Indianapolis Public Schools

Pre-Kindergarten Program

Handbook for Families

Indianapolis Public Schools 1
Mission 2
Vision 2
Indianapolis Public Schools Pre-Kindergarten 2
Mission 2
Vision 2
Requirement to attend Pre-K 2
Philosophy 3
IPS Pre-Kindergarten Program Description: 4
IPS ParentPay Program 5
How do I know what I have to pay? 5
No Cost Pre-K 5
Reduced Cost Pre-K 5
Full Pay Pre-K 5
CCDF Vouchers 5
Special Education Students 6
When will a payment be due? 6
How will I make my monthly payment? 6
Missing Payment 6
Notification of Missed Payment 6
The Learning Environment 8
Instructional Time 8
Lunch and Breakfast 8
Class Treats and Snacks 8
Classroom Schedule 8
Circle Time 8
Rest Time 9
Screen Time 9
Recess 9
Contact Information 9
Student Attendance 9
Arrival and Pick Up 9
Absences 9
Illness 10
Medications 10
Immunizations 11
Discipline 11
Toileting Policy 12
Support & Accommodations 12
Accident Protocol & Emergency Plan 13
Parental Communication & Collaboration 14

Indianapolis Public Schools

Mission

IPS empowers and educates all students to think critically, creatively, and responsibly, to embrace diversity, and to pursue their dreams with purpose.

Vision

IPS is a family of excellent public schools in which every student has the opportunity to succeed and the power to create their own future.

Indianapolis Public Schools Pre-Kindergarten

Mission

All children have access to high-quality, developmentally appropriate, and equitable pre-kindergarten experiences which enable them to become life-long learners. This will be accomplished by recognizing the value and diverse learning styles of each individual student and promoting his or her personal growth in a challenging, culturally relevant, and caring environment.

Vision

Our program is developmentally appropriate, offering instructional and play-based experiences designed to support a pre-kindergartner's growth: physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially.

Requirement to attend Pre-K

The IPS Pre-Kindergarten General Education Program serves children who turn 4 years old on or before August 1st.

Philosophy

Early childhood education is incredibly important to a child's future academic and professional success, which is why many education advocates point to pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) as a crucial point of entry that gives children the means to succeed later in life.

There is no single teaching method that guarantees success in Pre-K. Instead, teachers rely on multiple philosophies, based on their values or experience, to ensure the best outcomes for students. The IPS Pre-Kindergarten Program blends the philosophies of two categories — play-based and academically focused — our teachers incorporate ideas from both ideologies.

Our Pre-K program lays a strong foundation for academic success by integrating rigorous early learning experiences with intentional support for each child's social, emotional, physical, and mindful development. We recognize that academic readiness is most effective when paired with a well-rounded approach that nurtures both cognitive growth and personal well-being.

IPS Pre-Kindergarten Program Description:

Our program is designed to be accessible to families in the Indianapolis Public School District with a child or children that reach the age of four on or before the first of August. Our program is offered in multiple sites in each sector of the city. Enrollment is managed by Enroll Indy with the required completion of an application for On My Way Pre-K. Based on availability, families are offered full-day preschool program experiences Monday through Friday. Classrooms are staffed with one certified teacher and one Pre-K assistant with no more than 20 students. Parents provide transportation to school and pick up their child daily.

Under the umbrella of the IPS Pre-Kindergarten Program, Programs for Young Children (PYC), offers Developmental Pre-K experiences for three- and four-year-old children with an Individualized Education Plan(IEP). Students are entered into this program by evaluation, IEP eligibility or recommendation by First Steps. Services through First Steps are designed to meet the developmental needs of the child. Except in limited circumstances, First Steps does not provide services to meet medical needs. Most PYC students attend half-day developmental Pre-K programs and are provided transportation by bus. The weekly schedule of these students will be flexible depending on their age and Individualized Education Plan.

IPS Pre-Kindergarten Programs are provided to families at a variable rate based on their Free/Reduced Lunch Statues. Rate is $0/$100/$150. We accept On My Way Pre-K vouchers at all sites. The IPS Pre-K Program is also located at several IPS Innovation School sites which also accept On My Way Pre-K Vouchers. Due to the ½ day schedule of our PYC students they do not qualify for On My Way.

The IPS Calendar or the Innovation School Calendar will identify scheduled non-school days. These days will be non-student attendance days due to breaks, holidays, professional development opportunities, and Parent-Teacher Conferences. If IPS must close or delay school due to inclement weather, please check local television, radio stations, or your school's website for school closure announcements. The district will also send out automated phone messages regarding the delay or closure. In the event of a delayed opening, Pre-K families of PYC students enrolled in the half-day program would not attend the morning session, but students enrolled in the afternoon session would attend.

Tuition Information

For the 2026-27 School Year:

Families who receive a Pre-K seat for the 2026-27 school year will be guaranteed a Kindergarten seat at the same school for the 2027-28 school year.

