

CENTER-BASED MODEL

Introduction

Formula [school district/public school academy (PSA)] and Competitive (agency) Great Start Readiness Programs (GSRP) must comply with Public Act 116 of the Public Acts of 1973, as amended. Michigan State Board of Education criteria for the GSRP require adherence to the *Great Start Readiness Program Implementation Manual* and legislation requires program adherence to all standards in the *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten (ECSQ-PK)*. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) requires grantees to address program quality in a systematic way utilizing both the *Preschool Program Quality Assessment (PQA)* and child outcome data.

Grantees must comply with state licensing regulations governing child care. GSRPs must receive a certificate of approval/license from the Michigan Department of Human Services, Bureau of Adult and Children Licensing. All regular child use areas must be licensed. For more information contact the Bureau of Adult and Children Licensing at: (517) 373-8300 or <http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare>.

This section provides detail and requirements for a high-quality, Center-Based preschool program that will enhance the development of young children. Classroom models below include required components.

When planning the program year, grantees should take into account scheduled breaks, holidays, and possible inclement weather days to ensure that the minimum number of program weeks is met. With the exception of Migrant Education Programs, grantees in their first year of funding must operate for a minimum of 20 program weeks.

Part-Day GSRP

Part-Day preschool programs must provide for a minimum of three hours of teacher/child contact time per day, for at least four days per week, for a minimum of 30 program weeks.

All-Day/Alternate-Day GSRP

An All-Day/Alternate-Day (all day, two days per week) preschool program may be offered when local circumstances preclude Part-Day or School-Day options. The need for All-Day/Alternate-Day preschool must be carefully considered. A GSRP consultant should be contacted for guidance. The All-Day/Alternate-Day option must include 12 hours of curriculum per week, exclusive of rest time and staff relief. The local GSRP Advisory Committee annually addresses how the requirement for high-quality preschool programming is met during the afternoon, ensuring the quality and intensity of All-Day/Alternate-Day is equal to four Part-Day sessions of preschool.

The per-slot allocation is the same as Part-Day GSRP; it is not the same as School-Day GSRP. All children must be enrolled for the full day in each All-Day/Alternate-Day GSRP classroom. All-Day/Alternate-Day preschool programs must operate for at least the same length of day as the school district's/PSA's first grade program, for a minimum of 30 program weeks.

GSRP/Head Start Blend Classrooms

A grantee that is also a Head Start grantee or delegate agency, or another GSRP grantee through a subcontracting or partnering process with Head Start may choose to create a GSRP/Head Start "Blend" within a classroom. This is accomplished by blending a Part-Day GSRP slot and a Part-Day Head Start slot to create the funding for a GSRP/Head Start Blend slot for one child, resulting in a full day of preschool programming. The per-slot allocation is the same as Part-Day GSRP.

All Head Start and GSRP policies and regulations must be applied to the blended slots, with the highest standard from either program adhered to. All children funded by the GSRP/Head Start Blend must qualify for and be concurrently enrolled in both programs. Children in the class may be funded from a variety of sources, but all must attend for the full day.

GSRP/Head Start Blend preschool programs must operate for at least the same length of day as the school district's/PSA's first grade program, for a minimum of 30 program weeks.

Migrant Education GSRP

MDE coordinates efforts for the flexible delivery of effective programs for children of migrant families. These efforts include preschool programs offered through school districts as well as private non-profit or for-profit agencies. The per-slot allocation is the same as for Part-Day GSRP.

Migrant preschool programs must provide for a minimum of three hours of teacher/child contact time per day, for at least four days per week, for a minimum of six program weeks.

School-Day GSRP

School-Day preschool programs must operate for at least the same length of day as the school district's/PSA's first grade program, for a minimum of 30 consecutive weeks. A classroom that offers a School-Day program must enroll all children for the length of the school day to be considered a School-Day program. The All-Day/Alternate-Day program is not the same as a School-Day program.

GSRP funds are allocated/awarded based on Part-Day slots. When utilizing the School-Day option, grantees are choosing to use two slots for each child enrolled in the School-Day option.

Program Components

Philosophy

The GSRP grantee begins with an underlying statement of beliefs about teaching and learning. A philosophy statement is a means of thinking deeply about preschool teaching and the beliefs upon which decisions are made. This is separate from a mission statement, which answers the question, "Why do we exist?" and articulates the grantee's preschool purpose both for those in the organization and for the public.

