



High-Quality Prekindergarten Program  
and  
Family Engagement Plan

**Handbook**

*Revised September 2017*

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## PISD Pre-Kindergarten Handbook

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## **POSITION STATEMENT**

In accordance with *Texas Education Code Sec.29.153*, Princeton ISD will provide a pre-kindergarten program for the educational development of four-year-olds eligible for participation in the program.

## **DEFINITION**

*Texas Education Code Sec. 29.153* states that a district must provide pre-kindergarten classes if 15 or more eligible pre-kindergarten students are identified and are at least four years of age.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

Princeton ISD provides a comprehensive pre-kindergarten program designed to provide students with the prerequisite skills needed to ensure success in kindergarten. Princeton ISD will determine that:

- Public notification will be provided in both English and Spanish.
- Experiences and instruction will be based on developmentally appropriate concepts, skills, and themes and research-based teaching strategies proven to be successful.
- Parents and community members shall have the opportunity to provide input on the district and campus improvement plans. Families of identified students will be provided ongoing opportunities to participate and learn about the strategies used in the school program.
- Princeton ISD teachers and administrators will receive appropriate staff development in the area of early-childhood development and education.

## **PROGRAM ORGANIZATION**

Princeton ISD pre-kindergarten program will be organized as follows:

- Full-day pre-kindergarten program offered on all elementary campuses
- Full-day Bilingual pre-kindergarten program offered on Lacy, Godwin, and Harper campuses
  - Lacy Elementary will serve Bilingual students from Smith Elementary
- Both programs will follow the regular daily hours of operation.
- Class sizes will not exceed 22 students per certified instructor.
- The focus of instruction uses interdisciplinary approaches and developmentally appropriate strategies to ensure students are provided the prerequisite skills necessary for kindergarten.
- Transportation will be provided.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

*Texas Education Code (Sec. 29.153 (b))* states that a child is eligible if:

- The child is unable to speak and comprehend the English language
- The child is economically disadvantaged
- The child is homeless, as defined by *42 U.S.C. Section 11434a*
- The child of active duty member of the armed forces
- The child of member of armed forces who was injured or killed while on active duty.
- The child is or has ever been in the conservatorship of the department of Family and Protective Services, as provided by *Family Code 262.201*.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

PISD provides public notice of the availability of PK classes through school newsletters, district email list, newspaper ads, public fliers around the community, and social media. Public notices are issued in English and Spanish.

The following documents must be provided at the time of enrollment for all qualifying factors:

- Birth certificate
- Immunization Record
- Proof of residency (utility bill with physical address)

In addition to the documentation required for all PK students the following procedures will be utilized in determining eligibility for individual qualifying factors:

### **1. Unable to speak and comprehend the English Language (EL)**

- Parents/Guardians complete a Home Language Survey with a language other than English marked in either:
  - What language is spoken in your home most of the time?
  - What language does your child (do you) speak most of the time?
- Bilingual teacher will administer Pre-IPT Oral Test for ages 3-5
  - Students with a Language Level of either Non-English Speaking or Limited English Speaking qualify
- Conduct an LPAC meeting. LPAC must identify the student as an English language learner
- Have the completed Parent Permission form on file

### **2. Economically Disadvantaged**

- Parents/Guardians complete a Free / Reduced Meal Application
- Child Nutrition Department will determine eligibility based on application

### **3. Homeless (McKinney-Vento Act)**

- Parents/Guardians complete Student Residency Questionnaire
- Homeless Liaison will determine eligibility based on questionnaire

### **4. Child of active duty member of the armed forces**

- Documentation that a district employee verified the student's US Department of Defense (DoD) photo identification. (Form attached)
  - If the student has not been issued such an ID, then documentation must be on file that a district employee verified the military member's DoD photo identification (or other DoD-issued documentation indicating that the person is an active-duty member of the military) and verified documentation showing that the student is a child of the military member.

