siblings, friends, and untrained staff are not considered qualified to interpret.

### Supporting Dual Language Learners

1. Print-rich labeling is visible and represents the children’s (written) home languages.
2. Educators implement strategies that reflect an understanding of the stages of second-language acquisition by planning activities, materials, and experiences that support each stage.
3. Educators implement strategies that foster the relationships of children who speak languages other than English with English-speaking children.
4. Educators promote children's home language, while supporting English language development.
5. To promote early language development for multilingual children, ages 2.5-5.5, New Mexico will become a WIDA Early Years Member State beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. Educators will have full access to WIDA Early Years tools and resources that:
   - Highlight what multilingual children can do with language
   - Support instructional planning with attention to language
   - Offer suggestions for scaffolding language development
   - Promote language-focused family engagement

As part of our state’s membership, educators will also have access to the WIDA Early Years Online Learning Modules. The modules are self-paced professional learning opportunities designed for early care and education educators support young multilingual children. More information about WIDA Early Years tools and resources is available at wida.wisc.edu/EarlyYears.
Exemplary Practices—Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Instruction Rubric

1. Program administration provides systematic professional development that informs staffs’ culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, including evidence-based teaching strategies to support DLLs in both home and English language development. (15 pts)

2. At least 50 percent of program teachers have completed requirements for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) or a bilingual endorsements. (20 pts)

3. The program provides a clear and intentional plan to support children’s home and English language development at school and at home. This plan includes partnering with families to expose children to new concepts and activities (e.g., new books) in their native language at home, so they have time to familiarize themselves with the new information prior to its introduction in the early learning program in English. (25 pts)

4. The program provides evidence that recruitment efforts target families, who may be unfamiliar or unaware of public preschool programs and systems as a result of cultural and linguistic barriers; families are supported through the enrollment process. (10 pts)

5. Program procedures ensure that the Community Resource Guide (Family Engagement Criteria) is translated and includes specific resources and supports for families who speak a home language other than English. (10 pts)

6. In addition to appropriate culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, the program procedures ensure support for language revitalization, maintenance, and preservation efforts in tribal communities by providing opportunities outside of program hours for tribally designated experts to
   • conduct language classes and activities for families;
   • translate learning materials;
   • facilitate family engagement activities; and
   • teach traditional crafts while incorporating the native language. (20 pts)
4. Promoting Social-Emotional Development

**Definition:** Social skills that have been identified as essential for school success include the following eight abilities: 1) getting along with others, 2) following directions, 3) identifying and regulating one’s emotions and behavior, 4) thinking of appropriate solutions to conflict, 5) persisting on tasks, 6) engaging in social conversation and cooperative play, 7) correctly interpreting other’s behaviors and emotions, and 8) feeling good about oneself and others (Fox & Smith, 2007). New Mexico has implemented the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Pyramid Framework as a guide for supporting children’s social-emotional development.

**Rationale:** Research has established a compelling link between social emotional development and school success (Raver, 2002; Smith, 2006). There is a growing body of research that indicates how social emotional competence and challenging behavior can be effectively addressed within early childhood programs [(e.g., Domitrovich, Moore, & Greenberg (2012); Dunlap & Fox (2014); National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2009)]. A child’s early years set the trajectory for the relationships and successes they will experience for the rest of their lives, making it crucial that children’s earliest experiences truly foster—and never harm—their development. During these years, children’s brains are developing rapidly, influenced by the experiences, both positive and negative, that they share with their families, caregivers, teachers, peers, and in their communities. As such, expulsion and suspension practices in early childhood settings, two stressful and negative experiences young children and their families may encounter in early childhood programs, should be prevented, severely limited, and eventually eliminated. High-quality early childhood programs provide the positive experiences that nurture positive learning and development.

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5 Star Criteria

**Building Positive Relationships:**

1. The classroom staff implement the Inventory of Practices from the New Mexico Pyramid Framework. They analyze data from the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) and engage in the practice-based coaching specific to improving teaching practices that support social-emotional development. Preschool staff

   a. develop their students’ self-esteem by utilizing culturally and linguistically responsive instructional practices such as
      - respecting and acknowledging children’s cultural and linguistic backgrounds;
      - actively listening and providing appropriate responses to children;
      - refraining from judgmental statements;
      - positively responding to children’s ideas and extending the conversation by using high-level questions;
      - recognizing children’s efforts with specific positive comments;
      - using proper name and conversing with each child (Strive for Five);
      - using a tone of voice that is positive, calm and supportive; and
      - interacting with children at their eye level, establishing eye contact, when culturally appropriate.

   b. encourage autonomy by
      - providing children with opportunities to make choices;
      - allowing children time to respond and complete tasks independently;
      - creating opportunities for decision-making, problem-solving, and working together; and

   c. promote children’s individualized emotional regulation and executive function by
      - helping children recognize emotional cues; and
      - helping children identify appropriate choices and solve problems.
Implementing Preventative Practices

1. Program staff is responsible for screening for early detection of children at risk for developmental delay and disability. Prior to the third month of attendance, preschool program staff must assess each child with a developmental screening instrument that includes a social-emotional component. The screening tool selected will be completed collaboratively by program staff and family member(s). Program staff should additionally ensure that—if a screening has taken place within the last 12 months, and the documentation is available to the preschool program—a child is not rescreened.
   - Preschool program staff must inform families of screening and observational assessment results no later than the next scheduled family-teacher conference.
   - Program staff provide evidence of follow-up on the developmental screening tool including, if necessary, referrals for further evaluation.

2. Preschool program personnel are knowledgeable about the indicators of stress in young children and use the Inventory of Practices from the New Mexico Pyramid Framework to support young children in coping with trauma-induced experiences.

3. The learning environment and schedule support children’s interests and developmental levels and includes a balance of teacher-led large-and small-group activities.

