



Application for Voluntary Pre-K Programs 2019–20

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Objectives

- Updates and changes
- Timeline for submission and scoring
- Application structure
- Contents of each section
 - Utilization
 - Program Management
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Continuous Quality Improvement
- Scoring rubric

The logo consists of a red square containing the letters 'TN' in white, serif font. Below the red square is a dark blue horizontal bar.

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Application Updates

Pre-K Quality Act of 2016

- ***Competitive grant based on quality***
- Pre-K and kindergarten student growth portfolios
- Legislative intent added that Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) prepares students for kindergarten
- Alignment between pre-K and K–12 instruction
- ***Office of early learning to develop definition of quality with which programs will comply***

Quality Matters



High-Quality Pre-K

- Program Management
 - Access and Attendance
 - Community Partnerships and Services
 - Structure
- Teaching and Learning
 - Classroom Environment
 - Daily Schedule and Use of Time
 - Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment
 - Interactions and Instruction
- Continuous Quality Improvement



Application Changes and Updates

The department requested feedback regarding last year's application process. Based on this feedback, the department has made a few revisions to the process. With this application, we have:

- Increased the application completion window
- Moved up the date for feedback on scored applications
- Provided clear questions
- Provided data from EIS and other systems
- Demonstrated clear connections between questions and rubric scoring

Application Structure

- The application window and feedback will be moved to a December–April time frame.
- The application will be completed in ePlan.
- Only those attachments requested in the application will be scored.
- Budget, site locations, and teacher licensure sections will be completed once grant awards are extended. These will not be considered in the scoring process.

Application Timeline

- An electronic copy of applications will be emailed to VPK directors during the week of Dec. 3, 2018.
- The application will be posted on the VPK website during this same week.
- Changes to the application are currently being made in ePlan. We will notify VPK directors when the platform is available.
- All applications will be due February 8, 2019.
- Notification of award will be made by April 15, 2019.

Application Sections and Weights

- Utilization — 25 percent
- Program Management — 20 percent
- Teaching and Learning — 35 percent
- Continuous Improvement — 20 percent



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Section 1 — Utilization



Utilization — 25 Percent

Section 1 will be uploaded into ePlan.

- Data will be pulled from EIS.
- Three years of data will be included.
- All numbers must be correct in EIS by Nov. 30.
- The final pull will be made on Dec. 1.
- Utilization rates are determined by the number of **low-income four-year-olds served.**

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Section 2 — Program Management

Program Management — 20 Percent

This section comprised of questions regarding these three components:

1. Access and Attendance
2. Community Partnerships and Services
3. Structural Quality

Access and Attendance

This component is comprised of five questions on the following topics:

- Identification of Need
- Recruitment
- Eligibility Determination and Applicant Prioritization
- Enrollment and Eligibility Challenges
- Attendance

Sections II.a., II.b., and II.f.

All districts must respond to sections:

- II.a. Identification of Need,
- II.b. Statement of Service Considerations, and
- II.f. Attendance.

Changes to 2019-20 Access and Attendance Section

- Districts **who meet or exceed 90 percent utilization** are exempt from providing written responses to sections II.c., II.d., and II.e.; additionally, these districts must attach a copy of their student application.
- Districts **who do not meet or exceed 90 percent utilization** must also respond in full to sections: II.c. Recruitment, II.d. Eligibility Determination and Applicant Prioritization, and II.e. Enrollment and Eligibility Challenges.

Utilization Rates Below 90 Percent

- If your utilization rate is below 90 percent, provide a narrative response to all five questions in the Access and Attendance section.
- Let's take a look at a few of these questions related to:
 - Identification of Need
 - Recruitment
 - Eligibility Determination and Applicant Prioritization
 - Enrollment and Eligibility Challenges
 - Attendance

Identification of Need Example

Provide information regarding your district's need for quality pre-K programs. Consider the following:

- Demographic and/or geographic shifts
- Poverty trends
- Information regarding the unmet need for quality child care programs (public or private)
- Whether your sites are situated in locations that serve the most eligible children
- Any other factor(s) that may impact enrollment

Recruitment

Describe your district's pre-K registration process. Please include responses to the following questions:

- How is registration publicized to the community?
- How does your district recruit and enroll eligible students?
- How do you know your current processes are effective?

