

Guidance for Missouri Quality Prekindergarten for Child Care Programs (MOQPK-CC)

2025-2026 School Year

May 19, 2025

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INTRODUCTION

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is offering Missouri Quality Prekindergarten (MOQPK) Grants appropriated in House Bill 2 Section 2.025 for Fiscal Year 2026 available to child care programs.

Businesses in Missouri consistently rank the lack of early care and education options as a barrier for recruiting and retaining employees. The MOQPK-CC Grant program is designed to expand the funding for prekindergarten (Pre-K) instruction and increase access for low-income families.

Per the appropriation bill language, state revenue funds are available for Pre-K education programs to serve students, in the year prior to kindergarten eligibility (be age 4 as of July 31, 2025) in a program consistent with Section 161.213, RSMo. Reimbursements shall not exceed \$7,145 per individual student with priority is given to students at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level not already receiving funding, as identified below in the “Eligible Student/Classroom” section or other state or federal funding for the same instructional services.

The grantee agrees and understands that any amount funded per the award is subject to the appropriations made by the General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor.

ELIGIBLE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

All child care programs in Missouri, as defined in [Section 210.201, RSMo](#), that are licensed under [Section 210.221, RSMo](#), at the time of application, or that are unlicensed and contracted with the DESE subsidy program at the time of application, are eligible to apply for the MOQPK-CC Grant opportunity.

The child care program must remain licensed under [Section 210.221, RSMo](#), or if unlicensed, must remain contracted with the DESE subsidy program. The child care program must meet the following criteria to receive MOQPK-CC Grant funding:

- Serve students at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level not already receiving full child care subsidy for the same instructional services who are eligible Pre-K students (age 4); and
- Meet standards of high-quality early childhood education as outlined in [Section 161.213, RSMo](#), and as promulgated in [5 CSR 25-100.340](#) Early Childhood Education Standards, including:
 - The lead teacher in each Pre-K classroom shall have:
 1. A current Missouri early childhood education (ECE) or early childhood special education (ECSE) teaching certificate;
 2. A Bachelor’s degree or higher in ECE, ECSE, or child development;
 3. A Bachelor’s degree or higher in any field with a minimum of thirty-six (36) college credit hours in ECE or child development; or
 4. An Associate’s degree in ECE or child development; Associate’s degree in any field with a minimum of eighteen (18) college credit hours in ECE or child development; or sixty (60) college credit hours with a minimum of twenty-four (24) college credits in ECE or child development with
 - a. Active enrollment in pursuit of one of the credentials listed in paragraphs 1-3, and
 - b. Teaching under the supervision and mentorship of an individual who meets one of the credentials listed in paragraphs 1-3
 - Any teaching assistant in a prekindergarten classroom shall have
 1. A current Preschool Child Development Associate (CDA) credential; or
 2. Nine (9) college credit hours in ECE or child development

- Lead and assistant teachers' qualifications will be verified in the Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) system. MOPD requires official college transcripts to verify higher education.
- The program must participate in the [Quality Assurance Report \(QAR\) program](#) and demonstrate quality within two (2) years of award. The DESE Office of Childhood will automatically enroll MOQPK-CC grant recipients in the QAR program.
- All lead teachers and assistant teachers must complete minimum of eighteen (18) hours of professional development annually in at least four (4) [Missouri professional development content areas](#).
- The daily work schedule for the lead teacher and assistant teacher must cover the entire instructional time identified in the submitted calendar and daily schedule.
- Any prekindergarten classroom with eleven (11) to twenty (20) children must have a teaching assistant with a maximum class size of twenty (20) students.
- Operate full-day Pre-K programming for a minimum of nine (9) months annually with a minimum of 1044 hours of instruction time or operate half-day Pre-K programming for a minimum of nine (9) months annually with a minimum of 522 hours of instruction time, not including mealtime or rest time.
- The program must use a [DESE-approved comprehensive curriculum](#).
- The program must conduct assessments (e.g., P-KOF) aligned with the Missouri Early Learning Standards.
- The program must ensure all staff undergo background checks as described in [Section 210.1080, RSMo](#).
- The program must conduct annual developmental screenings (e.g., DIAL, ASQ) for all enrolled students.

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS/CLASSROOMS

Pre-K students must be age four (4) as of July 31, 2025, to be considered eligible to participate in the MOQPK-CC Grant program.

