

Section 1: Introduction

The Cabarrus County Partnership for Children is a non-profit agency, organized in 1998 to plan and administer Smart Start programs in Cabarrus County.

The mission of Cabarrus County Partnership for Children is to connect people, purpose and programs to ensure Child Well Being.

Since 2002, the Partnership has administered NC Pre-Kindergarten, a state funded, pre-kindergarten program for 4-year-old children in collaboration with Kannapolis City Schools and Cabarrus County Schools. In 2011, the NC Legislature moved More at Four under the Department of Health and Human Services in the Division of Child Development and Early Education and named NC Pre-K. Both programs were designed to provide high quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible four year olds.

Cabarrus County has thirteen sites, serving 354 children enrolled in the following *NC Pre-Kindergarten* sites for the 2021-2022 school year:

- Bethel Elementary
- Boger Elementary
- Cabarrus Bilingual – Central Drive
- Cabarrus Bilingual St. James
- Kids Korner CDC
- Logan CDC
- Mary Frances Wall Center
- McKnight Child Development Center
- Richfield Child
- Rocky River Elementary Preschool
- The Sunshine House CDC
- Winecoff Elementary Preschool
- W. M Irvin Elementary Preschool

These local guidelines reflect policies approved by the Cabarrus County NCPK Committee as directed by the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program Requirements and Guidance.

- *NC Pre-K Program Requirements- Sites should have the most updated version on file at all times, this is located on the DCDEE website: <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov>*

Section 2: Cabarrus County NC Pre-K Committee

- The Cabarrus County Early Education/NC Pre-K Committee meeting is held the 3rd Wednesday of every month from 10:00 to 11:00. Method/Location of meetings will be determined each month.
- The committee members will receive an email reminder prior to the monthly meeting.
- This committee plays an important role in making decisions concerning the NC Pre-K program and early education in our county and all should be involved in the process. NC Pre-K site directors/principal or designee are required to attend at least five (5) Early Education/NC Pre-K Meetings during an academic year.

Committee Structure

- Per NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidelines, the committee will be Co-Chaired by the superintendent (or designee documented in writing) for one of the local school systems (Cabarrus County or Kannapolis City) and the Board Chair (or designee documented in writing) of the local Smart Start Partnership.
- All superintendents (or designee) and Smart Start Partnership Board Chairs (or designee) in Cabarrus County must be members of the committee.
- The co-chairs are responsible for convening the meetings and appointing members. Committee appointments are made annually in May (Section 1 Committee Members signatures are due by May 31st)
- Per NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidelines, membership must include:
 - Licensed child care center (4 or 5-star license) representative,
 - Head Start Program representative,
 - Parent of preschool-age child(ren) representative (especially a child who is at-risk,
 - Child Care Resource and Referral agency or another child-serving agency
 - Department of Human Services or another child care subsidy funding agency representative, and
 - Public School Exceptional Children's Preschool Program representative.
- Other members or designee from various agencies and programs:
 - Members of the Preschool Interagency Coordinating Council
 - Staff from Cabarrus Health Alliance
 - Staff from Rowan Cabarrus Community College
 - Staff from Thompson
 - Community Business Owners/Leaders

The Co-Chairs will consider nominations for potential members from the other members of the full committee and the Cabarrus Partnership for Children (contracting agency). In the event one of these required members resigns during the school year, the leadership team will consider appointment recommendations from the representing agency or Cabarrus Partnership Staff.

Committee Responsibilities

The County/Region NC Pre-K Committee is the decision-making body for the local NC Pre-K Program. The Committee serves in an advisory role to the Contract Administrator in the development, implementation and annual review of local policies, plans, procedures and practices for the NC Pre-K Program, including but not limited to the following:

- a written plan to prevent the suspension and/or expulsion of children with unique needs/challenging behaviors and to ensure their families have access to appropriate resources and supports to maintain their child's placement in NC Pre-K Program.
- Developing and implementing a written transportation plan
- Developing and implementing a written transition plan
- Developing and implementing a written family engagement plan
- Developing and implementing a written plan for working with children and families with limited English proficiency
- Plan for Health Consultation Services for all sites
- Policy to ensure NCPK teachers and assistants are compensated at appropriate levels.
- Policy for inclement weather

Each of these written plans are attached as an Appendix to this document.

Section 3: The NC Pre-K Child

Families will call the Cabarrus Partnership for Children to set up an appointment to complete an application and supply all necessary documentation for enrollment. Families may also pick up applications at the Cabarrus Partnership for Children Office or download from the Cabarrus Partnership for Children's website. Head Start Programs in Cabarrus County and Kannapolis City will be responsible for submitting applications to the Cabarrus Partnership for Children to fill dual funded slots approved by the NCPK Committee. The Cabarrus Partnership for Children Staff will review all applications to determine and verify eligibility.

