

Columbia Union School-based Pre-K Program Guidelines

Schools desiring to operate a school-based Pre-K program must first obtain approval from the local conference K-12 Board of Education.

4500 The primary purpose of school-based Pre-K/K programs is to provide opportunities for children to learn about Jesus Christ as their Savior in a safe, loving, caring and intellectually stimulating environment. The young child should be immersed in a rich experiential environment which promotes the physical, social, emotional, spiritual and cognitive development. This growth varies with children; therefore, each child will be assessed to determine if the child will benefit from entering a formal learning environment.

Program Guidelines

A. School-based Pre-Kindergarten Stand-alone Program (4 year olds)

This is a program designed for four-year olds to stimulate their growth in a developmentally appropriate environment prior to entering kindergarten.

School-based stand-alone Pre-K programs must meet the following guidelines:

1. Approval to conduct a school-based Pre-K program must be obtained from the local conference office of education through the local Board of Education (see Appendix D).
2. Pre-K students must be at least four years of age on or before September 30 of the current school year unless states require or the local conference sets an earlier entrance date.
3. Enrollment in a school-based stand-alone Pre-K must be limited to 12 students (state requirements take precedence). A full-time teacher assistant is required for 13 or more students, with a maximum of 20.
4. **ALL** state and county standards and regulations for the care of four-year olds must be met.
5. Students enrolling in the school-based Pre-K program must submit copies of the following:
 - a. Official birth certificate
 - b. Social Security number
 - c. Current immunization records (see Code 3535-C)
 - d. Record of physical examination as required by Columbia Union Code and state, including information on any allergies (see Code 3535-A).
6. Pre-K teachers must be trained Seventh-day Adventists who meet local conference and state requirements for staffing.

B. School-based Pre-K/K Combination Program (4 and 5 year-olds)

This is a program designed for smaller schools to accommodate enrollment as well as community and parent needs. This multi-age program recognizes the developmental differences among typical four and five-year-olds. It is designed to nurture and meet the needs of each child's unique maturation rate.

School-based combination Pre-K/K programs (where states permit this configuration) must meet the following guidelines:

1. Approval to conduct a school-based Pre-K/K program must be obtained from the local conference office of education through the local Board of Education (see Appendix D).
2. Pre-K students must be at least four years of age on or before September 30 of the current school year unless states require or the local conference sets an earlier entrance date. Kindergarten students must be at least five years of age on or before

- September 30 of the current school year unless states require or the local conference sets an earlier entrance date.
3. A full-time teacher assistant is required when four-year-old Pre-K students are present in the kindergarten classroom. A maximum of 15 students is permitted in the school-based Pre-K/K classroom.
 4. **ALL** state and county standards and regulations for the care of four-year olds must be met.
 5. Students enrolling in the school-based Pre-K/K program must submit copies of the following:
 - a. Official birth certificate
 - b. Social Security number
 - c. Current immunization records (see Code 3535-C)
 - d. Record of physical examination as required by CU Code and state, including information on any allergies (see Code 3535-A).
 6. No other grades can be combined with the school-based Pre-K/K program.
 7. A developmentally appropriate curriculum and activities must be implemented for the Pre-K students, independent from the regular kindergarten program. Pre-K student activities should be very hands-on, non-paper and pencil oriented.
 8. Kindergarten teachers must be Seventh-day Adventists and meet requirements as outlined by the North American Division Office of Education.

4800

School-based Pre-K/Kindergarten Operating Standards

The local conference office of education will establish standards for school-based Pre-K/K facilities, equipment, instruction and building/playground safety. The following conditions must be met:

1. Local conference offices of education will determine salary and funding of school-based Pre-K, Pre-K/K, K, K-1 and/or K-2 classrooms based on local policy, state requirements and experience/training of the teacher.
2. The North American Division Kindergarten curriculum, which fosters a developmental educational approach, is to be implemented.
3. The Columbia Union Conference Pre-K Guidelines (see Appendix D) is to be followed.
4. The conference will follow the *Union Wage Scale*.
5. Any deviations from the above recommended guidelines must be processed for approval by the local conference office of education.

OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Historically, Seventh-day Adventists have been opposed to kindergartens and preschools. E. G. White statements such as “free as lambs”, “the mother should be the child’s only teacher”, and “no school until 8 to 10” have long influenced this position regarding early childhood education. In later years, after church schools were well established, she clarified the circumstances and principles behind these statements:

>There were no church schools with Christian teachers available at the time.

>Circumstances alter conditions.

>Where parents are unable to provide training for the young child, due to health, temperament or working outside the home, the child should be placed in the care of a Christian teacher.*

Shifts in lifestyles, culture and state regulations are finding young children being placed in school settings at younger ages than in the past. At the request of the Columbia Union K-12 Curriculum Committee, the following guidelines have been developed to be used as a framework in Columbia Union school-based Pre-K classrooms.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICES

Columbia Union school-based Pre-K classrooms need to focus on “developmentally appropriate” practices which take into account the age and maturity of each child. Children mature at different rates, be it cutting teeth, learning to walk, or learning to read and write. In a developmentally appropriate classroom, children are allowed to progress at their own pace when learning new skills and concepts. They should not be forced into a prescribed pace which may be too fast for some children and too slow for others. Instead, concepts are introduced and re-introduced as needed, allowing each child to mature and learn at their own rate.

Early childhood research indicates that young children require a rich environment of emotional, social, and physical activities centered on exploring their surroundings, including home, school, community and church. Readiness skills and concepts are introduced and re-introduced, but never forced. Four-year-olds should not be confined to desks doing paper-and-pencil seat work. Studies show that many children “burn out” in the middle grades when too much emphasis is placed on academics in the early years. These findings only affirm what we have known for many years from counsel given by Ellen White.

IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

The curriculum for four-year-old children must be centered on their natural curiosity to touch, taste, smell, hear and see. “Play is children’s work”, and should be an integral part of their learning experience. Play should be fun and always a positive experience and is the primary way to develop motor skills. Play lays the foundation for success in academic skills. Play can be directed in order to learn specific skills and concepts. Free play should be a part of every Pre-K schedule. Children’s social skills are strengthened when they are allowed to play together.

Indoor Play - Learning Centers

Learning centers provide a variety of opportunities to acquire specific developmental growth patterns. For example, the dress-up center or dramatic play center helps children express feelings, resolve social problems, experiment with adult roles, cultivate creativity and understand and deal with the world.

An art center allows children to work creatively, express ideas, experiences and feelings, think originally, improve fine muscle coordination, work independently, identify primary and secondary colors, learn about artists and artworks, recognize that God gives artistic talents, develop appreciation for nature and beauty, and use a variety of art media.

Other choices for centers include:

- Bible story center (felts, books, tapes, etc.)
- Block center (large blocks)
- Computer center
- Housekeeping center - Play store
- Manipulative center (puzzles, Etch-A-Sketch, Legos, etc.)
- Math center (counters, buttons, sorting, shapes, etc.)
- Listening center (songs, stories, etc.)
- Literature center
- Sand/Rice table
- Science center
- Social Studies center
- Thematic center (seasonal or theme related)
- Water table

A variety of centers should be planned for the Pre-K classroom and should be rotated throughout the year to keep children interested and engaged. Center rules are simple and should be clear to the students. Limits to the number of children per center and activities can be posted at the center by simple means such as clothes pins, colored strips, etc. Children should choose another center if one center is full. The teacher can manage the time spent in each center by ringing a bell, playing music, etc.

Outdoor Play

Children need to be able to run and play outdoors to expend their physical energy freely. Fresh air, sunlight and physical exercise form the basis for total physical development and well-being. Playing outdoors will help strengthen and control large muscles in the growing child. An adequate and safe playground must be provided for the children. Supervision of the children at all times is essential for this age group. **Never should children be left unattended without adult supervision, indoors or out.**

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

The following checklist is designed as a guide for the teacher in planning and implementing the Pre-K curriculum. This is not to be used as an assessment tool for individual children as all children have unique growth and maturity patterns. While most four-year-olds will accomplish much more than is listed below, teachers should not expect that all children will master all skills and concepts. The intent is for the teacher to incorporate these skills throughout the school year. Pre-K students should not be issued formal report cards. Progress in development is best communicated to parents through anecdotal notes and conferences.

