

White Plains City School District

Pre- Kindergarten Program Parent Handbook


www.whiteplainspublicschools.com

2025 - 2026

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ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

The White Plains City School District partners with several community-based organizations to provide a full-day prekindergarten program for all eligible four-year-olds. Our prekindergarten classes meet for a six-hour day and provide a comprehensive early childhood educational experience for our students and their families. All classes take place at fully licensed childcare centers, with program supervision and support provided by White Plains City School District staff. Pre-K is available for four-year old children who are born in the year 2021 and who reside in White Plains. We do not offer half-day programs. Our community-based childcare centers are licensed by NYS Office for Children and Families (OCFS).

Early Childhood Agencies:

- *United Preschool Center*
 - *456 North Street, White Plains, NY 10605*
- *The Little Disciples Learning Center*
 - *348 S. Lexington Ave, White Plains, NY 10606*
- *YMCA*
 - *148 Hamilton Avenue, White Plains, NY 10601*

Each childcare center has a director on site. Every effort is made to ensure that prekindergarten teachers hold New York State teacher certification in Early Childhood. Teaching Assistants are New York State licensed.

All childcare centers undergo rigorous and ongoing safety and wellness inspections.



Contact Information

Our office is located at the
Family Information Center
500 North Street
White Plains, NY 10605
914-422-2038

www.whiteplainspublicschools.org

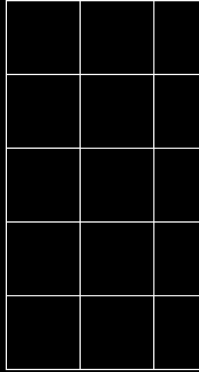
Gail Epstein, Pre-Kindergarten Director
gailepstein@wpcsd.k12.ny.us

Kathy Barpoulis, Director of Elementary Teaching, Learning, and
Assessment PreK-6
kathybarpoulis@wpcsd.k12.ny.us

Debbie Hand, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum
and Instruction
debbiehand@wpcsd.k12.ny.us

Ilka Marino, Family Information Center Coordinator
ilkamarino@wpcsd.k12.ny.us

Assignment Procedures



Application Process

Children who will be four years old by December 31, 2025 are eligible for Universal Prekindergarten in September of 2025. Parents who want their children to attend UPK in the 2025-26 school year should apply during the April/May application period.

- Information is sent to families for whom we have knowledge of a child born in 2021. Application is available on the White Plains City School District website.
- We will hold parent information/tours at each of our prekindergarten providers so that parents can learn about the center.
- Parents indicate their preferred childcare center in rank order.
- Completed applications received by May 2, 2025 are processed as a group. Children are NOT assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.
- The identity of each student is unknown to the District when the school assignments are made. This allows a fair and equitable process in placement.
- We continue to receive applications after May 2nd, but placement for these students will be based on remaining available spots and parents may not have a choice of location in their child's school assignment.

The White Plains School District is generally able to offer a prekindergarten seat for every eligible family who would like to place their child in our program. For this year, we have 309 seats available. In the unlikely event that there are more applicants than seats available for students, a lottery would be held to fill the full day slots with the children of families who request placement. Children who do not get a spot through the lottery system are put on a waiting list. The waiting list remains active until the end of the school year.



All About School Assignment

Several factors are considered when students are assigned to our Pre-K programs. Assignments are based upon space available and parent's preference of schools. **Whenever possible**, children will be assigned to the parent's first choice request, but this is **not guaranteed**.

Notification of Assignment

Following the Application Period, each family is notified of the school assignment for their child during the week of May 12, 2025.

Attendance

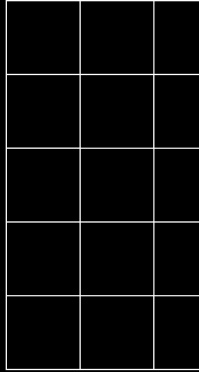
Once a parent enrolls their child in prekindergarten, it is expected that their child be in attendance each day that the program is in operation, except for excused absences. If a parent withdraws their child for an extended period of time for traveling or vacation, they will have to withdraw their child from the Prekindergarten program. Upon their return, they may re-enroll if there is a space available.