Example of Uploading Documents

Describe your district's process for determining which children will attend VPK. Please include the responses to the following questions:

- How does your district prioritize applicants to ensure that 90 percent of children who enroll are income eligible?
- How is student eligibility determined, and what documentation is collected?
- How are students selected for participation?
- How and when are families notified of their status?
- What is your district's process for maintaining a waiting list and tracking enrollment?
- **Please attach a copy of your student application.**

Community Partnerships and Services

This component is comprised of two questions on the following topics:

- Family Resources
- Community Pre-K Advisory Council

Structural Quality

This component is comprised of two questions on the following topics:

- Teacher Qualifications
- Safety and Health

Safety and Health

Please describe how your district monitors programs for the following:

- Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS)
- Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)
- Compliance with Rules and Regulations
- Compliance with Scope of Services

Include the ways in which feedback is provided and the procedure for following up when a plan is created and when corrective action is needed.

Using the Scoring Rubric

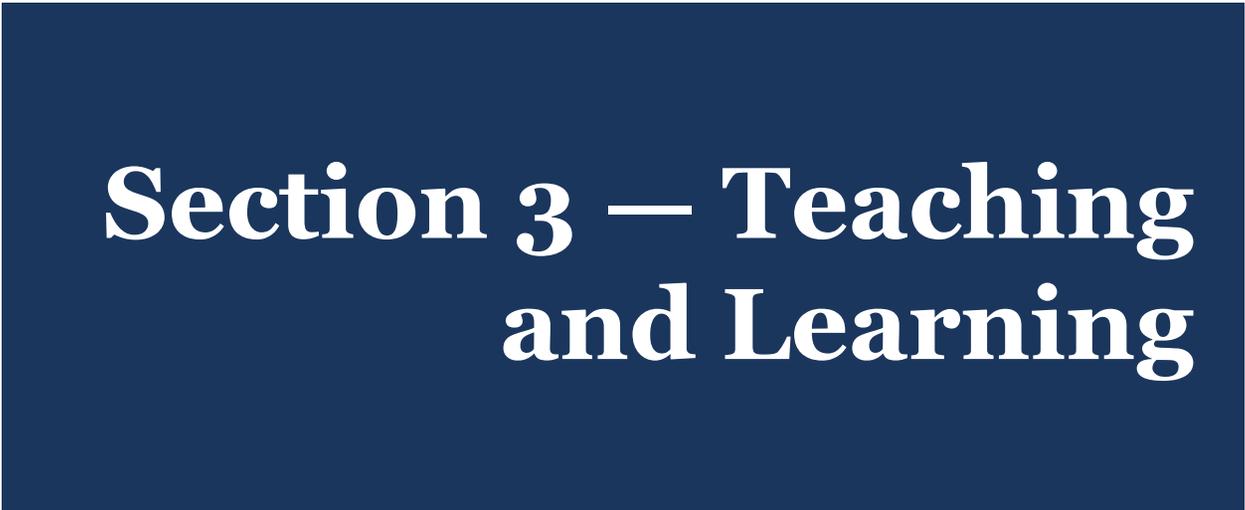
II.d. Enrollment and Eligibility Challenges

Please explain any challenges you have had in meeting eligibility requirements and how you have worked to overcome those challenges. *(Please note: 90 percent of children served should be income-eligible four-year-olds.)*

