



2026-2027

Universal Prekindergarten

Parent & Family Guide



The information contained in this Universal Pre-Kindergarten Guide is the property of the Central Islip UFSD for the use of the Central Islip community, parents, students and employees. All other uses are strictly prohibited.

About Our Program

The Central Islip Union Free School District offers a grant-funded Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Program. The UPK program is available for children residing within the Central Islip School Union Free School District and turning four years old by December 1st of the year they begin prekindergarten. Our UPK classes provide a comprehensive early childhood educational experience for our students and their families, utilizing best practices in early education.

In-district and off-site UPK classrooms are available. The district partners with several community-based prekindergarten centers to provide additional opportunities for Central Islip resident students to participate in the UPK program. Students in the in-district and community-based programs receive developmentally appropriate instruction.

The community-based UPK programs are facilities licensed by the New York State Office for Children and Family Services (NYSOCFS). These partners were selected through a rigorous application and interview process. The Central Islip Union Free School District administrative team supervises, oversees, and supports the off-site programs throughout the school year to ensure the highest quality of education. All childcare centers undergo ongoing safety and wellness inspections.

Program Sites & Contact Information

Central Office

Office of Grants and Funded Programs

50 Wheeler Road, Central Islip, NY 11722

Administrator for Grants and Funded Programs: Ms. Christina Guastella

CGuastella@centralislip.k12.ny.us

631-348-5000 ext. 1017

In-District Program

Anthony Alfano Elementary School

50 Wheeler Road, Central Islip, NY 11722

Program Hours: 9:39- 3:39

Principal: Ms. Carmen Vazquez

CVazquez@centralislip.k12.ny.us

631-348-5000 ext. 5410

Assistant Principal: Ms. Jasmin Dengeles

JDengeles@centralislip.k12.ny.us

631-348-5000 ext. 5419

Community-Based Programs

HeadStart

44 Toomey Road, West Islip, NY 11795

Program Hours: 9:45-3:45

**Before-care is available.*

Director: Ms. Christina Vittorato

CVittorato@liheadstart.org

631-348-1816

**There is an income requirement for placement at HeadStart (see Appendix Table 2).*

Program Sites & Contact Information

Leon's Early Childhood Center
25 Church Street, Ronkonkoma, NY 11773
Program Hours: 9:45-3:45
**Before and after-care are available.*

Director: Ms. Sandy Leon-Hoitsma
Assistant Director: Ms. Essence Sterling
Leon@lecceducation.org
631-619-6526
Website: lecceducation.org

THE Nursery School
35 Church Street, Lake Ronkonkoma, NY 11779
Program Hours: 9:45 - 3:15
**Before and after-care are available.*

Director: Ms. Fran Gandarillas
TheNurserySchools@gmail.com
631- 678-5686

YMCA of Bay Shore
200 W. Main Street, Bay Shore, NY 11706
Program Hours: 9:45 - 3:45
**Before and after-care are available.*

Director: Ms. Cindy Becker
Cindy.becker@ymcali.org
631-665-4255 ext. 6711

Assistant Director: Ms. Tina Ryan
Christina.ryan@ymcali.org
631-665-4255 ext.6724

Application Process

Applications are made available on January 1st of each year.

- Children who will be four years old on, or before, December 1st are eligible for UPK in September of the following school year. (Please see Appendix Table 1.)
- UPK applications will be made available on the district website, at each elementary school within the district, the Central Islip Public Library, and our community-based program locations. Applications may be completed digitally or via paper copy.
- A public lottery will be held each year. Should there be less applicants than seats available, all applicants will be assigned a lottery number using a randomized system.
- The district will continue to accept applications after the lottery date, however, placement for these students will be based on the number of remaining seats available; if there are no seats available the student will be given a number on the waitlist.
- While parents can notify the district of the preferred UPK program location for their child, there is no guarantee that a child will be placed in the preferred location.

The number of available seats may change each year. The anticipated number of seats is noted on the UPK application form. Should there be more applications than seats available, the remaining applicants will be given a waitlist number. The waitlist remains active until March of each school year.



