



## What is NC Pre-K?

The NC Pre-Kindergarten Program is a program of the Division of Child Development and Early Education in the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

The NC Pre-K Program is designed to provide high-quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible four-year olds. The program requirements are built on the premise that to be successful academically in school, children need to be prepared in all five of the development domains outlined by the National Education Goals Panel. Each of these domains is critical to children's well-being and for their success in reading and math as they come to school. The five domains, as reflected in *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success* are:

- Approaches to learning
- Emotional and social development
- Health and physical development
- Language development and communication
- Cognitive development

The requirements are designed to ensure that a high-quality pre-kindergarten classroom experience is provided for eligible four-year olds in each local NC Pre-K Program and that, to the extent possible, uniformity exists across the state.

## Frequently asked Questions

### 1. With that being said...What is NC Pre-K?

NC Pre-K is a statewide pre-school program that provides a structured educational experience for at-risk four-year olds who meet the age requirement of being four years old on or before August 31, 2016, and meet one or more of the requirements, as defined below.

### 2. What are the requirements for determining a child as being "at-risk"?

A child that meets the age requirements is eligible for NC Pre-K if the child meets at least one of the following criteria: That the child is from a family whose gross income level is below 75% of the State Median Income level; has an identified disability indicated by a current Individualized Education Program/Plan (IEP); has Limited English Proficiency (LEP); a developmental or educational need; a chronic health condition; or has a parent or legal guardian who is an active duty member in the armed forces, National Guard, or Reserve Unit or a child whose parent or legal guardian has been seriously injured or killed while on active duty.

### 3. How is my child chosen for the program?

Once the child's intake interview has been completed the application is date stamped and verified for eligibility, based on birth date and the criteria mentioned above. Once verified, and after June 10<sup>th</sup>, the applications are sorted based on the priority score the application received

1<sup>st</sup> and then by date received. Children with the highest scores first will tentatively be placed at the first chosen site, or when no longer available the second or third choice or an available site closest to the home. When funding has been approved and awarded by the State of North Carolina, notifications will be sent out to the family via email when available, stating which site the child has been accepted to. The family must notify Smart Start Rowan as to whether or not they accept the assigned school. Refusal of a school does not necessarily mean you will be immediately assigned a new school. Your child may be placed on a waiting list, pending an opening at your chosen school.

**4. Are there any costs associated with NC Pre-K?**

The only fees that may be charged to families for services are fees to cover the partial/full costs of meals when families do not qualify for free or reduced meals. When you register your child at the assigned school, you will need to fill out an application for free/reduced lunch. Families may also be charged the cost of wraparound services provided before or after the regular school day, during holiday's or during summer months, if needed and available. Transportation fees may also apply, see below.

**5. Does my child need a physical?**

Yes, a completed Kindergarten Health Assessment (blue form), Dental Assessment (yellow form) and Shot Record will be needed. It is recommended that you have these forms completed prior to your NC Pre-K application appointment, however, if you are unable to make an appointment with your child's physician, you will be asked to schedule an appointment during your child's intake interview, so that we may note when these forms should be expected in our office.

**6. Does NC Pre-K provide transportation?**

Currently, there is no transportation provided by NC Pre-K. Parents/Guardians must take their child in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon. Some sites may provide transportation for a fee. This must be arranged at the site, and not through Smart Start Rowan's NC Pre-K office.

**7. Where are the classrooms for NC Pre-K?**

NC Pre-K allows communities to decide where classrooms should be housed, whether in a Child Care setting, Public School or Head Start. Unless you designated which school you would like your child to attend on your application, they are placed closest to home. The amount of State funding will determine how many sites and classrooms that will be available each year.

**8. What are the days and times that the NC Pre-K classrooms operate?**

NC Pre-K sites must provide a pre-kindergarten program for a regular school day (minimum of 6 ½ hours per day) for a 10-month (180 instructional days) per school calendar year. In Rowan County, we generally follow the Rowan Salisbury School System Calendar. If your child is assigned to one of the private child care facilities, they may provide an operational calendar that could be slightly different than the Rowan Salisbury School System Calendar. Depending on your child's school, there may be days set aside for home visits and staggered entry; these days are included in the 180 day school calendar. It is important for your child's success that they attend on a regular basis.

**9. What is a developmental screening?**

All children entering a NC Pre-K program will be screened with an approved screening tool within 90 days of the first day of attendance in the program, or within 6 months prior to the first day of attendance into the program. This screening provides teachers with information on children's developmental status and the possible need for further evaluation. Early detection is essential to increasing the likelihood that children at risk of developmental delay, and those with disabilities, receive special services quickly.

**10. What will my child learn?**

NC Pre-K programs are expected to provide developmentally appropriate, high-quality pre-kindergarten experiences for children. All Rowan County NC Pre-K Classrooms use The Creative Curriculum for Preschool to provide opportunities for children's learning. The philosophy behind the curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Learning isn't just repeating what someone else says; it requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world we live in. In their early years, children explore the world around them by using all their senses (touching, tasting, listening, smelling, and looking). As children learn through purposeful and high quality play experiences, they are building critical foundational skills for cognitive development and academic achievement. These include verbalization, language comprehension, increased vocabulary, imagination, questioning, problem solving, observation, empathy, co-operation skills, and learning another's perspective. Through play, children learn a set of skills such as social skills, creativity, hand-to-eye coordination, problem solving, and imagination. These skills are better learned through play rather than through flashcards, or academic drills. Play enables us to achieve the key goals of our early childhood curriculum. Play is the work of young children. Please consult with your child's teacher if you have any questions concerning your child or the curriculum.

**11. What will my child's day consist of?**

All schools have a structured classroom schedule posted. The child's day will consist of educational activities that provide high quality indoor and outdoor learning environments. Both indoor and outdoor environments shall address curricular objectives by encouraging child-initiated, teacher-supported, **active learning experiences**. Teachers are to arrange for children to be outdoors each and every day, for a minimum of one hour, weather permitting.

**12. What will my child eat?**

Sites must provide breakfast and/or snacks and lunch meeting USDA requirements during the regular school day. The partial/full cost of meals may be charged when families do not qualify for free/reduced price meals. When children bring their own food for meals and snacks to school, if the food does not meet the specified nutritional requirements, the center must provide additional food necessary to meet those requirements.

**13. Can I visit my child's classroom?**

Yes! Family involvement is critical to the success of the children. NC Pre-K programs are to provide meaningful opportunities for parents and families to build trusting relationships that foster a bond between those involved in the education of the NC Pre-K child. Teachers provide many ways for families to be engaged in their child's education: home visits; parent/teacher conferences; classroom visits and options for parents/guardians to participate in classroom activities; family involvement; and opportunities to engage families outside of the regular school day.

**14. Will my child be required to wear a uniform? What supplies will my child need for school?**

Please consult your child's assigned school regarding their uniform policy and any required supplies.

**If you have additional questions please don't hesitate to call  
Smart Start Rowan at 704-630-9085.**