4	3	2	1	0
<p>Response provides a detailed description about how the district addresses challenges of eligibility requirements or plans to maintain eligibility requirements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A clear understanding and description of multiple issues and roadblocks that interfere with enrollment o A detailed plan for overcoming those challenges o A few ways additional seats could be used to meet the need if available and/or wanted (if program is fully utilized)- OR - o Response describes multiple ways how the district plans to maintain/continue to place eligible children in seats. 	<p>Response provides adequate detail about how the district addresses challenges of eligibility requirements or plans to maintain eligibility requirements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o An understanding and description of issues and roadblocks that interfere with enrollment o An outline of a plan for overcoming the challenges <p>If program is fully utilized, response indicates a beginning plan on how additional seats could be used to meet the need if available and/or wanted - OR - response describes how district plans to maintain/continue to place eligible children in seats.</p>	<p>Response provides general information about how the district addresses challenges of eligibility requirements or plans to maintain eligibility requirements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A description of some issues and roadblocks that may interfere with enrollment. o Some ideas of how to overcome the challenges o If program is fully utilized, response indicates some ideas how additional seats could be used to meet the need if available and/or wanted - OR - Response describes general ideas on how to maintain/continue to place eligible children in seats. 	<p>Response is vague or limited about how the district addresses challenges of eligibility requirements or maintain eligibility requirements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identifying very few issues or roadblocks, or issues are noted, but not specific o An idea to overcome challenges o If program is fully utilized, brief ideas/suggestions on how to maintain seats or add seats 	<p>Response does not address challenges of meeting eligibility requirements.</p> <p>-OR-</p> <p>Response does not indicate a plan for overcoming the eligibility requirement challenges.</p> <p>-OR-</p> <p>Response gives no indication for how the district plans to maintain/continue to place eligible children in seats.</p> <p>Score</p>
<p>Comments:</p>				



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**Section 3 — Teaching
and Learning**

High-Quality Pre-K

- Program Management
 - Access and Attendance
 - Community Partnerships and Services
 - Structure
- Teaching and Learning
 - Classroom Environment
 - Daily Schedule and Use of Time
 - Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment
 - Interactions and Instruction
- Continuous Quality Improvement



Teaching and Learning — 35 Percent

This section is broken into three categories:

- Classroom Organization
- Integrated Systems
- Interactions and Instruction

Classroom Organization

There are three questions in this component pertaining to these topics:

- Child-centered Environment
- Developmentally Appropriate Schedule
- Effective Use of Time

Child-centered Environment

Explain what is considered in the development of a classroom environment and how students interact with environment to facilitate learning:

- How do **curriculum** resources in the environment facilitate learning?
- How are **curriculum** resources chosen and changed throughout the year?
- How do students access those **curriculum** resources within the classroom?

Developmentally Appropriate Schedule

- The following question asks for you to describe your daily schedule including how much time is spent in each activity.
- Include any efforts you have made to either decrease transitions or include instruction in your transitions.
- The response should focus on how children are spending their time.

Effective Use of Time

- Based on daily schedule, please explain the purpose of each activity in the schedule and how instruction is delivered during those times (if applicable).
- Keep in mind that in pre-K we should not have a specific literacy block of time. Be sure to describe the ways literacy is embedded through learning throughout the day.
- Consider how learning centers are being used to build both knowledge and skills in an integrated way.

Integrated Systems

This component is comprised of four questions on the following topics:

- Standards Alignment
- Curriculum
- Child Assessment and Observation
- Special Populations

Standards and Curriculum Update

This section includes two questions asking you to describe:

- The state-approved curriculum you are using to ensure classroom instruction is aligned to the developmental domains found in the [Tennessee Early Learning and Developmental Standards \(TN ELDS\)](#).
- How your district ensures that ***teachers and teacher assistants*** have the supports necessary for effective curriculum implementation.

Child Assessment and Observation

This question asks you to list and describe how pre-K data is collected, reviewed, and used to inform practice. Consider the following:

- How is data collected?
- Who uses the data?
- How often is data reviewed?
- How is data used to guide instruction?

Special Populations

Students who require special education services and English learners should be offered the same access to VPK as all other students.

- The grant is intended to serve income-eligible four-year-olds regardless of their learning needs.
- Students from these subgroups should be offered the opportunity to apply for VPK.
- Special circumstances alone do not guarantee access to the program.

Special Populations Question

Provide specific information, plans, or strategies that you have used and/or plan to use to effectively serve children with exceptional learning needs. This includes children who require special education services and English learners.

