



OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

TO: Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP) Grantees

FROM: Sara Mead
Deputy Superintendent of Early Learning

RE: PKEEP Fee Policy

DATE: Oct. 14, 2025

I. Background

The District’s universal pre-kindergarten mixed delivery system includes District of Columbia Public Schools, public charter schools and community-based organizations (CBOs) designated as High Quality through the Pre-K Expansion and Enhancement Program (PKEEP). The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) manages and oversees PKEEP by 1) monitoring compliance with the PKEEP regulations; 2) providing training and technical assistance to PKEEP grantees; and 3) issuing policies, guidance and clarification on emerging pre-K practices.

II. Relevant Laws and Standards

PKEEP is authorized through the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008 (“The Act”) effective July 18, 2008 (DC Law 17-202; DC Official Code § 38-271.01 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations 5A DCMR Chapter 35. The legislation authorizes free, universal pre-K to all eligible 3- and 4-year-olds.

III. PKEEP Fee Policy

OSSE is sharing this policy guidance with PKEEP CBOs to clarify PKEEP requirements around the charging of fees to families of PKEEP students. PKEEP is a locally funded grant program intended to cover the cost of free pre-K services for eligible children. As such, PKEEP CBOs cannot charge mandatory fees as a requirement or prerequisite for a family to access or participate in the PKEEP program. Charging mandatory fees as a condition of PKEEP enrollment or participation is misaligned with the intent of The Act to ensure universal access to high-quality free pre-K services.

Examples of prohibited fees include:

- Mandatory fees for participation in typical school day activities;
- Excessive mandatory school registration fees; and/or
- Requirement to enroll in fee-based summer programs to secure a family’s enrollment in PKEEP or use of enrollment in such fee-based summer programs to prioritize families’ enrollment in PKEEP.

All PKEEP CBOs participate in the DC Child Care Subsidy Program, which also prohibits the charging of fees to families receiving subsidized child care services. Child care subsidy providers (including PKEEP CBOs) are permitted to charge late fees and transportation fees but may not charge families receiving subsidies any other fees ([DC Child Care Subsidy Program Policy Manual](#), Section 5.4). Child care subsidy providers (including PKEEP CBOs) receive a \$75 registration fee for children participating in the DC Child Care Subsidy Program when such fees are charged to other families. A PKEEP CBO may charge non-subsidy families a registration fee, but this fee may not exceed \$75. PKEEP CBOs receive additional funding for before- and after-care services for children enrolled in the DC Child Care Subsidy Program and may not charge fees for such care for these children during the PKEEP school year. Families receiving child care subsidies may be required to pay family co-payments outside of the PKEEP school year.

OSSE recognizes that PKEEP CBOs may charge families not enrolled in the DC Child Care Subsidy Program reasonable mandatory fees for additional services (e.g., registration fees, field trips, late fees). PKEEP CBOs may also charge fees for before and/or after care for children not receiving child care subsidies. Additionally, PKEEP CBOs may charge families not receiving child care subsidies for child care services provided outside of the PKEEP program, including care during the summer and/or school vacations (but, as stated above, may not require participation in such programming as a condition of a child's enrollment in PKEEP, or use such participation to prioritize children for PKEEP enrollment).

OSSE will investigate complaints involving the use of prohibited mandatory fees and administer appropriate enforcement action(s) if the allegations are substantiated.

For questions related to the PKEEP Fee Policy, email pkeep.osse@dc.gov.