

ISD Administration of GSRP

The Early Childhood Contact (ECC)

As part of administering the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), the Intermediate School District (ISD) will designate an Early Childhood Contact (ECC). The ECC is the early childhood leader at the ISD, facilitating an ISD-wide plan with a vision to improve child outcomes, to minimize achievement gaps and help all stakeholders to see the “big picture” of how GSRP strategically fits into the local Great Start Collaborative (GSC) early childhood efforts. The ECC uses the written GSRP philosophy statement as a foundation to partner with the GSRP Early Childhood Specialists (ECS) on data-based decisions for continuous quality improvement. For ISDs with larger populations, the ECC may work with a team to fulfill the responsibilities of the position. For ISDs with smaller populations, the ECC may also serve as the ECS. In this instance, care must be taken to ensure that responsibilities of the ECS, as outlined in the [Early Childhood Specialist](#) section of this manual, are not compromised.

The ECC ensures that effective systems are in place to support GSRP. ISD administrative policies and procedures document approaches to overarching aspects of the grant, such as community needs assessment, choosing and supporting subrecipients, notification of funding, community partnerships, recruitment, family engagement, communication, record-keeping, staff credentialing, and program and fiscal monitoring. Administrative policies and procedures must also address systematic oversight of subrecipient practices.

Early Childhood Specialist (ECS)

The ECC ensures that there is an ECS assigned to each classroom. At times, ISDs are unable to identify a well-qualified candidate to fill an ECS position after an extensive search. In that case, the ECC should contact the assigned consultant.

- Only a Reliable Assessor/Certified Observer completes the observations, interviews and scoring of the program evaluation tools(s). The Reliable Assessor/Certified Observer participates in the recertification process to maintain status as a Reliable Assessor/Certified Observer. See the [Program Evaluation](#) section of this manual for related information.
- The ECS contract accommodates the intensive support and additional classroom visits, coaching and consultation that staff members with incomplete credentialing require.

In determining ECS classroom assignments and other duties, the ISD is responsible first and foremost for assuring the ECS’s role in coaching and supporting the teaching team. As the ECC designs the system of ECS supports for the ISD and assigns classrooms to individual ECS, the following elements are considered:

- Required ECS functions and the hours needed to complete them.
- Additional functions the ISD assigns to ECS, and the hours needed to complete them.
- Expertise and experience of the ECS.
- Experience of the subrecipient and teaching team(s) with operating a PreK program, maintaining a child care license, and meeting GSRP requirements. For example, the ECC may plan additional classroom visits and/or more intensive support for beginning teachers, teachers new to GSRP or teachers that have less-than-expected program quality.
- Number of assigned subrecipients, sites, and classrooms.
- Geographic location of the assigned classrooms and amount of travel time between sites.
- Relationships between the ECS and teaching teams, especially if ECS are monitoring teaching staff as well as coaching them.

The ISD provides:

- A master calendar for all ECS activities, which aligns with reporting requirements on program evaluation, scheduled professional learning calendars and meetings such as ECS peer group, the local family participation groups, school readiness advisory committee (SRAC), or superintendent/school board meetings.
- A coaching documentation system and form(s) used for each session. The form must include at a minimum the date, the intention of the session, method of feedback with the lead and associate teachers, observational notes reflecting the session, any expected follow-up on either the part of the ECS or the teaching team, and confirmation that all members of the teaching team and the ECS participated in the session and agree to the content of the form. The ECS must keep a copy of the form and provide one to the teaching team. The ECC should review documentation periodically to see that teaching teams are getting the support needed and that the ECS team members are fulfilling the requirements of the position.
- A position description for every ECS, whether employed or contracted by the ISD or subrecipient, that includes the amount of time to be dedicated to GSRP work for the year. All position descriptions must be clear in the expectations to meet GSRP requirements: classroom observation/program evaluation, feedback, ongoing support, meetings, professional learning, etc. All must include a requirement to attend ISD and/or Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP) ECS meetings and professional learning required for the ECS as well as being available to the ISD or MiLEAP as needed as part of the monitoring process. References to meeting the requirements included in the position description must be included

in all subrecipient contracts where the subrecipient provides the ECS.

- Support alignment of GSRP with K-12 and children’s transition into kindergarten and protect hallmarks of early childhood education such as learner-centered, active, participatory learning and authentic partnership with families in their child’s development. (See the [Transition](#) section of the Implementation Manual for more information.)

Branding

A program name-change in fiscal year 2008-2009, from the Michigan School Readiness Program (MSRP) to the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), helped to directly align our state prekindergarten program with Project Great Start, our state early childhood initiative to foster school readiness and life success for young children. In 2024, Michigan launched the PreK for All initiative, focused on expanding access to free, high quality, PreK for all Michigan 4-year-olds. To accomplish this goal, the expansion of GSRP is essential. Michigan continues to offer a mixed-delivery system and increase the income threshold to allow more age-eligible children an opportunity to attend PreK for free. Grant branding must be evident at the ISD, subrecipient, and classroom, and may be formally addressed within written agreements and include minimally the GSRP logo. Additional logos may include the MiLEAP and PreK for All logo.

The name and logo identify each program as a strong partner in the systems-building efforts of Great Start, where services to children and families emerge from our Michigan [Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Birth to Kindergarten](#) (ECSQ). Name-branding assists advocacy efforts, making it evident that children who participate in GSRP have strong child outcomes, setting the stage for successful school experiences and graduation on-schedule with peers.