Addressing Concerning Behaviors

Research suggests that school expulsion and suspension practices are associated with negative educational and life outcomes. No child can be dismissed (i.e., dis-enrolled, suspended, expelled) from the preschool program. Instead, Child Find screenings shall serve as interventions for children that are not identified and do not have an IEP. A functional behavior assessment (FBA) will be conducted and, if warranted, a behavior intervention plan (BIP) will be developed in such a way as to

1. solicit input from the family;
2. provide written consent and prior written notice to the parent if the FBA is going to be a part of the evaluation for special education;
3. organize the environment, interactions, and curriculum to minimize the likelihood of challenging behaviors;
4. make a referral to Child Find if concerning behaviors persist;
5. have the child evaluated by the district’s multidisciplinary team; and
6. provide access to documents—that are considered for the Child Find and evaluation process—to classroom teachers: Developmental screenings that include a social emotional component (ASQ®, ASQ-SE, Denver Developmental Screening, HELP, Brigance®—screener only), a well-child screening, vision and hearing screenings, the ECOT, anecdotal progress notes, a copy of the Home Visit form and PART C.

For children who are identified—or who already have an IEP—the IEP team determines a need for an FBA, and the appropriate school district personnel complete the FBA and develop the BIP. All staff who provide services to the child will implement the behavior improvement plan.

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2 The US Department of Health and Human Services and the US Department of Education are the resource for this list regarding the appropriate response to behavioral concerns.
1. The Family Resource Library houses family supports for positive behaviors in the home environment, including the New Mexico Pyramid Framework. (10 pts)
2. The preschool program invites staff from community child care and Head Start programs to NM Pyramid Framework training for staff and families. (15 pts)
3. The program staff demonstrate ongoing utilization of strategies from the New Mexico Pyramid Framework. (20 pts)
4. The program staff creates ongoing communities of practice, deepen staff’s knowledge and ability to implement the New Mexico Pyramid Framework. These groups also contribute time and resources to provide the classroom materials required to fully implement the New Mexico Pyramid Framework. This is demonstrated by obtaining a score of 80 percent or higher on all sub-sections in the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool. (20 pts)
5. The program extends the New Mexico Pyramid Framework by providing ongoing Pyramid training for families. This training is located at http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/family.html (20 pts)
1. Each child must have an up-to-date immunization record or a public health division approved exemption from the requirement on file. Children cannot be enrolled without an up-to-date immunization record or a public health division approved exemption form, unless that child is experiencing homelessness. A child experiencing homelessness must be enrolled regardless of lack of immunization records. Lack of immunization records cannot delay a screening or evaluation process. Any minor child, through their parent or guardian, may file with the health authority—charged with the duty of enforcing the immunization laws—the following requests for exemptions from immunizations:

   a. A certificate from a duly licensed physician stating that the physical condition of the child is such that immunization would seriously endanger the life or health of the child.
   b. Affidavits or written affirmation from an officer of a recognized religious denomination that such child’s parents or guardians are bona fide members of a denomination whose religious teaching requires reliance upon prayer or spiritual means alone for healing.
   c. Affidavits or written affirmation from their parent or legal guardian that their religious beliefs, held either individually or jointly with others, do not permit the administration of vaccine or other immunizing agent.

2. Each child must receive the following health screenings by a school health care professional using the Student Health Assessment Form or private provider prior to the beginning of the program or within the child’s first three months of attendance.

   • Well child screening
   • Hearing screening
   • Vision screening
   • Dental screening

3. Developmental screenings must include all domains of development, including the social emotional component. They must be conducted for each child within the first three months of attendance. Program staff monitor for early detection of children at risk for developmental delays; they must have access to assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess their students. These materials are administered in the child’s native language or other appropriate mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information, as to what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally—unless it is not feasible to provide or administer, 34 CFR § 300.304(c)(1)(ii). Families are included in the screening process and informed of the results no later than the next scheduled family-teacher conference.

4. Appropriate referrals and follow-up services are made available to families to address all concerns that have been identified. Screenings are a collaborative process with families. Families are included in the screening by participating in interviews during the home visit. Families and teachers review results and referrals are made in a timely matter.
Meals
All personnel must be knowledgeable about each child’s special nutritional needs including allergies, medical conditions, and physician requests for dietary restrictions. Family-style dining takes place in the classroom. The program ensures that family-style dining is in compliance with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements.

All PED preschool programs must participate in the USDA School Lunch Program and must organize their schedule to meet the following:

- Programs funded for 450 hours must provide at least one meal per day that meets USDA requirements.
- Full-day or PreK Extended-Day (900 hours) programs must provide at least two meals per day, both meeting USDA requirements.
- Families of preschool children must complete the same forms for meal reimbursement, as required of other students in the school, unless students are directly certified or categorically eligible to participate in the program.
- Children experiencing homelessness qualify for free lunch through The National School Lunch Program.
C. RATIOS AND GROUP SIZE

5 Star Criteria

Staff: Child Ratios & Group Size (Class Load)

Class load means the number of students for whom a teacher structures activities at a given time (NMAC 6.29.1.9). General education preschool program adult-child ratio for four-year olds must be no greater than 1:10, with one lead teacher. One educational assistant is added to the classroom if the group size is 11 or more. Four-year-old group size may never exceed 20 children.

General education preschool program (special education inclusion classrooms and Title I classrooms) adult-child ratios for three-year olds must be no greater than 1:8, with one lead teacher and one educational assistant, if the group size is nine or more. Three-year-old group size may never exceed 16 children. As indicated in statute (NMAC 6.30.9.10), NM PreK classrooms can only serve 4-year-old children.

Mixed-age classrooms. Mixed age groups of children are allowed in Title I and special education preschool classrooms, as well as in NM PreK classrooms in small, rural schools where the total number of three-and-four-year-old children does not exceed 16 students. For school year 19-20, only four-year-old children may be funded for NM PreK. Group size and ratios are determined by the age of the youngest child in the group and by special education requirements.

