

# Getting To Know PA Pre-K Counts Webinar Series

## *Health & Safety*

### ***Today's Presenters:***

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# Meeting Topics

- Classroom Size, Ratio, and Supervision
  - Provision of Meals and Snacks
  - Personal Care Needs & Preventative Procedures
  - Immunization Requirements
  - Child Health Screenings
  - Emergency Preparedness Plans
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# Classroom Size & Ratio

- **§ 405.43. Class Size and Student/Staffing Ratio.**
- (a) Program class enrollments are limited to at most 20 students with at least one teacher and one aide in the classroom, however, for high quality programming a maximum of 17 students is recommended.
- (b) If a Program class has ten or fewer students, there shall be one teacher in the classroom and an aide must be available onsite to assist the teacher as needed.
- (c) Whenever the enrollment in a class exceeds 20, the class shall be divided into two classes so that each class individually does not exceed 20 students. Each class must be properly staffed and, if space is to be shared, that space must be divided by a barrier that adequately separates the spaces for instructional purposes.

# Classroom Size & Ratio

- If the classroom has 10 or fewer 3-and 4-year-olds, it must have one lead teacher and a secondary person available in the facility. The secondary person must meet the requirements for a Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts teacher's aide.
- Any number of children in a classroom above 20 constitutes a second classroom. Classrooms that share space must provide physical barriers that denote the separation of the classrooms. Each space must meet the student/teacher ratio and have the appropriately qualified staff.

# Provision of Meals & Snacks

- **Supplement #001: Meals and Snacks in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Classrooms**
  - Nutritious meals and snacks must be provided by the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program at appropriate times during the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts day. A half-day program must offer, at a minimum, one meal each day. Full day programs must offer both a snack and a meal.
  - Effective teachers make mealtime a learning time broadly, and teach about healthy eating habits, so there is no loss of “instructional time.”
  - Whenever feasible, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts providers should access federal food reimbursement programs. The PDE Division of Food and Nutrition can provide information and guidance about these programs.

# Provision of Meals & Snacks

- The Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts meal may be either breakfast or lunch, depending on the time of operational day. Half day programs may offer the required meal at an appropriate time during the day based upon the hours of program operation. However, if offered during a “snack time” the meal must contain the recommended meal components of a snack as provided by a recognized authority in nutrition such as the Child and Adult Care Food Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- No child may be forced to eat the prepared meal or snack; however, it must be offered.
- Food may not be withheld for any reason including discipline.
- No fees may be charged for any snack or meal.

# Provision of Meals & Snacks

- Children shall be allowed second helpings of foods if food is left over from a snack or meal.
- To the extent possible, information provided by family members concerning a child's eating habits, preferences, or special needs regarding food must be considered in planning meals.
- Alternative foods for children who are allergic to the prepared meal or snack must be offered.
- Foods and beverages that have little nutritional value (e.g., sweets, salty snack foods, soft drinks/soda/powdered drink mixes, etc.) should not be served to children.

# Provision of Meals & Snacks

- Families who offer to share snacks or treats should be encouraged to provide healthy and nutritious snacks. If non-nutritious sweets such as cakes are offered, a nutritious alternative must be provided in addition to the celebratory treat.
- Children should be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits and be encouraged to choose nutrient dense foods based on age-appropriate nutrition requirements of a recognized authority.
- Educational activities and information for families that focus on nutrition and healthy eating for preschoolers are recommended as part of the program's family engagement activities.





# Personal Care Needs

- PA Pre-K Counts providers shall implement the highest standards regarding health, safety, and personal care routines- using an approved self-assessment tools such as ECERS, ECERS-3, CLASS, etc.
- Adults and children should properly wash hands upon entering learning spaces, when returning from the playground/gross motor area, before/after meals, after toileting, etc.

# Personal Care Needs

- Children should be assisted to the extent necessary when engaged in toileting routines (toilet training is not a requirement for PA Pre-K Counts enrollment).
- Children must always have access to drinking water and toilet facilities.
- Policies and procedures about the handling and prevention of illness must be written, reviewed at least annually, and shared with all staff and families.

# Immunization Requirements

- **§ 405.49. Immunizations.**
  - Approved providers shall meet the immunization requirements that pertain to their provider type
    - for school districts and licensed nursery schools see 28 Pa. Code §§ 23.81—23.87 (relating to immunization);
    - for child care centers and group child care homes see 28 Pa. Code § 27.77 (relating to immunization requirements for children in child care group settings);
    - and for Head Start agencies see 45 CFR 1304.20 (relating to child health and development services), the federal Head Start Performance Standards.

# Immunization Requirements

These requirements include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1. Within 60 days of a child's first day of attendance in the program, the provider shall obtain a record establishing that the child has received the vaccinations recommended by the American Committee on Immunization Practices; or receipt from a parent or guardian of a child of a written objection to the child being vaccinated on religious grounds or a physician verified medical reason **of a temporary or permanent nature** explaining why the child is not to be vaccinated.
- 2. Providers must exclude children from group activities for an additional 30 days who are not vaccinated due to a temporary medical condition, unless they have received written confirmation from a physician, or state or local health department of vaccination, or continuation of the medical condition. A new verification is required every 30 days,

# Child Health Screenings

- Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts providers shall ensure all children have had the opportunity to receive the recommended vision, hearing, and health screenings. To meet this requirement, programs should at minimum:
  - Communicate to families about the importance of early screening;
  - Collect evidence from families regarding screenings that have occurred within 180 days of the recommended screening timeframes;
  - In cases where screenings have not occurred, provide timely opportunities for enrolled children to have the opportunity for screening. These screenings may be conducted by the providers or an outside agency including a physician; and
  - Communicate with families about screening results and support follow up as needed.
- At no time should a child be denied access to PKC programming or be disenrolled if recommended screenings are not up to date. Additional guidance on required screenings can be found in [#012: Comprehensive Screening](#).

# Emergency Preparedness Plans

- **§ 405.50. Emergency Response Plans.**
  - Approved providers shall develop, implement, review, and revise annually as necessary, a comprehensive disaster and emergency response plan that meets the guidelines of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. See resources at [Planning and Preparedness](#).
  - The plan must be developed in cooperation with the local Emergency Management Agency and be consistent with the guidelines developed by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and other pertinent state requirements.
  - The plan must be reviewed annually and modified as necessary. A copy of the plan must be provided to the [county emergency management agency](#). If the applicant does not already have such a plan in place, one must be developed.