

POLICY AND INFORMATION ADVISORY 2.17
SUBJECT: FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN
PROGRAM AREA: EARLY CHILDHOOD

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This policy updates and replaces the 2016 bulletin on 4-year-old kindergarten. These Questions and Answers provide information applicable to 4-year-old kindergarten and especially to 4-year-old kindergarten implemented in community approaches with child care, Head Start, private schools, and other community programs. The policies established in the bulletin have been developed in collaboration with, and are consistent with the policies of, other divisions within the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Relevant questions on child care licensing and subsidies have been coordinated with policies from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) Division of Early Care and Education.

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OVERVIEW

1. What is the history of 4-year-old kindergarten in the Wisconsin public schools?

Four-year-old children have been attending public schools in Wisconsin for more than 150 years. Wisconsin made a constitutional commitment to early education in 1848, when the State Constitution, in Article X, Section 3, called for school districts to be as uniform as practical and free to all children between the ages of 4 and 20. Essentially, all 4-year-old children in the community attended the one-room schools of the 19th century. At that time, few teachers had training in instructing young children. In 1856, the first private kindergarten opened in Watertown, serving children ages 2 to 5. The first public kindergartens in the state (established in 1873) limited kindergarten enrollment to 4- and 5-year-olds. These formal kindergartens used teachers with specific training in the education of young children.

Four-year-old kindergarten (4K) attendance peaked in the 1920s and then declined as schools shifted their emphasis to 5-year-olds. Eventually, kindergarten became a half-day program for 5-year-olds, with some exceptions. A few districts in the Milwaukee area have maintained 4-year-old kindergarten (often termed *junior kindergarten*) for nearly a century, despite the fact that state funding was suspended between 1957 and 1984. During that time, compensatory programs for educationally disadvantaged and disabled 4-year-olds (such as Head Start, Title I, and special education) helped to fill the void in many communities. In the 1980s, the state legislature renewed state aid for 4-year-old kindergarten and expanded state aid for full-day 5-year-old kindergarten (5K). This prompted many public schools to revisit the concept of universally available 4-year-old programming. During the late 1990s, more districts saw the need to implement 4-year-old kindergarten, and by 2016, 97 percent of school districts operated these programs. Since 2000, many districts implemented 4K using community approaches (4KCA). In 4KCA programs, school districts contract with community private schools, child care centers, and Head Start programs for the implementation of 4K in the community site, thus easing transitions for children and providing increased consistency in practices throughout the community.

For more information about 4K, see <http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/4k>. For more information about 4KCA, see <http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/kind/4k/4kca>.

2. What are the basic requirements for implementing a 4K program?

Wisconsin State Statutes Chapters 115-121 address 4K funding, parent outreach, eligibility, teacher licensure, transportation, program content, and several other areas. The primary state requirements are summarized below and addressed in more detail throughout this document:

- The district must ensure that the 4K classroom is under its supervision.
- The district must provide a minimum of 437 hours of instruction per school year as required by Wis. Stats. § 121.004(7) and 121.02(1)(f).
- The district must provide transportation to and from the 4K program as required by

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Wis. Stats. § 121.54.

- The district must ensure that each child is taught by an appropriately licensed teacher as required by PI 34.
- The district must ensure that all applicable school district standards in Wis. Stats. § 121.02 are met.
- The district must ensure that the 4K program is open and accessible to all resident, eligible children without cost.

FUNDING

3. How is 4K funded?

State equalization aid is a major source of funding for 4K in many districts. Wis. Stats. § 121.004(7) and 121.02(1)(f) define state funding requirements in order to count 4K students as part of a school district's membership for state equalization aid eligibility. To count students as 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE), a district must operate a program a minimum of 437 hours per year. Of that time, 87.5 hours (20 percent) of the 437 hours may be used for outreach activities for the school staff to link to children's primary caregivers. Additionally, per Wis. Stats. § 121.004(7)(cm), a district may add 87.5 hours of outreach to the minimum 437 hours and count students as 0.6 FTE

To qualify for equalization aid, districts must follow these hour requirements and other 4K regulations as identified in question 2.

4. How are students "counted" (membership) for 4K Funding?

Wisconsin public school districts are required to count pupils for membership purposes on the third Friday in September and second Friday in January and report the data to the School Financial Services Team (via the online PI-1563 Report) at the Department of Public Instruction. Children can be entered into the count when they are enrolled, and attending for purposes of instruction, in the district 4K program on the specific count dates. The counts differentiate children who are in a 0.5 FTE program from children who are in a 0.6 FTE program with parent outreach (for a description of the differences, see question 3 above).

Membership counts are based upon the financial responsibility for a child's public education. The resident district is often (but not always) financially responsible for the child's public education.

Note:

- Four-year-old students attending 4K and also receiving special education services in 4K should be counted in the 4-year-old kindergarten program.

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- Four-year-old students attending 4K in the morning and early childhood special education in the afternoon *may only be counted once* in the 4-year-old kindergarten category.
- Some district programs with 4-year-olds will not be identified in the 4K count but will be identified in the “Other” category. They are only reported in the “Headcount” and are not to be included in the funding calculation. This would include 4-year-olds who are Title I-funded only and those enrolled in district- or CESA-operated Head Start programs that are not also 4K sites.

For more information on counts visit

<http://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/children/enrollment/membership-info-reporting>.

- The following matrix provides guidance in counting a 4-year-old students in either the pre-school special education category or in the 4-year-old kindergarten (4K) category:

Count in Pre-School Special Education Category in the PI-1563?	Description of 4-Year-Old Student	Count in 4K Category in the PI-1563?
Yes	4-year-old resident with an IEP . Not enrolled in a non-public school 4K program*. Enrolled only in an early childhood special education program or receiving services.	No
No	4-year-old resident with no IEP. Enrolled in a public school 4K program*.	Yes
No	4-year-old resident with an IEP . Enrolled in a public school 4K program* plus receiving services (either as part of the 4K day or through additional early childhood special education sessions in the afternoon).	Yes, count in the 4K program (0.5 or 0.6 FTE—whichever applies)
No	4-year-old resident with a Service Plan. Enrolled in a <i>private</i> school 4K program, plus receiving Equitable Services from the public school.	No, enrolled in a private school and receiving services
<p>* An official 4K program requires a licensed 4K teacher and instruction in the subject areas identified in Wis. Stats. 121.02(1) and cannot include only special education children. For more information, contact Jill Haglund at (608) 267-9625 to clarify the program you have.</p>		

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5. Can 4K children be counted even if the Friday count dates are on a day the class is *not* in session?

Yes, children enrolled and receiving instruction in a 4-year-old kindergarten program can be counted even if the class is not in session on the Friday count date as long as certain conditions have been met. A child is eligible to be included in the count if he or she attended for instruction at least one day prior to the count date and one day after the count date, without a change in enrollment status. Children who do not attend for instruction at all until after the count date cannot be included in the third-Friday-in-September count.

A 4K student who by court order changes school districts repeatedly throughout the school year (e.g., every other day or every other week) will lose his or her enrollment status with each change. The district may lose the opportunity to include this student in the pupil count. Documentation of eligibility for the district's records will be important. Please contact DPI's School Financial Services Team at dpifin@dpi.wi.gov or (608) 267-9114 with questions related to this topic.

6. What is the difference between membership and enrollment counts?

Counting the number of students educated is reported both as membership (full-time equivalent) and enrollment (headcount).

Membership counts (used by DPI's School Financial Services Team) indicate the number of full-time equivalent students a district is eligible to claim for financial purposes. Student membership is used as a basis for calculating district revenue limits and school aid payments under state law.

Enrollment counts (used in reporting WISEdata reporting) indicate the number of students who are receiving their primary PK-12 education services in the district. This is not always equal to the number of students the district reports for state aids and revenue limit membership during a school year. Specific data elements are collected in order to provide the information required for state and federal reporting. State aid payments and accountability for student outcomes do not always go hand in hand. For more information, visit <https://dpi.wi.gov/wisedata/schools/membershipvsenrollment>.

7. How are 4K children counted for enrollment purposes (WISEdata)?

Wisconsin public school districts are required to count pupils for enrollment purposes on the third Friday in September and report the data to the Department of Public Instruction via WISEdata reporting. Due to definitional differences in state and federal requirements, these student headcounts often differ from the membership counts which determine funding. Enrollment in 4K is distinct from other early childhood services provided by districts. A child receiving only special education services should be counted as grade level PK for public enrollment purposes. A child participating only in a district-run Head Start program with no additional services should not be reported in public enrollment. Enrollment in 4K also supersedes these other services provided by the district for

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enrollment reporting purposes. See <http://dpi.wi.gov/wisedash/about-data/enrollment> for more information on enrollment counts.

8. While state general equalization aid can be a primary source of funding for 4K, what other school funding can be used for programs or services provided to 4-year-old children?

Communities are finding ways to bring a wide range of funding streams together to provide services to all 4-year-old children and their families. School-based funding sources that may *supplement but not supplant* equalization aid include Title I and special education:

- While Title I preschool programs are not considered the same as kindergarten, Title I funds can supplement other 4K funding. In Title I “schoolwide” programs, a flexible service delivery approach may be used where funds are used to reach goals and objectives for all students. In a Title I “targeted assistance” school, programming options include a Title I-funded teacher in the classroom to teach and provide assistance to identified Title I children as needed. To identify eligible 4K children in a targeted assistance school, the school must use multiple education-related, objective criteria, such as teacher judgment, interviews with parents, and developmentally appropriate measures of child development.
- Early childhood special education teachers and related services staff should be part of the 4K team. Implementation of a child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) must be the primary purpose for the funding. Support and services are designed to assist children with disabilities to access the general education curriculum, and are the result of team decision making between special and general education staff. (See the Department of Public Instruction special education information updates at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/early-childhood/community-settings> for more information on serving young children with disabilities in regular education settings.)

9. How did the state’s 4K start-up grant program assist districts with implementation of 4K?

Beginning in the 2008-2009 school year, the Wisconsin state budget included \$3 million for 4K start-up grants. The statutes require that funding preference be given to school boards that use a community approach to early education. In the 2009 budget cycle, Joint Finance retained funding for Cycle 1 but reduced the total funding for Cycle 2 start-up grants to \$1.5 million. In addition to the Cycle 2 funding reduction, the state budget further reduced funding for Cycle 3 by 10 percent. Since that time, the grant total has been \$1.35 million.

The statutes designate first-year funding of up to \$3,000 and second year funding of up to \$1,500 for each 4-year-old kindergarten pupil. If the funds in the appropriation are insufficient to pay all eligible school boards, the DPI shall prorate the payments.

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Administrative rules govern grant priorities, criteria, and administration. For up-to-date information on these grants, visit the DPI 4K home page at <http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/kind/4k/start-up-grants-schedule>.

By 2016, 69 districts accessed these funds to support their implementation of 4K. With 96 percent of the districts implementing 4K, it is anticipated that these grants will run for only one or two more cycles.

10. Can districts claim membership for state general equalization aid purposes for summer courses?

In most cases, students enrolled in 4K summer programs are eligible to be counted for membership (used by DPI's School Financial Services Team) for state aid and revenue limit purposes. To be eligible, the district must also offer a 4K program during the regular school year. Children enrolled in summer school must be eligible to attend 4K in the fall. Summer school must be available to all students in the district, regardless of need.

