

# Regulation

## ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Related Entries: Policy IFA**  
**Responsible Office: Department of Instructional Services**

### **PREKINDERGARTEN AND KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS**

#### **A. PURPOSE**

To establish Anne Arundel County Public Schools' prekindergarten and kindergarten programs to meet Maryland State Law and State Board Bylaw (COMAR).

#### **B. BACKGROUND**

State law (Senate Bill 856) and COMAR require that Anne Arundel County Public Schools provide prekindergarten and kindergarten programs for the defined populations unless students are enrolled in COMAR approved alternative kindergarten settings, conduct kindergarten assessment, and follow COMAR defined prekindergarten program criteria.

#### **C. PROCEDURES**

1. Senate Bill 856 requires that every school system provide full day kindergarten for all students by the 2007-2008 school year.
2. Kindergarten Attendance – COMAR 13A.08.01.01
  - a. Each child who resides in Maryland and is five years old or older and under 16 shall attend a public school regularly during the entire school year unless the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in the public schools to children of the same age, or the child is exempted under COMAR 13A.08.01.02-2A (Level of Maturity Waiver).
  - b. A child who resides in this State shall attend a public or nonpublic kindergarten program regularly during the school year before entering the first grade unless the child is enrolled in an alternative program as specified in COMAR 13A.08.01.02-2B or is receiving home instruction as provided in COMAR 13A.10.01.

- c. A child who resides in Maryland and attends a nonpublic kindergarten program for part of the year may transfer to a public kindergarten.
  - d. Students shall be considered in attendance at school when participating in school-sponsored activities during the school day, and when that participation is approved by the local superintendent of schools or the school principal, or their designees. Students shall be considered in attendance in an alternative program setting when participating in activities during the day sponsored by the alternative program, and when that participation is approved by the director of a licensed child care center, registered family day care home, or Head Start five-year-old program.
3. Age of School Attendance – COMAR 13A.08.01.02 determines the age of entry into school for prekindergarten and kindergarten students.
- a. Prekindergarten
    - i. Beginning with the 2005-2006 school and each school year thereafter, a child admitted to the prekindergarten program in the public schools shall be four years old or older on September 1.
    - ii. Anne Arundel County Public Schools’ Early Admission to Prekindergarten-Process and Guidelines allows entry into prekindergarten for three-year-olds who meet the “economically disadvantaged” criteria and are referred by the Coordinator of Preschool Special Education.
  - b. Kindergarten
    - i. Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year and each school year thereafter, a child admitted to the kindergarten program in the public schools shall be five years old or older on September 1 of the school year in which the child applies for entrance.
    - ii. Anne Arundel County Public Schools’ Early Admission to Kindergarten – Process and Guidelines allow entry into kindergarten for four-year-olds who:
      - will be five on or before December 31.

- apply between the April kindergarten registration period and August 1. Exceptions for submitting the application will be allowed for students moving into Anne Arundel County after August 1 and before September 1.
- score in the eighth stanine on a nationally normed achievement test for kindergarten and at 130 or better on a nationally normed cognitive ability test.

c. First Grade

- i. In the 2006-2007 school year, a child admitted to the first grade in the public schools shall be six years old or older on September 30, 2006.
- ii. Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year and each school year thereafter, a child admitted to the first grade in the public schools shall be six years old or older on September 1 of the school year in which the child applies for entrance.
- iii. Anne Arundel County Public Schools' Early Admission to Grade One – Process and Guidelines allow entry into grade one for five-year-olds who:
  - apply between the April kindergarten registration period and the beginning of kindergarten.
  - attend kindergarten for 30 days to allow for classroom observation and standardized testing.
  - Score in the eighth stanine on a nationally normed achievement test for grade one and at 130 or better on a national normed cognitive ability test.

4. Exemptions to Kindergarten Attendance Requirement-  
COMAR 13A.08.01.02-2

a. Level of Maturity Waiver

- i. A child who resides in Maryland and is five years old may be exempted from mandatory school attendance for one year if the child's parent or guardian believes that a

delay in school attendance is in the best interest of the child and the parent or guardian files a written request with the superintendent of schools asking that the child's attendance be delayed due to the child's level of maturity.