Interactions and Instruction

Within this component, there are two questions related to the following topics:

- Responsive-Nurturing Student/Teacher Interactions
- Academically Rigorous, Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Responsive-Nurturing Student/Teacher Interactions

Describe your district's policies and practices to encourage healthy social and personal competencies for your pre-K students:

- Training for teachers and educational assistants on how to create responsive and nurturing learning environments for young children. Include specifics on any particular training received
- Example(s) of best practice(s) your programs have used to promote positive school culture and strengthen positive connections among students and between students and adults
- Descriptions of your district's practices regarding students with persistent or extreme behavior issues

Include your pre-K discipline policy in the space below.

Academically Rigorous DAP

The following resources have been made available to help with your response to the question related to academically rigorous DAP:

- [Quality Matters: Defining Quality in Early Education](#)
- [2017 VPK Convening slides](#)
- ELM Phase II training
- [2018 Early Childhood Summit presentations](#)
- NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices book

Using the Scoring Rubric

Teaching and Learning – 35%

Section Score: _____

V. Classroom Organization

V. a. Child Centered Environment

Explain what is considered in the development of a classroom environment and how students interact with environment to facilitate learning. Please respond to the following:

- How do resources in the environment facilitate learning?
- How are resources chosen and changed throughout the year?
- How do students access those resources within the classroom?

4	3	2	1	0
<p>Response provides a detailed description about how classroom environments are developed and how students interact with the environment to facilitate learning including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Multiple examples of how the materials in the classrooms are thoughtfully chosen to meet both academic and developmental needs of children o Multiple examples of how the materials and environment are flexible and changed to meet the needs of children o Multiple examples of how the materials and environment are designed and arranged to provide interactive experiences for children o Multiple examples of how the materials and environment change across the year to meet the needs of children 	<p>Response provides adequate detail about how classroom environments are developed and how students interact with the environment to facilitate learning including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o At least two examples of how the materials in the classrooms are chosen to meet both academic and developmental needs of children o At least two examples of how the materials and environment are changed to meet the needs of children o At least two examples of how the materials and environment are designed and arranged to provide interactive experiences for children o At least two examples of how the materials and environment change across the year to meet the needs of children 	<p>Response provides general information about how classroom environments are developed and how students interact with the environment to facilitate learning including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o An example of how the materials in the classrooms are chosen to address some academic and/or developmental needs of children o An example of how some of the materials and environment are changed to meet the needs of children o An example of how some materials and/or the environment are arranged to provide interactive experiences for children o An example of how some of the materials and environment change across the year to meet the needs of children 	<p>Response is vague or limited about how classroom environments are developed and how students interact with the environment to facilitate learning including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Brief description of how resources in the environment facilitate learning o Limited examples of how materials and environmental resources are used to facilitate learning 	<p>Development of classroom environment and how students interact with environment to facilitate learning is not described.</p> <p>-OR-</p> <p>No examples of materials or environment used to facilitate learning are described.</p>
<p>Comments: _____</p>				<p>Score: _____</p>



Continuous Quality Improvement

Continuous Quality Improvement — 20 Percent

- Create culture of continuous improvement
- Effective early childhood leadership
- Data-driven improvements
- Ongoing professional learning:
 - Stakeholder training
 - Job-embedded professional learning
 - Improvement science

Included in this Section

This section is broken into three categories:

- Culture of Improvement
- Professional Learning
- Data-driven Improvements

Culture of Improvement Updates

This component is comprised of two questions related to:

- Teacher Evaluation
- Portfolio Implementation

Professional Learning Question

- How will your leadership team redeliver Early Learning 2.0 (EL 2.0) training?
- How do you ensure all teachers receive training inclusive of the selected state-approved pre-K curriculum?
- How will professional learning opportunities be anchored in district needs identified from CLASS assessments conducted?
- How is ongoing professional learning embedded into the daily practice of your district leaders, school leaders, teachers, and teacher assistants?
- What recent or ongoing trainings were delivered that encouraged quality improvements?
- In what way are school leaders involved in early childhood trainings?
- In what way do your professional learning strategies improve and/or increase collaboration with other teachers and grades?
- What other needs does your district have in ensuring quality professional learning for teachers and assistants?

