

TALKING POINTS

for Application Launch Support

Popular Application Questions

Do you need to create a new login?

We're using a new platform this year, you can create a new login to resolve your issue. If you have accessed the system previously, you will need to set up a new username and password to complete this year's online application. New accounts may be created with a previously used email address.

If my child will be attending the same school in the Fall to I need to re-apply?

Returning children actively enrolled in CPS by April 12, 2022 will be registered at the same school and do not need to re-enroll or re-verify their information. Those enrolled after April 12 or those who wish to transfer schools need to complete a new application. Children currently enrolled in a Community-Based Program who want to stay in the same program do not need to re-apply. Children applying to a new school will need to re-apply.

When will I find out my child's placement status after I apply?

Applying during the Initial Application Period improves your child's chances of securing their seat in your family's preferred programs. The Initial Application Period will extend into mid-May. **After submitting your child's application during this time, you'll receive your child's placement notice roughly a month after your application is submitted.** If you wait to apply until **after the Initial Application Period ends**, you'll receive placement notice within 24-hours after submitting your application.

Does my child qualify for financial aid to cover the cost of tuition at Community-Based Programs?

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) funding is provided by the state to ensure low-income working parents have access to full-day care. Many Community Based Early Learning Programs have reserved slots for low-income working families who qualify for CCAP. CCAP does not apply to CPS schools. Contact a provider directly to answer more specific questions about eligibility, verification, and any associated co-pays.

Additional questions?

Call the hotline at (312) 229-1690 or use the Help Chat feature at the bottom right-hand corner of ChicagoEarlyLearning.org.

Initial Application Period

The Initial Application Period (formerly Early Bird) opens on April 19th, 2022!

What's the window for the Initial Application Period?

The Initial Application Period will be open from April 19, 2022, to mid-May 2022.

You don't have to apply during the Initial Application Period, but it will improve your child's chances of securing a seat in competitive early learning programs for Fall 2022.

Please note, that during the Initial Application Period applications are not technically considered on a first-come-first-served basis. You will receive a notification on your child's placement before someone who does not apply during the initial application period, but enrollment is still prioritized based on need during this time too.

Why apply during the Initial Application Period?

Applying during the Initial Application Period improves your child's chances of securing their seat in your family's preferred programs. The Initial Application Period will extend into mid-May. After submitting your child's application during this time, you'll receive your child's placement notice roughly a month after your application is submitted.

Choosing the Right Program for Your Child

- Under the Chicago Early Learning umbrella, both CPS and Community-Based programs are required to have the same quality ratings and accreditation.
- All programs use evidence-based curricula and assessments to ensure children are on track for kindergarten.

	CPS Pre-K	Community-Based Programs
Age	<p>CPS Pre-K programs serve 4-year olds are all free. CPS also has universal, full-day preschool for all 4-year-olds.</p> <p>CPS also accepts 3-year-olds to half-day programs, but seating is limited.</p>	<p>Community-based programs serve children from birth to 5 years old.</p> <p>There are more full-day 3-year-old placements at Community-Based programs. CBOs also serve infants and toddlers.</p>
Cost	<p>Children who are three years old on or before September 1, 2022, are eligible for CPS' limited half-day programs.</p>	<p>Some sites are free and others charge minimal fees based on income.</p> <p><i>For example, families receiving government assistance are eligible for subsidies to reduce any costs associated with enrollment.</i></p>
Hours	<p>Some CPS schools partner with neighborhood programs to offer before and after school care (7 am – 3 pm).</p>	<p>CBOs are generally open longer (6 am – 6 pm) and most offer before and after school programs.</p>

Enrollment Prioritization

Priority Eligibility Criteria Explained

Enrollment is prioritized based on need as identified by a family's socioeconomic status, the child's age, and for children attending CPS Pre-K there are a couple of new factors, too. There's a seat for every child up to age five in early learning programs across the city, but here is a breakdown for the two main Chicago Early Learning program types:

CPS Pre-K Programs

- Socio-economic factors, including children in foster care, temporary living situations (STLS), family income at or below 100% of FPL, and children with IEPs.
- Siblings in grades K-8 at the same school.
- Applying to attend the student's kindergarten attendance area school.
- Proximity within a 1.5-mile radius of the school or CPS Early Learning Center.