Districts may partner with a CESA or another school district under an agreement, as provided in Wis. Stats. § 66.0301.

PARENT OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT

11. What activities can be considered as part of the parent outreach?

Parent outreach activities are direct services to parents, legal guardians, and primary caregivers in the form of home visits, parent education, and parent-child activities. The legislative intent of the 1991 revision of the 4-year-old kindergarten statute was to provide a fiscal incentive for school districts to incorporate a parental outreach component into their 4K programs. Support for parent outreach within the school recognizes that parents are partners in the educational process and that parents have both the right and the responsibility to share in decisions about their child's education and development. Furthermore, the outreach activities are intended to support, nurture, and instruct parents in their role as the primary educators of their children.

Parent outreach activities must comprise at least 20 percent (87.5 hours) of the 4-year-old kindergarten hours. Two options were created for districts that wish to incorporate parent outreach:

- An enrolled pupil could be counted as 0.5 FTE if the program annually provides 349.5 hours of instruction and 87.5 additional hours of parent outreach activities.
- An enrolled pupil could be counted as 0.6 FTE if the program annually provides 437 hours of instruction and 87.5 additional hours of parent outreach activities.

Outreach activities are those provided to 4K parents which extend beyond the parent involvement activities provided to other grade levels. Outreach activities are not specifically defined by state statutes. Outreach activities typically involve direct services to parents, such as weekly home visits, parent meetings at school, parent education classes,

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parent-child activities, family activity nights, family resource center visits, and participation in parent advisory meetings. Outreach activities may include interface with other child care or early education providers specific to transitions or generally to discuss collaborative programming. Districts can work in partnership with family centers, public libraries, YMCAs, or other programs, as long as they are being provided as part of the district's formal parent outreach plan. This formal involvement can include the following: use of 4K outreach funds to support the activities; attendance of district staff at events; classroom activities that connect with the community program; districts advertising the event to parents; keeping records of the parents that attend; etc.

The 87.5 hours of parent outreach is time available to parents of 4K children in the district. Outreach hours are not the total hours that parents actually participate in the activity. While the hours can occur within traditional school hours, they cannot be the same time as the hours counted for student instruction. The hours represent the structured activities that are available to 4K parents; e.g., 4K orientation, parent-child activities, home visits, workshops, parent instruction, etc. It is advisable that each district have an annual plan or list of the available hours of activities. Outreach includes activities beyond those that would occur as part of the school's overall parent involvement effort.

It is recommended that outreach activities be flexible and varied in order to be accessible to all potential participants, and that they recognize the varied needs and abilities of families. Outreach activities should also be sensitive to cultural, racial, and religious differences among families.

If the district implements the 87.5-hour parent outreach model, the district must document how the program provides opportunities for each parent to access the required 87.5 parent outreach hours. Districts should keep records of the plan and a log of parent participation that can be shared with auditors. See <http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/kind/4k/outreach-definition> for more information.

12. May individuals other than parents be involved in parent outreach activities?

Yes, outreach activities can involve or be targeted to parents, legal guardians, extended family members, and other significant caregivers in the child's life.

13. Can parent volunteer hours be counted as outreach hours?

Time for parents volunteering in the classroom or on a field trip is not counted as 4K parent outreach. However, if there is an intentional parent education component (such as classroom involvement or learning activities training) in conjunction with the volunteering activities, the hours for that activity may be included as 4K outreach hours.

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14. Who can provide parent outreach?

Parent outreach must be provided by appropriately qualified persons, such as the kindergarten teacher or student services professional (e.g., social worker, home school liaison, or guidance counselor). Parent outreach activities may also be provided in collaboration with family resource centers, parent education programs, and other community parenting efforts.

15. When districts are receiving state general equalization aid for 4K parent outreach, can a substitute teacher or teacher aide teach the class while the teacher is doing outreach?

Membership eligibility for state general equalization aid requires that the 437 classroom hours be provided by a licensed teacher. While using a properly licensed substitute teacher may be legal, it is not desirable. Use of a teacher aide does not meet the legal standard.

TRANSPORTATION

16. What is the district's obligation for providing transportation?

According to Wis. Stats. § 121.54(2)(a), a pupil attending a public elementary or secondary school, including 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten, is entitled to transportation by the public school district in which the pupil resides if the pupil resides 2 or more miles from the nearest public school that the pupil is entitled to attend.

State transportation aid for pupils transported two miles or less is only available if a district has an unusually hazardous transportation (UHT) plan on file prior to the end of the school year that must be approved by DPI pursuant to s.121.54(9) Wis. Stats. Only children living in the areas identified in the UHT plan may be counted in this category for state transportation aid.

Because transportation "to and from school" is required, the school district is responsible for transportation to and from half-day kindergarten programs as well as full-day kindergarten programs. Therefore, students entitled to transportation who participate in morning half-day kindergarten programs must be offered transportation to school and transportation home at the time their kindergarten program ends. Similarly, students entitled to transportation who participate in afternoon half-day programs must be offered transportation to school and transportation home at the time their kindergarten program ends. State law prohibits school districts from charging a fee to parents for the cost of the transportation of such students.

17. May a district contract with parents in order to meet transportation requirements?

Yes, the district may contract with parents to provide transportation for their children to and from 4K. The amount of compensation provided to the parent under such a contract would be negotiated between the parent and the district. The parent of a child enrolled in a

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public school program cannot be forced to accept a parent contract in lieu of school-provided transportation. Districts should develop written contracts and should always consult their legal counsel for assistance in drawing up such contracts (see Wis. Stats. § 121.55).

18. May a school district provide transportation for children to after-school child care?

Yes. For students who are required by law to be transported, the resident school district has the option of providing transportation to and from child care instead of to and from home [Wis. Stats. § 121.54(2)(am)]. If the district chooses to honor a parent's request to pick up or drop off a transportation-eligible student at the child care provider, the district cannot charge a fee for this service, as this is prohibited under Wis. Stats. § 121.54(8).

If the most direct route to the daycare location is greater than the most direct route to the student's residence, the district must make the mileage category determination based on the student's residence.

However, if the particular child is not required by law to be transported (i.e., either the child lives within 2 miles of the school or the district has chosen to use the "city option" or the child is attending a school outside the designated attendance area), then the district could provide the transportation to or from child care and charge a fee [Wis. Stats. § 121.545(2)]. The law allows the fee to be waived. The district receives no state transportation aid on behalf of that child.

19. Are there laws or policies about adults meeting the bus?

State law does not require a parent or other responsible person to meet a kindergarten child at the bus stop. However, individual school boards may adopt policies regarding bus pick-up and drop-off procedures for kindergarten students. The DPI agrees with the following resolution passed by the Wisconsin School Bus Association in 2006:

In the interest of safety of our youngest riders, the Wisconsin School Bus Association recommends to the Department of Public Instruction and to local school districts that "a policy be adopted that a parent or responsible person be present to receive a kindergartner or younger student from the school bus stop."

20. How do laws regarding the use of safety seats for transporting young children apply to schools?

Yellow school buses are exempt from the child safety seat requirements that apply to child care programs. The safety seat rules enacted in 2006 apply only when children are transported in vehicles other than school buses. Wisconsin 2005 Act 106 imposes age, weight, and height requirements for child safety seats, and applies to the transportation of children by any individual or agency, including schools, child care providers, and Head Start programs. The Department of Transportation website has information on this law at <http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/safety/education/default.aspx>.

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TEACHER LICENSURE AND SUBSTITUTES

21. What license must a teacher have?

Teachers of 4K students must hold an elementary/regular education license that includes prekindergarten or kindergarten (e.g., 1088 with a low grade that includes prekindergarten or kindergarten, or 1777 Regular Education with a developmental level of Early Childhood or Early Childhood-Middle Childhood). Some districts may establish a preference for one of the above listed licenses.

22. When can a teacher be hired using an emergency license?

DPI considers emergency applications for the upcoming school year only after districts have made every effort to fill vacancies with fully licensed candidates. An emergency permit may be issued to an individual with a non-teaching bachelor's degree who is not eligible for a teaching license. An emergency license may be issued to a person who holds a teaching license but is being asked to teach out of field or out of grade level.

Renewal of an emergency license or emergency permit requires that the applicant enroll, during the first year working under the emergency license or emergency permit, in an approved teacher training program leading to the appropriate license, and make adequate progress toward the license each year. Adequate progress means that the individual is enrolled in a Wisconsin state-approved educator training program or a comparable program outside Wisconsin and has completed six semester credits by August 31 of the year the emergency license expires, or is making adequate progress in a Wisconsin state-approved alternative educator training program by August 31 of the year the emergency license expires.

Visit <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/elo/substitute-emergency> for more information.

23. What are the requirements for substitute assignments in 4K?

A short-term absence (not exceeding 45 consecutive days) for a teacher can be filled with someone who holds:

- any valid Initial Educator, Professional Educator, Master Educator, or Life License (ideally, the substitute teacher would hold a valid teaching license that allows one to teach in 4K (i.e., 70-777, 71-777, or 45-083)); or
- a valid Short-term Substitute permit (three-year permit); or
- any valid Substitute License (five-year permit).

A long-term absence (exceeding 45 days per assignment) for a teacher can be filled with someone who holds:

- a valid Initial Educator, Professional Educator, Master Educator, or Life License that allows one to teach in 4K (i.e., 70-777, 71-777, or 45-083); or

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- a valid Substitute License (five-year permit) that allows one to teach 4K; or
- an emergency license or emergency permit (one-year permit), requested by the district after the long-term assignment has been posted, that allows one to teach 4K.

See question 21 for a list of appropriate licenses. More detailed information can also be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/elo/substitute-emergency>.

24. When does the State Educator Effectiveness System apply to 4-year-old kindergarten teachers?

- If the district 4K is school-based (funded by the district and located in a school classroom), then the district evaluates the teacher and he or she is subject to participation in the Educator Effectiveness System.
- If the district 4K is community-based (funded by the district and located in a contracted community classroom) and the district provides the teacher, then the district evaluates the teacher and he or she is subject to participation in the Educator Effectiveness System.

For more information on the EE System, visit <http://dpi.wi.gov/ee>.

25. When does the State Educator Effectiveness System *not* apply to 4-year-old kindergarten teachers?

- If the district 4K is community-based (funded by district and located in a contracted community classroom), and the community program employs and therefore evaluates the licensed teacher, he or she is *not* subject to participation in the EE System.
- If a community program calls its program 4K but it is not funded through a contract with a school district, then it is *not* subject to participation in the EE System.

26. Is Shaken Baby Syndrome training a requirement for 4K teachers?

Not in all cases. State child care licensing regulations require that any child care provider, employee, or substitute who provides care and supervision to children under age 5 in a certified or licensed child care center receives training in Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) prevention. This requirement does not apply to staff in school-based 4K, although it would be considered beneficial training. Depending on the individual child care center's policies in community approach sites, district staff may need to receive the training. The training could also be used as part of a parent outreach activity. The training is required for child care licensing in a face-to-face approach. Centers can usually train staff using the approved curriculum.

