TITLE 92 - NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHAPTER 11 - REGULATIONS FOR THE APPROVAL OF PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED BY SCHOOL BOARDS OR EDUCATIONAL SERVICE UNITS AND FOR THE ISSUANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION GRANTS

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001 General Provisions

001.01 Statutory Authority. This Chapter is adopted pursuant to Sections 79-1101 to 1104 and 79-318 of the Revised Statutes of Nebraska (R.R.S.).

001.02 Scope and Application of this Rule. This Chapter governs the approval of prekindergarten programs established by school boards or educational service units for children ages birth to kindergarten entrance age under the provisions of Section 79-1104 R.R.S. This Chapter also governs the issuance of the Early Childhood Education Grants to school districts for programs serving children ages three to kindergarten entrance age under the provisions of Sections 79-1101 to 1103 R.R.S.

001.03 Related Regulations. In addition to the requirements of this Chapter, public school districts are also governed by regulations contained in Title 92 Nebraska Administrative Code (NAC), Chapter 10, dealing with the accreditation of schools; 92 NAC Chapters 21 and 24 dealing with teacher certification and endorsement; 92 NAC Chapters 51 and 52 dealing with special education programs; and 92 NAC Chapter 19 dealing with enrollment. Public school districts operating a child care program may also be governed by 391 NAC Chapter 3 dealing with licensure of child care centers. Nothing in this Chapter may be interpreted to supersede the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, 20 USC §§1400 et al., including corresponding federal regulations, the Nebraska Special Education Act, and 92 NAC Chapters 51 and 52 where appropriate.

002 Definitions

002.01 At risk when used with reference to a child means the child is experiencing conditions or factors which could have a negative impact on his or her development or learning, including but not limited to such factors as low birth weight, poverty, being a child of teen parents or parents who did not graduate from high school, or living in a home whose occupants have limited ability to speak and understand English.

002.02 Board means the State Board of Education.

002.03 Center-based program means a prekindergarten program serving children in a class on a part-day or full-day program basis.

002.04 Class means a group of children who are receiving early childhood services in a classroom for a specific time period established by the school district or educational service unit. When there is more than one group of children (example: a morning group and an afternoon group), each group represents a distinct class for all purposes and must meet all requirements of this Chapter. Each class will meet instructional hour requirements for center-based programs indicated in Section 005 of this Chapter.

002.05 Commissioner means the State Commissioner of Education.

002.06 Comprehensive services means services other than the educational and family development and support components of the prekindergarten programs that are accessible to program participants including, but not limited to, nutritional, medical, dental, social, and mental health services.

002.07 Contact Hours, when used in conjunction with home-based programs, means that program staff will have contact with each enrolled family at least three (3) times each month and a minimum total of 180 minutes per month.

002.08 Curriculum means an intentional design to enhance children's learning that is appropriate for the age and development of the children and is designed and implemented to promote positive outcomes in the areas of social, emotional, intellectual, language, physical, and aesthetic development, for all children served in the prekindergarten program.

002.09 Department means the State Department of Education, which is comprised of the Board and the Commissioner.

002.10 Developmentally appropriate means that the learning environment and teaching strategies are based on widely accepted theories and research about the typical and atypical growth, development, and learning of children.

002.11 Established, when used with reference to prekindergarten programs established by a school board or educational service unit, means a prekindergarten program that is operated by a school district or educational service unit directly; or by contract with another entity; or in coordination, cooperation, collaboration or partnership agreement with another entity.

002.12 Family development and support means those components of a prekindergarten program which recognize the central role of the family in their children's development. Family development and support includes, but is not limited to, home visitation, parent resources and information, conferences, and referrals for additional services for children and families.

002.13 Family literacy means education and related activities which involve children and their families in interactive literacy experiences.

002.14 Full-day program means a prekindergarten center-based program that provides instruction, programming, and services for 6 or more hours per day in a class setting.

002.15 Home-based program means a prekindergarten program that specifically provides home visiting services and does not include a center-based component. This definition includes Sixpence programs as described in subsection 005.13, but does not apply to or include special education services in the home under Rule 51 and Rule 52 (92 NAC 51 and 52).

002.16 Home visiting services means a method of service delivery for child and family development and support where guidance, information, and child development services are offered in partnership with the family. Services may be provided for either home- or center-based programs in the family home or at another location determined by the family and the home visiting specialist or teacher. This definition includes Sixpence home-visiting programs as described in subsection 005.13, but does not apply to or include special education services in the home under Rule 51 and Rule 52 (92 NAC 51 and 52).

002.17 Home visitor means a person who provides family development and support services under the supervision of a home visiting specialist or a teacher.

002.18 Home visiting specialist means a person who develops, supervises, and provides home visiting services.

002.19 Infant means a child age birth to 18 months.

002.20 Instructional hour when used in connection with center-based programs means a period of time, at least sixty (60) minutes long, which is used for teaching in the following areas of children's growth and learning: social-emotional development, cognitive learning in the areas of language and literacy, mathematics, science, and problem solving; creative arts, health and nutrition; and physical and motor development. Meal or snack time is part of the program curriculum and provides opportunities for learning and social development, as well as nutrition, and therefore, is included as part of the instruction time. Outdoor and gross motor time will be included as part of the instruction time. Time spent transporting, conducting parent/teacher conferences or home visits will not count as instructional time.

002.21 Instructional hour, when used in connection with home-based programs, means contact hours. Time spent conducting home visits or phone contact will count as contact hours. Parent/teacher conferences are not considered contact hours.

002.22 Kindergarten entrance age means five years of age on or before July 31 of the current school year.

002.23 Paraeducator means an individual who serves in a non-teaching role under the supervision of a teacher certificated to teach pursuant to 92 NAC 21.

002.24 Parent means parent or legal guardian.

002.25 Part-day program means a prekindergarten center-based program that provides instruction, programming, and services for less than 6 hours each day in a class setting.

002.26 Partnership agreement means, for the purposes of this Chapter, a formal written agreement that describes the level and nature of commitment of each party to the prekindergarten program. The partnership agreement should describe the following: resources contributed by each partner; rights and responsibilities of each partner; and any other relevant information agreed upon by all parties. The parties are not required by this Chapter to enter into partnership agreements or form a partnership under the Nebraska Uniform Limited Partnership Act.

002.27 Prekindergarten program means all early childhood part-day or full-day center-based programs (may be called preschool, Head Start, child care, Sixpence or some other name depicting a center-based program) and/or home-based programs provided for children who have not reached the age of five on or before July 31 of the current school year.

002.28 Preschooler means a child age 3 years to kindergarten entrance age.

002.29 School year means the time period between July 1 and June 30 each year.

002.30 Teach means and includes, but is not limited to, the following responsibilities as found in Neb. Rev Stat. §79-101(12): (a) the organization and management of the classroom or the physical area in which the learning experience of prekindergarten age children takes place; (b) the assessment and diagnosis of the individual educational needs of the children; (c) the planning, selecting, organizing, prescribing, and directing of the learning experiences of the children; (d) the planning of teaching strategies and the selection of available materials and equipment to be used; (e) the evaluation and reporting of children's progress; and (f) the provision of a learning environment and opportunities for positive relationships with children and families.

002.31 Teacher means a person who is certificated pursuant to 92 NAC 21 to teach.

002.32 Toddler means a child age 18 months to 3 years.

003 Prekindergarten Program Approval Process

003.01 Intent to Operate Statement: Any public school district or educational service unit intending to establish a prekindergarten program will provide the following information to the Department at least 60 days prior to providing any such program:

003.01A A written statement indicating the intent to establish a prekindergarten program meeting the requirements of this Chapter and a description of the prekindergarten program to be provided. The description will include the type of service to be provided, the planned number of instructional hours for a center-based program or contact hours for a home-based program, and the ages of children in the program. This statement will be signed by the school district superintendent or the educational service unit (ESU) administrator.

003.01B Written verification that the district or educational service unit staff member who coordinates the prekindergarten program holds a Nebraska Teaching Certificate and has at least 9 college credit hours in early childhood education.

003.01C When known, name of the certificated teacher or teachers who will assume teaching responsibilities.

003.02 Approval Requirements. Prekindergarten programs established by school boards or educational service units will be approved by the Board pursuant to this Chapter upon the recommendation of the Commissioner. Approval requires compliance with the requirements identified in this Chapter.

003.02A School systems may submit a request for a waiver for subsections 004.07 and 005.05A of this Chapter listing each staff member that does not meet those requirements. To be eligible for a waiver, the following minimum information is required and must be submitted within 30 days of the hire date of each staff:

003.02A1 Copy of each advertised job posting and starting salary, and

003.02A2 List of all other applicants for the position along with their resume and/or application, and

003.02A3 Resume of person hired, and

003.02A4 A copy of an approved course of study from a cooperating college or university showing the staff member will be able to achieve a teaching certificate with an early childhood endorsement within four years. Such course of study should also include a copy of the staff member's current transcripts that shows:

003.02A4a Twelve (12) graduate hours in early childhood education; or

003.02A4b Bachelor's degree or higher including 12 undergraduate hours in early childhood education; or

003.02A4c Associate's degree in early childhood education.

003.02A5 For teachers of prekindergarten center-based program, provide the plan developed as required by subsection 005.05A for the staff member to obtain the required endorsement.

003.02B The Commissioner will submit the waiver request to the Board with his or her recommendation for approval or denial. The Board may approve the requested waiver if the components of the plan will promote quality learning, equity, and/or accountability. The Board will reject the waiver if the plan and requested waiver would not provide quality learning, equity, and/or accountability.

003.02C The approved waiver request will not exceed four (4) years.

003.03 Duration and Continuation of Program Approval. Program approval is granted for one year from each July 1 through the following June 30. Renewal is based on the program's compliance with this Chapter during the prior school year.

003.03A Districts approved for a waiver of subsection 004.07 for specifically identified staff must provide the courses each staff member subject to a waiver completed towards that staff member's approved course of study as part of the Early Childhood Program Report as described in subsection 003.06. Renewal of program approval is dependent upon the annual progress.

003.04 Approval For the Purpose of Early Childhood Education Continuation Grants or the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA). Prekindergarten programs established by school districts may be approved annually for purposes of TEEOSA or for Early Childhood Education continuation grants under this Chapter on the annual submission of the following by the establishing district:

003.04A An Early Childhood Program report demonstrating that the program will continue to meet the requirements of this Chapter, and, for programs receiving grants, a continuation plan demonstrating that the program will continue to meet grant requirements.

003.04B For programs receiving grants, a proposed operating budget demonstrating that the program will receive resources from other funding sources equal to or greater than the sum of any grant received pursuant to this Chapter for the prior school year plus any calculated state aid as calculated pursuant to subsection (1) of Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-1103 for the prior school year.

003.05 General Reports. The head administrator of each school district or educational service unit establishing a prekindergarten program will include information about such programs in the Nebraska Department of Education approved data system. All early childhood data is due as specified by the data system calendar.