Community-Based Early Learning Programs

- Children who are at least three years old, as of public school eligibility date
- Lower-income families are ranked above higher-income families.
- Children who are categorically eligible (homeless children, foster children, children from families receiving SSI or TANF) are treated as if they have zero income.

Application Process

Families with preschool-aged children can submit a single application for each child to any Chicago Early Learning program. Enrolling your child in an early learning program is easy and the application is open year-round. Follow these easy steps for your application:

1. Visit chicagoeearlylearning.org, click "Apply", and create an online account for your family. The application is available in English, Spanish, Polish, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Urdu, Arabic, Yoruba, and Chinese.
2. Fill in the information for your family, such as employment and income, information on your child, and your top choice preschool sites.
3. If your child receives an offer, you will be contacted with information on how to verify your child's preschool seats.

Application Support and Verification

Families with questions or needing support completing the application can call (312) 229-1690 for assistance with applications for both CPS schools and Community Based Early Learning Programs.

Once you receive a placement offer, you'll receive an email that provides instructions for verifying your family's details such as income, and proof of your Chicago address. You'll also need to bring your child's birth certificate. Verifications will take place at your child's school or at one of the 5 Family Resource Centers located across the city at local Chicago Public Libraries.

If you're offered a program seat and would like to accept, you will be able to contact the school directly to make an appointment or make an appointment online at ChicagoEarlyLearning.org on the Family Resource Centers page.

Additionally, families can visit a Family Resource Center at select Public Libraries for application and verification support. During the 2022 application period families will be able to apply in person and verify enrollment at the following Family Resource Centers.

Sulzer Regional Library	4455 N Lincoln Ave, Chicago, IL 60625
Woodson Regional Library	9525 S Halsted St, Chicago, IL 60628
Legler Regional Library	115 S Pulaski Rd, Chicago, IL 60624
Little Village Branch	2311 S Kedzie Ave, Chicago, IL 60623
Colman School	4655 S Dearborn St, Chicago, IL 60609

Families applying to CPS Pre-K programs may also be able to verify in-person at the program they applied to.

NOTE: You cannot verify your child's application if they're still waitlisted.

Enrolling

After verifying your child's early learning application, you'll need to visit the program your child will attend in the Fall. At this stage, you will also need to submit proof of a current physical and an immunization record for your child, so you'll need to book your doctor's appointment before enrolling. We also recommend that you call ahead to make an appointment at the early learning program your child will attend to complete their enrollment for the upcoming school year!

Diverse Learners

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)

If your child has an IEP and you have been directed by the CPS Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) to complete the online application, you may apply online. If you were not directed to complete the application, please contact the ODLSS School Assignment hotline at (773) 553-1847 for assistance.

If your child needs an IEP/504 evaluation, please call CPS Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) at (773) 553-1800.

Summer Programs

Summer hours for our Chicago Early Learning sites may vary. Many community-based organizations offer summer hours. Please contact the site of interest directly to learn more about the summer programs and hours offered.

The Value of Early Learning

- 90% of a child's brain development occurs by the age of 5.
- The brain triples in size in the first two years of life – which is why a child's learning experiences during that window are so predictive of her success later on.
- Early learning experiences lay the foundations of their minds for the rest of their lives.
- Children who attend quality early learning programs are more likely to enter kindergarten with a solid grasp of language and math and have more positive relationships with their parents.

Additional Questions?

Contact your preferred program directly, call the Chicago Early Learning Hotline at (312) 229-1690, or visit ChicagoEarlyLearning.org.