GSRP funding should be mentioned in speaking engagements and discussion with the media. In written materials, the grant name is spelled out fully at the first use of the acronym. The grant name is never modified, e.g., Great Start Preschool. The grant name, logo and acknowledgement of the funding source is included on public- and family-facing publications or project materials developed with funds awarded under this program, including print materials and electronic information (e.g., program websites and social media). This includes print materials that are publicly distributed, intended for program recruitment, or are ‘family-facing’ (e.g., application, newsletters, handbook, meeting minutes, etc.), reports/presentations, films, brochures, flyers, signs, etc. Social media posts must include the grant name and logo, however due to space limitations, are not required to include the funding source. Where more than one entity’s logo will be used, they should be of a similar size and when possible, appear on a single line. Logos are available for use and located in the [resources](#) for the Overview section of this manual. The following statement for acknowledgement of funding will be used:

- For programs with only state-funding: These materials were developed under a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential.
- For programs with braided or blended federal and state funding, such as the GSRP/Head Start Blend: These materials were funded in whole or in part under a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential.

Child Eligibility Files

Eligibility for GSRP requires verification of a child’s age and family income, as well as documentation of Program Eligibility Factors. Documentation of eligibility must be on file for every child enrolled in GSRP. This documentation must be maintained for seven (7) years.

MiLEAP requires that ISD monitoring of subrecipients includes annual review of child files to verify child eligibility was accurately and properly determined. Child files are also subject to periodic MiLEAP review.

Security of Sensitive Information

Maintaining copies of child birth certificates or other child and family personal information, as well as financial documents viewed to verify income in child files must be considered with great care. Maintenance procedures for sensitive documents must include security measures to ensure the files and the data contained therein is protected. This includes redacting personally identifiable data on forms including social security numbers, date of birth (for all but the child enrolled), maiden names, etc. Files should be kept in a secure location under lock and key, only accessible to authorized program staff.

Applications and accompanying documents should only be discussed with those that have permission to access the information. This would include among programs to determine placement as well as any others the parent/guardian authorizes to have access.

Electronic Files

Files may be electronic with scanned or photo images of eligibility documentation but must include proper security protocols to ensure safety of the data and limit file access only to authorized program staff.

Educational Records vs. Eligibility Records

The educational record for each child - including home visit and family conference forms, observation data, developmental screener data, other child growth/progress documentation, and samples of child’s work, etc. - is distinctly different than eligibility documentation and should be maintained in a separate file. In cases of single, separated, or divorced families, both parents must be granted access to the child’s educational information (unless court documents specify otherwise),

however, access to personal data provided to determine eligibility (e.g., tax forms, pay stubs, etc.) should be restricted to only the parent that provided that data.

ISD GSRP Advisory Structure

Each ISD must implement an advisory structure for GSRP. This advisory structure may vary according to the size and unique characteristics of each ISD. It may be composed of multiple committees/subcommittees/workgroups or may largely be accomplished by one central committee charged with the work. The SRAC may fulfill this role as one of its functions (See *School Readiness Advisory Committee* later in this section).

The **overarching purpose** of the GSRP advisory structure is to:

- Ensure active participation of all GSRP subrecipients with the ISD as grantee, in an ongoing dialogue as appropriate, by which the quality of the system and its services to families, children, and the community are examined.
- Ensure and facilitate active family participation, as appropriate, for children enrolled in the program.
- Ensure participation has been established in the SRAC and continues to meet requirements for the committee, on an ongoing basis.
- Ensure that data is analyzed and utilized in decision-making processes and for continuous improvement (see also the [Program Evaluation section](#) for more detail on continuous improvement).

While each ISD has the autonomy to create its own policies, procedures, protocols, and timeframes to achieve the overarching purpose, the ISD must minimally convene one ISD-wide group as follows:

- Purpose: To ensure that the following advisory structure functions are completed annually:
 - A formal conduit for bi-directional communication of information is provided;
 - All subrecipients have a local family participation group with a focus on local considerations (See Family Participation Group later in this section);
 - GSRP family representation on the regional GSC Family Coalition is promoted;
 - An ISD GSRP representative to the SRAC is designated and participates actively;
 - ISD level GSRP data analysis is conducted per requirements (see Data Analysis later in this section);
 - Subrecipients provide for transition opportunities into and out of GSRP.
- Leadership: Shall be led by the ISD ECC or their designee(s).

- Who/Members: Representation should include, but is not limited, to the following individuals:
 - ISD representative(s) (*required*);
 - Subrecipient representative(s) (*required*)
 - All subrecipients shall be invited to participate;
 - Each ISD establishes its own participation guidelines;
 - Program administrators, GSRP staff, and/or families;
 - Local Head Start and/or community stakeholder(s).
- Frequency: The ISD shall convene an ISD-wide advisory structure meeting a *minimum* of 3 times per program year.
- Records:
 - Attendance;
 - Agendas;
 - Meeting minutes;
 - Surveys, survey results, or other evidence of member participation in decision-making activities.

