



Georgia's Pre-K Program 2026-2027 Application Overview

Application Guidelines for Continuation, Expansion, and New Providers

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the 2026-2027 application process for Georgia's Pre-K Program. It is intended for all types of providers: continuation, expansion, and new applicants.

Definitions

Provider Type	Description
Continuation Provider	Operated Georgia's Pre-K classroom(s) during the 2025-2026 school year
Expansion Provider	Operated Georgia's Pre-K classroom(s) during the 2025-2026 school year and is applying for additional classroom(s) or site(s) for 2026-2027 school year
New Provider	Did not operate a Georgia's Pre-K classroom during the 2025-2026 school year

Regulations and Guidelines

Georgia's Pre-K Programs are governed by the Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines available on the Department website. These guidelines delineate the requirements for operating a Pre-K program and provide detailed funding information. New applicants are advised to review these guidelines before completing the application process. The guidelines can be accessed at <http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/Guidelines.pdf>.

Application Deadlines and Requirements

The application will open on **Monday, February 23, 2026**, and close on **Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.** No applications will be accepted after this date. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Programs who applied last year and were not awarded a Georgia's Pre-K program can access the application by going to the integrated provider portal and logging in with the credentials that were received last year. [Integrated Portal Login](#). Do not go to KOALA.

Programs who have NEVER applied for a Georgia's Pre-K program and have CAPS need to start the process from their KOALA homepage. Once the first name, last name, and email is submitted (if the same person logs into CAPS) go directly to the [Integrated Portal Login](#) and log in using the CAPS login. The Pre-K tile should be visible.

For programs that have NEVER applied for a Georgia's Pre-K program before would start the application process from their **KOALA homepage** to receive a user id and password for the portal. The user id and password will come via email from GADECAL within 24 hours.

Any issues with logins should be directed to gaprek.support@decal.ga.gov

Eligibility Criteria

Programs eligible to apply must meet these criteria:

- Located in Georgia
- Program types:
 - Local School System
 - Charter school approved by the State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia
 - Head Start Program
 - Licensed Child Care Center by the Department of Early Care and Learning

For child care centers, additional requirements:

- Licensed classroom space for at least 20 children.
- Licensed playground space to accommodate 20 students at a time for outdoor activities.

General Information

Class Size

The maximum class size for all Georgia's Pre-K classrooms is 20 students. Approved inclusion classrooms will have a maximum class size of 18 students. Programs interested in operating an inclusion classroom should email prekinclusion@decal.ga.gov

Staffing

Each classroom must have 1 Lead Teacher and 1 Assistant Teacher with approved credentials.

Program Delivery

- 180 instructional days for students
- 10 professional development/planning days for teachers
- 6.5-hour instructional day
- Use of [approved curriculum](#)

Priorities for Awarding Expansion or New Classrooms

Funding priority will be given to:

- Communities with a Pre-K waiting list of 25 or more students.
- Counties with a Pre-K saturation rate of 60% or below:
Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Brooks, Bibb, Butts, Bryan, Camden, Bulloch, Chatham, Chattahoochee, Carroll, Cherokee, Catoosa, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Columbia, Crawford, Coweta, DeKalb, Dawson, Douglas. Early, Floyd, Fayette, Forsyth, Franklin, Fulton, Habersham, Gilmer, Grady, Gwinnett, Houston, Hall, Laurens, Hart, Henry, Lamar, Liberty, Macon, Madison, McIntosh, Montgomery, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Stephens, Talbot, Terrell, Toombs, Towns, Troup, Turner, Twiggs, Union, Upson, Warren, Walton, White

Application Information

The Pre-K Application User Guide, available at [GAPREK Application Documents and Resources](#), provides step-by-step instructions with screenshots to assist in the application process.

Required Documentation for Uploading with Application

Application Type	Required Documentation for Uploading with Application
New to Georgia's Pre-K Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photos of the outside of the site• Photos of the room intended for Pre-K use (room does not have to be supplied with materials)• Photos of the playground intended for Pre-K use• Secretary of State's Certification page of Articles of Incorporation• IRS Documentation reflecting business Employer Identification Number (EIN)• Completed Online Access Agreement Form (This form can be accessed by clicking here GAPREK Application Documents and Resources)
Continuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No documentation required with the application
Expansion Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photos of the room intended for Pre-K use (room does not have to be supplied with materials)
Expansion Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photos of the outside of the site• Photos of the room intended for Pre-K use (room does not have to be supplied with materials)• Photos of the playground intended for Pre-K use• Secretary of State's Certification page of Articles of Incorporation

Additional Application Information

Current providers with issues such as low enrollment, probation sites, or noncompliant sites must complete the application process in GAPREK. However, funding will be at the discretion of DECAL. The Department will contact these providers directly regarding the final determination of service continuation.

Category	Description
Low Enrollment	Defined as a program site with (1) a single class with less than 15 students or (2) multiple classes with low enrollment across classes.
Probation	Sites in the Pre-K Quality Improvement Process with a status of probation
Noncompliant Sites	Programs must be in good standing with Pre-K program requirements and have a status of compliance/good standing with DECAL programs [Pre-K, Child Care Services, Nutrition Services, Child and Parent Services (CAPS), and Audits and Compliance] to be eligible for funding.

Funding Requests for Pre-K Inclusion Classrooms

To apply for an inclusion classroom, applicants must send an email to prekinclusion@dec.al.ga.gov, stating their intent to apply for an inclusion classroom. All inclusion classes are required to use a DECAL-approved inclusion model. If the application is from a child care program, it must be accompanied by a letter from the school system indicating their intention to partner.

Application Review Process

Funding for new classes will depend on the available funding after continuation classes are funded, the quality of the application, and the need for additional Pre-K classes in the region. Awards are made over time as need is established and class enrollments stabilize.

Funding Notification

Providers will receive their Georgia's Pre-K Grant Agreement via email. The agreement will indicate classes awarded. If funding is not granted, programs will be notified by email. Funding will occur in late spring or early summer.

Grant Funding Information

Funding is determined by program type and zone (Private Metro, Private Non-Metro, and Public School), the number of children served, and the lead teacher credential verified through the Georgia Professional Development System (GaPDS). For each grantee, funding covers lead and assistant teacher salary and benefits, classroom operating expenses, and student transportation.

Start-up grants of \$30,000 are awarded for each newly awarded classroom. This grant is intended to cover the cost of furniture, supplies, materials, and equipment for Georgia's Pre-K classroom. Providers will collaborate with their assigned Specialist to identify necessary purchases.

The *Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Pre-K Budget Information and Rate Chart* will be available and posted on the DECAL website upon approval and signing by the Governor.

The 2025-2026 Georgia's Pre-K Budget Information and Rate Chart, along with Teacher Salary Information, can be found on the DECAL website under the project director tab: <https://www.dec.state.ga.us/Prek/ProjectDirectors.aspx>. Select the Rate Chart that reflects the program type; Public (local school system) or Private (private programs and other public programs).

The Budget Information and Rate Chart is designed to assist Georgia's Pre-K Program Grantees in estimating the amount of grant funding for an individual class with full enrollment. The Rate Chart is not intended to provide an exact funding amount. Actual reimbursement may vary based on changes in class size, changes in lead teacher credentials, and number of days offering service.