

2014 Kindergarten Admissions Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

APPLYING FOR KINDERGARTEN

How do I know if my child is eligible for kindergarten?

To be eligible for kindergarten, your child must be a current resident of NYC *and* turning five years old in 2014.

How can I apply to kindergarten?

You can apply in one of three ways:

- Online using [Kindergarten Connect](#)
- Over the phone by calling 718-935-2400
- In person at an [Enrollment Office](#)

Please do not mail in a paper application.

Does it matter when I apply?

You can apply at any time from January 13 through February 14. Admission is not first-come, first-served. All applications received by the deadline will be treated the same, according to schools' admissions priorities.

I visited my zoned school and they couldn't help me apply. What do I do?

The online application is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week through February 14. There are 13 Enrollment Offices across the city, which are open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 3 pm. The application phone line (718-935-2400) is open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 6 pm. If you have questions or concerns about the process, please email KindergartenConnect@schools.nyc.gov or call (718) 935-2009.

How will families who don't speak English access the new ways to apply to kindergarten?

Interpretation service for non-English speakers is available in 200 languages when families apply over the phone or visit an Enrollment Office. The following resources are available on our website:

- An informational video that is translated in 10 languages that explains the process and how to apply;
- Translated step-by-step instructions for completing the online application;
- Translated Elementary School Directories.

Visit www.nyc.gov/schools/kindergarten and click on the appropriate language at right to access translated resources. If you don't have internet service, you can access these resources at an Enrollment Office.

Does a single application mean there are no longer zoned schools?

Families have always been able to apply to multiple kindergarten programs throughout New York City. The application process continues to allow families to apply to all schools, in addition to their zoned school. Priority is given to incoming students who live in the zone. The only districts that are full choice for elementary school (meaning there are no zoned schools) are Districts 1, 7 and 23. You can find out if you have a zoned school by calling 311 or visiting www.nyc.gov/schools/schoolsearch.

What if I'm moving during or after the kindergarten admissions period?

If you move before February 14, you can change your application information online, at an Enrollment Office, or by calling 718-935-2400. After February 14, you should call 718-935-2009.

After offers go out in early April, you can visit your new zoned school directly to register. You will need to provide two documents as proof of address, as well as proof of your child's birth date and your child's immunization records. You can visit other schools in your new neighborhood to find out if you can enroll your child. Students

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always have a right to attend their zoned school, space permitting. If your zoned school is overcrowded, your child will receive another placement. If you no longer have a zoned school, visit an [Enrollment Office](#) for a placement.

What happens to families who don't apply by February 14?

Families will be able to enroll in kindergarten for the 2014-15 school year even if they miss the deadline or do not apply. After February 14, families should call 718-935-2009. After offers go out in early April, families can visit their zoned school to register. You will need to provide two documents as proof of address, as well as proof of your child's birth date and your child's immunization records. Students always have a right to attend their zoned school, space permitting. If your zoned school is overcrowded, your child will receive another placement. Seats at a zoned school will not be offered to non-zoned families if a school historically has not been able to serve non-zoned applicants. This is not a new practice. If you do not have a zoned school and do not apply by February 14, you should visit an [Enrollment Office](#) for a placement.

What if I don't want to participate in the kindergarten admissions process? Is there another way to enroll my child into Kindergarten?

If you do not apply to kindergarten through Kindergarten Connect, you can visit your zoned school to pre-register, starting in April. You will need to provide two documents as proof of address, as well as proof of your child's birth date and your child's immunization records. Students always have a right to attend their zoned school, space permitting. If your zoned school is overcrowded, your child will receive another placement.

GETTING INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOLS

How can I find out more about schools?

You may contact or visit schools directly to learn more. Many schools have tours and open houses during the application period. The [Elementary School Directories](#) and [website](#) are resources to help you get started and identify schools in your community. The Elementary School Directories include some school performance information as well as information about programs offered, while the website provides information about school tours/open houses and application information. If you have questions about a particular school, we encourage you to reach out to the school, using the information listed in the Elementary School Directory.

What resources are available at local elementary schools to support this process?