In addition to formal meetings, ongoing communication with subrecipients must be carried out on a regular basis throughout the program year.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the force that drives decision-making for the continuous quality improvement of early childhood educational experiences. Data is used to monitor and support change elements, and share program quality information with families, the local education community, and the community as a whole. While data analysis must be ongoing at the classroom level, periodic formal data analysis at the system level is required and is best done by a group convened specifically for this purpose. As stated above, the unique characteristics of each ISD may see this group function independently or as part of another advisory structure group or committee. Minimally, the structure must ensure that periodic formal data analysis is occurring at the classroom level, subrecipient level (for subrecipients with multiple classrooms and for ISD operated classrooms), and ISD-wide as follows:

- Purpose: To ensure that the following periodic formal data analysis functions are completed:
 - Classroom level analysis of data is completed examining individual child level data and whole group outcomes/trends;
 - Site and/or subrecipient level analysis of data is completed examining the data of multiple classrooms as appropriate/determined by the ISD and its subrecipients;
 - ISD level analysis of data is completed which examines data from all funded classrooms;
 - Continuous improvement goals are set and monitored at all levels.
- Leadership: *Supported by* the ECS, ECC, and/or administrator.
 - *Facilitated by* a person with experience and skills to effectively execute this program requirement (ECS, director, teacher).

- Who/Members:
 - The classroom and site/subrecipient formal data analysis group will ideally include, but is not limited to:
 - Teaching teams (required);
 - ECS (required);
 - Administrators;
 - Parents.
 - The ISD-level formal data analysis group will ideally include, but is not limited to representation from:
 - ISD;
 - Subrecipient;
 - Site and/or classroom.
- Frequency: At each level, data analysis shall occur a minimum of 3 times per year.
- Records:
 - Attendance;
 - Agendas;
 - Meeting minutes.

Also see the [Program Evaluation section](#) for detail on systemic collection and utilization of data and recommended data analysis processes.

GSRP Policies and Procedures

Written policies and procedures support consistent operational activities. Policies and procedures provide clarity when dealing with accountability issues or activities that are of critical importance to the grant and may have serious consequences, e.g., grievance, flow of funding, and submitting reports. Well-written procedures that are implemented and followed help to minimize misunderstandings by identifying responsibilities and establishing boundaries. All parts of the system are dependent upon one another to function properly and provide the highest level of service to children and families.

GSRP Policies and Procedures must include program and fiscal policies as outlined below. ISDs have policies and procedures for grants which can be used to aid in writing GSRP fiscal and program policies. Subrecipients must be provided with a copy of GSRP Policies and Procedures. Some examples of policies and procedures that need to be written are: travel expenses allowable with amounts, steps for the bidding process, and seclusion and restraint. All GSRP policies and procedures will be reviewed during a program and/or fiscal review by MiLEAP.

Written processes must be in the GSRP administrative files.

1. Assurances

ISDs agree to comply with all applicable requirements of State statutes, Federal laws, executive orders, regulations, policies, and award conditions governing GSRP. ISDs understand and agree that if they materially fail to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant award, MiLEAP may withhold funds otherwise due from this grant program, any other federal grant programs, or the State School Aid Act of 1979 as amended, until the ISD as fiscal agent/grantee comes into compliance, or the matter has been adjudicated, and the amount disallowed has been recaptured (forfeited). MiLEAP may withhold up to 100 percent of any payment based on a monitoring finding, audit finding, or pending final report. All current grant assurances can be viewed in the GSRP Funding Application and the GSRP Implementation Plan in NexSys.

2. Child Recruitment

Refer to the [Recruitment and Enrollment](#) section of this manual for guidance on generating written procedures that align with legislative requirements about recruitment.

The ISD should work with subrecipients to create outreach and recruitment campaigns that can be funded by the 2% maximum that can be set aside and used for this work. Sharing ideas with other ISDs and adapting or adopting each other's work may make the most efficient use of the funds.

3. Closure Procedures

Closure procedures guide the ISD when a former subrecipient declines to participate in GSRP or in the event a subrecipient contract is terminated. A previous subrecipient that no longer chooses to implement the program must provide written notification to the ISD. Notification must include an inventory of the equipment and supplies purchased with GSRP funds that are remaining, this includes any food service equipment and supplies. The subrecipient must arrange to return all remaining equipment and materials to the ISD; ISDs will not be required to claim any items purchased with start up grant funds. The returned materials should be passed on to a new subrecipient that will serve children in the same area or distributed for use within other GSRP classrooms as needed. Excess materials can be sold to non-GSRP providers, and the funds utilized by the ISD to support GSRP after a determination is documented that use is not needed within the ISD. Materials that are well worn or aged may also be donated as appropriate.

There are infrequent instances where a program may close during the school year. Details on terminated contracts must be written in a policy and procedure by the ISD. The ISD will lead transitioning activities with the goal to prevent a break in service to children and to minimize distress to the children and families.

Considerations include:

- Agreement between parties of what is a reasonable amount of time needed to finalize the closure;
- Confirmed personnel contacts before agency closure, regarding who the ISD will work with for final invoice and payment structure pieces;
- Possible proration of the funding;
- Transfer of child files;
- Transfer of subrecipient administrative files;
- Final expenditure report;
- Transfer of inventory and supplies purchased with GSRP funds; and
- All remaining reports covering the period of time for which the subrecipient participated.