The written philosophy statement is developed and reviewed by administrators, staff, and the local GSRP Advisory Committee. It establishes a framework for program decisions, goal-setting; and is aligned with the ECSQ-PK. The philosophy statement also addresses local, social, economic, cultural, and family needs; and is promoted widely via the program's webpage, recruitment materials, classroom newsletters, parent-boards, etc.

Consider the following as the philosophy statement is crafted or reviewed:

Why preschool is important:

- What is the purpose of preschool?
- What is the preschool grantee's role?

Those we serve:

- How do we support diversity among enrolled children?
- How do we define our community of learners?
- What is our relationship with the community, parents, teaching colleagues, and administration?

Approach and content:

- What are our beliefs about how children learn?
- How do our beliefs affect our work?

Program administration:

- Curriculum selection.
- Instructional strategies AND teacher-child relationships.
- Child assessment.
- Program evaluation.
- Program improvement efforts for individuals, the classroom, and program.

Comprehensive Programming

The ECSQ-PK and legislation require comprehensive programming. In partnership with parents, the GSRP grantee supports:

- children's health (mental, oral, and physical), nutrition, and development across domains in responsive environments that celebrate diversity;
- professional development for staff to make referrals for needed services and to document all follow-up efforts; and
- a team approach toward child-specific plans for goals related to overall health and development.

Policies and Procedures

Parents and staff should be provided with policies and procedures that are easy to read, understandable, and brief. Grantees must have written policies and procedures that include the following:

- A program overview including a philosophy statement, curriculum, developmental screening, and child assessment information.
- Parent involvement information.
- Child recruitment plan that includes procedures for selection and placement.
- Referral policy to meet child and family needs, including follow-up procedures.

- Confidentiality policy.
- School calendar.
- Attendance policy.
- Exclusion policy must be written to describe short term injury or contagious illness that endangers the health and/or safety of children or others. Children must not be excluded because of the need for additional support, assistance with toileting, or staff attitudes and/or apprehensions.
- Weather policy.
- Rest-Time policy (applies to GSRP/Head-Start Blend, All-Day/Alternate-Day, and School-Day programs).
- Medication policy.
- Healthy policies and practices on physical activity and nutrition for children.
- Accident and emergency policies.
- Child discipline/conflict resolution policy.
- Policy for reporting child abuse/neglect.
- Grievance policy.
- Parent notice of program measurement.

Class Size and Ratio

A 1:8 adult/child ratio must be maintained at all times. A consistent third adult must be present in any classroom where 17 or 18 children are enrolled. Class size must be capped at 18 children with three consistent adults.

Additional staff members must be available to allow the lead teacher and associate teacher time for required breaks. Staff assigned to teach double sessions must not be responsible for more than 36 children.

Staffing

The GSRP staff must have appropriate credentialing, sophisticated knowledge of early childhood education, and practice a team approach. Staffing requirements include the necessity of the teaching team, which may include one lead teacher, an associate teacher, and a third adult remaining the same for the entire session, every day the class is scheduled. The classroom teaching team is supported with the active involvement of an early childhood specialist.

Refer to the Early Childhood Specialist section for specific credentials and responsibilities of this position. **A grantee may not employ one person to fill both the lead teacher position and the early childhood specialist position.**

Lead Teachers:

Lead Teachers must meet the GSRP qualifications upon hire. For Formula grantees, each lead teacher is required to have a valid Michigan teaching certificate and an early childhood specialist (ZA or ZS) endorsement.

For Competitive grantees and Formula grantees that subcontract with eligible child development programs, each lead teacher must have:

- a valid Michigan teaching certificate with an early childhood (ZA or ZS) endorsement, or

- a valid Michigan teaching certificate with a valid child development associate (CDA) credential, or
- a bachelor's degree in child development or early childhood education with specialization in preschool teaching.

Associate Teachers:

An associate teacher must be added with the 9th child in a classroom. Public Act 62 of 2011, signed by Governor Rick Snyder on June 21, 2011, altered credentialing requirements for the position of Associate Teacher with the GSRP. The provision for 120 Clock Hours as a Child Development Associate credential (CDA) equivalency has been discontinued. Personnel placed into the position of Associate Teacher after June 21, 2011 may not indicate plans to initiate the 120 Clock Hour training option. Personnel who currently have an approval letter from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) are grandfathered in and no further action is required. Personnel who began the process toward attaining the 120 Clock Hour training option prior to June 21, 2011 must have completed all training and submitted all documentation by May 31, 2012 to be considered for the approval.