The teacher is expected to create a learning environment that will introduce the children to the following skills and concepts by the end of the school year.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Spiritual Awareness

The children will:

1. Become aware that Jesus loves them and is their Savior
2. Acknowledge God as Creator
3. Be appropriately quiet during worship and prayer
4. Pray
5. Participate in singing worship songs

Bible Knowledge

The children will:

1. Understand that the Bible is God's book
2. Know common Bible stories: Creation, David and Goliath, Baby Jesus, etc.
3. Learn simple Bible memory verses

Character Development

The children will:

Demonstrate positive character development such as helpfulness, kindness, honesty, forgiveness, etc.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Social Development

The children will:

1. Relate positively to adults (seek help when needed)
2. Interact and play cooperatively (groups 2, 3, or more)
3. Participate as a contributing member of group learning experiences
4. Respect personal property
5. Respect school and classmates' materials and equipment
6. Practice safety (holding scissors, pushing in chair, etc.)
7. Follow rules and procedures
8. Focus attention on speakers
9. Follow simple oral directions
10. Recognize differences between right and wrong
11. Complete assigned tasks
12. Clean up after themselves
13. Use courtesy words such as "please", "thank you", and "excuse me"
14. Share and take turns
15. Adapt to new tasks
16. Understand individual and group dynamics

Emotional

The children will:

1. Show positive self-concept
2. Feel secure (can separate from parent)
3. Identify self with first and last names
4. Accept self limitations
5. Accept praise and criticism
6. Show pride in accomplishments
7. Express positive emotions
8. Express negative emotions in acceptable ways

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The children will:

1. Demonstrate large muscle control (running, climbing, jumping, etc.)
2. Demonstrate small muscle control (holding and using scissors correctly, coloring and drawing, putting simple puzzles together, pasting, stringing beads, etc.)
3. Demonstrate coordination and balance (hopping, balancing on one foot, walking in a straight line, throwing a ball, kicking a large ball)

4. Demonstrate independent skills (managing bathroom needs, putting on and taking off outerwear, feeding self, using basic hygiene such as washing hands and blowing nose)
5. Demonstrate oral communication (speaking clearly, answering and responding to questions)

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Safety

The children will:

1. Recognize full name
2. Know parents' names
3. Know address and phone number

Relationships

The children will:

1. Point to 18 body parts
2. Understand the following directional skills: up/down, in/out, on/under, top/bottom, over/under, next to/beside, in back of/in front of, before/after
3. Identify objects as *hard* and *soft*
4. Understand the following concepts: more/less, heavy/light, slow/fast, empty/full, hot/cold, same/different, black/white, etc.
5. Tell which objects go together: sock and shoe, nail and hammer, etc. (pair association)
6. Sort pictures or objects by classifications (animals, toys, vehicles)

Math

The children will:

1. Count from 1 to 10 or higher
2. Show an understanding of the passing of time
3. Demonstrate an understanding that different activities occur at different times of day
4. Match sequence or patterns of blocks or beads (three to six)
5. Count 4 to 10 objects by size (one-to-one correspondence)
6. Match and sort objects
7. Compare objects by size (big/little, tall/short)
8. Understand the concept of *one more* and *one less*
9. Identify basic shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle)
10. Name the basic shapes

Language

The children will:

1. Answer comprehension questions such as, "What should you do when you are hungry?" or "What should you do when you are sleepy?"
2. Describe what will happen next in a sequence of events
3. Pay attention to a short story when it is read and answer simple questions about it
4. Follow through when given one or two directions
5. Answer *how* questions (How old are you? etc.)
6. Ask *what*, *why*, and *where* questions
7. Use four-to-five-word sentences
8. Tell or retell stories

Fine Arts

The children will:

1. Participate in art and music activities
2. Identify the following basic colors: red, yellow, orange, blue, green, purple, brown, black and white
3. Name the basic colors
4. Add parts to incomplete drawings: house, person, shapes, etc. (Ask: What's missing?, etc.)

