

Frequently Asked Questions

Early Childhood Education Reopening

While the CLP focuses on grades K through 12, districts should align their pre-K planning to the district's CLP submission. In particular, districts should focus on aligning pre-K programming with the Kindergarten programming outlined in your district's CLP. Additionally, the pre-K program should still follow the VPK 2020-2021 Scope of Services.

1. Are districts required to include pre-k instructional programming in their K-12 CLP? Does pre-K enrollment need to be included in the district's K-12 CLP student enrollment documentation?

Districts are not required to include pre-k programming or enrollment in their submitted K-12 CLP; however, the yearly plan aligned to the 2020-2021 VPK Scope of Services should be uploaded as a related document in ePlan for the FY21 VPK Grant. This plan should address alignment with the district's CLP (also uploaded in ePlan) and be shared with the district's School-based Support Services program evaluator.

2. Can Pre-K follow the school's staggered schedule? (e.g., do an "A Day/B Day" schedule?)

Yes, pre-K can do an "A Day/B Day" schedule as long as the VPK Directors of the district document show 20 enrolled pre-K children are getting daily instruction. As a reminder, classes are state-funded for full enrollment of 20 students. Therefore, days that students do not attend pre-k in-person will need to have appropriate instructional alternatives that provide them opportunity and access to high-quality instruction every day. On days children attend pre-K in-person, it is best practice to model and practice routines the children will engage in when they are not attending pre-K in-person. This not only sets children up for success, it helps to establish consistent routines, structures, practices.

3. How might instruction look for days pre-K children do not attend school in-person?

On days, pre-K children do not attend school in-person, students must still need access to high-quality, developmentally appropriate receive instruction with high-quality materials and developmentally-appropriate learning experiences. Children learn best through playful discovery and should have these same opportunities when learning remotely. They also need a daily virtual, personal connection with the teacher or teacher assistant. Both components of distance instruction provide an opportunity for rich adult-child interactions and community building as well as a time to check in on a student's wellness. This brief connection could also be used to excite children about what they will be completing during the day at home, much like would happen during a morning greeting and circle time when attending pre-K in-person. Brief virtual morning meetings can also be used to model and practice foundational literacy skills. Because young children are still dependent on adults for guidance, families will need additional resources and ongoing supports on how to engage children in learning.

Some of children's at-home learning plans could include:

- Listening to stories read aloud (pre-recorded by teacher or digital books) twice a day with opportunities for interaction,
- Retelling stories read through drawing or role play,
- Exploring sounds by playing rhyming games and sounds-first activities with family (demonstrated in a pre-recorded 3 minute video for families),
- Gross motor activity such as Go Noodle or playing outside,
- Counting, sorting, comparing, and grouping common household items (toys, buttons, beans, socks, etc.),
- Play-based learning inclusive of building/constructing, dramatic play, painting, puzzle building,
- Engaging in daily gardening (or growing a potted plant) and cooking activities with the family.

4. *Can VPK start dates be extended if a district has decided to open later than the start of the year?*

VPK start dates should align with the district's K-12 adjusted calendar.

5. *On days pre-K children do not attend pre-K in-person, can the 5 and ½ hours of instruction be achieved through children completely through an online pre-K instructional program?*

Screen time learning can be valuable; however, it is not developmentally appropriate or effective for young children to receive instruction (The National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2015). When using technology, children and their families should have an orientation on appropriate timing and uses to support learning. Technology can be used to build knowledge and expand children's vocabulary when families are encouraged to research about animals, plants, building structures, places to visit, etc.

6. *Are different continuous learning plans required for locally or federally funded (Head Start or 619 Preschool) preschool programs? Should these be included in the district's submitted K-12 CLP?*

For some programs (special populations or Title I), programs are required to follow the most stringent expectations. Therefore, if federal guidelines are more stringent than state requirements, the VPK programming must follow federal guidelines. If state guidelines are more stringent than federal requirements, the VPK programming must follow state guidelines.

This document will be updated as additional questions are received.