

**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, SECONDARY AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

**PART 100.3 (a): QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES PREKINDERGARTEN THROUGH
SIX: PREKINDERGARTEN AND KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND
IN VOLUNTARILY REGISTERED NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS**

1. What prekindergarten programs are offered in public schools?

Public schools offer New York State-funded experimental prekindergarten and universal prekindergarten programs and prekindergarten programs, which are funded through Title I and local tax levies.

2. What are experimental prekindergartens?

- Experimental prekindergartens are developmentally-appropriate programs initially funded in 1966 to serve economically disadvantaged four-year-old children. Funding is limited to those school districts that are currently participating in this program.

3. What programs do experimental prekindergartens offer?

Experimental prekindergartens offer a balance of indoor and outdoor, active and quiet play, and individual and group activities to address the social, emotional, intellectual, creative development, and language/literacy needs of all children.

4. What services do experimental prekindergartens provide?

Experimental prekindergartens provide comprehensive services that include a focus on family support, social work, nutrition, health services, and parent involvement.

5. May three-year-old children be enrolled in experimental prekindergartens?

School districts may enroll three-year-old children only if all eligible and interested four-year-olds have been served. Otherwise, children must be four years old on or before December first of the year in which they are enrolled. A few school districts have established December 31st as their cut-off date.

6. What are universal prekindergartens?

Universal prekindergartens are developmentally appropriate, learner-centered programs, with a strong focus on early literacy. They serve children through formal collaborations between schools districts and community early childhood education agencies.

7. How are universal prekindergartens funded?

Universal prekindergartens were established in 1997 by Section 3602-e of Education Law, which provides a grant allocation to eligible school districts to serve children who are four years or age on or before December 1st of the year in which they are enrolled. A few districts have established December 31st as the cut-off date. Children must be eligible for kindergarten the following year.

8. How is school district eligibility for universal prekindergarten determined?

School district eligibility is determined according to a formula established by the statute. At the present time, school district participation is not mandatory.

9. Is collaboration between school districts and community early childhood education agencies mandatory for universal prekindergartens?

Yes. Collaboration between school districts and community early childhood education agencies is mandatory. Ten percent of the grant allocation to school districts has to be allocated for contracts with these agencies.

10. How is eligibility for kindergarten determined?

A child is eligible to attend a public kindergarten through Section 3202 of Education Law. Section 3202 states that any child who reaches his or her fifth birthday by December 1st (unless the school district resolves to extend the entry date beyond December 1st) is entitled to attend a public kindergarten.

11. Is kindergarten attendance mandatory?

No. Kindergarten attendance is not mandatory. However, when a child does not attend kindergarten, parents or guardians must be able to show that the child received adequate instruction on a kindergarten level in order for that child to be placed in first grade. (Matter of Cann, 1956, 77 St. Dept. (Educ.) 107)

12. What is the recommended group size for prekindergarten and kindergarten students?

Recommended group size for three- and four-year-olds is no more than 15-18 students and for five- and six-year-olds, no more than 18-20 students. More specific requirements are dependent on the regulations of different program areas, such as the State Office of Children and Family Services (day care licensing), the State Education Department (voluntary registration of nonpublic nursery schools and kindergartens), and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (accreditation).

13. What should be the adult-child ratio for these groups?

Nonpublic Schools

In nonpublic nursery schools and nonpublic kindergartens voluntarily registered with the NYS Education Department under Commissioner’s Regulations, Part 125, the following applies:

For three year olds, the ratio of children to adults shall not be greater than 8:1, with a maximum class size of 20 children in one group in one room;

For four year olds, the ratio of children to adults shall not be greater than 10:1, with a maximum class size of 20 children in one group in one room;

For five year olds, the ratio of children to adults shall not be greater than 15:1, with a maximum class size of 22 children in one group in one room; and

There shall be more than one adult available to any group at all times and there shall be a qualified teacher in attendance at all times.

Public Schools

In public (State-funded) pre-kindergarten programs, the following applies:

Universal PreK

Class size shall not exceed 18 students with one certified teacher and one para. Maximum class size shall not exceed 20 with one teacher and at least two paraprofessionals.

Targeted Prek

Class size has a required minimum of 16 students per session with one Prek teacher and at least one teacher assistant/aide. Maximum class size shall not exceed 20 with one Prek teacher and at least two teacher assistants/aides.

