



HIGHLAND FALLS-FORT MONTGOMERY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

FAQ for Universal Pre-K Registration

What is UPK (Universal Pre-Kindergarten)?

In New York State, UPK is a State and federally funded prekindergarten program offered to families free of charge. The only eligibility requirement for UPK in New York State is a child's residency and age. UPK is not an entitlement in New York State and not all families currently have access to UPK. In districts where UPK is available, entry is based on a lottery system and not all families who register are guaranteed a spot.

Who is eligible for UPK?

- Each child must be four (4) years old on or before December 1, 2025 - *a child eligible for Kindergarten is not eligible for UPK*
- Each child must reside within the boundaries of Highland Falls and Fort Montgomery
- Only parents and legal guardians are able to enroll children into school in NYS

What do I need to have to apply for UPK?

- Completed Registration Packet
- Three (3) valid forms of Proof of Residency
- Proof of Age
- Up to date Immunization Forms
- NYS Required Health Exam Form signed by a doctor and completed within 12 months
- Copy of IEP (if applicable)
- Parent/Guardian ID
- Proof of Custody/Guardianship, if applicable

What if I have some of my paperwork for my appointment but not all of it?

Your child will not be able to register and you will have to make a new appointment. All paperwork must be submitted in order to have your child registered.

How does the lottery work?

Families will be assigned a lottery number in advance to watch the live event on our Youtube channel. Information about the lottery will be posted on our website and notifications will be sent to families who have submitted all registration documents. Randomly drawn numbers will determine the order in which students are added to the class list, with siblings added together.

After the lottery, the registrar will email all applicants to notify them if they were selected or placed on a waiting list. Families must confirm receipt of the email within **3 business days**. If there is no response, the child will be moved to the end of the waiting list.

Those not selected in the lottery will be placed on the waiting list. If a spot becomes available



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due to non-completion of registration or a move out of the district, the next person on the waiting list will be notified.

What happens if my lottery number isn't chosen?

If your number is not selected, the student will be placed on our waiting list. All registrants will be included in the number selection process, and once we reach #40, individuals will be added to the list in the order they were chosen. ** Siblings will be accepted together.

Is there a universal screening process for UPK?

Yes. Our district uses the Dial-4 (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning) Once chosen for the UPK program, the Fort Montgomery Elementary School will reach out to you to schedule an appointment. Additionally, Commissioner's Regulations §117.1 requires that all students in prekindergarten through grade 12 be screened upon entry to the school district to determine which students are possibly gifted or have or are suspected of having a disability and/or have limited English proficiency.

Does my child need to be potty trained?

All applicants can find information regarding NYSED regulations as they relate to toileting here: <https://www.nysed.gov/memo/early-learning/prekindergarten-and-kindergarten-guidance-supporting-toilet-learning>

What happens in the lottery if I have twins or siblings?

All siblings registering together will be provided the same number when it comes to the lottery selection.

Where can I find more information about the UPK program?

Information on the program itself will be forthcoming from the Fort Montgomery Elementary School.

Is UPK participation mandatory?

No. UPK is a voluntary program for both districts and children. Parents and/or caregivers may choose, but are not required, to enroll their child(ren) in a UPK program. However, once enrolled, the school district's attendance policy must be applied.

What is the difference between UPK in a district classroom and UPK in an Eligible Agency, such as a Community-Based Organization (CBO)?

UPK programs offered throughout New York State are located in both district classrooms and CBOs. While UPK programs throughout the State may look different, all must offer a developmentally appropriate program that aligns with the New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards. Additionally, UPK classrooms must follow the laws and regulations



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outlined in Education Law §3602-e, Commissioner's Regulations §100.3, and Commissioner's Regulations Subpart 151-1. These laws and regulations must be followed regardless of who is delivering the UPK instruction.

If I don't think my child is ready for kindergarten, can I hold them back in UPK?

No. According to Section 3602-e of Education Law, a child is eligible for UPK when they are four years of age on or before December 1st of the school year in which they are enrolled or who will otherwise be first eligible to enter public school kindergarten commencing with the following school year. Therefore, a child would only be eligible for UPK for one year.