



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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SUBJECT: FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN

PROGRAM AREA: EARLY CHILDHOOD

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This policy updates and replaces the 2002 bulletin on four-year-old kindergarten. These Question and Answers provide information generally to 4-year-old kindergarten and especially to 4-year-old kindergarten implemented in community approaches with child care and Head Start. The policies established in the bulletin have been developed and are consistent with policies of the various divisions within the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Relevant questions on child care licensing and subsidy have been coordinated with policies from the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) Child Care Licensing and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Child Care Section.

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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 over 150 years. Wisconsin made a constitutional commitment to early education in 1848 when the State Constitution, 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 years. 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 (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) somewhat filled 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). Many public schools once again started to look at the concept of universally available four-year-old programming. During the late 1990s, more districts saw the need to implement 4-year-old kindergarten, and by 2006, over one-half of the school districts operated these programs.

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

Wisconsin made a constitutional commitment to early education in 1848 when the State Constitution, 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 years.

Wisconsin State Statutes sections 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 is under its supervision.
- The district must provide a minimum of 437 hours of instruction per school year.
- The district must provide transportation to and from the 4K program as required by Wis. Stats. §121.54.
- The district must ensure that each child is taught by an appropriately licensed teacher.
- The district must ensure that the 4K program is open and accessible to all resident, eligible children without cost.
- The district must ensure that all applicable school district standards in Wis. Stats. § 121.02 are met.

A summary of related laws and policies can also be found at http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/weecp_04.htm.

FUNDING

3. How is 4K funded?

State equalization aid is a major source of funding for 4K in many districts. Wis. Stats. § 121.04(7) defines 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 a 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 the child's primary caregivers. Additionally, a district may add 87.5 hours of outreach to the minimum 437 hours and count students as a 0.6 FTE.

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

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

Communities are finding ways to bring a wide range of funding streams together to provide new approaches for all 4-year-old children and their families. School-based funding sources that may **supplement but not supplant** equalization aid include Title I, and/or 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 pooled to reach goals and objectives. In a Title I "targeted assistance" school, programming options include a Title I-funded teacher in the classroom to teach and provide assistance to certain children as needed.
- 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 must be the primary purpose for the funding. Support and services are designed to assist a child with a disability 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 (DPI) Special Education Information Updates at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/bulindex.html> for more information on serving young children with disabilities in regular education settings.)

5. How does the 2008 State Start-Up Grant Program help districts to implement 4K?

Beginning in the 2008-2009 school year, the Wisconsin state budget includes 3 million for 4K Community Start Up Grants. The statutes require that funding preference be given to school boards that use a community approach to early education.

The statutes indicate that grants for the first school year can be for up to \$3,000 and in the succeeding year 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. At this level, the appropriation would fund 1,000 new children in the first year.

Administrative rules will include grant priorities, criteria, and administration. For up-to-date information on these grants, go to the DPI 4K home page (<http://www.dpi.wi.gov/ec/ec4yrpag.html>).

6. Can a district claim membership for equalization aid purposes for summer school?

In most cases, students enrolled in 4K summer programs are eligible to be counted for membership for state aid and for 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.

As with any summer classes, those wholly or partially funded with federal money, state categorical aid, or fees are not eligible for general aid.

7. Do districts need to get “approval” to receive state funding for a new 4K program?

The district must first submit to the DPI the enrollment report (PI 1203) due July 1. From that report, the DPI will contact the district about its 4K program to ensure that it meets the requirements of state statutes. Districts will then be permitted to report 4K students on the PI 1563 Pupil Count Report to determine eligibility for revenue limit/equalization aid purposes.

PARENT OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT

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

Outreach activities are not specifically defined by state statutes. The inclusion of parent outreach emphasizes and recognizes that all parents are their children’s first and most important teachers. Parents are partners in the educational process. Therefore, outreach activities should be designed to support and nurture parents. Outreach activities typically involve direct services to parents such as home visits, parent meetings at school, parent education classes, parent-child activities, family activity nights, family resource center visits, and participation in parent advisory committees. Outreach activities may also include interface with other child care or early education providers specific to an individual child, or generally to discuss collaborative programming. Activities can take place in the family’s home, a school building, or elsewhere in the community and should be implemented in a manner that is flexible, varied, and sensitive to cultural, racial, and religious differences among families. For more information go to <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/ec/ecoutprg.html>.

