Pre-Kindergarten Program and Application Process

January 8, 2026

Welcome!

Introductions and Agenda Review

- PPS Central Office Pre-K Team
  - Katie Soucy, Senior Director of Early Childhood Education
  - Kellie Irving, Pre-K Director
  - Ryan Bower, Pre-K Program Coordinator
- Families that need language interpreting are in a separate group with their interpreters, who will introduce themselves now.
- We will give you a brief overview of tonight's agenda on the next slide.

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Tonight we will provide an overview of the PPS Pre-K program and application process.

Agenda

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review
2. Program Goals and Approach
3. Locations and Hours
4. Application, Screening, and Enrollment Process
5. Attendance Expectations and Other Information

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Our Pre-K program aligns to State standards and focuses on nurturing the whole child.

PPS Pre-K Program Approach

Our goal is to provide Pre-K students with:

- A happy first experience of being in school
- Strong, positive relationships with teachers and classmates
- Opportunities to learn through play and teacher-led activities
- Support to master the skills necessary for Kindergarten success
- Excellent caregiving, including meals, a daily rest time and exercise

Our Pre-K program follows requirements and learning standards set by the State of Maine. We use a research-endorsed curriculum called “Pre-K for ME,” which engages students through a holistic approach that nurtures their academic, social, and emotional skills in a way that is appropriate for 4-year-olds.

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A typical day varies by classroom, but this gives a sense of how your child might spend their day.

9:00 - 9:15 am	Arrival and handwashing
9:15 - 9:30 am	Have breakfast
9:30 - 9:45 am	Circle time
9:45 - 10:45 am	Center-based Play
10:45 - 11:00 am	Second Circle
11:00-11:30 am	Small Groups
11:30-12:30 pm	Outdoor Exploration
12:30 -1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 - 2:00 pm	Rest
2:00 - 2:30 pm	Afternoon Snack
2:30 - 2:50 pm	Small Groups
2:50 - 3:00 pm	Dismissal

- Example of late start School Daily schedule
- Meals are provided by PPS and include breakfast and lunch.
- PPS Lunch Menus
- At least an hour of outside time a day for each class.
- Toileting happens throughout the day as needed.
- **Your child does not have to be toilet-trained to attend a PPS Pre-K Program**

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We offer Pre-K programming in ten of our district schools and two community partner sites.

Anticipated Pre-K Classrooms

- Amanda C. Rowe Elementary
- East End Community School
- Catherine Morrill Day Nursery
- Gerald E. Talbot Community School
- Harrison Lyseth Elementary School
- Longfellow Elementary School
- Ocean Avenue Elementary School
- Peaks Island Elementary School
- Portland Arts & Technology High School
- Presumpscot Elementary
- Reiche Community School
- Youth Family Outreach

PreK follows the early start and late start schedules of district elementary schools.

Locations and Hours

Early Start Schools: 7:40-2:10 (1:10 on Wednesdays)

- East End Community School, Gerald E. Talbot Community School, Longfellow Elementary School, Ocean Avenue Elementary School

Late Start Schools: 9:00-3:30 (2:30 on Wednesdays)

- Amanda C. Rowe Elementary, Catherine Morrill Day Nursery, Youth and Family Outreach, Harrison Lyseth Elementary School, Portland Arts & Technology High School, Presumpscot Elementary, and Reiche Community School

Peaks Island ONLY: 8:20-3:05 (12:20 on Wednesdays)

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Pre-K students are expected to attend school on-time every day, just like K-12 students.

Program Attendance Expectations

Students gain many positives from being in school – not just academic success but also being part of the school community and developing traits like curiosity, creativity and responsibility. *Showing up on time every day is important to your child's success and learning from preschool forward.*

Missing 10% of school (about 2 days a month)--excused or unexcused– means a student is "chronically absent." Chronic absenteeism in pre-K and Kindergarten has a negative long-term effect on children's academic success. It can make it harder for children to:

- Gain early reading and math skills that set the stage for elementary school;
- Build strong relationships with adults and other students;
- Develop good attendance habits for success in elementary school and beyond.