Special Education, case management only. Caseload ratios cannot be greater than 1:4 for center-based programs, in accordance with Subsection H of 6.30.2.10g of the NMAC. General education inclusive classrooms will maintain ratios of one teacher and one or two educational assistants, with at least 10—and up to 14—children without an IEP, and with up to 6 children with an IEP, as determined by the child’s IEP. Students with disabilities have a right to FAPE in the least restrictive environment (LRE), in accordance with 34 CFR §§ 300.114-300.115. The LRE decision is made in accordance with 34 CFR § 300.116, and placement is made by a group of individuals that includes the child’s parent(s). The placement decision CANNOT be solely based on the category or severity of the exceptionality. Where there is a reasonable likelihood that a student with an exceptionality can be educated in the regular classroom with supplementary aids and supports, then that placement should be tried first for as much of the day as possible. Rationale of a placement, other than the general education environment, MUST be clearly documented in the IEP with supporting data.

| WAYS TO MEET INDICATOR 6 (EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS) 4-YEAR-OLD PRESCHOOL RATIOS |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **3:1 ratio**                   | **2:1 ratio**   | **1:1 ratio**   |
| Evidence-based                 | Acceptable      | Least amount of |
| NM PreK/FOCUS Accepts          | beginning       | gains,           |
|                                | NM PreK/FOCUS   | based on        |
|                                | Accepts         | evidence        |
| Required Staffing              | Required Staffing | IDEA accepts*  |
|                                | Required Staffing |                |
| **STUDENTS**                   | **TEACHERS**    | **TEACHERS**    |
|                                | **STUDENTS**    | **TEACHERS**    |
| No IEP | IEP | Teacher | Teacher/Assistant | No IEP | IEP | Teacher | Teacher/Assistant | No IEP | IEP | Teacher | Teacher/Assistant |
| 6     | 2   | 1      | 1                | 8      | 4   | 1      | 1 SE**           | 5      | 5   | 1      | 2 SE**           |
| 9     | 3   | 1      | 1 SE**           | 10     | 5   | 1      | 1 SE**           | 6      | 6   | 1      | 2 SE**           |
| 12    | 4   | 1      | 1 GE/1 SE**      | 12     | 6   | 1      | 1 GE/1 SE**      | 7      | 7   | 1      | 2 SE**           |
| 15    | 5   | 1      | 1 GE/1 SE**      | 14     | 6   | 1      | 1 GE/1 SE**      | 8      | 8   | 1      | 2 SE**           |

Some states lobbied for higher teacher-student ratios, some pushed for lower ones. The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) collated all states’ data for the sake of consistent reporting the 50/50 ratios. This data reporting, quite obviously, does not represent best evidence-based practices, but it provides PreK programs a benchmark.

* but at the same gains as those recorded for PreK classrooms that are segregated by typically and atypically performing children.
** GE – means General Education student and SE means Special Education Student.
PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS
Preschool Administrators/Internal PreK Coaches

5 Star Criteria

Credentials
Preschool program administrators and internal coaches must hold one of the following four licenses:
1) the New Mexico education administration, PreK-12 license; 2) the New Mexico early childhood teacher license: birth through third grade; 3) the New Mexico early childhood teacher license: age three through grade three; or 4) the New Mexico special education license PreK–12.

Training

Preschool administrators must have successfully completed
1. within the first year, the web-based PED FOCUS Leadership Academy, which includes:
   • Intentional Teaching Overview
   • New Mexico Pyramid Framework Overview
   • the Full Participation of Each Child Overview;
2. the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ECERS)-3 online training (with evidence of successful completion within the first three months);
3. Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS)—Early Childhood, which must be completed within two years of hire or two years from the start of FOCUS implementation;
4. the online Early Childhood Observation Tool (ECOT) training (first year preschool administrators must complete the initial training by August 31st. All preschool administrators must complete refresher training annually at the beginning of the school year); and
5. five WIDA Early Years online professional learning modules to be completed:
   • Dual Language Learners and their Families
   • Dual language Learners with Disabilities
   • Scaffolding Language Learning
   • Promising Practices
   • WIDA Early English Language Development Standards Framework

Internal PreK Coaches must have successfully completed the
1. Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ECERS)-3 online training;
2. Intentional Teaching Training: Module I & Module II;
3. online Early Childhood Observation Tool ECOT training;
4. Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS)—Early Childhood;
5. LETRS-EC Facilitator Training;
6. New Mexico Pyramid Framework training;
7. Pyramid Framework Training of Trainers;
8. Full Participation of Each Child;
9. Practice-Based Coaching and Group Facilitation Coaching training;
10. TPOT training including inter-rater reliable training; and
11. five WIDA Early Years online professional learning modules as noted above.
## PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS
### Teachers and Educational Assistants

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<th>5 Star Criteria</th>
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**Credentials**

**PreK and Title 1 Preschool Teachers**

In each preschool classroom, the teacher must have 1) the New Mexico early childhood teacher license: birth through third grade, 2) the New Mexico early childhood teacher license: PreK through grade three, or 3) the New Mexico early childhood teacher license: birth through PreK.

If the teacher does not hold one of these early childhood teacher licenses, but does hold a K–8 Elementary license and/or a special education PreK–12 license, they must provide evidence of successful completion of:

1. the early childhood alternative licensure program (coursework, or NM TEACH Summative Evaluation route) **within two years** of hire or implementation of FOCUS; OR
2. a minimum of **twelve college credits annually** toward a master’s degree leading to one of the two early childhood licenses; OR

*Every preschool classroom must be staffed at all times by a licensed teacher.*

**Special Education Preschool Teachers:**

Teachers must be highly qualified in accordance with 34 CFR § 300.18 and as indicated in Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (STARS).

**Educational Assistants, Non-Special Education:**

Educational assistants (EAs) in each preschool classroom must have an associate’s degree (AA) in early childhood education and hold a level 3 educational assistant license from the PED. Any EA who does not currently possess an AA in early childhood education must provide evidence of successful completion of a minimum of **six college credit hours towards the degree annually.**

**Educational Assistants, Special Education:**

Instructional and non-instructional EAs must meet requirements under 6.63.9 of the NMAC.

**Note:** Non-instructional special education EAs are not reflected in adult-child ratios.

**Professional Development Plan:**

Preschool teachers and educational assistants all must have a current professional development plan (PDP) with specific professional goals and timelines related to the current FOCUS criteria. If applicable, PDPs must include specific coursework that is entered into the appropriate database upon successful course completion. Timelines follow the established PED teacher evaluation process.

**School administrators** will complete the Preschool Classroom Walkthrough monthly for each preschool classroom. Information from the walkthrough may be used for PDP goals. Administrators do not need to complete the entire walkthrough monthly, however they may choose to complete specific sections each month. These walkthroughs may be an artifact for NM TEACH.

**Planning and Release Time For Consultation**

Preschool program personnel benefits must include time for planning (at least two hours per week), and daily classroom preparation. Administrators must provide classroom coverage to maintain ratios for up to 45 minutes, and minimum of 30 minutes, to debrief following each practice-based coaching cycle.
Training
Preschool teachers and EAs, including approved long-term substitutes, must attend all required FOCUS trainings as follows (except where noted for licensed teachers only):

1. Intentional Teaching: Module I-Powerful Interactions and Module II-Observational Assessment (the equivalent of the NM PreK New Teacher Training must be completed within two months of hire or from start of FOCUS implementation.)