003.06 Early Childhood Program Report. An Early Childhood Program Report Form will be submitted annually by October 15, and on the form provided by the Department. The report form is contained in Appendix A of this Chapter. When the report reflects failure to comply with the requirements of this Chapter, it will be accompanied by a written plan for correcting the violation(s). The plan is subject to approval by the Commissioner or his or her designee. The Commissioner or his or her designee may approve the plan if in his or her judgment it is reasonably calculated to correct the violation prior to the end of the current school year.

004 Requirements For All Prekindergarten Programs (Center-based and Home-based) Established By School Boards or Educational Service Units

004.01 Stated Purpose. Each program will have a stated purpose of promoting social, emotional, intellectual, language, physical, and aesthetic development and learning for the children served and of promoting family development and support.

004.02 Planning. Each program will have a planning period. The planning period will include activities associated with:

004.02A Determining the community's unmet needs for early childhood education for prekindergarten children in terms of the number of such children in the community, an estimate of the number of children at risk, kinds of programs available, numbers of children birth to kindergarten entrance age who are not currently receiving services, and barriers to the provision of services.

004.02B Developing cooperative relationships with public and nonpublic providers of early childhood programs, including the development of cooperative agreements and contracts, as needed to carry out the proposed program.

004.02C Recruiting and training staff.

004.02D Identifying and listing existing school-community resources available to provide comprehensive services to the program participants.

004.03 Advisory Committee. A local Early Childhood Advisory Committee will be established with membership representing families and community members.

004.03A An existing advisory committee such as that required for services to children below age five (5) with disabilities in Title 92 NAC Chapter 51, a Head Start Policy Council, or a Title I Advisory Committee, may serve this purpose if the representation conforms with this section and the mission is expanded to encompass the purpose of this Chapter.

004.03B Advisory Committee meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act as described in Neb. Rev. Stat. §§84-1407 to 84-1414.

004.04 Coordination with Existing Programs and Funding Sources. Each program will develop, and keep on file, a written plan to show that the program will be coordinated or contracted with existing programs, including those listed in subsection 004.04A and nonpublic programs which meet the requirements of this Chapter. Each program will develop and keep on file a written plan to coordinate and use a combination of local, state, and federal funding sources including, but not limited to, those listed in subsection 004.04A in order to maximize the participation of economically and categorically diverse groups of children and to ensure that participating children and families have access to knowledge of comprehensive services that may be available.

004.04A For the purposes of subsection 004.04, existing programs and funding sources are as follows:

004.04A1 Grants provided through the Early Childhood Education Grant Program for children ages three to kindergarten entrance age under Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-1103 and the Early Childhood Grant Program for children ages birth to three (Sixpence Grants) under Neb. Rev Stat. §79-1104.02

004.04A2 Programs for children with disabilities below five years of age funded through the Special Education Act, the Early Intervention Act, and funds available through the flexible funding provisions under the Special Education Act.

004.04A3 The federal Head Start or Early Head Start program.

004.04A4 Title I of the federal funds provided through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and subsequent reauthorizations or other appropriate federal legislation.

004.04A5 Child care assistance through the Department of Health and Human Services.

004.04A6 Local district funds.

004.04A7 Funds obtained through contracts with other school districts, such as contracts to provide services to children below age five with disabilities pursuant to 92 NAC 51.

004.04A8 Private grants and gifts.

004.04A9 Parent fees from the program's locally-developed sliding scale.

004.04A10 Nonpublic prekindergarten programs which meet the requirements of Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-1104(2) and this Chapter.

004.05 Fees. Fees if charged will not exceed the actual cost for providing prekindergarten programs. Programs charging fees will have a plan to use a sliding fee scale in order to maximize the participation of economically and categorically diverse groups. Programs may waive fees on the basis of need. This subsection does not allow any school district to fail to meet its responsibilities under the Special Education Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. §§79-1110 to 79-1167).

004.06 Program Coordinator. Prekindergarten programs will be coordinated by either a certificated district staff member or an employee of an agency with whom the district has a partnership agreement who holds a current Nebraska Teaching Certificate with at least 9 college credit hours in early childhood education and has the authority and responsibility to ensure compliance of this Chapter.

004.07 Program and Staff Requirements. All teachers and administrators in prekindergarten programs established by school district or educational service units will hold a valid certificate or permit to teach issued by the Department pursuant to 92 NAC 21 unless a waiver has been granted by the Board pursuant to subsection 003.02A in which case the specific staff member or members listed as the subject of the waiver, will temporarily be exempt from the requirement in subsections 004.07 and 005.05A. Each center-based part-day or full-day program will also meet program and staff requirements in Section 005 of this Chapter. Each home-based program will also meet the program and staff requirements in Section 006 of this Chapter.

004.08 Participation and Inclusion. Participation of children and families in any program under this Chapter will be voluntary. Programs will not exclude children verified as having disabilities and will include to the extent possible children of diverse social and economic characteristics.

004.08A Birth Certificates. Within 30 days of enrollment, parents or guardians must submit to the district a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other documentation in compliance with the Missing Children Identification Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §§43-2001 through 43-2012.

005 Additional Program and Staff Requirements for Prekindergarten Programs Serving Children Birth to Kindergarten Eligibility Age in a Center-Based Program

005.01 Instructional Hours. Each class in the program will operate a minimum of twelve (12) instructional hours per week during the school year. Programs receiving grant funds pursuant this Chapter or receiving Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA) funds will operate a minimum of four hundred and fifty (450) instructional hours per school year.

005.01A Pursuant to the provisions of Neb. Rev Stat. §79-213, school systems unable to meet the minimums for instructional hours due to epidemic sickness, severe storm conditions, or destruction of the school house may request permission from the Board to offer fewer than the minimum hours by submitting an affidavit sworn to by the secretary of the school board and explaining the circumstances resulting in the request.

005.02 Family Development and Support. Each center-based part-day or full-day prekindergarten program will provide a strong family development and support component which recognizes the central role of parents in their children's development and establishes a working partnership with each parent. The family development and support component will include, at a minimum:

005.02A Written information for families about the program's philosophy, policies, and procedures.

005.02B An orientation to the program for children and families.

005.02C At least two (2) home visits per year between the parent(s) and the teacher to discuss the child's development and learning. If the family decides to have the visit at a location other than the home, it must be conducted at a location determined jointly by the family and teacher.

005.02D Specified opportunities for program staff to dialogue with families through such activities as parent conferences, participation on advisory committees, needs assessments, participation as classroom volunteers, and flexible scheduling of meetings and events.

005.02E Services based on the family's needs and interests that include but are not limited to, components that will enhance parenting skills and the family's ability to access community resources.

005.03 Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Curriculum, Practices, and Assessment. The part-day or full-day center-based prekindergarten program will provide a play-oriented learning environment, which facilitates the optimal growth and development of children, with opportunities for age-appropriate learning experiences through active involvement with people and materials.

005.03A A written program plan will be developed to explain and implement the program. The written program plan will include a description of how the program curriculum, practices and assessment provide a variety of developmentally appropriate, experiential activities which:

005.03A1 Promote a positive self-concept in each child.

005.03A2 Foster attachments for all children by ensuring they have consistent teachers and paraeducators daily.

005.03A3 Develop social skills in each child.

005.03A4 Encourage each child to think, reason, question, and experiment.

005.03A5 Foster both receptive and expressive language development and provide early literacy/pre-reading experiences.

005.03A6 Incorporate family literacy experiences.

005.03A7 Develop an understanding of mathematical concepts including quantities of things, of time, and of space.

005.03A8 Enhance each child's physical development and skills.

005.03A9 Encourage sound safety, health, and nutritional practices, including avoidance of controlled substances.

005.03A10 Stimulate each child in creative expression and appreciation of the arts.

005.03A11 Include exploratory play in a language and literacy-rich environment during a majority of the daily schedule.

005.03A12 Reflect and respect the diversity of races, national origins, gender, and physical and mental abilities in the larger society and with particular emphasis on the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children enrolled through planned activities, use of materials, and use of equipment.

005.03A13 Use positive, age-appropriate techniques of child guidance including redirection, anticipation, elimination of potential problems, and encouragement.

005.03A14 Use child assessment (evaluation) practices based on documentation gathered through an established system of ongoing observation and assessment to provide objective measures of each child's performance and progress in development and learning to meet the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines:

Nebraska's Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards. The summary of these standards are contained in Appendix D of this Chapter. The assessment data ~~is~~ will be used to plan and implement teaching strategies and activities to meet the individual needs of each child. Any formal assessment tools used will meet accepted standards of reliability and validity. Developmentally appropriate practices will be implemented for all children. Individualized support will be provided for children who are not progressing within age-expectations for literacy/pre-reading and mathematics.

005.03A15 Link the prekindergarten to the district's kindergarten/primary program through a written transition plan insuring continuity, identification, and implementation of processes necessary to facilitate the transition of children. The prekindergarten program will be included in the district school improvement plan.

005.03A16 Include a well-defined language development and early literacy emphasis, including the involvement of parents in family literacy activities.

005.03A17 Provide at least one outdoor play period (weather permitting) daily.

005.04 Evaluation and Quality Assurance. The program will participate in periodic program evaluations to assure program quality and positive child outcomes. The evaluation process will be designed by the Department and will include, but not be limited to the following:

005.04A An assessment of program quality.

005.04B A report of child outcomes including at least one objective measure of child performance and progress.

005.04C A written plan for dissemination of the results of the evaluation.

005.05 Program Staff. The prekindergarten program will use qualified staff as set forth below.

005.05A Teacher. Any teacher in a prekindergarten program will hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate with one of the following endorsements: Early Childhood Special Education (Birth through Kindergarten), Early Childhood Inclusive (Birth through Grade 3), or Early Childhood Education (Age 3 through Grade 3). The Early Childhood Education (age 3 through Grade 3) endorsement will not be valid for teaching children below age 3. A program may use a teacher without such an endorsement if the teacher files with the Department, as part of the annual Early Childhood Program Report, a plan developed by the teacher and the cooperating college or university to complete the endorsement. The plan will require the teacher to receive at least six (6) semester hours of credit annually toward completion of the endorsement. When fifty percent (50%) of the required courses have been completed, the teacher is eligible for a provisional endorsement pursuant to 92 NAC 24.

005.05B Paraeducator. A paraeducator assigned to work as a member of a team in a classroom setting will have received at least twelve (12) semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit in child development/early childhood education, or the equivalent in prior training or experience as determined by the Commissioner or his or her designee. Equivalencies include, but are not limited to the following:

005.05B1 Holding a current Child Development Associate Credential issued by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington, D.C. will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

005.05B2 Holding a current Nebraska teaching certificate with a K-6 elementary endorsement will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

005.05B3 Each two (2) years of employment in a program serving children birth through second grade will be an equivalency for three (3) credit hours of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Four or more years of experience may count for a maximum of six (6) of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

005.05B4 Early childhood training hours (including web-based training) provided by or sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Education Office of Early Childhood will count toward the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Fifteen (15) clock hours constitute one (1) semester hour.