**Important:** Your district should **not** make a copy of DoD identification.

- A statement of service from the installation adjutant general director of human resources for children of active members, mobilized reservists, or members of the Texas National Guard.

### **5. Child of Member of Armed Forces who was injured or killed while on active duty**

- A copy of the death certificate using the service-appropriate DoD form, or a DoD form that indicates death as the reason for the separation from service, for children of service members who died or were killed.
- A copy of Purple Heart orders or citation for children of service members or mobilized reservists or guardsmen who were wounded or injured in combat.
- A copy of the line of duty determination documentation for children of service members or mobilized reservists or guardsmen who were injured while serving active duty but were *not* wounded or injured in combat.
- Documentation that a service member is MIA for children of service members who are MIA.

### **6. Child is or has ever been in the conservatorship of the department of Family and Protective Services**

- Parents/Guardians present PK Verification letter from DFPS and Child Protective Services; or
- If parent or caregiver does not receive this letter, he or she may obtain evidence of eligibility by contacting a DFPS education specialist.

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

PISD recognizes the importance of supporting families in order to increase child outcomes. Therefore, in accordance with the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Commissioner's Rule §102.1003 (f), PISD utilizes family engagement strategies that are based on empirical research and are proven to demonstrate positive short-term and long-term outcomes for early childhood education.

## Goals:

The goal for PISD's family engagement plan is to: create a foundation for the collaboration of mutual partners, embrace the individuality and uniqueness of families, and promote a culture of learning that is child-centered, age-appropriate, and family-driven.

Familiarize staff and parents with the district's Family Engagement Plan for achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education.

## Definitions:

**Family**—Adults responsible for the child's care and children in the child's life who support the early learning and development of the child.

**Family engagement**--The mutual responsibility of families, schools, and communities is to build relationships that support student learning and achievement, family well-being, and the continuous learning and development of children, families, and educators. Family engagement is fully integrated into the child's educational experience, supports the whole child, and is both culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate.

## Guidelines

In accordance with TAC 102.1003 (f), PISD's Family Engagement Plan shall address the following categories on all campuses:

- A. Facilitate family-to-family support
- B. Establish a network of community resources
- C. Increasing family participation in decision-making
- D. Equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning
- E. Develop staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in meeting their children's learning benchmarks
- F. Evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous improvement

## **Strategies in Action**

### **A. Facilitating Family-to-Family Support**

- Creating a safe and respectful environment where families can learn from each other as individuals and in groups;
- Encouraging bilingual family members to translate for new parents, thus enhancing better communication;
- Having a “Meet and Greet” time during the first week of school to give parents the opportunity to get to know one another on an informal basis at the beginning of the school year;
- Encouraging parents to set up mutual support mechanisms (e.g. phone trees, car pools, play groups);
- Hosting events that bring families together (e.g. family fun nights, open houses, Onion Festival);
- Organizing field trips and other activities that include families.

### **B. Establish a network of community resources:**

- Building strategic partnerships;
- Leveraging community resources;
- Monitoring and evaluating policies and practices to stimulate innovation and create learning pathways;
- Establishing and maintaining partnerships with businesses, faith-based organizations, and community agencies;
- Identifying support from various agencies, including mental and physical health providers;
- Providing and facilitating referrals to family support or educational groups based on family interests and needs (e.g. Boy’s and Girl’s Clubs, youth leagues) ;
- Identifying partners to provide translators and culturally relevant resources reflective of home language.
- Providing up-to-date written information on community resources (e.g. PISD/Denton ISD’s Adult Education and Literacy GED and ESL classes, PISD’s community education classes, community health organizations, recreational options, resale shops, free clothes closet provided by local church, social service organizations, etc.)
- Having a different community resource visit the prekindergarten program once a month, giving family members the opportunity to interact with community resources more conveniently;
- Maintaining a parent resources section on counselor webpages that identify where community services can be found (e.g. health services, domestic violence services, clothes closet, Lion’s Club Eyeglasses Program, Methodist Church sponsored Back to School Bash for free school supplies);
- Assisting families in getting acquainted with the community library (e.g. summer library reading program);
- Providing families with a list of free/low-cost recreational options in the community in which they reside (e.g. City Hall Fall and Christmas Festivals, Movie in the Park, Lion’s Club Onion Festival, trunk-or-treat);
- Providing staff with time to participate in community events/meetings that enhance the program’s ability to meet family needs (e.g. working booths at community events, PTO) .

