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## **Families Gain Greater Access to Free Preschool Programs with Eligibility Expansion**

*GSRP Classrooms Support Early Childhood Development for 4-year-olds*

**TRAVERSE CITY, Mich.** – Free preschool through Michigan’s Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) has never been more accessible than right now for families of all incomes.

GSRP is Michigan’s free PreK program for eligible 4-year-olds. Northwest Education Services (North Ed) supports GSRP classrooms located throughout Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau counties in area child care centers and local schools. Program availability will vary based on location, but state eligibility and enrollment requirements from the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement and Potential (MiLEAP) have been loosened to allow greater access for families with 4-year-old children.

Starting May 1, GSRP providers may enroll all age-eligible students. Providers must reserve at least 10% of slots per classroom until Aug. 15 for the most eligible students, determined by [family income](#). After Aug. 15, any age-eligible students with completed applications may be enrolled. Early enrollment can start no sooner than one week before the provider’s start date for GSRP programming. Children must be 4 years old on or before Dec. 1, 2025 to be eligible for enrollment for the 2025-26 school year.

North Ed is one of 56 intermediate school districts across the state working with local public schools and community-based organizations to strengthen the early childhood education network.

“Increasing access to free, high-quality preschool through programs like GSRP is a crucial investment in our children and our community,” said Tracy Spincich, North Ed’s Birth to 5 early childhood coordinator. “We know that a strong start in education significantly impacts a child’s entire learning trajectory. This expansion means more local families will have the opportunity to give their children the tools they need to succeed not only as they enter school, but as engaged learners throughout their lives.”

GSRP classrooms support the development of young children and prepare them for successful entry into kindergarten using developmentally appropriate practices, guided by research-based curriculum. Children are introduced to math, reading and thinking skills through fun, hands-on activities while learning crucial social skills, like how to share, take turns and make friends.

GSRP classrooms vary in availability and offerings by geographic location and operator. Families will be expected to commit to either a four- or five-day schedule, depending on each site's offerings. Operators may include options for transportation and fee-based before- and after-school programs.

[Applications](#) may be submitted through Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency (NMCAA). More information can be found through the northwest Michigan [Help Me Grow website](#), or by contacting 231.922.7878 or [HelpMeGrow@NorthwestEd.org](mailto:HelpMeGrow@NorthwestEd.org).

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