



Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP) Monitoring Policy **Effective Oct. 1, 2025**

Background

The Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008 (“The Act”) authorizes the provision of free, universal pre-K to all 3- and 4-year-olds in the District of Columbia through a mixed delivery system that includes District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), public charter schools and child development facilities operated by community-based organizations (CBOs). The Act authorizes the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to oversee pre-K across the mixed delivery system and to administer the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP) to fund delivery of high-quality public pre-K in CBOs. Pursuant to 5A DCMR § 3506, OSSE is authorized to monitor all PKEEP CBOs to verify their continued eligibility and adherence to PKEEP’s high-quality standards as a condition of receiving PKEEP funding. OSSE may revoke a high quality designation based upon a finding that the CBO no longer meets the eligibility criteria or high-quality standards. A CBO shall cooperate with any monitoring conducted by OSSE pursuant to this subsection, and failure to do so may result in loss of a high quality designation or PKEEP funding.

Monitoring PKEEP High-Quality Standards and Criteria

Monitoring of PKEEP CBOs is conducted throughout the year. OSSE will use information provided by CBOs through various means including but not limited to PKEEP grant applications, monthly programmatic reports, reimbursement requests, mid-year check-in meetings, site visits, annual reports, internal OSSE data and bi-monthly PKEEP managers’ meetings to determine CBO compliance. OSSE will share the information sources and compliance status with CBOs via an annual PKEEP monitoring report following one full fiscal year of PKEEP participation.

PKEEP CBOs must maintain compliance with all PKEEP high-quality standards and funding criteria (see Table I). For purposes of issuing compliance findings, OSSE has identified the following primary high-quality standards and criteria:

- Operate a child development facility licensed by OSSE (§3501.1(l));
- Be a Level II child care subsidy provider (§3500.3(d));
- Meet and maintain minimum student enrollment requirements (§3500.3(e));
- Provide at least 6.5 hours of pre-K services for at least 180 days/year (§3500.3(g));
- Use a comprehensive curriculum approved by OSSE (§3501.1(b));

- Accreditation by a national accrediting body approved by OSSE (§3501.1(c));
- Conduct three child assessments and share results (§3500.3(e));
- Employ PKEEP teachers and assistant teachers who meet the minimum education requirements for their role (§3501.1(e)); and
- Pay PKEEP teachers and assistant teachers in accordance with PKEEP salary guidance (§3501.1(f)).

PKEEP Monitoring Report

The PKEEP monitoring report will evaluate a CBO's compliance in the prior fiscal year in accordance with the following three tiers:

1. Compliance:

- The PKEEP CBO met and maintained all PKEEP high-quality standards and funding criteria.
- No further action is needed.

2. Substantial Compliance:

- The PKEEP CBO met and maintained all primary PKEEP high-quality standards and funding criteria but did not meet or maintain at least one additional PKEEP standard or funding criteria.
- A corrective action plan is required. The CBO must correct the noncompliance in the time period determined and communicated by OSSE and prior to receiving a high quality designation renewal.

3. Noncompliant:

- The PKEEP CBO did not meet or maintain one or more primary PKEEP high-quality standard(s) or funding criteria.
- A corrective action plan is required. The CBO must correct the noncompliance in the time period determined and communicated by OSSE and prior to receiving a high quality designation renewal.
- Failure to correct noncompliance may result in a recommendation to terminate or withhold PKEEP funding.

Waivers

OSSE may waive compliance with one or more of the high-quality standards for no more than 12 months. OSSE will only waive compliance of any provision if OSSE determines that the CBO is meeting or exceeding the intent of the high-quality standard, that granting the waiver does not jeopardize the health and welfare of staff and children, that the immediate economic impact on

the CBO is sufficient to make compliance infeasible and that granting a waiver is in the best interest of children served by the CBO.

CBOs will not receive a noncompliance finding for any standard for which they have an approved PKEEP waiver(s). For more information on submitting a waiver request, please contact Dionne.Muir-Clarke@dc.gov.

Appeals

A noncompliant CBO may appeal OSSE’s finding of noncompliance or decision to withhold or terminate funding. Any such request must be submitted in writing to OSSE prior to the effective date of the termination, or within 30 calendar days of the date the recipient received notice of termination or noncompliance, whichever is longer. The request must include:

1. A statement of facts regarding each specified reason for the termination or required remedial action;
2. The specific basis for contesting each reason;
3. The specific relief requested; and
4. Two copies of all documentary evidence supporting the recipient’s positions.

OSSE will review all appeals within 30 calendar days of receipt. All decisions will be final.

Table 1. PKEEP High-Quality Standards and Funding Criteria

Regulatory Citation (5A DCMR 3500)	PKEEP High-Quality Standard or Criteria
3500.3(d)*	Determine subsidy eligibility (Level II Provider)
3500.3(e)*	Maintain class size of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 to 16 children per one classroom where the youngest child is 3 years old • 16 to 20 children per one classroom where the youngest child is 4 years old
3500.3(f)	Participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), unless exempt
3500.3(g)*	Operate at least 39 weeks a year, for a total of at least 180 days; operate Monday through Friday, beginning no earlier than 7 a.m.; provide at least six and a half hours of pre-K education services.
3501.1(a)	Maintain an adult-to-child ratio of one-to-eight for children 30 months to 3 years of age and of one-to-10 for children 4 years of age or older.

3501.1(b)*	Utilize a comprehensive curriculum that is aligned with the District of Columbia's early learning standards.
3501.1(c)*	Be accredited by a national accrediting body approved by OSSE.
3501.1(d)*	Utilize child assessment tools that are aligned with the curriculum to assess child outcomes at least three times during the program year, share assessment results with families at least two times during the program year and share results with OSSE.
3501.1(e)*	Employ, at a minimum, one teacher and one teacher assistant in each classroom who meet minimum educational requirements for PKEEP teachers and teacher assistants.
3501.1(f)*	Pay teachers and assistant teachers equivalent to DCPS pre-K teachers or assistant teachers.
3501.1(g)	Maintain a professional learning and training plan for pre-K teachers and assistant teachers.
3501.1(h)	Provide opportunities for parents to participate in and support the program's educational mission.
3501.1(i)	Ensure inclusion of children with disabilities, in accordance with federal law.
3501.1(j)	Provide and maintain at all times a safe, secure, and developmentally appropriate place that is in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
3501.1(k)	Ensure the daily active play for each child of pre-K age, including outdoor play time, weather permitting.
3501.1(l)*	Operate a child development facility licensed by OSSE.
3501.1(m)	Maintain a process for continuous improvement, ongoing classroom assessments, and the collection of authentic child assessment data at least three times a year.
3501.1(n)	Provide comprehensive health and support services (including a developmental screening within 45 days of enrollment) for all children enrolled in the program.
35003.3(g)	Attend monthly managers meeting (meet other eligibility criteria).
3506.2	Submit monthly reports by the tenth business day of each month.

*Indicates primary standard for purposes of issuing compliance findings.