All New York City public elementary schools have printed copies of the Elementary School Directory, and other materials like bookmarks and flyers to share with families. Many schools have set up computers for families to submit online applications at the school with the support of the parent coordinator. Schools have always worked with families during this time period when processing applications and they are prepared to work with families who come in seeking assistance, particularly during this year of transition. If you are having difficulty accessing information at your school, please let us know that by emailing KindergartenConnect@schools.nyc.gov.

I heard that a school in another district gives priority to students who live in my area, but I can't find that information online. How do I confirm this?

Schools' admissions priorities are listed in the [Elementary School Directory](#). If you have questions about a specific school's priorities, please contact KindergartenConnect@schools.nyc.gov.

I looked at the average proficiency ratings for a few schools in the Directory. How should I use this information in making decisions about schools?

School performance information is a data point that families have told us is helpful in developing an understanding of a school's overall quality. Ultimately, only you can decide which schools are a good fit for your

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child and your family. We encourage you to contact schools, go on tours, and ask questions in order to help you get a full understanding of each school that you are considering.

RANKING YOUR SCHOOL CHOICES AND PRIORITIZATION

How many schools should I include on my application?

You should include as many schools as you are genuinely interested in for your child. You can list up to 20. If your zoned school has had a waitlist of zoned students in recent years, you should list a few other options. If you live in a choice district, it's a good idea to list at least a few options.

Is there a strategy for how should I rank schools?

There is no strategy needed to rank schools. You should rank schools in order of your personal preference. If your zoned school is your first choice for your child, you should list it first. However, you do not lose priority to your zoned school based on how you rank it, so if it's your last choice, rank it last and all other choices you rank ahead of it will be considered first. The way you rank your schools does not change your priority to any school.

I'm worried that if I rank my zoned school fourth, and we don't get into the first three, someone who ranked it first will be given our slot even if they're out of zone. Will this happen?

Students receive offers based on admissions priorities and family rankings, so a non-zoned student will never receive a placement offer ahead of a zoned student. Just like the pre-k process, non-zoned students who rank a program highly for kindergarten do not have priority over a zoned student who ranks that program lower down.

What happens if I change my mind about my kindergarten choices?

Families can update their choices at any time before February 14, 2014. Families seeking to enroll at their zoned school, instead of the school offered through kindergarten admissions can visit their zoned school at any time after offers go out. As long as the zoned school does not have a zoned waitlist, they will be able to attend. Families can also visit schools to be put on the waitlist after offers go out.

I have ranked my choices based on my preferences. Should I expect to get one of my top choices?

Students are considered for placement at each school based on a priority order called Admissions Priorities. Students who fall in the first priority group will be considered for placement first; students in the second priority group will be considered next; and so on, until all available seats have been filled. Order within priority group is determined by random assignment (lottery). Living in a school's zone, having a sibling who attends a school, and being enrolled in the school's pre-k program are all factors that impact your child's access to schools on your application. You should review the Admissions Priorities for every school that you'd like to list on your application in order to determine which priority group applies to your child. You can find the admissions priority in the Elementary School Directories.

QUESTIONS ABOUT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

How will students with disabilities be placed through the kindergarten admissions process?

Students with disabilities applying for kindergarten placement are treated the same as their non-disabled peers. Students whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) recommend a self-contained or Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class should expect to be served in any community school to which they are matched.

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While all community schools have the capacity to serve the majority of students with disabilities, not every community school has the specialized expertise necessary to serve students with certain needs. There is a separate process for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) programs, including NEST and Horizon programs. For more information regarding this process, please contact Paul Byas, pbyas@schools.nyc.gov. There is no disadvantage to participating in both kindergarten admissions and the ASD process.

Students who require a specialized program, school (for example, bilingual special education, District 75) or setting (barrier-free) may receive an alternate placement offer through the [Transitioning to Kindergarten](#) process. For example, if a student receives an IEP recommending a District 75 program (a program provided by the Department of Education's citywide district serving students with intensive needs), the student will receive a placement offer to a District 75 program site as an alternative to the school where the child received a placement offer through kindergarten admissions. Students who require a barrier-free site will receive a placement offer to an accessible school if their kindergarten admissions placement does not meet their mobility needs.

I heard that students with disabilities should attend their zoned schools. Now there is an opportunity to apply to multiple schools, but I don't know which programs are offered at schools. What should I do?