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CLASS SIZE AND TEACHER RATIOS

27. What are appropriate teacher-child ratios and class sizes?

There are no state regulations addressing the teacher-child ratio for 4K. Class size is a local policy determined by the school board. As districts develop teacher ratio and class size policies, they may consider the policies and practices of other programs, such as:

- 1:10 with a maximum class size of 20 as defined for quality benchmarks by the National Institute on Early Education Research (NIEER);
- 1:13 with a maximum group size of 24 as required in state child care licensing regulations;
- 1:10 with class sizes of fewer than 20 children as required by Head Start performance standards;
- 1:15 ratio required by the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) class size reduction program and early childhood special education inclusion models; or
- two teachers working with groups of 16 to 20 as advised by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

28. What is the required square footage for 4-year-old classrooms?

There is no current Wisconsin law or administrative rule that establishes any requirement related to classroom size or square footage per pupil in school buildings for any grade level. Local, state, or federal building or fire codes may provide information regarding room or building capacity. One of the [20 school district standards](#), standard (i) in Wis. Stats. § 121.02(1), requires school districts to provide safe and healthful facilities. For more information, visit <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/facilities>.

In considering space for educational programming, a district may look for guidance to the Head Start Performance Standards and Wisconsin child care licensing regulations of no less than 35 square feet of usable floor space for each child.

ELIGIBILITY, ENROLLMENT, ATTENDANCE, AND RETENTION

29. At what age may a child enter kindergarten?

State law [Wis. Stats. § 118.14(1)(a)] specifies that children are eligible for kindergarten based on their age. To be eligible for 4K, a child must be 4 by September 1 of the school year. To be eligible for 5K, a child must be 5 by September 1 of the school year.

The school district may have an early admission policy, as described in Wis. Stats. § 120.12(25), to allow admission to 4K for younger children. As long as children are admitted through a district's early admission policy, they can be counted for membership

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for state aid and revenue limit purposes.

30. Do any national practices or principles exist for kindergarten entry and placement?

The National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists/State Departments of Education have developed principles for kindergarten entry and placement called *STILL Unacceptable Trends in Kindergarten Entry and Placement*. Learn more at <https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/Psunacc.pdf>.

31. Are there suggested guidelines for early admission policies?

Districts are advised to establish consistency in practice and policy for early admission to 4K and 5K. The following recommendations are suggested for districts:

- Arrange a personal meeting with the parents to determine their reasons for requesting entrance prior to the legal age. Parents should be aware that 4K and 5K are designed as sequential grade levels and the expectation is that children attend 4K for only one year—not enter early and then repeat it.
- Assess the child’s potential to benefit from early admission and to successfully participate in the grade level. This should include consideration of emotional stability, social and mental maturity, and physical health.
- Develop a process for application and appeals that is approved by the school board.

32. What documentation and health records are required for kindergarten entrance?

Typically, the school will provide health and vision report forms that can be completed by the child’s physician to indicate that a child is up-to-date with immunizations and vision and hearing screenings. The form may also be used to indicate any special health care needs of the child.

Requirements for health records are guided by statutory language:

- Parents must provide verification of the child’s age in the form of a birth certificate, passport, or other document.
- Schools are required to develop and implement a plan to encourage compliance with state immunization laws.
- Parents are required to present written evidence that their child has received specific vaccinations. Parents may claim waivers based on personal conviction or religious belief, or a physician may sign a health waiver if the immunization is harmful to the health of the student [Wis. Stats. § 120.12(16)].
- Children in 4K are required to meet the age requirements for immunizations rather than the grade requirements and should be marked in the “Pre-Kindergarten” section of the School Immunization Report to the local health department.

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- Each school board and each charter school shall request each pupil entering kindergarten to provide evidence that the pupil has had his or her eyes examined by an optometrist or evaluated by a licensed physician (Wis. Stats. § 118.135).
- Note that neither physical nor dental examinations are required by state statute or code; however, school districts may require and provide physicals.

The Department of Health Services (DHS) website (<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/childhood.htm>) contains information about the State Immunization Program requirements, the Student Immunization Record, and the School Immunization Report to the local health department. Parents and legal guardians may look up their child's immunization record in the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR) by logging on to the registry at <https://www.dhfswir.org/>. The WIR is also available to schools who wish to enter immunization data, better track children not meeting requirements, share data, and generate reports required by the state. For additional information or assistance with the WIR, please contact the WIR Help Desk at (608) 266-9691.

33. Does a child have to be tested in order to enter kindergarten?

No, entrance to kindergarten is based on age and not on a child's ability.

Some school districts screen incoming students to assess the skills of the children so they are better able to determine needed support services, as well as develop an educational program that meets the needs of the children. Information is often collected from parents, physicians, or community programs such as child care providers and Head Start.

More information on developmental screen can be found at <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/child-find-screening-about.php>.

34. Can a district deny entrance to an age-eligible child because there is a concern about the child's "readiness?"

No. State statutes clearly define age as the only criteria required for entrance into kindergarten and first grade. The district is responsible for providing a welcoming environment for all age-eligible children and their families through curriculum adaptation, teacher placement options, consultation with school specialists, and evaluations to determine the need for English Language Learner support, special education, Title I, or other special services.

35. Can a district refuse enrollment to an age-eligible child who is not toilet-trained?

A district cannot refuse entrance into 4K to a child who is not toilet-trained. The state statute defines eligibility by age and not by other conditions. The district can work in several ways to address the issue:

- Check with the family regarding medical needs, work with the child's physician, or make a referral for a special education evaluation if medical needs are an issue.

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- Develop a plan for toilet training:
 - A nurse, home-school liaison, or teacher can work directly with the parent to develop a plan for toilet training at home and at school.
 - If it is not possible to have a home and school plan, develop an in-school plan for toilet training.
 - Consider what strategies can be used in the classroom to support toileting success. Is there a reward system for successful toileting? Can special toileting schedules be designated for a child experiencing accidents? Can the child be paired with another child who can serve as a toileting model? Are there predictable times when accidents occur? If so, can something be done to encourage toileting before these times? What strategies have worked at home that could be used at school? Can the child be part of a plan where he or she has his or her own goal and rewards?
 - If the child attends regulated child care in addition to 4K, be sure to include the teacher or family provider in the conversation and plan.
- Consider the need for a 504 plan.
- Work with the parent to supply clean clothes and changing supplies (note that a child should never be required to change or bag his or her own clothes).
- Depending on the circumstances, a school may request that the parent come to the school to assist.

36. If a child is age-eligible for kindergarten, may the parents “hold their child out” for one year?

Wisconsin law establishes compulsory school age as age 6 (Wis. Stats. § 118.15). Legally, parents may wait until their child is 6 before sending him or her to school. Some parents have concerns about their child being among the youngest in the class or not socially mature enough for kindergarten. In these instances, the parents should discuss their concerns with district staff to learn more about the program and how they can work together for a quality experience for their child. Some issues to discuss include (note that the term *kindergarten* refers to both 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten):

- the characteristics of the child that cause concern about readiness for kindergarten;
- the school’s expectations regarding readiness and the school’s kindergarten screening procedures;
- the nature of the kindergarten program, such as class size and organization (smaller class size and “learning center” organization can accommodate greater developmental ranges among children in the class); and,
- what the parents would do to enhance their child’s learning before he or she begins kindergarten.

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Other points for parents to consider include:

- All school districts are responsible for meeting the needs of all kindergarten students, regardless of their ages or stages of development. Kindergarten curricula are designed to accommodate the wide variation in development levels of all children.
- Children arrive in kindergarten with a wide variety of abilities; that is perfectly normal. There will always be a child who is the youngest or the oldest.
- If a child is an English Language Learner, he or she receives support in kindergarten programs to learn English at an early age.
- Staff is trained to identify problems that may affect a child's ability to learn, and to provide appropriate services when necessary. The earlier a problem is identified, the sooner the child can receive special services that may help improve his or her ability to achieve throughout the school years.
- Kindergarten is an important part of a school's educational program and is part of the overall developmental curriculum.
- Kindergarten instruction promotes learning of many skills that are the foundation of the curriculum through grade 12. For example, early reading instruction is especially important to all learners.

Note: The practice of delaying entrance to kindergarten is controversial. More information on research and practices related to delaying entrance to kindergarten can be found in *Voices from the Field: Wisconsin Early Childhood Education and Care Stakeholders Consider Delayed Entrance to Kindergarten*, which can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/kind/admission>.

37. When a district has both 4K and 5K, and a child is age-eligible for 5K, can the parent place the child in 4K?

State statutes do not clearly address this situation. While the state statutes define eligibility for 4K and 5K in terms of age, they also provide that school districts have the authority to determine grade level placement. Placement in a particular grade, classroom, or school is a local decision that is based on locally determined school district policies. More information on this topic can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/kind/admission>.

Districts offering 4K should establish a policy to address this situation. If the district allows delayed entrance based on parent request, the district should ensure that the parent considers the issues about delaying entrance discussed in question 18.

38. What are the expectations for attendance in 4K?

According to Wis. Stat. § 118.15(1)(a), mandatory school age begins when a child is 6-years-old; therefore, 4K attendance is not mandatory. However, when a child is enrolled in 4K, there is an expectation that he or she will attend the program for the full hours of operation.

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The evidence from Wisconsin data is irrefutable: students with good attendance in kindergarten through grade 2 have higher rates of reading and math proficiency in later grades. Good attendance in the early years also predicts good attendance rates throughout a student's K-12 education. Data reveal that repeated early absence has negative educational implications for children. Wisconsin public schools share responsibility with parents and guardians to ensure that school-age children are enrolled in and attending appropriate educational programs. The DPI provides consultation, technical assistance, and resources to help reduce truancy and improve attendance. To learn more, visit <http://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/pupil-services/school-social-work/contents/attendance-truancy-dropout/resources>.

39. Can a child who has completed 4-year-old kindergarten be “held back” or “retained” by the school district for another year prior to moving into 5-year-old kindergarten?

Retention occurs when a student has not made sufficient progress over the course of the school year to be promoted to a higher grade level. Reported retentions and retention rates are based on data collected by the new WISEdata system, which replaced the Individual Student Enrollment System (ISES) in the 2016-17 school year). However, state and federal requirements for reporting retention currently begin with 5-year-old kindergarten.

School districts have the authority to “retain” a pupil who has not made progress in a 4K based on established school board policy. However, children in 4K who are not making developmental progress should be addressed through Response to Intervention (RtI) strategies and/or referral for special education evaluation well before the end of the year. Districts should take into consideration the developmental nature of 4K and 5K as precursors for first grade.

Note that retention in 4K is controversial. Some districts limit or reject the use of retention in 4-year-old kindergarten and consider progress within the framework of both 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten. A growing trend is to rethink the relationship between 4K and 5K in Wisconsin. Rather than two separate “grades,” consider the time between a child entering the school system (4K) and exiting 5K as a two-year continuum. In this model, the 4K “pass or retain” decision changes. The question to answer at the end of the first year in the continuum is: “Will this child meet end-of-5K expectations, based on his or her rate of progress and the continued level and type of support he or she has received during this first year?” If the team responds “yes” or “likely,” then stay the course. If the team responds “no” or “doubtful,” then the question becomes, “Does this child need special education supports in order to be successful?”

40. Can a student be enrolled in both a public school 4K program for part of the day and a private school for part of the day?