4. Communication

The ISD must establish and monitor systems to ensure that timely and accurate information is provided among the ISD, subrecipients, families, policy groups and staff. Consider the following strategies:

Communication with families must be carried out on a regular basis throughout the program year, and carried out in the family's primary or preferred language whenever possible, for example:

- Newsletters
- Focus groups or surveys
- Family conferences
- Open house events
- Local family participation group meetings and minutes
- Web site
- Children's progress notes

Communication with local family participation groups and the GSRP advisory structure includes the following information provided on a regular basis:

- Procedures and timetables for program planning
- Policies, guidelines, and other communications from MiLEAP
- Program and financial reports
- Program plans, policies, procedures, grant application

Communication among staff must include mechanisms for regular communication among all program staff:

- Staff meetings
- Distribution of program quality reports
- Intranet or listserv for internal staff correspondence
- Development of subrecipient plans that includes center operations

- Updates to annual written plans
- Professional learning communities (PLCs)

5. Funding Application

Legislation requires an annual comprehensive needs assessment using aggregated data from the ISD service area and a community collaboration plan. The ECC must seek endorsement of the plan by the local GSC and ensure that GSRP is part of the community's Great Start strategic plan. The signed GSC Endorsement Form is retained at the ISD. The needs assessment must document:

- Annual data collection on poverty, number of four-year-old children at risk for low educational attainment and existing PreK programming;
- Discussion of data with representatives from each local education agency (LEA), child care organizations and the GSC;
- Collaborative decisions on enrollment request, program options and process to determine PreK sites for the upcoming academic year and;
- The estimated number of eligible children who will remain unserved after the ISD, LEAs and community early childhood programs have met their funded enrollments. Justification will have to be provided as to why all eligible children could not be served.

See the resources for this section: [GSC Endorsement Guidelines](#)

6. Community Partnerships

GSRP administrative policies will reflect the role of the ECC as a trusted, credible leader in the GSC, where a collective impact approach prioritizes early childhood efforts. The ECC identifies and creates connections with administrators of the licensed child care centers in the region. The ECC increases the number of and strengthens partnerships between LEAs, Head Start grantees, child care organizations, municipalities with early learning initiatives, extended-learning programs, and other community-based programs.

It is important to have shared language and understanding of the early learning years, as well as the variety of settings that children are in before transitioning into GSRP and those they will experience after transitioning out of GSRP. Use of shared language, goals, and evaluation should be included in the strategic plan for GSRP and public statements. The ECC will support clear and consistent communication about vertical alignment as a priority in both internal (e.g., district strategic plans, teacher newsletters) and external (e.g., web sites, family newsletters) platforms.

7. Fiscal Policy and Review

Each ISD must have written fiscal policies outlining procedures for program, transportation, curriculum, and start up grant funding including but not limited to:

- How and when the subrecipients receive their allocations, including transportation;
- How and when the subrecipient budgets (original and carryover) and Final Expenditure Reports (FERs)/Carryover Final Expenditure Reports (COFERs) are submitted to the ISD, including supporting documentation;
- Budgeting and budget amendments;
- Completing FERs/COFERs;
- Allowability of costs;
- Inventory requirements;
- Cash management;
- Procurement, including capital outlay approval and competitive bidding requirements;
- Closeout procedures for subrecipients (FERs, audits, and equipment). See also “3. Closure Procedures” earlier in this section;
- Professional learning/training of subrecipients on fiscal components of GRSP;
- Travel;
- Fiscal monitoring process of subrecipients;
- Food service and required spreadsheet and/or other documentation.

Subrecipient documentation must be reviewed by the ISD, depending on the agreed upon payment schedule. For example, if 100% reimbursement is used, then the ISD must require supporting documentation before a payment is made. The ISD may also choose to review subrecipients on an annual basis. The ISD must provide professional learning to both the subrecipient fiscal and program staff responsible for GSRP. Fiscal policies will be reviewed by MiLEAP during a fiscal review. For further information on fiscal reviews, see the [Fiscal Review Process](#) document in the resources for the *Reporting and Monitoring* section of this manual.

8. Monitoring Subrecipients (Program)

Administrative policies must also reflect how the ISD will provide oversight and monitoring of subrecipient practices, such as local policies/procedures related to:

- MiLEAP, Child Care Licensing Bureau, including reports of site visits;
- Participation in Michigan’s Great Start to Quality system;
- Family engagement, including formal contacts;
- Use of a family handbook that includes all required elements outlined in the [Program Administration and Staffing](#) section of this manual;
- The advisory structure including the family participation group(s), advisory committee(s), and data analysis team(s);
- Human resources (staff hiring, professional educator preparation plans, supervision);

- Adult/child ratio, class size, hours, and weeks of operation;
- Professional learning for teaching teams, including training in the curriculum and child assessment tools in use;
- Participation in the National School Nutrition Program and/or the Child and Adult Care Food Program, as applicable;
- Child enrollment;
- Child files;
- Transition plans into and out of GSRP; and
- All program policies identified in the [Program Administration and Staffing](#) section of this manual.

9. Family Participation Group

Active and continuous family engagement in the educational experiences of their children is crucial to facilitating the best possible child outcomes. Achieving such engagement with families often begins with opportunities for families to participate in ways that build connections between the school and home. Stronger, more frequent connections strengthen relationships, create partnerships, and lead to increased participation and ultimately active engagement. GSRP requires opportunities be provided for families to participate and engage with the programs serving their children in multiple ways. As not all families have the same readiness for engaging with their child's school, the ECC will champion families as active decision makers in GSRP.

Refer to the [Family Engagement Section](#) for more information on family engagement.

Subrecipients and/or programs must provide opportunities for active and continuous participation of families of enrolled children through the implementation of a family participation group.

- **Purpose:** Engage families on a high-level.
 - Opportunities allow for engagement of families, open communication, family advocacy, and integration of family input/voice.
 - Family voice/input is taken back to the GSRP advisory structure for consideration within the continuous quality improvement process.
 - Each meeting focuses on local considerations, such as:
 - Transition into and out of GSRP;
 - Recruitment/enrollment;
 - Program quality assessment results;
 - Child outcome data;
 - Family learning opportunities.
- **Leadership:** *Supported by* the ECS, ECC, and/or administrator.
 - *Facilitated by* a person with experience and skills to effectively execute this program requirement, ideally a parent when possible, but may also be a teacher, director, or ECS.

