

Salem Pre-K Partnership Early Childhood Strategic Plan

2025-2028





OUR MISSION

Salem's Pre-K Partnership program is designed to **nurture the whole child** through developmentally responsive, play-based learning that supports independence, nurtures strong relationships, builds initial literacy and numeracy skills, and celebrates each child's identity and potential. **We partner with families to create safe, inclusive environments** where children gain the skills, confidence, and love of learning they need to prepare for successful transition into kindergarten.



OUR VISION

All Salem Pre-K children enter kindergarten with confidence, curiosity, and the foundational skills to thrive—socially, emotionally, physically, and academically. We envision joyful, inclusive classrooms rooted in equity and belonging, where every child is seen, supported, and inspired. Through purposeful play, exploration, and meaningful routines, children build independence, express themselves, and grow as creative, empathetic problem-solvers eager for lifelong learning.



Overview

The Salem Pre-K Partnership Early Childhood Strategic Plan was built with a simple goal in mind: to strengthen and expand the Pre-Kindergarten learning opportunities available for every 4-year-old in Salem. To shape this plan, we engaged with educators, parents and caregivers, and examined our data to understand our existing gaps in access, quality, and inclusion.

Our work was closely aligned to the three priorities outlined in Massachusetts' Commonwealth Partnership Preschool Initiative (CPPI):

- (1) Expanding access to affordable, high-quality preschool,
- (2) Strengthening quality across local programs, and
- (3) Ensuring all children—especially those needing special education or inclusion services—have equitable opportunities to learn and thrive.

Through this process, we also added a fourth priority: Ensuring programs have the support they need to succeed.

The improvement and expansion of our Pre-K offerings is a top priority of the Salem Public Schools. This plan lays out clear steps and targeted investments to address the most urgent issues that currently limit access to ensure that every child in our community has the opportunity to start kindergarten ready to succeed.

This plan was created in partnership with the Salem Pre-K Partnership organizations:

Angela's Preschool and Daycare

Ashley's Preschool and Daycare

The Pathways for Children Head Start Program

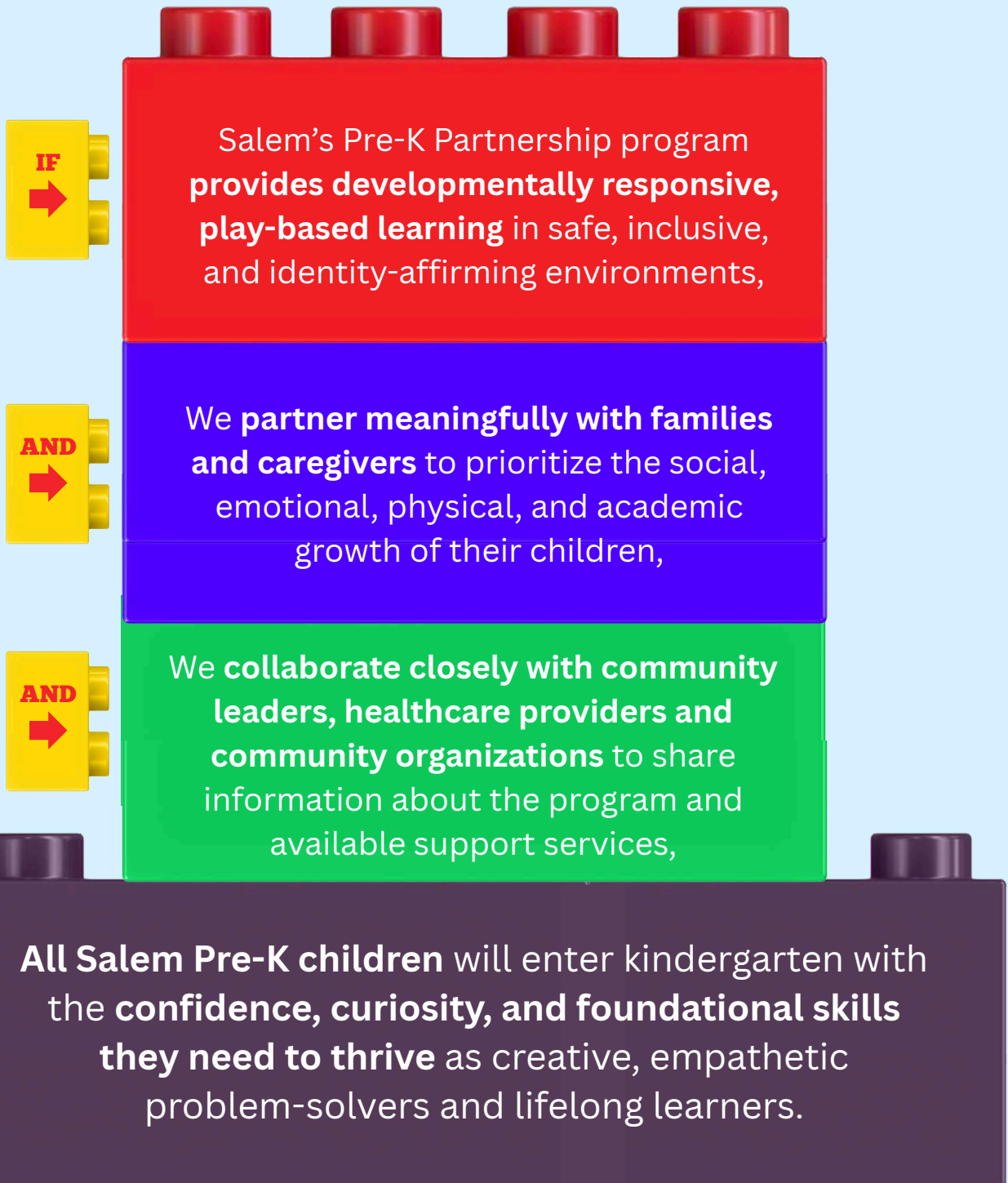
Salem Community Child Care

The Salem Public Schools Early Childcare Center

The Salem YMCA

Our Theory of Action

The building blocks for success mapped out in the Salem Pre-K Partnership's strategic plan.



Our Core Priorities



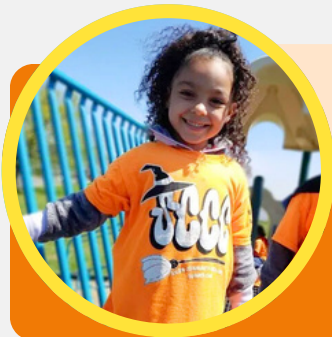
PRIORITY 1: EXPANSION AND ACCESS

We will make it as easy as possible for Salem families to navigate their Pre-K options.



PRIORITY 2: QUALITY ALIGNMENT

We will create a clear, shared framework that sets expectations for what children should experience and learn.



PRIORITY 3: EQUITABLE ACCESS

We will ensure equitable access to wraparound supports for the families we serve.



PRIORITY 4: PROGRAMMATIC SUCCESS

We will ensure our system is strong, efficient, and sustainable for the future.



Priority 1: Expansion and Access



We will make it as easy as possible
for Salem families to navigate their Pre-K options.

We aim to address barriers that make enrollment in Pre-K difficult, such as scheduling challenges, lack of transportation services, and limited options, to ensure all families have equitable access to high-quality programming.

To do this we will provide clear and accessible information about our range of Pre-K programs, so every family can understand what's available, how to enroll, and what to expect. This includes a Pre-K “Roadmap” to guide families through available programs, a centralized online enrollment system, and a transition toolkit that outlines the skills children will need for success in kindergarten.

To strengthen connections between families, schools, community organizations, and childcare providers, we plan to share up-to-date information on early learning, available supports, and resources directly with families. This will be made possible through partnerships with the Mayor’s Office, community outreach, and the Salem Children’s Cabinet.

OUR STRATEGY

1.1

Provide parents and caregivers with accessible information about Pre-K options in Salem.

1.2

Enhance efforts to connect and build relationships with parents, partners and childcare providers community-wide.

1.3

Identify and address barriers that prevent or limit families from registering for Pre-K.



Provide parents and caregivers with accessible information about Pre-K options in Salem.

1.1

1.1.1 Develop and distribute a PreK “Roadmap” to help families navigate the Salem PreK Partnership programs.

1.1.2 Work with the Mayor’s Office to create an online, centralized enrollment system and resource hub to enable families to compare preK options, and use a “Common App” style tool to apply for enrollment in multiple places at once.

1.1.3 Create and disseminate a transition toolkit to help families understand the skills students will need to successfully navigate the shift from preK to K.

Enhance efforts to connect and build relationships with parents, partners and childcare providers community-wide.

1.2

1.2.1 Work in partnership with the Mayor's office to re-establish the Salem Children’s Cabinet and Partnership Collaborative as the advocacy backbone for the city on all issues related to ensuring that families have equitable access to the resources and supports necessary for their children to thrive.

1.2.2 Launch an ongoing outreach campaign to connect with parents and caregivers directly to build understanding and enhance enrollment.

1.2.3 Build relationships with community organizations, pediatricians, business owners, realtors, childcare providers and others to share up to date information with the community about how and when to access available support and early intervention services, referral sources and preK programs.

1.2.4 Expand at home services to better support the needs of families with children ages 0-4.

Identify and address barriers that prevent or limit families from registering for Pre-K.

1.3

1.3.1 Build relationships with community partners to increase after care options balanced with play based learning and outdoor experiences.