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

Full-day, Pre-K classrooms should include time for P.E. as well as recess. Recess is a time for children to play freely, preferably outdoors when weather permits. Large muscle activities such as running and jumping are an important part of a four-year-old's development. Organized games are used during P.E. to teach group skills and for developing coordination and exercising specific muscle groups.

Other areas to include in the daily schedule are circle time, center time, nap/rest time, story time and theme activities. Following is a sample daily schedule for a full-day:

8:15 - 8:30	Arrival - quiet activities (books, puzzles, etc.)
8:30 - 9:00	Circle Time Worship - songs, prayer, short worship thought/story Pledge of Allegiance Calendar Time Plans for the day
9:00 - 9:15	Drinks and restroom break (If restrooms are not in the classroom, the entire class may need to go as a group in order to have proper supervision at all times.)
9:15 - 9:45	Bible story and activities
9:45 - 10:15	P.E.
10:15 - 10:30	Juice break (if required by local regulations)
10:30 - 10:50	Theme/unit/skills presentations Language arts Math Pre-reading Social studies, science, health Art
10:50 - 11:45	Centers - child's choice - free play - teacher informal interaction/observation with child - monitor children's rotation through all centers - centers should be changed periodically - center activities reinforce presentations
11:45 - 12:00	Cleanup and lunch preparation
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch
12:30 - 1:00	Recess (free-play outdoors, weather permitting)
1:00 - 1:15	Story time
1:15 - 2:00	Rest time
2:00 - 2:20	Recess
2:20 - 2:50	Creative play (games, dress up, etc.)
2:50 - 3:00	Cleanup and dismissal

PRE-K CURRICULUM RESOURCES

As stated above, the curriculum for four-year-olds should be very hands-on, experientially based. Paper and pencil activities should be minimal. Student textbooks are not used in Pre-K; the following resources are for the teacher in planning developmental activities for the students.

Home Study International's Preschool Program - includes handbook, program guide, and Wee Sing CD's - order through your local conference office of education.

A Child's World - utilize themes and center ideas, adapt parts that are developmentally appropriate for four-year-olds - order through the Adventist Book Center.

Harcourt Pre-K Math - Teacher's edition only - provides abundant hands-on activities for number awareness - order from Harcourt, Inc.

Classroom Books

Reading to children is an essential activity in helping to prepare them for learning to read. A rich supply of story and picture books are needed in the Pre-K classroom. These can be acquired with minimal expense from yard sales, thrift centers, donations from "outgrown" collections, as well as the public library.

Following is the North American Division Office of Education adopted criteria for selecting print and nonprint materials for Seventh-day Adventist Schools:

Print and Nonprint Materials Selection Criteria

Print and nonprint materials selected should exemplify quality literature and encourage discernment in individual selection. The following criteria are provided as guidelines for selecting appropriate print and nonprint materials.

- Support Seventh-day Adventist beliefs
- Support the local school's curriculum
- Match the maturity level of the students
- Relate to various cultures

Address current issues

- Free of gender or ethnic bias
- Present information with accuracy
- Demonstrate good literary style

Avoid print and nonprint materials that:

- Emphasize evolution. However, brief references to evolution whose major content is of value can be used as an opportunity for the teacher to bring out the differences in Biblical creation and evolution.
- Picture evil as desirable and goodness as trivial.
- Highlight vulgarity, eroticism, sentimentalism and escapism. Materials in which minimal references of profanity are found may be selected **if it is clearly marginal and content has significant value.**

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INFORMATION

The entire December 2005/January 2006 issue (Vol. 68 No.2) of *The Journal of Adventist Education* is devoted to Adventist Early Childhood Education. This is an excellent resource for both teachers and parents to not only learn our church's philosophy for early childhood education, but to learn developmentally appropriate practices to help children mature in a loving and nurturing environment.