- Who/Members: May be made up of, but not limited to the following:
 - Family members of enrolled children (parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles, foster parents/guardians, or other family members with an active role in children’s lives)
 - Classroom staff;
 - School or program level administrators;
 - ECS/ECC.
- Frequency: Shall convene or seek family input about the child/family experience in the classroom through meetings, events, surveys, etc., ideally several times annually, but a minimum of 2 times per program year.
 - For meetings, a minimum of one family member per classroom is ideal;
 - All family members should have the opportunity to participate, and to give and/or receive information in the manner that best fits their needs.
- Records: Evidence of family participation in decision-making activities may include:
 - Attendance;
 - Agendas;
 - Meeting minutes;
 - Surveys/results.

Additionally, ongoing communication with families must be carried out on a regular basis throughout the program year in the family’s primary or preferred language whenever possible.

10. Philosophy

The ISD will ensure that each subrecipient has a written philosophy statement and must have a process to approve each philosophy statement, determine whether the statements are promoted widely and whether the beliefs documented are used in decision-making. Discrete philosophy statements will have common features that are aligned with the [Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Birth to Kindergarten](#) (ECSQ) yet will provide for local language to addresses social, economic, cultural, and family needs. See the [Program Administration and Staffing](#) section of this manual for additional information on PreK philosophy statements.

11. Professional Learning

Administrative policies acknowledge that effective professional learning (PL) can improve the instructional coherence among subrecipients and improve the quality of learning opportunities for young children. The planning of PL opportunities is data-driven, ongoing, and part of a long-term continuous improvement plan.

The ECC strengthens local administrative quality by arranging PL for elementary principals, directors of child care organizations, municipalities with early learning

initiatives, extended-learning programs, and other community-based organizations (CBOs). This group is poised for relationship-building and to learn best practices for prekindergarten.

The ECC and the ECS support meaningful PL for teaching teams. The ECS is critical to PreK quality and supports GSRP teaching teams throughout the academic year with expertise in the *ECSQ*, and status as a reliable assessor/certified observer in the applicable program evaluation tool. Refer to the [Early Childhood Specialist](#) section of this manual for more information on the ECS position. The ECC will demonstrate innovative efforts to create and standardize time for school- and community-based GSRP teaching teams to work together across different daily, weekly, quarterly, and school year calendars.

ECS need time to reflect on what makes their own professional learning work strong, and what hinders it. The ECC engages and supports ECS teamwork by gathering the ECS as a community of learners more than once per year to reflect on the ECS role and responsibilities. The ECC also ensures that the ECS is able to attend professional learning events, such as curriculum/child assessment training, state sponsored professional learning events, the Annual Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) State Conference or the HighScope International Conference.

12. Program Evaluation

The program evaluation plan reflects a discriminating use of data. Data markers include child-based data, classroom-based data, staff surveys and markers of family well-being.

13. Record-keeping

ISD administrative procedures must identify where critical grant records are housed and staff position(s) responsible to maintain files. Refer to the [Reporting and Monitoring](#) section of this manual. Refer to the [Program Evaluation](#) section of this manual for guidance on generating written procedures that align with grant requirements about evaluation.

14. School Readiness Advisory Committee (SRAC)

The SRAC is established as a workgroup of the local Great Start Collaborative (GSC). The SRAC is designed to improve all children's school readiness within a community, so that no matter their PreK experience children come to kindergarten ready and aligned with their peers. This is accomplished through the involvement of classroom teachers, families of program participants, and community, volunteer, and social service agencies and organizations, as appropriate, who make recommendations to the Great Start Collaborative regarding GSRP and other community services. The ECC or their designee must be an active participant in the SRAC.

- Purpose: Specific to GSRP, the SRAC is charged with the task of annually reviewing and making recommendations regarding the program components listed below, as specified in Sections 32d and 32p of the State School Aid Act and by the department as follows:
 - Participation of all GSRP subrecipients in a collaborative recruitment and enrollment process to assure that each child is enrolled in the program most appropriate to his or her needs and to maximize the use of federal, state, and local funds;
 - Review should include local enrollment policies, procedures, and timelines for recruitment and enrollment.
 - Use of an age-appropriate educational curriculum in all GSRP classrooms that is in compliance with the *Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Birth to Kindergarten* children adopted by the State Board of Education;
 - Nutritional services for all program participants supported by federal, state, and local resources as applicable;
 - Physical and dental health screening and developmental screening services for all program participants;
 - Referral services for families of program participants to community social service agencies, including mental health services, as appropriate;
 - Active and continuous involvement of the families of the program participants;
 - A plan to conduct and report annual GSRP evaluations and continuous improvement plans using criteria approved by the department.
 - The GSC review or endorsement of the GSRP Funding Application, including the community needs assessment, annually.
 - Other community services designed to improve all children’s school readiness.
- Leadership: GSC Director, ECC or their designee(s).
- Who/Members: Shall be made up of, but not limited to the following:
 - GSRP Representation:
 - At least one representative from the ISD is expected to participate fully in this committee and act as a liaison/conduit of information between the GSC and the ISD;
 - The ISD’s representative is responsible for sharing information with all subrecipients, as appropriate;
 - Classroom teachers;
 - Family members of program participants;
 - Community, volunteer, and social service agencies and organizations.
- Frequency:
 - As established by the local GSC, but no less than once per year.

