



**Major Program Requirement Differences:
Meck Pre-K vs NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance
September 18, 2018**

Administration:

- Meck Pre-K is administered by Smart Start of Mecklenburg County.
- Meck Pre-K is funded through the adoption of an annual budget by the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners.
- Payment rates are set by Smart Start of Mecklenburg County as approved by the Mecklenburg County Manager's Office.
- Smart Start of Mecklenburg County will coordinate and collaborate with the NC Pre-K Committee and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS).
- Smart Start will develop a Meck Pre-K reporting system (in lieu of the NC Pre-K Reporting Systems).

The County/Region NC Pre-K Committee

- Smart Start of Mecklenburg County will coordinate and collaborate with the NC Pre-K Committee and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS).
- Smart Start of Mecklenburg County will report on the list of implementation and operational requirements to the Mecklenburg County Manager's Office.
- Site selection requirements will use the NC Pre-K selection rubric and Smart Start of Mecklenburg County will make site selections in coordination with the County Manager's Office.
- Smart Start of Mecklenburg County and the County Manager's Office will create an advisory early childhood committee for ongoing input, discussion, and recommendations with regard to Meck Pre-K implementation and operation.

The Meck Pre-K Child

- The goal for Meck Pre-K is to serve all 4 year-old children in the county regardless of income. Initially, children in families below 220% of the federal poverty level are targeted for enrollment. The same income exceptions allowed for the NC PreK program will apply (e.g., up to 20% of children regardless of income if the following risk factors apply: identified disability; limited English; an educational need (through a developmental screening or IEP); a chronic health condition as indicated by a diagnosis from a professional health care provider; and children (in families) who are homeless).
- Smart Start of Mecklenburg County will coordinate with CMS with regard to a coordinated support plan for children with special needs.

The Meck Pre-K Site

- Meck Pre-K funding will follow a classroom construct based on 18 children in each classroom (unless the licensed capacity is less). The payment by classroom construct will be monitored and reviewed and adjustments could occur should classrooms incur significant under enrollment.
- Child attendance must be taken daily and submitted to Smart Start monthly. The goal for Meck Pre-K is to have 90% or higher attendance for children. Aggregate attendance data will be made public as part of an end-of-year public dashboard.

- During the initial home visit, parents will sign a policy statement in recognition of the importance of child attendance for growth and development.
- Excused absences will follow NC Pre-K rules, however, every effort will be made to ensure that parents understand the importance of child attendance and that attendance will be publicly tracked.

Transportation fees

- Families can be charged a nominal fee. The Mecklenburg County NC Pre-K policy limits fees to parents to \$20 per week for transportation. Meck Pre-K will also allow site administrators to charge parents up to \$20 per week for transportation.
- Transportation scholarships will be provided at \$20 per week per child for round trip transportation for up to 5 children per Meck Pre-K classroom. Transportation logs must be maintained and submitted to Smart Start of Mecklenburg County monthly.
- The transportation scholarship policy is under review with a potentially more generous scholarship policy post year one implementation.

The Meck Pre-K Classroom

- Meck Pre-K follows NC Pre-K rules and guidance, however, center administrators and classroom teaching staff will participate in the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and related coaching to support high-quality interactions between staff and children to promote school readiness among Meck Pre-K children.
- The Creative Curriculum will be used in Meck Pre-K classrooms and teaching staff will use Teaching Strategies Gold for ongoing child assessments 3 times per year. Inter-rater reliability with TS Gold will be tracked.
- Aggregate child gains will be public through a public dashboard.

The Meck Pre-K Staff

- Meck Pre-K will offer professional development opportunities related to curriculum, ongoing child assessments, and effective interactions between classroom staff and children. Classroom staff (both the lead teacher and assistant teacher) will be required to participate. Where appropriate, site administrators, directors, and coordinators will also be required to participate.
- Classroom staff (as a team) will be assessed through the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) with related professional development and coaching provided as needed.

Payment Rates by Site Type

- Payment rates per child are to be determined by Smart Start of Mecklenburg County with approval by the County Manager's Office.
- **The rates for 2018-2019 are:** \$800 per child for child care centers and \$400 per child for Head Start programs (unless approved for a higher rate) for classrooms with a lead teacher with a BA/BS or higher with a B-K license, a NC Lateral Entry B-K License, a B-K Standard Professional License, a Provisional B-K License, a Provisional Pre-School Add-On, Other State Teacher's License, or other NC Teacher's License.
- The rates for 2018-2019 for classrooms with a lead teacher with a BA/BS or higher but who holds no license and is working toward B-K licensure is \$750 per child.