2. The Online Early Childhood Observational Tool (ECOT) must be completed no later than August 31st, or within 30 days of hire, and prior to submitting an assessment report. New teachers must complete the full online training. Returning teachers must complete the refresher training annually by August 31. All training must be completed prior to submitting observation data in ECOT.

3. ECERS-3 online training (with evidence of successful completion), which must be completed within 60 days of hire or six months from the start of FOCUS implementation.

4. The Full Participation of Each Child, must be completed as an in-service training before the teacher begins, or within six months of hire, or six months from the start of FOCUS implementation.

5. New Mexico Pyramid Framework must be completed within one year of hire or one year from the start of FOCUS implementation.

6. Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS)—early childhood training must be completed within one year of hire or one year from the start of FOCUS Implementation (for licensed teachers only).

7. Five WIDA Early Years online professional learning modules must be completed within two years of hire for new teachers, and within the 2019-2020 school year for returning teachers. Modules are:
   • Dual Language Learners and their Families
   • Dual Language Learners with Disabilities
   • Scaffolding Language Learning
   • Promising Practices
   • WIDA Early English Language Development Standards Framework
**ERS—Environment Rating Scales**
Teaching staff and administrators conduct a classroom self-assessment using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale—Third Edition (ECERS-3) and, in collaboration with their coach and administrator, use the results to inform their CQI planning efforts, paying close attention to the scoring rubrics.
An outside ECERS-3 assessment is completed as part of the verification process. PreK programs must be assessed by an exterior evaluator using the ECERS-3 and achieve an average total score of 5.0 to meet verification. If a program does not achieve a 5.0, the administrator must work with classroom staff to improve that score.

**Curriculum**
Programs must utilize an evidence-based curriculum with fidelity. A comprehensive, integrated, curriculum will address early literacy, math, science and social emotional competencies through purposeful play. The curriculum must have strong external evidence of positive impact on improving child outcomes. The program must maintain a copy of the independent research as part of the verification documentation.

**Effective Early Literacy Instruction**
Teachers incorporate effective daily early literacy instruction throughout the day, beginning with Morning Message. Classroom observations document the following:
1. phonological awareness activities (e.g., songs, finger play, rhyming, beginning sounds)
2. oral language and vocabulary activities
3. alphabet knowledge activities
4. concepts of print activities
5. read alouds that incorporate comprehension strategies
6. individual and small group (2–4 children) read alouds using first read, second read and third read, ensuring that each child is read to, at least once-weekly in 450-hour programs and twice-weekly in 900-hour programs
7. large group reading activities. Half or more of the children may rotate large group time, however these groups must occur daily
8. opportunities for developmentally appropriate writing activities

These practices are verified using the TPOT, ECERS-3 and the New Mexico Early Literacy Observation Checklist.
Lesson Plans
Teachers use information from multiple sources, such as assessment data, on-going child observations, children’s interests, family input, the approved evidence-based curriculum, and IEP/ECO—early childhood outcome—goals to create weekly lesson plans using the required New Mexico PED preschool electronic lesson plan form.

1. Every Monday or the first day of the program week, the lesson plan will be posted in the classroom for families.
2. Teachers may use the webbing form from the New Mexico Early Childhood Guide for Inclusion, pg. 36, as the fourth page of the lesson plan to assist with incorporating strategies, modifications, and accommodations to meet the needs of individual students. This page must be accessible to the teacher, coach, administrator, and EA only. http://cdd.unm.edu/ecln/PSN/common/pdfs/Inclusion%20Guide%20April%201.pdf
3. Lesson plans will be archived in a binder for review for at least two school years.
4. Educators must have weekly planning time (at least equivalent to the time provided to kindergarten teachers) to review child assessment information and for curriculum planning. Teachers with am/pm sessions should have additional planning time due to the increased number of children.

Assessment
Preschool teachers and EAs must provide evidence of implementation of classroom-based services with fidelity to approved evidence-based curriculum, utilizing the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines—Essential Indicators with Rubrics, available at https://prek.ped.state.nm.us/EarlyLearningGuidelines This evidence includes the following:

1. Documented use of the ECOT** for ongoing assessment of children’s progress and as a primary source of information for individualized lesson planning. Assessment results should be used by the interdisciplinary team, which includes family members, to develop the child’s IEP. The ECOT is the online tool for recording the assessment notes and rubric ratings, utilizing the beginning of year (BOY), middle of year (MOY), and end of year (EOY) assessment dates.
2. Documented use of the New Mexico PED preschool electronic lesson plan form, which may include the modification form from the New Mexico Early Childhood Guide for Inclusion as a fourth page.
3. Documented use of Family-Teacher Summary Reports for each of the three family-teacher conferences (For children with an IEP, the IEP meeting may suffice for one of the family-teacher conference and the Family-Teacher Summary Report.)

*The ELG align with the Common Core State Standards and are approved by the OSERS to be used for ECO reporting.
**The ECOT is approved by the OSERS to be used for ECO reporting.
Preschool Assessment (Implement Beginning SY2017-18)

In preschool programs, the child observational assessment process includes the following:

1. The NM Quick-Look Recording sheets and report data for 26 essential indicators (EIs)—for each child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EI</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Demonstrates body coordination and strength in activities such as climbing stairs with alternating feet, marching, running, jumping, hopping, dancing, and riding tricycles and scooters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3a</td>
<td>Shows an understanding of the basic concepts of print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3b</td>
<td>Understands that print carries meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>Uses senses to investigate characteristics and behaviors in the physical and natural worlds and begins to form explanations of observations and explorations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>Develops increasing independence during activities, routines, and play</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EI</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Demonstrates balance and spatial awareness in many situations (running and stopping, climbing, ball-handling, in simple group games e.g., “Duck, duck, goose”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4a</td>
<td>Recognizes and generates rhyming sounds in spoken language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4b</td>
<td>Demonstrates understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>Makes predictions and forms hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>Adapts behaviors to fit different situations (e.g., accepts transitions, follows daily routines, incorporates cultural expectations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>Role-plays to express feelings, to dramatize stories, to try out social behaviors observed in adults, and to reenact real-life roles and experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>Focuses and completes a variety of tasks, activities, projects, and experiences</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>EI</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1a</td>
<td>Develops manual coordination to use writing and crafting tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5a</td>
<td>Shows an understanding of alphabetic knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5b</td>
<td>Knows and applies letter-sound correspondence and beginning sound-recognition skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>Cares for personal and group possessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Demonstrates the ability to attend, understand, and follow increasingly complex directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Uses numbers and counting as means for solving problems and determining quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>Plays and interacts with various children, sharing experiences and ideas with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Demonstrates the ability to effectively engage in a range of conversational skills in their home language (including ASL) for a variety of purposes relating to real experiences and different audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3a</td>
<td>Rote counts in sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3b</td>
<td>Names and identifies written numerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>Uses and accepts negotiation, compromise, and discussion to resolve conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>Recognizes, names, describes, compares, and creates familiar shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>Accepts guidance from a variety of appropriate adults and seeks their support when needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Creativity Sample (not rated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EI</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>Communicates ideas and/or feelings through creative activities (e.g., making up a song, acting out a story, creating a piece of art work or a set of movements)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Portfolio documentation for 3 EIs using the NM Portfolio Collection Forms specifically designed for these EIs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EI</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Demonstrates comprehension of a story that is read aloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Understands how to apply the early stages of drawing and writing to convey meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>Sorts, classifies, and groups materials by one or more attributes</td>
</tr>
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Special education preschool programs use the ELG to develop IEP goals and for ECO reporting. (See ELG-ECO Crosswalk, Appendix A)
Assessment Reporting

Beginning in SY 2017-18, PED programs must use the Early Childhood Observation Tool (ECOT) to record observations and rubric ratings.

1. NM PreK and Title 1 preschool teachers and EAs must complete three child observational assessments and report data
   • finalize BOY in ECOT by the 30th instructional day from the first day of child attendance;
   • finalize MOY in ECOT for extended-day (900-hour) programs, by the first Friday in February (which includes portfolio forms);
   • finalize MOY in ECOT for 450-hour programs, by the first Friday in February; and
   • finalize EOY in ECOT within two weeks prior to the last day of the child’s attendance in the preschool program.

2. Preschool special education teachers, in collaboration with related service providers, must complete three child observational assessments and report the data
   • within the first 30 calendar days that the child enters the program and conduct the first Preschool Observational Assessment for ECO reporting;
   • for extended-day (900-hour) programs, by the first Friday in February (which includes portfolio forms);
   • for 450-hour, by the first Friday in February; and
   • within two weeks prior to the last day of the child’s attendance (their exit from the program) for the end of year assessment.

Program must develop CQI goals based on child assessment results.
B. CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

5 Star Criteria

All programs must engage in a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process that includes a data analysis process, with a focus on setting a district goal that impacts student achievement, implementing an action plan, and monitoring progress toward meeting the goal in the time frame specified.

Identify the sources used to determine specific areas for improvement within your public school preschool program. The district goal that is chosen must

- correlate with the FOCUS Essential Elements of Quality and directly impact student achievement as demonstrated by ECOT data;
- provide a brief explanation regarding why you selected the specific source;
- note one or more ELG EIs and the assessment data for each goal; and
- be developed by October 15 to be reviewed as part of PED monitoring and the FOCUS verification process (Verification Phase I AB).

Note: 1) Classroom goals are not required in this document. The action plans developed in the practice-based coaching process are the classroom goals.
2) Purchasing items is not a goal, but may be one of the strategies listed to reach a goal. 3) The CQI plan may also be documented on the NM DASH 90-day plan. 4) For PreK programs, progress toward the goal will also be submitted with the continuation application.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION/DATA USED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Information/Data Used</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool Observational Assessment (ECOT)—Data must be referenced for each goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECERS-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pyramid Social-Emotional Strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>LETRS—Early Childhood Literacy Strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusive Practices Self-assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback from Program Monitor/FOCUS Verification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Walkthroughs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each program must have at least one district/charter goal, but may choose to add up to two additional goals.

Preschool staff are encouraged to reach out to all those involved with the preschool program to make education a team effort for quality improvement. Teacher and family input is especially important.
Administrator is the individual designated by the school or district as the person responsible for the early childhood program for the school or district. In order to support quality early childhood practices, administrators must have early childhood knowledge and experience or have on-site administrative personnel with early childhood knowledge and experience. In addition, program administrators have knowledge and experience in early childhood education, early intervention, early childhood special education, and supervision.

Appropriate Accommodations and Modifications are plans and environmental accommodations for children with special needs or abilities (medical, educational, or behavioral). These include written plans, space arrangements, adaptation of materials, inclusion in age-appropriate self-help activities, and handling questions about differences. Adaptations permit children with disabilities or dual language learners to show what they know and can do. This definition is used in connection with children of diverse abilities. In support of the full participation of every child, appropriate accommodations and modifications are often made for all children.

Assessment of Children’s development and learning is essential for early childhood educators and programs. It supports planning, implementation, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the classroom experiences preschool staff provide. The most reliable and informative assessment process is the observation and documentation of children’s participation in daily activities and routines. Educators involved in authentic observation seek to observe children’s development, skills, and behavior naturally through their play and participation in daily activities and routines and does not include specifically planned activities that test children’s knowledge, abilities, or skills. The information gained through authentic observational assessment, related to the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines, is used to inform families and plan individualized activities and strategies to help each child grow and develop.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) takes the observations made in a Functional Behavioral Assessment (BFA) and turns them into a concrete plan of action for managing a student’s behavior. A BIP may include ways to change the environment to keep behavior from starting in the first place, provide positive reinforcement to promote good behavior, avoid reinforcing bad behavior, and provide needed supports so that the student will not be driven to act out due to frustration or fatigue.

Caseload is typically defined as the number of students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for whom a teacher serves as case manager and is responsible for writing and implementing those students’ IEPs. In the area of special education, the definition of class size differs from that of caseload.

Child Find: IDEA Sec. 300.111 requires all school districts to identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. This obligation to identify all children who may need special education services exists even if the school is not providing special education services to the child. A child may be referred to Child Find services. The child is screened for possible developmental delays and disabilities. The results of the screening are compared to the state’s eligibility guidelines. The state is required to track and follow-up on all children who receive Child Find services. There is interagency coordination to ensure resources are available to provide the needed services to the child. Child Find is not a one-time event (i.e. “Child Find Round Up”). It happens all year long as an ongoing intake process. For preschool children, Child Find screenings shall serve as interventions under Subsection B of 6.31.2.10 NMAC.