Any GSRP Associate Teacher hired after June 21, 2011 must have one of the following:

- an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development or the equivalent; or
- a valid classroom CDA credential.

Both of these formal training options uniformly and systematically prepare staff to be effective team teachers in preschool classrooms.

Other Classroom Staff:

Third Staff Person:

- is added when the classroom enrolls 17 or 18 children;
- is a consistent member of the teaching team; and
- meets the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing, Department of Human Services licensing requirements as a "caregiver."

Relief Staff:

- are appropriately oriented and trained in program procedures relevant to their roles (e.g., responsive adult-child interaction strategies, child development, special needs of enrolled children, family-style meals), and receive ongoing supervision.

Substitute Staff:

- grantees should ensure a substitute teacher has a minimum of a CDA. Any long-term substitute (more than one month), should meet qualifications for the position being filled.

Staffing Noncompliance

Gains in a young child's development are increased when the child has meaningful relationships with responsive adults who have a sophisticated understanding of early childhood education. For this reason, it is critical that GSRPs have qualified teachers upon

hire. Grantees that employ staff who do not meet credentialing requirements are in noncompliance status.

Staff recruitment efforts must be documented in local administrative files. Recruitment efforts can include the following: identification of the search and screen committee, including individuals outside the hiring unit to serve as committee members; and should minimally include hiring procedures, position descriptions that include GSRP credentialing requirements, evidence of advertisement(s), form letters and notices; evidence of journals, publications, electronic bulletin boards, institutions, departments, professional organizations, meetings, and personal and professional networks to which advertisements and notices are sent (or offices/individuals with whom contacts are made). Compliance plans for staff who are not appropriately credentialed are submitted annually to MDE. This plan must outline educational training and include an anticipated compliance date. MDE's Office of Professional Preparation provides a list of approved early childhood education-ZA/ZS programs in Michigan: https://mdoe.state.mi.us/proprep/ProgramInfo.asp?Program_ID=61.

Lead Teachers:

If a grantee demonstrates to MDE it is unable to hire qualified lead teachers, only persons who have **significant but incomplete training in early childhood education**, or child development may be employed. "Significant" early childhood education is defined as nearing completion (within one or two courses) of the early childhood education (ZA/ZS) endorsement on a valid Michigan teaching certificate. Educational training is defined as credit-bearing coursework and/or the field experience/student teaching necessary, according to the work plan established for the endorsement candidate by the college or university. Progress toward completion of the compliance plan shall consist of at least two credit-bearing courses per calendar year. A lead teacher's compliance plan must be completed within two years of the date of hire with GSRP.

Associate teachers:

If a grantee can demonstrate to MDE that it is unable to employ properly-credentialed staff, the grantee may employ Associate Teachers who have minimally completed one course that earns college credit in early childhood development or early childhood education. In this instance, the grantee is in noncompliance status until credentialing is completed. Compliance plans for Associate Teachers must minimally include two courses or 60 clock hours of training per calendar year, must be completed within two years of the date of employment, and must result in the attainment of the CDA or an associate's degree in child development or early childhood education.

Educational training is defined as at least two credit-bearing courses or 60 clock-hours of training per calendar year from an approved training institution or agency. Any kind of training that would be considered "individual study" as opposed to "formal training" will not be accepted. An example of this would be video training, where a person simply watches a video followed by a question sheet. Trainings should provide opportunities for the trainee to apply, analyze, and evaluate content related to the early childhood years. Video trainings and other forms of individual study do not foster this kind of experience.

Personnel currently pursuing the 120 Clock Hour training option must have all training completed, documented, and submitted to MDE by May 31, 2012. For any individual who does not meet this deadline, the training obtained up to that date is null and void and must now meet the requirement of either a CDA or an associate's degree in child development or early childhood education.

Team Teaching

Grantees ensure staff implement a team teaching model, include time dedicated for the teaching team to plan, implement curriculum in all learning environments, assess children, and support parent involvement through home visits, conferences, and parent meetings. A high-quality GSRP dedicates time for staff to plan on a daily basis:

- all teaching staff participate equally in planning activities;
- all teaching staff conduct and participate in children's activities; and
- the lead teacher does not plan all activities; ensuring associate teachers do not play minor non-teaching roles (e.g., wipe tables, prepare meals, etc.).

