

Pre-Kindergarten Admissions Guidelines  
for Students Entering Pre-Kindergarten in September 2016

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**To:** District School Pre-K Principals  
**From:** Amar Rajwani, Director of Pre-K Admissions, Office of Student Enrollment  
**CC:** Rob Sanft, Chief Executive Officer, Office of Student Enrollment  
Sarah Kleinhandler, Deputy Chief Executive for Elementary Admissions, Office of Student Enrollment  
District Superintendents  
Borough Field Support Directors  
**Date:** January 2016  
**Re:** Pre-K Admissions for 2016-2017

We look forward to partnering with you and your staff to ensure a successful admissions process for the 2016-2017 school year. This document provides detailed information about the following:

- I. Overview and Timeline
- II. Conducting Outreach to Families
- III. Application Process
- IV. Admissions Priorities
- V. Sibling Verification
- VI. Offer Period and Pre-Registration
- VII. Waitlist Management
- VIII. Round 2
- IX. Frequently Asked Questions
- X. Contact Information

A second memorandum, with detailed guidance on managing offers, pre-registration, and waitlists will be provided in the spring. As you read through the information, please reach out to the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE) Office of Student Enrollment at [SEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:SEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov) with any questions.

**I. Overview and Timeline**

All NYC families with children born in 2012 are eligible to apply to pre-K for the 2016-2017 school year.

Pre-K is offered at NYCDOE district schools, stand-alone NYCDOE Pre-K Centers, charter schools, and NYC Early Education Centers (NYCEECs). NYCEECs (formerly known as Community-Based Organizations) are private organizations that partner with the NYCDOE to provide pre-K programs in all communities.

***How it Works***

- Families complete a single application for district schools, Pre-K Centers, and full-day NYCEECs.
- Families list up to 12 options on the same application, in order of preference.
- Each applicant receives a single offer from the NYCDOE.
- Families interested in half-day or 5-hour NYCEECs or charter schools must contact those sites directly.

**Timeline for Pre-K Admissions:**

Date (2016)	Activities
January 25 – March 9	Application period; Pre-K Directories distributed and Family Info Sessions held
March 31	Deadline for Schools to verify sibling priorities
Late April	Schools preview offer lists
Early May	Offer letters sent to families; pre-registration begins; Round 2 application opens
May 20	Pre-registration deadline; Round 2 deadline
Late May	Programs with available seats begin making waitlist offers

**II. Conducting Outreach to Families**

***Distribute Pre-K Directories***

The Pre-K Directory provides admissions information and a list of pre-K programs. It is posted on the [pre-K website](#). Printed copies are available at elementary schools, NYCEECs, and [Family Welcome Centers](#) and will also be available at Family Information Sessions and other outreach events. The Directory is available in ten languages.

The Pre-K Directory Update contains new information about program additions and removals that were not printed in the Directory. It will be posted [online](#) and printed copies will be available at [Family Welcome Centers](#).

For the most up-to-date information, families are encouraged to review [Pre-K Finder](#) online.

***Recommended Outreach Practices***

- Host open houses and conduct tours for families to learn about your pre-K program. If you have not already, send us your open house schedule by filling out [this brief survey](#) and we will post the information on the [pre-K website](#).
- Encourage families to attend one of the [Pre-K Info Sessions](#) between January 27 and February 3.
- Ensure you reach all students in your community, including students with disabilities (including those with IEPs), students with a home language other than English, and students without permanent residence.
- Your recruitment activities may not discriminate against a child or family on the basis of actual or perceived income, race, creed, color, sex, gender, national origin, citizenship status, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, or political belief.
- Ensure families know that enrolling in your pre-K program does not guarantee them a seat in your kindergarten the following year. All families must apply for kindergarten and offers are distributed by the NYCDOE based on family preferences and admissions priorities.

**III. Application Process**

Families can apply to pre-K from January 25 through March 9, 2016. There are three ways to apply:

- Online at [nyc.gov/prek](http://nyc.gov/prek).
- Over the phone by calling 718-935-2067.
- In person, at a [Family Welcome Center](#).