- ii. A written request for a one-year exemption from mandatory attendance for a five-year-old shall be filed with the superintendent of schools or the superintendent's designee before the opening of school of the year in which the child becomes five years old.
  - iii. After a child is enrolled in kindergarten, a parent or guardian may file a written request to withdraw the child from the program and delay attendance until the following school year if the parent or guardian believes it is in the best interest of the child.
- b. Alternative Program Settings.
- i. A child may be exempted from attending kindergarten if a parent or guardian of the child files in writing their intent to place the child in an alternative setting and verifies that the child is enrolled:
    - a) Full-time in a licensed child care center ("Full-time in a licensed child care center: means the child is enrolled in the child care center only and does not attend any other kindergarten program – COMAR 13A.08-01.02-1); or
    - b) Full-time in a registered family day care home ("Full-time in a registered family day care home" means the child is cared for by the family day care provider only and does not attend any other kindergarten program – COMAR 13A.08.01.02-1); or
    - c) Part-time in a Head Start five-year-old program. (Part-time in a Head Start five-year-old program" means that child is enrolled in the Head Start program and may or may not be enrolled in another child care program – COMAR 13A.08.01.02-1).

- d) A parent or guardian who elects to enroll a child full-time in a licensed child care center, full-time in a family day care home, or part-time in a Head Start five-year-old program shall file their intent to enroll the five-year-old child in an alternative program with the school system before the opening of school of the year in which the child becomes five years old. The parent or guardian shall verify enrollment by providing the following information:
    - Name of program;
    - Address of facility location; and
    - License or registration number and expiration date.
  - e) A parent or guardian of a child who attended an alternative program shall register the child for first grade before the opening of school of the year in which the child becomes six years old and shall provide documentation showing proof of attendance in the alternative program setting. Documentation includes:
    - Date child was enrolled; and
    - Number of days child was absent
  - f) Program directors/providers who enroll a five-year-old child full-time in a licensed child care center, full-time in a family day care home, or part-time in a Head Start five-year-old program shall furnish the parent or guardian with the documentation as specified in (e).
- ii. Non-State Residents. A five-year-old who moves into Maryland who has had a kindergarten experience in another state for part of the school year shall be enrolled in kindergarten. A six-year-old child who moves into Maryland who has not had a kindergarten experience may be enrolled in kindergarten or first grade. The school system shall determine the appropriate grade placement of a six-year-old child who moves into

Maryland based on a review of the documentation provided by the parent or guardian.

5. Kindergarten Assessment will be conducted as specified by COMAR 13A08.01.02-03.
6. Prekindergarten Programs will meet the specifications of COMAR 13A.06.02.00.
  - a. Scope and Purpose – 13A.06.02.01
    - i. All publicly funded prekindergarten programs for eligible four-year-old children administered by local boards of education or qualified vendors have the overall goal of providing learning experiences to help children develop and maintain school readiness skills necessary for successful school performance.
    - ii. From the 2003-2004 school year through the 2006-2007 school year, enrollment shall be based upon the availability for prekindergarten sites established by the board of education. Beginning in 2007-2008, boards of education shall have completed expansion of prekindergarten programs in order to accommodate all eligible four-year-old children seeking enrollment.
  - b. Student Eligibility – Senate Bill 856 and COMAR 3A.06.02.03
    - i. The school system shall enroll all four-year-old applicants who are from families with economically disadvantaged backgrounds or who are homeless. (“Economically disadvantaged background” means a family whose income would make a child eligible for free or reduced price meals bases on eligibility requirements established by the United States Department of Agriculture if the child were in kindergarten- COMAR13A.06.02.02).
    - ii. For vacancies remaining after compliance with this regulation, the school system may enroll four-year-old applicants who are not from families with economically disadvantaged backgrounds but who represent a student population that exhibits a lack of readiness in personal and social development, language and literacy,

mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, or physical development and health.

- c. Prekindergarten Site Selection. – COMAR 13A.06.02.04. The school system shall develop a facilities plan identifying appropriate sites to ensure that a publicly funded prekindergarten program is available to all eligible children by 2007-2008.

**Regulation History:**      **Developed by Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services.**  
**Reviewed by Board of Education: 1/4/06.**  
**Adopted by Board of Education: 3/1/06.**

**Not previous history:**      **Replaces 605.01, issued 9/6/78; revised 1/17/90.**