As a result of the Department of Education's special education reforms, also known as the "Shared Path to Success," special education services now largely follow the student. All students eligible for kindergarten, including students with disabilities, should apply to kindergarten. Since all schools are expected to serve the majority of students in their community, all families are encouraged to apply to their zoned school and any other schools that interest them. Students with specialized needs that require additional expertise may receive support in specialized programs that are only available at some community schools. If your child meets the eligibility requirements for either of these types of programs, he or she may be offered an alternative placement through the Transitioning to Kindergarten process.

What programs are available for English Language Learners (ELLs), and how do I use that information to make the best possible program choices on my application?

All schools offer English as a Second Language (ESL) services, and some schools also offer Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or Dual-Language programs. The school pages in the Elementary School Directory list the ELL programs currently offered for kindergarten students in each school. For the most up-to-date information about ELL program offerings, families are encouraged to contact schools directly. There's no strategy needed to rank these programs. You should reach out to schools and use the information provided in the Elementary School Directory to rank ELL programs in order of your preference.

If your child has been identified as an ELL, you should be invited to attend an ELL parent orientation at your child's school within ten days of his or her first day of attendance at school. During the orientation, fill out the Parent Survey and Program Selection Form and select the program that you believe best meets your child's needs. If you do not receive this form, you can request it from the school.

You have the right to request a specific type of program at your school. All schools offer ESL programs, and all schools are expected to open a TBE or Dual Language program when the families of at least 15 ELLs in a single language in one grade or two consecutive grades have requested that program. By selecting a TBE or Dual Language program on the Parent Survey and Program Selection Form, families help inform which ELL programs should be offered at schools.

For more information about all ELL programs and services available in New York City public elementary schools, please visit: www.nyc.gov/schools/Academics/ELL/FamilyResources.

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If your child requires *special education services given in a language other than English*, s/he may be recommended by the IEP team for a Special Education bilingual program. If the school to which you received an offer through the kindergarten admissions process does not provide that specialized program, you will receive an alternative offer via the Transitioning to Kindergarten process, which develops the IEP.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PLACEMENT OFFERS

Who decides which students will be given a placement offer to a school?

Placement offers are made based on schools' priority structures and family preferences. In any case where there are more applicants within a given priority group for a school than there are seats available, the placement will be made based on random assignment (lottery). This is how offers were made at individual schools in previous years. Once offers are sent out, admissions will be handled locally at the school, based on the same admissions priorities.

How does sibling priority work?

Kindergarten applicants with an older sibling who will be in grades 1-5 in September 2014 receive priority for admission, as outlined in each school's admissions priorities. A sibling can be a half, step, or foster sibling, but must reside in the same household as the applicant. Siblings who are entering grades 5 and above do not confer priority to applicants, as per [Chancellor's Regulation A-101](#).

What happens after I get my offer?

The offer letter will instruct you to contact the school within a specific timeframe to make an appointment to pre-register in person. It will also list the documentation required. You will need to bring your child, his or her birth certificate or passport, immunization records, and two proofs of your residence. For the list of acceptable proofs of residence, visit www.schools.nyc.gov/choicesenrollment/newstudents. Pre-registering to accept your offer does not impact your child's chance of receiving an offer from another school's waitlist, receiving a Gifted & Talented, charter school, or ASD NEST placement. If you do not pre-register by the deadline, your seat will be forfeited.

What happens if I don't like my offer?

The advantage to listing school options in order of preference is to give a true representation of where you feel most comfortable sending your child. There is no strategy for getting into a school. The new kindergarten admissions process maximizes the number of offers we can make to families up front, and uses parent preferences, within the priority structure, to make the best offers possible at all applicants citywide.

After you receive your kindergarten offer you may choose to register at the school to which you have received an offer, or register at your zoned school if space allows. In any case, you may remain on waitlists for schools ranked higher than the offer you received. You do not have to enroll your child in the school you were offered. However there is no guarantee that another NYC public school offer will be made if there are no available seats at your zone or waitlist school(s).

How do I get more information about a school's waitlists?

As in the past, the DOE will provide additional information about zoned waitlists, after initial offers have been made in April. We will consider ways to improve the data we include in the directories for future years to help families understand how students have been admitted to individual schools.