005.05B5 The program may employ a paraeducator who does not meet the twelve (12) semester hour requirement as long as the paraeducator completes a minimum of six (6) semester hours or the equivalent in training or experience within the first year of employment and meets the full twelve (12) semester hour requirement before the end of the second year of employment.

005.05C Home Visitor. The prekindergarten program may employ a home visitor in a center-based program who provides family development and support services under the direction of a teacher. The home visitor will have at least twelve (12) semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit in one or a combination of the following areas: (i) Early Childhood Education; (ii) Early Childhood Special Education; (iii) Child Development; (iv) Human Services, Nursing, Social Work, Sociology or Psychology, including coursework in the area of family centered practices or child and youth development.

005.05C1 The program may employ a home visitor who does not meet the twelve (12) semester hour requirement as long as the home visitor completes a minimum of six (6) semester hours or the equivalent in training or experience within the first year of employment and meets the full twelve (12) semester hour requirement before the end of the second year of employment. Equivalencies include, but are not limited to the following:

005.05C1A Holding a current Child Development Associate Credential issued by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington, D.C. will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

005.05C1B Holding a current Nebraska teaching certificate with a K-6 elementary endorsement will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

005.05C1C Each two (2) years of employment in a program serving children birth through second grade will be an equivalency for three (3) credit hours of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Four or more years of experience may count for a maximum of six (6) of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

005.05C1D Holding a Nebraska Home Visitor certificate will be equivalent to three (3) semester hours.

005.05C1E Early childhood training hours (including web-based training) provided by or sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Education Office of Early Childhood will count toward the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Fifteen (15) clock hours constitute one (1) semester hour.

005.05D Orientation. All staff working in the prekindergarten program will be provided with an orientation prior to having direct responsibility for the care and teaching of children or for providing family and development services. The orientation will include job duties and responsibilities, building safety procedures, information about the state law regarding reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect under Neb. Rev. Stat. §28-711, child assessment information, and daily routines and schedules.

005.05E Language Resource. If the majority of children enrolled in the program use a common language other than spoken English, at least one staff member who uses such language will be available as an active participant to communicate with such children in classroom and group experiences. Where less than a majority of the children enrolled in the program speak a language different from the rest, one staff member or a community resource person or parent will be identified to serve as a resource to the program.

005.05F Staff Development Plan. There will be a written plan detailing staff development opportunities for all teachers, paraeducators and home visitors working in the program who have regular contact with children and their families. The written plan will include a professional development goal, the strategies for meeting the goal and a timeline for completion. The written plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

005.05G Staff Development Hours. Teachers, paraeducators and home visitors who have regular contact with children in early childhood programs will participate annually in at least fifteen (15) clock hours of Early Childhood Training Center approved staff development. All staff development will relate to prekindergarten or child development.

005.05H Background checks. Program staff who are not required to hold a Nebraska Teaching Certificate and who have contact with children will be checked by program administration against the Nebraska Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect and the Nebraska Adult Protective Services Registry, before being hired. No person or persons may be hired or remain employed who has a felony conviction nor any misdemeanor conviction involving abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct as further defined and identified in 92 NAC Chapter 21 subsections 003.12 and 003.13.

005.06 Child/Staff Ratio and Group Size. Child/staff ratios and group sizes will be maintained as indicated below with staff assigned who meet the qualifications described in subsection 005.06. When age groups are mixed, the lower ratio will prevail.

005.06A If the program serves infants, at least one (1) staff member in the classroom setting will hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate. A paraeducator or an additional certificated teacher will be assigned to assure a ratio of at least one (1) adult for each four (4) children with a maximum group size of eight (8).

005.06B If the program serves toddlers, at least one (1) staff member in the classroom setting will hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate. A paraeducator or an additional certificated teacher will be assigned to assure a ratio of at least one (1) adult for each six (6) children with a maximum group size of twelve (12).

005.06C If the program serves preschoolers, at least one (1) staff member in the classroom setting will hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate for each group of twenty (20) children. A paraeducator or an additional certificated teacher will be assigned to assure a ratio of at least one (1) adult for each ten (10) children with a maximum group size of twenty (20).

005.06D In full-day programs where children nap, the certified teacher may be out of the classroom during the nap period as long as the children are adequately supervised by other staff and the teacher is readily available.

005.07 Facilities, Equipment, Health and Safety

005.07A Classroom settings will provide at least thirty-five (35) square feet per child of space usable by the children.

005.07B An outdoor play area that is protected by fences or physical barriers will be available which provides at least seventy-five (75) square feet per child of play space.

005.07B1 The fence or physical barrier will be of a type of structure that is a continuous barrier and is at least 36 inches in height, flush with the ground, and without any gaps that would allow a child to exit the protected area.

005.07C Each classroom setting and outdoor play area will be equipped with safe, durable, age-appropriate equipment and materials for indoor and outdoor activities.

005.07D If needed, modifications of the equipment, materials, and activities will be made to assure maximum participation in the ongoing activities of the program for children with disabilities attending the program.

005.07E Equipment and materials will be organized into clearly defined areas of interest that are arranged to encourage independent choice; cooperative activity; and alteration between quiet and active exploration and teacher-and child-initiated activities.

005.07F Each prekindergarten program will maintain safe, healthful, and sanitary conditions within the facilities used for the program and on the outdoor playground and meet applicable fire, safety, and health codes.

005.07G At least one (1) staff member per class who has received first aid and CPR training specifically designed for children will be on duty with the children at all times. Written verification of current training will be available.

005.08 Meals and/or Snacks. The program will provide all children in each class at least one meal and/or snack that meets USDA Child Nutrition Program guidelines each day. All tables used for meals and snack will be properly sanitized.

005.09 Immunizations. The school district will comply with all state statutes and regulations regarding the immunization status of all enrolled children.

005.10 Supervision. Adequate and appropriate supervision will be provided at all times children are in attendance, including during outdoor play and field trips. Adequate and appropriate supervision includes, but is not limited to, knowing the whereabouts and being within sight or sound of children at all times.

005.11 Toileting. The program will ensure the toileting needs of all children are met immediately. The program will ensure wet and/or soiled clothing is changed immediately.

005.12 Infants and Toddlers. Programs serving children birth to age 3 will meet the following requirements:

005.12A The physical, emotional and social needs of infants and toddlers will be met consistently and promptly;

005.12B Formula and feeding schedules will be obtained from parents;

005.12C Infants will not sleep with bottles;

005.12D Bottles will not be propped;

005.12E If formula is used, it will be a commercially made product;

005.12F All breast milk and prepared formula will be refrigerated and clearly labeled with the child's name and discard date; and unused prepared formula will be discarded as indicated by the label;

005.12G Unfrozen breast milk will be discarded 48 hours after being expressed; and frozen breastmilk will be discarded three months after being expressed;

005.12H Only highchairs with three point safety straps will be used;

005.12I Infants will be placed on their backs to sleep except in cases where there is a medical reason the child will not sleep on its back; and written verification of the medical reason from the child's physician will be available;

005.12J Wet or soiled diapers will be changed immediately and disposed of in a sanitary manner;

005.12K Individual cleaning cloths will be used for diapering;

005.12L Diaper changing surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected after each use and staff will use proper hand washing techniques after each diaper change;

005.12M Toileting will be done in a manner agreed upon with the parent;

005.12N Potty chairs will be cleaned, disinfected, and properly stored away from play areas;

005.12O All cribs and playpens will meet federal safety standards as indicated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission; and

005.12P All cribs and playpens will not contain any soft objects, bumper pads, toys or loose bedding.

005.13 Sixpence Programs. School districts that receive Early Childhood Endowment birth to three grants, also referred to as Sixpence programs, may be required to meet additional grant-related program requirements established by the Endowment Board of Trustees.

006 Additional Program and Staff Requirements for Prekindergarten Programs Serving Children Birth to Kindergarten Eligibility Age in a Home-Based Program (Does not apply to or include special education services in the home under Rule 51 and Rule 52 (92 NAC 51 and 52).

006.01 Contact Hours in Home-Based Programs. Program staff will have contact with each enrolled family at least three (3) times each month and a minimum total of 180 minutes per month. A minimum of 120 minutes will be face-to-face contact with the family. Contact may be completed by the home visiting specialist or the home visitor. If a school district or educational service unit contracts with another organization to provide early childhood services, the district or ESU will ensure the adequate number of hours are provided as required in this subsection.

006.02 Family Development and Support. Each home-based prekindergarten program will include the following, at a minimum:

006.02A Written information for families about the program's philosophy, policies, and procedures;

006.02B An orientation to the program for families; and

006.02C Delivery of services that are based on family needs and interests and that focus on the child's development and positive family outcomes. Services will be provided year round following a curriculum that meets the requirements of subsection 006.03 of this Chapter.

006.03 Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Curriculum, Practices, and Assessment in Home-Based Prekindergarten Programs. Each home-based prekindergarten program will provide curricula that are research-based and designed to work with families that facilitate the optimal growth and development of children, and that are culturally appropriate for all families served. The program will also include a well-defined language development and early literacy emphasis, including the involvement of families in literacy activities.

006.03A Each program will have a written program plan that will include a description of program curriculum, practices and assessments used. This plan must be provided to all parents and be available to the Department upon request.

006.03B Use child assessment (evaluation) practices based on documentation gathered through an established system of ongoing observation and assessment to provide objective measures of each child's performance and progress in development and learning to meet the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines: Nebraska's Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards. The summary of these standards are contained in Appendix D of this Chapter. The assessment data will be used to plan and implement teaching strategies and activities to meet the individual needs of each child. Any formal assessment tools used will meet accepted standards of reliability and validity. Developmentally appropriate practices will be implemented for all children.

Individualized support will be provided for children who are not progressing within age-expectations for literacy/pre-reading and mathematics.

006.04 Evaluation and Quality Assurance. Each home-based program will participate in periodic program evaluations to assure program quality and positive child outcomes. The evaluation process will be designed by the Department's Office of Early Childhood and will include, but not be limited to the following:

006.04A An assessment of program quality;

006.04B A report of child outcomes including at least one objective measure of child performance and progress; and

006.04C A written plan for dissemination of the results of the evaluation.

006.05 Program Staff. In order to provide home-based services, each home-based program will use one or more home visiting specialists and may in addition use one or more home visitors who meet the qualifications below:

006.05A Home Visiting Specialist. Any home visiting specialist in a home-based program will have a bachelor's degree or higher in one of the following areas:

006.05A1 Early Childhood Education,

006.05A2 Early Childhood Special Education,

006.05A3 Child Development, or

006.05A4 Human Services, Nursing, Social Work, Sociology or Psychology including at least twelve (12) graduate or undergraduate hours in any area of family-centered practices or child and youth development.

006.05B Home Visitor. Any home visitor will have at least twelve (12) semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit in one or a combination of the following areas: (i) Early Childhood Education (ii) Early Childhood Special Education; (iii) Child Development; (iv) Human Services, Nursing, Social Work, Sociology or Psychology, including coursework in the area of family centered practices or child and youth development.