1.3.2 Explore AM and PM hour options across partner programs to better support the needs of working parents.

1.3.3 Build a partnership with local transportation service to provide affordable shuttle service and busing options.

1.3.4 Offer tiered pricing for after-care, vacation and summer programs to support low income families.



We will create a clear, shared framework that sets expectations for what children should experience and learn.

The Salem Pre-K Partnership is committed to making sure each classroom gives children the strongest possible start. We've already taken important steps: using a shared, research-based curriculum for three- and four-year-olds, providing teachers with coaching and support, and using tools to understand how children are learning and how classrooms can keep improving. Teachers have also taken part in high-quality training on early literacy and numeracy.

We have come a long way, but there is much more work to do. To continue to strengthen our programs, we will create better ways to collect, share and use data, including a new online dashboard that will give teachers and leaders timely access. This will enable us to consistently celebrate what's working well, identify where support is needed, and make sure every child has access to a high-quality preschool experience.

OUR STRATEGY

2.1

Create accessible data management tools to track and monitor progress across programs.

2.2

Ensure all Pre-K educators receive the training and support necessary to successfully leverage research-based early childhood teaching strategies and materials.

2.3

Strengthen and support high quality curriculum alignment across all Pre-K Partnership classrooms.

2.4

Provide the training and supports necessary for multilingual learners to successfully transition into Pre-K classrooms.



Create accessible data management tools to track and monitor progress across programs.

2.1

2.1.1 Create and manage ongoing data cycle routines to create space for Pre-K partner leaders and instructional coaches, and City Connects Coordinators to regularly review classroom data and map out next steps.

2.1.2 Create and manage ongoing data cycle routines to create space for Pre-K partner leaders and instructional coaches, and City Connects Coordinators to regularly review classroom data and map out next steps.

2.1.3 Create accountability measures to track progress in order to identify, address and close behavioral and achievement inequities across programs within the Salem Pre-K Partnership.

2.1.4 Provide quality checks and support to Pre-K partners to ensure equity in experiences.

Ensure all Pre-K educators receive the training and support necessary to successfully leverage research-based early childhood teaching strategies and materials.

2.2

2.2.1 Provide principals, program directors, specialists, coaches and Pre-K educators with training on early childhood best practices.

2.2.2 Offer regular joint professional development and coaching for all district and partner Pre-K educators, including opportunities for weekly common planning time.

2.2.3 Create a Pre-K teacher mentorship program, pairing new teachers with experienced ones.

2.2.4 Offer stipends for additional professional development time outside of school hours.

Strengthen and support high quality curriculum alignment across all Pre-K Partnership classrooms.

2.3

2.3.1 Create a digital hub for shared resources, schedules, and updates across district Pre-K classrooms and partner programs.

2.3.2 Align curriculum and learning expectations between Pre-K and Kindergarten.

2.3.3 Develop clear processes and practices to support the transition to Kindergarten.

Provide the training and supports necessary for multilingual learners to successfully transition into Pre-K classrooms.

2.4

2.4.1 Apply for funding to support multilingual early learning opportunities.

2.4.2 Recruit multilingual early educators.

2.4.3 Partner with the ELPAC (English Learner Parent Advisory Council) to connect with newcomer families to share information and early childhood success stories.

2.4.4 Evaluate the need for additional dual-language Pre-K classrooms.



We will ensure equitable access to wraparound supports for the families we serve.

Young children learn and grow best when their families feel supported. In our community, many families need help accessing wraparound supports such as food assistance, mental health services, and behavioral health care. Community partners say that services for young children could be accessed more efficiently through better coordination.

Educators working with our youngest learners could benefit from additional training and support to enable them to consistently use restorative and trauma-informed practices. This means addressing attendance, behavior, and social-emotional needs without excluding children from the classroom so that every child feels safe, welcomed, and able to learn.

We are committed to building a stronger, clearer system of support for Pre-K children and their families to help schools and our partners identify children's strengths and needs early and connect families to the right services. By simplifying access, we can prevent unnecessary special education referrals and ensure each child has the opportunity to thrive.

OUR STRATEGY

3.1

Enhance early intervention and prevention practices to address challenges before children enter school.

3.2

Prepare all early childhood educators and staff to support the diverse developmental needs of all Pre-K learners.



Enhance early intervention and prevention practices to address challenges before children enter school.

3.1

3.1.1 Collaborate closely with City Connects to assess young children, pair child and/or families with the support they need as early as possible, and track progress.

3.1.2 Establish tiered intervention practices to be used across all Pre-K classrooms and train all staff on how to use them.

3.1.3 Coordinate specialized staff to provide coherent, aligned supports for each student in real time as needed throughout the year.

Prepare all early childhood educators and staff to support the diverse developmental needs of all Pre-K learners.

