



Chesterfield Preschool Expansion Frequently Asked Questions

What is Preschool Expansion Aid (PEA)?

Answer: The NJ Department of Education Preschool Expansion Aid (PEA) serves to establish or expand access to high-quality, full-day preschool programs in the State of NJ. The Chesterfield Township School District completed a rigorous application process through the NJDOE to provide evidence that the Little Dragons Preschool Program is prepared to provide a high-quality preschool program. The district has been awarded PEA funds to begin a five-year plan starting in the 2024-2025 school year (year 1 of 5).

What is a “High-Quality Preschool Program”?

Answer: According to NJAC 6A:13A, a high-quality preschool program is defined as “a full-day program with a certified teacher, an aide, and small classes that are inclusive of children with special needs.”

Chesterfield’s high-quality preschool program will include:

- Fully certified teachers, licensed by the NJDOE
- A research-based curriculum and assessment program (High Scope)
- Developmentally appropriate materials and supplies to support the curriculum
- Comprehensive health and nutrition services
- Differentiated and/or specialized instruction to meet the needs of all learners
- Ongoing comprehensive program evaluation & professional development for staff
- Facilitation of an Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) made up of community stakeholders and families to support family & community engagement
- Access to a Preschool Intervention & Referral Team
- Opportunities for learning through partnerships with community stakeholders

Will the preschool be open to all Chesterfield Township 3- and 4-year-old students?

Answer: The school district has been approved for a 5-year expansion plan. This means that the NJDOE has dictated that the district has five (5) years to systematically expand to serve our school district’s “Preschool Universe”. Starting in the 2024-2025 school year (year 1 of 5), the district was approved to open (5) full-day classes, serving approximately 75 students. The district is approved to systematically expand by 1-2 classrooms per school year (depending on need/approval), during which students will be selected for enrollment via lottery. Starting in the fifth year, it is estimated that the school district will begin serving all 3- and 4-year-old students in the district.



What are the locations of the Little Dragons preschool classrooms?

Answer: Chesterfield Township Elementary School and iGo STEM Academy (Chesterfield).

What is a community partner/provider site?

Answer: A provider site is a certified preschool program near Chesterfield that chooses to partner with the district to educate preschool students enrolled in the Chesterfield Township School District. The district will partner with provider sites and use their classrooms to educate our preschool students. The district preschool program will extend all NJDOE requirements to the provider site(s). As a result, students attending the provider sites will receive the same high-quality instruction, including educational experiences outside of the classroom. The district will work with our community provider to provide program supervision and ensure that all NJDOE curriculum, instruction, and assessment mandates are met.

Registration / Lottery

How old does my child have to be to enter preschool?

Answer: Students must be 3- or 4- years old on or before October 1 of the school year.

Is there a residency requirement to register? If I do not currently live in Chesterfield Township, can my child enroll in the Little Dragons preschool and pay tuition to attend?

Answer: Yes, there is a residency requirement. Little Dragons Preschool is currently only open to Chesterfield Township & Crosswicks residents. The school district is not accepting non-resident tuition students at this time. Dependents of non-resident district staff may be offered tuition-based enrollment spots once the annual resident lottery is exhausted, according to requirements outlined in NJAC 6A:13. *iGo STEM Academy may also continue offer additional preschool classrooms that are not affiliated with the Chesterfield Township School District for non-Chesterfield residents and students who do not receive a spot in Little Dragons.*

How are students selected to participate in the preschool program?

Answer: For years 1-4 of the preschool expansion, program spots will be distributed via random selection from a voluntary lottery. Lottery and registration information can be found [here](#).



Can I select which preschool site (Chesterfield Elementary School or iGo STEM Academy) I prefer for my child to attend?

Answer: Children who are selected to participate in the preschool program are randomly placed in a class and program location. *The only exception for special consideration for placement applies to students with formally documented exceptionalities in which placement is decided by the Child Study Team.*

If selected for a spot in the program via the lottery, what documentation will be required for Little Dragons Preschool registration?

Answer: Once notified of selection in the lottery, registration information can be found [here](#). A total of (16) documents will be required to be submitted with the School District Preschool Registration Form. Required items include:

- Copy of Child's Birth Certificate. *Once accepted, you will be required to bring in the original birth certificate with raised seal for review.*
- Copy of Deed or Lease agreement
- First Proof of Residency (e.g., utility bill, driver's license, etc.)
- Second Proof of Residency (e.g., utility bill, driver's license, etc.)
- Form: Authorization to Release Student Records
- Form: Universal Child Health Record (Completed by your child's physician)
- Form: Immunization Records (Completed by your child's physician)
- Form: Health History Questionnaire
- Form: Health Insurance & Physical Form
- Form: Health Information Release Form
- Form: Consent for Approved Medication Form
- Photo of Student
- Form: Bus Safety Contract
- Form: Medication Administration Form
- Form: Asthma Action Plan
- Form: Food Allergy Action Plan

If my student is already enrolled as a 3- or 4-year-old preschool student at Chesterfield Elementary School or iGo STEM Academy (Chesterfield), do I need to register again?

