



# Durham PreK FAQs 2021-2022 School Year

## Application Process and Placement Questions

### My child turns 4 in June. Can we apply?

Yes. Students that turn 4 on or by August 31, 2021 can apply for Durham PreK.

### What about my child that turns 5 in September?

Children that turn 5 in September 2021 are eligible and encouraged to apply to Durham PreK.

If a child does not turn 5 on or before August 31st, they may not enroll in Kindergarten without going through the early admission to kindergarten process through [Durham Public Schools](https://www.durhampublicschools.org).

### My son still has a visa and is in the process of getting his green card, can he still be accepted in a public school?

Yes. Your child can be accepted into a public school and all PreK programs.

### What kind of seat availability is there?

During the 2019-2020 school year, there were 1,096 publicly funded pre-k seats in Durham County (excluding pre-k seats at Watts and Morehead Magnet schools and pre-k students receiving exceptional services at Durham Public Schools). Seat numbers slightly decreased due to COVID-19, but we project returning to about 1,096 pre-k seats for the upcoming school year (SY21-22).

### What percentage of families receive a placement?

Most families that applied during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years received a PreK placement. Some families declined their seat placement, but most applicants were offered a seat either before the school year began or during the school year.

### How will we know if our application is submitted properly?

When you complete the application process through our online application portal, you will receive a confirmation email letting you know that your application was submitted properly. If we notice that your application is missing any information or documentation, you will receive an



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email stating what information is missing. Once that documentation is submitted, you will receive an additional email to confirm the completed application.

### **If I started an application last year, is my application still on file for my child?**

All families that want to be considered for a PreK seat for the upcoming school year must submit a SY 21-22 Durham PreK application. This application will be available on February 15, 2021 at 10 am on <https://www.durhamprek.org/>.

### **Do you have to submit all your documents on February 15th?**

No. You can start the application, but save your progress and upload your documentation when you are ready to upload it. We strongly encourage families to complete their application by May 14, 2021 to be considered for all programs.

### **How do you upload documents with the online application?**

Our application online tool allows parents to upload their documents to their application. If you have any questions about this process, please contact our Durham PreK Information Desk at 1-833-733-5338.

### **Is it first come, first serve?**

The Durham PreK application process is not a first come, first serve process. The PreK Partners (DPS, DHS, NC Pre-K, and Durham PreK) consider the following information for child placement:

- Educational needs of child
- Address (home or work address as noted by family in application)
- Sibling's school location
- Family's school preferences as listed on the application (preferences are considered, but not guaranteed)
- If a child meets any priority eligibility for PreK services

### **Can families indicate their preference for pre-k programs in Durham Public Schools?**

Durham Public Schools are not included in the preference list in the application.

### **Do children with IEPs automatically qualify for DPK Title I?**

Children with IEPs must apply through the Durham PreK application process. Students' academic and educational needs are considered in placement, but it does not automatically qualify them for a Title I pre-k classroom. Some students with IEPs are served in their existing programs or other programs and will continue receiving their IEP services in that classroom. We encourage families with children with an IEP to discuss pre-k with their IEP team.



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In Durham Head Start, children with IEPs/IFSPs receive additional points when supporting documentation is provided.

### **Does the child need to be present for the phone screening?**

Only the parent needs to be present during the phone screening. During the application process families will be asked to provide the best phone number and time frame for the phone screening. A trained staff member will call the family during the time to complete the phone screening. Please note that the number may be private or blocked to keep the confidentiality of staff members.

### **Will my son meet teachers face to face for the evaluation or test to be qualified for PreK?**

Due to COVID-19, all screenings during the application process will be completed over the phone by the parent/guardian. Teachers will complete child screenings for all pre-k students at the beginning of the school year in their classrooms.

### **When do we find out if we got accepted?**

The first round of placement notifications is planned for mid-June. We strongly encourage families to apply by May 14, 2021 to be considered in the first round of placements. A second and third round of notifications will be sent in July and August for families that apply after the first round of notifications, then we will move to a rolling application process for the school year.

### **How do you assign children to a school?**

Children are placed in Private Sites and Head Start based on parent preference and/or home or work address as indicated in the application as much as possible. Parent preferences cannot be guaranteed.

If a child has been identified to attend a Durham Public Schools (DPS) classroom, DPS considers the child's base school based on their home address or the closest pre-k classroom to their base school.