If the district implements the 87.5 hour parent outreach model, the district must document how the program meets the required 87.5 parent outreach hours.

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

Yes, outreach activities can involve or be targeted for parents, legal guardians, extended family members, and other significant care givers in the child’s life.

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

Parents volunteering in the classroom or on a field trip are not counted for parent outreach unless there is an intentional parent education component (such as classroom involvement or learning activities training) in conjunction with the volunteering activities. The hours must be counted based on the amount of time parents participate in the outreach activity and do not include planning time.

11. 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.

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

Eligibility for 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.

Outreach is often provided on the fifth day of the week when children are not in school or after school hours. In either approach, teachers may implement outreach activities during the day, the evening, or weekends to address parent schedules.

ELIGIBILITY, ENROLLMENT, AND ATTENDANCE

13. 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 for state aid and revenue limit purposes.

14. Are there suggested guidelines for early admission policies?

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

1. A personal meeting with the parents to determine their reasons for requesting entrance prior to the legal age.
2. An assessment of the child's potential to benefit from early admission and to successfully participate in the grade level, including consideration of emotional stability, social and mental maturity, and physical health.
3. A process for application and appeals that is approved by the school board.

15. 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.

- Schools are required to develop and implement a plan to encourage compliance with state immunization laws.
- Parents must provide verification of the child's age. This can be through a birth certificate, passport, or other document that the school district has indicated as acceptable.
- 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.
- Schools are required to encourage parents to obtain an eye exam for their child from a licensed practitioner prior to kindergarten entrance (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 and Family Services (DHFS) website at <http://www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/childhood.htm> has information including 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 registry at <https://www.dhfwir.org/>.

16. 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.

Some districts use "Child Development Days" Development Screening Model (http://www.cesa6.k12.wi.us/products_services/earlylearningresources/childfind.cfm) in collaboration with other child-service agencies. This voluntary service helps professional staff to better serve families and children by

1. Identifying young children who are in need of further assessment;
2. Educating families about normal child growth and development; and,
3. Developing community awareness of resources available.

17. 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/or evaluations to determine the need for English Language Learners, special education, Title I, or other special services.

18. If a child is age-eligible for kindergarten, may a parent "hold their child out" for one year?

Wisconsin law establishes compulsory school age as 6 years of age (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 the 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:

- 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. Lower class size and "learning center" organization can accommodate greater developmental ranges among children in the class; and,
- What would the parents do to enhance their children's learning if not in kindergarten.

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 curriculum is designed to meet the wide variation in development levels of all children.

- Children arrive in kindergarten with a wide variety of abilities, and 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 provide appropriate services. The earlier the problem is identified, the sooner the child can receive special services that may help overcome the problem and 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. You can find more information on the research and practices related to delaying entrance to kindergarten at "Voices from the Field: Wisconsin Early Childhood Education and Care Stakeholders Consider Delayed Entrance to Kindergarten" at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/ec/ec-entr-admiss.html>.

19. When a district has both 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten, 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://www.dpi.wi.gov/ec/ec-entr-admiss.html>.

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.

20. Can a child who has completed a 4-year-year old kindergarten be “held back” or “retained” by the school district at that grade for another year prior to moving into the next grade level.

School districts have the authority to “retain” a pupil who has not made progress in a prescribed program, based on established school board policy.

21. 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 (<http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/pdf/Psunacc.pdf>).

TEACHER LICENSURE

22. What license must a teacher have?

Teachers of 4K students must hold a prekindergarten or kindergarten license (#080 prekindergarten; #090 PK-K; #083 PK-3; #100 kindergarten; #103 K-3; #086 PK-6; #106 K-6; #088 PK-8; #108 K-8; 70-777 Regular Education – Early Childhood level; 71-777 Regular Education –Early Childhood-Middle Childhood level; etc.).