Curriculum used in a classroom can be defined as a plan for achieving the individual goals set for children’s development. These goals are typically set by early childhood educators in collaboration with children’s families. Children have a greater learning opportunity in programs where the environment is well-planned and curriculum is an intentional process.

Developmental Screening is a short assessment to determine if a child is learning basic skills in a developmentally expected time frame and to alert educators and family if there are lags. Often, children with developmental delays are not identified as early as possible, resulting in unnecessary and costly missed social and educational opportunities. For young children ages birth to five, physical, cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional growth and development occur at a rapid pace. While all children in this age range may not reach developmental milestones (e.g., smiling, saying first words, taking first steps) at the same time, development that does not happen within an expected timeframe can raise concerns about developmental disorders, health conditions, or other factors that may negatively impact the child’s development. Early, frequent screening of young children for healthy growth and development is recommended to help identify potential problems or areas needing further evaluation. With early identification of delayed or missed developmental milestones, children can be provided treatment or intervention more effectively, and additional developmental delays or deficits may be prevented (OPRE report, 2/14).
**Documentation** is necessary to the effective education of preschool children. Educators observe, document, and reflect on all of the Essential Indicators. The documentation may be in the form of quick-look recording sheets, brief notes for some of the indicators, or more lengthy written notes for others. Factual descriptions of how the child demonstrates progress on the indicators are written on portfolio forms and may be accompanied by photographs and/or work samples. Documentation is recorded on the online ECOT.

**Dual Language Learners** are children who acquire two or more languages simultaneously and learn a second language, while continuing to develop their first language. The term dual language learners encompasses other terms frequently used, such as Limited English Proficient (LEP), bilingual, English language learners (ELLs), English learners (ELs), and children who speak a language other than English (LOTE). OHS 2009

**Early Childhood Outcomes** must be reported by states as the percentage of preschool children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who demonstrate improved
- positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
- acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early literacy); and
- use of appropriate behavior to meet needs

The outcomes address these three areas of child functioning necessary to be an active and successful participant at home, in early care and education settings, and in the community.

**Essential Indicators** are fully described in the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines—Preschool Essential Indicators with Rubrics. Major aspects of, and reasonable expectations for, the development of young children from birth through kindergarten are described by the essential indicators of children's development. These indicators focus educators' attention on those areas most essential and most telling of a child's timely social, emotional, academic, and physical development. Assessment of these developmental indicators ensure knowledge of expected child growth and the guidance to respond suitably when benchmarks are not being met.

**Evidence-based Curriculum** is a curriculum with strong external evidence of positive impact on improving child outcomes and has been vetted through rigorous research.

**Expulsion** is the removal of a student from a school either permanently or for an indefinite time exceeding 10 school days or a locally established lesser period.

**Formal Behavior Plan** is a written plan for implementing individualized, classroom and school-wide behavior interventions and strategies to decrease inappropriate behavior. (from NMAC 6.29.1)

**Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)** is a process that identifies specific, target behavior; the purpose of the behavior; and what factors maintain the behavior that is interfering with the student’s educational progress.

**Home Language.** School readiness and school success for children who are dual language learners are tied directly to mastery of their home language. It is important for teachers to acknowledge, support, and emphasize the benefits of being bilingual, the importance of maintaining home language, and the value of becoming fully bilingual.

**Inclusive Practices and Settings.** The right to access inclusive early childhood programs is supported by a robust legal foundation. The IDEA supports equal educational opportunities for eligible children with disabilities through 21. Part B of the IDEA, requires that special education and related services are to be made available to all children with disabilities, ages 3 through 21, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the least restrictive environment (LRE), factoring in an individual child's unique strengths and needs. Eligible children with disabilities under Part B of the IDEA are to receive the full range of supplementary aids and services to enable them to be educated with children who do not have disabilities, participate in the general educational or developmental curriculum, and participate in typical non-academic activities with nondisabled peers, to the maximum extent appropriate. The American with Disabilities Act, Section 504 regulations require recipients—such as schools—to provide equal educational opportunities for children with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the child's needs.
**Individualized Education Program (IEP)** is a legal written document that defines a child's special education program. The IEP is intended to help school children, ages 3 to 21, reach educational goals more easily than they otherwise would. In all cases, the IEP must be tailored to the individual child's needs, as identified by the IEP evaluation process. An IEP is written by a team, including a school administrator, a special education teacher, regular classroom teacher, the family of the child, and other family as appropriate. The IEP must especially help educators and related service providers understand the child's disability and how the disability affects the learning process. The IEP describes how the child learns, how the student best demonstrates that learning, and what educators and other service providers will do to help the student learn more effectively. The IEP has stated goals and objectives that correspond to the needs of the child and indicates placement for learning in the least restrictive environment possible for the child. It must be reviewed and updated by the team annually and can be reviewed and amended any time, if requested by the family. An IEP is mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Practice-Based Coaching** is a cyclical process for supporting teachers’ use of effective teaching practices that lead to positive outcomes for children. The coaching cycle components are:
1. Planning short-term goals and developing measurable action steps.
2. Engaging in focused observation. 3. Reflecting on and sharing feedback about teaching practices.

**PED’s New Mexico PreK** is a voluntary program, funded by the State. The PreK program began in 2005 to ensure that every child in New Mexico had the opportunity to attend a high-quality, early childhood education program before attending kindergarten. All children, no matter their background or neighborhood, should have an equal chance for success in school and in life. The purpose of the New Mexico PreK Program is to
- increase access to voluntary, high-quality pre-kindergarten programs;
- expand community capacity for early childhood programs;
- support linguistic and cultural curriculum that is appropriate;
- focus on school readiness; and
- provide developmentally appropriate activities for New Mexico children.

**Portfolio Collection** is the way to best format and document some of the Essential Indicators. This format requires a detailed description of how the child demonstrates that indicator, including photographs and work samples. Portfolio items provide families a better-rounded picture of what their child does and how their child is learning and growing. Each item in the portfolio should be a distinct observation of different experiences. Family members often find portfolio items valuable treasures that capture their young child in action. Additionally, the portfolio collection for each child offers the early educator a tool to actively engage family members and invite them to participate as partners in supporting their child’s growth and development.
**Positive Behavior Support (PBS)** is an approach for changing a child’s behavior. It is based on humanistic values and research. It is an approach for developing an understanding of why the child has challenging behavior and for teaching new skills to replace that challenging behavior. PBS is a holistic approach that considers all of the factors that impact on a child, family, and the child’s behavior.

