

# Office of Early Learning Newsletter



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## News from the Director

Jason Breslin, NBCT

Happy spring! In late March, my office issued a [memo regarding Important OEL Dates](#). Please make sure to look over this carefully as there are a few changes this year due to the change in child count pull dates.

With the continuation of this unprecedented year, I know that teachers are looking forward to their spring break.

This is also a great time for professional development. I want to remind districts that our [P-3 Virtual Institute videos are still accessible on our webpage and can be found here](#). As always, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you again for all your continued work with our youngest learners in NYS.

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### [\\*OEL Update\\*](#)

Our website has been relocated and updated. Please use the new [OEL website address](#) to find the latest information about early learning in New York State.



## **NEW Resource for Parents of Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten Programs**

With over 200 languages spoken by children in our schools<sup>1</sup>, New York State is home to one of the most diverse populations in our nation. Since the number of linguistically diverse families will likely continue to increase, it is critical for all educators of Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs)<sup>2</sup> to provide the necessary supports and programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive to their needs and will build on the assets our students bring to the classroom.

In NYS, we believe that an informed, empowered community of parents, guardians, and other persons in parental relation are critical to ensuring that all our diverse EMLs continue to develop and maintain their home language. We want all families to value their home language as they support their children’s growth and help them become bilingual or multilingual. Families may worry that their children’s knowledge or skills cannot transfer if they do not speak English at home. However, research shows that using the home language does not interfere with learning to speak, read, or write in English or learning a new language. Therefore, we encourage families to use their home language as it helps with learning to read, write, and participate actively in discussions.

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages recently released the [\*Welcome Families of Emergent Multilingual Learners to Prekindergarten in New York State\*](#) brochure. This brochure was created to help parents see the value that using their home language has for our EMLs, and to help answer four common questions they might have: “Should we speak English at home?”; “How will my child be assessed?”; “Will my child get confused?”; and “How can I help?” The brochure is available in the following 11 languages:

[Arabic](#)  
[Bengali](#)  
[Chinese](#) (Simplified)

[English](#)  
[French](#)  
[Haitian-Creole](#)

[Karen](#)  
[Russian](#)  
[Spanish](#)

[Urdu](#)  
[Uzbek](#)

Please share this new resource with all parents of EMLs. All resources for EMLs can be found on the [Emergent Multilingual Learners in Prekindergarten Programs webpage](#).

<sup>1</sup> Source: NYS SIRS 2018-2019

<sup>2</sup> The Department uses the term “Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs)” to refer to Prekindergarten students identified by the Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs) Language Profile as a prekindergarten student whose home or primary language is other than English.

## 2019-2020 Emergent Multilingual Learners Final Report Data

According to the [Student Information Repository System \(SIRS\)](#), state-funded prekindergarten programs served 120,139 children<sup>3</sup>. During the spring and summer of 2020, 494 state-funded prekindergarten grantees completed the 2019-2020 NYS Prekindergarten Final Report<sup>4</sup>. Part of the information collected included data about Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLs); specifically, counts of EMLs identified and processes used to identify EMLs, maintain their data and support their home languages.

43,510 EMLs were identified. Among the 111 listed languages spoken other than English were Spanish (20,455 EMLs), Chinese (3,767), Yiddish (1,902), Bengali (1,596), Arabic (1,204), Russian (951), Urdu (686), Haitian-Creole (323), Korean (299), Albanian (277), Uzbek (274), Nepali (216), and Karen (198). The tables shown below provide a summary of the aforementioned processes used for serving EMLs.

Processes Used to Identify EMLs	Number of Grantees Using This Process	Percentage
A District-developed process used during registration for District Pre-K programs	256	51.8%
NYSED's Emergent Multilingual Language Profile and Process	74	15.0%
The Office of Bilingual Education's Home Language Survey for Grades K-12	138	27.9%
Total Grantees That Identify EMLs	413	83.6%

Processes for Maintaining EML ID & Home Language Data	Number of Grantees Using This Process	Percentage
Digitally in the grantee's local data systems	229	46.4%
Manually in each Pre-K EML teacher's records	104	21.1%
Manually in each Pre-K EML's permanent/cumulative District file folder	227	46.0%
The grantee does not maintain Pre-K EML data	33	6.7%

Processes for Supporting EMLs' Home Language	Number of Grantees Using This Process	Percentage
Family engagement strategies included enlisting multilingual assistance from Pre-K EMLs' family members before, during, and after class time.	175	35.4%
Pre-K EML children were enrolled in the District's (including CBOs, if collaborating) Pre-K Dual Language Program.	12	2.4%
Pre-K EML children were enrolled in the District's (including CBOs, if collaborating) Pre-K Transitional Bilingual Education Program.	11	2.2%
Pre-K EML children were placed in classrooms with Pre-K teachers and/or teaching assistants reflecting the same multilingual skills and used the student's home language(s) to support daily instruction in English.	80	16.2%
The grantee did not identify any Pre-K EMLs in 2019-20.	207	41.9%

## 2019-2020 Students with IEPs Final Report Data

During the spring and summer of 2020, 494 state-funded prekindergarten grantees completed the 2019-2020 NYS Prekindergarten Final Report. Part of the information collected included data about students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs); specifically, the number of enrolled prekindergarten students with IEPs and the services that they received. The table below provides a summary of the data provided by the 470 grantees which indicated that they collect enrollment data for preschool students with disabilities.