Some districts establish a preference for those licenses with the focus on early childhood, e.g. the prekindergarten or prekindergarten-grade 3 #083 or the PI 34 Early Childhood Level (birth through age 8).

TRANSPORTATION

23. 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 two or more miles from the nearest public school that the pupil is entitled to attend.

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 who are entitled to transportation and who participate in morning half-day kindergarten programs must be offered transportation to school and transported home at the time their kindergarten program ends. Similarly, students entitled to transportation who participate in afternoon half-day programs must be transported from their homes to the program for the beginning of the kindergarten program as well as home again at the end of the day. State law prohibits the school district from charging a fee for the cost of the transportation to parents of such students.

24. 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 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 the contracts (see Wis. Stats. § 121.55).

25. 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/from child care instead of to/from home [Wis. Stats. § 121.54(2)(am)]. If the district chooses to honor a parent's request to pick up/drop off a 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).

However, if the particular child is not required by law to be transported (i.e., the child lives within 2 miles of the school; the district has chosen to use the "city option"; or perhaps the child is attending a school outside of the designated attendance area), then the district could provide the transportation to/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.

26. 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 kindergarten or younger student from the school bus stop.

27. 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 only apply when children are transported in vehicles other than school buses. Wisconsin 2005 Act 106 imposes age and weight/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. The Department of Transportation web site has information on this law at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/safety/vehicle/child/laws.htm>.

STANDARDS, SUBJECT AREAS, CURRICULUM, AND ASSESSMENT

28. What learning standards guide 4K?

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 Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards provide a framework for the development of program, curriculum, 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. Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards promote beneficial connections between early childhood and K-12 educational experiences. The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards can be found at <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/EarlyLS.htm>.

29. What are the content subject area requirements for 4K?

Wis. Stats. § 121.02(1) defines subject areas at each grade level including four- and five-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
- 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 four-year-old children.

Curricula are locally determined and should be based on best practice. Best practice (see references for publications by the National Association of Elementary School Principals and National Association for the Education of Young Children) 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

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 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 be 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 in student self-directed activities.

See the DPI web site for more information at <http://dpi.wi.gov/ec/ecqualhm.html>.

30. 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 (see references for publications by the National Association of Elementary School Principals and National Association for the Education of Young Children) 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/or 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.

See the DPI web site for information on how several school districts have assessed student progress in 4K at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/fscp/pdf/ec-impact-dev.pdf>.

CLASS SIZE AND TEACHER RATIOS

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

There are no state regulations directing 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 practices in 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;
- 1:15 ratio required by the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) class size reduction program and early childhood special education inclusion models; or
- 2 teachers working with groups of 16 to 20 as advised by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

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

No minimum square footage requirements specifically apply for 4K classrooms. However, for safety and building design purposes, the Wisconsin Department of Commerce (WDOC) has adopted the International Building Code which specifies 20 square feet per occupant of open floor space, assuming a self-contained classroom with one exit. This standard does not suggest this is the optimal room size for an education program. In considering space for educational programming, a district may look for guidance to the Head Start and child care requirement of no less than 35 square feet of usable floor space for each child.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND 4K

33. 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 for state and federal special education funding.

34. 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 to many 4-year-old children with disabilities. It is important to provide the special education and related services and support so 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 by qualified staff in environments that are specifically designed for young children are critical elements in 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 consult with staff members.
- Where several children with disabilities are present in one setting, an early childhood special education teacher may spend two or three sessions per week team teaching or co-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. Sometimes, more than one setting may be used to provide special education and related services. For example, the child may receive support in an early childhood general education setting from an early childhood special education teacher and the child may receive occupational therapy services in a public school setting. Or, a child with a visual impairment may receive services in an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) classroom part-time, in addition to a visual impairment teacher providing service to that child in a general early childhood setting. Regardless of the actual strategy, collaborative communication skills and flexibility are crucial to the success of these services.

35. 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 the IEP team has determined that the 4-year-old kindergarten classroom is the most appropriate placement.

