



**Seattle Preschool Program Request for Qualification
School Year 2026-27**

**Questions and Answers
Updated: 12/11/25**

#	Question(s)	Answer(s)	Date Received	Date Answered
1	<p>Before we assume we are generally ineligible, can you clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whether alternative assessment tools like COR Advantage are eligible• How DEEL determines alignment for both curriculum and assessments• If there's a rubric, crosswalk, or any guidance we can use to evaluate our current systems ahead of applying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) is the official assessment for SPP and must be used by all providers.• Providers using high-quality, evidence-based curriculum must have intensive plans for coaching, training and assessment as DEEL may not offer comprehensive supports for curricula that is not High Scope or Creative Curriculum. A waiver for a different curriculum may be approved if the provider "uses a specific evidence-based, validated curriculum that's aligned with best practices in the field, and that focuses on teaching/improving a specific outcome (literacy, math, SEL)... [and] Uses continuous quality improvement to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting educational goals." TSG is a required assessment.• Table 1 in the RFQ Release document would be a helpful checklist of sorts to confirm if current systems would meet future SPP requirements. A more substantial review/comparison could be conducted by reviewing the SPP Manual, however it's a very detailed operational manual, rather than a rubric to compare against.	11/21	11/26

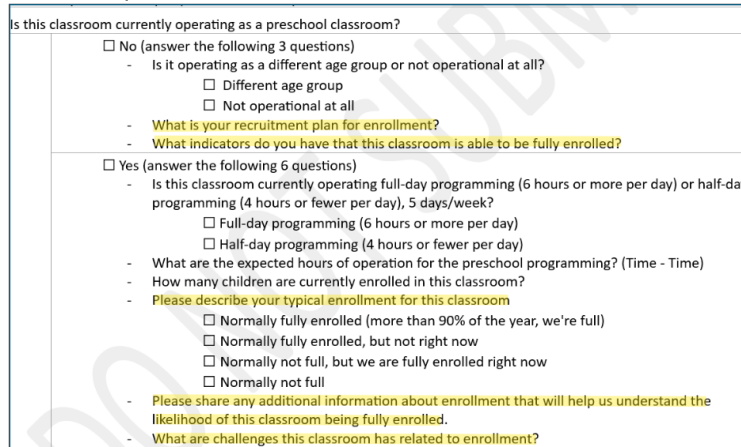


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2	We are currently located in 98178 Unincorporated King County and therefore have not qualified to participate in SPP in the past. If something has changed regarding the geographical location of our center please let us know and we'd be happy to apply.	Providers are not required to be located in Seattle to be eligible for this RFQ. However, the children enrolled in their program are expected to meet SPP eligibility criteria which includes Seattle residency. SPP Providers must also have an active Seattle business license upon contracting.	11/21	11/26
3	We are interested in starting the preschool program. I would like to know what are the next steps.	<p>Please visit the SPP Funding site: https://www.seattle.gov/education/for-providers/funding-opportunities/2026-27-spp-rfq</p> <p>From there, review the Release document for eligibility and program requirements: https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/DEEL/FundingOpportunities/RFQs/2025/26-27_SPP_%20RFQ_Release.pdf</p> <p>To apply, create an account in Submittable and submit the listed forms (use the Release document for instructions): https://seattledeel.submittable.com/submit</p>	11/24	11/26
4	Our teachers are currently pursuing their bachelor's right now and they have not graduated. How likely are we to be approved if they are in the processes of getting their bachelors?	You are eligible to apply. We give teachers four years from the date they start in that SPP classroom to meet qualifications and obtain their bachelor's degrees. Teachers' current qualifications don't weigh into the likelihood of your selection.	12/2	12/2
5	Do directors have the same four years to receive their bachelor's degree as the lead teachers?	Yes.	12/2	12/2
6	Is tuition support for higher education just for the teachers or does that also include the site director?	Right now, it's just for the teachers.	12/2	12/2



