



Public PreK Guidelines for Family Child Care: A Document Review

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Introduction

The PreK in Family Child Care (PKFCC) project is funded by Home Grown and the Foundation for Child Development and is a collaborative effort between Erikson Institute, the University of Delaware, and the Equity Research Action Coalition at UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute.

The PKFCC project examines strategies for implementation of public PreK in FCC¹ settings across states and localities in the U.S. It aims to both disseminate study findings about promising approaches to implementation and to facilitate cross-state learning about implementation successes and challenges.

The Issue

Integrating FCC educator participation in publicly-funded PreK is important for expanding program capacity. Such integration entails the need for responsive operating guidelines. We reviewed 73 publicly available state/city PreK implementation and guideline documents/websites to assess the level of detail about FCC-specific requirements and supports within these documents. This brief summarizes ways PreK program implementation and guideline documents offer details about how to carry out public PreK within FCC settings.

Key Highlights

- Typically, when FCC is mentioned in publicly-available PreK documentation, information about FCC regulations is minimal and these documents cannot be used to understand distinctions for implementing PreK within FCC. For instance, a document may only reference FCC group size or ratio guidelines by referring to general licensing requirements.
- Fifteen states out of 44 and five cities out of seven refer to FCC in a limited way within their PreK documents/websites.
- Two states' documents, from Colorado and Utah, specifically exclude FCC participation in publicly-funded PreK.
- We identified nine content areas related to FCC (see Table 1, page 3). The most common are qualifications/compensation, collaboration, and program operations. However, mentions across all nine categories are typically cursory and rarely outline specific strategies or requirements for inclusion of FCC in PreK.

FCC in PreK Guideline Examples

A few state and city PreK documents provide more robust details. For example, Vermont² outlines different paths for FCC PreK educators to meet qualification requirements; one pathway for an FCC PreK educator is to hold a valid Vermont educator license with an endorsement in either early childhood education or early childhood special education.

A partnership of

While states like Vermont outline one specific type of guideline for FCC educators, San Francisco’s and Arkansas’ program documents offer additional guidance across multiple topics. We selected these examples to highlight the state and city that provided the most comprehensive guidance based on our coding scheme. More details are in Boxes 1 and 2.

Box 1: San Francisco

San Francisco’s program operating guidelines³ include specific information for FCC programs that implement PreK. For example, the document states that qualified FCC PreK educators must hold at a minimum a Teacher Permit according to the State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Further, the document includes references for both FCC PreK program alignment with child care licensing regulations and ratios and group size.

Box 2: Arkansas

The Arkansas state PreK program manual⁴ offers a comprehensive description of FCC inclusion containing references to 6 of the 9 coded items in our review. Specific references to FCC participation are found in discussion of qualifications, ratios, alignment with licensing regulations, and assessment practices. More specifically, qualifications for FCC educators are stated as a minimum of a CDA credential and the filing of a Staff Qualifications Plan that outlines a plan to complete a four-year degree in early childhood or child development. Additionally, direct reference is made to the use of the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Revised (FCCERS-R) as an appropriate observation tool.

Recommendations

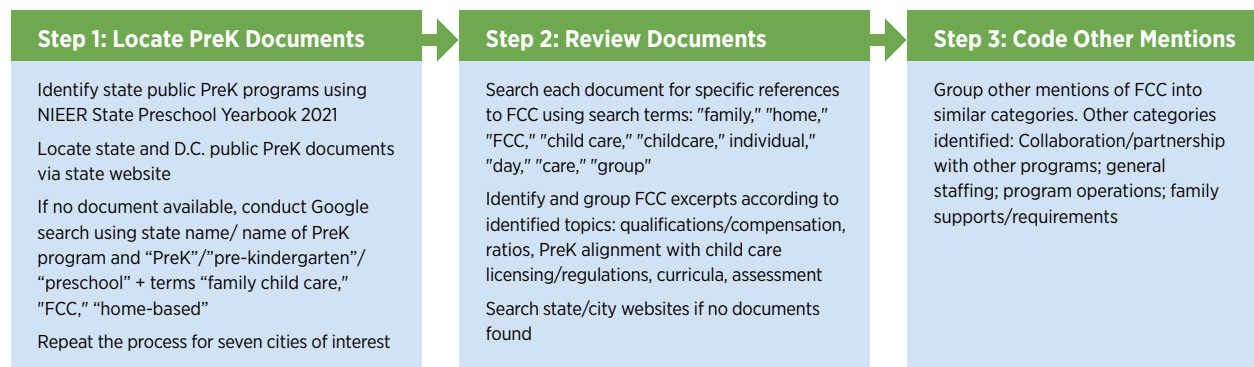
State/City Policy: Current publicly available implementation guidelines and practices are limited in scope for providing programs with directions about how to implement PreK in FCC. The unique setting of FCC requires acknowledging structural differences among public school, center-based, and FCC PreK sites. To help ensure FCC programs’ success as PreK education, more specific implementation materials are needed. Availability and accessibility of guidelines can contribute to equity and awareness of opportunities for all programs.