In public school kindergartens, there are no State mandates regarding adult-child ratios or maximum class size.

14. Are there per child square footage space requirements for prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms?

There are per child square footage requirements for prekindergarten classrooms. There are no per child footage requirements for kindergarten classrooms. The minimum requirements for prekindergarten are 30 square feet per child in district-operated programs and 35 square feet per child in agency-based programs that are licensed as child care facilities.

15. What is a voluntarily registered nonpublic nursery school and/or kindergarten?

A voluntarily registered nonpublic nursery school and/or kindergarten is defined in Commissioner’s Regulations Part 125 as:

- Organized for the purpose of educating a group or groups of six or more children less than seven years of age, under the supervision of qualified teachers, providing an adequate program of learning activities and maintaining good standards of health and safety; and
- Registered by the Department upon the submission of satisfactory evidence that it meets the standards set forth in Commissioner’s Regulations. After approval of the application, an onsite visit is made to finalize the registration process.

16. What are the basic requirements for becoming a voluntarily registered nonpublic nursery school or kindergarten?

Schools that seek to be voluntarily registered must provide evidence that they:

- Meet State and local fire, health, and building codes;
- Meet Commissioner’s Regulations Part 125 in regard to indoor and outdoor facilities; staff qualifications; adult-child ratios; staff health exams, tuberculin tests, CPR, and first aid training; student physical exams and immunizations; meals and snacks; educational program, equipment and materials; emergency procedures; and
- Have met the requirements for licensing by the State Office of Children and Family Services, if services for children under seven are provided for more than three hours per day, per group.

17. What happens after all State and local requirements have been met?

A certificate of registration, valid for a five-year period, signed by the Commissioner of Education and with the gold seal of the Board of Regents affixed, will be issued to the nonpublic nursery school and/or kindergarten after all State and local requirements have been met.

18. What is required for a nonpublic school or kindergarten to become incorporated?

New York and business corporation law (for profit) corporations are formed when a certificate of incorporation is filed with the Secretary of State of New York. Education corporations (nonprofit) are formed by petitioning the State Board of Regents for a provisional charter of incorporation pursuant to Section 216 of the Education Law.

19. What is required when a board of directors of a “day care center only,” incorporated pursuant to the New York Not-for-Profit Corporation Law, elects to expand into a kindergarten (or nursery, elementary, and or secondary school)?

When the Board of Directors of a “day care center only” elects to expand into a school, the corporation will be operating “ultra vires” or “beyond the scope” unless steps are taken to reincorporate pursuant to the Education Law. For further information and technical assistance, a “day care center only” who elects to expand into a school may contact the State Education Department’s Office for Nonpublic School Services at 518- 474-3879.

Educational Programs for Prekindergarten and Kindergarten – 100.3 (a) (1)

20. What is meant by an educational program based on and adapted to the ages, interests, and needs of the children?

An educational program for prekindergarten and kindergarten is based on an understanding, from research and practice, of how young children develop physically, socially, emotionally, linguistically, culturally, and intellectually.

21. What does the State require to determine children's needs?

Commissioner's Regulations Part 117 requires local school districts to screen all new entrants to State public schools. This applies to students, ages 5-21, entering a public school system for the first time or reentering a public school with no available record of a prior screening. The purpose of this screening is to identify children who might have a disability, be limited English proficient/English language learners (LEP/ELL), and/or gifted. (See question/answer 23 for an explanation of the difference between screening and assessment.)

22. How are the results of a screening used?

Screening results are reviewed and reported. The written report provides the name of the assessment tool, student results, and may include a referral.

- A student identified as possibly gifted is reported to the superintendent of schools;
- A student identified as possibly having a disability is referred to the school system's Committee on Special Education (CSE);
- A student identified as possibly limited English proficient/English language learners (LEP/ELL) is assessed by the use of an approved, appropriate, and unbiased assessment tool and reported to the superintendent of schools. (For more information, see Commissioner's Regulations Part 154. 2 (b) and/or *Guidelines for Programs for Limited English Proficient/Limited English Language Learners. (LEP/ELL).*)

23. What is the purpose of prekindergarten and kindergarten assessment?

The purpose of prekindergarten and kindergarten assessment is to inform curriculum and instruction by identifying students':

- Strengths and interests;
- Social, emotional, physical, linguistic, and intellectual needs;
- Ability to demonstrate competencies that build a foundation for achievement of the State learning standards; and
- Progress over time using multiple measures.