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7	If the qualified lead teacher is absent, are there requirements around who can substitute for them on a particular day?	We don't dictate that, but would like substitutes to be equipped. Our requirements apply to the permanent teacher. If you've got a floater who needs to be in there for a day and they don't meet qualifications, that's ok.	12/2	12/2
8	Our very experienced center, from years as an FCC, has an initial license and expect to get non-expiring in March. Are we eligible?	They do need to already have their non-expiring license in order to be eligible to apply right now. So, they would need to wait to apply until they already had their non-expiring license.	12/2	12/2
9	Question about assessments, we don't do any of the Teaching Strategies Gold or the ASQ assessments. Is that a 4-year timeline to do those, as well?	No, that would need to be immediate. You would need to be prepared and have infrastructure that would allow you to administer those assessments beginning the 26-27 school year. Not having experience with those assessments yet would likely be taken into consideration in the selection process, but SPP has supports and technical assistance to help a provider prepare and be successful. Again, dependent on the internal supports already in place to begin adopting these assessments/screenings.	12/2	12/2
10	Is there financial support for Teaching Strategies Gold and things like that?	Yes. SPP pays for TSG licenses/portfolios and training. The High Scope and Creative curriculum is funded by SPP, too. If you're using Creative Curriculum or High Scope, we pay for all training and all curriculum, supplies and materials.	12/2	12/2
11	We are cooperative preschool, with three-hour classes (AM/PM) with two different teachers. For this programming, we're not required to be licensed. Are we exempt or need that license to apply for Seattle preschool program?	SPP does require full day programming. Children enrolled need to attend for six hours and not just three. Generally, if you're a full-day program, you have to be licensed by DCYF and that license would need to be a non-expiring. Our expectation is that you have a consistent lead and assistant or co-lead teachers who are trained in the curriculum, can administer the curriculum with fidelity, and are responsible for	12/2	12/2



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		that classroom, so that requirement could interrupt a co-op model if that's important to your operating structure.		
12	We are a newly licensed organization, close to being fully licensed. The people that run the center have significant experience and have all the qualifications. They're doing Creative Curriculum. Are you saying that they are disqualified because they don't have a non-expiring license, despite all of these qualifications and experience?	Yeah, that is true.	12/2	12/2
13	I saw on page ten of the RFQ where it's talking about how specific classrooms are going to be selected and that it looks like the city wants to look at two years of enrollment data to demonstrate demand at the center or in that classroom. Where is that information collected in the application process?	<p>That is a question on the classroom form.</p>  <p>The narrative questions don't ask "what has been your enrollment rate for the last two years?" We ask for more details to understand the story around recruitment for this classroom.</p>	12/2	12/2
14	What tends to happen with Seattle Preschool Program classrooms in the summer? Are parents still kind of opting in? Paying for child care with private pay or	I will answer for the 2026-2027 school year. SPP providers who are not currently operating SPP for 2025-2026 will not have access to summer of 2027 funding, so anybody who is not	12/2	12/2



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	subsidy? Or is it possible to run the program for longer than 180 days?	<p>currently operating SPP would need to make plans for summer. Providers who are not funded for summer of 2027 would go to a private pay model with their families. We know that many of our providers are childcare providers that offer year-round, full day, and all kinds of schedules for their families.</p> <p>SPP's limited funds don't allow us to just have a year round program for all of our classrooms that might want it, so that funding is only accessible to our existing contractors.</p> <p>Providers who are not funded for SPP over the summer encourage families to access other subsidies, like Working Connections, BSK or CCAP.</p>		
15	We have a center with room for new families to come and join us rather than kind of converting our current families. Does the city provide any support with recruitment and enrollment of families?	<p>Yes, we do. It's a delicate balance. On one hand, we are obligated to select children for SPP based on certain criteria, and that's listed in the release document. Criteria like,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-year-olds before 3-year-olds • Children zoned for a particular school • Siblings, etc. <p>We are required to select students in that order and place them at sites. However, if there is something systematically preventing us from doing that, then we won't do that and instead we'll say you do your own enrollment.</p> <p>For example, if your organization serves younger kids that would move into an SPP classroom, in order to ensure those children have access to those slots, the agency would select their own children for SPP. If you're blended with ECEAP or Head Start, meaning you've got income restrictions in the SPP classroom, you would do your own enrollment. If you've got cultural alignment,</p>	12/2	12/2



