

The Role of the Preschool Instructional Coach

Preschool instructional coaches are funded in New Jersey's State Preschool Program to provide and maintain high levels of quality by helping and supporting preschool teachers. The primary role of the preschool instructional coach is to visit classrooms and coach teachers using the reflective cycle. The district shall provide preschool instructional coaches at a ratio of no more than 20 preschool classrooms for each preschool instructional coach.

Specific qualifications and responsibilities for preschool instructional coaches are listed below.

Minimum required qualifications and experience as of August 15th, 2022

- A bachelor's degree and preschool through grade three (P-3) teacher certification;
- At least three years of experience teaching in general education preschool programs;
- Experience in implementing developmentally appropriate preschool curricula;
- Experience with a wide range of appropriate early childhood performance-based and classroom quality assessment instruments; and
- Experience providing professional development to classroom teachers;
- Preschool Professional Development Fellow status.

In addition to the requirements listed above and depending on the population served by the district board of education, a preschool instructional coach shall also demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Certification that includes an endorsement for bilingual education or English as a second language.
- Certification that includes an endorsement for teacher of students with disabilities or teacher of the handicapped.
- A graduate degree in early childhood education with an emphasis on early literacy and/or early mathematics; and/or
- A graduate degree in educational supervision and/or leadership.

For information on required qualifications for preschool instructional coaches appointed prior to August 15th, 2022, refer to N.J.A.C.6A:9B.

Responsibilities of the Preschool Instructional Coach

Coaching Support and Professional Development

- Visit classrooms on a regular basis to coach and provide feedback to teachers to support high quality teaching practices using the reflective cycle.
- Provide feedback directly to teaching staff based on the reflective cycle plan and model

exemplary practices and regularly meet with the early childhood supervisors, program directors or principals. Recordkeeping, including use of the reflective cycle, should be maintained during these visits.

- Coach teachers on the use of performance-based assessments including supporting quality assessment practices, interpretation of data and the use of assessment data in planning.
- Administer structured program evaluation instruments to measure quality practices in preschool classrooms. Examples of program evaluation instruments include curriculum implementation fidelity tools, Early Childhood Environment Ratings Scale -Third Edition (ECERS-3), Supports for Early Literacy Assessment (SELA), and the Preschool Classroom Mathematics Inventory (PCMI).
- Use performance-based assessment data and results of structured classroom observations to determine and support a high-quality curriculum implementation, plan specific goals, and create training opportunities.
- Model developmentally appropriate classroom practices and lessons, facilitate PLC meetings, and plan and implement workshops to strengthen areas of needed improvement identified from structured observation instruments (aggregated data), curriculum observation instruments, performance-based assessment results, district evaluation data, and other information.
- Plan and provide professional development experiences for classroom teachers that align with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards, the school district's Department of Education (DOE) approved curriculum, the district's DOE approved professional development plan and classroom-quality assessment data. Professional development should be presented in a variety of participant settings, ranging from small groups to cohorts to entire staff.
- Confer with early childhood supervisor to coordinate, articulate, and provide professional development for all staff.
- Provide individualized follow-up support to the teacher's level of development and plan small group meetings/trainings for teachers with similar needs.
- Reflect on own professional development needs, attend workshops, read research articles, consult with others, etc.

Additional Support

- Confer regularly with the Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialist (PIRS).
- Confer regularly with the Community Parent Involvement Specialist (CPIS) and other relevant school/district personnel to plan for smooth transitions for children entering

preschool through grade three programs.

- Assist the Community Parent Involvement Specialist (CPIS) in planning parent involvement activities (e.g., ensuring that the results of the performance-based assessment along with other information about the preschoolers are shared with kindergarten staff, planning parent workshops together, planning visits to kindergarten classrooms).
- Provide technical assistance to district and provider administrators to discuss curriculum goals, professional development, performance-based assessment, structured observation visits, etc.
- Support transition activities, programs, and services between and among preschool through grade three programs.
- Perform additional duties as assigned that are directly related to early childhood classroom improvement.

References

- [New Jersey Department of Education, Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines \(2015\).](#)
- [NJAC 6A:13A, Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs.](#)