

PRESCHOOL/EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

When approved by the California Department of Education (CDE) under the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) may operate one or more part-day preschool programs in accordance with law and the terms of its contract with CDE.

(cf. 5148 - Child Care and Development)

MCOE's preschool program shall include all required program components, as described in 5 California Code of Regulations (CCR) 18272-18281 and AR 5148 - Child Care and Development, for the educational program, the creation of a developmental profile for each child, staff development, parent involvement and education, community involvement, Health and Social Services (HSS), nutrition, and program evaluation. [5 CCR 18271-28281]

Minimum Hours/Days of Operation

MCOE's part-day preschool program shall operate a minimum of three hours per day, excluding time for home-to-school transportation, and for a minimum of 175 days per year unless otherwise specified in the program's contract. [Education Code (EC) 8235; 5 CCR 18136]

Staffing

The preschool program shall maintain an adult-child ratio of at least one adult for every eight children and a teacher-child ratio of at least one teacher for every 24 children. If MCOE cannot recruit a sufficient number of parents/guardians or volunteers to meet the required adult-child ratio, teacher aides may be hired as necessary. [5 CCR 18135, 18290]

(cf. 1240 - Volunteer Assistance)

(cf. 6020 - Parent Involvement)

Any person employed at an MCOE preschool and any volunteer who provides care and supervision to children at a preschool shall, unless exempted by law, be immunized against influenza, pertussis, and measles in accordance with Health and Safety Code (HSC) 1596.7995 and AR 5148 - Child Care and Development. Documentation of required immunizations, or applicable exemptions, shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file. [HSC 1596.7995]

(cf. 4112.4 - Health Examinations)

(cf. 4212.4- Health Examinations)

(cf. 4312.4 - Health Examinations)

(cf. 4112.6 - Personnel Files)

(cf. 4212.6 - Personnel Files)

(cf. 4312.6 - Personnel Files)

In addition, preschool teachers shall present evidence of a current tuberculosis clearance and meet other requirements as specified in HSC 1597.055.

Wraparound Child Care Services

In accordance with its contract with CDE, MCOE may offer full-day services to meet the needs of eligible families through a combination of part-day preschool and wraparound child care services that are offered for the remaining portion of the day or year following completion of the preschool services. Child care and development services offered through this program shall meet the requirements of general child care and development programs pursuant to EC 8240-8244. [EC 8239]

Wraparound services shall operate a minimum of 246 days per year unless otherwise specified in the contract. Within this period of time, the part-day preschool program shall operate 175-180 days. After the completion of the preschool program, a part-time general child care and development program may operate a full day for the remainder of the year. [EC 8239]

Family Literacy Services

When any MCOE preschool program receives funding for family literacy services pursuant to EC 8238.4, the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services or designee shall coordinate the provision of: [EC 8238]

1. Opportunities for parents/guardians to work with their children on interactive literacy activities, including activities in which parents/guardians actively participate in facilitating their children's acquisition of prereading skills through guided activities such as shared reading, learning the alphabet, and basic vocabulary development
2. Parenting education for parents/guardians of children in participating classrooms to support their child's development of literacy skills, including, but not limited to, parent education in:
 - a. Providing support for the educational growth and success of their children
 - b. Improving parent-school communications and parental understanding of school structures and expectations
 - c. Becoming active partners with teachers in the education of their children
 - d. Improving parental knowledge of local resources for the identification of and services for developmental disabilities, including, but not limited to, contact information for MCOE special education referral.
3. Referrals to providers of adult education and instruction in English as a second

language as necessary to improve academic skills of parents/guardians

(cf. 6200 - Adult Education)

4. Staff development for teachers in participating classrooms that includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Development of a pedagogical knowledge, including, but not limited to, improved instructional and behavioral strategies
 - b. Knowledge and application of developmentally appropriate assessments of the prereading skills of children in participating classrooms
 - c. Information on working with families, including the use of on-site coaching, for guided practice in interactive literacy activities
 - d. Providing targeted interventions for all young children to improve kindergarten readiness upon program completion.