24. What is the difference between screening and assessment?

Screening is a brief procedure used to identify children who need further comprehensive evaluation as compared to assessment, which is an ongoing process. Decisions about placement and curriculum and instruction needs should not be made solely on the basis of a screening. (See questions/answers 21 and 22 for more information about State screening requirements.)

25. What are appropriate assessment practices for prekindergarten and kindergarten programs?

Appropriate assessment practices in prekindergarten and kindergarten:

- Incorporate the language of the State learning standards;

- Include multiple measures implemented over a period of time;
- Are implemented within the context of the children's everyday experiences;
- Reflect teachers' ongoing observations, including anecdotal and running records;
- Are conducted in the child's native language and in English; and
- Include input from the child's family.

26. What does early childhood research and practice indicate regarding the design of an educational program for prekindergarten and kindergarten?

Early childhood research and practice indicates that programs for prekindergarten and kindergarten should be designed to provide a variety of opportunities for young children, preferably in the native language of a child who is limited English proficient/English language learner (LEP/ELL). These opportunities include:

- Learning new information and constructing knowledge through active engagement with diverse materials, people, and ideas;
- Building on individual strengths, interests, and background experiences;
- Making observations, predictions, and inferences by exploring, manipulating, and investigating things in their environment;
- Participating in individual, small, and large group activities;
- Connecting new concepts and skills with those already learned;
- Participating in a balance of active and quiet activities on a daily basis;
- Making choices among a variety of activities;
- Participating in playful, interactive, connected learning experiences; and
- Progressing from concrete to abstract understanding of concepts.

27. What are the characteristics of a learner-centered classroom or outdoor environment for young children?

Learner-centered environments in the classroom and outdoors have the following characteristics:

Classroom

- Facilities which meet State and local health and safety requirements;
- Provisions for accessibility for children with disabilities;
- Bright, attractive and inviting settings;
- Spaces and equipment which foster active engagement;
- Clearly-defined and labeled learning centers in a child's native language and in English;
- Activities and a daily routine that build a sense of community in the language best understood by the child, based on sharing, respect and mutual trust;
- Age-appropriate materials, in a child's native language and in English, integrated within the planned curriculum;
- Non-sexist, multicultural materials and activities; and
- Development of foundational computer technology skills.

Outdoors

- Spaces that meet State and local health and safety requirements;
- Large motor equipment that meets safety standards;
- Grassy areas for group play, paved areas for riding toys, and soft surfaces for swing and slide areas; and
- Sand and water play area with appropriate utensils for scooping, digging, pouring, etc.

28. Why is it important to include community resources as part of the learning environment?

It is important to include community resources as part of the learning environment because that interaction helps young students to:

- Develop a sense of the local geography;
- Make connections to the world of work, language, and culture;
- Explore the natural environment; and
- Identify local areas of interest such as, libraries, museums, farms, zoos, greenhouses, florists, nature preserves, and fish hatcheries, etc.

Communication Skills and Exposure to Literature (a) (1) (i)

29. What communication skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) are prekindergarten and kindergarten students expected to demonstrate in English and in a child's native language?

Prekindergarten and kindergarten students are expected to demonstrate communication skills related to reading, writing, listening, and speaking that are in the State learning standards. For limited English proficient/English language learners (LEP/ELL), these communication skills may be demonstrated in a student's native language.

The following charts list examples of specific communication skills by grade level (prekindergarten or kindergarten). Grade level designations and early literacy skill developmental approaches will vary, depending on a student's developmental level and English linguistic background.

