

## VIDEO 2: What to Know Before Applying



### New Jersey Preschool Expansion Webinar Series: What to Know Before Applying



In this video, we will provide an overview of the application process for districts applying to receive Preschool Education Aid. For more information about the application timeline, see our library of other videos.



LEAs must offer full-day kindergarten to be eligible to submit an application. LEAs that have higher free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) percentages will be prioritized for consideration by highest to lowest priority grouped as follows:

- LEAs at 20 percent FRPL or above, with successful application;
- LEAs at 15-19 percent FRPL, with successful application;
- LEAs at 10-14 percent FRPL, with successful application; and
- LEAs with less than 10 percent FRPL, with successful application.

Prior to the 2023-2024 school year, school districts had to have a certain percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch to be eligible to apply for PEA. Now, all districts in the state that have full-day Kindergarten are eligible to apply. However, among districts with successful applications, priority consideration is typically given to districts with higher Free or Reduced-Price Lunch percentages, as you can see on this screen. The Notification of Funding Opportunity will specify exactly how priority is assigned.



LEAs must document all efforts to engage with licensed providers and Head Start programs.

5. Indicate the number of licensed providers in your community and/or neighboring towns identified using the Licensed Child Care Locator link on the line below:

Program Name				
Contact Name				
Contact Method (email, phone, etc.)				
Date Contact was initiated				
Response from Program (Y/N)				
Date of Follow Up Contact (if no response)				
Program Interested in Collaboration (Y/N/Unsure)				
Provide Reason(s) for "No" or "Unsure"				
Number of Rooms for Collaboration that Meet DOE Standards (Please indicate "0" if no classrooms meet DOE standards)				
Letter of Intent Included in LEA Application (Y/N)				

The DOE typically awards priority points to districts that plan to collaborate with Head Start or child care providers. The state continues to place significant emphasis on maintaining and strengthening a “mixed delivery” public preschool program where children are served in classrooms operated by the district, as well as in partnering Head Start and child care centers. To that end, the PEA application typically requires that districts reach out to all Head Start and child care providers in and around the district to invite them to participate in the state preschool program. Keep in mind that priority points are only awarded to districts that reach a base score of 70 points on the application.

Districts applying as a consortium will also receive priority points. The lead district must be identified, and each partnering district listed. Signed statements of assurance must be provided by each of the consortium districts.



## Thinking ahead...

- Serving 3- and 4-year-old children in Year 1
- Full day slots for all children currently enrolled
- No tuition students until at least 90% of resident students are served
- Ensure that all special education students have access to a full day program



Here are a few things to consider as you’re planning to bring preschool to your district.

First, you need to think about how you’ll serve three- and four-year-old children as soon as your program opens. Many districts mistakenly try to start by serving 4’s and plan to add 3’s later, but this isn’t permitted. Your program must serve both 3’s and 4’s in the first year and during each year after. Also, the Department of Education encourages mixed age classrooms, so if you’re a small district that’s only planning to start by

opening one classroom in the first year, that's fine – you can absolutely include both ages in one classroom.

Also, if you have an existing preschool program, you'll need to be sure you have a full-day slot for all children enrolled. You cannot disenroll students that you've already promised a slot.

Another piece here is that before you can serve non-resident preschoolers, you'll need to serve at least 90% of your universe of resident preschoolers. For more information about your universe of preschoolers, check out our video on the PEA budget planning workbook.

And finally, because you'll be offering a full day program to your general education preschoolers, you'll need to offer a full day program to your special education preschoolers as well. You cannot have a full day for gen ed and a half day for special education. Obviously, you'll work in accordance with the child's IEP to determine the appropriate length of day, but you must be able to offer all special education preschoolers a full day if the Child Study Team determines that is their placement. You need to ensure equity between your general education/inclusion classrooms and any self-contained special education classrooms you have.



## You've reached the end of What to Know Before Applying

Video Library:

<https://nieer.org/new-jersey-preschool-expansion-webinar-series>

That brings this video on the Preschool Education Aid Application Process to a close. For more information on the PEA application, see our library of other videos on a variety of useful topics.