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Registration & Screening

Registration Process

After a child is given a lottery number, the registration process MUST be completed for their seat to be held in the UPK program. A mailing will be sent home within one week of the lottery with specific instructions on how to complete the online registration process. If registration is not completed by the deadline, students will lose their lottery number and be placed on the waitlist. Please contact the Central Registration Office at 631-348-4196 or visit them at 1 Broadway, Central Islip, NY 11722, for assistance during the registration process.

Screening Process

After a student is fully registered, a screening process is required. All screenings take place in May or June the year before students begin UPK. The DIAL-4 screener helps to identify a child's basic skills in language development, fine and gross motor skills, and school readiness. The screening is short and will take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete; students must be in attendance to complete the screener. Information gained from this screening will help teachers provide appropriate support for students once they enter their classrooms in September.

School Assignment, Attendance, & Transportation

All About School Assignment

Several factors are considered when a student is assigned to a UPK program. A student whose primary home language is Spanish has the option for a bilingual classroom placement. Placement in a bilingual class is based on several factors, including lottery numbers. Please contact Ms. Jasmin Dengeles, Assistant Principal, with any concerns or preferences about your child's placement.

Attendance

Once a parent enrolls their child in UPK, their child is expected to be in attendance each day that the program is in operation, except for excused absences. If a child is absent for an extended period of time, they will have to withdraw from the UPK program. Upon the child's return, they may re-enroll and be placed on the waitlist if there is no available seat. Program Directors and Administrators may also drop a child from the program due to excessive absence/lack of attendance.

Transportation

Bus transportation will be provided for all students enrolled in our UPK programs, both within the district and at our community-based programs.

Family Engagement



Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in their child's UPK experience.

Parents can volunteer for special projects, class activities, and field trips.

UPK teachers, Directors, and Administrators are available to answer any questions that you may have about the program or your child's specific needs, and regular parent-teacher conferences are scheduled throughout the school year.

Additionally, the Central Islip Union Free School District offers parent workshops throughout the year.

Both the in-district program at Alfano and the community-based programs utilize a digital platform to communicate important information about upcoming events, send pictures about student outings and other fun activities, and help maintain open lines of communication with families. Information on accessing these platforms will be sent home during the first month of school.

Curriculum and Instruction

All UPK classes have access to the Footsteps to Brilliance Curriculum and Creative Curriculum System for Preschool.

Footsteps to Brilliance is a digital program offered in English and Spanish. The program contains thousands of interactive eBooks, songs, and games that engage students and inspire a love for learning. All families can access the curriculum at home.

The Creative Curriculum System for Preschool focuses on play-based learning and utilizes hands-on investigations incorporating language, literacy, and mathematics throughout the day.

Launchpad, which provides playful and powerful evidence-based phonics and pre-reading skills instruction meant to prepare students for kindergarten, is also utilized, along with Happy Numbers, which focuses on unpacking math concepts for students in a fun and interactive way.

All UPK students will have access to iPads throughout the year to enhance their learning experience. Student usernames and passwords will be sent home at the beginning of the year for all platforms that can be used at home to reinforce skills.



Curriculum and Instruction

Some community-based UPK programs utilize other curriculums in coordination with the Central Islip Union Free School District options provided.

The UPK schedule is well-balanced and consists of learning centers, whole group instruction, quiet play/time, independent play, fine motor activities, and indoor/outdoor gross motor play. Each location has an outdoor play area where children participate in supervised play each day (weather permitting), with opportunities for movement and exploration.

Below are links to at-home curriculum platforms and other fun online resources that can be utilized:

Footsteps 2 Brilliance

- www.footsteps2brilliance.com

Happy Numbers

- www.happynumbers.com

Typetastic

- No username or password required
- www.typetastic.com



Appendix

Table 1: Eligible Birth Dates

School Year	Applications Available	Date of Birth Between
26-27	January 1, 2026	12/2/2021-12/1/2022
27-28	January 1, 2027	12/2/2022-12/1/2023
28-29	January 1, 2028	12/2/2023-12/1/2024
29-30	January 1, 2029	12/2/2024-12/1/2025

Table 2: Financial Eligibility for HeadStart 26-27

# Persons in Family/ Household	Poverty Guideline
1	\$15,960
2	\$21,640
3	\$27,320
4	\$33,000
5	\$378,680
6	\$44,360
7	\$50,040
8	\$55,720

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**We can't wait
for your child
to join us!**



Visit our website
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