



Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning  
Bureau of Policy and Professional Development

**Issue Date:** March 23, 2026

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2026

**End Date:** N/A

**Subject:** Enrollment Plan Guidance and Resources

**To:** Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Grantees

**Priority:** High

**Category:** Informational

**Action:** Read and follow “Action Steps”

**Required Response:** None

## PURPOSE

To provide guidance and clarification on program expectations for Pennsylvania Pre-K (PA PKC) Counts grantees for Enrollment Planning, including the introduction of the Seven Components for Effective Enrollment Planning.

## BACKGROUND

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Regulations at 22 Ps. Code § 405.24. Enrollment state: “Each approved provider shall develop and implement a plan for securing full enrollment throughout the program year.” Historically, enrollment plans have been developed without standardized Departmental expectations. Grounded in insights from program monitoring and valuable grantee feedback, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is establishing a more consistent framework to better support programs in developing, implementing, and reviewing their enrollment strategies.

The goal in providing a consistent framework for enrollment planning is to ensure the PA PKC enrollment process is unbiased, transparent and understood by all parties including program administrators, staff and families. This process honors the unique

context of each program while providing a clear framework for continuous improvement in policies and practices.

Strong enrollment systems ensure children and families with the highest needs are identified, engaged, enrolled, and supported throughout the program year. It also ensures PA PKC programs meet full enrollment expectations throughout the program year.

## **DISCUSSION**

OCDEL has developed the Seven Components of an Effective Enrollment Plan to provide a common framework for PA PKC programs that supports:

- Intentional enrollment planning
- Clear documentation of processes
- Strength-based engagement with families
- Use of data to inform decision-making
- Alignment with Community Needs Assessments
- Continuous improvement efforts

The Seven Components support programs in transitioning from reactive enrollment practices to proactive, sustainable systems. These components function as an integrated system, rather than isolated activities. Together, they support programs in pacing enrollment, maintaining documentation, strengthening family partnerships, and sustaining full enrollment throughout the program year.

**Beginning July 1, 2026, PA PKC programs will be expected to incorporate all seven components into the program's enrollment plan. Preschool Program Specialist (PPS) will review evidence of all seven components within FY 2026-2027 enrollment plans.**

### **The Seven Components of Effective Enrollment Planning**

**1. Community Analysis:** A data-informed understanding of local demographics, risk factors, and service gaps used to guide enrollment strategies and prioritize children and families with the greatest need.

**Goal:** Use local data to intentionally target enrollment efforts.

**2. Recruitment Strategy:** A proactive, equity-driven outreach approach that engages eligible families through partnerships and targeted efforts in high-need communities.

**Goal:** Reach eligible families early and intentionally.

**3. Screening & Eligibility:** A consistent, family-centered process for verifying age and income eligibility that ensures compliance with PKC requirements while reducing barriers for families.

**Goal:** Support timely and accurate eligibility verification.

**4. Timeline & Communication:** A structured enrollment calendar paired with clear internal procedures and family communication practices to support enrollment pacing and continuity.

**Goal:** Ensure shared understanding of timelines, responsibilities, and next steps.

**5. Data Management:** A disciplined process for entering, reviewing, validating, and correcting enrollment data in PELICAN to support transparency and informed decision-making.

**Goal:** Maintain clean, accurate enrollment data.

**6. Retention Plan:** A strengths-based, family-centered strategy to promote attendance, address barriers, and reduce chronic absenteeism.

**Goal:** Support ongoing participation and sustained family engagement.

**7. Refilling Vacancies:** A rapid response process for identifying vacancies and enrolling new children to maintain program enrollment levels.

**Goal:** Sustain enrollment at or above 90 percent throughout the program year.

## **ACTION STEPS**

OCDEL has provided each PPS with training and guidance on Seven Components of Effective Enrollment Planning. Resources to support grantees in implementing the Seven Components of Effective Enrollment Planning will be shared with programs through the PA PKC portal, and through direct support from the PPS.

Available resources include:

- The Seven Components of an Effective Enrollment Plan
- PA Pre-K Counts Enrollment Planning Tool
- SAMPLE Enrollment Plan
- PA PKC Enrollment Plan Reflection Tool for Programs
- SAMPLE Letter: Acceptance into PA Pre-K Counts
- SAMPLE Letter: PA Pre-K Counts Priority Waitlist Letter

OCDEL will also provide professional development to assist programs in understanding the new expectations and to support implementation of the Seven Components of an Effective Enrollment Plan. Upcoming opportunities will include dedicated time during PA PKC Office Hours, targeted training sessions, and interactive learning opportunities during the annual Grantee Gathering.

These sessions will introduce the Seven Components in greater depth, highlight promising practices from across the Commonwealth, and provide space for programs to ask questions, reflect on current enrollment systems, and receive coaching.

Programs are encouraged to participate in these learning opportunities to assure compliance with program expectations for enrollment planning and implementation, and

to engage in continuous quality improvement efforts. Additional details regarding dates, formats, and registration will be shared through on-going communications.

## **NEXT STEPS**

1. Starting July 1, 2026, Programs must review and update their Enrollment Plans to ensure all seven components are clearly documented and implemented.
2. Starting July 1, 2026, Preschool Program Specialists will utilize the Seven Components framework during monitoring and while providing technical assistance.
3. Programs should regularly review enrollment data to inform recruitment, eligibility verification, retention strategies, and vacancy response.
4. Direct any questions to your Preschool Program Specialist.