### **Do we need to get a Powerschool number for our pre-K students if we apply for DPK?**

No, not for the PreK application process. Students assigned to Durham Public School pre-k classrooms may receive a Powerschool number.

### **If my child is in Head Start now, can he switch and go to an elementary school next year?**

It depends on the following: completed application, developmental screening and if a child can be better served in another program.



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### **For families with twins, can we submit one application? Will they be placed together?**

For the Durham PreK application, twins need to complete separate applications. Please call our Durham PreK Information Desk (1-833-773-5338) for more information about these steps. If students are placed at a program with 1 classroom, twins will be placed together in that classroom.

For Head Start classrooms, parents are encouraged to complete separate applications in the event that one sibling has any health concerns. They will only be placed in the same classroom if they will be attending 1 of our 2 smaller sites.

## **Application Documentation Questions**

### **What happens if a family's income changes during the school year - either increasing or decreasing?**

If a family's income changes after completing their application or during the school year, we ask that they submit updated documentation to our Durham PreK Information Desk. Family's parent fees may be re-assessed once we receive updated income documentation. Please call 1-833-773-5338 or email [prek@childcareservices.org](mailto:prek@childcareservices.org) if you have questions regarding changes in income or would like to submit updated income documentation.

For Durham Head Start, parents can update their application.

### **Will monthly income be based on overtime or only regularly scheduled hours?**

If overtime is on the pay stubs, then it will be included in household income but solely as frequently as it was received.

### **What needs to be submitted for self-employment?**

Your 2020 tax information, the most recent month's profit/loss/expenditure statements, or contact Allie Brown at the PreK information desk at 1-833-773-5338 or [prek@childcareservices.org](mailto:prek@childcareservices.org) for an application specific form.

### **If parents file taxes separately, are both W-2's required for the application?**

If both parents or stepparents are living in the home with the PreK child, then income information for both will be required. All gross household income of parents/stepparents/legal guardians living with the PreK child is required



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## Durham PreK Calendar, Hours and Wrap Care

### Are there different start dates?

Most Durham PreK classrooms follow the Traditional School Calendar with the exception of Holt and Persontown elementary schools, which follow the Year-Round School Schedule. Some classrooms may stagger entry at the start of the school year to help with the transition process. We recommend families follow up with their assigned PreK site for specific start dates.

### What does a typical day look like in a Durham PreK program?

Our [Why Pre-K?](#) page on our Durham PreK website provides information about what a typical day looks like in our pre-k programs. This page includes a sample PreK day schedule, examples of activities and teacher interviews.

### Will they attend 6.5 hours everyday? Do children struggle with this time commitment in the classroom?

The traditional PreK calendar builds in some early release days throughout the school year, approximately one per month, however, yes, they would be expected to attend the entire 6.5 hour day. Children typically adjust to the time commitment quickly as the daily schedule of the classroom keeps the children engaged in a play-based curriculum.

### For traditional school year calendars, what do parents do over the summer?

Many of our PreK sites offer summer camp/care options. Please visit our [site locations](#) page to learn more about our sites and their offerings.

### Are there consequences to a school or program if a child is absent on a regular basis?

Regular attendance is strongly encouraged to ensure your child is given the greatest opportunity to succeed in the classroom and to be the most prepared for kindergarten at the end of the school year. The site director should make several attempts to contact the family and determine the reason for the child's regular absence. If the site director feels that the family needs to be unenrolled from the site, the contract administrator of each program will work with the site to create a timeline for disenrollment.

### If we co-parent, can multiple parents switch between pick up/drop off?

Yes. Please provide that information directly to your assigned PreK site.

### How does the Scholarship program support wrap-around care for PreK?



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CCSA's Child Care Scholarship Program offers assistance paying for care before and after the PreK day on qualifying seats for families who meet eligibility criteria. Information on family eligibility can be found on the [Scholarship Program page](#) of the CCSA website. Not all PreK programs offer wrap around care every year, and not all wrap around care options are open to scholarship support. Bilingual Scholarship Counselors can answer general questions about family eligibility and direct families toward information about wrap around care at specific sites.

## Durham PreK Program Questions

### Is there a list of programs?

Our PreK list of programs can be found on our [Site Locations](#) page of our Durham PreK website.

### Where can we review the curriculum?

All programs follow [Creative Curriculum and use TS Gold](#) for assessments. Our [Why PreK?](#) page also provides more information about a typical day in PreK what types of activities and curriculum programs provide.

