

Did you know that 85% of your child's brain growth occurs in the first five years of life? Studies show that language, social skills and a love of learning emerge well before kindergarten.

And did you know that learning in the early years sets the pace for all later learning? Children who attend a quality early learning program start out up to two years ahead of those without pre-k, and stay ahead right through high school.

That's why the city now has pre-k classes open to all 4-year-olds, both in the schools and in the community, at no cost. All you have to do is apply. Just follow the simple steps inside.



## Other Questions About Pre-k?

### Q: Are all four year olds guaranteed a place in a program?

A: No. Children are accepted and placed in a program based on the availability of seats in each classroom. But this year, the city has greatly expanded the program to approximately 54,000 seats.

### Q: Who get first priority in popular programs?

A: Siblings get first priority. Then zoned students applying to their own school. Third priority is given to students who live in the district, but whose zoned school has no pre-k or district students with no zoned schools.

### Q: Is busing available?

A: No. There is no busing available for pre-kindergarten.

### Q: Someone has suggested my child needs special education services. What should I do?

A: Special education services are provided if an assessment determines your child needs these services. If you want your child assessed, tell the school staff when you apply for pre-k.

### Q: What if my child does not speak English?

A: Your child may be able to enroll in a bilingual/dual language class, or your child will receive English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.

### Q: Does my child need to be a U.S. citizen to be eligible for free pre-kindergarten services?

A: No, neither you nor your child has to be a U.S. citizen. No one should ask you to provide information about your citizenship status.

### Q: How do I find my child's zoned school is located?

A: Call 311 and give them your address. Or call 888-469-5999 and speak to a parent counselor. You can also go online to the Department of Education's website. You will be able to enter your address in the search engine at the site to find your zoned school.

### Q: What about health insurance?

A: If your child doesn't have health insurance, the city may be able to help—as part of the pre-k enrollment process. Your child may be eligible for Child Health Plus, an insurance plan open to children under 19, regardless of immigration status. Medical care, including eye and dental care, is provided under Child Health Plus. For more information, see the brochure "Steps for Success" online at [http://schools.nyc.gov/Early\\_Childhood](http://schools.nyc.gov/Early_Childhood).



# Will your child turn four this year?



## Then it's time to sign up for FREE preschool!

A Parent's Easy Guide to Applying for the city's Prekindergarten program



New York City currently offers **prekindergarten classes in 500 public schools and more than 600 community sites**, so you are likely to find a pre-k class in your neighborhood. The enrollment process is under way for the coming year, and **children who turn four years old by December 31 are eligible** for FREE pre-k classes!

The enrollment process for programs in the schools and at community sites is different. **It's wise to apply to both to guarantee a space for your child.** For pre-k classes in a local public school pre-k, you must apply by April 18, listing your five top choices. If that deadline has passed, don't despair. There are still many community-based pre-k programs with openings. You can apply directly to each program that is of interest to you.

Most operate for a part-day, about 2.5 hours, either in the morning or in the afternoon. But many community sites offer extended day, year-round programs that working parents need, with pre-k services built into the day. The cost of the rest of the day may be covered by child care subsidies, Head Start and/or parent fees. A growing number of school-based sites also offer services for a full school day.

***How do you get started?  
Just follow these easy steps.***

### Step 1: See if your child is eligible.

This is the easy part: Any child in New York City who will be **four years old** by December 31 can attend **FREE** pre-k classes, **regardless of immigration or citizenship status.**

### Step 2: Learn more about FREE pre-k programs in your neighborhood and get an application.

If you have a computer, you can get a directory of public school and community based organization pre-k programs and an application at <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/PreK>. The directories are also available at your local elementary schools. For more help:

- **Call 311 and ask how to apply for pre-k.** This is the city's helpline, and the operators who answer the phone can tell you how to apply.
- **Call 888-469-5999 and speak to a parent counselor.** This is the New York City Child Care Consortium, which can help with pre-k as other child care services. The service is free and open to anyone who calls.



### Step 3: Submit your application.

- **For pre-k classes in the public schools:** Applications for *public school pre-k must be submitted by mail.* Parents will then be notified about pre-k seats in the public schools.
- **For pre-k classes at community sites:** Community-based programs can accept applications directly, up until October 31. The Department of Education's directory of pre-k programs, posted online at <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/PreK>, has a complete list of community programs that offer pre-k classes.

Once you find a program convenient for you—either near your home or workplace—call the program for more information and to make an appointment to visit. If you need help in figuring out what questions to ask or how to narrow your choices, you can call 888-469-5999 and work with a parent counselor. This free service can provide you with tips and brochures on what to look for in a quality program.

### Step 4: Register for Pre-k Classes.

**Pre-k classes in the public schools will notify you about how and when to register your child, once you are accepted.** Each school sets its own date. Whenever it is, you will need to come to the school with your child, as well as certain documents, such as proof of birth and address.

**Community programs can register you at your convenience.** You will also need to bring your child and the same documents, when you register.