006.05B1 The program may employ a home visitor who does not meet the twelve (12) semester hour requirement as long as the home visitor completes a minimum of six (6) semester hours or the equivalent in training or experience within the first year of employment and meets the full twelve (12) semester hour requirement before the end of the second year of employment. Equivalencies include, but are not limited to the following:

006.05B1A Holding a current Child Development Associate Credential issued by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington, D.C. will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

006.05B1B Holding a current Nebraska teaching certificate with a K-6 elementary endorsement will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

006.05B1C Each two (2) years of employment in a program serving children birth through second grade will be an equivalency for three (3) credit hours of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Four or more years of experience may count for a maximum of six (6) of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement.

006.05B1D Holding a Nebraska Home Visitor certificate will be equivalent to three (3) semester hours.

006.05B1E Early childhood training hours (including web-based training) provided by or sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Education Office of Early Childhood will count toward the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Fifteen (15) clock hours constitute one (1) semester hour.

006.05C Orientation. All staff working in the home-based program will be provided with an orientation prior to having direct responsibility for the care and teaching of children or for providing family and development services. The orientation will include job duties and responsibilities, home visiting safety procedures, information about the state law regarding reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect under Neb. Rev. Stat. §28-711, child assessment information, and information about the importance of family routines and schedules.

006.05D Staff Development Plan. There will be a written plan detailing staff development opportunities for all home visiting specialists and home visitors working in the home-based program who have regular contact with children and their families. The written plan will include a professional development goal, the strategies for meeting the goal and a timeline for completion. The written plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

006.05E Staff Development Hours. Home visiting specialists and home visitors who have regular contact with children in early childhood programs will participate annually in at least fifteen (15) clock hours of Early Childhood Training Center approved staff development. All staff development will relate to prekindergarten or child development.

006.05F Background checks. Home visiting specialists and home visitors who do not hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate and who have contact with children will be checked by program administration against the Nebraska Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect, and the Nebraska Adult Protective Services Registry and have a criminal background check before being hired. No person or persons may be hired or remain employed who has a felony conviction nor any misdemeanor conviction involving abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct as further defined and identified in 92 NAC Chapter 21 subsections 003.12 and 003.13.

007 Early Childhood Education Grants for Prekindergarten Programs for Children Ages Three to Kindergarten Entrance Age. Any school district, individually or in cooperation with other school districts or educational service units, working in cooperation with existing nonpublic programs meeting the requirements for approval in this Chapter may submit an application for an Early Childhood Education Grant for a prekindergarten program for children ages three (3) to kindergarten entrance age that is established by the district and is approved by the Department pursuant to this Chapter. Administrative authority for Early Childhood Education Grants for prekindergarten programs for children from birth to age three (3) (Sixpence Grants) resides with the Early Childhood Education Endowment Board of Trustees.

007.01 Children Who May Be Served With Grant Funds.

007.01A All prekindergarten-age children, ages three (3) to kindergarten entrance age, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or the social, linguistic, or economic diversity of the children's families are eligible to be served with grant funds awarded as provided in this Chapter.

007.01B Up to thirty percent of the funds granted for each prekindergarten program under this Chapter may be used to offset program costs for children who are not identified in the priorities specified in Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-1103(1)(b), (c), and (d) or who are not supported through any of the funding sources listed in subsection 004.04 of this Chapter, in order to maximize the participation of children from diverse groups.

007.01C Early Childhood Education Grant funds will not be used to support the participation of children who are below age three or who are eligible by age to enroll in kindergarten (those who reach age five by July 31 of the current year).

007.02 Grant Application Process.

007.02A Request For Proposals. For years in which grant funds are available, the Department will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for new or expansion grants for programs for children ages three to kindergarten entrance age.

007.02B Forms. Each school district applying for new or expansion grant funding under this Chapter, individually or in cooperation with other school districts or educational service units, will submit an application on the forms in Appendix B of this Chapter. The application process for continuation grants is established online and requires electronic submission of information identified in Appendix C of this Chapter.

007.02C Applications. Applications will be rated on the basis of conformance with the requirements of this Chapter.

007.02D Panel. The Commissioner or his or her designee will appoint a panel of persons knowledgeable in early childhood education to evaluate the applications and to recommend proposals for funding to the Commissioner.

007.02E Commissioner's Recommendation. Application funding recommendations by the Commissioner will be made at a meeting of the State Board of Education. Upon action by the Board, all applicants will be notified of the outcome.

007.02F Funding Distribution. Grant funds will be distributed by the Department using the priorities and limitations specified in Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-1103(1), (b), (c), and (d). The Department will make an effort to fund programs across the state in both rural and urban areas.

007.03 Grant Funding.

007.03A Each prekindergarten program approved under the provisions of this Chapter will be eligible to apply for grant funding subject to the following:

007.03A1 Appropriation of the funds by the Legislature.

007.03A2 An annual review of compliance with the requirements of this Chapter and quality as measured over time by the program assessment tool pursuant to subsection 005.04A. Programs found with deficiencies as identified in the assessment tool must show measured progress annually.

008 Violations, Probation, or Loss of Program Approval and/or Loss of Grant Funds

008.01 Violations. When the Commissioner or his or her designee determines that the prekindergarten program is in violation of any requirement specified in this Chapter, written notice will be given to the school district or educational service unit. Any prekindergarten program in violation of any requirements specified in this Chapter will submit a written plan to the Commissioner or his or her designee describing how violations will be corrected prior to the beginning of the next school year.

008.02 Continued violation of any requirements indicated in this Chapter may result in probation, loss of approval and/or loss of grant funding as described in this Chapter. The Commissioner may, at his or her discretion, make recommendations to the State Board to end or deny program approval and/or grant funding or place a program on probation.

008.03 Recommendations from the Commissioner to the Board to either end or deny program approval pursuant to Sections 004, 005 and 006 or to end grant funding pursuant to Section 007 may be appealed by filing a petition and request for hearing with the State Board of Education pursuant to 92 NAC 61 no later than 15 calendar days after the date of receipt of written notice of the recommendation from the Commissioner or his or her designee. All hearings arising under this Chapter will be conducted in accordance with the hearing procedures of 92 NAC 61, including provisions of that Chapter relating to evidence.

008.04 When the Commissioner makes a recommendation to the Board to end or deny program approval or end grant funding, notice of the recommendation and of the right to request a hearing will be given by certified mail returned receipt requested sent at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the date of the Board meeting at which the recommendation is to be considered. The notice will be sent to the superintendent of the school district or head administrator of the educational service unit responsible for the program. The notice will specify the basis for the recommendation.

008.05 Upon review of the Commissioner's recommendation and following any hearing, the Board will make a determination regarding the program's approval or grant funding and will inform the superintendent of the school district or the head administrator of the educational service unit of the Board's decision in writing by certified mail.

Return to: Nebraska Department of Education
Office of Early Childhood
PO Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509

NDE: 24-012
Revised: 8/18
Date Due: October 15

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM REPORT
For _____ School Year

District Name/ESU Number:		County District Number:
Address:	City:	Zip Code:

Program Contact:	Title:
Telephone Number:	E-mail Address:

Program Coordinator:	Title:
Telephone Number:	E-mail Address:

PROGRAM OPERATION

☐ **Yes**, this public school district/ESU **does** operate a prekindergarten program in the _____ school year.

*If you checked **yes**, please complete pages 2-11, sign below and return pages 1-3 to the NDE Office of Early Childhood at the address provided.*

☐ **No**, this public school district/ESU **does not** operate a prekindergarten program in the _____ school year.

*If you checked **no**, please sign below and return this page only to the NDE Office of Early Childhood at the address provided.*

Signature of District Superintendent/ESU Administrator:	Date:
By signing this you are confirming that this form is completed accurately and to your best knowledge.	

For definitions refer to the definitions section of Rule 11 (002.00).

Yes	No		
☐	☐	**Center-based Program serving Preschoolers**	Does this public school/ESU operate a center-based prekindergarten program serving preschoolers? • Complete the following sections of the Supplemental Regulation Checklist: 004.00 & 005.00
☐	☐	**Center-based Program serving Infants and/or Toddlers**	Does this public school/ESU operate a center-based prekindergarten program serving infants and/or toddlers? • Complete the following sections of the Supplemental Regulation Checklist: 004.00, 005.00 & 005.12
☐	☐	**Home-based Program**	Does this public school/ESU operate a home-based prekindergarten program serving Children Birth to Kindergarten Eligibility Age? • Complete the following sections of the Supplemental Regulation Checklist: 004.00 & 006.00
☐	☐	**Sixpence Program**	Does this public school/ESU operate a Sixpence prekindergarten program? • If yes, please indicate if it is an infant and/or toddler center-based program, home-based program or both by checking the correct box(es) above and completing the corresponding regulation checklists. • Complete the following section of the Supplemental Regulation Checklist: 004.00, 005.13
☐	☐	**Childcare**	Does this public school/ESU operate childcare?

How many classes of children does your district serve?	**Total Part-Day (Less than 6 hours)**	**Total Full-Day (6 hours or more)**

Class means a group of children who are receiving early childhood services in a classroom for a specific time period established by the school district or educational service unit. When there is more than one group of children (example: a morning group and an afternoon group), each group represents a distinct class for all purposes and must meet all requirements of this Chapter.

Yes	No		
☐	☐	004.04	Coordination with Existing Programs and Funding Sources. Each program will develop, and keep on file, a written plan to show that the program will be coordinated or contracted with existing programs, including those listed in subsection 004.04A and nonpublic programs which meet the requirements of this Chapter. Each program will develop and keep on file a written plan to coordinate and use a combination of local, state, and federal funding sources including, but not limited to, those listed in subsection 004.04A in order to maximize the participation of economically and categorically diverse groups of children and to ensure that participating children and families have access to knowledge of comprehensive services that may be available.
		A	For the purposes of subsection 004.04, existing programs and funding sources are as follows:
☐	☐	**A1**	Grants provided through the Early Childhood Education Grant Program for children ages three to kindergarten entrance age under Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-1103 and the Early Childhood Grant Program for children ages birth to three (Sixpence Grants) under Neb. Rev Stat. §79-1104.02
☐	☐	**A2**	Programs for children with disabilities below five years of age funded through the Special Education Act, the Early Intervention Act, and funds available through the flexible funding provisions under the Special Education Act.
☐	☐	**A3**	The federal Head Start or Early Head Start program.
☐	☐	**A4**	Title I of the federal funds provided through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and subsequent reauthorizations or other appropriate federal legislation.

Complete remaining funding regulations on the next page (page 3)

☐	☐	**A5** Child care assistance through the Department of Health and Human Services.
☐	☐	**A6** Local district funds.
☐	☐	**A7** Funds obtained through contracts with other school districts, such as contracts to provide services to children below age five with disabilities pursuant to 92 NAC 51.
☐	☐	**A8** Private grants and gifts.
☐	☐	**A9** Parent fees from the program's locally-developed sliding scale.
☐	☐	**A10** Nonpublic prekindergarten programs which meet the requirements of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-1104(2) and this Chapter.