A child cannot be “enrolled” in both a private school and a public school at the same time with both programs counting the student in their enrollment counts. If a child is “enrolled” in public school in a part-day program, it is the business of the family what the child does the rest of the time. If a private school allows the child to “attend” during the hours the

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public school is not in session, and the parents are willing to pay the tuition, that is a decision for the private school to make. In this situation, the public school could count the student for state aid purposes, but the private school could not include the child in its fall enrollment report. If the child is “enrolled” in a private school but wants to also attend classes in the public school, it is up to the district to decide if it will allow such an arrangement. In this situation, the private school would report the student as enrolled on the PI 1207 fall report, and the public school could not count the student for state aid purposes.

See the Q&A at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/private-schools/part-time-attendance>.

DISCIPLINE, SUSPENSION, EXPULSION, SECLUSION, AND RESTRAINTS

41. Can a child enrolled in 4K be expelled or suspended?

The Wisconsin Constitution guarantees a free public education for children ages 4 through 20 who have not graduated from high school. The requirement of the local school district to provide free public elementary and secondary education to resident children is stated in Wis. Stats. § 121.77(1). Within these guarantees, there are also state laws related to suspension [Wis. Stats. § 120.13(1)(b)] and expulsion [Wis. Stats. § 120.13 (1)(b)3]. These laws define: the conduct that could lead to these actions, the notifications required, procedures, rights, and responsibilities. Four-year-old 4K programs are included in these laws. A summary is available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/schldscplnqa.pdf>.

On the national and state level, there is growing concern about the use of exclusionary practices in early childhood settings. The practices may not allow for the wide variation in developmental skills in young children. National and state data show that these exclusionary practices demonstrate great racial disparities that begin in the early years. A joint policy statement from the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education aims to: raise awareness about exclusionary discipline practices in early childhood settings; provide recommendations to create bias- and discrimination-free practices; and identify free resources for programs, teachers, providers, and families. Visit <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/child-health-development/reducing-suspension-and-expulsion-practices> for more information.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction supports efforts to reduce expulsion and suspension in early childhood and 4K through the use of a curriculum with a strong emphasis on social and emotional development. The Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence is an example of a framework that aligns with Response to Intervention (RtI) for early childhood and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for older students. The Pyramid Model is consistent with public health and mental health models of promotion, prevention, and intervention. For information on the model, training opportunities, and implementation communities, see <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wi-pyramid-model-about.php> and http://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/assets/files/resources/1330450273_RtI%20Resources%20for%20Programs%20Serving%20Children%20Birth-5%20years.docx.

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42. Do the laws on restraints and seclusion apply to 4K and child care?

Yes, seclusion and restraint laws apply to 4K and child care. 2011 Wisconsin Act 125 addresses the use of seclusion and physical restraint in public schools. The Act applies to both regular and special education students and prohibits the use of seclusion or physical restraint except when certain conditions apply. Seclusion or physical restraint may be used only when a student's behavior presents a clear, present, and imminent risk to the physical safety of the student or others, and only when it is the least restrictive intervention feasible. Certain maneuvers and techniques are prohibited, such as "basket holds" or other lap holds. Mechanical or chemical restraints may not be used. Seclusion rooms may not have locks, and rooms must be free of any objects or fixtures that may injure the student. If it is reasonably anticipated that restraint or seclusion may be used with a student with a disability, it must be included in the student's IEP. The IEP must also include positive interventions, supports, and other strategies based on a functional behavioral assessment. Other requirements include parental notification as well as documentation and training on safe use of physical restraint, including ways to de-escalate behavior and non-prohibited actions. For more information, visit <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/topics/seclusion-restraint> and <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2011/related/acts/125>.

Child care licensing rules DCF 251.07 (2)(e)3 do not allow a child to be restrained or secluded (this includes binding or tying to restrict movement, or enclosing in a confined space such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar cubicle). The DCF commentary manuals provide further explanation for the rules, including:

- what is not included in the definition of physical restraint;
- occasional exceptions for a child with an IEP;
- responsibility to protect the child and others from harm;
- expectation that the center will work with the parents; and
- recommendation that the parent be referred to the child's physician, Birth to 3 agency, or public school for an evaluation and assistance in developing a plan for the future.

The group child care commentary can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/commentary>.

STANDARDS, SUBJECT AREAS, CURRICULUM, SCREENING, AND ASSESSMENT

43. What learning standards guide 4K?

The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) provide a shared framework for understanding and communicating developmentally appropriate expectations for young children from birth to first grade (mandatory school age). The WMELS provide a framework for the development of programs, curricula, and assessment practices. As a result, young children will have more opportunities for positive development and learning. The standards are a guide for parents, professionals, and policymakers, all of whom share responsibility for the well-being of young children. The WMELS promote beneficial

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connections between early childhood and K–12 educational experiences.

WMELS training is available throughout the state to train child care providers, teachers (K-12 and higher education), program support personnel, technical assistance personnel, administrators, and families. A facilitated process is also available for school districts to align WMELS with state academic standards. This process brings together personnel from 4K, 5K, early elementary, and community early childhood education in an examination of learning expectations, beliefs, research, standards, and data.

More on WMELS can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/practice> and <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels-about.php>.

44. What are the required subject areas for 4K?

Wis. Stats. § 121.02(1) defines subject areas at each grade level, including 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten. For required kindergarten, the subject areas include:

- reading and language arts,
- mathematics,
- social studies,
- science,
- health
- physical education,
- art,
- music,
- environmental education, and
- computer literacy.

The subject area requirements are the same for 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten. However, the curriculum for 4-year-olds will differ from that of 5-year-olds. The curriculum should be developmentally, individually, and culturally appropriate for 4-year-old children.

Curricula are locally determined and should be based on best practice. Best practice for kindergarten reflects an integrated and developmentally appropriate curriculum rather than curriculum taught by subject area. An appropriate curriculum incorporates concepts from the required subject areas. Publications by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (<https://www.naesp.org/>) and National Association for the Education of Young Children (<https://www.naeyc.org/>) provide guidance on best practices.

The required subjects do not need to be taught as separate subjects; for example, the teacher can engage movement (physical education), singing (music), and counting (math) all at the same time. Physical education, art, and music can be completely integrated into the curriculum under the direction of a teacher licensed in that subject area or it can be taught directly by a teacher licensed in that subject area. Environmental education and computer literacy should also be integrated into other subject areas.

The statutes do not specify the amount of time needed to address these areas. Established

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DPI practices suggest the following proportions:

- Reading and language arts activities should be approximately 30 percent of the curriculum.
- Math, social studies, science, health, physical education, art, and music should make up approximately 10 percent each of the teacher-directed curriculum activities, for a total of 70 percent of the curriculum.
- Up to one-third of each day should be devoted to student self-directed activities.

Allowing children to sleep or nap is not required. However, especially in full-day programs, rest or quiet time should be provided. This may include relaxation, quiet reading, or other appropriate activities.

For more information, visit the DPI website at <http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/kindergarten-subjects>.

45. Can a district implement 4-year-old kindergarten using mixed age groupings?

School districts establish grade-level and curriculum designs at the local level. Multiage or mixed age grouping is a design that may be adopted. Mixed age groups for 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten are the most common mixed age model. When districts implement 4K in community settings, the community program may already be mixed age and include 3- through 5-year-old children; in these community models, 3-year-old children are not considered enrolled in 4K and may not be claimed for funding through the Friday counts.

46. How does the WISEdata Roster Collection (formerly known as Course Work Completion System) relate to 4K?

The Roster data is a subset of the student-level data collected by the Department of Public Instruction through WISEdata. It was previously known as the Coursework Completion System (CWCS). The Roster is intended to capture data on all K4-12 grade-level curricula and student achievement, including:

- the courses taught and the student enrollment (using standard course codes);
- the teacher(s) teaching the course based on their WISEid and Entity ID;
- classroom type—optional field (single or multiple); and
- multiple other course, teacher, or student characteristics.

The Roster applies to all students enrolled in a school district program. Students with disabilities who attend general curriculum or modified curriculum courses are reported through Roster with their special education services reflected by the appropriate course rigor level. Roster is *not* collecting information on special education students who are not receiving services in general education settings. More detailed information on Roster data can be found on the DPI website at <http://dpi.wi.gov/cst/data-collections/student/cwcs>.

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4K implications: The *WMELS* apply to early childhood special education, 4K, and 5K. They reflect five comprehensive domains: health and physical development, social and emotional development, language development and communication (includes early literacy), approaches to learning, and cognition and general knowledge (includes early math). Wisconsin Common Core State Standards (CCSS) apply also to 4K and 5K. Both the *WMELS* and CCSS assist in determining and guiding assessment and curriculum decisions. CWCS reporting should be based on these standards and should reflect the curriculum, instructional approaches, assessments, and reports to parents.

More detailed information on 4K and the Roster collection can be found on the DPI website https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_7DxcNmn8hZUi1pNjI3ekMxZjA/view. See also question #39 above related to alternatives to retention.

47. Are children in 4K part of the statewide Wisconsin Student Assessment System?

No, 4K is not part of the Wisconsin Student Assessment System. To measure progress in 4K, Wisconsin school districts use a variety of curriculum and assessment tools. Best practice includes authentic assessment methods that observe and record children's progress in typical activities throughout the program year. Best practice also includes seeking information and input from parents and primary caregivers. Child progress is documented in all domains of learning, including physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and language development. Assessment information is used to individualize instruction and plan next steps.

48. How are 4-year-old kindergarten students involved in the state early literacy screening?

The Wis. Stats. § 118.016(1) requirement for school districts and charter schools to assess the reading readiness of all children enrolled in 4-year-old kindergarten through second grade has been in place since the 2012-13 school year. The intent of this assessment is to provide administrators, teachers, and parents with valuable information necessary to improve the reading skills of students. Results are used to identify reading problems early and to inform instruction. For children whose assessment performance indicates a risk of reading difficulty, the school or district will provide interventions or remedial reading services (Wis. Stats. § 121.02).

The data from the screener is not part of the accountability system. According to an October 2015 DPI memo, <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/reading/Assessment%20of%20Reading%20Readiness%2016-17%2010%2027%2015pdf.pdf>, the tool(s) must:

- be administered at least annually;
- assess phonemic awareness and alphabet (letter-sound) knowledge;
- be an appropriate, valid, and reliable assessment of literacy fundamentals;
- include children receiving special education; and

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- provide data that can be reported and shared with parents or guardians.

Initially, the DPI selected PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening) as an appropriate, valid, and reliable assessment of literacy fundamentals (including phonemic awareness and letter–sound knowledge). Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, districts could choose to continue using PALS as their assessment of reading readiness for 4K through second grade or select alternative tools. Districts will be able to implement literacy assessment in the framework of a more comprehensive system for assessment in the early years. Many of the current evidence-based assessment tools would meet the criteria for literacy assessment.

While the requirement that school districts continue to assess reading readiness of all children enrolled in 4-year-old kindergarten to second grade continues, 2015 Act 55 (the 2015-17 state budget) changed the funding mechanism that provides state financial support for this required assessment. Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, school districts and independent charter schools are responsible for the cost of administering the assessment of reading readiness chosen by the district or charter schools. They are eligible to seek reimbursement from DPI for the costs of the assessment, provided the assessment meets the criteria established in state law (described above). These state aid payments will be prorated if the total reimbursement claims submitted by school districts and ICSs exceed the amount appropriated for this purpose.