### **C. Increasing Family Participation in Decision-Making**

- Developing and supporting a family advisory council (e.g. PTO);
- Developing, adopting, and implementing identified goals within the annual campus/school improvement plan targeting family engagement (e.g. Campus Improvement Committee);
- Developing and supporting leadership skills for family members and providing opportunities for families to advocate for their children/families (e.g. PTO, Campus Improvement Committee);
- Collaborating with families to develop strategies to solve problems and serve as problem solvers (e.g. District and Campus Improvement Committee);
- Engaging families in shaping program activities and cultivating the expectation that information must flow in both directions to reflect two-way communication (Parent/Teacher Conference, Remind, social media, Campus Improvement Committee);
- Developing, in collaboration with families, clearly defined goals, outcomes, timelines, and strategies for assessing progress (BOY, MOY, EOY Parent/Teacher Conferences);
- Educating families about their rights under State and Federal law regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- Providing opportunities for families to provide input on key decisions happening in the program (e.g. Campus Improvement Committee);
- Using an intake questionnaire at the beginning of the school year so that teachers can learn about the children in their classroom from their parents' perspective and begin some mutual goal setting with each individual family (Survey form at Meet the Teacher Night);

### **D. Equipping Families with Tools to Enhance and Extend Learning**

- Designing or implementing existing home educational resources to support learning at home while strengthening the family/school partnership (e.g. A to Z Math activities and reading picture books, Fast Forward Reading Program);
- Equipping families with resources and skills to support their children through the transition to school and offering opportunities for families and children to visit the school in advance of the prekindergarten school year (e.g. PK Round Up activities and school tours);
- Providing complementary home learning activities for families to engage in at home with children through information presented in newsletters, online technology, parent/family-teacher conferences, and other school related events;
- Providing families with information, best practices, and training related to age appropriate developmental expectations (e.g. BOY, MOY, EOY Parent/Teacher Conferences);
- Emphasizing benefits of positive family practices such as attachment and nurturing that complement the stages of children's development (e.g. BOY, MOY, EOY Parent/Teacher Conferences);
- Collaborating with families to appropriately respond to children's behavior in a non-punitive, positive, and supportive way (e.g. conference, phone, literature);
- Conferencing with families at least twice during the school year and collaborating with them in setting goals for their children while at the prekindergarten program;
- Encouraging family members to volunteer in the classroom, using the time to foster enhanced communication regarding their child's development;

- Doing an annual survey at the beginning of the school year to identify parents' talents, skills and cultural traditions that they would be willing to share with the classroom;
- Having kindergarten staff visit each prekindergarten classrooms giving parents the opportunity to meet teachers, administrators and have their questions answered regarding the transition to kindergarten (Kindergarten Round Up activities to prepare PK for Kinder);
- Utilizing PISD Email Express, Remind, and digital signage to share information on upcoming school and community events;
- Hosting a Family Night centered around a topic that interests everyone. Plan activities for both adults and children of various ages, including siblings (e.g. Movie Night, painting, talent shows, dances, trunk-or-treat);

### **E. Developing Staff Skills in Evidence-Based Practices that Support Families in Meeting their Children's Learning Benchmarks**

