



**Princeton Public Schools**

# **Preschool Information Session 2023-2024**

# What does it mean to be a Preschool Expansion district?

As a Preschool Expansion district, Princeton Public Schools receives funding from the State of New Jersey to provide age-eligible 3 and 4-year olds with a full-day of high quality preschool programming (N.J.A.C. 6A:13A-2.1)

2019-2020: 4 Classrooms/ 60 spots  
2020-2021: 5 Classrooms/ 75 spots  
2021-2022: 6 Classrooms/ 90 spots  
2022-2023: 6 Classrooms/ 90 spots  
2023-2024: 9 Classrooms/ 135 spots



# Riverside

- Mrs. Dawn DeVeaux
- 4 Year Old room



# Johnson Park

- Ms. Christina Maloney
- 4 Year Old room
- Principal: Ms. Angela Siso-Stenz





# Community Park

- New!
- Dual Language Immersion
- 4 Year Old room
- Principal: Dineen Gruchez



# Burke Foundation Early Childhood Center at Princeton YWCA

- Ms. Carissa Titus
- Ms. Rodica Asay
- Ms. Alexis Schickner
- Director: Ms. Tara O'Shea
- Both 3 and 4 Year Old classrooms



# Marcy T. Crimmins Learning Center

- Ms. Jennifer Yanovitch
- Operated by the Princeton YMCA and Princeton Community Housing
- Mixed Age – both 3 and 4 year olds
- Director: Keshon Bennett





# Princeton Community Family Learning Center

- Cub School
- New!
- Mix age: both 3 and 4 year room
- Director: Lori Musa





# Preschool Placement Zones

Zoned school for Kindergarten	3 Year Old Placements	4 Year Old Placements
Johnson Park	Burke Foundation/YWCA	Johnson Park CP (DLI Opt In's) Burke Foundation/YWCA
Community Park	Burke Foundation/YWCA	Community Park Burke Foundation/YWCA (DLI Opt Outs)
Littlebrook	Cub School	Cub School Riverside
Riverside	Crimmins Learning Center	Riverside Crimmins Learning Center

# Classroom Requirements & Support Staff

Each classroom has:

- One P-3 (Preschool-3rd grade) certified teacher
- 1 Teacher Assistant / Paraprofessional
- **Maximum of 15 students**

And is supported by:

- **Preschool Instructional Coach**  
Coaches teachers on the development of pedagogy and practice to affect student outcomes.
- **Preschool Intervention & Referral Team Specialist**  
PIRS coach teachers on the development of social-emotional practice to affect student outcomes.



# Additional Support Staff Include

- Preschool Supervisor
- Building Principals and Center Directors
- Community and Parent Involvement Specialist and Center Family Workers
- School Nurses
- District Behaviorist/Speech Consultant





# Before- & After- School Care

- Before and after school care is offered at Cub School and YWCA only
- There is a fee depending upon the amount of time you wish your child to participate. (Please inquire with the provider for the 2023-2024 school year fee).
- Childcare is offered during the weeks that school is not in session at the YWCA and Cub School only. The provider will share this information as it becomes available.



# Program Operating Hours

8:25 am – 3:00 pm./

9:00 am – 3:30pm

- The Princeton Public Schools Early Childhood Program is a **full-time**, 6 hour-per-day program (as mandated by the NJDOE-DECE).
- The program follows the district calendar and operates when the public schools do.

–This includes snow days



# Attendance Counts

**Students are expected to attend school daily, unless they are ill.**

**It is recommended that a doctor's note accompany their return if applicable.**

- Our NJDOE partners define Chronic Absenteeism as being absent 10% of the total expected days of school.
- As your child nears certain milestones you will receive notices to discuss attendance from the preschool leadership.
- Lack of attendance may jeopardize your ability to participate in our program.
- Vacations:

Please be cognizant of school calendar when planning vacations. These will be logged as absences and will be reflected on the student record and school record.  
**This will be an unexcused absence.**



# Meals

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- All programs accommodate for allergies and/or food restrictions due to health or religious reasons.
- We try to maintain a **nut-aware** environment in all buildings. (YWCA is completely nut-free)

## YWCA, YMCA and in-district classrooms

- Students have the option of bringing home lunch or ordering school lunch
- School lunch is prepared off site and delivered to the locations daily

Cub School prepares all meals on site and maintains their own menu.

