WILLIAMSVILLE
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Est. 1893



Universal
Pre-Kindergarten Program

2025-2026 Parent/Guardian Handbook

Introduction

The Williamsville Central School District is delighted to welcome you and your four-year-old to our Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program (UPK). We are pleased to collaborate with community based child care centers and district elementary schools, to help your four-year-old develop physically, socially, emotionally, linguistically, culturally and intellectually.

Curriculum

UPK is a developmentally appropriate, child-centered educational program that places an emphasis upon early literacy and early numeracy aligned with the New York State Pre-K curriculum as well as science, social studies and social emotional learning. The program emphasizes the following prekindergarten reading competencies: phonological and phonemic awareness, print awareness, alphabet recognition and phonics, fluency, background knowledge and vocabulary development, comprehension strategies, and the motivation to read. Additionally, the program emphasizes prekindergarten number concepts and skills.

WELCOME to the Williamsville Central School District Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program!

The goal of the UPK Program is to provide your child with high quality targeted instruction and structured activities designed to facilitate learning and social-emotional growth. Language and communication skills, creative and critical thinking skills, large and fine motor skills, as well as the optimal development of social-emotional skills are integral components of our program.

The importance of play is also emphasized as teachers plan developmentally appropriate experiences for your child. Through play, children explore and construct understandings about the world, explore their knowledge of print using literacy materials, learn about letters, words, and numbers as they manipulate alphabet and number materials. Children build comprehension skills as they gain background experiences, increase their vocabulary and language development when they interact with peers and adults, and grow socially through the context of play.

Academic Readiness

Academic readiness screening will be conducted by your child's teacher early in the school year. The data from this screening will help the district identify any students who may require additional services or supports. Also, it will help your child's teacher identify areas of strength and areas where additional instruction and/or practice is needed.

Program requirements

Transportation

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from UPK daily. It is important to arrive and pick up *on time* so children benefit from the total learning experience. Late arrivals and early departures disrupt a child's learning.

Parental Involvement

Research has clearly demonstrated the important role parents play in their child's education. A child's success in school is increased when parents are involved in their education. Thus, parental involvement in UPK is another important requirement of NYS Education Department regulations. There are many levels of parent involvement and we encourage you to participate to the extent your schedule allows. Here is just a partial list of the many ways you can be involved in your child's UPK experience:

- Communicate with your child's teacher/program director if your child has special needs or if there are events in his/her life that may impact participation in the program.
- Read to your child daily
- Implement teacher suggestions to help reinforce learning
- Read newsletters, parent bulletin boards, e-mails from your child's school
- Volunteer in your child's class
- Attend parent-teacher conferences
- Attend special school events
- Complete the parent survey at the end of the school year prepared by the school district. Parent responses are greatly appreciated and will help identify program strengths and areas for growth.



Attendance



As a student in our UPK program, your child is officially a new entrant in the Williamsville Central School District. As per New York State Education regulations, your child must attend 5 days a week for the 180-day school year. It is important, from the very beginning, for students to understand that going to school on time, every day, is an important responsibility. Your child's attendance and tardies will be recorded daily. Excessive unexcused absenteeism and tardiness may result in your child being removed from the program. It is recommended that parents consult the calendar their preschool provides, which indicates days of attendance, vacations, holidays, parent conferences and other special happenings.

Please note: Your child will NOT be able to continue in the Williamsville UPK Program if you move out of the Williamsville School District during the school year.

Absences

Just as with our K-12 school program, a written excuse must be submitted when your child returns after an absence, listing the dates and the reason for said absence. Please follow the guidelines established by your child's preschool when your child is sick. If a child is absent for more than three consecutive days due to illness, a doctor's note is required stating your child is well enough to return to school.

Extended Absences

Removing your child from school for an extended period is strongly discouraged. Continuity of learning is lost when a student misses several days of school. Parents/guardians are asked to notify the district in writing, at least two weeks in advance, if your child will have an extended absence including the dates of the absence. Please understand that an extended absence may jeopardize your child's continued participation in the UPK Program. Since our funding is directly related to our total attendance, we are obligated to ensure full enrollment. The Williamsville District maintains attendance and tardy records and will contact parents if concerns develop. Parents will acknowledge being aware of the expectations for attendance and procedures by signing the form at the back of the booklet. Excessive unexcused absenteeism and tardiness may result in your child being removed from the program.

Tardies

We want to ensure that your child has every opportunity to succeed in the Universal Pre-kindergarten program and be ready for kindergarten. Late arrivals result in lost learning time for your child and a disruption to the learning of the rest of the class. A late arrival or early departure could be recorded as unexcused. A total of 15 unexcused absences and/or tardies can jeopardize your child's placement in the UPK Program and may result in removal.