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PPS partners with families to support consistent Pre-K attendance.

Program Attendance Expectations

- Regular attendance supports learning and routines; PPS partners with families to support continued enrollment
- Families are expected to notify their child's school as soon as they know their child will be absent and provide a reason for the absence (for example, illness, death in the family, family emergency, etc)
- If a Pre-K student is absent for more than three consecutive weeks for a reason other than a documented medical issue, they may be unenrolled from PPS and will forfeit their current Pre-K slot

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Families may apply to the Pre-K lottery through the PPS website from January 9th - Feb. 13th.

Application Timing and Process

- Applications for the lottery will be accepted **January 9th - February 13th**
- Applying to the lottery offers the best chance of getting a spot in the program
- Students are eligible if born between October 16, 2021 and October 15, 2022
- Applications are available in multiple languages on the PPS website:
  - Pre-K Lottery Process
- The PPS Multilingual Center is available to support any family that needs assistance completing the application for the Pre-K program
  - Please visit the PPS central office at ***353 Cumberland Avenue, Portland*** if you need support

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Students on the Pre-K waitlist are more likely to be placed outside of their neighborhood school.

Waitlist

- Students who are not offered a spot through the lottery are placed on a waitlist
- Students who apply to the program after the lottery closes are also placed on a waitlist
- Students on the waitlist are often still offered spots, but they are less likely get placed in their neighborhood schools or preferred locations

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Families will need to provide information and participate in screening to complete enrollment.

Enrollment

Complete Forms and Provide Information

- Birth Certificate
- Proof of Residence
- Immunization Record
- Language Use Survey

Participate in Child Find Screening

- Family Questionnaires (ASQ-3)
- Attend a Required Playgroup for Incoming Students

Complete Multilingual Intake

- Pre IPT Assessment
- Family Interview

Enrollment for Families that are Experiencing Homelessness

Families that are experiencing homelessness are still asked to provide the documents and complete the steps listed above, but the children are able to start school while we partner with families to complete these steps

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All PPS Pre-K students participate in developmental screenings during enrollment.

School Screenings

- All PPS Pre-K students are screened to identify any potential concerns in the child's development and possible need for referral for Special Education Supports and Services
- Screening results are reviewed one-on-one with families
- Families can then decide if they want to proceed with the referral process for potential special education services

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Multilingual students complete English proficiency screenings as part of enrollment.

Multilingual Enrollment

PPS Multilingual and Multicultural Center

- All multilingual PPS Pre-K students are screened to determine their English proficiency
- All multilingual PPS Pre-K families are interviewed to determine which language(s) will be used for spoken and/or written communication between the family and PPS
- PPS Pre-K Students are seen as Dual Language Learners because they are actively learning two or more languages

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All Pre-K classrooms follow a 1-to-8 ratio of adults to students with a max of 16 students.

Programming

Teachers

- One teacher and one ed tech minimum in each classroom for an adult to child ratio of 1:8
- Max of 16 students per class

Parent-Teacher Conferences

- Formal conferences offered twice a year
- Interpreters available for conferences
- Sign-ups are sent out by schools and teachers

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Transportation is provided based on student need an availability.

Transportation

Transportation WILL be available to:

- Students enrolled in the PPS Pre-K program who have an IEP that includes a requirement for specialized transportation

Transportation MAY be available to:

- Students placed at their neighborhood elementary school
- Students placed at a partner site in the neighborhood where they live
- Students from the Ocean Avenue neighborhood assigned to classrooms in partner sites

Transportation is NOT available to (unless required by an IEP to):

- Students placed at elementary schools outside their neighborhood
- Students placed at partner sites outside their neighborhood
- Students placed at Peaks Island Elementary School

What Questions do you have about the Pre-K program at Portland Public Schools?

Questions and Answers?

What else would you like to know about the Pre-K Program?

Please type your questions in the Q&A in your home language.

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Thank you for your time!

Follow Up

We are excited for another incredible year of learning for the PPS Pre-K program!

Please feel free to contact the PPS Pre-K Program for any other questions and concerns by contacting our program coordinator Ryan Bower at Bowerr@portlandschools.org

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