3.2

3.2.1 Prepare all educators, including school and program leaders, to work with children with diverse developmental needs, in order to prioritize inclusion practices.

3.2.2 Provide professional development to prepare all educators to deliver explicit SEL instruction and to employ restorative, trauma-informed practices.

3.2.3 Build educator capacity to support students with special needs who are also multilingual learners.

3.2.4 Provide training and resources to help support children with significant social-emotional needs, particularly in the transition from home to school.





Priority 4: Programmatic Success



We will ensure our system is strong, efficient, and sustainable for the future.

Children deserve to have high-quality learning experiences no matter which Pre-K classroom they attend. To create that foundation across our programs, we need clear systems, and consistent practices and support. This means building better ways to share data across schools and partner programs, reducing unnecessary paperwork, and streamlining processes so educators and staff can spend more time with children.

We are planning for the future by analyzing enrollment trends, exploring new funding opportunities, and building a pipeline of early childhood educators through internships and licensing support.

By investing in these systems now, we are confident that Salem's Pre-K programs will remain strong, consistent, and accessible for every family.

OUR STRATEGY

4.1

Establish agreements and routines to define and ensure all students are provided with equitable and consistent learning opportunities across Salem's Pre-K Partnership classrooms.

4.2

Develop the capacity, structure and supports necessary to sustain and scale the district's Pre-K system.



Establish agreements and routines to define and ensure all students are provided with equitable and consistent learning opportunities across Salem's Pre-K Partnership classrooms.

4.1

4.1.1 Develop an MOU and data sharing agreement that defines the responsibilities of the district and partner providers and includes agreed-upon guidelines related to the use and reporting of exclusionary practice

4.1.2 Develop and pilot systems that enable the Partnership to monitor its impact, track data including daily attendance, and identify areas for continued improvement.

4.1.3 Reduce paperwork by streamlining processes and providing templates to reduce the administrative load.

4.1.4 Explore ways to pool funding and administrative resources to support efficiency.

4.1.5 Create a dedicated Pre-K Director position to oversee all Pre-K programs districtwide.

Develop the capacity, structure and supports necessary to sustain and scale the district's Pre-K system.

4.2

4.2.1 Analyze census, demographic and real estate trends to forecast future enrollment needs.

4.2.2 Annually review and update current demand for Pre-K seats and patterns of K enrollment to inform planning.

4.2.3 Seek a sustainable, multi-source funding model, that includes increased Pre-K Ch. 70 funding.

4.2.4 Build the pipeline of future early childhood educators by offering student internships and job-embedded licensing opportunities.



Glossary of Terms

Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI): The CPPI grant funds local communities across Massachusetts to implement plans to provide 3 and 4-year-olds in a district/community with equitable access to high quality preschool through partnerships with private providers.

Dual identified: Students who are both identified as having a disability and also as an English Language Learner (ELL). This means they require both special education services to support their disability and supports to help them learn English.

Early Childhood Education (ECE): This refers to both the formal and informal learning experiences provided to young children from birth to approximately age 8, primarily focusing on their preschool years (birth to age 5). It aims to support a child's holistic development, including their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical well-being, preparing them for formal schooling and a lifetime of learning. ECE programs, such as preschools and childcare facilities, often involve play-based and experiential learning to foster curiosity, develop essential skills, and create a nurturing environment for young learners.

Mixed delivery system: This is a system where publicly funded Pre-K programs are delivered through a variety of public and private settings, including local education agencies (LEAs), licensed child care centers, and community-based organizations. A primary goal of a mixed delivery model is to ensure access to high-quality, affordable options for children and their families.

Multilingual: Individuals who are multilingual have the ability to effectively communicate in multiple languages.

Pre-K or Pre-Kindergarten: Pre-K are structured programs that offer some educational content for children who are 4 years old.

Preschool: When we refer to preschool we are talking about educational programs for 3 year olds focusing on play-based learning and social-emotional development.

Salem Pre-K Partnership: The Salem Pre-K Partnership is a network of community based organizations and the Salem Public Schools focused on strengthening equity and access to high quality programs for 3 and 4 year olds. Currently the Salem Pre-K Partnership consists of Salem Community Childcare, Ashley's Preschool & Daycare, Salem YMCA, Angela's Preschool & Daycare, Pathways for Children and the Salem Public Schools.

Universal Pre-K: The aim of Universal Pre-K is to provide every 4 year old who wants a seat access to a free, publicly-funded educational program that is high quality regardless of family income or circumstances.



The Salem Pre-K Partnership

Angela's Preschool and Daycare

Ashley's Preschool and Daycare

**The Pathways for Children
Head Start Program**

Salem Community Child Care

**The Salem Public Schools
Early Childcare Center**

The Salem YMCA

Salem Public Schools