

Frequently Asked Questions On Act 166 of 2014

An act relating to providing access to publicly funded PreKindergarten education

B. Prequalified PreKindergarten Education Programs Status (Section 2604 of the Rules)

Prequalification

Quality Standards Requirements (STARs)



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B. Prequalified PreKindergarten Education Program Status (Section 2604 of the Rules)

PREQUALIFICATION

1. Do all public and private PreKindergarten programs need to complete a prequalification application if they wish to receive public education funding?

Yes, all programs, regardless of setting, that want to provide PreKindergarten education must be approved as a prequalified PreKindergarten education program.

2. Where can I find the application to become a prequalified PreKindergarten education program?

The application can be found on the AOE website on the [Act 166 page](#).

3. Once a program receives approval as a prequalified PreKindergarten education program, how long is the prequalification status good for?

Prequalification status is valid for three years, as long as the program continues to meet prequalification standards as outlined under Act 166 and its Rules.

4. Do all regulated center based and family child care home programs have to apply to become prequalified if they provide services to 3, 4 and 5 year old children?"

No. Prequalification is **only** required for those center based and family child care home programs that want to provide publicly funded PreKindergarten education through an agreement for tuition payments with school district(s).

5. When a school contracts with a private program to offer PreK in the school building, who applies for prequalification?

The entity that holds the program license (the licensee) with CDD program licensing is the applicant for prequalification.

6. For multi-site programs, is our prequalification good for all sites?

Prequalification status is approved by program license number and is not transferrable. Each site with a separate license number must have a separate prequalification.

7. Does a school district need to partner with every prequalified PreKindergarten program families choose (assuming they are located within the district's PreK Region if one has been established)?

If a resident child is enrolled in a prequalified private program, then under Act 166 the school district must enter into an agreement for tuition payment with that private program. If the district has an approved PreK Region and the private program is outside the district's approved region, the family may request the school board enter into an agreement for tuition payment with that program. The district has discretion in deciding whether to enter into an agreement or not.

8. Where can I find the online list of prequalified programs? How often is the list updated?

Anyone can use the search function on the [BFIS searchable database](#) available on the CDD/DCF website to find the list of prequalified programs. There also is a link to this site from the [AOE Act 166 webpage](#). By using the drop down functions, a search by town and by type of prequalified provider (public school or privately operated) is possible. Prequalification status is updated in the [BFIS searchable database](#) within 48 hours of a change in a program's prequalification status.

9. Is it possible to transfer ownership of a public or private prequalified program and maintain prequalification for Act 166?

No. Because prequalification is based on a program's license number, it is not possible to transfer prequalification to a new owner. The new owner must apply for an initial program license with the Child Development Division. Once the new license number is issued, the program will need to also achieve at least 3 STARS with an approved plan to achieve 4 STARS in two years. If the program meets all other Act 166 requirements, they are then able to apply for prequalification status. In some instances (when the program doesn't substantially change) a program license number will change but the STARS administrators will transfer the STARS status to the new license number. In this case, the prequalification status for Act 166 will transfer as well. Program Directors should contact [CDD Licensing/Subsidy](#) and the [STARS office](#) early in any change process.

10. When there is a change in a prequalified program, does it need to be reported? If yes, how is that done?

A program should use the prequalification change in status form found on the [Act 166 webpage](#) and submit it to the AOE PreK Coordinator and any schools with which the program has tuition agreements.

STARS:

1. Is there a "grace period" for a newly established PreK program to achieve 4-5 STARS (3 with a plan)? Can it become Prequalified without STARS?

No, there is no "grace" period for newly established programs. Without STARS or National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation, it cannot become prequalified.

2. To apply for Prequalification, at least 3 STARS (with an approved plan to get to 4 STARS) is needed. If a program hasn't been open for a year, how can it proceed?

It is possible for a new program to obtain 3 STARS within the first month or two of operation. However, since there would not be any points in the Compliance arena of STARS, the program would need to earn enough points in the other arenas in order to obtain 3 STARS. The new 3 STAR program would then need to submit a plan to obtain 4 STARS with 2 points in each arena within two years to the AOE Secretary and DCF Commissioner.

3. My new program is operating on a school year schedule and will not have enough points to achieve 3 STARS until 4-6 weeks into the school year, how can I proceed?

There is no deadline for prequalification. For private programs, whenever your program achieves prequalification status the annual tuition rate will be prorated. Payments will begin for the children enrolled in your program once you have achieved prequalification status. Prior to achieving prequalification status, families will need to cover the full cost of tuition to your program.

For new public school classrooms, if you have achieved prequalification status by October 1, all of the children in your new classroom will be included in the ADM count for that school year.