Type of Service	Number of State-Funded Pre-K Enrolled Students with IEPs	Number of District Students with IEPs Not Enrolled in State-Funded Pre-K but Co-located with State-Funded Pre-K Students
Related Services Only	9,440	556
Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT) Services Only	376	34
Both Related and SEIT Services	4,121	114
Half-day (2.5 hours or less) Special Class Integrated Setting (SCIS)	376	330
Full-day (more than 2.5 hours) Special Class Integrated Setting (SCIS)	1,556	1,671
Totals	15,869	2,705

### Summary of EML & IEP Data

In the 2019-2020 school year, 62,084 prekindergarten students were identified as EMLs or as having an IEP; these students comprise approximately one half of the population of prekindergarten students served in state-funded programs. Such extensive identification demonstrates that YS prekindergarten programs, NYSED and OEL have invested in and committed to providing for the special needs of the State's youngest learners. See [OEL's Supporting Special Populations page](#) for more information.

New York State prekindergarten grantees are currently not required to maintain EML data or provide services beyond identifying EMLs. However, it is a recommended best practice to use the processes listed above to meet the needs of EMLs and their families.

According to [Regulations of the Commissioner Part 200.9\(d3\)](#), all public school prekindergarten providers and their collaborating agencies are required to collect enrollment data for preschool students with disabilities.

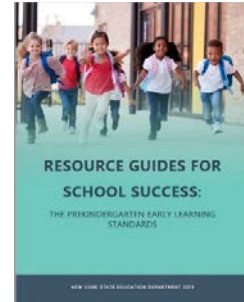
Contact [OEL@NYSED.gov](mailto:OEL@NYSED.gov) with any questions about this data.

**Disclaimer:** The accuracy of the data provided above is dependent on information provided by state-funded prekindergarten programs. This data has not been verified by NYSED or OEL.

<sup>3</sup> Source: NYS SIRS 2019-2020

<sup>4</sup> Source: 2019-2020 NYS Prekindergarten Final Report, MVPS, August 2020

## Updates to Grade Level Learning Standards Resources for Pre-K Through Second Grade



The [Resource Guides for School Success in Early Learning](#) are grade-specific resources that consolidate all learning standards into one comprehensive document that provides a uniform format to make them easily accessible for teachers, specialists, administrators and parents. The Office of Early Learning (OEL) and the [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) have updated and revised these documents.

Updates include additional links to introductory documents for each subject, listed in the order that they occur in the resources. These links are listed in the “Purpose of this Document” sections. Users will also find an additional paragraph added to the science sections with information about the three dimensions of science learning, including the science and engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts. All links within the documents have been checked and updated for functionality.

As a reminder, these resources are not a curriculum, assessment, or set of teaching strategies but rather, resources for the learning that students should accomplish. Users are encouraged to also review the full articulations of the New York State Learning Standards. The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASB) recently awarded \$4,000 to OEL to complete the creation of an additional resource for third grade.

### Supporting Learning Through Play During COVID-19

Recent shifts to virtual learning and single-minded emphasis on academic achievement have hampered some efforts to support [play-based approaches](#). According to the [Harvard University’s Center on the Developing Child](#) article [Play in Early Childhood: The Role of Play in Any Setting](#), the science of child development points to three core principles that can guide what society needs to do to help children and families thrive. These include: 1) supporting responsive relationships; 2) strengthening core life skills; and 3) reducing sources of stress. Access this article and its accompanying video to learn more about how play can support all three principles and foster children’s resilience to hardship, and how the complex play interactions help build their brains.

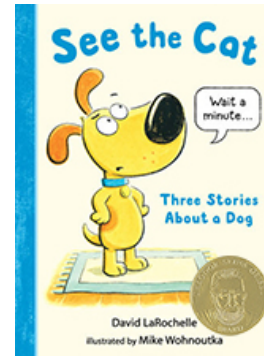
Parents have so little time during COVID, but helping children learn independent play skills can get them a few free minutes here and there. [Rebecca Parlakian’s new column for PBS Parents](#) highlights strategies families can use to support their preschoolers' ability to play on their own.

[According to Diane Ravitch](#), a historian of education and Research Professor of Education at New York University, “The global pandemic has taken its toll on families and children. Children have not been able to engage in their normal routines, sit in a classroom with friends and teachers, visit extended family or participate in social activities without a mask. ...Children have spent much of the school year online and maintaining social distance from other people. This summer, children need to do self-initiated activities that are rewarding for their own sake. This will create happier children now and, [as research has shown](#), lead to improved physical, cognitive, social, emotional and creative outcomes later in life.”