Complete the Supplemental Regulation Checklist (pages 4-11), then answer the question below based on it.

☐ **Yes,** this public school district/ESU **does** meet all regulations required by Rule 11.
If check yes, keep completed supplemental regulation checklist (pages 4-11) on file.

☐ **No,** this public school district/ESU **does not** meet all regulations required by Rule 11.
*If you checked **no**, complete the chart listed below. Keep completed supplemental regulation checklist (pages 4-11) on file.*

Note: For any regulation checked NO on the supplemental regulation checklist, please identify the regulation and provide information below that describes in detail the plan for correcting the Rule 11 violations and making the necessary changes. Attach documentation as necessary. ***Failure to provide a detailed plan will result in a noncompliance letter.***

Regulation Number	Areas of noncompliance and plan for making corrections in progress

SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATION CHECKLIST for PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

004.00
Requirements For All Prekindergarten (Center-based and Home-based) Established By School Boards or Educational Service Units

Yes	No		
☐	☐	004.01	Stated Purpose. Each program will have a stated purpose of promoting social, emotional, intellectual, language, physical, and aesthetic development and learning for the children served and of promoting family development and support.
		004.02	Planning. Each program will have a planning period. The planning period will include activities associated with:
☐	☐		A Determining the community's unmet needs for early childhood education for prekindergarten children in terms of the number of such children in the community, an estimate of the number of children birth to kindergarten entrance age who are not currently receiving services, and barriers to the provision of services.
☐	☐		B Developing cooperative relationships with public and nonpublic providers of early childhood programs, including the development of cooperative agreements and contracts, as needed to carry out the proposed program.
☐	☐		C Recruiting and training staff.
☐	☐		D Identifying and listing existing school-community resources available to provide comprehensive services to the program participants.
☐	☐	004.03	Advisory Committee. A local Early Childhood Advisory Committee will be established with membership representing families and community members.
☐	☐	N/A ☐	A An existing advisory committee such as that required for services to children below age five (5) with disabilities in Title 92 NAC Chapter 51, a Head Start Policy Council, or a Title I Advisory Committee, may serve this purpose if the representation conforms with this subsection and the mission is expanded to encompass the purpose of this Chapter.
☐	☐		B Advisory Committee meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act as described in Neb. Rev. Stat. §§84-1407 to 84-1414.
☐	☐	004.05 N/A ☐	Fees. Fees if charged will not exceed the actual cost for providing prekindergarten programs. Programs charging fees will have a plan to use a sliding fee scale in order to maximize the participation of economically and categorically diverse groups. Programs may waive fees on the basis of need. This subsection does not allow any school district to fail to meet its responsibilities under the Special Education Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. §§79-1110 to 79-1167).
☐	☐	004.06	Program Coordinator. Prekindergarten programs will be coordinated by either a certificated district staff member or an employee of an agency with whom the district has a partnership agreement who holds a current Nebraska Teaching Certificate with at least 9 college credit hours in early childhood education and has the authority and responsibility to ensure compliance of this Chapter.
☐	☐	004.07	Program and Staff Requirements. All teachers and administrators in prekindergarten programs established by school district or educational service units will hold a valid certificate or permit to teach issued by the Department pursuant to 92 NAC 21 unless a waiver has been granted by the Board pursuant to subsection 003.02A in which case the specific staff member or members listed as the subject of the waiver, will temporarily be exempt from the requirements in subsections 004.07 and 005.05A. Each center-based part- day or full- day program will also meet program and staff requirements in Section 005 of this Chapter. Each home-based program will also meet the program and staff requirements in Section 006 of this Chapter.
☐	☐	004.08	Participation and Inclusion. Participation of children and families in any program under this Chapter will be voluntary. Programs will not exclude children verified as having disabilities and will include to the extent possible children of diverse social and economic characteristics.
☐	☐		A Birth Certificates. Within 30 days of enrollment, parents or guardians must submit to the district a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other documentation in compliance with the Missing Children's Identification Act Neb. Rev. Stat. §§43-2001 through 43-2012.

005.00
Additional Program and Staff Requirements for Prekindergarten Programs Serving Children Birth to Kindergarten Eligibility Age in a Center-Based Program
(Also referred to as: Prekindergarten, PK program, Preschool, Childcare, etc.)

Yes	No	
☐	☐	**Does the District/ESU operate a Center-Based Program serving preschoolers or infants/toddlers?** **If marked NO, do not complete 005.01 – 005.13, proceed to section 006.00 on page 10.**
☐	☐	**005.01** Instructional Hours. Each class in the program will operate a minimum of twelve (12) instructional hours per week during the school year. Programs receiving grant funds pursuant this Chapter or receiving Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA) funds will operate a minimum of four hundred and fifty (450) instructional hours per school year.

Early Childhood (Prekindergarten) instructional program hours are being collected through the Consolidated Data Collection (CDC). Districts must indicate the total number of hours per week and per year for each classroom group of children.

Yes	No	
		005.02 Family Development and Support. Each center-based part-day or full-day prekindergarten program will provide a strong family development and support component which recognizes the central role of parents in their children's development and establishes a working partnership with each parent. The family development and support component will include, as a minimum:
☐	☐	**A** Written information for families about the program's philosophy, policies, and procedures.
☐	☐	**B** An orientation to the program for children and families.
☐	☐	**C** At least two (2) home visits per year between the parent(s) and the teacher to discuss the child's development and learning. If the family decides to have the visit at a location other than the home, it must be conducted at a location determined jointly by the family and teacher.
☐	☐	**D** Specified opportunities for program staff to dialogue with families through such activities as parent conferences, participation on advisory committees, needs assessments, participation as classroom volunteers, and flexible scheduling of meetings and events.
☐	☐	**E** Services based on the family's needs and interests that include but are not limited to, components that will enhance parenting skills and the family's ability to access community resources.
☐	☐	**005.03** Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Curriculum, Practices, and Assessment. The part-day or full-day center-based prekindergarten program will provide a play-oriented learning environment, which facilitates the optimal growth and development of children, with opportunities for age-appropriate learning experiences through active involvement with people and materials.
☐	☐	**A** A written program plan will be developed to explain and implement the program. The written program plan will include a description of how the program curriculum, practices, and assessment provide a variety of developmentally appropriate, experiential activities which:
☐	☐	**A1** Promote a positive self-concept in each child.
☐	☐	**A2** Foster attachments for all children by ensuring they have consistent teachers and paraeducators daily.
☐	☐	**A3** Develop social skills in each child.
☐	☐	**A4** Encourage each child to think, reason, question, and experiment.
☐	☐	**A5** Foster both receptive and expressive language development and provide early literacy/pre-reading experiences.
☐	☐	**A6** Incorporate family literacy experiences.
☐	☐	**A7** Develop an understanding of mathematical concepts including quantities of things, of time, and of space.
☐	☐	**A8** Enhance each child's physical development and skills.
☐	☐	**A9** Encourage sound safety, health, and nutritional practices, including avoidance of controlled substances.
☐	☐	**A10** Stimulate each child in creative expression and appreciation of the arts.

Yes	No		
☐	☐		**A11** Include exploratory play in a language and literacy-rich environment during a majority of the daily schedule.
☐	☐		**A12** Reflect and respect the diversity of races, national origins, gender, and physical and mental abilities in the larger society and with particular emphasis on the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children enrolled through planned activities, use of materials, and use of equipment.
☐	☐		**A13** Use positive, age-appropriate techniques of child guidance including redirection, anticipation, elimination of potential problems, and encouragement.
☐	☐		**A14** Use child assessment (evaluation) practices based on documentation gathered through an established system of ongoing observation and assessment to provide objective measures of each child's performance and progress in development and learning to meet the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines: Nebraska's Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards. The summary of these standards are contained in Appendix D of this Chapter. The assessment data will be used to plan and implement teaching strategies and activities to meet the individual needs of each child. Any formal assessment tools used will meet accepted standards of reliability and validity. Developmentally appropriate practices will be implemented for all children. Individualized support will be provided for children who are not progressing within age-expectations for literacy/pre-reading and mathematics.
☐	☐		**A15** Link the prekindergarten to the district's kindergarten/primary program through a written transition plan insuring continuity, identification, and implementation of processes necessary to facilitate the transition of children. The prekindergarten program will be included in the district school improvement plan.
☐	☐		**A16** Include a well-defined language development and early literacy emphasis, including the involvement of parents in family literacy activities.
☐	☐		**A17** Provide at least one outdoor play period (weather permitting) daily.
		005.04	Evaluation and Quality Assurance. The program will participate in periodic program evaluations to assure program quality and positive child outcomes. The evaluation process will be designed by the Department and will include, but not be limited to the following:
☐	☐		**A** An assessment of program quality.
☐	☐		**B** A report of child outcomes including at least one objective measure of child performance and progress.
☐	☐		**C** A written plan for dissemination of the results of the evaluation.
		005.05	Program Staff. The prekindergarten program will use qualified staff as set forth below.
☐	☐		**A** Teacher. Any teacher in a prekindergarten program ~~shall~~ will hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate with one of the following endorsements: Early Childhood Special Education (Birth through Kindergarten), Early Childhood Inclusive (Birth through Grade 3), or Early Childhood Education (Age 3 through Grade 3). The Early Childhood Education (age 3 through Grade 3) endorsement will not be valid for teaching children below age 3. A program may use a teacher without such an endorsement if the teacher files with the Department, as part of the annual Early Childhood Program Report, a plan developed by the teacher and the cooperating college or university to complete the endorsement. The plan will require the teacher to receive at least six (6) semester hours of credit annually toward completion of the endorsement. When fifty percent (50%) of the required courses have been completed, the teacher is eligible for a provisional endorsement pursuant to 92 NAC 24.

Teacher qualification information is being collected through the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS). Districts must complete a Staff Template and Staff Assignment Template for each teacher. All early childhood teachers must be reported as prekindergarten. For any program employing a teacher not having an early childhood education endorsement, the teacher's plan for and progress toward completion of the endorsement must be submitted yearly to NDE, Office of Early Childhood.

Yes	No		
☐	☐	005.05 N/A ☐	**B** Paraeducator. A paraeducator assigned to work as a member of a team in a classroom setting will have received at least twelve (12) semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit in child development/early childhood education, or the equivalent in prior training or experience as determined by the Commissioner or his or her designee. Equivalencies include, but are not limited to the following: **1** Holding a current Child Development Associate Credential issued by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington, D.C. will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. **2** Holding a current Nebraska teaching certificate with a K-6 elementary endorsement will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. **3** Each two (2) years of employment in a program serving children birth through second grade will be an equivalency for three (3) credit hours of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Four or more years of experience may count for a maximum of six (6) of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. **4** Early childhood training hours (including web-based training) provided by or sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Education Office of Early Childhood will count toward the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Fifteen (15) clock hours constitute one (1) semester hour. **5** The program may employ a paraeducator who does not meet the twelve (12) semester hour requirement as long as the paraeducator completes a minimum of six (6) semester hours or the equivalent in training or experience within the first year of employment and meets the full twelve (12) semester hour requirement before the end of the second year of employment.