- Records:
 - In collaboration with the GSC.

15. Distribution of Funds

Involving the local SRAC and the GSC in the creation of the distribution plan is advised; the GSC works with community partners and is called on annually to endorse the ISD's Funding Application, the first step in the GSRP funding process. The ISD should also partner with the GSC and the local Resource Center (RC) to build capacity for CBOs to serve as GSRP sites in future years. GSRP subrecipients must minimally have the following quality ratings in the Great Start to Quality (GSQ) system: Enhancing Quality, Enhancing Quality-Validated, Demonstrating Quality.

State funding is appropriated for GSRP using the state fiscal year from October 1 to September 30. Until the State Aid Act is signed by the governor each year, allocations for ISDs are tentative. As such, ISDs should consider the following points when making plans for contracting with subrecipients, enrolling children, or beginning programming.

- Any expenditures not utilizing carryover, thus dependent on new funding, are at risk of not being reimbursed if the GSRP appropriation is reduced.
- Communication with subrecipients and families should carefully clarify that any programming for the upcoming year is dependent on the inclusion of GSRP in the State School Aid Act.
- When working with subrecipients to determine start dates, ISDs should balance caution of risk with likelihood of continued GSRP funding levels.

Legislation requires each ISD to distribute at least 30% of its total allocation to CBOs. Each ISD reports to the department in its GSRP Program Implementation Plan (PIP) a detailed list of subrecipients by provider type, including private for-profit, private non-profit, community college or university, Head Start grantee or delegate, local government, and district/PSA or ISD. From the total amount of program funding the ISD awards for the operation of classrooms, the ISD must indicate the amount awarded to CBOs. A percentage is then calculated. ISDs unable to distribute 30% of their allocation to CBOs must demonstrate to MiLEAP the specific steps required, as detailed below, have been taken to meet the requirement.

Funds awarded to Head Start agencies, even when the Head Start agency is the ISD, contribute to the total percentage distributed to community-based partners.

Faith-Based Organizations (FBO) are considered CBOs and as such also contribute to the total percentage distributed to community-based partners. FBOs can make strong GSRP partners as they are often well-connected to community agencies that support families. Faith-based subrecipients keep prayers and religious instruction from being a part of a GSRP classroom. In space used for dual purposes, there is no

need to remove or cover faith-based displays. These subrecipients do not restrict GSRP enrollment or staff hiring due to faith-based considerations.

Public School Academies (PSA) and Community Education PreKs are considered LEA subrecipients. If an open-to-the-public PreK is operated by an LEA, this is also considered an LEA subrecipient. Review the MiLEAP child care license to confirm whether an LEA or a community agency is the licensee. LEA programs are only counted as community-based providers when they are Head Start grantees or Head Start delegates.

A PSA must include pre-k in the charter to be eligible for GSRP funding. The PSA should contact the authorizer to have pre-k added prior to being awarded funding.

Existing subrecipients that have met the variety of quality and administrative benchmarks required of the grant should be able to expect consistency of funding awarded. That is, the ISD may 'hold harmless' existing, strong GSRP partners and should look to additional community partners and competition between all partners when distributing increased funding.

The ISD must have a written process to distribute GSRP funding that will be fair to all current and potential early childhood partners. The document will reflect policy and procedures to follow each year, with specific consideration of allocating funds to community partners.

The policy must describe minimally one ISD notification made to licensed centers which serve PreK children and are not current subrecipients. The ISD must work with stakeholders to determine the most effective timing and method for notification(s). The notification must include information regarding:

- The center's eligibility to participate;
- Information regarding GSRP requirements; and
- A description of the subrecipient application and selection process.

An exception to this requirement is provided for a licensed center which is not a current GSRP subrecipient and for which the ISD has documentation on file that the current licensee administration has declined partnership with GSRP.

Additionally, an approvable process addresses the following:

1. Are there current subrecipients that struggle to fill their spaces?
2. For current subrecipients, how does the ISD weight classroom quality and grant compliance in hold-harmless determinations?
3. Are there areas of high-need that require additional funding? If so, how will need for services be balanced with quality of programming?
4. How are subrecipient decisions regarding program options and services addressed? (For example, Part-day, 4 day School-day, vs. 5 day Extended Program, transportation, etc.)

5. Are there administrative issues that would prohibit a program from being funded? (For example, licensing, fiscal capacity, pattern of late or incomplete reporting, disqualification of CACFP, etc.)
6. Are there specific local issues that will impact the distribution of funding or that could be addressed through the distribution plan?
7. How does the ISD partner with the local GSC, Resource Center, and others to build the capacity of local community agencies to take part in GSRP in future years?