Cost to Attend IPS Pre-K

Pre-K Tuition for 2026-2027

- **Full-Day Tuition**
  - **$700 Monthly**
  - This equates to a weekly cost of about $195, which is comparable to other surrounding school districts and licensed preschool centers.
- **General Discount**
  - **$500 Monthly**
  - This equates to a weekly cost of about $139 which is comparable to other surrounding school districts and licensed preschool centers.
  - **Discount eligibility as follows:** Single-parent households currently receiving SSI/ Disability income.
- **Extended Day Services**
  - Students receiving special education services may be eligible for lower full-day tuition rates by reaching out directly to the Early Learning Department at earlylearning@myips.org or at tel# 317.954.0557.

Tuition Payment Frequency

- Payment is due every month on the 3rd (August 2026-May 2027).
- Payment not received by the 6th will incur a late fee.
- Tuition will be collected electronically only, via credit card, debit card, or e-check. Transactional fees on credit and debit cards will be applied.

Other Important Criteria

- Full rate is applicable to all families.
- CCDF co-pays will be collected.
- CCDF and OMWPK overages will be collected.
- Families who are terminated from CCDF or OMWPK for any reason are required to pay the $700 monthly tuition.

The Learning Environment

Instructional Time

The specific start time and end time for the IPS Pre-Kindergarten Programs are site-based. These times are determined by the administration team at each school including innovation sites and communicated with families. The length of the preschool day is approximately six hours and thirty minutes including time for drop off and pick up. If the IPS Pre-Kindergarten Program is aligned to the elementary schedule where the program is located, then the length of the day may be slightly different.

Lunch and Breakfast

Full-day programs offer breakfast and lunch. PYC students that attend the half-day morning session will have breakfast. The PYC afternoon program will provide lunch.

Allergy and special dietary restrictions for individual children are followed and posted in each classroom. If your child has special dietary needs or has food allergies, please provide a note from your family doctor to document food allergies. Once the information is received, food services will be notified of your child's dietary or food allergy guidelines so meals that meet these restrictions can be provided.

If your child refuses to eat school breakfast or lunch daily, the parent/guardian will be asked to prepare a healthy breakfast/lunch to send with their child each day. We want to ensure that all our students are getting their nutritional needs met.

Class Treats and Snacks

Treats or snacks intended for the entire class must be store bought and packed individually.

Classroom Schedule

A Master Schedule for IPS Pre-K classrooms ensures equitable experiences for all Pre-K students. The daily schedule will include the following activities:

- Circle time
- Read aloud
- Centers
- Lunch
- Recess
- Rest time
- Snack time
- Specials (If school schedules)

Circle Time

Time to remind students of or introduce routines, promote language development, introduce and practice calming strategies, increase awareness of the world, and develop social skills.

Rest Time

Rest time is part of the daily schedule and cannot exceed 60 minutes. Students that are unable to fall asleep or wake up during the rest period will remain on their individual cot and read or rest.

Screen Time

Whole-class screen time is limited to short purposeful experiences to promote song and or movement. The teacher discusses what is viewed with the children. Whole class movie viewing is not a recommended practice.

Recess

Outdoor play is part of the daily schedule when weather permits. Active indoor play may be a replacement during inclement weather or if hazardous conditions are present outside.

Contact Information

Communication with the school is essential. Updated contact information and emergency contact information must be on file for your child by the first day of school. Phone numbers and an e-mail address are requested. Schools must be notified if there is any change in contact information.

Student Attendance

It is expected that our students arrive and are picked up on time daily. Our program is not a day care. The IPS Pre-Kindergarten Program does not practice flexible arrival and pick up times.

Arrival and Pick Up

School Start time is based on each site. Students need to arrive on time to ensure they do not miss specific instruction.

Parents will be contacted if the child is still at the school 10 minutes after dismissal. Late pickup times of 15 minutes or more will result in the emergency contact notified and must be documented with the signature of authorized person.

After five such occurrences, a formal letter will be sent home signed by the classroom teacher and school administrator and will require a conference with the school team. Chronic late arrivals will be documented and addressed via a conference or phone call with the school's social worker.

Absences

If your child has unexcused absences for an extended period and the school is not contacted or able to reach you, then your child may be unenrolled after administrative review.

Excessive absences are defined as 5 or more consecutive days or 10 or more cumulative days. Any student that collects an OMW Pre-K Voucher will lose a voucher after 20 consecutive or 40 cumulative absences, regardless of excused or unexcused.

Each school will communicate with parents when a student begins to accumulate multiple absences. After 5 consecutive or 8 cumulative absences, the teacher may send home the first Pre-K attendance letter and a conference may be held. After 9 consecutive or 14 cumulative absences, the teacher may send home a second Pre-K attendance letter and a conference may be held. At 10 consecutive or 15 cumulative absences, a conference must be held with the parent to address the attendance concerns.

Illness

Our PreK program's attendance expectations are aligned to IPS expectations. Parents are expected to notify the school office if their child is ill and unable to attend school. The child's absence will be marked as excused if parents notify the school. If your child has unexcused absences for an extended period and the school is not contacted or able to reach you, then your child may be unenrolled after administrative review.

Your child must be fever-free without the aid of medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Parents should check for any combination of these symptoms prior to sending children to school and contact a health professional if symptoms arise and/or persist.