49. Are there best practices regarding screening and assessment for 4K programs?

Yes, on the national and state level there are best practices regarding screening and assessment for young children. *The Comprehensive and Aligned System for Early Childhood Screening and Assessment: Wisconsin's Blueprint (2016, 3rd ed.)*, provides information and resources to help build a strong system of screening and assessment, ensuring children are provided what they need from early learning professionals, and offers the following guiding principles:

- The purpose of screening and assessment is to provide information about a child's development and learning, as well as to inform decision making.
- Parents and primary caregivers are partners in screening and assessment practices.
- Information for screening and assessment processes is gathered from multiple sources, including standardized, valid and reliable tools; observations of a child's development; and communication with families and practitioners.
- The timing of screening and assessment processes matter.
- Practitioners use screening and assessment tools and processes that are culturally responsive to individual child and family circumstances.
- Screening and assessment are components of a comprehensive system of services, resources, and supports for children and families.
- Screening and assessment activities occur naturally within the child and family's typical routines and experiences to the extent possible.

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- Collaborative screening and assessment initiatives within communities contribute to consistency in practices and promote greater accountability on behalf of all young children.
- Screening and assessment activities are implemented by trained and supported practitioners.
- Screening and assessment information provides a pathway to ensure access to equitable, high-quality resources to meet the needs of all young children and families.

Visit <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/curriculum-assessment-child-assessment.php> for more information.

More information can also be found at:

- <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com> (found under *curriculum/assessment* and *child find/screening*)
- <http://dpi.wi.gov/strategic-assessment/cycles-assessment/formative>

50. Do the principles and practices of Response to Intervention (RtI) apply to 4K?

The DPI endorses and promotes universally designed, evidence-based, and developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment practices as the foundation for RtI implementation in early childhood settings. While RtI began as a model for K-12 education, the DPI believes that the concepts of RtI can also be aligned with 4K and our early childhood partners in health, mental health, home visiting, child care, Head Start, and early childhood special education. The Wisconsin RtI framework provides a conceptual model to support and monitor child development and learning across all domains, as described in the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, including social-emotional development, language-literacy, and mathematics. When determining screening and ongoing assessment tools and procedures, programs are encouraged to refer to current established guidelines for early childhood assessment practices.

The DPI acknowledges the unique circumstances to be considered when applying the Wisconsin RtI framework to early childhood:

- To achieve desired outcomes, the nature of young children's development and learning often dictates a different approach to assessment and teaching than those for older students.
- Because areas of child development are highly interrelated and interdependent, curricula must address all developmental domains and content areas.
- Recognizing learner variability when providing quality learning opportunities and nurturing relationships contributes to a significantly diverse population of early learners with a wide range of needs.

The DPI advises programs to deliver content-rich curricula with challenging but achievable goals in ways that honor and respect the unique learning needs of young children. Using a play-based curriculum to support a child's learning is important for developing self-

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regulation, as well as promoting language, cognition, and social competence. To this end, the DPI offers a number of documents that compare RtI implementation in early childhood and K-12 as guidance for the development of effective and appropriate services for the young children of Wisconsin and their families. These can be found at <http://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/educators/rti-in-action/earlychildhood.html>.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND 4K

51. If a child is enrolled in 4K and receives special education, does the district receive funding for both?

Yes, when a child is enrolled in 4K and receives special education services, the district is eligible for equalization aid and state and federal special education funding. The child is reported as enrolled in 4K on the second Friday count.

52. What opportunities are created for 4-year-olds with disabilities when school districts provide 4K?

As school districts expand the range of general education settings available to young children with disabilities, 4-year-old kindergarten is a placement being considered for 4-year-old children with disabilities. It is important that the kindergarten program can accommodate the needs of a diverse population of learners. Designing general education programs in a way that allows all children to be successful will promote the inclusion of children with disabilities. Providing developmentally and individually appropriate experiences, taught by qualified staff in environments that are specifically designed for all young children, is critical to designing inclusive programs.

Local education agencies (LEAs) are using a variety of approaches to support 4K students with disabilities. For example:

- Special education teachers and related service providers visit early childhood general education settings primarily to coach and consult with staff members (also called *Itinerant Services*).
- Where several children with disabilities are present in one setting, an early childhood special education teacher may spend two or three sessions per week co-teaching or team teaching in the classroom.
- Programs for children with and without disabilities may be located in close proximity, to allow fluid movement of staff and children between classrooms.

The type and amount of support is dictated by the needs and strengths outlined in the child's IEP. These service decisions are child-driven based upon the IEP, not based upon the disability of the child. In some cases, more than one setting may be used to provide special education and related services. The IEP team is mindful that services are required to be in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). A child with a disability is removed from a setting with typically developing age peers only when the nature and severity of the

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disability requires removal in order for the child to make progress in the general curriculum or an alternate curriculum. For example, a child with a visual impairment may receive services in an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) classroom part-time, in addition to receiving services from a visual impairment teacher in a general early childhood setting. Regardless of the actual strategy, collaborative communication skills and flexibility are crucial to the success of these services.

53. With 4K becoming a more frequently used general education setting, may a school district place all 3-year-olds with disabilities in a 4K program?

No, a district cannot have a policy or practice to place all 3-year-olds with disabilities in a 4-year-old kindergarten program. There may be some instances where an IEP team would determine that the 4-year-old kindergarten classroom is the most appropriate placement (e.g., if it is a multi-age 3-4 classroom with non-disabled 3-year-old children). If a 3-year-old with an IEP is being served in 4K, the child is not counted in the actual 4K third Friday count because he or she is under 4 years of age.

54. What factors should be considered when developing class size in kindergarten programs that include children with disabilities?

LEAs should consider the class size research for young students and the needs of enrolled children with disabilities. 4K programs are including more children with disabilities. Throughout schools, personnel and parents are striving for natural proportions of children with and without disabilities in kindergarten classes. It is important to include more children without disabilities to provide adequate opportunities for engagement with typically developing peers.

55. If a child has an IEP, are the rules different for admission, enrollment, or retention?

Admission, enrollment, and retention rules are the same for all children, including those who are receiving special education services.

56. When the 4K teacher is dually licensed as both a kindergarten teacher and as an early childhood special education teacher, can he or she perform both general and special education roles within one classroom?

A 4K program must have an appropriately licensed teacher who holds an Early Childhood (EC) or Early Childhood-Middle Childhood (ECMC) licensure. A dual licensed teacher who holds both EC and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), or both ECMC and ECSE, may teach children with disabilities and children without disabilities in the same classroom.

The dual licensed teacher must be able to provide special education services in accordance with a child's IEP. Consideration should be given to the amount and frequency of special education services specified in an IEP, which may impact the availability of a dual licensed teacher to also serve as the general education teacher. The use of a dual licensed teacher may not limit the placement or services options for children with disabilities.

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A dual licensed EC/ECSE teacher may be contracted as both a special education and general education teacher. Regardless of license, if there is a single teacher in a 4K program instructing both students with and without disabilities, there is no excess cost of providing special education instruction or related services. The salary would be in Fund 10 and not eligible for categorical or IDEA funding.

For further information about special education personnel working with students who are not identified as students with disabilities, refer to the DPI guidance document at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/sped-incidental-benefit.pdf>

Dual certification provides teachers with a strong background in both general and special education. More universities are offering dual certification. With specific planning, the teacher's expertise in both general and special education can form the basis of a solid 4K program.

57. If a child needs to receive IEP services during the time the child is attending child care, do the licensing rules apply?

If services such as therapy to a child are provided in the child care center and the child is removed from the classroom to participate in those services, the child should be signed out of child care. When the services are completed and the child returned to the classroom, the child should be signed back into child care. If services are provided in the child care center classroom, the child must remain signed into care and all licensing rules must be met.

USDA CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS AND 4K

58. Can children participating in a 4K program receive reimbursable meals under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs?

The USDA provides financial reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children in schools and non-school programs.

School Programs: Children enrolled in schools are eligible to participate in USDA- and state-funded child nutrition programs offered by schools. Reimbursement is based on the number of meals served to children eligible for free, reduced price, and non-needy meals. Programs available to schools include the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Special Milk Program, the Afterschool Snack Program, and the Wisconsin School Day Milk Program.

Non-School Programs: Children enrolled in qualified outside-of-school-hours care centers such as child care and Head Start are eligible to participate in USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program. The site must be organized for the purpose of providing child care services. Reimbursement will be based on: the percentage of enrolled children in the categories of free, reduced price, and non-needy; the number of meals served by type; and the prevailing rates of reimbursement.

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Meals and snacks served to children may also be reimbursed at the “free rate” at qualified at-risk afterschool meal program sites participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. At-risk afterschool meal program sites establish eligibility by being located in a school area where 50 percent or more of the children are eligible for free or reduced price school meals or where eligibility is documented using census tract data.

For additional information on school or non-school Programs, visit the Wisconsin Child Nutrition Program home page at <http://dpi.wi.gov/nutrition>.

4K AND YOUNGSTAR

59. How are 4K programs related to YoungStar?

Districts that operate 4K programs using community approaches to child care may participate in YoungStar if at least 1 hour of child care service is provided per day outside of the 4K service delivery timeframe. If the program accepts Wisconsin Shares payments, it must participate in YoungStar. The educational qualifications of the 4K teacher may be counted for YoungStar purposes if the teacher is in the classroom beyond the school district-funded hours, and is providing child care teaching responsibilities during the alternative hours of the day.

When the 4K program is in a classroom, and the classroom remains open (for example, as the 4-year-old classroom) before or after the 4K instruction, and the same teacher remains in the classroom throughout the day, this teacher should be listed on the Registry Program Profile as the Lead Teacher for the classroom so that his or her educational qualifications can be counted for YoungStar.

The classroom teacher, during non-4K hours, can receive technical consultation services if the child care program has requested technical consultation. For more information on 4K and YoungStar, see the FAQs document at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/>.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

60. Does open enrollment apply to 4K and school-operated child care?

Open enrollment applies to 4K and school-operated child care only if the child’s resident school district offers the same type of program the child wishes to attend and only if the child is eligible for the program in her or his resident school district [Wis. Stats. § 118.51(2)].

61. Is a student who attends 4K under open enrollment required to reapply for kindergarten in the nonresident school district?

No. Once the student open enrolls in a nonresident school district, the student may continue to attend the nonresident school district without annual reapplication, except that the

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student may be required by the nonresident school district to reapply when the student enters middle school, junior high, or high school [Wis. Stats. § 118.51(3)(c), 118.51(2), and 120.12 (25) Wis. Admin. Code PI 36.06(3)(d)].

62. May a child request early admission to 4K under open enrollment?

A child must be 4-years-old by September 1 to begin 4K. The parents or legal guardian of a child who will not be 4-years-old by this date may request that both the resident school district and nonresident school district evaluate the child for early admission under the district's own early admission policy. The child must be found eligible by both school districts to open enroll, even if the criteria are different. However, the nonresident school district is not required to evaluate the child and may deny the student's open enrollment based on the child not being old enough to attend school [Wis. Stats. § 118.14(1)(b), 118.51(2), and 121.12(25)].

63. For the purposes of open enrollment, what constitutes “the same type of program?”

If students enrolled in the programs are eligible to be counted for state aid and revenue limit membership, then the programs are the same type of program.