Article titles of particular interest for working with the Pre-K child include:

Mind, Brain, and Early Childhood by Linda Bryant Caviness

Adventist Early Childhood Education by Christine L. Gillan

The Importance of Imagination and Play: A Neuro-cognitive Perspective by Linda Bryant Caviness

Skills for School Readiness from Texas Child Care Quarterly

Helping Preschool Children Become Readers: Tips for Parents by Ann S. Epstein

Guidance Techniques That Work from Texas Child Care Quarterly

General principals in **The Child-Centered Kindergarten** by Joan Moyer can be applied to Pre-K classrooms as well as being helpful for programs that have a combination of Pre-K and K in the same classroom.

To obtain back issues:

Issues cost \$2.00 each (includes shipping in the U.S.) Discounts are available for bulk orders. For more information, contact:

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*(see Manuscript 7, 1904)

Application to Operate School-based: (See Code 4500)

Stand-alone Pre-K, Pre-K/K Combination, Stand-alone Kindergarten, K-1/K-2 Combination

(Due at conference February 1)

Name of School: _____ Date _____

School Board action: Voted Date: _____ Action: _____

A. TYPE OF PROGRAM REQUESTED Request is for the school year _____

_____ Stand-alone Pre-K _____ Pre-K/K Combination _____ Stand-alone Kindergarten _____ K-1 _____ K-2

B. TEACHER INFORMATION Name of principal teacher: _____

Qualifications/certification of person to teach this program: _____

Name of teacher assistant _____ Qualifications/certification _____

NAD certificated teacher supervising program (if applicable): _____

C. ENROLLMENT PROJECTION Please indicate the expected enrollment for the requested program.

Stand-alone Pre-K _____ Pre-K/K _____ 4-year-olds _____ 5-year olds _____ Stand-alone Kindergarten _____

K-1 _____ K _____ 1st grade _____ K-2 _____ K _____ 1st grade _____ 2nd grade _____

D. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Indicate amount budgeted for start-up, equipment, supplies, etc. (for first year operation only) \$ _____

Indicate monthly/yearly budgeted funds for consumable supplies \$ _____

Principal's Signature

Date

See Columbia Union Conference Education Code - 4500 Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten - for policies and guidelines

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

_____ **Approved**

_____ **Denied**

Superintendent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Teacher Guidelines for Reporting to Parents

In keeping with the developmentally appropriate approach to educating young children, the Pre-K teacher will want to maintain informal assessments of the four year-old child. Development and maturation rates vary greatly at this age. There should not be any comparisons between and among the four year-olds. A skill that one child may be able to master: another child of the same age may not be developmentally ready to acquire.

Written checklists/progress reports should not be a part of the Pre-K program. There is no checklist of skills that should be completed before entering kindergarten other than the normal maturing process. Conferencing with parents as to the developing skills and concepts of the individual child is much more effective.

The following narrative-based "progress report" focuses on the positive aspects of the child's development. A brief general statement as to growth in the four major areas is a starting point for the conversation. The teacher curriculum checklist from the Columbia Union School-based Pre-K Guidelines can be used as a guide for writing the positive statement on the report, but is not to be used as a checklist to judge a child's development.

Areas that need to be brought to the attention of the parents for improvement are to be discussed with the parent, not put in writing. These would involve broad areas such as unacceptable behavior, frequent illnesses/absences, toilet habits, etc.

Four year-old children need to be allowed to grow and develop at their own pace with guidance in the four major areas without pressure to "measure up".



Childhood should be a journey ...not a race.

Robert L. Johnson

PRE-K REPORT TO PARENTS

School _____

Teacher _____ Date _____

_____ is growing and learning in our
(child's name)
Pre-K classroom this year. Here are some of the skills and concepts that show
growth in 1st quarter 2nd quarter 3rd quarter 4th quarter.

Spiritual:



Social/Emotional:

Physical:



Intellectual:



Color Code: **Pink**-1st Quarter; **Yellow**-2nd Quarter; **Blue**-3rd Quarter; **Green**-4th Quarter