## Breakfast

- Students have the option of bringing breakfast from home or ordering school breakfast
- Breakfast is continental consisting of cereal, cheese sticks, fruit and/or bagels

Lunch and Breakfast is at no cost to families that qualify for the meals benefits program



Research-based program

One of the four approved curricula recommended by the NJDOE-DECE

Differentiated instruction model allows teachers to provide challenges and/or support where needed to ensure classroom success for students of all learning abilities.

# Program Curriculum: Creative Curriculum

## Central Focus:

The promotion of exploration and discovery as a way of learning

## Curriculum Goal:

Enable children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills

38 research-based objectives are the heart of the curriculum and define the path teachers take with children in the classroom. They inform every aspect of teaching, include predictors of school success, and are aligned with State early learning guidelines.

# PPS Preschool is Play-Based

## What does that mean?

### What is Play-Based Learning?



Self-Chosen



Enjoyable



Process Oriented

Children learn through play by engaging in and making sense of their world. Play-based learning is self-chosen, enjoyable and process oriented. These opportunities are experiences that are child directed and facilitated by an adult. In play-based learning, caregivers take an active role as intentional planners, observers and guides. Play-based learning maintains the joy of free play while allowing children to connect authentically with content. When children co-construct their learning with their caregivers and peers, they apply it to their own lives and make meaningful personal discoveries as they progress towards learning goals.



# BENEFITS OF PLAY-BASED LEARNING

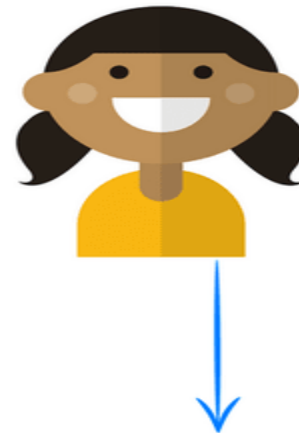
## *cognitive development*

- Gain literacy and language skills
- Hone problem-solving skills
- Build sensation and perception abilities
- Learn to use symbols to represent ideas
- Practice focusing on a task
- Develop motivation and curiosity to learn



## *Social emotional development*

- Build friendships
- Learn to cooperate and resolve conflict.
- Establish a sense of self.
- Become confident and motivated to learn.
- Explore their own interests.