Indicate the total number of paraeducators in the program and indicate how many meet the specified Rule 11 requirement.

	005.05B5 **How many paras** are in year 1 of employment and are completing 6 semester credit hours in child development/early childhood education or the equivalent?
	005.05B5 **How many paras** that are in year 2 of employment and are completing 12 semester credit hours in child development/early childhood education or the equivalent?
	005.05B5 **How many paras** have completed 12 semester credit hours in child development/early childhood education or the equivalent?
	Total **Number** (add boxes above) of paraeducators that are in the district's early childhood program. (year 1, year 2 and have completed 12 hours)

Yes	No		
☐	☐	005.05 N/A ☐	**C** Home Visitor. The prekindergarten program may employ a home visitor in a center-based program who provides family development and support services under the direction of a teacher. The home visitor will have at least twelve (12) semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit in one or a combination of the following areas: (i) Early Childhood Education; (ii) Early Childhood Special Education; (iii) Child Development; (iv) Human Services, Nursing, Social Work, Sociology or Psychology, including coursework in the area of family centered practices or child and youth development. **1** The program may employ a home visitor who does not meet the twelve (12) semester hour requirement as long as the home visitor completes a minimum of six (6) semester hours or the equivalent in training or experience within the first year of employment and meets the full twelve (12) semester hour requirement before the end of the second year of employment. Equivalencies include, but are not limited to the following: **A** Holding a current Child Development Associate Credential issued by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington, D.C. shall will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. **B** Holding a current Nebraska teaching certificate with a K-6 elementary endorsement shall will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. **C** Each two (2) years of employment in a program serving children birth through second grade will be an equivalency for three (3) credit hours of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Four or more years of experience may count for a maximum of six (6) of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. **D** Holding a Nebraska Home Visitor certificate shall will be equivalent to three (3) semester hours. **E** Early childhood training hours (including web-based training) provided by or sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Education Office of Early Childhood will count toward the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Fifteen (15) clock hours constitute one (1) semester hour.
☐	☐		**D** Orientation. All staff working in the prekindergarten program will be provided with an orientation prior to having direct responsibility for the care and teaching of children or for providing family and development services. The orientation will include job duties and responsibilities, building safety procedures, information about the state law regarding reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect under Neb. Rev. Stat. §28-711, child assessment information, and daily routines and schedules.
☐	☐	N/A ☐	**E** Language Resource. If the majority of children enrolled in the program use a common language other than spoken English, at least one staff member who uses such language will be available as an active participant to communicate with such children in classroom and group experiences. Where less than a majority of the children enrolled in the program speak a language different from the rest, one staff member or a community resource person or parent will be identified to serve as a resource to the program.
☐	☐		**F** Staff Development Plan. There will be a written plan detailing staff development opportunities for all teachers, paraeducators and home visitors working in the program who have regular contact with children and their families. The written plan will include a professional development goal, the strategies for meeting the goal and a timeline for completion. The written plan will be reviewed and updated annually.
☐	☐		**G** Staff Development Hours. Teachers, paraeducators and home visitors who have regular contact with children in early childhood programs will participate annually in at least fifteen (15) clock hours of Early Childhood Training Center approved staff development. All staff development will relate to prekindergarten or child development.
☐	☐		**H** Background checks. Program staff who are not required to hold a Nebraska Teaching Certificate and who have contact with children will be checked by program administration against the Nebraska Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect, and the Nebraska Adult Protective Services Registry before being hired. No person or persons may be hired or remain employed who has a felony conviction nor any misdemeanor conviction involving abuse, neglect, or sexual misconduct as further defined and identified in 92 NAC Chapter 21 subsections 003.12 and 003.13.

Yes	No		
		005.06	Child/Staff Ratio and Group Size. Child/staff ratios and group sizes will be maintained as indicated below with staff assigned who meet the qualifications described in subsection 005.06. When age groups are mixed, the lower ratio will prevail.
☐	☐	N/A ☐	**A** If the program serves infants, one (1) staff member in the classroom setting will hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate. A paraeducator or an additional teacher will be assigned to assure a ratio of at least one (1) adult for each four (4) children with a maximum group size of eight (8). (See definition of infant)
☐	☐	N/A ☐	**B** If the program serves toddlers, one (1) staff member in the classroom setting will hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate. A paraeducator or an additional teacher will be assigned to assure a ratio of at least one (1) adult for each six (6) children with a maximum group size of twelve (12). (See definition of toddler)
☐	☐	N/A ☐	**C** If the program serves preschoolers, one (1) staff member in the classroom setting will hold a valid Nebraska Teaching Certificate for each group of twenty (20) children. A paraeducator or additional teacher will be assigned to assure a ratio of at least one (1) adult for each ten (10) children with a maximum group size of twenty (20). (See definition of preschooler)
☐	☐	N/A ☐	**D** In full-day programs where children nap, the certified teacher may be out of the classroom during the nap period as long as the children are adequately supervised by other staff and the teacher is readily available.
		005.07	Facilities, Equipment, Health and Safety.
☐	☐		**A** Classroom settings will provide at least thirty-five (35) square feet per child of space usable by the children.
☐	☐		**B** An outdoor play area that is protected by fences or physical barriers will be available which provides at least seventy-five (75) square feet per child of play space.
☐	☐		**B1** The fence or physical barrier will be of a type of structure that is a continuous barrier and is at least 36 inches in height, flush with the ground, and without any gaps that would allow a child to exit the protected area.
☐	☐		**C** Each classroom setting and outdoor play area will be equipped with safe, durable, age-appropriate equipment and materials for indoor and outdoor activities.
☐	☐		**D** If needed, modifications of the equipment, materials, and activities will be made to assure maximum participation in the ongoing activities of the program for children with disabilities attending the program.
☐	☐		**E** Equipment and materials will be organized into clearly defined areas of interest that are arranged to encourage independent choice; cooperative activity; and alteration between quiet and active exploration and teacher-and child-initiated activities.
☐	☐		**F** Each prekindergarten program will maintain safe, healthful, and sanitary conditions within the facilities used for the program and on the outdoor playground and meet applicable fire, safety, and health codes.
☐	☐		**G** At least one (1) staff member per class who has received first aid and CPR training specifically designed for children will be on duty with the children at all times. Written verification of current training will be available.
☐	☐	005.08	Meals and/or Snacks. The program will provide all children in each class at least one meal and/or snack that meets USDA Child Nutrition Program guidelines each day. All tables used for meals and snack will be properly sanitized.
☐	☐	005.09	Immunizations. The school district will comply with all state statutes and regulations regarding the immunization status of all enrolled children.
☐	☐	005.10	Supervision. Adequate and appropriate supervision will be provided at all times children are in attendance, including during outdoor play and field trips. Adequate and appropriate supervision includes, but is not limited to, knowing the whereabouts and being within sight or sound of children at all times.
☐	☐	005.11	Toileting. The program will ensure the toileting needs of all children are met immediately. The program will ensure wet and/or soiled clothing is changed immediately.

Enrollment Information

This data is used for state aid calculations.

Child enrollment information is being collected in ADVISER. Districts must complete Early Childhood Program section for each student participating in an early childhood program.

All children birth to kindergarten entrance age served by the district must be included in ADVISER.

Yes	No	
☐	☐	All children enrolled in the program are below the age of kindergarten entrance eligibility.
If no, please explain		

Yes	No	
☐	☐	**Does the District/ESU operate a center-based program serving infants and/or toddlers? If marked NO, do not complete 005.12A – 005.12P**
		005.12 Infants and Toddlers. Programs serving children birth to age 3 will meet the following requirements:
☐	☐	**A** The physical, emotional and social needs of infants and toddlers will be met consistently and promptly;
☐	☐	**B** Formula and feeding schedules will be obtained from parents;
☐	☐	**C** Infants will not sleep with bottles;
☐	☐	**D** Bottles will not be propped;
☐	☐	**E** If formula is used, it will be a commercially made product;
☐	☐	**F** All breast milk and prepared formula will be refrigerated and clearly labeled with the child's name; and unused prepared formula will be discarded as indicated by the label;
☐	☐	**G** Unfrozen breast milk will be discarded after 48 hours; and frozen breastmilk will be discarded after three months;
☐	☐	**H** Only highchairs with three point safety straps will be used;
☐	☐	**I** Infants will be placed on their backs to sleep except in cases where there is a medical reason the child will not sleep on its back; and written verification of the medical reason from the child's physician will be available;
☐	☐	**J** Wet or soiled diapers will be changed immediately and disposed of in a sanitary manner;
☐	☐	**K** Individual cleaning cloths will be used for diapering;
☐	☐	**L** Diaper changing surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected after each use and staff will use proper hand washing techniques after each diaper change;
☐	☐	**M** Toileting will be done in a manner agreed upon with the parent;
☐	☐	**N** Potty chairs will be cleaned, disinfected, and properly stored away from play areas;
☐	☐	**O** All cribs and playpens will meet federal safety standards as indicated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission; and
☐	☐	**P** All cribs and playpens will not contain any soft objects, bumper pads, toys or loose bedding.

Yes	No	
☐	☐	**Does the District/ESU operate a Sixpence program?** **If marked YES, and you have both a center-based and home-based Sixpence program you must complete both 005.12 and 006.00. If you only have a center-based Sixpence program, you must complete only 005.12. If you have only a home-based Sixpence program, you must complete only 006.00.** **If marked NO, do not complete 005.13.**
☐	☐	**005.13** Sixpence Programs. School districts that receive Early Childhood Endowment birth to three grants, also referred to as Sixpence programs, may be required to meet additional grant-related program requirements established by the Endowment Board of Trustees. (District meets Sixpence Requirements)

006.00
Additional Program and Staff Requirements for Prekindergarten Programs Serving Children Birth to Kindergarten Eligibility Age in a Home-Based Program (Does not apply to or include special education services in the home under Rule 51 and Rule 52 (92 NAC 51 and 52).