Progress Reports

Your child's teacher will initially conduct an assessment of your child's educational skills and continually monitor those skills. This information will be shared with you. You will receive a written progress report mid-year at a parent-teacher conference and again at the end of the school year. We encourage you to contact your child's teacher at anytime if you have questions or concerns about your child's progress.

Speech Language Screening
During the first three months of the school year, the district will conduct a speech language screening for each student at his/her UPK site. The purpose of this screening is to identify any speech or language concerns that may require additional support. If a concern is indicated, your child's teacher will discuss the possibility of further evaluation with you.

Hearing and Vision Screening
A vision and hearing screening is also required by New York State Education Department. A school nurse will be retained by the District to complete these screenings within the first few months of the school year at your child's preschool. Since early identification and follow- up are vital to your child's school success, the district will notify you if there are any concerns that warrant follow up with your child's physician.

Health Requirements

Physical Examination
As required by New York State Education Department, you will need to submit proof that your child has had a complete physical exam including screening for lead levels and a thorough dental exam. Two copies of the district health appraisal and dental exam forms must be completed and returned to your child's teacher no later than September 1st. Children will not be allowed to start UPK until the completed form has been received. We cannot grant exception to this requirement.

Immunization Requirements
Each child is required by the New York State Education Department to have a health statement on file, which includes a record of up-to-date immunizations under the signature of the child's source of medical care.

The district nurse practitioner will review the immunization record of all students enrolled in UPK to ensure compliance with NYS regulations. Families will be contacted if there are any concerns regarding their child's immunization record.

Teacher Requirements

Teacher Certification
Each UPK class is required to be staffed by a teacher who is certified in early childhood education (Birth-Gr. 2), special education or Nursery–Gr. 6 (N-6).

Staffing
As per NYS regulations, classes of 18 or less must be staffed by one teacher and one teacher aide or assistant. Classes of 19-20 must be staffed by one teacher and two aides or assistants.

Staff Development
UPK teachers will be provided Staff Development sessions planned by the Williamsville Central School District to help teachers stay current with the latest practices in early childhood education, as well as procedures and requirements within the UPK Program. Regular staff meetings are also held to share information and review concerns raised by teachers and administration.

Program Supervision

The Williamsville Central School District Universal Pre-kindergarten Program is supervised by the Williamsville Central School District. There are administrators overseeing operations of the program. District administrators and/or their designees check-in with UPK classroom regularly to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented and that student needs are being met, according to state and district standards.



Who should parents contact when...

Concerned about child's progress……contact child's teacher at location assigned

A situation at home……contact child's teacher at location assigned

Special services information……WCSD Office of Student Services 716-626-8064

Child will be absent less than three days…notification and note to child's assigned site

Child will be absent three or more days……notification to child's UPK site Director or Building Principal

Withdrawing child from UPK……..notification email to upk@williamsvillek12.org

Additional information about Williamsville's UPK program is available on the district website www.willliamsvillek12.org under the drop down menus: Departments, Teaching and Learning, Universal Pre-K.

UPK Attendance Policy 2025-2026

- As per the New York State Education Department (NYSED) UPK guidance, the UPK attendance policy mirrors the Williamsville Central School District's attendance policy. As a result, exceptions for attendance cannot be made. Please reference WCSD policy 7110 for additional information.
- Students must meet expectations for regular attendance and prompt arrival and dismissal.
- Students must attend their assigned program 5-hours per day, 5-days per week, for the 180-day school year.
- Unexcused absences and/or tardiness combined, totaling 15 days, may result in immediate removal from the program.
- **A written explanation of absence, signed by the parent/guardian, must be presented by the student following each absence within three days of the student's return to the UPK program.**
- For any planned, extended absence (i.e. vacation), parents must provide a written notice two weeks in advance to the teacher and the UPK Program Director. *These days of absence are counted toward total accrued absences/tardiness for attendance purposes.*
- Transportation to and from the program is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

Please sign below, and return the bottom half of this page to your child's teacher.



I have read the WCSD UPK Handbook and understand and agree to follow the UPK program policies and attendance requirements as stated above.

Unexcused absences and tardiness combined, in any combination totaling **15** days is considered excessive. I understand that if my child has any combination of excessive unexcused absences and/or tardiness totaling **15** days, it may result in my child's removal from the UPK program.

UPK Site_____

Child's name (please print) _____

Parent/Guardian name (please print) _____

Parent/Guardian signature _____ Date _____

~NOTES ~

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