64. What is the timeline for applying for open enrollment?

Open enrollment legislation (Wis. Stats. § 118.51 and Wis. Admin. Code PI 36) establishes the timelines and procedures for public school open enrollment. The statute provides two procedures to apply for open enrollment. The regular application period requires applications to be submitted between February and April of the school year preceding the one in which parents desire their children to attend a nonresident district. An alternative procedure allows a parent to apply for open enrollment at any time during a school year. Under both procedures, open enrollment applies only when both districts have 4K and the child is eligible for the program in the resident school district.

CHARTER SCHOOLS, HOMESCHOOLING, AND 4K

65. Can a charter school serve 4-year-olds?

Yes. Charter schools serve elementary and secondary students. Elementary students include 4-year-old kindergarteners. The U.S. Department of Education guidance on preschool education states that federal charter school grant funds may be used to support charter schools that offer only 4K education, since Wisconsin's definition of elementary grades includes 4K (Wis. Stats. § 115.01).

66. Does the charter school need be to be located in a district building?

No. The facilities used for charter schools are determined locally and must follow all building and safety codes. There are school districts that have formed partnerships with local child care centers to provide 4K programming. Charter schools using the community

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approaches mentioned in this bulletin must be aware that charter school law must be followed (Wis. Stats. § 118.40).

67. Must the employees of the charter school be employees of the school district?

No. Based on the charter school law [Wis. Stats. § 118.40(7)], the school board of the school district in which a charter school is located shall determine whether or not the charter school is an instrumentality of the school district. If the school board determines that the charter school is an instrumentality of the school district, the school board shall employ all personnel of the charter school. If the school board determines that the charter school is not an instrumentality of the school district, the school board may not employ any personnel for the charter school. There is no provision in charter law to allow for a "blended" employment status; the charter school is either an instrumentality or a non-instrumentality of the school district

The decision of a school board to enter into a charter school contract (including the decision to make the charter school an instrumentality of the district) should be reviewed in the context of other contractual obligations, including collective bargaining agreements.

68. Does Home-based education apply to 4K?

Under Wisconsin law, enrollment in a home-based private educational program is a substitute for attendance at a public or private school under the compulsory school attendance law, which applies to children age 6 and up. Since children under age 6 are not subject to the compulsory school attendance law, it is not possible to enroll a child in a homeschool program for 4- or 5-year-old kindergarten. If a child will not reach age 6 on or before September 1, it is not necessary to submit a form to enroll him or her in a homeschool program for that school year.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – DISTRICT FUNDING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

69. What approaches are being used as public schools work with other early childhood programs in their communities?

Schools are taking new approaches to expanding universally available 4K that use a school-community interface. The key to expansion of 4K is the involvement of a broad range of community early childhood stakeholders.

Community approaches bring together community leaders representing businesses, schools, child care providers, Head Start programs, parents, and recreation organizations to explore the issues and develop community-based approaches to 4K. They are finding new and innovative approaches that may be school-based or community-based. For example, some communities have 4-year-old kindergartens located in a variety of settings, including elementary schools, licensed child care centers, and Head Start programs. In one approach school teachers and support staff provide the 4K program in established community programs. In another approach, the school district contracts with established programs that

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have DPI-licensed teachers on staff to provide kindergarten.

Communities that utilize 4KCA highlight 54 benefits that have resulted from this approach to 4K, including:

- benefits to children (in the form of easier transition and consistent approaches),
- benefits to parents (who have easier access to multiple programs),
- benefits to school districts (who can connect with parents and children earlier), and
- benefits to community programs (who receive early support for children with special needs, as well as increased access to professional development).

More information about the impact of 4KCA can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/kind/4k/4kca> and <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/4k-community-approaches-resources.php>.

70. What is the financial responsibility of districts that use community approaches?

Wisconsin's school finance formula is premised on the state and local district "sharing" in the cost of educational programming. Once a community has an approved 4K program through public-private partnerships with community programs, the district's financial responsibility is similar to traditional school-based kindergarten. The following requirements reflect the implementation of 4K in community approaches:

- The district must ensure that there is an appropriately licensed 4K teacher. The district may employ the teacher or may contract with the community program to employ the licensed kindergarten teacher.
- Parent outreach will vary depending on whether or not the district is claiming the 437 hour program or a 437 hour program plus 87.5 hours of parent outreach. Parent outreach may be provided by the district through contract or through other arrangements with community partners.
- The school district covers the cost of instruction for the 4K portion of the program, including staff compensation, special education, and support services for children.
- The district covers up to the full cost of facilities, supplies, food, and staff development, based on the collaborative approach agreed upon by the partners.
- The district is responsible for transportation of children enrolled in the 4K portion of any of the programs. Parents, Head Start, or the child care center provide transportation when children are enrolled for a length of time exceeding 4K hours.
- The district retains a portion of its state aid to cover district costs such as administration and support staff.
- Interagency agreements or contracts define these roles and responsibilities in detail (see question 68 for more information on the content of these agreements or contracts).

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71. While equalization aid and revenue limit authority is a primary source of funding for 4K, what other funding can be used to support community approaches?

Communities are finding ways to bring a wide range of funding streams together to provide new approaches to serving all 4-year-old children and their families. These sources cannot replace the district's financial responsibility for the 4K program. Community funding can include, but is not limited to, child care and Head Start. Several examples of blended funding are described below:

- When schools use community-based child care approaches, child care funding (such as Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy funding from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Child Care Section) provides subsidies for eligible parents participating in approved activities, which helps support the full-day operation of the program.
- Communities may find new approaches, through partnerships between 4K and Head Start, that expand the number of hours and services available to children and families.

For more details, see the DPI's publication *Financing Community Approaches to 4-Year-Old-Kindergarten*, which can be found at <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/4k-community-approaches-fiscal.php>.

72. If a district is implementing 4K in public-private community approaches with a community program, how much oversight does the district have over the program?

In 4K programs using community approaches, 4K is considered part of the school district's 4K program. School districts are not relieved of their obligation for oversight of programs conducted with community partners. Through appropriate planning and site supervision, the school district must assure that the required components of 4K are implemented in all of their settings. Most districts have established collaborative councils that plan and oversee these community approaches. These councils address the details of these programs and provide reports to the school board. There should also be contracts between the participating provider(s). These agreements should address the district fiscal contribution and clarify service delivery models, child care licensing, Head Start performance standards, hiring, teacher in-services, planning time, curriculum and program practices, and other roles and responsibilities. The school district has the authority and obligation to supervise the program for compliance with contract, district, and state requirements.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – RELATED REGULATIONS

73. Why are 4K statutes and program requirements different from child care and Head Start requirements?

The main reason for the differences is that each entity is subject to the rules of a different federal and state governmental agencies. School districts must meet Wisconsin State Educational Standards as well as requirements of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the U.S. Department of Education. Child care providers must meet DCF

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251, Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers, which are standards established by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF). Head Start is a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

74. Are requirements for teacher-child ratios and class sizes different when 4K is being implemented in community settings?

When 4K is implemented in child care settings, child care licensing regulations need to be followed. These regulations require a teacher–child ratio of 1:13 and a maximum group size of 24. When 4K is implemented in Head Start settings, Head Start Performance Standards specify a teacher-child ratio of 1:10, with class sizes of fewer than 20 children.

75. Are all facilities used for the 4K instructional program sponsored by the school district required to meet the building requirements for a "school" under the jurisdiction of the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services?

The facilities used for 4K instruction must meet the most stringent applicable building code. If the program is located in a child care center, the district must meet the child care code and be in compliance with school codes. Local municipalities may have stricter code requirements.

76. How do districts report DPI-licensed teachers who are hired under contract as 4K providers by private schools, child care centers, and Head Start programs?

The WISEstaff application (previously the *PI-1202* form) has two fields on the assignment screen for 4K teachers who are hired by private schools, child care centers, or Head Start centers.

The district should report the teacher and answer “Y” (Yes) to the assignment-related question, “*Is this assignment being performed by a subcontracted individual?*” The default for this field is “N” (No) and will need to be changed to “Y” (Yes) for subcontracted individuals.

The screenshot shows the WISEstaff application interface for editing a staff assignment. The top navigation bar includes 'WISEstaff', 'Edit Staff', and 'Assignment'. The main header displays 'WSEid: 1003950048 - JOSHUA ROYA' and 'Hiring Agency: 7288 - Wisconsin Dept of Public Instruction'. The interface is divided into two columns: 'Assignment' and 'Details'. The 'Assignment' column contains dropdown menus for 'Working LEA' (0070 - Algona School District), 'Working School' (0040 - Algona HS), 'Position' (S2 - Teacher), and 'Area' (0050 - Elementary - All Subjects). Below these are input fields for 'Local Use' (highlighted in yellow), 'Local Assignment ID', and 'Local Assignment Title'. The 'Details' column includes a 'Full Time Equivalent Percent for this assignment' field set to 100%, a 'Number of classes being taught for this assignment' field, and three Yes/No questions. The first question, 'Is this assignment being performed by a subcontracted individual?' (highlighted in yellow), has the 'Yes' radio button selected. The other two questions are 'Is this assignment being performed by a long term substitute?' and 'Is this assignment part of a School Board approved alternative education Program?'. At the bottom of the 'Assignment' column are 'Cancel' and 'Save' buttons.

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They will then need to report the information for the center that actually hired the 4K teacher in the “Local Use” field. Teachers being reported will need to have a WISEid. The WISEid has replaced the use of social security numbers to report staff. The other information they will need to report for this individual are: first and last name (middle, suffix, and former last name are optional), birth year, gender, race, and local and total experience. Districts will need to make sure the teacher is reported *at the same school that they report the students attending*.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

77. How can districts bring community stakeholders together to explore community approaches?

Most districts exploring or implementing community approaches have established early childhood community councils. These councils include representatives from the school district, community child care providers, Head Start, families, and any other community or municipal agencies interested in the care and education of young children. It is not necessary to include every private provider in the community, but the district should make a good faith effort to include a balanced representation of private providers to the council.

78. How are communities providing a structure to sustain their community approaches?

The council plays a key role in the communication and decision making needed to sustain community approaches. The council provides a forum to address implementation issues, facilitate program evaluation, promote program expansion or improvement, and link with the school board.

Many school districts designate a staff person to act as the coordinator for community approaches. Whether it is a district principal or a community coordinator, this position can be vital to ensure ongoing attention to these community approaches.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – SITE PARTNERSHIPS

79. How can a district work with a family child care provider to implement 4K?

Currently, most collaborations between schools and family child care focus on participation in school-sponsored professional development training, joint field trips, transition orientations, or transportation. Districts may also interface with family child care providers as part of the outreach component. Family child care providers are also excellent connections to support family engagement, since they have direct contact with parents on a daily basis.

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80. What needs to be considered for community approaches with Head Start and 4K?

As more communities are beginning to implement 4K for all children, partnerships between the programs are critical to ensure that comprehensive services for low-income families are available and that the expertise of both the public schools and Head Start is maximized.

While programs can be co-located as morning and afternoon programs, with little direct collaboration, programs can also be designed so that Head Start-eligible 4-year-old children can be jointly enrolled and can be counted for Head Start and 4K funding. These design approaches must assure that the state 4K requirements, as well as the federal Head Start requirements, are followed. In some instances, state child care licensing must also apply.

To use both school district equalization aid and Head Start funding, communities need to consider how to enhance programs for children and families while using resources efficiently and without duplication. Community approaches using 4K and Head Start require specific considerations to ensure compliance with federal Head Start fiscal requirements: performance standards for comprehensive child development services, health services, parent involvement, as well as service delivery design.