Communication Skill	Prekindergarten	Kindergarten
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distinguish between print and pictures to show awareness of printed letters and words• Recognize that letters represent sounds• Track printed words that are read aloud• Retell or summarize information or ideas from a text	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify beginning consonant sounds in one-syllable spoken words• Recognize and identify words that rhyme• Distinguish sight words from environmental print• Identify vocabulary from words and concepts in books
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow left to right and top to bottom direction when writing English• Write own first name	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write all upper and lower case manuscript letters• Write own first and last name and those

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spell a few common or familiar words • Label drawings with letters or words • Show interest in sharing writing with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of family members • Produce and/or label drawings and pictures with letters or words
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact in group discussions or class meetings • Respond to stories read aloud • Understand and follow oral directions • Identify and respond to sounds in the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen attentively to spoken language • Listen attentively for different purposes • Track words and sentences as they are read aloud
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in conversations around a special project or activity • Share observations and feelings about experiences in the school or community, such as a nature walk or field trip • Speak with expression appropriate for the purpose • Participate in dramatizing a story read aloud • Respond verbally to questions and directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the connection between personal experiences and information in imaginative and informational texts • "Interview" visitors to the classroom or school • Ask questions to clarify understandings • Speak for different purposes • Use age-appropriate vocabulary and grammar

30. What learning experiences can teachers provide to expose prekindergarten and kindergarten students to quality children’s literature?

Learning experiences that teachers can provide to expose students to quality children’s literature include:

- Oral reading to familiarize students with story elements and a variety of genre, such as alphabet books, stories, poems, and informational text;
- Book discussions which include book titles and authors;
- Opportunities to frame questions to clarify parts of a text;
- Retelling stories to analyze the interactions and motivations of the characters;
- Performing arts, such as dramatizations that re-create the sequence of a story;
- Creative arts to encourage students to express what they heard, saw, or read in a book;
- Graphic organizers, such as charts and webs, to understand relationships among various elements of a text or more than one text;
- Cooperative learning teams designed to develop and extend literacy experiences; and
- Working as partners with parents and guiding them when necessary, so that students are reading quality children's literature in the home. (Students whose native language is not English may read either in their native language or English.)

Dramatic Play, Creative Art and Music Activities (a) (1) (ii)

31. How do prekindergarten and kindergarten students learn literacy skills through dramatic play?

Prekindergarten and kindergarten students learn literacy skills through dramatic play by:

- Discussing the meaning of actions that occur in a role play;
- Speaking more precisely to describe their own experiences;
- Communicating their feelings in appropriate ways, using a variety of settings; and
- Participating in print-rich activities, such as grocery shopping, taking telephone messages, and mailing letters.

32. How do prekindergarten and kindergarten students learn literacy skills through the creative arts?

Prekindergarten and kindergarten students learn literacy skills through the creative arts by:

- Using a variety of materials and experiences as the basis to express ideas and emotions;
- Building visual and spatial relationship skills to support emergent writing;
- Developing fine motor/small muscle skills and tactile senses to strengthen eye-hand coordination; and
- Using their imagination to create and respond to a variety of texts and works of art.

33. How do prekindergarten and kindergarten students learn literacy skills through music?

Prekindergarten and kindergarten students learn literacy skills through music by:

- Singing and responding to songs and fingerplays;
- Chanting and responding to rhymes and poems;
- Making and using simple rhythm instruments;
- Creating , responding to, and moving to rhythmic sounds, and
- Responding to recorded and live musical performances.

Participation in Group Projects, Discussions, and Games (a) (1) (iii)

34. What group participation activities are appropriate for a prekindergarten or kindergarten program?

The following are examples of appropriate group participation experiences for prekindergarten or kindergarten:

- Conversations with peers and adults;
- Class meetings;
- Structured role play;
- Informal dramatizations;
- Project work;

- Small group conversations; and
- Interviewing special guests.

Science and Mathematical Experiences (a) (1) (iv)

35. What science and mathematical experiences need to be infused into prekindergarten and kindergarten curriculum?

Science and mathematical experiences which need to be infused into a prekindergarten and kindergarten curriculum are those that encourage children’s innate imagination and curiosity. Activities may include anything that engages children in using their senses to explore and manipulate. Young children learn from projects where they can:

- Observe what's happening;
- Try to make sense of what has been observed;
- Ask and frame questions about their observations;
- Predict what might happen; and
- Test predictions under controlled conditions.

36. What key ideas and competencies from the State learning standards need to be included in a prekindergarten and kindergarten's math curriculum?

Key ideas and competencies from the State learning standards that need to be included in a prekindergarten and kindergarten's math curriculum are:

Mathematical Reasoning

- Similarities and differences
- Sorting and classifying
- Number sequence
- Quantities of solids and liquids
- Grouping and sequencing

Number and Numeration

- One-to-one correspondence
- Order of whole numbers
- Whole and parts
- Grouping and place value
- Recognize numbers from 0-9

Modeling and Representation

- Using manipulatives to understand spatial relationships;
- Analyzing and displaying real-world data on graphs, charts, etc.;
- Ordering sets of objects; and
- Identifying objects with geometric shapes.

