

IOWA Department of Education

Preschool - Kindergarten

# Agenda



1. Purpose and definitions
2. Table – conditions for enrollment, standards, assessment and funding
3. Critical Clarification
4. Questions and Answers

## Purpose

To provide guidance for Iowa's public schools specific to the definition, condition for enrollment, required standards and assessments and funding for preschool and kindergarten programs.

This guidance is specific to the Iowa Department of Education funded programs of Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs, state aid for kindergarten programs, and special education weighting.

## Reminder of Rule

Iowa public schools are required to assess all K-3 students at the beginning of the school year and intermittently throughout the year using a Department-approved universal screening assessment.



## Definitions

***Prekindergarten/Preschool:*** Programming for children whom are not kindergarten age eligible. These children may or may not receive state funding based on the program and the services they receive. This includes Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs and Early Childhood Special Education instructional services as specified on the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

***Kindergarten:*** Programming for children who are kindergarten age eligible and for whom the district receives K-12 student aid.

# Preschool and Kindergarten

Program	Age	Conditions for Enrollment	Standards	Assessment	State Funding		
					SWVPP	Special Education	Certified Enrollment
Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children [SWVPP]	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child is a resident of Iowa</li> <li>Open Enrollment does not apply</li> </ul>	Iowa Early Learning Standards (IELS)	GOLD online assessment [required]  IGDIs online assessment for Universal Screening [optional]	Yes	No	.5
	4-IEP support services only				Yes	No	.5
	4 – IEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child is a resident of Iowa</li> <li>Open Enrollment applies</li> </ul>			No	Yes	1.0 + special education through weighting
Kindergarten [Age on or before 9/15]	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open Enrollment applies</li> <li>Grade Level is District Determined</li> </ul>	Iowa Core	District Determined Assessments [required]  DE approved universal screening assessment. The DE supports administration of FAST. FAST may also be used as the district’s KLA measure. [required]	No	No	1.0
	5 – IEP support services only				No	No	1.0
	5 – IEP				No	Yes	1.0 + special education through weighting

## Other District Programs

The Department recognizes that the below occurs in some districts.

- Kindergarten-age eligible children may be part of a multi-grade classroom meeting both SWVPP and kindergarten standards; or
- 5 year old children attend programs such as transitional, alternative, beginning, or other terms to indicate programming prior to kindergarten.

Conditions regarding learning standards and assessments must be met for each age group.

## Critical Clarification

It is the Department's position that these grade placement practices conflict with the purpose of Iowa Code 279.68: Early intervention to prevent later skill deficits.



## Critical Clarification

Serving five year olds in SWVPP and alternative type kindergarten programs **often** conflict with the concept of early intervention in the following ways:

- It is difficult to ascertain which standards these programs use. Learners in these programs are not taught to the Iowa Core standards even though they are Kindergarten age.
- Instructional time received may be less than what is received by learners who attend Kindergarten.
  - This is counter-intuitive. If these learners lack skills, providing more opportunities, not fewer, are needed.
- The goals of the program are not to increase the trajectory of learning. It is readily communicated that the learners will not be considered for first grade.

## Other District Programs: Critical Clarification

Statewide Voluntary  
Preschool Program funds  
may not be used to  
support 5 year old  
attendance in such  
programs.



## Critical Clarification

The district may select to fund kindergarten-age eligible children as part of a multi-grade program [space permitting after all 4-year old enrollment has been accounted for], in the following ways:

- Certified enrollment or special education funds
- Parent paid tuition
- Funding provided by other community resources

## Critical Clarification

Once a child has completed any programming prior to kindergarten [e.g., transitional, alternative, beginning] and is age eligible for first grade, there are two options:

- The child attends kindergarten.
  - If 1.0 funding was used to support a child to attend previous programming such as transitional, alternative or beginning programs, then the child would be considered as being retained in kindergarten.
- The child attends first grade.
  - If 1.0 funding was used to support a child to attend previous programming such as transitional, alternative or beginning programs, then the child would be considered as being appropriately promoted to first grade

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Questions and Answers

## Frequently Asked Question

*Are children in transitional Kindergarten required to take a DE approved assessment?*

If the district reports those learners as Kindergarten students and receives 1.0 funding for them, they are considered Kindergarten students by the Department and must be included in the Universal Screening assessment for kindergarten.

## Frequently Asked Question

*Are children in transitional Kindergarten considered to be retained? What about the next year when the learner attends Kindergarten?*

Retention is defined as *any action* taken to maintain a student in the current grade for an additional consecutive year.

Districts must use this definition to determine which learners have been retained.