Transportation

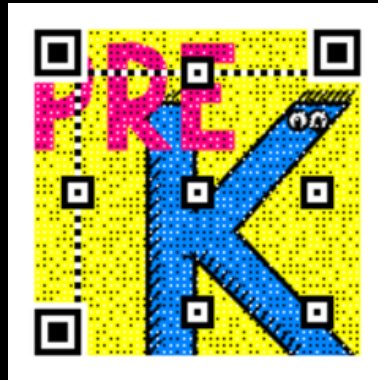
Bus transportation is NOT provided for our prekindergarten program. Parents must arrange for prompt arrival and pick-up at the prekindergarten center.



Registration Process



In order to register for the prekindergarten program, you must complete and submit an application. Scan this QR code to get started:

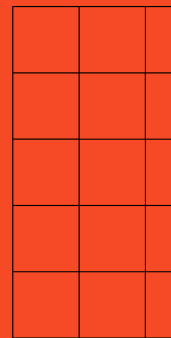


It is important to complete the application and submit it. You may email the Family Information Center at familyinformationcenter@wpcsd.k12.ny.us; or, call the office at (914)244-2038, to schedule an appointment if you need access to a computer.

Once your child is successfully registered in the prekindergarten program, your child will be assigned to a childcare center.



Prekindergarten Screening Process



At the beginning of the school year, all enrolled UPK students will be assessed by their teachers for school readiness and potential developmental delays. This information will be shared with parents. Students who speak a language other than English at home will be assessed through a parent survey and screening conversation with District staff over the summer prior to the beginning of UPK. The UPK program will use this information to provide appropriate supports in working with students and their families to maintain their home language and begin to develop listening and speaking skills in English. In addition, all UPK students will have a hearing and vision screening administered by White Plains School District nurses during the school year.

Family Engagement



Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in their child's UPK experience. Parents are given opportunities to volunteer for special projects, class activities, and field trips. UPK teachers and Directors are available to answer any questions that you may have about the program or your child's specific needs. Regular parent-teacher conferences are scheduled throughout the school year. Parent workshops are offered by the White Plains School District to discuss topics such as: kindergarten readiness, literacy development, health and wellness, and positive parenting techniques.



Curriculum & Instruction

All UPK classes use “PreK On My Way,” a comprehensive early-learning program that embraces children’s natural curiosity and encourages them to explore and connect to the world around them through eight theme-related units.

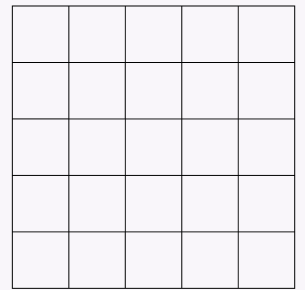


Classes are organized around learning centers, allowing for small and large group instruction as well as organized social interaction among peers. Planned activities promote student learning and encourage students to be self-assured and independent through a balanced schedule of teacher-initiated and child-initiated learning activities.

The daily schedule includes a balance of active and quiet play, indoor and outdoor gross motor activities and individual and small group activities.

All childcare centers have an outdoor playground, and weather permitting, children participate in supervised outdoor play every day.

Promoting Language and Literacy Development



The White Plains City School District serves a diverse population of students and families, many of whom are multilingual. We strongly encourage all our families to promote language and literacy skills in the home by speaking with and reading to children in the language(s) that are spoken at home by siblings, parents, and other family members. Children who enter kindergarten with strong language and literacy skills in their home language will have an easier time learning to read, write, speak, and listen in English. Books and literacy materials are available from your child's PreK teacher that will assist you in reading to your child in your home language.




In addition, please request that all information from your child's UPK program be provided to you in the language that you read and understand. A translator can be requested for parent conferences and meetings.

Let's Work Together

 familyinformationcenter@wpcsd.k12.ny.us

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 (914) 422-2038