The classroom:

- Must enroll a combination of students below and above the 185 percent of the federal poverty line. See Appendix A for sample of direct certification of federal poverty level.
- Programs must operate a full-day Pre-K programming for a minimum of six (6) hours of instruction daily, five (5) days a week for a minimum of 174 days or 1044 hours or half-day Pre-K programming for a minimum of three (3) hours of instruction daily, five (5) days a week for a minimum of 174 days or 522 hours, not including mealtime or rest time.
- Must be located at the child care program site indicated on the application.
- Cannot include students claimed by another funding source for the same instructional time, including but not limited to:
 - Contracted services with a Local Education Agency (LEA) for State Aid in the Foundation Formula;
 - MOQPK-LEA funded slot;
 - Parent paid tuition, state or federal funds;
 - Child care subsidy.
 1. For subsidy paid on attendance, in the event the student receives partial child care subsidy, the provider assumes all responsibility in maintaining clear and accurate documentation of the student's attendance in child care time outside of the instructional day, as well as the student's attendance during the instructional time of the day.
 2. For subsidy paid based on enrollment, if a student is authorized for subsidy, the student will not be eligible to be claimed for this MOQPK-CC grant.

It is the responsibility of the program to maintain clear and accurate documentation of the student's attendance in child care time outside of the instructional day, as well as the student's attendance during the instructional time of the day. Staff in the Office of Childhood will monitor this attendance during the grant period to ensure awarded

programs are meeting this requirement.

GRANT FUNDING AMOUNT

Funding for the MOQPK-CC Grant cannot exceed \$7,145 per slot per school year (e.g., September to May).

- Full-day slots shall have a minimum of six (6) hours of instructional time daily, five (5) days a week, 174 days in the academic year, and the reimbursement is \$7,145 per slot.
 - Programs with alternative schedules must total 1,044 hours of instructional time in the academic year.
- Half-day slots shall have a minimum of three (3) hours of instructional time daily, five (5) days a week, 174 days in the academic year, and the reimbursement is \$3,572.50 per slot.
 - Programs with alternative schedules must total 522 hours of instructional time in the academic year.

Example:

$$\begin{array}{rcccl} \text{Programs} & = & \text{Monthly} & \times & \text{9 Month Grant} & = & \text{Grant} \\ & & \text{Total per} & & \text{Cycle} & & \text{Funding} \\ & & \text{Student} & & & & \text{Amount} \\ & & \text{Slot} & & & & \\ \\ \text{Full Day} & = & \$793.88 & \times & 9 \text{ Months} & = & \$7,145 \\ \\ \text{Half Day} & = & \$396.94 & \times & 9 \text{ Months} & = & \$3,572.50 \end{array}$$

ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

MOQPK-CC Grant funds may be used for any expense that supports the program, such as salaries, benefits, supplies, equipment, furniture, instructional materials, and rent as long as all eligibility and program criteria for MOQPK-CC, as described herein, are met.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Eligible child care programs must submit the online application for MOQPK-CC Grant funds to the Office of Childhood by June 27, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. See Appendix B for sample application.

No late or incomplete applications will be considered. If a duplicate application is submitted, DESE will consider the most recent application submitted by the child care program when awarding MOQPK-CC Grants.

Applications shall contain the following information:

- The number of Pre-K students below the 185 percent federal poverty line that will be funded by MOQPK-CC
- The number of Pre-K students above the 185 percent federal poverty line that will be funded by MOQPK-CC
- Location students will be served for the MOQPK-CC
- Departmental Vendor Number (DVN)
- Status of the child care program (e.g., licensed or contracted)

- If program is operating a full-day or half-day program
- Number of classrooms and slots being requested for MOQPK-CC grant funding
- Which DESE approved curriculum will be used in the MOQPK-CC classroom
- Applicant attestation of the terms and conditions for receiving MOQPK-CC funding

AWARD AND FUNDING STRUCTURE

Child care providers may receive multiple funding sources for students served in their program; however, if awarded MOQPK-CC Grant funding, the Pre-K instructional time cannot be funded by any other source (e.g., child care subsidy, parent tuition, state or federally-funded slots). If students are confirmed to be funded by another source for the same instructional time, the provider may be disqualified from the MOQPK-CC grant and subject to recoupment of some or all funds.

If a student who is enrolled in the MOQPK-CC Grant program is absent for 30 consecutive days, the slot will be considered vacant on the 30th day. If a previously filled slot becomes vacant, the slot must be filled with another eligible student within 30 calendar days or funding will be reduced accordingly for the remainder of the grant period unless the slot is filled. Once filled, the program can prorate the time the slot was filled on the next invoice for payment.

Applications will be prioritized into categories for funding determinations as follows:

1. Programs that were awarded and served students in a MOQPK classroom during the 2024-25 academic year.
2. The number of students served at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level.
3. Child care programs operating a full-day program (six (6) or more hours daily).