Yes	No	
☐	☐	**Does the District/ESU operate a Home-Based Program? (Do not complete for Home-Based Early Childhood Special Education) If marked NO, do not complete 006.01 – 006.05C.**
☐	☐	**006.01** Contact Hours in Home-Based Programs. Program staff will have contact with each enrolled family at least three (3) times each month and a minimum total of 180 minutes. A minimum of 120 minutes will be face- to- face contact with the family. Contact may be completed by the home visiting specialist or the home visitor. If a school district or educational service unit contracts with another organization to provide early childhood services, the district or ESU will ensure the adequate number of hours are provided as required in this subsection.
		006.02 Family Development and Support. Each home-based prekindergarten program will include the following, as a minimum:
☐	☐	**A** Written information for families about the program's philosophy, policies, and procedures;
☐	☐	**B** An orientation to the program for families; and
☐	☐	**C** Delivery of services that are based on family needs and interests and that focus on the child's development and positive family outcomes. Services will be provided year round following a curriculum that meets the requirements of subsection 006.03 of this Chapter.
☐	☐	**006.03** Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Curriculum, Practices, and Assessment in Home-Based Prekindergarten Programs. Each home-based prekindergarten program will provide curricula that are researched-based and designed to work with families that facilitate the optimal growth and development of children and that are culturally appropriate for all families served. The program will also include a well-defined language development and early literacy emphasis, including the involvement of families in literacy activities.
☐	☐	**A** Each program will have a written program plan that will include a description of program curriculum, practices and assessments used. This plan must be provided to all parents and be available to the Department upon request.
☐	☐	**B** Use child assessment (evaluation) practices based on documentation gathered through an established system of ongoing observation and assessment to provide objective measures of each child's performance and progress in development and learning to meet the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines: Nebraska's Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards. The summary of these standards are contained in Appendix D of this Chapter. The assessment data will be used to plan and implement teaching strategies and activities to meet the individual needs of each child. Any formal assessment tools used will meet accepted standards of reliability and validity. Developmentally appropriate practices will be implemented for all children. Individualized support will be provided for children who are not progressing within age-expectations for literacy/pre-reading and mathematics.
		006.04 Evaluation and Quality Assurance. Each home-based program will participate in periodic program evaluations to assure program quality and positive child outcomes. The evaluation process will be designed by the Department's Office of Early Childhood and will include, but not be limited to the following:
☐	☐	**A** An assessment of program quality;
☐	☐	**B** A report of child outcomes including at least one objective measure of child performance and progress; and
☐	☐	**C** A written plan for dissemination of the results of the evaluation.

Yes	No		
		006.05	Program Staff. In order to provide home-based services, each home-based program will use one or more home visitor specialists and may in addition use one or more home visitors who meet the qualifications below:
☐	☐		**A** Home Visiting Specialist. Any home visitor specialist in a home-based program will have a bachelor's degree or higher in one of the following areas: **1** Early Childhood Education, **2** Early Childhood Special Education, **3** Child Development, or **4** Human Services, Nursing, Sociology or Psychology including at least twelve (12) graduate or undergraduate hours in any area of family- centered practices or child and youth development.
☐	☐	N/A ☐	**B** Home Visitor. Any home visitor will have at least twelve (12) semester hours of undergraduate or graduate credit in one or a combination of the following areas: (i) Early Childhood Education; (ii) Early Childhood Special Education; (iii) Child Development; (iv) Human Services, Nursing, Social Work, Sociology or Psychology, including coursework in the area of family centered practices or child and youth development. **1** The program may employ a home visitor who does not meet the twelve (12) semester hour requirement as long as the home visitor completes a minimum of six (6) semester hours or the equivalent in training or experience within the first year of employment and meets the full twelve (12) semester hour requirement before the end of the second year of employment. Equivalencies include, but are not limited to the following: **A** Holding a current Child Development Associate Credential issued by the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington, D.C. will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. **B** Holding a current Nebraska teaching certificate with a K-6 elementary endorsement will be an equivalent for the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. **C** Each two (2) years of employment in a program serving children birth through second grade will be an equivalency for three (3) credit hours of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Four or more years of experience may count for a maximum of six (6) of the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. **D** Holding a Nebraska Home Visitor certificate will be equivalent to three (3) semester hours. **E** Early childhood training hours (including web-based training) provided by or sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Education Office of Early Childhood will count toward the twelve (12) semester hour requirement. Fifteen (15) clock hours constitute one (1) semester hour.
☐	☐		**C** Orientation. All staff working in the home-based program will be provided with an orientation prior to having direct responsibility for the care and teaching of children or for providing family and development services. The orientation will include job duties and responsibilities, home visiting safety procedures, information about the state law regarding reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect under Neb. Rev. Stat. §28-711, child assessment information, and information about the importance of family routines and schedules.

Indicate the total number of home visitors in the program and indicate how many meet the specified Rule 11 requirement.

	006.05C	**How many home visitors** are in year 1 of employment and are completing 6 semester credit hours in child development/early childhood education or the equivalent?
	006.05C	**How many home visitors** are in year 2 of employment and are completing 12 semester credit hours in child development/early childhood education or the equivalent?
	006.05C	**How many home visitors** have completed 12 semester credit hours in child development/early childhood education or the equivalent?
	Total **Number** (add boxes above) of home visitors that are in the district's early childhood program. (year 1, year 2 and have completed 12 hours)	

Return to:
Nebraska Department of Education
Office of Early Childhood
kristine.luebbe@nebraska.gov

NDE 24-006
Revised: 11/2018
Date Due: February 1

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
APPLICATION for NEW or EXPANSION GRANTS

District Name/ESU Number:			U.S. Congressional District (check one) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3
Address:	City:		Zip Code:
Grant Application Category: ☐ Option 1 (11-20 children per classroom) ☐ Option 2 (7-10 children per classroom)	Amount of Grant Funds Requested for Operating Budget:	Amount of Grant Funds Requested for Start-up Budget:	Amount of Local Share to be Provided:

Authorized Representative (NDE considers the Superintendent/ESU Administrator to be the Authorized Representative):		Signature of Authorized Representative:
Telephone Number:	FAX Number:	E-mail Address:

Program Contact/Coordinator:		Title:
Telephone Number:	FAX Number:	E-mail Address:

Fiscal Contact:		Title:
Telephone Number:	FAX Number:	E-mail Address:

PARTNERSHIP STATEMENT of COMMITMENT

Directions: This form should be completed by each local partner (agency, organization, etc.), including the applicant district/ESU. Please make copies of this form for each partner to complete and submit with the application.

Partner Name:		
Address:	**City:**	**Zip Code:**
Contact Person:	**Title:**	
Telephone Number:	**Email Address:**	

As a partner in the program, this agency will commit the following resources, time, ongoing representation, etc. to assure that the program provides a high quality early childhood experience:

The partner's signature on this form verifies participation in the development of the grant application, a full awareness of the content of the grant application, and agreement to participate in the development of a written partnership agreement.

Signature of Partner:	Date:

APPLICATION NARRATIVE

(PLEASE NOTE: Text boxes within the application template will automatically expand to include all necessary information.)

Grant Applications will be scored on a 100 point scale.

Application Summary

In one or two sentences, identify how the grant funds will be used (i.e., number of groups of children, number of children, number of days and hours).

Program Planning (Maximum 10 points)

1) Current Status: Provide information regarding the current status of preschool age children in the proposed service area.

_____ Number of licensed child care centers
_____ Total licensed capacity
_____ Number of licensed preschools
_____ Total licensed capacity
_____ Number of licensed family child care homes
_____ Total licensed capacity
_____ Number of Head Start classrooms
_____ Total funded capacity
_____ Number of children, age 3 & 4, enrolled in Head Start
_____ Number of children, age 3 & 4, with a verified disability
_____ Number of children, age 3 & 4, enrolled in Title I, Part A services
_____ Number of children, age 3 & 4, enrolled in Title I, Part C (Migrant services)
_____ Number of children, age 3 & 4, enrolled in Title I, Homeless services
_____ District-wide percentage of free & reduced lunch eligibility
_____ District-wide percentage of English Language Learners
_____ Total number of 3 year-old children
_____ Total number of 4 year-old children
_____ Kindergarten enrollment for the current school year
_____ Anticipated kindergarten enrollment for the next school year
Kindergarten is offered:
☐ All-Day Every-Day
_____ Total number of hours per year
☐ Half-Day Every-Day
_____ Total number of hours per year

Define the proposed service area.

2) Need: Provide a justification of the need for an early childhood education program grant in the proposed service area. Describe the community's unmet needs for three- and four-year-old children. Describe the needs of working families and how the proposed program will impact these families. Describe the barriers to services.

3) Community Characteristics: Describe any significant characteristics of the community and/or changes in the community demographics (i.e., immigrant population, economic status).

Partnerships (Maximum 25 points)

1) Partners: Identify the partners with whom you have, or will have, a formal written partnership agreement. Check all that apply and include the name of the partner program as appropriate. **A Partnership Statement of Commitment form must be included for each partner that is checked.**

- ☐ Programs for Children with Disabilities below 5 years of age funded through the Special Education Act
- ☐ Early Intervention
- ☐ Head Start _____
  If not checked, explain why Head Start has not been included. _____
- ☐ Title I, Part A
- ☐ Migrant (Title I, Part C)
- ☐ Title I Homeless
- ☐ Child Care Center _____
- ☐ Family Child Care Home _____
- ☐ Community Preschool _____
- ☐ Local School District _____
- ☐ Educational Service Unit _____
- ☐ Early Learning Connection Coordinator _____
- ☐ Health & Human Services
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____

Describe the efforts to include community partners, especially any Head Start programs in the district. If community partners declined to participate, identify the partner and cite the reason(s) for not participating. List the partners that participated in the program planning process and those partners submitting an attached Partnership Statement of Commitment.

Describe the participation of the partners in the program planning process. Describe how the partners will be involved in the start-up process and in the implementation of the early childhood education program.

Describe the plan for development of local written partnership agreements.

2) Advisory Committee: Describe the plan for establishing the local early childhood advisory committee. Include a purpose statement and identify the roles and/or individuals to be represented. Describe the responsibilities of the committee members.

Program Description (Maximum 50 points)

1) Start-up Plan: Identify the anticipated activities and timeline for implementing the early childhood program. Describe the role of the classroom teacher in the start-up activities. Include the projected date the program will begin serving children.

2) Program Design: Identify the elements of the early childhood education program. Check all that apply.

Length of the Day

- ☐ Part Day (less than 6 hours per session)
  - _____ Number of hours per day
- ☐ Full Day (6 hours or more per session)
  - _____ Number of hours per day

Days of programming

- ☐ Monday
- ☐ Tuesday
- ☐ Wednesday
- ☐ Thursday
- ☐ Friday

Length of program year

- ☐ School-Year (9 months)
  - _____ Total number of hours per year
- ☐ Full-Year (12 months)
  - _____ Total number of hours per year

Classroom Ratios

- _____ Number of classroom groups of children
- _____ Number of children per classroom group
- _____ Number of staff per classroom group

Program Facility

- ☐ Existing site _____
- ☐ New site _____
- ☐ Type of facility _____

Describe how the program meets the applicable fire, safety and health codes.

Describe how the program will provide adequate space and appropriate equipment both indoors and outdoors.

Meals and/or Snacks Meeting USDA Guidelines

- ☐ Breakfast provided
- ☐ Morning snack provided
- ☐ Lunch provided
- ☐ Afternoon snack provided
- ☐ Participate in School Lunch Program
- ☐ Participate in Child and Adult Care Food Program

Transportation

- ☐ Provided for all enrolled children
- ☐ Provided for some enrolled children
- ☐ Not provided

Describe the family development and support activities, including family literacy activities. Identify a plan for conducting home visits. Describe how the program will meet the economic and logistical needs and circumstances of families.