## American Library Association Announces 2021 Geisel Award and Caldecott Medal Recipients

At the end of January 2021, the [American Library Association](#) (ALA) announced its book and media awards, including the Geisel and Caldecott Awards. The Geisel Award is given annually to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished American book for beginning readers published in English in the United States during the preceding year, while the Caldecott Medal is awarded to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.

[The 2021 Geisel Award](#) was given for *See the Cat: Three Stories About a Dog*. According to the ALA, it “...is a deceptively simple book that teaches readers the power of words. The text is in direct contrast with the illustrations, defying both the reader’s and Max the Dog’s expectations. Surprises and twists keep readers engaged and cheering for Max as he tries to outwit the narrator.”



[The 2021 Caldecott Medal](#) was awarded for *We Are Water Protectors*. According to the ADA, “Michaela Goade’s vivid, swirling watercolors capture the sacredness of water and amplify Carole Lindstrom’s passionate call to action and celebration of Indigenous ancestry and community. Rich symbolism and repeating floral patterns appear alongside distinctive colors and atmospheric light to tenderly frame the defiant young protagonist standing up against the real-life horrors of the Dakota Access Pipeline.”

Readers can view more information and titles that received 2021 Honor Books listing at [ADA’s Book and Media Awards website](#).

## Acceptable Experience for Professional Teacher Certification in Early Childhood Settings

One of the requirements for the Professional teacher certificate is to complete at least three school years of valid teaching experience or its equivalent (540 full-time days). A maximum of 180 days of teaching experience will be accepted per school year (July 1 –June 30). In addition, the teaching experience must span at least three different school years.

For individuals who were issued their Initial teacher certificate on or after February 2, 2014, the required valid teaching experience must be in the subject area of the certificate held to be acceptable for the Professional certificate. For individuals who were issued their first Initial teacher certificate before February 2, 2014, the required valid teaching experience does not need to be in the subject area of the certificate held to be acceptable for the Professional certificate.

Please note that if individuals hold multiple Initial teacher certificates, they may combine valid teaching experience gained under each of their certificates to satisfy the teaching experience requirement for Professional certification. However, individuals who taught three or more years in one subject area must apply for the Professional certificate in that subject area as their first Professional Certificate. 2

The settings in which individuals, who hold or held Initial Early Childhood Education certification, could gain the valid teaching experience required for the Professional Early Childhood Education certificate includes, but is not limited to, the early childhood settings listed below. Please see the [Office of Teaching Initiatives \(OTI\) website](#) to see the full, up-to-date list of settings in which individuals could meet the teaching experience requirement for Professional certification. Contact the Office of Teaching Initiatives at [tcert@nysed.gov](mailto:tcert@nysed.gov).

- Head Start programs approved by the U.S. Department of Education
- Licensed day care centers through the [Office of Children and Family Services \(OCFS\)](#)
- School-Based Child Care programs recognized by the [New York City Department of Health](#)
- Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) approved by the [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\)](#)
- Voluntarily Registered Nursery Schools and Kindergartens through [NYSED](#)

The [Educational Incentive Program \(EIP\)](#) is an OCFS scholarship program which helps staff and caregivers pay for approved training and educational activities with the intent to build provider knowledge, skills and competencies and improve the quality of childcare. ***To be eligible for EIP, you must be caring for children in a program licensed or registered by OCFS or the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH).***

Eligibility is based on your employment, level of income, and the course or training you choose. For more information about eligibility requirements visit [OCFS – Paying for Training](#).

## 2020-2021 School Year Child Count Reporting for State-Funded UPK Programs

NYSED recognizes the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the enrollment of prekindergarten students during the 2020-21 school year. Due to these circumstances, NYSED's Office of Early Learning (OEL) and the Office of Information and Reporting Services (IRS) has made modifications pursuant to Commissioner's Regulations 8 NYCRR 151-1 to the traditional child count pull date and reporting information, as described in [OEL's January 5<sup>th</sup> memo](#). This change is being made so that the calculation of prekindergarten grants is reflective of the number of students ever served in State-funded UPK programs in the 2020-21 school year.

Three extract dates for prekindergarten enrollment have replaced the traditional BEDS day count for the 2020-21 school year only. During the 2020-21 school year, the child count pull extract has been moved from December 1, 2020 to Friday, January 15, April 16, and June 4, 2021. On each of these pull dates, districts will report the number of prekindergarten students ever served (not just those with an active enrollment record on each respective pull date). On the January 15<sup>th</sup> pull date, districts counted any prekindergarten student ever enrolled in the program from September 2020 up to and including January 15, 2021. The final pull date will result in the cumulative total of enrollments (not removing any students that have exited).

Calculation of the State-funded UPK grants will remain the same pursuant to Education Law 3602-e in which the maximum grant payable to any district will remain proportionate to the number of 1.0 FTE seats filled. Because of the overwhelming factors impacting enrollment, giving districts opportunities to report enrollment over the course of three extract dates, the district will be able to recoup funds for any child educated in their program during this difficult fiscal year.

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