Measurement

- Using standard and nonstandard units of measure;
- Using comparative terms, such as, more-less, heavier-lighter, etc.;
- Comparing length, height, weight, and capacity; and
- Gathering and displaying information about objects.

Patterns

- Identifying patterns in the indoor and outdoor environment;
- Using manipulatives such as, puzzles, blocks, beads etc. to re-create patterns in the environment;
- Recognizing patterns in art, music, and literature; and
- Drawing and/or describing patterns.

37. What key concepts and competencies from the State learning standards need to be included in the science curriculum for prekindergarten and kindergarten?

A prekindergarten and kindergarten science curriculum should include the following key concepts and competencies:

Physical Setting

- Observing and describing specific properties of objects in the classroom, school, and community;
- Classifying objects based on specific criteria;
- Using simple tools to gather and describe information;
- Recognizing how materials change when conditions change in the environment; and
- Making and recording predictions.

Living Environment

- Identifying similarities and differences between living and non-living things;
- Describing and comparing human and animal habitats;
- Naming parts of human and animal bodies and their function;
- Naming parts of a flower and/or plant;
- Identifying ways plants are used for food; and
- Observing, describing, and documenting the growth of living things.

Large Muscle Activities - (a) (1) (v)

38. Why are large muscle/gross motor activities important in prekindergarten and kindergarten?

Large muscle/gross motor activities are important to help students gain awareness and control of their bodies. These activities provide a variety of active play, group games, music, and movement experiences that provide opportunities for students to dance, run, hop, skip, climb, and jump.

39. Why are small muscle/fine motor activities important in prekindergarten and kindergarten?

Small muscle/fine motor activities are important to strengthen eye-hand coordination and to develop a student's ability to manipulate objects in purposeful ways. These activities include the use of:

- Manipulatives, such as puzzles, unifix cubes, stringing beads, and tangrams;
- Writing utensils such as, pens, pencils, markers, and crayons; and
- Art tools such as, paint brushes, straws, stamp prints, strings, and feathers.

40. What are the requirements for physical education instruction for students in kindergarten based on Part 135.4 (2) (1) of Commissioner's Regulations?

Commissioner's Regulations Part 135.4 (2)(1) states that all students must participate in physical education activities on a daily basis and for at least 120 minutes in each calendar week, exclusive of the time required for showering and dressing or to be in an equivalent program approved by the Commissioner of Education.

Health Education – (a) (1) (vi)

41. Why is health education important in prekindergarten and kindergarten?

Health education is important in prekindergarten and kindergarten because students learn:

- The parts and functions of their body;
- The connection between good nutrition and good health;
- How to reduce safety risks in their immediate environment;
- How to respond appropriately in emergencies; and
- How to develop positive interpersonal relationships.

42. What are the requirements for instruction in health education for students in kindergarten based on Commissioner's Regulation Part 135.3?

Commissioner's Regulations Part 135.3 states that students in kindergarten (and primary grades) must be provided planned activities for:

- Developing attitudes;
- Knowledge and behavior that contribute to their own self worth;
- Respect for their bodies;
- Ability to make constructive decisions regarding their social and emotional, as well as their physical health; and
- Personal individualized health guidance, including the development of specific habits necessary to maintain good individual and community health.

Early Literacy Program for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten – 100.3 (a) (2)

43. What is the basis of a quality early literacy program?

A quality early literacy program is based on and adapted to the ages, interests, and needs of the children it serves. The program provides learning experiences that build the foundation needed to read, write, listen, and speak for a variety of purposes as outlined in the State English Language Arts (ELA) learning standards. An effective early literacy program is based on research that indicates that young children acquire language primarily by interacting with other children, adults, and the language symbols found in their environment. It is embedded in developmentally appropriate practice, and is responsive to the uniqueness of each child, including limited English proficient/English language learners (LEP/ELL), those with special needs, and those who are gifted.

44. What are the components of a balanced early literacy program for prekindergarten and kindergarten students?

The components of a balanced early literacy program include oral language, concepts of print, phonological and phonemic awareness, letter identification, character identification (for children's whose first language is based on characters), word recognition, fluency, and comprehension.