Applications will be grouped into the categories listed above. Funding will be awarded in the order applications are received within each category starting with the first category, then extended to the subsequent category, and so forth.

MOQPK-CC Grant program conditional awards will be made by July 9, 2025. Child care programs will be notified via email of the conditional award. Once all requirements have been received and verified, the program will be notified via email of the award. Participating awarded programs will be posted on the MOQPK-CC Grant [website](#).

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for the MOQPK-CC Grant, child care programs must submit and have verified all reporting requirements by August 22, 2025.

- **DESE-approved Curriculum** – Upon award, the child care program shall submit documentation of staff training or staff enrollment in upcoming training for the curriculum indicated on the application.
- **Teacher Qualifications** – For each MOQPK-CC classroom, the program shall submit the name of the lead teacher, the lead teacher’s MOPD-ID number, the lead teacher’s daily hours of employment. Qualifications will be verified through the MOPD system. Please note that MOPD requires official transcripts be directly sent to MOPD for verification and it may take up to 30 days for documents to be evaluated.
 - If a teacher position becomes vacant for any reason, the child care program must notify DESE within ten (10) calendar days.
 - A qualified teacher shall be in place within 45 days to maintain eligibility for MOQPK-CC funds.

- **Assistant Teacher Qualifications** – For each MOQPK-CC classroom serving more than ten (10) students, the program shall submit the name of the assistant teacher, the assistant teacher’s MOPD-ID number, the assistant teacher’s daily hours of employment. Qualifications will be verified through the MOPD system. Please note that MOPD requires official transcripts be directly sent to MOPD for verification and it may take up to 30 days for documents to be evaluated.
 - If the position becomes vacant for any reason, the child care program must notify DESE within ten (10) calendar days.
 - A qualified assistant teacher shall be in place within 45 days to maintain eligibility for MOQPK-CC funds.
- **Calendar** – A copy of the child care program’s annual calendar including days of operation for each classroom serving MOQPK-CC funded children.
- **Daily Schedule** – A copy of the Pre-K daily schedule for each classroom serving MOQPK-CC funded children.

By September 5, 2025, the program shall submit a roster of all children enrolled in each MOQPK-CC classroom on the form provided by the department and shall include each student’s name and DCN and birthdate. If a DCN is not available, DESE will make every attempt to locate child’s DCN. If DESE is unable to locate a child’s DCN, the program will need to provide official documentation confirming the child’s date of birth. If children enroll throughout the academic year, the program shall submit an updated roster with the same requirements within 5 days of the child’s enrollment.

TIMELINE

Important dates and deadlines for the MOQPK-CC Grant are provided in the following table:

| Item | Timeline |
|---|--|
| Application Posted | May 19, 2025 |
| Application Due Date | June 27, 2025 |
| Conditional Award Date | By July 9, 2025 |
| Lead and Assistant Teacher(s) Qualifications verified in MOPD | August 22, 2025 |
| Verification of Curriculum | August 22, 2025 |
| Program’s school year calendar | August 22, 2025 |
| Daily schedule for each classroom with MOQPK slots | August 22, 2025 |
| Award Date | August 29, 2025 |
| PK classrooms Operating | September 3, 2025 |
| Submit class roster(s) | September 5, 2025 |
| No Tax Due Letter | October 10, 2025 |
| Invoice Submission | October 10, 2025, and monthly thereafter |
| Student Attendance | October 10, 2025, and monthly thereafter |

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Final MOQPK-CC Invoice | By June 10, 2026 |
| Final MOQPK-CC Year-end Report | By June 10, 2026 |

PAYMENTS

Prior to payment, the provider shall demonstrate they are compliant with state sales and withholding tax laws by showing it has “No Tax Due.” A No Tax Due Form is submitted directly to the Missouri Department of Revenue. The Missouri Department of Revenue will issue a letter showing that there is No Tax Due. A copy of the No Tax Due Letter must be submitted to the department.

Payments will be made monthly beginning in October with the final payment for May. Invoices must be submitted by the 10th of the month following services.

- Payments will be made based on the number of MOQPK-CC students enrolled in the month of service.
- Invoices will be submitted on the form provided.
- Attendance will be submitted monthly on the form provided.
- A year-end report shall be submitted to the department on the form provided with the final invoice.

Child care programs are required to keep documentation used to calculate the child’s eligibility based on federal poverty level (e.g., family income and household size), and expenditures using MOQPK-CC funds (e.g., payroll records, receipts, purchase orders) for five (5) years following the completion of the grant.