Describe the written agreements with the local Head Start agency and, if feasible, other community-based early childhood education and care programs to provide higher-quality learning experiences and a more seamless transition to kindergarten. Include information regarding how all early childhood stakeholders, community and school-based, will be included in the process of transitions to kindergarten.

Describe how the early childhood education program will be part of the district school continuous improvement process.

3) Student Population: Identify the population of children who will be served in the early childhood education program. Check all that apply and add estimated numbers as appropriate.

☐ Children whose family income qualifies them for participation in the federal free or reduced lunch program.
_____Estimated number of four-year-olds who will be eligible to attend kindergarten in the following year.

☐ Children who reside in a home where a language other than spoken English is used as the primary means of communication.
_____Estimated number of four-year-olds who will be eligible to attend kindergarten in the following year.

☐ Children who were born prematurely or at low birth weight as verified by a physician.
_____Estimated number of four-year-olds who will be eligible to attend kindergarten in the following year.

☐ Children whose parents are younger than eighteen or who have not completed high school.
_____ Estimated number of four-year-olds who will be eligible to attend kindergarten in the following year.

☐ Children who have been verified with a disability.
☐ Children who qualify for or who are enrolled in the federal Head Start program.
☐ Children who qualify for or who are enrolled in Title I.
☐ Children who do not qualify for one of the above.

_____ Estimated number of children who will participate in year 1 of the early childhood education program grant.
_____ Estimated total number of four-year-olds to be served (age as of July 31).
_____ Estimated number of three-year-olds to be served (age as of July 31).

4) Staff: Describe how the program will recruit and assure that all teachers and paraeducators will meet the requirements of ***Rule 11 – Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the Issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants***.

If staff (teacher and/or paraeducator) for the early childhood education program has been identified, provide the name, position, and teaching endorsement or qualifications, as applicable.

Describe how the early childhood staff will be supported to provide time for the teacher(s) and para(s) to plan together for curriculum/instruction and assessment, as well as how staff will be supported through mentoring and/or coaching to promote best practices.

Describe the governance structure. Specifically identify who is responsible for supervising and evaluating staff in the early childhood education program. Identify the program coordinator/administrator and the number of early childhood credits earned by that person.

5) Curriculum Framework: Identify the curriculum framework selected for use in the early childhood education program.

Describe how the selected curriculum provides a research-based and play-oriented learning environment which facilitates the optimal growth and development of children, with opportunities for age-appropriate learning experiences through active involvement with people and materials.

Describe how the ***Nebraska's Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards*** will be used to support the curriculum.

If applicable, describe how technology and interactive media will be integrated into the curriculum and will support the learning and development of the children.

6) Child Assessment and Program Evaluation: Describe how data from child assessments and program quality assessments will be used to connect assessment, curriculum, teaching strategies, and classroom practices to meet the group and individual needs of the children.

Check the box below to indicate the applicant's agreement to participate in a program evaluation process:

☐ The program agrees to participate in periodic evaluations to assure program quality and positive child outcomes as part of the evaluation process designed by the Department of Education.

7) Professional Development: Describe how individual staff and program professional development needs will be determined.

Identify the training needed to implement the program and child assessments as well as the curriculum. Identify the training resources available within the partnership and the timeline for providing the training.

Describe how the early childhood education program will coordinate with the regional *Early Learning Connection* to provide professional development opportunities. If known, identify the person(s) who will serve as a member of the *Early Learning Connection* regional partnership.

Coordinate and Use a Combination of Local, State, and Federal Funding Sources (Maximum 15 points)

Identify the program's plan to use multiple funding sources to maximize participation of economically and categorically diverse groups and to ensure that participating children and families have access to comprehensive services. Check all funding sources that will be used in the program:

- ☐ Early Childhood Special Education
- ☐ Special Education Flexible Funding
- ☐ Federal Head Start
- ☐ Title I, Part A
- ☐ Even Start Family Literacy (Title I, Part B)
- ☐ Migrant (Title I, Part C)
- ☐ Title I Homeless
- ☐ Child Care Assistance through Health and Human Services
- ☐ Local School District
- ☐ Parent Fees Based on a Sliding Fee Scale
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____

Identify the program's plan to use a sliding fee scale to maximize participation of economically and categorically diverse groups and to ensure that participating children and families have access to comprehensive services.

OPERATING BUDGET with MULTIPLE FUNDING SOURCES

*All state funds should be specified on a line item basis, as applicable. Cells with **XXXXXX** indicate categories which cannot be supported by a particular funding source. Any of the funding sources listed in 79-1103(2) R.R.S. can be used to support the Early Childhood Program.*

FUNDING SOURCE / BUDGET CATEGORIES	State Early Childhood Grant	IDEA Part B Base	IDEA Part B Enrollment/ Poverty	Special Education Act Flex Funding (State)	Head Start	Title I Part A	Title I Part C (Migrant)	Local District Funds	HHSS Child Care Assistance	Parent Fees (Sliding Fee Scale)	Other
SHARE (indicate % of TOTAL BUDGET)											
Personnel (100)											
Employee Fringe Benefits (200)											
Professional Services (300)				XXXXXX							
Evaluation (300)				XXXXXX							
Staff Development (300)											
Staff Travel (300)											
Property Services (400)											
Purchased Services (500)				XXXXXX							
Child Transportation (500)				XXXXXX							
Classroom Materials/Supplies (600)											
Child Food (600)		XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX							
Family Involvement (600)											
Indirect Costs (695)											
Property (700)											
Minor Facility Modifications (700)		XXXXXX		XXXXXX		XXXXXX					
TOTAL											

BUDGET NARRATIVE

PLEASE NOTE: Text boxes within the budget template will expand to include all necessary information. *All anticipated costs necessary to operate the program must be explained. The budget must relate directly to the activities and staff identified in the application and should provide a rationale for the projected costs (e.g., how employee benefits are derived). The budget should clearly indicate the portions to be supported through grant funds as well as the matching funding or services provided by the applicant or partner agencies.*

Personnel:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Employee Fringe Benefits:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Professional Services:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Evaluation:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Staff Development:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Property Services:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Purchased Services:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Child Transportation:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Staff Travel:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Classroom Materials/Supplies:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Child Food:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Family Involvement:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Indirect Costs:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Property:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

Minor Facility Modifications:

Grant Funds
Match Funds

START-UP BUDGET

PLEASE NOTE: Text boxes within the budget template will expand to include all necessary information. *This form supplements the operating budget form and is intended to clarify the request for start-up funds separate from ongoing operating costs. Start-up funds may be requested in an amount up to $25,000. Complete all line items as applicable. A detailed budget narrative for use of the start-up funds must also be included on this form.*

BUDGET CATEGORIES	Start-up Request	Budget Narrative
Personnel (100)		
Employee Fringe Benefits (200)		
Professional Services (300)		
Staff Development (300)		
Property Services (400)		
Purchased Services (500)		
Staff Travel (500)		
Classroom Materials/Supplies (600)		
Property (700)		
Minor Facility Modifications (700)		
Administrative/Indirect Costs (695)		
TOTAL		

Nebraska Department of Education Required Information for Continuation Grants

Program Information

- Contact Information
  - Authorized Representative
- Summary (of previous year)
  - Highlights and Successes from Previous Year
  - Challenges from Previous Year
  - Planning Process for Upcoming Year
- Program Design (for upcoming year)
  - Hours, days and terms of operation
  - Classroom ratios and group size
  - Meals, Transportation, Health and Safety
  - Family Development
  - Staff
    - Identification and Qualifications for: Program Coordinator, Classroom Teacher, Paraeducators

Program Framework (for upcoming year)

- Partners
  - Identification of inter-agency and intra-agency partners
  - Dates of Partnership Agreements
- Advisory Committee
  - Description of membership, structure and schedule
- Professional Development
  - Plan for teachers and paraeducators
- Curriculum Framework
  - Identification of curricula being sued
  - Description of Early Learning Guidelines as support to curriculum
- Evaluation Measures
  - Scores from most recent program evaluation and how they've been used to promote continuous improvement
  - Other assessments used in Prekindergarten classroom
  - Plan for dissemination of the results of the evaluation measures
  - Description of how prekindergarten is involved in district continuous improvement plan

Budget (for upcoming year)

- Identification of local, state, and federal funding sources
- Operating budget detail with matching sources of funding equal to or greater than the grant
- Operating budget summary

Assurances

Summary of Early Learning Guidelines: Nebraska's Birth to Five Learning and Development Standards

Social Emotional Standards:

SE.01: Self Concept- Develops self-awareness and sense of self
SE.02: Self Control- Manages emotions with increasing independence
SE.03: Cooperation and Prosocial Behavior- Develops foundational skills to support cooperation and prosocial behavior
SE.04: Social Relationships- Shows interest in, interacts with, and develops personal relationships with others
SE.05: Knowledge of Families and Communities- Develops a sense of belonging to family, community, and other groups

Approaches to Learning Standards:

AL.01: Initiative and Curiosity- Develops foundational skills that support initiative, self-direction, and curiosity as a learner
AL.02: Sensory Exploration, Reasoning, and Problem Solving- Demonstrates active inquiry, persistence, problem identification, and application of knowledge to new situations

Health and Physical Development Standards:

HP.01: Fine (Small) Motor Skills- Uses finger and hand control to operate and use small objects demonstrating fine motor coordination
HP.02: Gross (Large) Motor Skills- Child demonstrates effective and efficient use of large muscles for movement, position, and to explore the environment
HP.03: Health and Safety Practices- Child develops an awareness and understanding of health, physical activity, and safety
HP.04: Nutrition- Develops healthy eating habits and exhibits increasing independence in eating abilities

Language and Literacy Standards:

LL.01: Listening and Understanding- Demonstrates continual growth in understanding increasingly complex and varied vocabulary
LL.02: Speaking and Communicating- Develops foundational skills to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes
LL.03: Phonological Awareness- Demonstrates knowledge of phonological awareness
LL.04: Book Knowledge and Appreciation- Demonstrates interest in and appreciation of reading-related activities
LL.05: Print Awareness and Early Writing- Conveys meaning through drawing, letters, and words

Mathematics Standards:

M.01: Number and Operations- Demonstrates awareness of quantity, counting, and numeric competencies

M.02: Geometry and Spatial Sense- Develops understanding of geometric shapes and spatial relationships

M.03: Patterns and Measurements- Demonstrates awareness of routines, predictable patterns, and attributes that can be measured

M.04: Data Analysis- Develops foundational skills in learning to understand concepts of classification, data collection, organization, and description

Science Standards:

S.01: Scientific Knowledge- Demonstrates a basic awareness and use of scientific concepts

S.02: Scientific Skills and Methods- Develops foundational skills in learning and understanding about the world through exploration and investigation

Creative Arts Standards:

CA.01: Music- Develops foundational skills to support creative expression through voice, instruments, and objects

CA.02: Visual Art- Develops foundational skills that support creative expression through the process, production, and appreciation of visual art forms

CA.03: Movement- Develops foundational skills that support creative expression through movement

CA.04: Dramatic Play- Expresses creativity using puppetry, storytelling, dance, plays, and theater