Future Research: It is possible that non-publicly available state and city documentation exists on an informal or in-house level, or that waivers or informal accommodations are used for FCC providers. Future research is needed to determine if non-publicly available documents support FCC PreK implementation, or if there are public documents missed by our search strategy. In some cases, administrators may intend for documents to apply to FCC without specifically mentioning FCC. Surveys of state and city PreK administrators are one approach that may further the understanding of materials currently available to FCC PreK programs.

Document Review Strategy

Our goal was to identify places in state and city PreK documents that specifically mentioned FCC. We conducted a systematic review of 73 publicly available state and city public PreK implementation documents and/or websites. Figure 1 depicts the document review process for 44 states and the District of Columbia, which each offer at least one public PreK program⁵. As a supplement to this information about states, we also reviewed documents for seven major cities with well-known PreK programs.

Figure 1. Document Review Process



Appendix A

Table 1: Mentions of family child care (FCC) in public state and city documents/websites

State	Qualifications/ compensation	Ratios	Alignment with licensing regulations	Assessment	Collaboration/ partnership with other systems	General staffing	Program operations	Family supports/ requirements	Acknowledges FCC inclusion
Arizona				X		X	X		X
Arkansas	X	X	X	X			X		X
California				X			X		
Florida							X		
Illinois								X	
Iowa					X				
Maine					X				
Michigan					X				
Minnesota					X				
Oregon*							X		X
Pennsylvania							X	X	X
Vermont	X								
Virginia					X				
Washington						X			
Wisconsin					X				
City									
Denver									X
New York City									X
Philadelphia*	X					X			X
Portland* (Multnomah County)	X								X
San Francisco	X	X	X				X	X	X
Totals	5	2	2	3	6	3	7	3	9

Note: *Refers to more than one reviewed state document/website. 20 of 52 reviewed states/cities/DC (44 states, 7 cities, DC)

Endnotes

- 1 For a glossary of PKFCC terms, please visit our website. www.erikson.edu/research/prek-in-family-child-care-project-pkfcc/
- 2 Vermont State Board of Education. (n.d.). Vermont State Board of Education manual of rules and practices series 2600—Prekindergarten education. <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-state-board-rules-series-2600.pdf>
- 3 San Francisco Office of Early Care & Education. (n.d.). Early Learning Scholarship and Preschool for All program operating guidelines fiscal year 2020–2021. https://sfoece.org/wp-content/uploads/FY2122-ELS_PFA-Operating-Guidelines_ENG.pdf
- 4 Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. (n.d.). Arkansas Better Chance program manual. Arkansas Department of Education. https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/20201201155552_2019_20_ABC_Program_Manual_10_10_19.pdf
- 5 Friedman-Krauss, A. H., Barnett, W. S., Garver, K. A., Hodges, K. S., Weisenfeld, G. G., Gardiner, B. A. & Jost, T. M. (2022). *The State of Preschool 2021: State Preschool Yearbook*. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research. <https://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks-yearbook2021>

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About the Partners

Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

The Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC) at the University of Delaware strives to improve the quality of early care and education throughout the state of Delaware and beyond by providing exemplary professional development and program-level supports to all sectors of the early care and education community. DIEEC conducts policy-relevant research that helps to advance equity, promote the early childhood workforce, and enhance the lives of young children and their families.

Home-Based Child Care Research at Erikson Institute's Herr Research Center

Erikson Institute educates, inspires, and promotes leadership to serve the needs of children and families. As part of that mission, the Herr Research Center develops original scholarship and research that shapes the early childhood field. Since 2008, the Home-Based Child Care (HBCC) Research focus area has conducted rigorous and actionable research to inform early care and education policy and program design and decision-making. Through national, multi-state, and local projects and participatory approaches, Erikson's HBCC Research group partners with professionals and communities to highlight promising strategies for supporting equity for the home-based child care workforce and quality for children and families who use home-based child care.

Equity Research Action Coalition at the UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

The Equity Research Action Coalition, a university-based collaborative, focuses on co-constructing with practitioners and policymakers actionable research and evaluation to support the optimal development of Black children and other children of color prenatally through childhood. The Coalition works at the intersection of research, program, and practice through anti-racist and cultural wealth frameworks. The Coalition focuses on developing a science-based action framework to eradicate the impact of racism and all its consequences on the lives of Black children, families, and communities and other children and families from marginalized communities, and to ensure their optimal health, wealth, and well-being.