

City School District of Albany

Expanded Prekindergarten for Three- and Four-Year Old Students in High-Need School Districts

Program Abstract

Expanded Prekindergarten for Three- and Four-Year Old Students in High-Need School Districts (EPK) will increase the availability of full-day, high quality prekindergarten placements with the City School District of Albany (CSDA) at no charge to parents. There will be an anticipated 21 EPK classrooms created and located in targeted, high-need neighborhoods in the City of Albany. The purpose is to create opportunities for more low-income children to have a quality, prekindergarten experience in a rich early learning environment: to socialize with peers, build character, and understand basic concepts to enter kindergarten. EPK will augment the CSDA’s existing Universal Prekindergarten Program (UPK) and Priority Prekindergarten Program (PPK), using the CSDA’s same threshold of prekindergarten quality for 3 and 4 year olds.

Main components of the EPK program include:

- Expanding the CSDA’s prekindergarten program to include 3 year olds and additional 4 year olds, which supports a pipeline of age-appropriate curriculum focused on developmental components and academics aligned with 4 year old prekindergarten and NYS Common Core Learning Standards in K-grade 2.
- Reaching the highest need, eligible 3 and 4 year old children by targeting those living in the neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty in the City of Albany (Arbor Hill, South End, and West Hill) and/or high concentrations of immigrants/refugees (Delaware).
- Partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs) who already provide established, licensed preschool programs for either 3 year olds at day care centers or 4 year old prekindergarten programs located in target neighborhoods of Albany.

A Quality EPK program with the CSDA is defined as:

- Providing a quality preschool experience with a safe and creative classroom environment.
- Hiring qualified teachers.
- Implementing the Creative Curriculum for Preschool, an intentionally planned curriculum which is developmentally appropriate for children.
- Using the Early Screening Inventory to screen and a local tool plus Teaching Strategies GOLD to assess students to identify additional needed services, establish baselines and track progress, as well as use results to inform instruction and program effectiveness.
- Delivering appropriate and relevant professional development opportunities for educators throughout the year to establish needed skills and knowledge to support student learning.
- Fostering reciprocal relationships with families and parent involvement and engagement.
- Creating and adopting a comprehensive transition plan for both 4 year old prekindergarten and kindergarten that strives to ensure young children have a baseline of developmentally appropriate skills and experience a positive transition into school.

	Public School Operated	CBO Operated	Total
New full-day slots for four-year old students	0	28	28
New full-day slots for three-year old students	0	269	269
Total:	0	297	297