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		<p>for example. One of our providers is Daybreak Star and they prioritize families from indigenous backgrounds or communities; we can't screen for that. That's not part of our selection criteria, so they do their enrollment for cultural alignment.</p> <p>You'll have an enrollment coordinator at DEEL who will be your ongoing partner.</p> <p>This would be a good time to clarify: the more competitive classrooms will already be fully enrolled with children. When you mention not converting your currently-enrolled classrooms, that's actually <i>not</i> what SPP wants. Our selection criteria will be prioritizing classrooms that are fully enrolled and those children would become SPP kiddos. Two agencies that had existing families/children enrolled and shifted to SPP this year (and even shifted just <i>one</i> of their preschool classrooms to SPP, not <i>all</i>) are Hutch Kids and The Children's Center at Burke Gilman Gardens. Perhaps they could offer insight into their experience joining SPP with existing classrooms of children.</p>		
16	How much weight is given to the narrative versus the hard data of the program?	<p>High level, there are two phases to this selection process. First is the application phase that asks narrative questions to tell us all about your story, who you serve, how your organization functions. A panel will review your entire application, but especially the narrative responses, and score them. And that's where you need to achieve 70 points to be considered for selection (RFQ Rating Criteria is on page 9 of the RFQ Overview) That's how you get onto the <i>roster</i>; how you become qualified to be an SPP provider.</p> <p>Let's say 25 classrooms want to be SPP next year. That's when the "hard data" or quantitative data comes into play. For</p>	12/2	12/2



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		<p>example, if your classroom is on a certain section of the map, you might get points for being in this green section versus not green section. Or if you've got strong historical enrollment vs this classroom has never operated before, that will give you different points for historical enrollment.</p> <p>In the second stage where we're selecting you from 25 classrooms on the <i>roster</i>, that's where a lot of those quantitative data points come into play.</p>		
17	Does the SPP calendar strictly follow the Seattle Public Schools calendar, are there certain holidays that we need to observe or anything like that?	As long as you've got 180 operating days, you can operate whichever days between September 1 st and June 30 th . [6-hour days, 5-days/week are expected.]	12/2	12/2
18	Can apply if we start the certification of our site this month?	Eligible applicants must already have a non-expiring childcare license from DCYF. If that's not already obtained before the application deadline, you are not eligible to apply for this RFQ.	12/8	12/11
19	Is it possible to request a copy of the current draft agreement template for the SPP? I believe we may have requested one last year. We'd love a chance to preview this document again, if possible. Thank you so much for your consideration,	Yes, it has been uploaded to the funding opportunity page.	12/8	12/11
20	We don't have a childcare program right now and are looking to start one. Can we apply for SPP and would our situation be eligible?	<p>If a provider does not have a non-expiring license already, they are not eligible to apply for this RFQ.</p> <p>It can take considerable time to stand up a brand-new childcare agency from scratch, get a non-expiring license, staff, establish enrollment, and demonstrate quality enough to be a competitive</p>	12/8	12/11



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		<p>applicant for SPP. You <i>may</i> be able to apply for the 2027-28 RFQ. The state has many resources to help new providers get started.</p> <p>The most competitive SPP Applicants will first to be eligible, already have a non-expiring license, and then we'll probably be operating for at least two years or so serving the community that we're hoping to serve. It's not an eligibility requirement, but we do look for a demonstrated history of service and quality to show the rigor that we kind of ask of you once you're in the program. SPP takes a decent amount of infrastructure.</p>		
21	Is it allowable to partner with a childcare provider to operate out of our space?	<p>Yes, this is already happening at many of our sites. After you've identified a childcare agency that would be interested in operating in your space, they would be the ones to apply for SPP.</p> <p>In particular, if you were to partner with an existing SPP provider, they have an abbreviated application process. It's more straight forward for you to identify an established childcare provider to operate out of your space.</p>	12/8	12/11
22	We have a new site with a non-expiring license, but it hasn't operated for two years yet. However, our larger agency has operated for many years at many other locations, so there's established infrastructure, just not at this particular location. Is this still a competitive application?	Yes. That is what we'd like to hear more about in your application – how you've got that shared infrastructure that allows you to replicate success at multiple locations.	12/8	12/11
23	What if our site does not currently have or use TSG, do we need it prior to the application?	No, the most competitive providers will have already been using TSG with fidelity. To that end, an equally competitive application would recognize "We don't use TSG but understand the tenants of TSG and here's what we do already and how it aligns with	12/8	12/11