Evaluation and Monitoring

- Meck Pre-K Smart Start staff will coordinate with DCDEE Child Care Consultants and Child Care Resources Inc (CCRI) on ECERS-R assessments.
- Meck Pre-K classrooms will participate in a county-wide program evaluation conducted in the fall and the spring to measure program quality and child gains. Aggregated data will be available through a public dashboard.

Program and Fiscal Monitoring of Local NC Pre-K Programs

- Smart Start and local site administrators are required to monitor for program/policy and fiscal/contract compliance with oversight by the County Manager's office.
- Smart Start to coordinate with DCDEE Child Care Consultants for compliance with NC Child Care Rules.

Major Program Requirement Differences: Meck Pre-K vs NC Pre-K Program Fiscal and Contract Manual

Section 1: Introduction and Section 2 County/Region Plan and DCDEE Contracts with Local Entities to Administer the NC Pre-K Program

- The contractual agreement is between Mecklenburg County and Smart Start of Mecklenburg County to administer Meck Pre-K.
- Meck Pre-K contracts are with private and public agencies as determined by Smart Start of Mecklenburg County as coordinated with the Mecklenburg County Manager's Office.
- The Mecklenburg County Manager's Office notifies Smart Start of Mecklenburg County of its allocation for the next contract year and develops a contract based on funding.

Section 3. Pre-K Allocations, Allowable Uses of Pre-K Funds, and Children Served

- Meck Pre-K follows NC Pre-K rules and guidance as adjusted for Smart Start and County Manager's Office roles and responsibilities.
- **The rates for 2018-2019 are:** \$800 per child for child care centers and \$400 per child for Head Start programs (unless approved for a higher rate) for classrooms with a lead teacher with a BA/BS or higher with a B-K license, a NC Lateral Entry B-K License, a B-K Standard Professional License, a Provisional B-K License, a Provisional Pre-School Add-On, Other State Teacher's License, or other NC Teacher's License.
- The rates for 2018-2019 for classrooms with a lead teacher with a BA/BS or higher but who holds no license and is working toward B-K licensure is \$750 per child.
- Administrative funds for Meck Pre-K are set at 4 percent.

Section 4. Subcontracts

- Meck Pre-K follows NC Pre-K rules and guidance as adjusted for Smart Start of Mecklenburg County and the County Manager's Office roles and responsibilities.
- Smart Start of Mecklenburg County shall not subcontract any Meck Pre-K educational services without prior approval from the County Manager's Office.

Section 5. Related Funding Information

- Meck Pre-K funding as potentially used for TANF maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements is under review.

Section 6. Payment Process

- The payment process is determined through a policy set by Smart Start of Mecklenburg County and approved by the County Manager's Office.
- Meck Pre-K funding will follow a classroom construct based on 18 children in each classroom (unless the licensed capacity is less). The payment by classroom construct will be monitored and reviewed and adjustments could occur should classrooms incur significant under enrollment.
- Child attendance must be taken daily and submitted to Smart Start of Mecklenburg County monthly. The goal for Meck Pre-K is to have 90% or higher attendance for children. Aggregate attendance data will be made public as part of an end-of-year public dashboard.
- Electronic Funds Transfer. Smart Start of Mecklenburg County will work with site providers to set up an electronic funds transfer for payments.

Section 7. Equipment and Property Management.

- Smart Start of Mecklenburg County to develop a policy on inventory management.

Section 9. Documentation and Records.

- Smart Start of Mecklenburg County to develop a policy with regard to record retention for child eligibility (and verification of eligibility if delegated to site administrators).

Section 10. NC Pre-K Reporting Systems.

- Smart Start of Mecklenburg County to develop a reporting and budgeting system with approval by the County Manager's office.

Section 11. Reporting Requirements

- Smart Start of Mecklenburg County will comply with reporting requirements set by the Mecklenburg County Manager's Office.

Section 12. Reversions and Refunds

- Meck Pre-K unspent funds revert to the County Manager's Office.

Section 13. End of Year Requirements

- Meck Pre-K funds are available only for the county fiscal year for which they are authorized

Section 14. Audit and Monitoring

- The Mecklenburg County Manager's Office will establish auditing and monitoring requirements.