

Georgia's Pre-K Credential and Salary Frequently Asked Questions for Teachers

This document is designed to provide guidance only. All Georgia's Pre-K Program personnel are employees of the Pre-K provider for whom they work, not DECAL or the State of Georgia. For this reason, teachers should direct specific salary questions to their employer.

General Questions

Where can I find information on teacher credential requirements for Georgia's Pre-K Lead and Assistant teachers?

- For information on lead teacher credentials, refer to sections 12.3 – 12.6 in the Georgia's Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines. For information specific to assistant teacher credentials, refer to section 13.3 in the Guidelines. The Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines document is posted at <http://dec.al.ga.gov/Prek/Teachers.aspx>.

Where can I find information pertaining to teacher salary for Georgia's Pre-K Lead and Assistant teachers?

- For lead teacher salary information refer to section 12.3 and 12.7 in the Pre-K Providers' Operating Guidelines. For assistant teacher salary information, refer to section 13.4.

If a Pre-K teacher is already paid above the salary minimum, is the program required to increase lead or assistant teacher salary?

- To meet the Pre-K grant budget requirements, a Pre-K program must meet the minimum salary requirements for each lead and assistant teacher. Pre-K programs are required to pay lead teachers a minimum of 90% of the total base salary funded by DECAL and 100% of supplemental compensation. Assistant teacher salary is paid at a rate of \$16,190.35 regardless of years of experience. Pre-K programs are required to pay assistant teachers 100% of the salary funded by DECAL.

Paying a lead or assistant teacher over the minimum salary requirement is at the discretion of the employer.

Are Pre-K programs required to provide benefits to Pre-K teachers?

- DECAL provides funding for lead and assistant teachers benefits; however, Pre-K programs are not required to provide benefits to teachers. Offering benefits is at the discretion of the employer. Examples of benefits include health insurance, life insurance, flexible benefits such as dental and vision, dependent child care and the employer's portion of federal and state taxes.

Teachers should direct questions specific to benefits to their employer.

Lead Teacher Salary Information and Questions:

The lead teacher salary has two components: base salary and supplemental compensation. Base salary is based on the teacher's verified credential(s). Supplemental compensation is based on the teacher's creditable years of experience.

- **Base Salary:** Providers are required to pay lead teachers a minimum of 90% of the total salary funded by DECAL. Salaries are negotiated between the provider and the teacher. Providers have the ability to set base salary levels as long as the minimum salary requirement is met.
- **Supplemental Compensation:** Supplemental compensation includes a 3% increase in base salary for each two years of creditable years of experience up to 20 years. Supplemental compensation is cumulative and is based on the teacher's history as a Georgia's Pre-K lead teacher and/or history as a certified teacher in a K-12 public school. Providers are required to pay teachers 100% of supplemental compensation funded by DECAL. This supplement should be part of the lead teacher's salary and should be paid in a manner consistent with the base salary (weekly, monthly, etc.). The supplement

may not be used as a salary bonus. It is not acceptable to hold the salary supplement and pay mid-year or at the completion of the school year.

Is there a resource to help me calculate my salary for the 2019-2020 school year?

- The *2019-2020 Salary Estimate Worksheet for Lead Teachers* is available to help teachers calculate their salary for the 2019-2020 school year. The Salary Estimate Worksheet is posted at <http://dec.al.ga.gov/PreK/Teachers.aspx> under the Lead Teacher Credential/Salary tab.

What are *Creditable Years of Experience*?

- For Georgia's Pre-K Program, *Creditable Years of Experience* (CYE) are defined as all years taught as a full-time lead teacher in a Georgia's Pre-K Program (public or private) with an approved credential and all years taught as a full-time certified teacher in a K-12 public school. A teacher must have taught full-time for at least six months of the school year (60% of the year) to receive credit for one full year.

Do years taught as a substitute teacher count?

- Teaching experience associated with substitute teaching, student teaching, teacher aide/assistant teacher experience, part-time or temporary teaching positions should not be included when counting years of experience.

What if the lead teacher did not work a full year in Georgia's Pre-K and/or a full year as a certified teacher in a K-12 public school? How much of a school year must have been worked to count toward *Creditable Years of Experience*?

- The lead teacher must have worked full-time for at least 6 months of the school year (60%) to receive credit for one full year.

What if the years taught in Georgia's Pre-K and/or a K-12 public school were not consecutive? If a teacher left and then came back, does *Creditable Years of Experience* start over?

- *Creditable Years of Experience* do not have to be consecutive.

If a teacher taught in a public school in another state, do those years count toward *Creditable Years of Experience*?

- Years of experience taught in another state will count toward *Creditable Years of Experience* if the teacher held a valid, in-field state education certificate related to the field of employment and was under contract during the period in which the experience was earned.

How will *Creditable Years of Experience* be determined and who will be responsible for verification?

- Pre-K programs are responsible for verifying a teacher's creditable years of experience. Providers should have written processes and/or policies regarding verification of *Creditable Years of Experience* for their program. Teachers are responsible for providing their employer appropriate documentation to verify their teaching experience.

What forms of documentation should teachers provide their employer to verify teaching experience?

- Teacher contracts, letters from human resources or former employers, and Experience Verification Forms are examples of what can be provided to verify CYE. Employment applications/resumes, teaching certificates, training certificates, data from the GaPDS, and data from the Teacher's Retirement System of Georgia (TRS) should not be used. DECAL will conduct audits and reviews to verify creditable years of experience reported by Pre-K programs.

When determining *Creditable Years of Experience*, should programs only count the years the teacher worked at their present program?

- When determining a teacher's *Creditable Years of Experience*, a program should count the years at their program as well as the years the teacher taught in another Georgia's Pre-K Program (public or private) with an approved credential and all the years taught as a certified teacher in a K-12 public school.

Creditable Years of Experience being reported for me is incorrect. Who should I contact to report additional years?

- Teachers should address Creditable Years of Experience concerns with their employer. If the number of years reported is incorrect, the teacher should provide their employer documentation to support all qualifying years of experience. The Pre-K program is responsible for submitting the information to DECAL and requesting correction.

What is the difference between a Certified Level 4 and a Certified Level 5?

- Teachers at Level 4 hold a minimum of a Bachelor's degree and have completed requirements for Georgia teacher certification. Teachers at Level 5 hold a minimum of a Master's degree and have completed requirements for Georgia teacher certification.

If a teacher has a Master's degree but does not hold Level 5 certification, does that teacher qualify for the Level 5 salary?

- A teacher with a Master's degree but not a Level 5 certification does not qualify for the Level 5 certification salary. To qualify for the Certified Level 5 (Master's), the teacher must hold Level 5 certification.

If a teacher has a Level 6 certification, at what level will the teacher be paid?

- Teachers with Level 6 certification (Specialist) will be paid at the Certified Level 5 (Master's). Teachers with a Level 7 (Doctorate) will be paid at the Certified Level 5 (Master's).