Planning for the subsequent grant and academic year considering that the ISD will receive contact information for each licensed childcare center located in the service area of the intermediate district or consortium by March 1 of each year:

1. What is the timeline for subrecipient selection and notification of funding?
2. In what ways and at what time will the ISD reach out to notify each licensed center that serves PreK children located in the service area of the intermediate district or consortium that is not a current subrecipient to make them aware of the opportunity to become a part of GSRP?
3. In these notices, how will the ISD provide information regarding GSRP requirements and a description of the subrecipient application and selection process for community-based providers?
4. How does the ISD give the potential partners contact information for someone who could answer questions during the subrecipient selection and distribution process?
5. What programs in the community are prepared either to increase the number of children served or to begin a GSRP?
6. What is the process for the competitive request for proposals?
 - a. What factors will be considered in selecting subrecipients?
 - b. How will fairness across all eligible entities (LEAs/CBOs) be assured?
 - c. How and when will the ISD share the requirements the potential partner would have to meet to apply and those that would have to be met if chosen? An example would be staff credentialing requirements. Applicants would not have to have compliant staff to apply. They would however have to agree that, if chosen to receive funding, appropriate staff would be hired.
 - d. What is the timeline and process for the ISD to collect pertinent information from potential partners?
 - e. What is the objective review process to rate/rank proposals?
 - f. What stakeholders make up the team that reviews proposals and makes funding distribution decisions?
 - g. How and when does the ISD inform potential community partners of the factors the ISD will consider in making its decisions to award funding?

- h. How and when does the ISD communicate to those being awarded funding?
 - i. What is the timeline and process for how the ISD will communicate with those applicants not being awarded funding for the grant year and give feedback as to why the decision was made?
- 7. What process will an entity not awarded funding, or an entity awarded a reduced level of funding, have to appeal the decision locally and how will they be informed of that process? The essential question for an appeal should be whether the ISD provided the process to award funding in writing and followed its process with fidelity.
- 8. How will the ISD provide to the public and to participating families a list of community based GSRP subrecipients with a GSQ quality level of at least enhancing quality?

16. Flexibility Waiver

Public Act 120 of 2024 (PA 120) provides MiLEAP with the ability to temporarily waive selected implementation requirements under subsection (4) allowing for new or expanding programs to be eligible for funding. "New classroom" is defined as a classroom that is operating for the first time as a GSRP classroom and has entered into a contract with the ISD after October 1, 2024.

The following requirements in subsection (4) can be waived:

(b) An age-appropriate educational curriculum that is in compliance with the early childhood standards of quality for prekindergarten children adopted by the state board, including, at least, the Connect4Learning curriculum.

(d) Developmental screening services for all program participants.

(j) Participation in this state's great start to quality process with a rating of at least enhancing quality level.

To be eligible for the flexibility waiver, the program must demonstrate to the satisfaction of MiLEAP that the program meets all of the following:

(a) Is a licensed child care center or is a licensed program.

(b) For the initial year the program enters into contract, provides the minimum instructional time of 90 days if offering the school day or part day options and 120 days if offering the extended program with each day meeting a minimum of 6 hours.

(c) Participates in this state's quality rating system at the maintaining health and safety quality level.

(d) Implements a professional educator preparation plan (PEPP) for any lead teachers not meeting teacher credentialing requirements. See the Program

Administration and Staffing section for additional information about the PEPP requirements.

(e) Uses a developmentally appropriate curriculum that aligns with the Early Childhood Standards of Quality.

(f) Conducts a developmental screening and referral process for children the program identifies as possibly needing services.

(g) Commits to participating in program financial review and monitoring by the ISD.

(h) Provides a plan to implement an approved GSRP curriculum and meet the additional waived GSRP requirements.

Programs granted a flexibility waiver are not subject to the following subsection (4) requirements for the below-listed amount of time, unless the program’s flexibility waiver is revoked.

GSRP requirement	Waiver Description	Length of waiver (time until program must come into compliance with GSRP requirements)
Participation in Great Start to Quality at an Enhancing Quality Level	The program must be at the Enhancing Quality level or higher by the end of the first school year.	1 year
Number of days of programming and number of hours per day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must provide a minimum of 120 days for part day and school day options. • Must provide a minimum of 180 days for extended program. • Length of day must be equal to the local first grade day for all program options except part day. 	Programs may have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer than 120 days for part day and school day options • Fewer than 180 days for extended program option • Reduced hours per day for school day and extended day programs. • Rationale must be provided for each 	1 year

Must use an approved curriculum and assessment tool	Within 90 days of contracting with GSRP, the program must identify an approved curriculum and an approved assessment tool that they plan to fully implement by the end of the waiver period.	2 years
Must use an approved screening tool and make referrals as needed	Within 90 days of contracting with GSRP, the program must identify an approved screening tool they intend to implement by the end of the waiver period. The program must begin screenings of and making referrals for all children enrolled in GSRP by the end of the waiver period.	2 years

17. Head Start Program Performance Standards Waiver

PA 120 of 2024 included language giving MiLEAP the authority to allow Great Start Readiness Programs to implement Head Start Program Performance Standards for Quality instead of GSRP requirements for GSRP classrooms.

To expand access to GSRP, Head Start subrecipients may request to implement the Head Start Program Performance Standards for quality as an alternative for existing GSRP policies, regulations, and procedures. To request this allowance from the department, GSRP Head Start subrecipients must:

1. Submit the Head Start Program Performance Standards waiver to their ISD for the allowance.
2. Provide the ISD with the following assurances:
 - a. That the child care licenses of all centers operated by the subrecipient to serve GSRP and Head Start children are in good standing and that no child care licenses are suspended or revoked.