- Providing essential professional development for educators in understanding communication and engagement with families, including training on communicating with families in crisis;
- Promoting and developing family engagement as a core strategy to improve teaching and learning among all educators and staff;
- Developing staff skills to support and use culturally diverse, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive family engagement strategies.
- Training children to greet and say good-bye to parents and their classmates as a means to show respect for all program participants;
- Using developmentally appropriate activities to help children understand differences in families, cultures and traditions;
- Providing training for educators on how to respond to families that are in a crisis; • Making space available for staff to meet with parents privately;
- Providing professional development opportunities focused on professional ethics as it relates to family engagement (ex: boundaries, confidentiality, etc.);
- Providing professional development that is effective in developing skills in working with families. Topics could include: engaging fathers, communication styles, parenting practices, understanding and responding to your child's behavior, etc.;
- Providing professional development that focuses on how culture can influence perspectives on childrearing, such as: communication styles, role of professionals, caregiving (sleeping, eating, toileting), discipline, language and learning (Ruby Payne);
- Committing to hiring staff that reflect the diversity of the community in which the program resides.

### **F. Evaluating Family Engagement Efforts and Using Evaluation for Continuous Improvement**

- Ensuring an evaluation plan is an initial component that guides action (e.g. District and Campus Improvement Committee);
- Using a cyclical process to ensure evaluation results are used for continuous improvement and adjustment (e.g. District and Campus Improvement Committee) ;
- Ensuring teachers play a role in the family engagement evaluation process (e.g. Teacher representatives on the District and Campus Improvement Committies)

- Setting child-centered goals with parents at the beginning of the school year. Check in with them several times during school year to discuss the progress that has been made in achieving the mutually developed goals;
- Incorporating goals related to family engagement into the program’s strategic planning initiatives (e.g. District and Campus Improvement Committee);
- Parents and community members are invited to be a part of the district and campus site-based decision committees.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Princeton ISD endorses the position that quality staff development cannot be overemphasized. Administrative and supervisory staff members support early childhood education through providing the leadership and resources for effective ongoing staff development for the early childhood educators.

## **PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Princeton ISD embraces the belief that early childhood education is successful only if parents are included as partners in the education of their children. Parents must receive information related to program objectives and activities which support the school process. Princeton ISD also relies on active community support for its programs. Community members can offer resources and assistance which contribute to the program’s success.

Parents are informed through this program description, updates, newsletters and information about program activities and parent involvement activities.

Parents and community members are invited to be part of Princeton ISD’s site-based decision committees.

By the combined effort of families, students, and staff, effective services are offered to the prekindergarten students in Princeton ISD.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

The pre-kindergarten program is evaluated at the end of each year through the district and campus site-based decision making committees. These committees include parents, community, and business members, teachers and administrators. Goals for the year are evaluated for effectiveness, and new goals are set for the coming year.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For further information on the pre-kindergarten program offered at Princeton ISD, please contact the following personnel:

Jackie Hendricks, (469) 952-5400 (menu: administration)  
Assistant Superintendent of  
Elementary Curriculum

Rene Mullins, (469) 952-5400 (menu: administration)  
Assistant Superintendent of  
Elementary Curriculum

Campus Principal or Counselor (469) 952-5400 (menu: your child's campus)

By the combined effort of families, students, and staff, effective services are offered to the prekindergarten students in Princeton ISD.

## Pre – Kindergarten Verification of Qualification

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### LEP

- Qualified by LPAC Committee

### Economically Disadvantaged

- Qualified by Child Nutrition Department

### Homeless

- Qualified by Homeless Liaison

### Child of Active Duty Armed Forces

- Student has a Department of Defense (DoD) Photo Identification; **OR**
- Parent has a Department of Defense (DoD) Photo Identification and; documentation showing that the student is a child of the military member.

### Child of Injured or Killed Armed Forces

- Documentation of Injury or Death

### Conservatorship of Department of Family and Protective Services

- Verification from Child Protective Services

Name of Verifying Employee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Verified: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Verifying Employee: \_\_\_\_\_

*Keep a copy of this completed form in the student's cumulative folder.*