Answer: No, you do not need to register again.

If my student is already enrolled in the childcare program at iGo STEM Academy (Chesterfield) and I received a letter of acceptance, do I need to register my child with the school district?

Answer: Yes, you will need to complete all Chesterfield Twp School District registration requirements for your child to accept their spot in Little Dragons at iGo STEM Academy.



I have siblings who are both eligible for preschool- if one is accepted, will the other be accepted?

Answer: If there is a sibling currently in the program who will continue, your other child will be accepted into the program. However, if your child is eligible for kindergarten, and another child is eligible for preschool, a spot is not guaranteed. *Please email preschool@chesterfieldschool.com to confirm the registration team is aware of twin/multiple entries.*

I have twins/multiples. What if one gets in - does the other automatically become eligible for the program?

Answer: Twins/multiples will not have separate registration eligibility. For lottery purposes, if either twin/multiple student's number is selected, all are eligible for the program. *Please email preschool@chesterfieldschool.com to confirm the registration team is aware of twin/multiple entries.*

Preschool Program

What is the length of the instructional day?

Answer: The required time for the full-day preschool program will be 6 hours, including time for breakfast, lunch, and rest.

How many children are in a preschool class?

Answer: All general education & inclusion preschool classes will have a maximum of 15 students with one certified teacher and at least one preschool classroom aide.

Does my child have to attend for a full school day, five days per week? Can they attend for a half day or on a partial-week schedule?

Answer: The Preschool Education Aid (PEA) program requirements mandate a full-day program. If enrolled, children must attend for the full day, five days per week.

My child does not nap. Will they be required to nap at rest time?

Answer: While the one-hour rest time is a required component of the preschool program, children are not required to sleep. Lights are dimmed with quiet, soft music and students are on cots with personal bedding. Students who do not want to sleep can rest for the duration or engage in quiet/approved activities on their cot (books, puzzles).

What Curriculum will be used in the Little Dragons Preschool Program?

Answer: [High Scope](#) is one of four curricula currently approved by the NJDOE. High Scope is a reliable and effective research-based curriculum that meets the State early learning standards. The High Scope Curriculum is founded on a philosophy of "active participatory learning" in which children and adults are engaged as interactive partners in the learning process. In HighScope programs, learning occurs in a play-based



environment where children and adults work together to develop children's knowledge and skills in problem solving, decision making, and dependence, and to promote their sense of curiosity, persistence, and creativity. Educational materials and the learning environment build on children's interests, accommodate different developmental and ability levels, and reflect the diversity of children's family and community backgrounds.

What are the core components of the Chesterfield Little Dragons Preschool Program?

Answer: The Little Dragons Preschool Program incorporates developmentally appropriate, play-based learning opportunities. The Key Developmental Indicators of the full-day preschool program will include:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social & Emotional Development
- Physical Development & Health
- Language, Literacy, & Communication
- Mathematics
- Creative Arts
- Science & Technology
- Social Studies

Will there be Before and After Care options available?

Answer: Yes, Before and After Care Options Available through [iGo STEM Academy](#) and [Champions at Chesterfield Elementary School](#).

What is an inclusion classroom?

Answer: An inclusion classroom provides a comprehensive educational program to children with and without disabilities, learning together in the same space. Inclusion integrates special education and related services into all aspects of a program, depending on student needs. If you are concerned that your child may have a disability please review the [district requirements for ChildFind](#) and please contact [Dr. Melissa Carlton, Supervisor of Special Services & Early Childhood Education](#).

Will the school district provide bussing for preschool students? Can the bus transport to and from daycare?

Answer: Transportation will be provided for eligible students who live 2+ miles from the school building, as per district policy requirements. The district does not currently offer courtesy busing to all students in the school district.

Does my child need to be toilet trained to attend preschool?

Answer: While being toilet-trained will support an easier transition to starting school, it is not required for students to be toilet-trained to attend our public preschool program. If your child develops or shows readiness signs, school staff will be able to assist in a plan to toilet train at school if you also agree to train at home.