



Crosswalks Inclusive Preschool – Peer Mentor Application & Handbook

Crosswalks is an inclusive preschool program for 3- and 4-year-old children with and without disabilities. The program is housed at the Blount County Learning Center, which is centrally located to provide easy access for families throughout the county. Crosswalks is based on the philosophy of Developmentally Appropriate Practice, meaning that learning takes place through a play-based, child-initiated approach. Instruction is designed to be both age-appropriate and individually appropriate for each child, with a strong focus on the development of school-readiness skills.

Crosswalks has two components to its program which are combined into one classroom. We have Crosswalks Partner for students who have qualified for Special Education Services and currently have an IEP. We also have **Crosswalks Mentors** for students who are typically developing and display leadership and peer-modeling skills that will be used to model for classmates with disabilities. **This application is for Crosswalks Mentor.** If you have received this application by mistake and are looking for services for a student with special needs, please contact the Preschool Program Specialist at (205) 775-1950 (extension 9980) to see if your child may need an evaluation to qualify for an IEP.

Crosswalks is also beneficial to families of typically developing students because children are taught by highly qualified teachers and the program has a smaller teacher-to-student ratio than many other early childhood programs. In addition, tuition is lower than that of private early childhood facilities.

If you believe your child would be a good candidate for the Crosswalks Mentors program, please review the following information and complete the attached forms.

We know that students have a variety of strengths and weaknesses, and we do not expect peer mentors to be perfect. However, we do look for leadership and mentoring skills that will benefit our program. If you are concerned that your child may not be what we are looking for, please feel free to contact us to discuss your concerns and determine whether your child would be a good fit.

Enrollment

Mentor students must reside in Blount County or be the child of a staff member who works at the Blount County Learning Center. Students must turn three years old **on or before July 31** of the current school year and **must be potty trained** at the beginning of the school year to be eligible to attend. Children who are eligible for kindergarten will not be accepted.

Enrollment of siblings of students currently in the program will be determined on an individual basis. One of our goals is to promote independence for students with special needs.

Application Process

The number of typically developing peers accepted will depend on the number of students with special needs enrolled in the classroom; therefore, the number of available spaces will vary each school year. Applications will be reviewed based on eligibility requirements for age and development, as well as the demonstration of skills that will support mentoring others.

Students who are eligible to be peer mentors may apply for the upcoming school year during open enrollment in **March and April**. Applications may be obtained through the Blount County website or on-site. **Waiting lists are not maintained from year to year; a new application must be submitted annually.**

Tuition

The tuition for typically developing peers is **\$60 per week** for the 5-day program or **\$45 per week** for the three-day program. Tuition will be due on Monday (or the next school day if Monday is a holiday) and is late on Tuesday afternoon. If the tuition is not paid by Tuesday afternoon, the student cannot return until paid. Tuition begins the first full week of school (based on the school calendar). Full tuition is due each week regardless of the number of days the child attends.

Administration reserves the right to dismiss a student from the program due to poor attendance or failure to comply with program policies and procedures.

Meals

Breakfast and lunch may be purchased from the school cafeteria. At this time, the cost for the upcoming school year has not been determined. All students received free breakfast and lunch during the 2025–2026 school year; however, we have not yet received information regarding the 2026–2027 school year. Families will be notified in August 2026 (or sooner) if there will be a cost for meals. **Any meal charges will be in addition to the tuition cost.**

If you prefer to send your child’s breakfast and/or lunch from home, you may do so each day; however, **food cannot be heated at school.** A snack must be sent daily for your child.

Blount County Handbook

In addition to the guidelines outlined in this handbook, the Crosswalks program follows all Blount County Board of Education policies and procedures as stated in the system handbook.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for providing transportation to and from school.

Guidance and Behavior Management

The teacher and paraprofessionals use developmentally appropriate guidance and behavior management strategies to promote positive self-concepts, appropriate behavior, and self-control. Through guidance and positive reinforcement, children learn that appropriate behavior leads to positive outcomes.

Behavior management strategies may include redirection, planned ignoring, verbal reminders, time away within the classroom for calming and regrouping, and the temporary loss of privileges or activities when appropriate.

If a child demonstrates persistent or serious behavioral concerns, a parent conference will be scheduled to discuss concerns and determine appropriate next steps. In cases involving ongoing behavioral or safety concerns, the team may recommend suspension or removal from the program.

