

256C.3 Preschool program requirements.

1. *Eligible children.* A child who is a resident of Iowa and is four years of age on or before September 15 of a school year shall be eligible to enroll in the preschool program under this chapter. If space and funding are available, a school district approved to participate in the preschool program may enroll a younger or older child in the preschool program; however, the child shall not be counted for state funding purposes.

2. Teacher requirements.

a. An individual serving as a teacher in the preschool program must meet all of the following qualifications:

(1) The individual is either employed by or under contract with the school district implementing the program.

(2) The individual is appropriately licensed under chapter 272 and meets requirements under chapter 284.

(3) The individual possesses a bachelor's or graduate degree from an accredited college or university with a major in early childhood education or other appropriate major identified in rule by the department.

b. A teacher in the preschool program shall collaborate with other agencies, organizations, and boards in the community to further the program's capacity to meet the diverse needs of the children taught by the teacher and the families of the children, such as needs for early care, health, and human services. In addition, a teacher in the preschool program shall work to maintain relationships with each child's family in order to enhance the child's development in all settings by collaborating with providers of parent education and family support opportunities.

3. *Program requirements.* The state board shall adopt rules to further define the following preschool program requirements which shall be used to determine whether or not a local program implemented by a school district approved to implement the preschool program qualifies as an approved local program:

a. Maximum and minimum teacher-to-child ratios and class sizes.

b. Applicable state and federal program standards.

c. Student learning standards.

d. Provisions for the integration of children from other state and federally funded preschools.

e. Collaboration with participating families, early care providers, and community partners including but not limited to community empowerment area boards, head start programs, shared visions and other programs provided under the auspices of the child development coordinating council, licensed child care centers, registered child development homes, area education agencies, child care resource and referral services provided under section 237A.26, early childhood special education programs, services funded by Title I of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and family support programs.

f. A minimum of ten hours per week of instruction delivered on the skills and knowledge included in the student learning standards developed for the preschool program.

g. Parental involvement in the local program.

h. Provision for ensuring that children receiving care from other child care arrangements can participate in the preschool program with minimal disruption due to transportation and movement from one site to another.

4. *School district requirements.* The state board shall adopt rules to further define the following requirements

of school districts implementing the preschool program:

a. Methods of demonstrating community readiness to implement high-quality instruction in a local program shall be identified. The potential provider shall submit a collaborative program proposal that demonstrates the involvement of multiple community stakeholders including but not limited to, and only as applicable, parents, the school district, accredited nonpublic schools and faith-based representatives, the area education agency, the community empowerment area board, representatives of business, head start programs, shared visions and other programs provided under the auspices of the child development coordinating council, center-based and home-based providers of child care services, human services, public health, and economic development programs. The methods may include but are not limited to a school district providing evidence of a public hearing on the proposed programming and written documentation of collaboration agreements between the school district, existing community providers, and other community stakeholders addressing operational procedures and other critical measures.

b. Subject to implementation of chapter 28E agreements between a school district and community-based providers of services to four-year-old children, a four-year-old child who is enrolled in a child care center or child development home licensed or registered under chapter 237A, or in an existing public or private preschool program, shall be eligible for services provided by the school district's local preschool program.

c. A school district shall participate in data collection and performance measurement processes and reporting as defined by rule.

d. Professional development for school district preschool teachers shall be addressed in the school district's professional development plan implemented in accordance with section 284.6.

5. Department requirements.

a. The department shall implement an application and selection process for school district participation in the preschool program that includes but is not limited to the enrollment requirements provided under section 256C.4.

b. The department shall track the progress of students served by a school district preschool program and the students' performance in elementary and secondary education.

c. The department shall implement procedures to monitor the quality of the programming provided under the preschool program.

d. The state board, in collaboration with the department, shall ensure that the administrative rules adopted to support the preschool program emphasize that children's access to the program is voluntary, that the preschool foundation aid provided to a school district is provided based upon the enrollment of eligible students in the school district's local program regardless of whether an eligible student is a resident of the school district, and that agreements entered into by a school district for the provision of programming in settings other than the school district's facilities are between the school district and the private provider.

2007 Acts, ch 148, §3; 2007 Acts, ch 215, §100; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, § 42; 2008 Acts, ch 1181, § 67, 74

Legislative intent that statewide early childhood professional development system be designed to support statewide preschool program for four-year-old children; 2008 Acts, ch 1181, § 73