### Are all the programs following the same virtual lesson plan? If not, is there a resource, like a rating system, that provides ways each program is coping with COVID?

Programs use Creative Curriculum to plan their in-person and virtual lesson plans. Since Creative Curriculum allows for a child-centered, play based approach to learning, classroom virtual lesson plans are guided by the needs and interests of the students in that classroom.

There is not a rating system for how each program is coping with COVID. NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) provides cluster reports found [here](#). To read more about the COVID-19 safe and healthy guidelines PreK programs follow, please click [here](#).

### What is the difference between all these programs? Income?

All PreK classrooms follow the same high-quality standards including a B-K licensed teacher, high-quality research-based curriculum, professional development and coaching for teachers and directors and strong family engagement.

Programs differ in their eligibility criteria, the funding of the classroom and the building where the classroom is located. Our Durham PreK [infographic](#) details the eligibility criteria for our pre-k partners.



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### Do children experience more success in kindergarten after being in a PreK program?

In PreK, students develop social and emotional skills that support success in kindergarten. To read more about the benefits of pre-k, please click [here](#).

### Do any programs have gifted options?

No. Our PreK programs do not offer gifted options. Our curriculum is child centered and the teacher will provide developmentally appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of the students in the classroom

### Do children need to be potty trained?

Children need to be potty trained to attend pre-k. For children receiving exceptional children services at Durham Public Schools, there may be some exceptions made on a case-by-case basis.

In Durham Head Start, we prefer that children are potty trained but we will work with families in accomplishing that goal.

### Do you offer transportation?

Transportation for all PreK partners is the responsibility of the family/parent/guardian.

### What is Title I?

Title I preschool programs are designed to improve cognitive, health and social-emotional outcomes for eligible children below the grade at which an LEA (Local Education Agency) provides a free public elementary education. In Durham, Durham Public Schools provides Title I preschool education to children who turn 4 by August 31st of the applying school year. Selection into a Title I preschool classroom is based on academic need. To read more about Title I preschool programs in North Carolina, please click [here](#).

## COVID-19 and Virtual Instruction

### Will the COVID-19 vaccine be required?

Currently, the COVID-19 vaccine is not approved for use with children under the age of 16. Durham PreK follows North Carolina's Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) guidelines in regards to the health and safety requirements of pre-k classrooms. To read more click [here](#).



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## Is virtual schooling an option?

This school year (2020-21), parents have the option of picking either in-person or virtual schooling for their children.

State and local leaders have not made decisions about virtual PreK options for next school year. We are working with school leaders and monitoring the guidance from health and safety experts to plan and prepare for the 2021-22 school year. Durham PreK Partners' number one priority to ensure the safety of the children and staff at each site.

As soon as decisions are made about the upcoming school year, we will notify all applicants via email and update our website with this information.

## General Questions

### Will there be any other Family Info Session?

Our team will hopefully be hosting other Family Info Sessions to ensure all families are able to attend and learn more about Durham PreK! Be sure to follow Durham PreK on social media to learn about any other Family Info Sessions that we host in the future.

### My child does not speak English very well. Is that okay?

Our teachers work to support children that are learning English in all our PreK programs. Our programs also work to communicate for families in their preferred language.

### My child does not speak very much. What is the best option for him?

The application process helps PreK partners to find the most supportive classroom to promote your child's development. All PreK programs will support your child and all PreK students in their development. Your assigned program and teacher can also connect families to additional resources or services if they are needed.

### Can I apply for a Magnet school?

To learn more about DPS Magnet schools and the application process, please click [here](#).

We do have PreK classrooms at some DPS magnet schools, but if you attend these schools for PreK you still need to apply through the magnet application process to attend the magnet school for kindergarten.



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## Kindergarten Information

### Is there testing to see if a child is ready for kindergarten?

To learn more about Kindergarten readiness testing, please visit Durham Public Schools' [kindergarten](#) web pages.

### How do I apply for kindergarten?

The kindergarten registration process begins on February 15<sup>th</sup> at DPS. To learn more about the kindergarten registration process, please click [here](#).

### If my child enters a public school in Durham, will she have priority for that school when she enrolls in kindergarten?

Not all elementary schools in Durham have PreK. Durham Public Schools try to place pre-k students in their base school or the school closest to their base school. For those students that are assigned to a PreK classroom at a Magnet school such as Holt and Pearis Elementary Schools, families would need to apply to that Magnet school for Kindergarten through the Magnet Application Process.



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