These considerations have led to two basic community approaches to 4K and Head Start:

1. The district enters into agreements with Head Start to deliver 4K to Head Start-eligible children. Both state 4K and federal Head Start requirements are followed. Eligible 4-year-old children are considered enrolled in both programs and are counted for Head Start funding and 4K equalization aid when services are provided to a greater extent than either program could offer operating in isolation. This approach extends services including:
 - extending the program days by combining the part-day 3-hour Head Start program with the part-day 2.5 hour 4K program to create a 5.5-hour day for children
 - extending the program hours and/or program year to provide the program during non-school days and into the summer months
2. To provide integration of low-income and higher income families within the same classes, the school district provides the 4K program requirements for all children either directly or through agreement with Head Start. The Head Start program provides the full range of Head Start services to Head Start-eligible and -enrolled children. The district costs for the 4K program and the Head Start child development program are prorated or shared to account for the additional hours and number of Head Start-eligible and non-Head Start-eligible children. Prorating follows federal Head Start guidance and audit requirements.

These approaches are described in DPI's *Financing Community Approaches to 4-Year-Old-Kindergarten*, which can be found at <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/4k-community-approaches-fiscal.php>.

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81. May community approach models exist with faith-based programs?

When community sites are used, partnerships with faith-based schools can occur if certain guidelines are followed. Districts should select community sites based solely on religion-neutral criteria. The district's 4K program must be open to all eligible children whose parents want the program. The district must ensure a nonsectarian environment, curriculum, and program for all students during the "4K" part of the day at the faith-based program. The program must be open to any district child without faith-based requirements. Interagency agreements or contracts must define these assurances and define how the district will oversee the program to assure compliance (see question 58 for more information on the content of these agreements or contracts).

Districts should consider how they already work with faith-based programs in terms of special education, transportation, or any other connections. Approaches should be consistent in how they address the environment issues and whether there are other written agreements. Funds received from the district by a faith-based partner cannot be used for any religious purpose and must only be used for 4K purposes. Before entering into a community partnership with a faith-based program, a district should consult with its legal counsel.

82. What should be included in an interagency agreement for collaborative programs?

An interagency agreement or contract should be established with each of the community settings. This signed agreement will be used to determine who has responsibility for the specific components of the program. Interagency agreements should include at a minimum the following:

- a mission, goal, or purpose statement;
- a statement that this specified 4K program is part of the district's 4K program;
- specific roles and responsibilities of each agency (including, but not limited to:
 - programming responsibilities (e.g., building maintenance, outdoor play space requirements, transportation, and parent outreach and involvement);
 - parameters of collaboration (e.g., joint activities, shared staff expertise, or shared resources);
 - staff issues (e.g., staff supervision, joint planning time, and background checks);
 - health services coverage;
 - common professional development and shared learning opportunities; and
 - responsibility for ensuring compliance with the applicable licensing rules);
- financial responsibility (e.g., insurance coverage, space rental, and contractual arrangements);
- maintenance of student records;
- district rights and responsibilities for program supervision;

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- timelines;
- definitions and common uses of terminology; and
- processes for dispute resolution.

Note that agreements with faith-based programs must:

- ensure a non-sectarian environment, curriculum, and program for all students during the 4K part of the day;
- be open to any district child without religious-based requirements; and
- outline methods by which the district will oversee the program to assure compliance (see question 58 for more information on the content of these agreements or contracts).

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT

83. How should districts “code” children for DPI reporting when they are receiving 4K services in community-based settings?

At this time, there is not a required structure for “coding” 4K children who receive services in community-based settings. Districts may report 4K students at any public elementary school(s) in the district. The DPI recommends the following methods for districts to report 4K students:

- A district may report all 4K students under one existing elementary school (one reason for this choice might be that the administrator or principal of the school is overseeing the 4K program).
- A district may report 4K students at several existing elementary schools of the district’s choosing.
- A district may report 4K students under whichever existing school serves the elementary attendance area in which the community setting is physically located.
- A district may set up a new school entity and use the new school to report the enrollment of all 4K students who are in community settings (new school codes are assigned by DPI; visit <https://dpi.wi.gov/cst/data-collections/school-directory/directory-data/school-code> for more information). The district designates the address and other contact information for the new school to ensure that mail and email for the school reach the correct location and person at the district.
- A district may report some 4K students at existing elementary schools and also set up a new school for other 4K students as described above.

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84. If a district uses community approaches, must it provide transportation to any site that the parent prefers, or can the district designate attendance areas?

A school board has the authority to designate attendance areas for 4K programs located in community centers and other sites in the same manner as it does for public schools within the school district. When parents are given options for community-based settings, the district may assign community-based settings according to designated attendance areas. A 4K student is entitled to transportation to the 4K program in the attendance area in which he or she resides. Therefore, if parents choose to have their children attend a 4K program at a community setting that was not assigned, the district does not have to provide transportation.

85. If a district uses community approaches, does every site need to be open for any parent that selects that site?

The district-wide 4K program must be open to any age-eligible child whose parents reside in the district. Local school districts can establish their own enrollment and placement policies. Policies can be set up by the district for enrollment in 4K that allow parents to prioritize the site they want or for the district to assign sites by certain criteria such as attendance areas or availability of slots in community settings.

Districts can allow parents to reject an attendance area placement and select a site as a “within district enrollment” option. In these cases, the district should consider having a policy comparable to those for the other grades when a parent chooses an “out of attendance area” school.

Districts may not establish enrollment criteria that limit access to the district’s 4K program, such as existing enrollment in the community setting, membership in any faith-based organization, sibling attendance, income, or developmental ability.

86. Often children attending child care centers may be from more than one school district. May the nonresident 4-year-olds at the child care center participate in the 4-year-old kindergarten program at that site?

In Wisconsin, children are entitled to a free education in the district in which they reside [Wis. Stats. § 121.77(1)(a)]. Children's ability to attend school in a district in which they do not reside is governed by state laws. State laws provide the following ways for children to attend nonresident school districts:

- *Intergovernmental agreements under Wis. Stats. § 66.0301 (previously called 66.30):* School districts can use agreements reached under Wis. Stats. § 66.0301 to allow children from one school district to attend 4K in another school district. More information can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sfs/finances/fund-info/package-cooperative-funds>.
- *Public school open enrollment (Wis. Stats. § 118.51 & Wis. Admin. Code PI 36):* Open enrollment legislation establishes the timelines and procedures for public school open enrollment. This includes the requirement that applications must be submitted between

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February and April of the school year preceding the one in which parents desire their children to attend a nonresident district. The statute does not provide any exceptions to this requirement. However, open enrollment only applies when both districts have 4K and the child is eligible for the program in the resident school district.

- *Parent-paid tuition (Wis. Stats. § 121.81)*: If a nonresident school district has space, it may allow nonresident students to enroll on a parent-paid tuition basis. The child's parent-paid tuition is equal to the open enrollment transfer amount. If a kindergarten program is half-time, the tuition cost would be one-half of the full-time amount.
- *Tuition payment by resident district (Wis. Stats § 121.78)*: State law permits resident school districts to enter into tuition agreements with other school districts. However, it is uncommon for school districts to enter into these agreements except for students who need special education or related services that the resident school district cannot provide. State law [Wis. Stats § 121.77(1)(b)] requires that school districts charge tuition for non-resident students, unless the student is entitled to attend the district under open enrollment or a tuition waiver.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM

87. If a district is going to contract with child care or Head Start agencies, do those agencies have to use the same curriculum as the district?

Regardless of where a district holds 4K or who is providing it, all 4K programs must meet the state requirements for subject area content, as well as the district's curriculum expectations.

The WMELS were developed as a tool to guide the creation and implementation of a developmentally appropriate environment for children. The WMELS provide a unifying approach for community settings implementing 4K in community approaches. More information on WMELS can be found in question 34 above.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

88. Is the district required to provide the same professional development to Head Start and child care teachers as to district teachers?

Unless the teacher is a district employee, there are no requirements that professional development be provided to Head Start or child care teachers. However, providing high-quality professional development opportunities for 4K teachers in all settings may benefit the children they teach.

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89. How is Wisconsin helping child care providers obtaining bachelor's degrees?

Well-trained and well-paid staff are key to providing high-quality early childhood care, and Wisconsin offers assistance to promote training and retention of child care workers. Since its creation in 1999, T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® WISCONSIN has awarded more than 8,000 scholarships to assist child care workers to enroll in higher education courses while they are working. Ninety percent of programs participating in T.E.A.C.H. serve low-income children whose parents receive a Wisconsin Shares subsidy. In fiscal year 2016, T.E.A.C.H. recipients received wage increases averaging 5.8 percent per year—more than double the 3.3 percent average wage increase other child care workers received. More information on T.E.A.C.H. can be found at <http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/>.

According to the 2016 Wisconsin Child Care Workforce Study, child care teachers are becoming more educated. Educational attainment exceeds that of the Wisconsin workforce in general. More than half (52 percent) of all child care teachers have an associate degree or higher. More than one fourth (29 percent) have a bachelor's degree or higher (source: Dresser, L., Rodriguez, J., and Meder, M. *Wisconsin's Child Care Workforce: Wages, Benefits, Education and Turnover of the Professionals Working with Wisconsin's Youngest Children* (2016). Report for WECA by COWS and the UW Survey Center. Madison, Wis.).

90. How is Wisconsin helping Head Start and other non-public school teachers obtain their bachelor's degrees and teacher licenses?

Non-public school programs need information and support for their licensed teachers and administrators. Therefore, to help non-public school teachers obtain a bachelor's degree or teacher license, the DPI has worked hand-in-hand with the University of Wisconsin System and the Wisconsin Technical College System to promote articulation between the two systems. Through these efforts and faculty mini-grants, several technical colleges are in partnerships with Wisconsin's four-year degree-granting colleges and universities to assist early childhood educators with associate degrees to obtain bachelor's degrees.

T.E.A.C.H. scholarships are available to Head Start teachers and assistant teachers, and to child care program staff working in collaborative 4K programming (see question 89 for more information on T.E.A.C.H.)

91. How is Wisconsin helping Head Start and other non-public school teachers maintain their teacher licenses?

The Wisconsin Quality Educator Initiative, PI 34, sets requirements for educator preparation program approval and license renewal that are standards- and performance-based. Educators must create and implement a verifiable Professional Development Plan (PDP) during their licensure cycle. Under the tutelage of a qualified mentor and with the guidance of a DPI-trained PDP team, the educator actively engages in sustained, verifiable professional development to renew his or her license. Successful completion of the PDP must lead to verifiable professional growth, and the effect of the professional growth must be linked to student learning.

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To help non-public school teachers maintain their licenses, the DPI provides a variety of resources:

- Information for teachers about initial licenses can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/initial-educators>.
- A Professional development plan toolkit can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/tepd/pdf/pdpinitialeducatortoolkit.pdf>.

