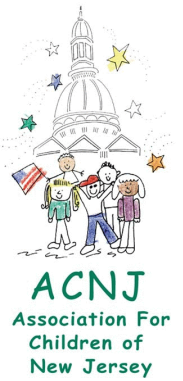




NJ Preschool Expansion Initiative: Coming To A School District Near You!



New Jersey has a new school funding formula that includes a significant expansion of state-supported preschool! For the last ten years, over 40,000 3- and- 4 year olds living in our lowest income districts have had access to high quality preschool. This exciting new program will provide every low-income preschooler in the state, an additional 30,000 children, with access to such a quality program. This is money well spent! Research shows that children, who attend high quality preschool, come to Kindergarten ready to learn and to succeed. Such positive results are already happening in New Jersey's existing high quality preschool programs. When preschool is expanded, more children will have the skills needed to be successful in Kindergarten and beyond!

Here are the quick facts about the preschool expansion:

- **What will the program look like in my district?**
 - That depends on where you live! In some districts all of the children will be eligible and in others, just some.

Check ACNJ's website to find your district: www.acnj.org (All information can be found by clicking "Preschool" under the ACNJ toolbar)

- **Who will pay for the program?**
 - This program will be fully funded by the state
- **What are some of the quality components required?**
 - A class size of no more than 15
 - A teacher with a Bachelor's Degree who is trained to teach young children
 - Family workers and/or social workers to work with families
 - A research-based curriculum

Check ACNJ'S website for the whole synopsis of the new regulations- www.acnj.org (All information can be found by clicking "Preschool" under the ACNJ toolbar)

- **When will the program begin?**

The program will be phased in:

 - 2008-2009 will be a district planning year
 - A percentage of preschoolers will begin to be served in 2009-2010
 - Districts are required to develop a 5-year plan, so that by 2013-2014, 90% of the eligible preschoolers are required to be enrolled.
- **Where will the classes be held?**

Districts can provide this program through a variety of ways:

 - In district classrooms
 - In classrooms located in participating, local licensed child care centers
 - In classrooms located in participating local Head Start centers

- A combination of the above

How does preschool work best? As part of a PK-3 System

While New Jersey continues to be on the “cutting-edge” in implementing quality preschool programs, solely investing in preschool is not enough. Successful education programs for young children need to be comprehensive, span several years and target important education transition periods. That’s what a PK-3 system does. It coordinates the preschool and the early primary grades. This approach offers children a continuum of learning in a consistent environment.

As difficult as it may be, envisioning and planning beyond the preschool expansion, to developing a PK-3 system will, in the long run, be better for children. Positive educational outcomes for children and effective public spending are a winning equation for young students and the community-at-large!

What Can You Do?

- **Get involved**
 - School districts need input from their communities, and parents of young children in-particular
 - Call your school district and ask them about their plans
 - Join the district’s Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). Each district is required to have an ECAC and that includes stakeholders from the community
 - **Spread the word**; talk to other parents.
 - Tell your school board that you support this.
 - Tell you school district that there are child care and/or Head Start centers in your community that can partner with them to implement the program.
 - **Stay informed**: Check the Department of Education and ACNJ’s websites for updates and information:

- www.state.nj.us/education/ece

- www.acnj.org

- **Association for Children of New Jersey**
Call or email us if you have any questions or concerns.

35 Halsey Street

Newark, NJ 07102

973-643-3876

973-643-9153

www.acnj.org

Cynthia Rice
crice@acnj.org

or **Jennifer Hakim**
jhakim@acnj.org