The online application is available in ten languages. Interpretation services will be available in over 200 languages for applications submitted over the phone and in person.

#### **IV. Admissions Priorities**

Students are considered for placement at each program they list on their application based on Admissions Priorities. For district schools, priority is based on where the applicant lives and whether he or she has a sibling attending the school. Students in the first priority group will be considered for placement first; students in the second group will be considered second, and so on.

##### ***Admissions Priorities for District Schools***

1. Zoned students with a sibling at the school;
2. Other zoned students;
3. In-district students with a sibling at the school who have no zoned pre-K program;
4. In-district students with a sibling at the school who are zoned to a different pre-K program;
5. In-borough students with a sibling at the school;
6. Out-of-borough students with a sibling at the school;
7. In-district students who have no zoned pre-K program;
8. In-district students applying to a school other than their zoned school;
9. In-borough students;
10. Out-of-borough students.

##### ***Placement Policies***

- There is no guarantee that a child will receive an offer to one of the choices on their application.
- Students who do not receive an offer to any of the programs listed on their application will receive an offer to a program with available seats that is located as close as possible to the family's home address.
- How a family ranks a program on their application does not affect priority.
- Within each priority group if there are more students applying to a program than there are available seats, offers will be made randomly to applicants within the same priority group.
- For non-zoned schools, the first two priorities do not apply, since these schools have no zones.
- Placement in a pre-K program in a school does not mean that the student will automatically remain in the school for kindergarten for the following school year. The family must apply for that school as part of the kindergarten admissions process. District schools currently offering a pre-K program give priority to these students after zoned students (if the school is zoned) and siblings.

##### ***Placement Policies for Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)***

- All children, including those with IEPs, are eligible to apply to pre-K. The pre-K admissions process does not take IEP status into account when offers are made.
- Children with IEPs that recommend a Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT) and/or Related Services can be served at any pre-K program, including those at district schools. The Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) is responsible for arranging these services, which may be administered at your site. Email the NYCDOE Special Education Office at [RelatedServices@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:RelatedServices@schools.nyc.gov) with any questions.
- Families of children with IEPs recommending Special Class or Special Class in an Integrated Setting will work with the CPSE to identify a program to meet the needs of their child. However, a family may choose to apply through the pre-K admissions process if they believe the child may be recommended for a general education setting next year, or if they would like the child to participate in a general education setting before or after his or her special education pre-K program. Email [PreKFamilyEngagement@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:PreKFamilyEngagement@schools.nyc.gov) with questions.

## **V. Sibling Verification**

### ***Schools Conduct Sibling Verification (Mid-February – Late March)***

You must verify sibling status for applicants claiming sibling priority. Beginning in February, you will have access to the Sibling Verification List (SVL) in [SEMS](#) (Student Enrollment Management System) which allows you to view and verify applicants whose families claimed on the application that an older child currently attends the school.

A sibling is defined as a brother or sister who lives in the same household as the applicant (this includes half, step, and foster brothers and sisters). To be verified, a sibling must be currently pre-registered or enrolled at the school **and** entering grades K-5 in September 2016. A guide for using SVLs will be provided in February.

**For siblings entering kindergarten, please note:** families with children attending kindergarten in September 2016 will not receive their kindergarten offer letters before the end of the pre-K application period. When completing their pre-K applications, some families may claim sibling priority at a school where they will not ultimately receive a kindergarten offer.

As you become aware of these cases during the kindergarten pre-registration period, please notify the Office of Student Enrollment at [SEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:SEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov). We will update the sibling priority for the pre-K applicant to your school. You will then be able to verify the pre-K applicant on your SVL in [SEMS](#).

Furthermore, as soon as kindergarten offers are released, you should contact all families with kindergarten offers and encourage them to pre-register. Students who have received a kindergarten offer to your school for September 2016 must be pre-registered in order to verify the sibling relationship with the pre-K applicant.