45. What are prekindergarten and kindergarten students expected to know and be able to do for each component of a balanced early literacy program?

Prekindergarten and kindergarten students are expected to demonstrate specific competencies for each component of a balanced early literacy program. Some of these competencies are listed in the chart below.

Component	Prekindergarten	Kindergarten
Oral Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak audibly and with expression appropriate for the purpose; • Take turns when speaking in a group. • Speak for different purposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share ideas or information - Retell information from text read aloud - Dramatize story sequences or events • Answer questions about a text or story • Make predictions about a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use precise words to describe feelings, share information, communicate ideas, and ask questions • Summarize information from text read aloud • Frame questions about a text • Make inferences about a text
Concepts of Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between print and pictures • Use picture clues to gain understanding of a text • Follow left to right and top to bottom direction when looking at books (in English) • Pretend to read books or magazines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify parts of a book and their function • Use illustrations to self-select a book • Understand that print represents words that can be read aloud • Recognize that the end of a written line of a text is not the end of a thought • Produce a word that rhymes with a spoken word
Phonological and Phonemic Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat the sequence of sounds heard in spoken words • Identify and produce letter-sound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that words are a combination of sounds • Recognize, identify, and produce spoken

	<p>correspondence, including spoken words that rhyme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Count or tap the number of syllables in multi-syllabic words Count or tap the number of words in spoken sentences 	<p>words that rhyme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify beginning consonant sounds in one syllable spoken words Sort syllables and words that share beginning, middle, and end sounds Blend spoken segments of syllables to create known words Identify and change the initial phoneme of word families to create new words
Letter Identification and Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a drawing, picture, or other graphic to represent a letter or a word Copy or write letters of the alphabet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize and name all upper case and lower cases manuscript letters Independently write some upper and lower case letters
Character Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be able to have an abstract concept of characters Be able to form own representation of characters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize and name many characters Copy or write some characters
Word Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the difference between letters and words Point to words on a chart or in a text when read aloud Match spoken words to print Recognize similar words in print 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize common words in the learning environment Learn the meaning of new words from books, magazine, charts, posters, etc. Use a picture dictionary to learn the meanings of words from a variety of text/genre
Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to simple questions about a book with limited text Compare characters, events, and/or settings in a story to personal experiences Make predictions about characters or events in a story Share feelings about parts of a story Help the teacher retell a story using objects and/or pictures Produce drawings or dictations about a text read aloud Select books and other written material based on personal criteria Dictate own interpretation of drawings, paintings, and other "compositions" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to questions about a book or other text, such as a language experience chart or classroom poster Frame simple questions to clarify a text read aloud Retell what is read or heard using own words Correctly answer questions about stories read aloud. Dramatize events in a story in the correct sequence Make inferences about characters or events in a story Share feelings about a story and the reasons for those feelings Help the teacher create a story map or complete a graphic organizer of a text Connect vocabulary and life experiences to characters and events in books Compare the story elements of two or more texts

46. What strategies can prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers use to motivate students to participate in early literacy experiences?

Prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers can use the following strategies to motivate students to participate in early literacy experiences:

- Read aloud daily to individual or groups of students;
- Encourage students to discuss and gain meaning from the illustrations in a text;
- Create a book area for classroom book collections;
- Include books and other printed material in each learning center of the classroom;
- Use and review descriptive words and phrases on students' project work;
- Provide a variety of books that reflect students interests, cultures, and activities in which their families are currently engaged, such as celebrating a family tradition;
- Display more than one copy of students' favorite books;
- Build in time for students to select books from libraries in the school or neighborhood;
- Use classroom resources such as word walls, picture dictionaries, and/or large charts to enhance learning; and
- Invite special guests to read to the children.