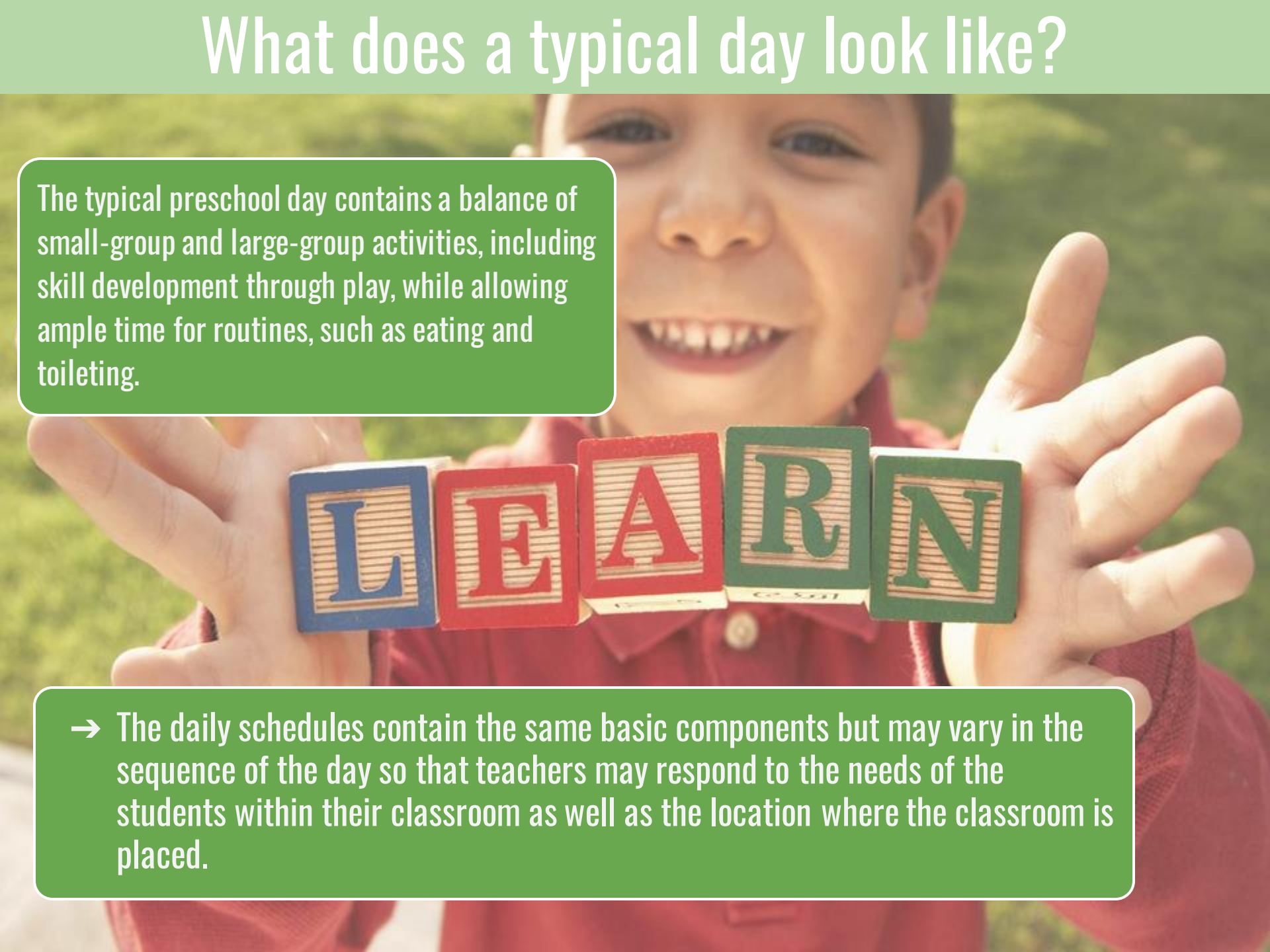


## *Physical development*

- Practice fine and gross motor skills
- Build muscle and coordination
- Grow through a variety of tactile experiences



# What does a typical day look like?

A young child with dark hair and a red shirt is smiling and holding five wooden blocks in front of their chest. The blocks are arranged to spell the word 'LEARN'. The child's hands are visible, holding the blocks from both sides. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting.

The typical preschool day contains a balance of small-group and large-group activities, including skill development through play, while allowing ample time for routines, such as eating and toileting.

→ The daily schedules contain the same basic components but may vary in the sequence of the day so that teachers may respond to the needs of the students within their classroom as well as the location where the classroom is placed.

# Sample Daily Schedule

## Morning

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8:30	Arrival/Breakfast
8:45	Opening Group
9:00	Choice Time
10:15	Handwashing/Snack
10:30	Gross Motor (outdoor play)
11:15	Small Group
11:30	Large Group Read Aloud
11:45	Lunch

## Afternoon

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12:15	Rest Time
1:30	Choice Time/small group
2:15	Gross Motor (outdoor play)
2:30	Closing Group/ Dismissal





# Screenings and Assessments

## Early Screening Inventory - Revised

- Children are screened with the ESI-R upon entering the program and by the classroom teacher.
- This screening gauges several developmental domains and assists in identifying children in need of additional assistance.

## Teaching Strategies - GOLD

- We utilize Teaching Strategies-GOLD in assessing, via the collection of anecdotal evidence, for 38 research-based objectives which include predictors of school success.





# Monitoring Program Quality

**Early Childhood Environmental Scale:** *Measures the quality of the classroom environment and teacher/student interaction*

**Curriculum Fidelity Tool:** *Measures the implementation of the curriculum and assessment tool*

**Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool:** *Measure the implementation of the pyramid model of social emotional learning*

We use these tools to assure:

1. Program quality across settings
2. Professional development planning
3. Continuity in a mixed delivery system

# How are parents informed of their child's progress?



→ **Parent/Teacher Conferences**, held 2 times per year.

→ Parents may ask their child's teacher for information regarding the child's performance in the classroom at any time.

→ Classroom newsletters and online platforms  
→ Report cards twice annually

# Do the students go outside?



It is very important for children at this age to be physically active and to develop their gross motor skills.

In accordance with the *Preschool High Quality Guidelines*, children go outside daily, unless there is active precipitation, extreme cold or extreme heat.

