# Preschool Instructional Coach (PIC) and Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialist (PIRS) Information

## Information for districts when determining how best to fulfill the coaching positions

### Purpose:

Current Preschool Expansion Aid (PEA) funded districts are required to provide Preschool Instructional Coaches (PICs) and Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialists (PIRS) to support preschool program implementation. The quality of the program is affected by how the roles are fulfilled and implemented. The intent of this document is to provide information to districts that will help inform their decision making.

Districts must review and follow [N.J.A.C. 6A:13A Elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs](https://www.nj.gov/education/code/current/title6a/chap13a.pdf) to understand the requirements and responsibilities of the positions.

* The district shall provide Preschool Instructional Coaches (PICs) at a ratio of no more than twenty (20) preschool classrooms for each PIC.
* The district shall provide Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialists (PIRS) at a ratio of no more than twenty (20) preschool classrooms for each PIRS.
* An individual serving in a dual role as a PIC and PIRS must be assigned no more than twenty (20) classrooms in any combination (i.e. a PIC who is assigned twelve (12) classrooms would be able to serve as PIRS to no more than eight (8) classrooms).
* All individuals fulfilling the role(s) are required to attend and complete specific New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) professional development sessions.

## Questions to consider when fulfilling the role of the Preschool Instructional Coach (PIC) or Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialist (PIRS)

### District employee:

* Does the individual meet the education and experience requirements?
* For those districts with fewer than 20 preschool classrooms, will the individual serve in multiple roles?
* Is the individual able to dedicate the appropriate amount of time, as outlined in [N.J.A.C. 6A:13A](https://www.nj.gov/education/code/current/title6a/chap13a.pdf), to the position? If districts serve less than twenty (20) classrooms, consider the proration of time (i.e., twelve (12) classrooms = minimum of 60% of program operating time dedicated to the role).
* Is the individual able to fulfill all required components of the role in the time allocated to the position (i.e., reflective coaching, modeling Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP), responding to PIRS Request for Assistance (RFA), creating and providing professional development, implementing structured observation tools)?

### Shared service with another district:

* Does the individual meet the education and experience requirements?
* Which district will serve as the lead school district to employ the individual?
* Who will be responsible for supervision of the individual in each district?
* Is there a memorandum of understanding or contract in place between districts outlining time allocations for each district?
* When combined, will the allowable ratio of one (1) PIC and/or one (1) PIRS for twenty (20) classrooms be maintained?
* Are districts implementing the same curriculum? If not, has the PIC demonstrated an understanding and expertise in each district’s chosen curriculum?
* Is the individual able to fulfill all required components of the role (i.e., reflective coaching, modeling DAP, working with PIRS Request for Assistance (RFA), creating and providing professional development, implementing structured observation tools)?
* Has the district budgeted and planned additional time for individuals who are fulfilling these roles to attend NJDOE training outside of the time allocated to meet their coaching responsibilities?

### Head Start Coaches:

* Does the individual meet the education and experience requirements as outlined in [N.J.A.C. 6A:13A](https://www.nj.gov/education/code/current/title6a/chap13a.pdf)?
* Is there a memorandum of understanding or contract in place between the district and Head Start outlining time allocations for coaching PEA funded classrooms?
* When combined with any other responsibilities, will the allowable ratio of one (1) PIC and/or one (1) PIRS for twenty (20) classrooms be maintained?
* Is the individual able to fulfill all required components of the role (i.e., reflective coaching, modeling DAP, working with PIRS Request for Assistance (RFA), creating and providing professional development, implementing structured observation tools)?
* How will the district administrators and coaches communicate and collaborate with the Head Start coaches?
* How will collaboration with the district occur around professional development?
* Has the district budgeted and planned additional time for individuals who are fulfilling these roles to attend NJDOE training outside of the time allocated to meet their coaching responsibilities?
* If a Head Start coach meets all requirements and is fulling all responsibilities for the Head Start classrooms, and the district is in mutual agreement, the Head Start coach can be designated as the PIC. A Memorandum of Understanding is recommended to ensure that all coaching responsibilities are met and that communication between both parties occurs.

### Consultants:

* Contracts should be in place that clearly state the requirements of the position, as outlined in [N.J.A.C. 6A:13A Elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs](https://www.nj.gov/education/code/current/title6a/chap13a.pdf). It is the responsibility of the district to ensure all aspects of the positions are met.
* Has the district confirmed that the contracted consultant will maintain the allowable ratio for the position(s), inclusive of all districts that the consultant is servicing?
* Has the district budgeted and planned additional time for individuals who are fulfilling these roles to attend NJDOE training outside of the time allocated to meet their coaching responsibilities?
* Has the district ensured that appropriate time allocations for their districts are in place? (i.e., twelve (12) classrooms = minimum 60% of program operating time dedicated to the role).
* Does the PEA budget reflect the time and funds needed for the contracted individual?
* Does the contract indicate how each required component of the role will be fulfilled?
* Does the individual meet the education and experience requirements?
* Has the consultant demonstrated an understanding and expertise in the district’s chosen curriculum?
* Is the individual able to fulfill all required components of the role in the time allocated to the position (i.e., reflective coaching, modeling DAP, working with PIRS Request for Assistance (RFA), creating and providing professional development, implementing structured observation tools)?