If a program chooses to operate five days of classroom programming per week, arrangements must be made to allow sufficient time for all staff to participate in planning, professional development, and parent involvement activities.

Teaching Practices

Teaching practices encompass everything the teaching team does to facilitate children's development, including organization of the indoor and outdoor learning environments, the nature of adult-child interactions, and strategies for transitions and grouping. Use the selected comprehensive curriculum to guide decisions about teaching practices.

Please refer to the ECSQ-PK and the PQA Form A for further detail on high-quality indicators of teaching practices.

Daily Routine

A consistent daily routine must include appropriate amounts of time each day for children to:

- indicate their plans to adults, in a variety of ways, and in ways that are consistent with individual developmental levels;
- carry out their plans, making many choices about where and how to use materials (adults support children's efforts by listening, encouraging children's language, imitating children's ideas and words, and commenting on specific attributes of children's work);
- a minimum of one hour is to be allotted for uninterrupted choice-time;
- recall and discuss their activities in small groups following each choice-time;
- engage in discrete small-group activities which may be adult-initiated, but not adult-dominated;
- engage in large-group activities which may be adult-initiated, but not adult-dominated;
- have snack- or meal-time(s) where staff and children eat together family style and share the same menu to the extent possible. (See *Meals/Snacks* in this section);
- have transition times that actively engage children;
- have outside-time where adults intentionally support and extend children's plans. Grantees provide equipment and materials for active play. Children are minimally provided thirty minutes of physical activity per day, a combination of both teacher-led and free play, notwithstanding the time needed for adults to support children dressing themselves or transitioning to outdoors, unless prevented by inclement weather conditions such as heat, rain or wind-chill.
- have an opportunity for rest in a full-day program;

- hear parts of the day regularly referred to by staff; and
- see a daily routine posted at child eye level, that is easily understood by children, and includes visuals for planning, choice, recall, small-group, large-group, snacks/meals, outside, and rest.

Challenging Behavior

The structure of the physical environment, daily routine, activities presented, and the adult(s) approach all have a direct influence on child behavior. Research shows young children who struggle with behavioral and emotional problems have a fifty percent chance of continuing to struggle into adulthood.

GSRP grantees must not deny enrollment or exclude a child based on challenging behavior or any disability because of staff attitudes and/or apprehensions, unfamiliarity with the behaviors or disability, the need to access additional resources to serve a specific child or the need for individualized planning and intentional teaching.

There is evidence high-quality early childhood education minimizes challenging child behaviors when it focuses on child-initiated learning activities. In addition, positive behavior support is most effective when offered to children through a system based on positive relationships with children, families, and colleagues; creating supportive learning environments, intentional social-emotional teaching strategies, and mental health consultation involving intensive individualized interventions.

The effective early childhood mental health consultant has appropriate credentials and is familiar with program-centered consultation, where the goal is to build the capacity of staff, families, and program systems to prevent, identify, and reduce the impact of mental health problems in children and families. An ongoing relationship between a mental health professional and early childhood program staff ensures familiarity with the needs of children and teachers, timely consultation, and services.

The discipline or conflict resolution policy must address procedures for adults to support children as they solve problems with materials, do things for themselves, and assist them in resolving conflicts with peers. In the GSRP classroom, adults:

- encourage children to do things for themselves throughout the day;
- treat conflict situations with children matter-of-factly;
- approach children calmly and stop any hurtful actions;
- acknowledge children's feelings;
- involve children in identifying the problem by gathering information from children and restating the problem;
- ask children for solutions and encourage them to choose one together; and
- give follow-up support when children act on their decisions.

“Specials”

GSRP classrooms housed within an elementary school are sometimes offered additional programming referred to as “specials,” such as library, computers, physical education, music, and/or art classes. It is questionable whether a classroom in which the GSRP teacher is implementing a comprehensive program (as required) has need of additional programming. In addition, the Department of Human Services (DHS) requires all regular child use areas be licensed, and MDE requires GSRPs maintain staffing guidelines with staff

who have significant credentialing in early childhood education. However, teaching staff may make use of other available space, approved for use by licensing, to support children's learning. The following should also be considered:

- Children who are at risk of academic failure benefit most from developing strong and positive relationships with the GSRP classroom teachers. How would multiple teachers throughout the week affect a child's sense of safety, security, and emotional development?
- When staggered "specials" are in place, what are the effects on the consistent daily routine for children?
- How would "specials" impact the provision of an appropriate amount of time each day for other parts of the daily routine?
- What effects on children will emerge with the additional transitions that will be required of them?
- In following the ECSQ-PK, GSRP classrooms integrate attention to ALL learning domains throughout the day; if this is already in place in the classroom, is there really any need to implement "specials?"
- How can the grantee bring the expertise of the "specials" staff to the classroom as a normal part of the classroom experience? Consider team planning to ensure developmentally-appropriate activities which adhere to the ECSQ-PK. The "specials" teacher could be incorporated into the classroom as the lead for large-group or small-group time(s), assisting out-of-doors, etc. Even in this case, the "specials" teacher should have activities that reflect what is currently going on in the classroom, as opposed to isolated art, music, or physical education lessons.
- How can "specials" staff contribute anecdotes for use in child assessment?

Meals/Snacks

Grantees must adhere to the Child and Adult Care Food Program nutritional guidelines located at: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/meal_pattern_requirements_203318_7.doc.

In addition, all programs must follow guidelines of the DHS Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing. Foods served should reflect the home and community cultures and be high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar, and salt. GSRP requires Part-Day programs minimally provide a snack. School-Day programs minimally must provide snacks and lunch. **Parents are to incur no costs for meals or snacks.**

School cafeterias are problematic areas for GSRPs to utilize as snack/meal sites. Consideration should be given to time for transitioning, size of tables/chairs, auditory and visual over stimulation, and the loss of quality time for adult/child interactions. Adults in the classroom sit at the table, eat the same foods children do, and participate in child-initiated conversation. All meals/snacks must occur in licensed space, preferably in the GSRP classroom. All GSRP meals/snacks must be delivered family-style, supporting children to do things for themselves, such as:

- preparing snack or mealtime by assisting with washing and setting tables, bringing food to the table, and choosing where they will sit;
- using child-sized furniture and materials so that children easily serve themselves, pour their own beverages, and pass food items to others;
- choosing whether to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat;
- assisting in clean-up by clearing their places at the table, disposing of their leftovers, washing the table, and pushing in their own chairs.

Rest/Quiet Time

Centers that operate five or more hours must have a written rest or quiet time policy. The policy must comply with rest requirements of DHS, Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing. The policy should include:

- A time period no longer than one hour, while accommodating for the individual needs of children.
- Provision of alternate activities for children who do not sleep.
- Provision for parents and staff to support the developmentally-appropriate rest/nap needs of each child.
- Details on transition into rest time [e.g., children assist with putting cots out, getting their own blanket(s) and transition item(s); and turning off lights and turning on soft music]. Adults can assist in transition by moving among children in an unhurried fashion, having quiet conversation and providing soothing touch such as backrubs.
- Details on transition out of rest time (e.g., staff turn on soft music, open blinds, turn on lights, and gently awaken children with a touch and conversation). Children can assist in transition by putting away cots, blankets and transition items.

Parent Involvement

Parent engagement is critical to positive child outcomes. The GSRP provides a variety of opportunities for parents to become involved in the program and regularly seeks input from parents. Refer to the Parent Involvement section for more information. **NOTE: Parents must not be required to volunteer in the classroom or participate in group meetings as a condition of enrollment.**

Transportation

Providing child transportation to and from the center contributes significantly to family access to GSRP, but this service is not required. Parents must not incur costs to access the GSRP.

DHS Child Care Licensing Rules include requirements for the transportation of preschoolers. Licensing rules assure the safety and welfare of children, that children are properly supervised while being transported, and are not confined in a vehicle for long periods of time. Licensing rules apply to both routine and field trip transportation. There are specific rules for center-owned vehicles, vehicles of staff or volunteers, or other private transportation and also specific guidelines for public school bus transportation of preschoolers. Due to their small physical size, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends preschool-age children transported in school buses always be transported in properly secured child safety restraint systems. Grantees must ensure:

- parents give permission for their children to be transported;
- children are escorted by adults to and from vehicles;
- children are offered adult assistance when entering and exiting vehicles;
- there is one caregiver, in addition to the driver, when there are over 10 three-year-old children, or over 12 four-year-old children on the bus; and
- children are not to be in a vehicle for more than one continuous hour.