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)

Eligibility

Children eligible for MCOE's CSPP program include those who will have their third or fourth birthday on or before December 1 of the fiscal year that they are being served. Children who have their third birthday on or after December 2 may be enrolled on or after their third birthday. [EC 8208, 8235, 8236]

To be eligible for subsidized services, families shall meet at least one requirement in each of the following areas: [EC 8235, 8239, 8263, 8263.1]

1. The family is a current aid recipient, income eligible, homeless, and/or one whose children are recipients of protective services or have been identified as being, or at risk of being, abused, neglected, or exploited
2. The family needs child care services due to either of the following circumstances:
 - a. The child is identified by a legal, medical, or social services agency, the MCOE liaison for homeless students, a Head Start program, or an emergency or transitional shelter as being a recipient of protective services, as being or at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited, or as being homeless

(cf. 6173 - Education for Homeless Children)

- b. The parents/guardians are engaged in vocational training leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofession, or profession; are engaged in an educational program for English Language Learners or for the attainment of a high school diploma or general educational development certificate;

are employed or seeking employment; are seeking permanent housing for family stability; or are incapacitated.

If all families meeting at least one of the criteria specified in item #2 have been enrolled, a full-day CSPP program may provide services to families who do not meet any of those criteria, provided the criteria in item #1 are met. [EC 8263]

Enrollment Priority

The Assistant Superintendent of Student Services or designee shall consult the county's centralized eligibility list, when available, or shall maintain an MCOE waiting list in accordance with admission priorities. As vacancies occur, applicants shall be contacted in order of their priority. [5 CCR 18106]

First priority for enrollment in a preschool program shall be given to neglected or abused children ages 3-4 who are recipients of child protective services or who, based upon written referral from a legal, medical, or social service agency, are at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited. If unable to enroll a child in this category, MCOE shall refer the child's parent/guardian to local resource and referral services so that services for the child can be located. [EC 8236, 8236.3; 5 CCR 18131]

(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)
(cf. 1700 - Relations Between Private Industry and the Schools)

After all children with first priority are enrolled, MCOE shall give second priority to eligible children 4 years of age who are not enrolled in a Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program prior to enrolling eligible children 3 years of age. [EC 8236, 8236.3]

If a CSPP program is operating within the attendance boundaries of a school where at least 80 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, third priority for enrollment shall be for families who meet the criteria of EC 8263 specified in items #1-2 in the section "Eligibility" above. Any remaining slots may be open to any families not otherwise eligible, provided that the families prove residency within the attendance boundary of the school and priority is given to families with the lowest income. [EC 8236.3]

After all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled, the program may provide services to children with disabilities who are ages 3-4 and whose family income is above the income eligibility threshold. [EC 8235]

In addition, after enrolling all eligible children, up to 10 percent of the program's enrollment, calculated throughout the entire contract, may be filled with children who exceed the age limitations and children whose family income exceeds the income eligibility threshold by no more than 15 percent. [EC 8235; 5 CCR 18133]

MCOE may certify eligibility and enrollment up to 120 calendar days prior to the first day of the beginning of the preschool year. After establishing eligibility at the time of initial enrollment, a child shall remain eligible for the remainder of the program year. [EC 8237; 5 CCR 18082]

Notice of Action

Upon receiving a parent/guardian's application for services, the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services or designee shall review the application and documentation and shall certify the eligibility of the family or child.

MCOE's decision to approve or deny a child's enrollment shall be communicated to the family through a written Notice of Action (NOA) mailed or delivered within 30 days from the date the application is signed by the parent/guardian. [5 CCR 18094, 18095, 18118]

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

Subsequently, the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services or designee shall mail or deliver an NOA to a parent/guardian at least 14 calendar days before any intended change in services, including, but not limited to, an increase or decrease in fees, an increase or decrease in the amount of services, or termination of services, due to any of the following circumstances: [5 CCR 18095, 18119]

1. A determination during recertification or update of the application that the need or eligibility requirements are no longer being met or the fee or amount of service needs to be modified
2. Failure of the parent/guardian to document the family's need or eligibility after MCOE requested such documentation in writing
3. An indication by the parent/guardian that the parent/guardian no longer wants the service
4. The death of a parent/guardian or child
5. The conclusion of a limited-term agreement, provided that the parent/guardian has been informed in writing of the date that the services would terminate.

For each child enrolled in MCOE's preschool program, the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services or designee shall maintain a family data file including, but not limited to, a completed and signed application for services, documentation of income eligibility, and a copy of all NOAs. For each child not receiving subsidized services, the family data file shall also include records of the specific reason(s) for enrolling each child, the child's family income, and evidence that MCOE has made a diligent search for children eligible for subsidized services. [5 CCR 18130, 18133, 18081, 18084]

(cf. 1340 - Access to District Records)

(cf. 3580 - District Records)

(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

Combined Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Classroom

When a child is eligible for both the preschool program and MCOE's TK program, MCOE may place the child in a classroom which is commingled with children from both programs as long as the commingled program meets all of the requirements of each program as well as the following requirements: [EC 8235, 48000]

1. An early childhood environment rating scale, as specified in 5 CCR 18281, shall be completed for the classroom.
2. All children enrolled for 10 or more hours per week shall be evaluated using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), as specified in 5 CCR 18272.
3. The classroom shall be taught by a teacher who holds a credential issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) in accordance with EC 44065 and 44256.
4. The classroom shall comply with the adult-child ratio specified in EC 8264.8.
5. Contractors of MCOE shall report the services, revenues, and expenditures for children in the preschool program in accordance with 5 CCR 18068.
6. The classroom shall not include children enrolled in TK for a second year or children enrolled in a regular kindergarten classroom.

