



Meck Pre-K Transportation Policy

Access to transportation is critical for participation in Meck Pre-K. Research shows that children who regularly attend pre-k have much stronger gains across developmental domains compared to children with chronic absences. Since 2007, the NC Pre-K program operating in Mecklenburg County has only approved new sites or classrooms that provide transportation. To help support the transportation needs of students, the NC Pre-K Committee has funded transportation scholarships to ensure that children eligible to participate in Charlotte-Mecklenburg NC Pre-K are not denied services based on a family's inability to pay for transportation.

Community Child Care Centers

Meck Pre-K, which mirrors many of the same policies within the NC Pre-K program, requires Meck Pre-K site directors to ensure that students receive transportation (if needed to promote attendance). Strategies include organized carpooling, assistance to parents in accessing community resources (public transportation) and offering transportation to students. Like the Charlotte-Mecklenburg NC Pre-K Program, Meck Pre-K administers a transportation scholarship fund as part of its operating budget to help child care centers meet the costs related to providing transportation for participating families.

Transportation funding is built into the Meck Pre-K budget to provide monthly assistance to support:

- Five scholarships per Meck Pre-K classroom on a monthly basis (\$80 per child X 5 children = \$400). Centers that have multiple classrooms will be provided scholarships at the rate of 5 per classroom (i.e. 3 classes X 5 scholarships = 15 scholarships per site).
- Each scholarship equals \$20 per week per child for round trip transportation. (1 child X \$20 = \$20 X 4 weeks = \$80 monthly per child).

Transportation logs must be maintained and submitted each month to Smart Start of Mecklenburg County (along with other required monthly forms). These logs:

- List all Meck Pre-K children that receive transportation provided by the child care center,
- Distinguish between scholarship and private-pay students,
- Are submitted on a monthly basis to the Meck Pre-K Office and are due on the last school day of each month with the monthly attendance report, and
- Will be maintained in the Meck Pre-K Office and will be available upon request.

If additional funds are available, any child care facility that transports more than 5 children per classroom and reports such transportation on the monthly logs submitted to the Meck Pre-K Office may receive additional funds (if additional funds are available).

In the event that there are not enough transportation funds to provide scholarships to all eligible children in a classroom, the classroom will be required to offer the scholarships to children on a rotating basis. The program director must contact the contract administrator for guidance on how to administer available scholarships funds.

If a child is not a transportation scholarship recipient within a school month, parents may be charged a nominal fee (not to exceed \$20 per week per child) to offset the costs of transporting children to and from the Meck Pre-K program. Smart Start of Mecklenburg County is reviewing options to potentially increase transportation scholarships in the long-term.