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

LEAs should not only consider the class size research for young students but should also consider the needs of enrolled children with disabilities. 4K programs are including more children with disabilities. While most school personnel and parents are striving for natural proportions of children with and without disabilities in kindergarten classes, it is important for the group to include more children without disabilities to provide adequate opportunities for engagement with typically developing peers.

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

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

For more information on delayed entrance and retention, go to the DPI website at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/ec/ec-entr-admiss.html>.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

38. 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)].

39. 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 into a nonresident school district, the student may continue to attend the nonresident school district without annual reapplication, except that the 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)].

40. 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)].

41. 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. The two school districts must examine the following: the hours of instruction, the character of the instruction, the target population, and certification of teachers.

42. Can a parent open enroll to a neighboring district that has 4K if the district of residence does not yet have 4K but will begin one in the fall?

Open enrollment applications must be approved or denied by the first Friday following the first Monday in April. If the resident school board has taken action and is on record as offering 4K the following year, it must approve the open enrollment applications of students applying to attend nonresident districts for 4K. If the school board has not approved offering 4K before this notification date, it should deny the applications. If the school board approves offering 4K after the notification date (but before school starts), the district may reverse its decision and allow the open enrollment, but it is not required to do so.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES—OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

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

Schools are taking new approaches for 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 business, schools, child care, Head Start, parents, recreation, and parent education 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. One approach has school teachers and support staff providing the 4K program in established community programs. In another approach, the school district contracts with established programs that have DPI-licensed teachers on staff to provide kindergarten.

More information can be found on this approach in the resource section of this document or by going to <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/ec/ec4yrpag.html> or <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/4YearK.htm>.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – DISTRICT FUNDING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

44. What is the financial responsibility for districts who 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 56 for more information on the content of these agreements or contracts).

45. 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 serve 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 Program funding from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Child Care Section) provides subsidies for eligible parents in approved activities to 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 to children and families.

For more details see the DPI’s “Financing Four-Year-Old Kindergarten in Community Approaches” that can be found at <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/docs/FundingResourceGuide.pdf>.

46. If a district is implementing 4K in public-private partnerships 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 obligations 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 inservice, planning time, curriculum and program practices, and other roles and responsibilities. The school district holds the authority and obligation to supervise the program for compliance with contract, district, and state requirements.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – RELATED REGULATIONS

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

Each entity is subject to the rules of a different federal and state governmental agency. School districts must meet Wisconsin State Educational Standards and requirements from the Wisconsin DPI and the U.S. Department of Education. Child care providers must meet state child care rules and standards established by the DHFS. Head Start is a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A comparison of 4K, special education, and child care licensing regulations can be found at www.collaboratingpartners.com/weecp_04.htm.

48. 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 will need to be followed. These regulations are for teacher-child ratios of 1:13 and a maximum group size of 24.

49. 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 Commerce?

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.

50. How do districts report DPI - licensed teachers who are employed by child care or Head Start centers under contract as 4K providers?

Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, the PI-1202 form has two new fields on the assignment screen. For 4K teachers who are hired by child care or Head Start centers, the district should report the teacher and change the default for the field, "Contracted Agency," from N (No) to Y (Yes). They will then need to report the information for the center that actually hired the 4K teacher. The other information they will need to report for this individual is social security number, first and last name (optional is middle, suffix, former last name), birth year, gender, race, and local and total experience. More information can be found at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/lbstat/fallsf08.html>. Districts will need to make sure the teacher is reported at the same school that they report the students attending.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

51. 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 that are interested in the care and education of young children. It is not necessary to include every private provider in the community, but the district needs to make a good faith effort to include a balanced representation of private providers to the council.

52. 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 is vital to ensure ongoing attention to these community approaches.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – SITE PARTNERSHIPS

53. 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.

54. 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 be 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 using resources efficiently and without duplication. Community approaches using 4K and Head Start require specific considerations to comply with federal Head Start fiscal requirements; performance standards for comprehensive child development services, health services, and parent involvement; and design for service delivery.

These considerations have led to two basic approaches to 4K and Head Start partnerships.

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/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 the Department of Public Instruction's "Financing Four-Year-Old Kindergarten in Community Approaches" that can be found at

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/docs/FundingResourceGuide.pdf>.