- b. That the subrecipient has not been suspended by the Office of Head Start or disbarred from any other federal or state agency or disqualification from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
 - c. That the subrecipient will provide GSRP enrolled children with at least the minimum instructional time as required by the department.
 - d. That the subrecipient participates in this state's quality rating system at a level determined by the department.
 - e. That the subrecipient uses a developmentally appropriate curriculum.
 - f. That the subrecipient ensures that all enrolled children receive developmental screening and are referred for appropriate special education support and services.
 - g. Commits to allow the ISD access to GSRP Head Start classrooms following a mutually agreed upon plan.
 - h. That the subrecipient commits to participating in program financial review and monitoring by MiLEAP, as needed.
 - i. Commits to conducting an annual independent financial audit and provide a copy of the annual audit to the department upon request.
 - j. Commits to submit all financial and program reporting requirements for GSRP as determined by the ISD. ISDs may choose to accept the financial audit as mentioned in (i) in lieu of requiring documentation for expenses.
 - k. Commits to submit all program reporting requirements for GSRP as determined by the department.
 - l. Commits to submit all financial and program reporting requirements for GSRP as determined by the department.
 - m. Commits to participate in the development and implementation of a collaborative recruitment and enrollment in partnership with their local intermediate school district(s).
3. Upon receipt of the request from the subrecipient, the ISD will review for acknowledgement of all commitments listed above. The ISD must forward the request to the department within 10 working days of receiving the request. Included with the request, the ISD will include any concerns that they have that the subrecipient cannot satisfactorily meet the above commitments.
 4. Any subrecipient demonstrating to the satisfaction of MiLEAP that they can meet the above commitments and are currently meeting the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards, will receive written notification from MiLEAP that they are approved to implement Head Start national Performance Standards for Quality as an alternative to GSRP policies and regulations. The department will include the ISD on the written response.

Where ISD and Head Start subrecipient budgets have been finalized for 2024-25, this waiver is not intended to require modification of the fiscal agreement in the contract between the Head Start subrecipient and the ISD for 2024-25.

Head Start Waiver for Individual Requirements

Additionally, beginning in 2023-24, legislation provided an option for GSRP/Head Start Blend programs to apply for a waiver to meet Head Start Performance Standards in place of individual GSRP requirements.

A Head Start subrecipient seeking a waiver of individual GSRP requirements must complete the updated GSRP/Head Start Blend Waiver Form and submit it to the ISD. Once reviewed by the ISD, it will be submitted to MiLEAP for approval.

18. Written Agreements

A written agreement is required between the ISD and its subrecipients. The agreement must contain the components that form a binding agreement between two or more parties, including an offer, acceptance of that offer and consideration of what each party gives of value that each would not normally be legally obligated to provide.

Agreement for Services

1. Each document must clearly state that it is a contract/agreement between the ISD and each subrecipient to meet the need for GSRP services.
2. Agreements must address impasse or default for parties that do not complete any portion of the agreement and identify the entity providing the dispute arbiter.
3. The contract will reflect GSRP requirements including:
 - a. a plan for how the ISD and subrecipients will partner to ensure high-quality implementation of the GSRP (e.g., monitoring, auditing, orientation, mentoring, and hiring and professional learning of staff);
 - b. a list of the developmental screening tool, curriculum, child assessment tool used, and how staff will receive training on the full implementation of each of the tools;
 - c. a plan showing partnership in conducting annual program evaluation using the applicable program evaluation tool, with expectations that each program develops annual plans toward earning a high-quality score (as defined for the applicable tool);
 - d. an explanation of how the subrecipient will be involved in ISD advisory group(s) and local family participation group(s), how often the local family participation group(s) will meet each year and how the subrecipient will ensure family participation at the local level.
4. The contract will include a general timeline for required GSRP reports and who will be responsible for completion of each report, including

- any systems subrecipients are required to utilize such as Michigan Student Data System (MSDS), MiRegistry, etc.
5. The contract will describe the ISD's system to seek information from the subrecipient about, provide oversight on, and evaluate the effectiveness of each of the itemized features in the local contracts.
 6. The contract will ensure that administrative funds are not exceeded. It must include a statement regarding the administrative cap for the ISD.
 7. It must also specify whether the ISD will keep the 2 percent for a shared outreach and recruitment campaign or allow the funds to be split with subrecipients. If split, the ISD must provide guidance on how the funds may be used.
 8. The contract must report the process for flow of funding; e.g., state the process for the ISD to make monthly payments or reimbursements to the subrecipients and how the ISD will track both revenue and expenses.
 9. The contract must state which financial records the subrecipient is required to submit to the ISD and which it must retain for monitoring purposes. The ISD will also affirm its responsibility to maintain financial records necessary for MiLEAP audit.
 10. The program option(s) to be implemented must be included: Part-Day, 4 day School-Day, 5 day Extended Program, 4 day GSRP/Head Start Blend, or 5 day Extended GSRP/Head Start Blend.
 11. The number of spaces to be filled must be included. Any modification to this number must be noted in an addendum.
 12. If the ISD is retaining additional funds to support program quality, a strong contract will identify services.
 13. The contract must be signed and dated by both parties. Complete titles, including agency name, must accompany each signature.
 14. Contracts between the ISD and subrecipients that are continuing from previous years must be in place by October 1, the start of the grant year.
 15. Contracts with new subrecipients must meet this deadline if the program starts at the beginning of the grant year.

Other Contracts

A written agreement is also required between the ISD and any other party responsible for any GSRP service. The agreement must contain the components that form a binding agreement between two or more parties including: scope of services, defined compensation, a defined period, and signatures with titles of all parties involved.

Portions of this section were adapted from:

HHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB (2006). *Tips for Establishing an Effective Communication System*.

Kauerz, K. & Coffman, J. (2013). *Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches*. Seattle, WA: College of Education, University of Washington.

Language Diversity and Literacy Development Research Group. [Lead for Literacy Initiative Memos](#).