(cf. 5111 - Admission)

(cf. 6170.1 - Transitional Kindergarten)

Fees and Charges

Fees for participation in MCOE's preschool program may be assessed and collected in accordance with the fee schedule established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI). [EC 8273; 5 CCR 18078]

(cf. 3260 - Fees and Charges)

However, no fee shall be charged to an income-eligible family whose child is enrolled in a part-day preschool program or a family that is receiving CalWORKs cash aid. [EC 8273.1; 5 CCR 18110]

A family may be exempt from the fees for up to 12 months if the child qualifies for preschool on the basis of being the recipient of child protective services or as being, or at risk of being, abused or neglected. [EC 8273.1]

The Assistant Superintendent of Student Services or designee shall establish a process that involves parents/guardians in determining whether to require parents/guardians to provide diapers and/or whether and how much to charge parents/guardians for field trip expenses, within the limit specified in law. A child shall not be denied participation in a field trip due to the parent/guardian's inability or refusal to pay the fee, and no adverse

action shall be taken against a parent/guardian for that inability or refusal. [EC 8273.3]

Disenrollment Based on Reduced Funding

When necessary due to a reduction in state reimbursements, families shall be disenrolled in the following order: [EC 8236, 8263.3]

1. Children 3 years of age whose families have the highest income in relation to family size shall be disenrolled first, followed by children 4 years of age whose families have the highest income in relation to family size.

At each age level, if two or more families have the same income ranking, the child with disabilities shall be disenrolled last. If there are no families that have a child with disabilities, the child who has received services the longest shall be disenrolled first.

2. Families of children 3 or 4 years of age who are receiving child protective services or who have been documented to be at risk of being neglected or abused, regardless of income, shall be disenrolled last.

Expulsion/Unenrollment Based on Behavior

An MCOE preschool program shall not expel or unenroll a child based on the child's behavior, unless MCOE first takes the following actions to address the child's behavior: [EC 8239.1]

1. Inform the parents/guardians of the child's persistent and serious challenging behaviors and consult with the parents/guardians and teacher in an effort to maintain the child's safe participation in the program.
2. If the child has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP), with written parent/guardian consent, contact the agency or MCOE employee responsible for such plan or program to seek consultation in regard to serving the child.

(cf. 6159 - Individualized Education Program)

3. If the child does not have an IFSP or IEP, consider if it is appropriate to complete a universal screening of the child, including, but not limited to, screening the child's social and emotional development, referring the parents/guardians to community resources, implementing behavior supports within the program, and considering an IEP for the child.

If MCOE has taken the actions specified in items #1-3 above and the child's continued

enrollment would present a serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children, MCOE shall refer the parents/guardians to other potentially appropriate placements, the local child care resource and referral agency, or any other referral service available in the local community. Within 180 days of the start of the process, MCOE may unenroll the child. [EC 8239.1]

Children with disabilities may only be suspended or expelled in conformance with the procedures and limitations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Parent Hearing

If a parent/guardian disagrees with any MCOE action to deny the child's eligibility for subsidized preschool services, disenroll the child due to a funding shortage, increase or decrease fees, increase or decrease the amount of services, terminate services, or otherwise change the level of services, the parent/guardian may file a request for a hearing with the Monterey County Superintendent of Schools (County Superintendent) or designee within 14 calendar days of the date the NOA was received. Within 10 calendar days of receiving the request for a hearing, the County Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of the time and place of the hearing, which, to the extent possible, shall be convenient for the parent/guardian. [5 CCR 18120]

The hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures specified in 5 CCR 18120 by an MCOE administrator who is at a staff level higher in authority than the staff person who made the contested decision. Within 10 calendar days after the hearing, the MCOE administrator shall mail or deliver a written decision to the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian disagrees with the written decision, the parent/guardian may, within 14 calendar days, appeal the decision to CDE. [5 CCR 18120-18122]