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		<p>TSG.” This would be a really helpful way for our application reviewers to see how successful you would be in adopting TSG as a new assessment tool.</p> <p>DEEL pays for TSG, CLASS, and we manage all the ASQ technical supports, so all of the required assessments are financed and supported by DEEL. The challenges that some recent providers may have with TSG is getting their team trained up and mostly bought in, because especially if it's new and you've got some <i>other</i> structure, it can be a little bit difficult to bring in TSG three to four times a year and do this relatively rigorous observation and documentation collection if it's not established behavior.</p>		
24	Can we use our own curriculum?	<p>Yes, it must be evidence-based. Describe it in your application. We expect you to already have a built-in infrastructure for training and professional development for that curriculum.</p> <p>But right now, we don't have a precedent of any providers in SPP who are not running Creative Curriculum or High Scope, but it's allowed.</p>	12/8	12/11
25	Both of my lead teachers have a degree in Elementary Ed, not ECE. Would they still have to switch their degrees over to an ECE degree?	<p>[currently for SY25-26] Lead Teachers require a bachelor's and 30 ECE credits and up to ten of those credits could be crossover (school age or hybrid) credits. So, they would just need to get the additional credits to be meeting qualifications. And as a reminder, you've got four years to meet those qualifications once that teacher has started in the SPP classroom, so it doesn't have to be a prerequisite.</p> <p>Funding increases as your teachers become qualified or exceeding qualifications.</p>	12/8	12/11



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26	Does SPP pay for teachers to go to school?	Yes, SPP Scholars is a scholarship fund (after all other scholarship funds have been accessed) for teachers to help meet the SPP qualifications. An ECE navigator can support your educators in developing an education plan, if they don't have one. The funding is competitive; we can't fund every single teacher who wants it.	12/8	12/11
27	What are the limitations for providers who are geographically outside of Seattle? Are they eligible? Is there a certain distance?	Yes, they are eligible, and we look for "Seattle-Adjacent." There's no exact mileage, however, if you don't have families who live in Seattle coming to that location, that would be a non-starter because kids who are eligible for SPP must be three and four, and Seattle residents . The decision-making factor would be if you have existing enrolled families from Seattle who are coming to you, even if you're 8 miles out of Seattle.	12/8	/12/11
28	Regarding enrollment, can the children in our infant/toddler classrooms get priority enrollment in the SPP classroom?	<p>Yes, there's an allowance for continuity of care. Enrollment in SPP starts with DEEL and a centralized application. The children are prioritized in a certain order (i.e. 4-year-olds are enrolled before 3-year-olds.) If an agency has reason to add any criteria to the selection of children, then they will do their own enrollment. e.g., a child is coming from a toddler classroom and you want to move them into your preschool classroom, if you've got Head Start or ECEAP and there's income requirements for that classroom, etc. And there are reasons like continuity of care: Program alignment with Head Start or ECEAP, cultural alignment like Daybreak Star Preschool prioritizes native and indigenous families, if you require children to participate for a full 10-hour day (SPP is only six hours). So, if any of those scenarios might apply to your site, you will do your own selection of children.</p> <p>For agencies that do their own enrollment, DEEL will still support you. We give you a staff member to be available, help you do</p>	12/8	12/11



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		paperwork as needed. Overall, you choose the child, you help that family get enrolled, and you maintain that relationship with them.		
29	Can an agency share enrollment with DEEL? A 20-child classroom have 10 kids enrolled by DEEL and 10 enrolled by the agency?	Technically, yes. There's a chance that could change, but for now that's true.	12/8	12/11