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Why can I only receive one kindergarten offer, instead of possibly having multiple offers to choose from?

In order to provide the highest number of incoming kindergarten students with a kindergarten placement, every family who applies to kindergarten will receive a single offer in April. In the past some families received multiple offers, while some other families received no offer. This year, all applicants will receive an offer at the same time because all families will indicate their preference for schools before offers are made, instead of after.

Families can remain on the waitlist at schools they ranked higher and choose between waitlist offers that they may receive after all offers are made in April. Pre-registering at a school does not prevent you from receiving a waitlist offer later on. If you receive an offer to a school other than your zoned school and feel that the school is no longer a fit for your child, you never lose your priority to your zoned school. You may enroll your child at your zoned school if there is an available seat.

What happens if my child is offered placement at a school that I didn't list on my application?

In rare cases, a child may be provided an offer to a school that was not listed on the family's application. This will only happen in one of the following scenarios:

- You did not list your zoned school on the application, and your child could not be placed at any of the other options listed on your application;
- Your zoned school is over-crowded, with a waitlist of zoned students, and your child could not be placed at any of the other options listed on your application; or
- You live in a choice district (1, 7, or 23) and your child could not be placed at any of the options listed on your application.

If the placement offer you received presents a medical or childcare, hardship for your family, you may visit an Enrollment Office to submit a Placement Exception Request. Documentation of the hardship is required. For more information on this process, please contact us at KindergartenConnect@schools.nyc.gov or 718-935-2009. Please keep in mind that you may also receive an offer from the waitlist of one of your preferred schools after the initial offers are sent out in early April.

If the school that I received an offer to is located far away from my house, will a bus be provided?

In New York City, placement in an elementary school does not guarantee yellow school bus service. If your child's school is outside of the district in which you live, school bus transportation will not be available. If your child's school is in the district where you live, the New York City Department of Education will use the table below to determine if your child qualifies for free or reduced fare transportation. For more information, you can contact the Office of Pupil Transportation at 718-392-8855.

Grade Level	Walking Distance from Child's Home to School		
	<i>Less Than ½ Mile</i>	<i>½ Mile or More, But Less Than 1 Mile</i>	<i>1 Mile or More</i>
K-2	Half-Fare MTA Bus Pass	Either Yellow Bus or MetroCard	Either Yellow Bus or MetroCard
3-6	No Transportation is Provided	Half-Fare MTA Bus Pass	

If I do not get into a school, can I find out why?

The reason why an incoming kindergarten student would not receive an offer at a school is because all seats were offered to students with a higher priority or within the same priority group based on the random selection process.

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What if I think a mistake has been made? Can I appeal?

There is no appeals process for kindergarten. However, if you think there has been a mistake, for example, that your child did not receive sibling priority and should have, please email KindergartenConnect@schools.nyc.gov or call 718-935-2009 and we will investigate.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE KINDERGARTEN ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Why wasn't the online application piloted in a zoned district?

We implemented an online application for pre-k admissions in 2008 for all districts, both zoned and non-zoned. Over the past five years, we have learned about what aspects of the online application process work well, and we've learned about opportunities for improvement. Last year, we piloted new application methods for kindergarten admissions (online and over-the-phone) in three communities: District 1 (Lower East Side), District 7 (South Bronx), and District 23 (Brownsville). Those three districts do not have zoned schools, but similar to districts with zoned schools, parents previously were required to submit their applications in person at schools. The goal of the pilot was to test the new methods for applying, which are applicable to zoned districts as well as non-zoned districts. The admissions policies for non-zoned and zoned schools do not change as a result of the new application process.

Will the DOE or charter schools be using the information I provide through Kindergarten Connect for purposes other than kindergarten admissions? How do I know that the vendor the DOE is using will respect my privacy?

The DOE will not share your information with anyone else, including charter schools. Like all vendors with access to student-level data, there is a strict non-disclosure agreement in place preventing them from sharing any information without authorization from the NYCDOE. The DOE will use your kindergarten application information for placement purposes only.

If I have more questions or suggestions, who can I contact?

Please email KindergartenConnect@schools.nyc.gov with any additional questions or concerns.