Professional Learning Updates

- How do you ensure all teachers receive training inclusive of the selected state-approved pre-K curriculum?
- Describe the ways professional learning opportunities are anchored in district needs identified from CLASS assessments conducted.

Data-driven Improvements

This component has two questions:

- Developing Goals
- Identifying SMART Goals

SMART - Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Based

These examples were shared at the VPK convening in August:

- Goal 1: By May 2020, 90 percent of VPK students will score “At Expectation” on pre-K early literacy skills as measured by CPAA.
- Goal 2: 100 percent of VPK students will show growth on CPAA between August and May measurements.
- These goals correlate with TN ELDS Reading Foundational Skills, Phonological Awareness: RF.PK.2, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, and 2e.

Using the Rubric

Continuous Quality Improvement – 20%

Section
Score

VIII. Culture of Improvement

VIII.a. Teacher Evaluation

Describe how the district uses the evaluation system for professional growth.

4	3	2	1	0
<p>Response provides a detailed description about the district's teacher evaluation system, how teachers are evaluated, how evaluation results are used for teacher's professional growth, and for improving instructional practices including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The use of the evaluation system as a growth model ○ A detailed description of protocol for how the teacher evaluation tool is used to provide feedback to teachers to improve practice ○ Multiple examples that support a plan to build teacher capacity based on evaluation scores ○ Multiple strategies for addressing low-performing teachers and for growing those at or above expectations ○ Indication that teacher evaluation results inform a differentiated system of professional learning opportunities and teacher evaluation trends are considered when professional training decisions are made ○ Indication that teacher assistants are evaluated and are provided opportunities for training aligned to evaluation results ○ Description of how guidance documents provided by the state are used to evaluate pre-K teachers 	<p>Response provides adequate detail about the district's teacher evaluation system, how teachers are evaluated, how evaluation results are used for teacher's professional growth, and for improving instructional practices including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The use of evaluation system as rating system and growth model ○ A detailed description of protocol for how the teacher evaluation tool is used to provide feedback to teachers to improve practice ○ Several examples that support a plan to build teacher capacity based on evaluation scores ○ Several strategies for addressing low-performing teachers and for growing those at or above expectations ○ Indication that teacher evaluation trends are considered when professional training decisions are made ○ Indication that teacher assistants are evaluated and provided opportunities for training to build capacity ○ Description of how guidance documents provided by the state are used to evaluate pre-K teachers 	<p>Response provides general information about the district's teacher evaluation system, how teachers are evaluated, how evaluation results are used for teacher's professional growth, and for improving instructional practices including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identification of the evaluation system used ○ How feedback is provided to the teacher ○ Indication that professional learning opportunities are sometimes aligned to teacher evaluation trends ○ An example that supports a plan to build teacher capacity based on evaluation scores ○ A strategy for addressing low-performing teachers and for growing those at or above expectations ○ Indication that teacher assistants are evaluated and provided feedback. ○ Description of how guidance documents provided by the state are used to evaluate some pre-K teachers 	<p>Response is vague or limited about the district's teacher evaluation system, how teachers are evaluated, how evaluation results are used for teacher's professional growth, and for improving instructional practices including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indication that the evaluation system is used as a tool to rate effectiveness only ○ Indication that feedback is provided to the teacher ○ Indication that professional learning opportunities are not aligned to teacher evaluation trends ○ Indication that teacher assistants are evaluated ○ Indication that the guidance documents provided by the state are unknown to the district, but there is an articulated plan to utilize them in the future 	<p>Response does not describe use of a teacher evaluation system.</p> <p>-OR-</p> <p>There is no clear tool used to evaluate teacher assistants.</p> <p>-OR-</p> <p>There is no use of state-provided guidance documents for pre-K evaluations or plan to use them.</p>
Comments:				Score:

Next Steps

- Begin work with district teams.
- Begin responding within the Word document provided.
- Before Feb. 8, 2019, upload responses into ePlan.

Department Contacts

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Questions





Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark on their chosen path in life.

Excellence | Optimism | Judgment | Courage | Teamwork