

PRE-K PARTNERSHIPS: A SUCCESS BY 6 / AISD COLLABORATION (PKP) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE PRE-K PARTNERSHIPS?

Pre-K Partnerships are relationships between Independent School Districts (ISD) and high-quality community-based child development centers (CDCs) to offer public Pre-K on CDC campuses. Eligible children are co-enrolled in the ISD and the CDC receives a portion of state funding to implement the Pre-K program overseen by the ISD. Pre-K Partnership models vary across ISD. Through these partnerships, the districts can increase their Pre-K program offering to families. Families benefit from this model as their child can access both full-day care and a 3-hour Public Pre-K program all in one location.

WHAT IS PRE-K PARTNERSHIPS: A SUCCESS BY 6 / AISD COLLABORATION (PKP)?

To expand and scale Pre-K Partnerships, Austin ISD (AISD) partnered with United Way for Greater Austin (UWATX) to serve as the community administrator for Pre-K Partnerships. UWATX manages the partnerships, sets program standards, and employs dedicated staff to support the implementation of Pre-K Partnerships at CDCs.

WHY IS UWATX LEADING THIS COLLABORATION?

For more than a decade, UWATX has worked closely with community CDCs to improve quality and increase access to high quality programs as a strategy to improve school readiness. As part of this work, UWATX has convened a cohort of CDCs that are high quality and enroll a high percentage of children from low-income families – providing professional development support, volunteers and other resources, mental health consultation, and more.

UWATX is a key convener and contributor of the [Success By 6 \(SX6\) Austin/Travis Coalition 2019-2023 Strategic Plan](#). The coalition, made up of child and family advocates in the community identified PKP as a program that will increase high-quality care and education in the community. PKP will also improve the financial stability and sustainability of CDCs to be able to deliver high quality care and education to children from low-income families.

WHAT CDCs ARE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

CDCs must meet the following criteria to participate:

- Fully Licensed and in good standing with Department of Family Protective Services,
- Must meet Texas Rising Star 3- or 4-star rating or currently nationally accredited (e.g. NAEYC, NAC),
- Provide a breakfast or lunch that meets the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines ([here](#)),
- Currently serve or interested in serving children on childcare subsidy, and;
- Meet additional PKP program standards set by UWATX.

WHAT DOES A PKP CLASSROOM LOOK LIKE?

The PKP classroom is a nurturing and responsive environment that fosters growth and development of all children. It includes planned experiences for children through intentional adult facilitation. Materials are engaging and interactive and social relationships are paramount. The PKP classroom follows program standards set by UWATX and aligned to state and national early childhood guidelines.

The Pre-K portion of the day is a 3-hour program led by a qualified Pre-K Lead Teacher. The Lead Teacher implements a TEA Commissioner approved curriculum and follows developmentally appropriate practices such as; planned small and large group activities, at least 45 minutes of center time daily, parent engagement activities, and provide a responsive and nurturing environment for all children.

WHAT BENEFITS DO PKP CENTERS RECEIVE?

Partner CDCs will receive 80% (approximately \$3,000 annually per child) of the state average daily attendance (ADA) revenue for eligible children enrolled in and attending half-day Pre-K on site at the center. Additional benefits that CDCs will receive include, but are not limited to: free training opportunities that meet Childcare Licensing and national accreditation requirements, marketing on AISD and UWATX's website, mentoring from a UWATX instructional specialist, and mental health consultation.

WHAT TYPE OF SUPPORTS WILL UWATX OFFER TO PARTNER CDCs?

UWATX has a dedicated team to oversee and support the PKP day-to-day operations. Staff are available to provide technical assistance and training to CDCs for everything from registration and enrollment to instructional strategies and teacher recruitment. Our main priority is to make sure CDCs feel successful as a PKP center partner.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A CHILD TO BE "CO-ENROLLED?"

Children between the ages of 3 and 5 who are enrolled at a partner CDC and determined eligible for Pre-K (See [Eligibility for Prekindergarten](#)) will complete the registration process for AISD. A child is considered co-enrolled in both the center and in AISD once the family completes the AISD registration process. The registration and enrollment process is facilitated by the child's CDC, *not* AISD.

WHEN WILL PKP BEGIN?

Pre-K Partnerships: A Success By 6 / AISD Collaboration's inaugural school year will begin on August 20, 2019.

DOES PKP FOLLOW THE AISD CALENDAR?

THE PKP calendar will follow a similar schedule to AISD, but will set it's own staff in-service dates. CDCs will have a certain number of flex days due to center closures that must be approved by the Director of Pre-K Innovation prior to the start of the school year.

WHERE ARE PRE-K PARTNERSHIP CLASSROOMS LOCATED?

PKP classrooms will be located on-site at high quality partner CDCs in the Austin early childhood community. UWATX does *not* have a physical school.

WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE LEAD PRE-K TEACHER?

The teacher of record for PKP must meet one of the following qualifications:

- Current Texas EC-6 certification; OR
 - Bachelor's degree in Child Development or Early Childhood Education; OR
- If you have a Bachelor's degree in an unrelated field and meet one of the following additional qualifications you may serve as the teacher of record. Additional qualification must meet one of the following:
- 12 credit hours of early childhood coursework (e.g. child development, curriculum, family engagement, health and safety) or a CDA
 - Montessori certification through the Association of Montessori Internationale or Montessori Accreditation Council for teacher education
 - At least 8 years of experience in an NAEYC accredited child care program
 - At least 3 credit hours of early childhood coursework and be currently enrolled in a college-level, credit-bearing early childhood program, or in a CDA course of study through an approved provider

WHY IS UWATX EMPLOYING TEACHERS?

Partner CDCs have the option to contract with UWATX in a fee for service model to provide the Pre-K teacher. Under this model, UWATX is responsible for managing job postings, inquiries, screenings, and the interview process. Once UWATX and the CDC mutually select a candidate, UWATX hires the teacher and assigns them to the CDC. The teacher reports directly to the CDC director or designee and the CDC is responsible for reporting the teacher's hours to UWATX.

Teachers employed by UWATX have access to health benefits, paid time off, and Teacher Retirement System (TRS). CDCs who don't currently offer medical benefits to their employees may choose to select this option. Partner CDCs have the option to employ their own teachers as long as PKP's minimum requirements are met.

HOW ARE UWATX EMPLOYED TEACHERS MATCHED WITH PARTNER CDCs?

When a CDC contracts with UWATX to employ the teacher, the CDC will complete a teacher candidate profile to identify key criteria and characteristics the CDC is looking for in a Pre-K teacher. UWATX and the CDC will also capture logistical needs such as; whether the CDC is seeking a part-time or full-time teacher or someone who would like to have summer's off or work year-round. From there, UWATX will take the teacher candidate profile and search high and low for a strong candidate whose values and teaching style aligns with what a CDC is looking for.

WHAT ARE SOME BENEFITS TO BEING A PKP LEAD TEACHER?

Lead teachers will receive extensive professional development to help prepare them as they enter the Pre-K classroom. UWATX will host a two-week paid Teacher's Academy that will take place August 5-16. During these two weeks teachers will learn more about Pre-K Partnerships, the program standards and expectations, they will hear from experts in the field and walk away with a toolkit of early childhood best practices!

PKP teachers will also be eligible to apply for an education award in the amount of \$2,500. The education award may be used towards tuition and/or loan payments. The application will be made available on June 24, 2019 and the deadline to apply is July 12, 2019.

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