55. May community partnerships exist with faith-based programs?

When community sites are used, partnerships can occur with faith-based schools with certain assurances. The district's 4K program must be open to all eligible children whose parents want the program. The district must ensure a non-sectarian 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, Title I, or any other connections. Approaches should be consistent in how

to 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 for 4K purposes.

There are several good sources of information on collaborations with faith-based programs included in the resources at the end of this document.

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

A partnership 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,
 - a. Programming responsibilities, e.g., building maintenance, outdoor play space requirements, transportation, and parent outreach and involvement;
 - b. Parameters of collaboration, e.g., joint activities, shared staff expertise, or shared resources; and
 - c. Staff issues, e.g., staff supervision, joint planning time, and background verification.
- Financial responsibility, e.g., insurance coverage, space rental, and contractual arrangements;
- Maintenance of student records;
- District rights and responsibilities for program supervision;
- Timelines;
- 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);
- Definitions and/common uses of terminology; and
- Dispute resolution.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT

57. 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. The DPI Data Management and Reporting team (DMR) recommends that each district report 4K students in community sites by attaching these children to the schools administered by the principal or administrator who oversees the program. Accordingly:

- A district could report all 4K students under one existing elementary school because the administrator/principal of that school is overseeing the 4K program.

- A district could report 4K students under whichever existing school serves the elementary attendance area in which the community setting is physically located.
- A district could set up a new school entity in its local student software system and report all 4K students in community settings under that new school code (assigned by DMR).

It is a local decision, but a district must be consistent for all school reporting purposes.

58. 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 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 whose attendance area he/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.

59. 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 for 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.

60. Often children attending child care centers may be from more than one school district. May the non-resident 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/coop_agree.html.
- Public school open enrollment [Wis. Stats. § 118.51 & Wis. Adm. 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 in February 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. For the 2007-08 school year, full-time tuition is \$6,043. If a kindergarten program is half-time, the tuition cost would be one-half of the full-time amount.

Tuition payment by resident school 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

61. 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 and the district's curriculum expectations.

Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards were developed as a tool to guide the creation and implementation of a developmentally appropriate environment for children. The WMELS provides a unifying approach for community settings implementing 4K in community approaches. More information on WMELS can be found at <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/EarlyLS.htm>.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

62. 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 will improve the quality experiences for children.

63. How is Wisconsin helping child care providers obtain bachelor's degrees?

Well-trained and well-paid staff are key to providing quality early childhood care, and Wisconsin offers assistance to promote training and retention of child care workers. Since its creation in 1999, TEACH (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood Wisconsin has awarded more than 5,000 scholarships to assist child care workers to enroll in higher education courses while they are working. Eighty-four percent of TEACH recipients serve low-income children whose parents receive a Wisconsin Shares subsidy. According to a recent evaluation, TEACH recipients received wage increases averaging 7.1% per year; more than double the 3.3% wage increase other child care workers received. More information on TEACH can be found at <http://www.wecanaeyc.org/teach/index.php>.

64. How is Wisconsin helping Head Start and other nonpublic school teachers achieve their bachelor's degrees and teacher licenses?

Nonpublic school programs need information and support for their licensed teachers and administrators. Therefore, to help nonpublic school teachers achieve a bachelor's degree and/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 from 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 obtaining bachelor's degrees.

65. How is Wisconsin helping Head Start and other nonpublic school teachers maintain their teacher licenses?

To help nonpublic school teachers maintain their teacher licenses, the DPI established License Renewal Support Centers, a network of 14 programs around the state, with the primary purpose of providing services to educators not employed by public schools in Wisconsin. These centers organize support seminars for initial educators, assist in creating Professional Development Plans, manage the Professional Development Plan review process, and may offer mentoring for initial educators. A fee may be required for some of these services. A list of the centers is available at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/tepd/lrsc.html>.

In addition to the License Renewal Support Centers, DPI offers employers a stipend of \$375 per initial educator to support costs for mentoring, orientation, and support seminars for the initial educators. The organization hiring the initial educators is required to complete an application for funds annually.