**Professional Development Plan** is an on-going plan for continued professional development for each staff member. The plan must document ongoing activities to increase the educator’s knowledge, specialization, and qualifications in early childhood education, individualization, and family support.

**Quick Look Recording Sheet** was designed to capture those pre-school aged children’s behavior and benchmarks, as noted by the Essential Indicators, that can be observed quickly and easily and may not need to be observed multiple times. The quick-look-check recording format lends itself to this type of observation and documentation. Educators merely record the date of the observation in the column corresponding with the rubric rating that matches the child’s observed performance for that indicator.

**Ratios**, in the context of PreK caseloads, refers to the maximum number of students with IEP’s who can be taught by one certified educator. When the number of students with IEPs exceed that maximum, ratio is also used to indicate that number who can additionally work when a paraprofessional—with whom the certified educator works and is responsible for providing services and managing IEPs—is posted to that classroom. It is written as “students: special education teacher”, also as “student: paraprofessional”.

**Referral** is a written request for evaluation or eligibility for special education and related services.
### APPENDIX A: Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Crosswalk-NM Early Learning Guideline (ELG): Birth through Kindergarten

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECO Outcome 1: Positive Social Relationships</th>
<th>ECO Outcome 2: Acquires and Uses Knowledge</th>
<th>ECO Outcome 3: Takes Appropriate Action to Meet Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 6.1: Demonstrates the ability to effectively engage in a range of conversational skills in his or her home language (including ASL) for a variety of purposes relating to real experiences and different audiences</td>
<td>ELG Indicator 5.2: Demonstrates the ability to attend, understand, and follow increasingly complex directions</td>
<td>ELG Indicator 1.1: Demonstrates body coordination and strength in activities such as climbing stairs with alternating feet, marching, running, jumping, hopping, dancing, and riding tricycles and scooters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 13.1: Communicates ideas and/ or feelings through creative activities (e.g., making up a song, acting out a story, creating a piece of art work, performs a set of movements)</td>
<td>ELG Indicator 6.1: Demonstrates the ability to effectively engage in a range of conversational skills in his or her home language (including ASL) for a variety of purposes relating to real experiences and different audiences</td>
<td>ELG Indicator 1.2: Demonstrates balance and spatial awareness in many situations (e.g., running and stopping, climbing, ball-handling, simple group games such as Duck, Duck, Goose)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 18.1: Adapts behavior to fit different situations (e.g., accepts transitions, follows daily routines, incorporates cultural expectations)</td>
<td>ELG Indicator 7.2: Demonstrates comprehension of a story read aloud by asking relevant questions and providing key details in literary texts</td>
<td>ELG Indicator 2.1: Is developing manual coordination to use writing and crafting tools and demonstrate self-help skills such as buttoning and zipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubric 2.1a: Develops manual coordination to use writing and crafting tools</td>
<td>Rubric 7.3a: Shows an understanding of the basic concepts of print</td>
<td>Rubric 2.1b: Demonstrates self-help fine motor skills, such as buttoning and zipping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubric 7.3b: Understands that print carries meaning</td>
<td>Rubric 7.3a: Shows an understanding of the basic concepts of print</td>
<td>ELG Indicator 20.2: Uses and accepts negotiation, compromise, and discussion to resolve conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 19.1: Cares for personal and group possessions</td>
<td>Rubric 7.3b: Understands that print carries meaning</td>
<td>ELG Indicator 21.2: Accepts guidance from a variety of appropriate adults and seeks their support when needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 20.1: Plays and interacts with various children, sharing experiences and ideas with others</td>
<td>ELG Indicator 7.4: Hears and discriminates the sounds of language in words to develop phonological awareness</td>
<td>ELG Indicator 24.2: Develops increasing independence during activities, routines, and play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 25.3: Role plays to express feelings—e.g., dramatizes stories, tries out social behaviors observed in adults, reenacts real-life roles and experiences</td>
<td>Rubric 7.4a: Recognizes and generates rhyming sounds in spoken language</td>
<td>ELG Indicator 27.1: Focuses and completes a variety of tasks, activities, projects, and experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 7.5: Demonstrates an understanding of the alphabetic principle and word recognition skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubric 7.5a: Shows an understanding of alphabetic knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubric 7.5b: Knows and applies letter-sound correspondence and beginning sound recognition skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 8.3: Understands how to apply the early stages of drawing and writing to convey meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 9.1: Uses numbers and counting as means for solving problems and determining quantity</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 9.3: Progresses in an understanding of number words and numeral recognition skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubric 9.3a: Rote counts in sequence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubric 9.3b: Names and identifies written numerals</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 10.1: Recognizes names and describes, compares, and creates familiar shapes</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 12.1: Sorts, classifies, and groups materials by one or more attributes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>** ELG Indicator 13.1: Communicates ideas and/or feelings through creative activities (e.g., making up a song, acting out a story, creating a piece of art work, performing a set of movements).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELG Indicator 14.1: Uses senses to investigate characteristics and behaviors in the physical and natural worlds and begins to form explanations of observations and explorations</td>
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<tr>
<td>LG Indicator 14.3: Makes predictions and forms hypothesis</td>
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**ELG Indicator may be used for multiple outcomes
APPENDIX B: NM PreK Guidance

Using PreK Funds

General Principles
1. Justification must be included with all submitted requests for reimbursements (RfR). This includes lesson plans for pre-and post-field trips, cooking, and sensory activities that use food products.
2. Reimbursements must be submitted at least monthly.
3. Pre-approval is required for all items, or systems of items over $5,000 (e.g., A cart with multiple iPads is considered a system.)
4. Pre-approval is required for purchase/adoptions of curriculum programs. Any purchased curriculum must align with the NM ELG, be rated “effective” or higher by independent research, and be approved by the PED prior to purchase.
5. Salaries for staff, who serve multiple programs, must be cost-allocated proportionately among the programs.
6. Field trips are charged to student travel, Object 55817.