- Fever (over 100.4 F) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Medications

IPS policies and procedures are followed regarding the safe administration, handling, and storage of medication. Appropriate documents must be on file before medication of any kind can be given at school by the office staff or the nurse, in schools that have a clinic. The school's office staff will contact families of children with health needs to establish individual health plans, as needed. A Medical Emergency Card must be completed upon enrollment.

Immunizations

It is the responsibility of families to ensure that student immunizations are updated before each new school year. To access the required and recommended immunizations, contact your child's school or visit https://www.in.gov/isdh/17094.htm In addition to these records and emergency contact information, you must also provide your child's birth certificate.

IPS policy states that a "Department of Health" order could mean that exempted students (students exempted from vaccination requirements) would be excluded from school temporarily during an outbreak or an epidemic". IPS follows the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's "Infectious Disease Control Guidelines".

Discipline

Students, parents, and school staff all have a role in making schools safe and must cooperate with one another to achieve this goal. When school staff and parents work together as partners, they create important opportunities for children to develop social, emotional, and academic competencies. As role models, parents and school staff should exhibit the behaviors they would like to see students emulate. School staff will keep parents informed of their child's behavior and enlist parents as partners in addressing concerns. Meetings (virtual or phone) between parents and school staff are encouraged to solve problems, prevent behavior problems and support behavior change and skill development. The IPS Student Code of Conduct applies to students at all times while at school. The IPS Student Code of Conduct can be located at www.myips.org .

Every PreK classroom has a designated 'calming space' or 'reset' space. This space is a safe area for a child to remove himself/herself from an activity to use and improve their self-regulation skills taught in the classroom. This area is not used as an area of punishment.

The school's social worker can provide support to students and families. Please be open to communication with the resources that our schools have available and do not hesitate to contact the school if specific support is needed. It is our goal to keep your child at school. Supporting the school and your child will help ensure that our goal is met.

Toileting Policy

As children enter into an IPS General Education Pre-K (age 4), we encourage them to be fully potty trained to support their independence and success in the classroom. However, potty training is not a prerequisite for enrollment, ensuring equal access for all students.

A child is considered fully potty trained if they can:

- Recognize when they need to use the restroom.
- Independently complete the toileting process, including:
    - Lowering their undergarments.
    - Using toilet paper appropriately.
    - Pulling up their undergarments.
    - Washing their hands after using the restroom.

Support & Accommodations

We understand that accidents may happen, and we are committed to supporting children as they develop toileting independence.

- Teacher Assistance: Teachers and assistants may provide minimal assistance when necessary, such as giving verbal and visual aides to guide the child with completing the toileting process. If a student needs additional support due to developmental, sensory, or medical needs, staff will follow guidelines to ensure dignity, safety, and compliance with ADA, IDEA, and Section 504.
    - In the situation that a student will need physical assistance in completing the toileting process, it is a best practice for two adults to be present when performing the supporting tasks. To maintain the ratio you will need an extra FSSA certified adult in the room.
- Students with Disabilities or Medical Needs: Children who qualify under IDEA or Section 504 will receive necessary accommodations, and potty training is not required for participation in special education services outlined in their IEP or 504 Plan.
- Medical Privacy: Any medical or behavioral interventions related to toileting will be handled in compliance with HIPAA, FERPA, and FAPE. Staff will collaborate with families to ensure appropriate support while maintaining confidentiality.

Accident Protocol & Emergency Plan

If a child has an accident requiring additional assistance:

- Staff will not delay providing minimal assistance if necessary, ensuring the child's health and dignity.
- If a child needs a full change of clothing, the school will contact a parent or guardian.
- If a parent is unavailable, staff will follow an emergency plan, which may include:
    - Using available extra clothing.
    - In the event of a bowel movement accident, school personnel may provide assistance to ensure the child's hygiene and comfort.
        - Steps for supporting a student
            - Inspect the designated changing area
                - Making sure that all of the necessary equipment and supplies are available in the area (i.e. gloves, wipes, water, soap, etc.)
                - If a student has to be laid down the student must be elevated off the ground.
                - Prepare table/surface where students will be changed by wiping with a sanitized cloth.
            - Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Gloves are required (apron if necessary).
            - Explain to your student what you are doing.
            - Once done supporting the student prior to cleaning up the area, change your gloves.
            - Cleaning the surface or area to avoid cross-contamination of infected or contagious material is a safe handling procedure which should be practiced. The proper removal and disposal of gloves should be included in the bloodborne pathogen training offered at your school.

Parental Communication & Collaboration

For children experiencing frequent accidents (daily or multiple times a week), we encourage collaboration between parents and staff to support toileting independence. This may include:

- Establishing a consistent bathroom routine.
- Providing positive reinforcement at home and in school.
- Discussing additional strategies or resources as needed.

If a previously potty-trained child begins having accidents due to a medical or behavioral concern, we will work with the family to create a plan, which may involve:

- Consultation with health services.
- Coordination with the social work team.
- Implementation of a structured bathroom schedule.
- Evaluation for a 504 Plan to determine appropriate accommodations.