As educators navigate the PDP goal-writing process, DPI requires that all goal approval and PDP verification processes be done online through one of our statewide providers:

- Wisconsin Education Career Access Network (<http://services.education.wisc.edu/wecan/>)
- Quality Educator Interactive (<https://myqei.org/>)

The DPI also provides information on loan forgiveness and cancellation programs for educators:

- Each year, the U.S. Department of Education announces the low-income schools and teacher shortage areas approved as eligible for loan forgiveness and cancellation for the current school year. This could be important to teachers who have Federal Stafford Loans, Federal Supplemental Loans, or Federal Perkins Loans. For more information, see <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/programs/loan-forgiveness>.
- A public service loan forgiveness program is available to teachers who do not meet the requirements for the low-income school loan forgiveness program. Learn more at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/public-service>.
- Information about recent legislation affecting the Wisconsin Teacher Loan Program, as well as other information about the program, can be found on the State of Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board website at <http://www.heab.state.wi.us/>.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – COMPLYING WITH CHILD CARE LICENSING

92. What is the difference between a child care center and a preschool?

For child care licensing purposes, there is no difference between a child care center and a preschool or nursery school. Because preschools typically operate for 2.5 to 3.5 hours per session, some of the licensing rules do not apply. Some rules that may not apply are those related to: serving meals; providing naps; programming for the beginning and end of the day; and rules related to the care of infants, toddlers, and school-age children, unless the program serves children of these ages.

93. Do child care programs operated by public schools need to be licensed?

No. Under Wis. Stats. § 48.65, public or private schools are exempt from licensure. Child care programs operated by public schools are, however, required to meet the child care licensing rules established by the DCF under Wis. Stats. § 120.13(14), which says in part that a school board may establish and provide, or contract for, the provision of child care

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programs. Child care programs established under this law shall meet the standards for licensed child care centers established by DCF.

Beginning in 2016, public school-operated programs participating in the YoungStar Quality Rating System are monitored for compliance with a subset of the child care licensing rules found in DCF 251. This is a new requirement which resulted from the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant in 2014. The new federal requirement applies to any public school license-exempt child care program that wishes to be eligible to care for children receiving a Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy.

94. Do child care programs operated by private or parochial schools need to be licensed?

No. Private schools do not need to be licensed in order to operate a child care center except where Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy payments are concerned (the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy is described in the next section). A private school is an institution that has been determined to be a private school by the state superintendent under Wis. Stats. § 118.165 and 118.167. Parochial schools and private schools have the same definition per the DCF and the DPI.

A private school that wishes to be eligible to care for children receiving Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy payments must be licensed.

95. Do collaborative 4K programs that are located in a public school building and operated jointly with a public school and a child care or Head Start program need to be licensed?

If the public school is assuming responsibility for the collaborative program, the program does not need to be licensed. If responsibility for the collaborative program is shared by the community approach partners, the child care or Head Start program must be licensed. A contract or interagency agreement that has been signed by all of the parties in the collaborative will be used to determine who has responsibility for the collaborative program (see question 57). A license may be issued to the collaborative or to the child care or Head Start program.

Once a license is issued to a collaborative program, the program is subject to routine monitoring visits by a DCF licensing specialist. These visits will focus on compliance with licensing rules. The agency that holds the license is responsible for maintaining compliance with the licensing rules.

96. Do collaborative 4K programs that are operated jointly with a private school and a child care or Head Start program need to be licensed?

If the private school is assuming responsibility for the collaborative program (and the private school does not wish to receive child care subsidy reimbursement), the program does not need to be licensed. If responsibility for the collaborative program is shared by the community approach partners, or the private school wishes to be eligible to receive child care subsidy payments, the program must be licensed. A contract or interagency agreement

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signed by all the parties in the collaborative will be used to determine who has responsibility for the collaborative program. A license may be issued to the collaborative or to the private school, child care program, or Head Start program.

Once a license is issued to a collaborative program, the program is subject to routine monitoring visits by a DCF licensing specialist. These visits will focus on compliance with licensing rules. The agency that holds the license is responsible for maintaining compliance with the licensing rules.

An ECSE program can only provide services through an IEP to children in licensed or regulated child care programs. If the private school is not licensed, the school would provide special education through an Individualized Service Plan. More information can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/bul10-03.pdf>.

97. How do child care licensing rules apply when a collaborative 4K program operated by a public school and a licensed child care or Head Start program is located in a licensed child care or Head Start setting?

The licensed center must meet the applicable child care licensing rules. If there is a public school employee present (i.e., working as a teacher in the collaborative program), the public school is responsible for maintaining staff information, including background checks. Supervision of the public school employee and program planning responsibilities must be addressed in the collaborative or interagency agreement.

Once a license is issued to a program in a collaborative, the program is subject to routine monitoring visits by a DCF licensing specialist. These visits will focus on compliance with licensing rules.

98. How do the child care licensing rules apply when a public school rents space in the public school to a child care program?

The child care center is licensed under the child care licensing rules.

99. How do the child care licensing rules apply when a collaborative 4K program operates in a public school building with a child care or Head Start program?

The child care or Head Start program must be licensed unless the school district assumes responsibility for the complete program. The child care or Head Start program must meet the licensing requirements. Caregiver background checks must be completed on all staff of the licensed child care or Head Start program. School district personnel who may be involved in the collaborative program must meet the background check requirements of the school district. Each agency is responsible for maintaining records for its program's staff and children. Other responsibilities should be defined in an interagency agreement.

Once a license is issued to a collaborative program, the program is subject to routine monitoring visits by a DCF licensing specialist. These visits will focus on compliance with licensing rules. The agency that holds the license is responsible for maintaining compliance with the licensing rules. The licensing specialist will refer to the collaborative or

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interagency agreement to determine who has responsibility for maintaining child and staff records. Items addressed in the licensing rules, and not specifically designated as the school's responsibility in the collaborative or interagency agreement, will be monitored for compliance with the licensing rules.

100. Who monitors child care centers for compliance with child care licensing rules, and what happens if a licensing violation is noted?

The DCF Bureau of Early Care Regulation is responsible for monitoring licensed child care centers for compliance with the licensing rules. Licensed programs receive regular monitoring visits by a DCF licensing specialist. Public school-operated child care centers that are exempt from licensing will be monitored by a DCF licensing specialist annually for a subset of the licensing rules.

During a monitoring visit, the licensing specialist may observe the program, check health and safety requirements, and review child and staff files and other documents related to licensing rules. Violations will be noted on a statement of non-compliance issued to the licensee or school district. Licensees are responsible for filing a plan of correction for all violations. Licensees and public schools are responsible for ensuring that violations have been corrected. Information about the results of monitoring visits for both licensed and public school-operated child care programs will be sent to the public child care search website.

101. Can fees be charged by a child care program if child care children are enrolled in a collaborative with a school district?

Yes. While child care is primarily funded by parent fees, 4K is part of the public system and is provided at no cost to families. Therefore, any child attending the community approach classroom only for the 4K hours of a day may not be charged tuition for the 4K program. However, child care programs typically determine that a 5- or 6-hour day is considered full-day and anything less is considered part-day. For example, in a program that does not charge by the hour, if the child participates in 4K for 2.5 hours and is attending the child care program for 6.5 hours, the cost for child care is not reduced, because the child is still in care for more than 6 hours.

102. If a child only attends child care during the 4K time, must he or she be counted by the child care center for its child care license?

Yes, because the child will be under the care and supervision of the child care center during the 4K time. All children attending a child care center for 4K services must be counted for licensing purposes.

This requires that all 4KCA-licensed sites have complete files (i.e., licensing paperwork) for all children counted for 4K, even those who do not attend a "wraparound" session. Child Care Licensing will expect that this file include contact information,

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immunization records, a report of a physical exam in the last two years, and other documents related to the child (such as records of permission for field trips). All required information can be collected on forms available for group child care or, if the school district collects similar information from parents, they can copy those forms and put them in the child's file at the center.

103. Can child care programs access Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy funding when they are offering collaborative 4K for children enrolled in the child care program and Wisconsin Shares-eligible children are participating in this programming?

Yes. Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy policy supports the authorization of the hours of care needed while a child is in a regulated child care setting. When a child care setting additionally offers collaborative programming for Head Start or 4K programs, the full amount of hours may be authorized—up to the total amount of hours of care needed while the parent is in an approved activity—if: the school program and child care program are co-located, the total number of hours of the child's 4K program is not more than 4 hours per day, and the total length of the child's authorized child care day is 5 or more hours per day (the school program hours are included in this total). The parent is responsible for paying for any costs when the child is in care while the parent is not in an approved activity.

104. Will full-day Wisconsin Shares authorizations be made if the child is in care only part of the day?

No. Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy authorizations only cover care for the number of hours needed for the parent to remain in an approved activity. Full-time hours will be authorized only when the parent needs full-time care in order to be in an approved activity. Authorizations are made for the specific amount of combined hours of care needed.

105. Can Wisconsin Shares be accessed if the child is only enrolled in a Head Start program or a 4K program operated by a public or private school?

No. Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy cannot be authorized for Head Start or 4K hours that are not part of a community approaches program and do not offer regulated child care services.

106. If a Head Start or public school program offers “wraparound” services to provide care to children outside of Head Start or 4K program hours, can Wisconsin Shares be used?

Yes. Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy can be authorized for the hours the child attends the “wraparound” child care program, provided that the conditions specified in question 103 are met.

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107. Are private school child care programs eligible to receive reimbursement from the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program?

Private school child care programs are not eligible to receive subsidies from the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy program unless the child care program is licensed by the DCF or, if the program cares for three or fewer children under age 7, certified by the county in which the care is provided.

108. What rules pertaining to children's records must child care centers follow?

A child care center must have all required information about children attending the program. This includes enrollment information, immunization records, health examination reports, and other information required under the licensing rules. Records may be shared between the child care center and the school district, but they must be available for review by the DCF licensing specialist. The DCF licensing specialist will monitor a center's compliance with children's records.

109. How do the child care licensing rules apply when a child attends a community approach 4K program for more than four consecutive hours a day and under the licensing rules is required to have a nap or rest time?

The Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers (DCF 251) require that all children under age 5 who are in care for more than 4 hours have a nap or rest period. The licensing rules also require that children who have a nap or rest period be provided with a cot, sleeping bag, or 2" thick mat to use. Children are not required to sleep or even lie down during the nap or rest period. If the child does not sleep, he or she should be permitted to get up after 30 minutes. A rest period could consist of a quiet time of at least 30 minutes spent looking at books or otherwise playing quietly while on the cot, sleeping bag, or 2" thick mat. This rest time could happen either before or after lunch between the 4K portion and the child care portion of the child's day.

110. What are the expectations for the availability of epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPens®) in 4K Community sites?

If a child with a known need for an epinephrine auto-injector wants to keep one at the 4K site, it is handled as any other prescription drug authorization. If the 4K site decides to have an epinephrine auto-injector on site for unexpected emergencies, the child care program may do so according to [2015 Wisconsin Act 35](#):

- Child care programs are not required to have an epinephrine auto-injector on hand; however, [2015 Wisconsin Act 35](#) allows a child care program to train staff and obtain a stock epinephrine auto-injector in the event of an unexpected allergic reaction.
- School districts are not required by law to have stock epinephrine auto-injectors, but can do so with a "plan" ([Wis. Stat. § 118.2925](#)).

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- If the school district has a district-wide policy of having stock epinephrine at each school building, the plan should consider how the district will support its 4K sites.
- If the 4K buildings are covered by the school district for emergency nursing services, the district may check with *EpiPen4Schools* (<https://www.epipen4schools.com/>) to see if they are eligible for free stock EpiPens®.