- The EC department from CCS and KCS can request a copy of placements lists from the Partnership. The EC departments will inform the Partnership if children have already been placed for EC services.
- For each child accepted into the program, the family will be required to provide a copy of the child's current health assessment (to include a completed vision, hearing and dental screening) and immunization record within 30 calendar days after the start of school or their child will not be allowed to attend.
- After a pool of eligible children is determined and sorted by NC Pre-K APP system, service priority status (At Risk vs Eligible) is used to prioritize the children for the NC Pre-K Services.
- Children served in a NC Pre-K slot must meet age requirements, income eligibility, or eligibility for children in military families, or additional approved exceptions.

Documentation of any of these factors must be attached to the file sent to the Partnership office.

- A complete child's file, including the current signed paper application by parent & staff along with a copy of the following documents is to be on file at the Partnership office:
 - Current signed application by parent & staff
 - Copy of Eligibility Card
 - Copy of Parent Receipt/Audit Form
 - Copy of NC Pre-K Income Form
 - Copy of Child's Insurance Card
 - Copy of birth certificate
 - Copy of proof of income
 - Proof of residence
 - Copies of documentation for any of the eligibility factors
 - Documentation of custody or guardianship if applicable
 - Copy of immunization record
 - Copy of health assessment
 - DIAL-4 results

Copies for each file are due to our office in its entirety by the due date listed on the attachment. The Partnership is required to have this information on site.

Section 4: The NC Pre-K Site

Official NC Pre-K Day and Year

- Hours of operation must be consistent with a minimum of a 6.5-hour instructional day for a 10 month or 36 week NC Pre-K year, including year-round public schools. Each Site is required to send in their annual calendar by **third Friday of July**. Per NC Pre-K Requirements and Guidelines: *"Whenever possible the hours of operation should be consistent with the school system in the geographic area where the NC Pre-K site is located. Additionally, the site's schedule should generally follow the local public school calendar"*. Days that are set aside for home visits and for staggered entry at the beginning of the school year may be included as part of the school calendar year. Throughout the school year a home visit may also count as an attendance day when used for instructional purposes or for a child who is unable to come to school due to special circumstances (e.g. extended illness, hospitalization and recovery).

Program Attendance Policy

- A slot will be reimbursed if it is filled at least half of the school calendar days out of the month. The only exception to this is the first and last month of classroom operation (August and June) and,

- in which a previously unfilled slot is filled for the first time, and if there is a special circumstance which is addressed on a case by case basis. The site should request from the Partnership an exception if one of these cases arise.
- When a child has been **absent** for **three consecutive days**, the site principal/director/administrator should contact the family and determine the child's participation status. The Partnership should be contacted by the **third day of absence. And documentation of participation status** should be provided with monthly attendance. The Partnership's Family Education Coordinator can also be a resource to the teacher and family if there are circumstances at home that are making it difficult for the child to attend school on a regular basis.
- Site Administrators should document attempts to contact the family, as well as decisions/plans regarding the child's continued participation in the program. Every effort should be made to maintain the child's placement and participation in NC Pre-K.

Attendance Requirement for Payment Purposes

- Each month the NC Pre-K Teacher will complete an attendance sheet for their classroom's attendance and send to the Cabarrus Partnership for Children NC Pre-K Program. This sheet is used to enter attendance into the NC Pre-K Kids software, which is used in the reimbursement process. This sheet is **mandatory** of each NC Pre-K Classroom in the program.
- Attendance procedures will be followed in an effort to make this process smooth and timely for the Partnership and sites.
- Each site principal/director is required to sign an attendance reimbursement document after the attendance report has been processed. **The attendance reimbursement document** will be emailed and/or faxed to site principal by the third day of the month, and can be returned by fax (704-934-0029) or emailed to jamie@cabarruspartnership.org or brought to the Partnership Office by the **fifth day of the month**.
- Each site director will be sent an email when the **attendance reimbursement document & site invoice** is ready for their signature. They will be given 3 business days to come into the Partnership office to sign and date documents so they can be processed for reimbursement.

Nutrition

- Sites must provide breakfast and/or snacks and lunch meeting the Meal Patterns for Child in Child Care Programs from the USDA requirements during the regular school day.
- The partial/full cost of meals may be charged when families do not qualify for free/reduced price meals.

Wraparound Services and Fees

- NC Pre-K dollars may not be used to pay for wraparound services.
- NC Pre- K children will be given the option for wraparound services through the Child Care Subsidy Program at the Cabarrus Partnership for Children, as funds are available in the Smart Start Child Care Subsidy program.
- Families must contact the Partnership to set up an appointment to meet with staff once a child is accepted into the program. The family must meet the child care subsidy requirements to apply.

Section 5: The NC Pre-K Classroom

Developmental and Health Screening

All children will be required to have a developmental screening prior to be placed in the NCPK Program. A mass screening event will be held each summer to provide families who apply to the NCPK Program an opportunity to receive all the required health and the developmental screenings at one time and free of charge. This screening event will be a joint effort by the Cabarrus Partnership for Children, Cabarrus County and Kannapolis City Schools. Screenings at this event will include:

- A developmental screening using the DIAL-4 screening tool.
- A dental screening
- A hearing screening and,
- A vision screening

Also, all parents/guardians will be asked to complete a Dial-4 Parent Questionnaire and given an opportunity to discuss any developmental concerns they may have. All applicants who apply after the mass screening event will receive a developmental screening including vision and hearing by appointment the month following the date of application. The family will be responsible for obtaining the vision and dental screenings.