Child care programs must maintain financial records for auditing purposes and must produce such records upon request by DESE.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Early Childhood Programming

[Missouri Early Learning Standards](#)

[Quality Assurance Report \(QAR\)](#)

[Preschool Program Guidance](#)

[Approved Early Childhood Curriculum](#)

[Missouri Professional Development System](#)

Educator Certification

[General Information](#)

[Routes to Educator Certification](#)

[Reactivate a Teaching Certificate](#)

Other

[Missouri Department of Revenue](#)

[No Tax Due Form](#)

GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

For Programming Questions:

Office of Childhood – Quality Programs – Preschool

Preschool@dese.mo.gov

573-751-6793

For Payment Questions:

Childhood Finance

childhoodinvoices@dese.mo.gov

573-522-5595

For Teacher Certification Questions:

Office of Educator Quality

certification@dese.mo.gov

573-751-0051

For Missouri Professional Development System Questions:

Office of Childhood – Quality Programs – Professional Development

mopd@dese.mo.gov

573-751-6793

APPENDIX A

FPL DIRECT CERTIFICATION INFORMATION

Child care programs participating in the MOQPK-CC Grant program must ensure that families of eligible Pre-K students who are served with MOQPK-CC Grant funds are at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).

The mechanism for ensuring FPL is through direct certification. This is a process of collecting, reviewing, and verifying the documentation that families provide as proof of their income and household size, which is used to determine the family's FPL.

If the child care program does not already have processes in place to complete the direct certification of FPL as part of their enrollment procedures, then the child care program who is requesting to participate in MOQPK-CC must establish this procedure as part of receiving these grant funds.

Free and Reduced-Price Lunch School Meals Information

The [Free and Reduced Price School Meals Information](#) document on the DESE website is an example of the required information to determine FPL. When selecting this document from the website, it will open in Microsoft Word and can be edited to change the sections for *school district name* to your *child care program name*.

- **Attachment D – Application Instructions.**

This document on the DESE website above contains instructions and documentation used for school districts to determine Free and Reduced-Price Lunch and can be modified for child care programs who need a process for direct certification of the families' FPL.

- **Attachment A – Eligibility Criteria for Free and Reduced Price Meals.**

This document on the DESE website above contains the eligibility guidelines for maximum household income eligible for free and reduced-price lunch meals. These guidelines can be used as a tool after receiving Attachment D application information to determine families of eligible Pre-K students are at or below the 185 percent of the FPL.

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE APPLICATION FOR MOQPK-CC GRANT

Child care programs must use this online application to apply for MOQPK-CC Grant funding. Applications are due on June 27, 2025. Classrooms must be operating by September 2, 2025.

1. Location. This is the site where students will be served for MOQPK-CC.
 - ☐ Program Name _____
 - ☐ Address _____
 - ☐ City _____ State MO Country United States
 - ☐ Zip Code _____
 - ☐ County _____
2. Departmental Vendor Number (DVN) _____
3. Primary Contact. This is the person operating the child care program listed above (e.g., owner/board president/chairperson/managing member).
 - ☐ First Name _____
 - ☐ Last Name _____
 - ☐ Role _____
 - ☐ Email _____
 - ☐ Phone _____
4. Does your program contract with a public school district for any pre-kindergarten slots?
 - ☐ No (skip next 3 items)
 - ☐ Yes (must complete next 3 items)
 - School District Name _____
 - School District Address, City _____
 - I understand the slots/classrooms I provide under a contract with the public school district cannot be included in the request for MOQPK-CC funding. (Insert your initials) _____
5. Program Type (select at least one)
 - ☐ I am a licensed child care program
 - ☐ I am contracted with DESE to receive subsidy payments
6. Number of Student Slots
 - ☐ Total number of Full Day slots: _____
 - Anticipated number of full day slots at or below 185 percent poverty level: _____
 - Anticipated number of slots above 185 percent poverty level: _____
 - ☐ Total number of Half Day slots: _____
 - Anticipated number of slots at or below 185 percent poverty level: _____
 - Anticipated number of slots above 185 percent poverty level: _____
7. What curriculum will be used? (Pick from drop down of DESE approved curriculum)

Creative Curriculum
Curiosity Corner
Emerging Language & Literacy Curriculum (ELLC)
Every Child Ready
Experience Early Learning Preschool
High/Scope
Montessori
Project Construct
Ready to Advance – Benchmark
Scholastic PreK On My Way

8. I have read, understand, and agree to follow the Terms and Conditions applicable to this MOQPK-CC funding opportunity.

- ☐ Yes (must select and type name before allowed to submit)
- ☐ No

Submit