The DPI and CESA 8 sponsor an on-line mentor course specific for early childhood. This course provides information about PI34 and the various early childhood programs in the state. Primarily, the course builds the capacity of teachers to mentor new teachers and guide them in developing their professional development plan.

There are also many on-line resources available to support initial educators. DPI has developed tool kits for initial educators, professional educators, professional development teams, and school districts. The tool kits and other information are available at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/tepd/pdp.html>. DPI has recently created an on-line module describing PI34. While it is a requirement for anyone participating in the Professional Development Plan reviewer training, the module may also be useful for others interested in learning about PI34. You may create a log in and password (000000 for non-school) to review the module at <http://www.uwex.edu/ics/PI34/>.

There are many resources to support initial educators as they move through the process of becoming professional educators. Individuals, employing agencies, and DPI all share the responsibility of supporting initial educators as a part of our commitment to a high quality workforce.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – COMPLYING WITH CHILD CARE LICENSING

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

There is no difference between a child care center and a preschool or nursery school when it comes to child care licensing. Because preschools typically operate for 2 ½ to 3 ½ 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 those rules related to the care of infants and toddlers and school-age children unless the program serves children of these ages.

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

68. Do child care programs operated by private schools need to be licensed?

No. Private schools do not need to be licensed to operate a child care center except as it applies to Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy payments which are described in the next section. A private school is an institution with a private educational program that meets all of the criteria under Wis. Stats. § 118.165(1) or is determined to be a private school by the state superintendent under Wis. Stats. § 118.167. Parochial schools and private schools have the same definition per the DHFS and the DPI.

69. 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 the responsibility for the collaborative program, the program does not need to be licensed. If responsibility for the collaborative program is shared by the partners in the collaboration, the child care or Head Start program must be licensed. A collaboration or partnership 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 DHFS 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.

70. 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 the 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 partners in the collaboration, or the private school wishes to be eligible to receive child care subsidy payments, the program must be licensed. A collaboration or partnership agreement 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, or Head Start Program.

Once a license is issued to a collaborative program, the program is subject to routine monitoring visits by a DHFS 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 Early Childhood Special Education program can only provide services through an Individualized Education Program to children in licensed 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/sped/pdf/bul99-09.pdf>.

71. How do the 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 partnership agreement.

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

72. 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.

73. 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 of the staff and children for their program. 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 DHFS 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 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.

74. Who monitors for compliance with the child care licensing rules and what happens if a licensing violation is noted?

The DHFS Bureau of Regulation and Licensing is responsible for monitoring licensed child care centers for compliance with the licensing rules. Licensing specialists will review interagency agreements to determine which partner in a collaborative is responsible for items covered by the child care licensing rules.

Licensed programs receive regular monitoring visits by a DHFS licensing specialist. 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. Licensees are responsible for filing a plan of correction for all violations and ensuring that violations have been corrected.

COMMUNITY APPROACHES – CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

75. 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 collaboration 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.

76. Can child care programs access Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program dollars 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 should be authorized—up to the total amount of hours of care needed while the parent is in an approved activity. The parent is responsible for paying for any costs when the child is in care while the parent is not in an approved activity.

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

No. Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy authorizations only cover care for the amount of hours needed for the parent to remain in their 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.

78. 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-based collaboration and do not offer regulated child care services.

79. If a Head Start or public school program offers “wrap-around” 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 “wrap-around” child care program.

80. 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 DHFS or, if the program cares for 3 or fewer children under age 7, certified by the county in which the care is provided.

CHARTER SCHOOLS AND 4K

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

Yes. Charter schools serve elementary and secondary students. Elementary students include 4-year-old kindergarteners. It is important to note that the federal charter program makes an important distinction related to Wisconsin's 4K and charter status. If 4K is a stand-alone grade level (not part of a wider grade level charter school), it is highly likely the United States Department of Education would determine it is not a charter school and, therefore, would not be eligible for federal charter funding.

82. 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 approaches mentioned in this bulletin must be aware that charter school law must be followed [Wis. Stats. § 118.40].

83. 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 for 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.

RESOURCES RELATED TO CURRICULUM, STANDARDS, AND PRACTICES

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