47. How should prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms be organized to support literacy development?

Prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms should be organized into clearly defined learning centers that evolve as the curriculum changes. Materials and equipment selected for these centers should foster creativity, exploration, and inquiry while exposing students to balanced literacy experiences, including oral language, concepts of print and comprehension in the child's first language and English, phonemic awareness, letter identification, character identification, and word recognition. Learning centers should be print-rich and appropriately labeled in the child's first language and in English with words, pictures, and symbols displayed at the child's eye level. Suggested learning centers with sample materials and props are listed below:

- **Library** – books, magazines, posters, puppets, photos, flannel board, and art prints which are culturally and linguistically appropriate;
- **Listening** – cassette/compact disk player, head phones, and books with audio;
- **Dramatic Play** – authentic props (clothing, hats, and career-related tools) and print materials (books, magazines and other materials) that help children act out male and female adult roles in a variety of settings;
- **Blocks** – unit and hollow blocks with complementary accessories, such as mathematical patterns, figurines of animals and people, and small toys;
- **Music** – rhythm instruments and instrumental and choral music;
- **Math/Manipulatives** – picture puzzles, simple board games, table blocks, unifix cubes, tangrams, Legos, beads for stringing, as well as standard and nonstandard measuring tools, etc.;

- **Writing** – story starters, lined and unlined paper of various sizes, large pencils, markers, crayons, print stamps, typewriters, computers, etc.;
- **Science** – plants, dirt, rocks, seeds, leaves, flowers, magnifiers, measuring tools, etc.;
- **Sand and Water Play** – plastic containers of various sizes and shapes;
- **Creative Arts** – easels, play dough, paint, sand, water, paper of different sizes, colors and textures, glue sticks, paste, scissors, tape, etc.; and
- **Large Muscle** – riding toys, jump ropes, hula-hoops, as well as indoor and outdoor equipment for activities, such as climbing and sliding.

Use of Reading to Obtain Meaning from Print (a) (2) (I)

48. What strategies may be used to help prekindergarten and kindergarten students obtain meaning from print?

Teachers use the following strategies to help prekindergarten and kindergarten students obtain meaning from print when working with fiction and nonfiction texts and from the learning environment. (For students whose native language is not English, the print preferably would first be in the native language and then in English.):

Strategies to Use with Fiction and Nonfiction Text

- Preview texts to create interest;
- Encourage students to retell, summarize, or draw conclusions from a story read aloud;
- Ask students about the actions, feelings, and intentions of a character;
- Encourage students to compare their personal experiences with the text;
- Use the context and illustrations to gain meaning from a text;
- Incorporate new words and concepts into a dramatization of the text;
- Participate in creating a language experience chart;
- Engage students in a discussion of the illustrations of a text;
- Ask students to predict what will happen next in a story or how it will end;
- Guide students in comparing two texts by the same author/illustrator;
- Engage students in a group project that is related to a theme from a book;
- Read back their self-dictated stories; and
- Engage students in sounding out letters and simple words.

Strategies to Use in the Learning Environment

- Provide creative art materials that students can use to respond to a text;
- Label furniture, storage containers, and common objects in the indoor or outdoor environment;
- Include literacy props (note pads, recipe charts, menus, coupons, price lists, and for sale signs) in each classroom learning center;
- Establish a writing center for tracing, drawing, and other emergent writing experiences;
- Post new or unfamiliar words on charts around the classroom; and
- Invite parents, school personnel, and community volunteers to have “book conversations” with the students in small or large groups.

Frequent and Intensive Opportunities to Read for Learning and for Pleasure (a) (2) (ii)

49. What is needed for prekindergarten and kindergarten students to read for learning and pleasure, preferably first in their native language and then in English if they are limited English proficient/limited language learners (LEP/ELL)?

Teachers need to provide daily opportunities for students to:

- Engage in authentic play that integrates reading, writing, listening, and speaking;
- Listen to and retell stories to recall information from a variety of patterned, predictable texts;
- Select from a wide range of children’s literature organized by concept, theme, or interest;
- Create imaginative oral and written stories;
- Connect literature to other experiences, such as, field trips, classroom projects, or family events;
- Listen to familiar words that are spoken in native languages; and
- Observe adults or older students selecting and reading books of their choice.

Activities that Teach Regular Spelling-Sound Relationships (a) (2) (iii)

50. What activities are appropriate to teach prekindergarten and kindergarten students’ regular spelling-sound relationships?

Activities that teach regular spelling-sound relationships include:

- Songs, fingerplays, poems, rhymes, and stories with repetitive language;
- Opportunities to hear, repeat, and recognize the similarities and differences in language patterns;
- Language experience charts, story starters, or recorded dictation to draw attention to specific sound or letter patterns; and
- Exposure to phonemic awareness activities. (See questions/answers 43 and 44.)