## **VI. Offer Period and Pre-Registration**

### ***Offer Period (Early May)***

The NYCDOE will send decision letters to families in early May 2016. You will be able to view a list of students receiving offers by accessing the Program Candidate List (PCL) in [SEMS](#). Students who are listed with an offer on the PCL are eligible to pre-register. In late April, before offers go out, you will have a chance to preview the offer list.

### ***Pre-Registration Period (Early May – May 20)***

The pre-registration period is early May – May 20, 2016. To accept an offer and pre-register, the family must go to the school in person, with the child and proof of the child's date of birth and address ([list of acceptable documents](#)).

The Pre-K Pre-Registration Screen (QPKF) will be open in ATS beginning in early May 2016 so you and your staff can pre-register students. During the pre-registration period, only students with offers can be pre-registered. Information on pre-registering students in ATS will be provided the spring.

**You must complete pre-registration data entry for students with offers in ATS by 5pm on Friday, May 27, 2016.**

## **VII. Waitlist Management**

Starting in late May, pre-K waitlist screens will be available in [SEMS](#). You and your staff will be responsible for making waitlist offers to fill any available seats. A guide to managing waitlists will be provided in May.

### ***Pre-K Waitlist Policies***

- Students are automatically waitlisted for programs listed higher on their application than the offer.
- Students who do not receive an offer to any of the programs listed on their application will receive an offer to a program with available seats, as close as possible to the student's home address. He or she will also be placed on the waitlist for all programs listed on the application.
- If your school has available seats remaining after the pre-registration period, only make waitlist offers according to the order that waitlisted students are listed in [SEMS](#). Waitlists are ordered according to standard pre-K admissions priorities (i.e. any remaining zoned siblings will be on top of the waitlists).
- If a family missed the application or did not apply to your program, you may add the child to your [SEMS](#) waitlist in priority order.

### **VIII. Round 2**

A second round of pre-K admissions ("Round 2") will be held from **May 2 – May 20, 2016**. Round 2 will include new pre-K programs and may also include some programs from the Main Round that still have availability. More information about what to do if your program is included in Round 2 will be provided in the spring.

### **IX. Frequently Asked Questions**

Below are some questions we frequently receive from principals and school staff:

#### **Are zoned siblings guaranteed to get a seat in my school?**

*No. While zoned students and siblings have high priority for admission to your program, your school may not have enough pre-K seats to accommodate all interested applicants. Additionally, a family may rank another program higher on their application, and they may be offered a seat there instead. Family preference matters.*

*Please also note that zoned non-siblings have higher priority than non-zoned siblings.*

#### **After receiving a single offer from NYCDOE, can students later receive waitlist offers from other programs?**

*Yes. Families may be on the waitlist for other programs, and may receive additional offers throughout the late spring, summer, and early fall. Stay in touch with your registered families so you can manage any vacancies.*

#### **Why will some students get offers to my program even if they do not apply to my program?**

*Every applicant will receive an offer. If your program does not fill with applicants, and you have seats still available, we may offer them to families who couldn't be offered one of their choices.*

#### **How can I help families complete the application?**

*You should assist families to understand the application and admissions process. Encourage families to apply to multiple Pre-K for All programs, to increase their chances of receiving an offer to one of their choices.*

*If you help families apply online, the family must press SUBMIT and use their own email. Additionally, you may not submit paper applications to a Family Welcome Center on behalf of a family; the family must come in person.*

**Are students who enroll in my pre-K program guaranteed a seat in my kindergarten?**

*No. Families that enroll in your pre-K are not guaranteed a kindergarten seat the following year. Families must apply for kindergarten and offers are made based on family preferences and admissions priorities.*

**X. Contact Information**

If you have questions, contact the Office of Student Enrollment at 718-935-2009 or [ESenrollment@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:ESenrollment@schools.nyc.gov).

The Pre-K Admissions Team contacts are:

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