Allowable Costs
1. PreK staff salaries and benefits
2. Classroom materials and supplies
3. Classroom equipment, including computers, laptops, printers, iPads, tablets, cameras
4. Playground equipment
5. Classroom furniture
6. T.E.A.C.H. or other scholarship/tuition costs
   a. after successful course completion
   b. when the RfR is accompanied by a grade report of “C” or better
   c. within the fiscal year in which the classes were completed
7. Field trips with an academic purpose (must include lesson plans with the RfR)
8. Cooking activity expenditures accompanied by lesson plans
9. In-state travel for early childhood meetings, trainings, or conferences
10. Up to one percent of program services award for administrative costs

Not Allowable Costs
1. Entertainment, such as field trips to movies or amusement parks
2. Food for parent or staff meetings or classroom celebration events
3. Children’s food, including meals while on field trips
4. Candy, soft drinks, or other high sugar items
5. Out-of-state travel costs
6. In-state travel other than approved early childhood conferences and training
7. Educational assistants funded through the transportation award
8. Assistants who accompany children on the bus in accordance with the child’s IEP (these must be charged to special education)
Family Engagement

1. Allowable Activities for calculating the required 90 hours of family engagement:
   a. All time allotted for home visits and family-teacher conferences (Note: Two 6-hour days, not including lunch, are set aside for home visits, so count as 12 hours.)
   b. Contact time for family activities (Note: A family literacy night is from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, so count as two hours.)
   c. Family engagement activities that occur during the day, either during classroom time or at another time, when children are not usually present (e.g., the fifth day of four-day week programs or early dismissal days), provided all parents are invited and there are specific activities related to one or more NM Early Learning Guidelines’ essential indicators.
   d. Field trips that all parents are asked to attend and that have at least one academically focused activity for families to complete together while on the trip
   e. Kindergarten visits that all parents are asked to attend
   f. Potlucks and holiday meals with a specific instructional focus linked to an essential indicator
   g. School-wide activities, like science fairs or school plays that incorporate a specific activity session just prior to the event, to which the preschool teacher invites the families to the classroom for an activity related to that school-wide event. (e.g., the 5th grade is putting on a play based on a children’s book. The preschool teacher invites the families to the classroom 30 minutes prior and reads the story aloud, modeling questions that build comprehension. He then provides a handout of suggestions for families to discuss with their child after the event.) The additional preschool activities allow the school to count the entire evening as part of the required family engagement hours.

2. Unallowable Activities for calculating the required 90 hours of family engagement:
   a. Take-home activities, reading logs, newsletters, etc.
   b. Individual family volunteer time in the classroom
   c. Field trips with only a limited number of parents invited
   d. School events without a PreK connection activity
   e. Holiday meals or potlucks without an instructional activity

Administrative Requirements

1. Integrity of Staff Assignments. PreK program administrators must ensure that teachers and educational assistants assigned to PreK classrooms will not be assigned to non-PreK duties.
2. Regular Walkthroughs. PreK program administrators must conduct the PreK Classroom Walkthrough at least monthly.
3. Coaching. PreK program staff will fully participate in the PreK coaching model (Practice-Based Coaching) to fidelity, which includes both on-site and video-based sessions. Teachers will participate in an up to 45-minute, minimum of a 30-minute, debriefing period following each session.
APPENDIC C: FOCUS VERIFICATION

What is verification?
To verify that New Mexico public school preschool programs are meeting the 5 Star Criteria, as outlined in the FOCUS: Essential Elements of Quality—the documentation, observation, and interviews collected throughout the year by staff are collated and reported by preschool administration.

Preschool programs that provide evidence of meeting 1) at least 70 points (70 percent) of the Exemplary Practices in a specific area of the Foundations of Quality—Full Participation of Each Child and 2) the 5 Star Criteria, will also be verified and recognized as an Exemplary Program in that area.

Why is the verification process important?
As part of New Mexico’s Early Learning System, the PED has committed to the implementation of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Verification

- is a key component of the QRIS and monitors compliance of the Pre-K standards and FOCUS criteria.
- validates and recognizes quality instructional practices
  - in the classroom
  - in the school
  - in the district.

- is a self-study that supports Continuous Quality Improvement
  - in the classroom
  - in the school
  - in the district
  - in the state.

- aligns with PED’s quality improvement initiatives

- provides opportunity for data-driven analysis and decision making for
  - funders
  - stakeholders
  - families
  - policy.

Who conducts the verification?
- The verification is a team process. Individuals go through the process to ensure inter-rater reliability and demonstrate fidelity to an outlined procedure and the FOCUS: Essential Elements of Quality.
**How is the verification self-study process completed?**

- Orientation to the self-study process is provided to public school preschool programs.
- The self-study process—gathering of evidence regarding each program’s adherence to the FOCUS: Essential Elements of Quality—is undertaken.
- Once completed, self-study evidence is reviewed and on-site verification is scheduled and conducted.
- The program is verified as meeting the 5 Star Criteria, or it is notified which components of the 5 Star Criteria have not been verified.
- District administrators and classroom teachers will complete Verification Action Plans for components of the 5 Star criteria not verified. Once evidence has been provided, programs will be notified of meeting the 5 Star criteria.
- Thereafter, the program must demonstrate that the 5 Star Criteria is maintained by
  - ensuring that all the evidence documentation is up to date
  - ensuring that new staff meet the training requirements
  - providing evidence of Continuous Quality Improvement

**When will the verification self-study process take place?**

- Phase I Part A and B of the verification process is due November 15th.
- Verification of Phase I Part A and B is equivalent to the NM PreK Fall Administrator Report.
- Phase I Part A represents the primary documents required at the beginning of each school year. These include the Practice-Based Coaching Agreement, the School Information Sheet, and the Training Needs Assessment.
- Phase I Part B represents the additional documents required within the first three months of each school year. These include the Credentials Document, Child Record Tracker, Preschool Classroom Walkthrough, and the Continuous Quality Improvement Plan.
- Phase II of the verification process is due within two years of FOCUS implementation.
- Verification of progress on Phase II is due May 15th and is the equivalent to the NM PreK Spring Administrator Report.
- Verification is a self-study process, engaging district administrators and teachers.
- It supports documenting practices that are visible in the classroom and policies and procedures that support teachers and ancillary staff.

All FOCUS verification materials may be found at: https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/early-childhood-bureau/
A partnership between the New Mexico Public Education Department and the University of New Mexico.

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