



SEATTLE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

May 2016

Policy Updates

On May 23, 2016, the Seattle City Council passed the following amendments to Seattle Preschool Program (“SPP”) legislation:

Continuity of care. The Seattle early learning community is committed to supporting efforts to reduce the numbers of transitions for families as their children move between educational sites/levels. To recognize and respect this commitment, SPP is making three changes.

1. **Child participation.** SPP will now formally allow up to 15% of the children in each agency’s classrooms to be “ineligible” for the program. Ineligible children include those who:
 - Do not reside within the City limits.
 - Are 3-years-old and over the family income limit.
 - Are currently eligible for kindergarten in Seattle Public Schools.

In other words, a large agency that has several SPP sites, or an agency that has just one site, may elect to hold up to 15% of the total slots in its SPP classrooms for children who are not eligible for the program. No individual classroom may have more than 5 children who are ineligible for SPP.

As a Seattle voter-approved property tax levy, the City is responsible for ensuring that the children who were intended to benefit from this investment are, in reality, benefitting. Many of our SPP providers are committed to their communities and serving children who may not meet SPP’s eligibility requirements. Allowing a small percentage of ineligible children in each SPP classroom is intended to make SPP more feasible for CBOs across the city. The City will not fund children who are ineligible for SPP.

Parents/guardians of children in SPP classrooms must consent to their child being enrolled in an SPP classroom. SPP requirements and expectations, including, but not limited to, the “No suspension or expulsion” policy, the attendance expectations, and

assessment (ASQ and TSG) reporting, apply to all children in SPP classrooms regardless of program affiliation or funding source.

2. **Continuity for previously-enrolled children.** SPP's "grandfathering" provision is extended beyond the first year of program participation and open to any SPP-eligible child. DEEL representatives will work annually with provider agencies to determine the number of children previously enrolled with a provider agency that will be eligible to enroll in SPP classrooms. SPP enrollment forms and eligibility verification must be completed for all children in SPP classrooms.
3. **Kindergarten continuity.** For SPP classrooms located in Seattle Public School buildings, children who live in the attendance zone of the school will have priority for enrollment. If feasible, beginning in 2017, priority for enrollment will also be given to children who have an older sibling enrolled in an elementary school where an SPP classroom is housed.

Organizational flexibility. Seattle preschool provider agencies have worked for years to provide high-quality programming that is responsive to their community. To make SPP feasible for a broader range of community providers, SPP is making three changes:

1. **Classroom commitment.** Providers are no longer required to provide a minimum of two classrooms for the program. Since space constraints make offering two SPP classrooms infeasible for some organizations, agencies may participate in SPP with one classroom.
2. **Program alignment.** Classrooms offering Head Start, ECEAP, or dual-language instruction, and those that specialize in serving children with identified disabilities may select a percentage of the children in blended SPP classrooms to meet the requirements and expectations of non-City funders. Children selected by provider agencies must meet SPP eligibility requirements or be counted toward the 15% of children who may be ineligible for SPP. DEEL representatives will work annually with provider agencies to determine the number of agency-selected children who will enroll in SPP classrooms. For Head Start and ECEAP, the number of agency-selected children will not exceed the number of slots contractually required by each funder. SPP enrollment forms and eligibility verification must be completed for all children in SPP classrooms.
3. **Curriculum waiver.** DEEL will develop a curriculum waiver process to permit high-quality providers to use curricula other than HighScope and Creative Curriculum. The waiver process will:

- Include input by a panel of early learning curriculum experts
- Align with the curriculum waiver process that are being developed by the State.

Agencies applying for curriculum waivers must:

- Have a rating of Level 4 or above in Early Achievers
- Use an evidence-based curriculum that includes a tool for assessing the fidelity of implementation
- Have an intensive, agency-managed plan for instructional support.

DEEL may approve up to three additional curricula for use by SPP provider agencies.