



2026-2027

Universal Prekindergarten

Parent & Family Guide



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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 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.



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Program Sites & Contact Information

Office of Grants and Funded Programs

50 Wheeler Road, Central Islip, NY 11722
Executive Director for Grants & Funded Programs: Ms. Christina Guastella
CGuastella@centralislip.k12.ny.us
631-348-5000 ext. 1017

Anthony Alfano Elementary School

50 Wheeler Road, Central Islip, NY 11722
Program Hours: 9:39 a.m. - 3:39 p.m.

Principal: Ms. Jasmin Dengeles
JDengeles@centralislip.k12.ny.us
631-348-5000 ext. 5410

Assistant Principal: Ms. Janelle Lugo-Elmore
JLugo-Elmore@centralislip.k12.ny.us
631-348-5000 ext. 5401

HeadStart

44 Toomey Road, West Islip, NY 11795
Program Hours: 9:45 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

**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).*



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Program Sites & Contact Information

Leon's Early Childhood Center

25 Church Street, Ronkonkoma, NY 11773

Program Hours: 9:45 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

**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 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

**Before and after-care are available.*

Director: Ms. Angela Camarda
TheNurserySchools@gmail.com
631- 678-5686

Great South Bay YMCA

200 W. Main Street, Bay Shore, NY 11706

Program Hours: 9:45 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

**Before and after-care are available.*

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



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CENTRAL ISLIP UPK 26–27

Overview of Program Offerings

	ALFANO	HEADSTART	LEON'S	THE NURSERY SCHOOL	YMCA
TRANSPORTATION*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LUNCH PROVIDED	✓	✓	✓	✓	
BILINGUAL PROGRAM OFFERED	✓				
FOLLOWS CI CALENDAR	✓		✓	✓	✓
OUTDOOR PLAYGROUND	✓	✓	✓ [#]	✓	✓
SCHOOL HOURS	9:39 – 3:39	9:45–3:45	9:45–3:45	9:45–3:15	9:45–3:45
BEFORE/AFTER CARE		EARLY DROP OFF AT 8:30	✓	✓	✓

*transportation to be provided anywhere within the Central Islip School District

[#]anticipated Fall 2026

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.



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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 via email 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.



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School Assignment, Attendance, & Transportation

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 Mrs. Janelle Lugo-Elmore, 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 attend 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. It is coordinated by each school's main office staff. Any information related to transportation, including the pick-up and drop-off location must be communicated to the school's main office personnel. Contact information for each school can be found on page 2 of this guide.



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Family Engagement

Family members play a critical role in supporting the growth and development of their children. Families are viewed as partners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the UPK program. They are invited and encouraged to participate in their child's UPK experience. They can volunteer for special projects, class activities, and field trips. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled throughout the school year. Each UPK program offers several opportunities for families to visit the program for special events.

Communication is a key component of family engagement. Each of the UPK programs utilize a digital platform to notify families about important information, upcoming events, and to share photographs. The purpose is to maintain open lines of communication. Information on accessing these platforms will be sent home during the first month of school.

Families are encouraged to contact the UPK teachers, Site Directors, and District Administrators. They are available to answer any questions that you may have about the program or your child's specific needs.



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Curriculum and Instruction

All UPK classes have access to the Footsteps to Brilliance, Happy Numbers, and Creative Curriculum System for Preschool. Footsteps to Brilliance is a digital program offered in English and Spanish. The program contains interactive eBooks, songs, and games that engage students and inspire a love for learning. All families can access the curriculum at home. Happy Numbers is an digital mathematics resource to practice and enhance their skills. The Creative Curriculum System for Preschool focuses on play-based learning and utilizes hands-on investigations incorporating language, literacy, and mathematics throughout the day. Each of these programs support students' learning in the UPK programs.

Students attending the Anthony Alfano Elementary School will also have access to Launchpad, which provides playful and powerful evidence-based phonics and pre-reading skills instruction meant to prepare students for kindergarten.

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

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 access to platforms that can be used at home to reinforce skills.

In addition, the UPK classroom, curriculum and instruction are brought to life through intentional, well-designed play-based and theme-based learning centers where children actively construct meaning. Teachers shape the physical environment as a key instructional tool, creating dedicated spaces that invite students to explore, converse, inquire, build, and create. Educators ensure learning experiences are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically responsive.



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Curriculum and Instruction

Furthermore, home languages are integrated into daily instruction. Students have access to multilingual book choices and labels around the room, cultural activities, and multilingual staff members who provide direct support to students.

The UPK schedule is well-balanced and consists of student choice, 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:

Footsteps 2 Brilliance

- www.footsteps2brilliance.com

Happy Numbers

- www.happynumbers.com

Typetastic

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



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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	\$38,680
6	\$44,360
7	\$50,040
8	\$55,720

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