Health Assessments

- During the application process families are informed they are required to provide a current and complete Health Assessment and Immunizations Record on the child by the 30th calendar day of school, **if they are accepted in the program.**

Early Learning Standards and Curricula

- Cabarrus County NC Pre-K classrooms implement the Creative Curriculum for Preschool. This curriculum is aligned with Foundations: *Early Learning Standards for NC Preschoolers*. These standards are used to guide planning for developmentally appropriate, high-quality experiences for children (see NC Pre-K Requirements, section 5-2) The Teaching Strategies Gold Cloud Resources will be used for classroom and family planning as mandated by the Division of Child Development and Early Education.
- Cabarrus County NC Pre-K classrooms will use the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Assessment Tool as mandated by The Division of Child Development and Early Education as their on-going assessment instrument. Child work samples, anecdotal notes and other documentation will be collected by NCPK staff and used to assess all NCPK children on the CC Developmental Continuum. This documentation will be reviewed during program monitoring.

Section 6: The NC Pre-K Staff

The NC Pre-K staff at the site level shall include the following: Administrators, teachers, and teacher assistants. The ***NCPK Staff Information Form*** is to be turned in annually for all staff working in the NCPK site. During the school year, The Partnership must be notified immediately when there is a staff change, change in education of staff, change in name or address, and if there is a need for a long term substitute. You must complete the appropriate form along with the following documents:

- Copies of licensure
- Degree with date issued
- Current transcripts

Change forms are due to the Partnership five business days after the staffing change occurs.

New teachers hired in non-public sites must meet qualification set forth by the NC Pre-K/Early Education Committee that states the teachers must have a BK or Preschool Add-on license. (No Lateral Entry Licenses will be issued after June 30, 2019.) All NC Pre-K teachers in non-public schools must be enrolled with the Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development (EESLPD) Unit of the Office of Early Learning.

Teacher Assistant qualifications will follow the guidance outlined in the NC Pre-K State Guidelines.

Bilingual Staff

- All programs must have interpreters available that will provide translation support for the NC Pre-K Classrooms if there is no bilingual staff in the NC Pre-K Classroom.
- Contractor must develop a written plan for working with families with limited English proficiency to be submitted with their site application.
- See Plan for Working with families with Limited English Proficiency in the Appendix of this document.

Professional Development and Training

- All Cabarrus County NCPK Staff are required to receive training in both *Creative Curriculum and Assessment* as well as *Foundations for Early Learning Standards*.
- All NCPK staff will also receive training in Conscious Discipline and/or another approved program that promotes healthy social-emotional development of all children.

Section 7: Evaluation and Monitoring

ECERS-R Assessments

- Mock ECERS-R assessments are available to the NC Pre-K Classrooms. You can contact Child Care Resources, Inc. for more information.
www.childcareresourcesinc.org

Reported Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations

- You are required to notify the Cabarrus Partnership office anytime there is an open abuse and neglect investigation occurring in a NC Pre-K **site**.

Site Monitoring

- All NC Pre-K sites are required to complete the NCPK Monitoring Tool and submit this tool to the Contract Administrator by **Nov. 15th**.
- The Contract Administrator will complete a monitoring review/visit by January 31st.

The NC Pre-K site will need to provide the following at their Site Monitoring Visit:

- Child Progress and Planning Reports
- Individual Child Portfolios
- Additional formative assessment documentation as requested
- Center Policy and Procedures
- Other documentation as indicated on the site monitoring tool

Section 8: Materials and Equipment

Use of Other Funds {Smart Start, NC Pre-K, Grants, etc.}

If there are funds available, the NC Pre-K staff will evaluate all participating NC Pre-K classrooms beginning with the oldest sites. The staff will evaluate the classroom and replace materials and equipment that may need replacement to ensure that the classroom will be able to provide a developmentally appropriate, high-quality pre-kindergarten experience for children.

Consumable Materials

Consumable materials may be purchased with other funds for classrooms if needed but this is normally the responsibility of the NC Pre-K site.

List of Resources Available for Materials and Equipment

- All About the ECERS-R, Debby Cryer, Thelma Harms, Cathy Riley
- Creative Curriculum For Preschool Fourth Edition, Diane Trister Dodge, Laura J. Colker, Cate Heroman
- Early childhood Environment Rating Scale Revised Edition, Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, Debby Cryer
- Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success
- <http://www.kaplanco.com/store/trans/retrievePDFList.asp?ListID=566>
- <https://consciousdiscipline.com/>

Inventory

- Each NC Pre-K classroom will be given an inventory checklist to be completed annually in spring. Previously purchased start-up fund materials will be tracked on inventory form also.