In the event the children do not get the opportunity to go outside, the teachers will conduct gross motor activities in the building's gym (if accessible), or in the classroom.



# How can parents be involved in the program?



Parents are highly encouraged to volunteer in their child's preschool classroom, or participate in special activities like reading a story, sharing their culture, or arts & craft activities.

Parents can also serve on the **Princeton Early Childhood Advisory Council (PECAC)** and/or site parent groups.

Parent workshops are provided throughout the school year.



# Program Application Requirements



In order to apply for the Princeton Public Schools Early Childhood Education Program for the 2023-2024 school year:

- You must be a resident of Princeton.
- Your child must turn three or four years old on or before October 1, 2023.

# Preschool Registration

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## Eligibility Requirements

- **Applicants must reside in Princeton.**
- Each applicant's proof of residency will be checked by our district registrar
- Child must turn 3 or 4 years old by October 1, 2023.
- Can be completed entirely online

## Documentation Requirements

- 1 primary document: current lease, deed, mortgage statement, tax bill or housing letter
- 3 secondary documents: current cable, phone, PSEG bill, bank, tax bill or credit card statement, pay stub
- Copy of your child's immunization records **AND** updated physical
- Your child's birth certificate or passport *(foreign copy must be translated in English)*
- *Other pertinent legal documents e.g. custody agreement, divorce decree, IEP or 504*

# Priority Placement

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Priority Placement will be given to:

- Children with special needs as confirmed by the Office of Special Services and student's IEP. (State regulation)
- Children who qualify for free or reduced meals (see guidelines on our website)
- Children with siblings already enrolled in the Princeton Public Schools Preschool program in the 2022-2023 school year.
- Current preschool students rolling up to the 4 Year Old program

*Preschool seats will be filled through the priority process, followed by a random lottery selection, and are based on the number of projected/approved seats shared with NJDOE-DECE*

# Frequently Asked Questions

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- **Do preschool students currently enrolled in the program need to register?**

No, students already enrolled do NOT need to register again. A transition survey will be distributed to gather data regarding rising PK4 students. If you respond 'yes,' your child will be automatically rolled over to the next grade.

- **When will I find out where my child was placed?**

Provider placement letters will be sent following the lottery. You will receive an invitation for orientation from your assigned location in late summer.



# Frequently Asked Questions

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- What happens if my child does not get placed right away?

After available seats for each program are filled, the remaining names will be drawn in our lottery and added to a waitlist in the order they are drawn.

In alignment with NJDOE ECE regulations we are responsible for offering a seat in one of our locations. We **cannot** accommodate special request.

Applicants will be notified by Ms. Valerie Ulrich, preschool coordinator, via phone and email as seats become available by specific location.

# For Additional Information

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Ms. Valerie Ulrich, Preschool Coordinator

609-806-4203 ext. 2044 [valerieulrich@princetonk12.org](mailto:valerieulrich@princetonk12.org)

Ms. Laurie Oneto, Preschool Administrative Assistant

609-806-4203 [laurieoneto@princetonk12.org](mailto:laurieoneto@princetonk12.org)

Ms. Liliana Morenilla, *Community & Parent Involvement Specialist*

609-806-4240 ext 4240 [lilianamorenilla@princetonk12.org](mailto:lilianamorenilla@princetonk12.org)

# Private Provider Contacts

- **Ms. Tara O'Shea**
  - Burke Foundation Early Childhood Center Director
  - [toshea@ywcaprinceton.org](mailto:toshea@ywcaprinceton.org)
  - 609-497-2100 ext. 325
  - [The Burke Foundation Early Childhood Center \(ywcaprinceton.org\)](http://TheBurkeFoundationEarlyChildhoodCenter(ywcaprinceton.org))
- **Mr. Keshon Bennett**
  - Crimmins Center Director
  - [kbennett@gscymca.org](mailto:kbennett@gscymca.org)
  - 609-497-9622 ext. 209
  - [www.gscymca.org](http://www.gscymca.org)
- **Ms. Lori Musa**
  - Cub School Center Director
  - [Lori.musa.pcflc@gmail.com](mailto:Lori.musa.pcflc@gmail.com)
  - 609-454-3637
  - [www.princetoncflc.com](http://www.princetoncflc.com)