Health & Medical Emergencies

The staff will make every effort to protect the health and safety of all children. The cooperation of parents is essential in this effort. Parents should keep their child at home when any of the following symptoms are present. Children must be symptom-free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school:

- Headache
- Fever of 100°F or higher
- Diarrhea
- Rash accompanied by fever or behavioral change
- Vomiting
- Eye discharge / pink eye
- Severe cold symptoms
- Mouth sores with drooling

If a child becomes ill or is injured at school, the child's parents will be notified. If the illness or injury requires immediate medical attention, parents will be contacted right away. In the event of a serious emergency, paramedics will be called and the child will be transported to the hospital if necessary. A staff member will remain with the child until a parent or guardian arrives.

Application Submission Information

- Please complete and return the following 5 pages to the Blount County Learning Center office by April 30, 2026.
- Keep pages 1–4 for your records.
- Families will be notified via email of acceptance into the Crosswalks Mentor Program by May 6, 2026.
- If you have any questions, please contact Breann Prince at kbprince@blountboe.net.

Peer Mentor-Preschool Application 2026-2027

This application is due in the Blount County Learning Center office by April 30, 2026.

Child's Full Name _____

Preferred Name/Nickname: _____

Current Age _____ Date of Birth _____

Mother/Guardian Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number: _____ Email _____

Place of Employment _____

Father/Guardian Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number: _____ Email _____

Place of Employment _____

Does your child have any medical conditions ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please explain _____

Has your child ever received therapy?(such as Speech, Physical, Occupational)

____ Yes ____ No If yes, please list: _____

Are you applying for 3 days or 5 days a week? _____

Is the applicant the child or relative of a Blount County School System employee?

___ Yes ___ No Employee Name _____ School _____

NOTE: YOUR CHILD MUST BE FULLY POTTY TRAINED TO BE CONSIDERED FOR ENROLLMENT.

Being fully toilet trained includes:

- consistently telling an adult when he/she needs to use the restroom
- using the toilet independently
- staying dry throughout the school day
- managing clothing independently (pulling pants up and down)
- wiping independently (does not include bowel movements)
- washing hands independently
- wearing regular underwear (not pull-ups)

Is your child fully toilet trained? ___ Yes ___ No ___ Almost (please list the skills your child is still working on) _____

** Note: All of the above toileting requirements must be met before the first day of school in order for a child to remain in the program.**

_____ **Developmental Profile** _____

Social Development

Does your child like to be a helper? _____

Is your child shy or outgoing? _____

Is your child a leader or follower when playing in a group? _____

Does your child adjust well to new people or situations? _____

Is your child easily redirected? _____

Speech and Physical Development

Does your child speak in complete sentences? _____

Is your child's speech easily understood by all listeners? _____

What sounds does your child have difficulty producing? _____

Does your child walk, climb and move about all types of surfaces? _____

Can your child open and close containers? _____

Can your child button and unbutton pants/ coats? _____

Can your child copy lines, circles, or letters? _____

Behavioral

Can your child attend to an activity independently for 4 or more minutes? _____

Does your child have temper tantrums? _____

How would you describe your child? ___ Underactive ___ Active ___ Overactive

What discipline works best for your child? _____

Has your child attended another preschool or daycare? ___ yes ___ no

Has your child ever been dismissed from a preschool or daycare program?

___ yes ___ no If yes, please explain _____

Quick Check

Read each item and think about your child's current behavior. Check the box that best describes your child most of the time. Use the Notes column to provide additional details if needed.

Remember that we do not expect perfect behavior; we are looking for a variety of strengths and areas for growth.

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Notes
Follows directions.				
Participates in organized group activities.				
Responds appropriately when hit or pushed by other children.				
Starts conversations with others.				
Controls temper in a conflict situation.				
Shows interest in a variety of things.				
Makes friends easily.				
Puts away toys when requested.				
Communicates problems to you.				
Eats with a fork and spoon.				
Uses toilet independently.				
Washes hands independently.				
Easily accepts separations from family.				

Parent Agreement

I am interested in enrolling my child in the Crosswalks preschool program as a typically developing peer mentor to interact with preschool students with disabilities. I understand that submission of this application does not guarantee acceptance into the program. If my child is accepted, I accept responsibility for providing transportation to and from school, for paying tuition according to the established schedule, and for following all program policies and procedures. I certify that the information provided on this application is accurate and complete.

Child's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Parent Signature _____ **Date** _____

Official Use Only: Date received _____ Staff signature _____