Learning About the Nature of the Alphabetic Writing System (a) (2) (iv)

51. What is the alphabetic writing system in the English language?

The alphabetic writing system in the English language is based on the “alphabetic principle” which describes the relationship between letters and sounds. Letters of the alphabet can be combined and recombined to convey meaning. Frequent oral language and phonemic awareness experiences are needed to be able to distinguish the sounds within words. Daily opportunities to use the sounds and symbols (written letters and words) of the English language help to build vocabulary and the ability to use more precise language. Activities that reinforce the alphabetic principle include:

- Following left to right and top to bottom direction when writing;
- Recognizing and writing own first and last name;
- Labeling drawings, paintings, and pictures with letters or words;

- Using classroom resources (word wall, picture dictionary, posters, and charts) to support own writing;
- Copying words, signs, lists, and labels from the immediate environment;
- Recognizing, identifying, and writing letters of the alphabet;
- Matching spoken words to printed words;
- Writing names on individual cubbies, mailboxes, paintings, and drawings;
- Labeling objects found in indoor and outdoor environment;
- Writing or dictating ideas, feelings, and questions; and
- Reproducing words associated with concepts, themes, objects, and events in a text.

Understanding the Structure of the Spoken Word (a) (2) (v)

52. What activities expose prekindergarten and kindergarten students to the structure of spoken words?

Activities that expose prekindergarten and kindergarten students to the structure of spoken words include recognizing initial sounds of words, identifying and using rhyming words, and engaging in conversations. These activities are critical to the early development of language. Young students need daily opportunities to participate in activities, such as:

- Asking and responding to questions;
- Making appropriate comments in reply to others' statements;
- Sharing observations and experiences through writing, drawing, picture taking, and role playing;
- Participating in small group projects that foster interaction, sharing, and problem-solving;
- Retelling a story or personal experience; and
- Copying names of people, places or objects from books, magazines, posters, and other forms of environmental print.

Parent Involvement 100.3 (a) (3)

53. How should prekindergarten and kindergarten administrators and teachers actively involve parents?

Prekindergarten and kindergarten administrators and teachers need to:

- Communicate with parents in the primary language of the home whenever possible;
- Train all school personnel to be sensitive to the diversity among families, such as sending messages to parents in the primary language of the home, posting welcoming signs and messages in all languages represented, and conducting special activities that recognize the different cultures;
- Develop and disseminate materials in the primary language of the home that inform families and the community about ongoing activities;
- Schedule parent conferences in consideration of differences in culture, language, employment, availability of resources, etc.;

- Welcome parents who serve on building level Part 100.11 shared decision making committees as equal partners;
- Provide opportunities for parents to become actively involved in their child’s classroom;
- Engage parents in activities to improve their own literacy;
- Inform parents about the State learning standards and how they relate to the instructional program;
- Provide information and guidance for parents on literacy activities students could do at home;
- Make home visits on an as needed basis and with parents’ consent;
- Provide parenting education programs for those who need them; and
- Provide space in the school for parent education programs, meetings. and special events.

Related Resources

54. What are examples of early literacy resources teachers use to plan and implement a quality educational program for prekindergarten and kindergarten students?

The following resources are available through the State Education Department website (<http://www.nysed.gov>) or by contacting the Department's Publication Sales Unit at 518:474-3806:

- **Preschool Planning Guide: Building a Foundation for Development of Language and Literacy in the Early Years;**
- **Early Elementary Resource Guide to Integrated Learning;**
- **Essentials of Reading;**
- **New York State Reading Symposium: Final Report;**
- **The Teaching of Language Arts to Limited English Proficient/English Language Learners: A Resource Guide for Teachers; and**
- **Early Literacy Guidance: PreK-Grade Three.**

The following publications are available through external sources:

- **Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children,** Susan B. Neuman, Carol Copple, and Sue Bredekamp;
- **Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children’s Reading Success,** The National Research Council;
- **Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction;** National Reading Panel of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development;
- **Beginning Reading and Writing,** International Reading Association, Eds. Dorothy S. Strickland and Lesley M. Morrow; and
- **Much More than the ABC’s: The Early Stages of Reading and Writing,** National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Judith A. Schickedanz

Additional Websites

The Center for Early Reading Achievement, <http://www.cirea.org>
National Institute for Literacy, www.nifl.gov
National Association for the Education of Young Children, www.naeyc.org
International Reading Association, www.reading.org