

FAQs: DCPS PRE-SCHOOL AND PRE-KINDERGARTEN LOTTERY FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2010-2011

DCPS is proud to offer over 4500 seats for three- and four-year-old children across 85 schools. However, students are not required to attend pre-school (3) or pre-k (4), and some schools are unable to accommodate all applicants. Where the number of pre-school and pre-k applicants exceeds the number of available seats at a particular school, a lottery will be held. In-boundary applicants who do not receive a pre-school or pre-k seat will still have the right to attend kindergarten at their in-boundary school beginning at age five.

Fast Facts:

- The Pre-school and Pre-k Lottery application period for the 2010-2011 school year **begins on January 28, 2010 and ends on February 28, 2010 at 11:59 PM.**
- Applicants may each apply to up to six schools, selecting any combination of in-boundary and/or out-of-boundary schools they wish.
- Pre-school applicants must turn three years old by September 30, 2010. Pre-k applicants must turn four years old by September 30, 2010.
- The lottery application must be completed online; no paper applications will be accepted.
- The lottery will run on March 2. Results will be posted online on March 3 and mailed home on March 8.
- Applicants who receive a seat in the lottery must accept the offer by April 1 and register by May 1 in order to secure the seat. This includes verifying in-boundary residency if admitted with an "in-boundary preference." If you are admitted to Watkins Montessori, you will need to complete additional steps before enrolling at the school.

1. If I apply early in the application period, will I have a better chance of being accepted?

No. As long as you apply between January 28 and February 28, there is no advantage to applying early.

2. If my child a) lives in-boundary for the school to which I'm applying, b) has a sibling at the school, or c) lives close to the school, will I have a better chance of being accepted?

Yes. The DC Municipal Regulations (DCMR) allow for a preference in the lottery for a particular school if your child lives in-boundary for the school, your child has a sibling at the school, or your child lives within three blocks of the elementary school.* If admitted with an "in-boundary preference," you must be prepared to prove in-boundary residency when registering at the school. (To find your in-boundary school, please visit dcps.dc.gov.) If admitted with a "sibling preference," you must be prepared to prove that your children are siblings when registering at the school.

3. How does the lottery work?

- After the application period closes on February 28, each applicant will be assigned a random number for each school he/she applied to.
- The applicants for each grade at each school will then be sorted in order of random number.
- Applicants will be placed into available seats in their particular grade at each school based on their preference order and their random number order. The following is the order of preferences for the Pre-school and Pre-k Lottery:
 1. Students who live in-boundary with a sibling at the school are placed first, in random number order.
 2. Students who live in-boundary without a sibling at the school are placed next, in random number order.
 3. Students who live out-of-boundary with a sibling at the school are placed next, in random number order.
 4. Students who live within three blocks of the school without a sibling at the school are placed next, in random number order.*

* A proposal is being considered to change the three-block measure to a comparable mile distance in order to standardize and clarify this preference.

-
-
5. Any remaining seats will go to students who have neither in-boundary, sibling, nor proximity preferences, in random number order.

Exceptions: For the dual-language program at Oyster-Adams and the Spanish Immersion program at Tyler, preferences #2 and #3 above are reversed in order to support the programs' language acquisition goals. The Watkins Montessori program does not grant in-boundary preference.

- Finally, applicants who are placed into more than one pre-school or pre-k program will be given a seat at the school they ranked highest and moved to the waitlist for all other schools on their application.
- Waitlists will be created after all seats in a particular grade at a school are filled, so that students who are not admitted will appear on the waitlist in the preference order described above.

4. Does the order in which I rank my choices affect my lottery results?

Yes. If, during the lottery, a student is placed into more than one school, he/she will be given a seat at the highest ranked school and moved to the waitlist for all other schools on his/her application.

5. Can my child be accepted to more than one school? If we get into a school, what happens to our application for the other school(s)?

In order to maximize the number of applicants who receive a seat at a school to which they've applied, students will not be admitted into more than one school in the Pre-school/Pre-k Lottery. However, all applicants will be placed on a waitlist at each school to which they are not admitted during the lottery.

6. How will I know if any pre-school/pre-k seats are available at a particular school?

When you select the school and the grade to which you are applying, the application will indicate the number of seats the school anticipates being able to offer at the particular grade during the 2010-2011 school year.

7. I'm submitting Pre-school and Pre-k Lottery and/or Out-of-Boundary Lottery applications for more than one child, and I'd like them to be admitted to the same school. Is this possible?

Each child's application is treated independently in the Pre-school/Pre-k and Out-of-Boundary Lotteries; therefore, if one sibling is admitted to a particular school, there is no guarantee that the other will be able to attend the same school. However, DCPS seeks to accommodate families by elevating children to the top of the waitlist for their particular grade at a particular school if their sibling was admitted to that school through the lottery.

8. Why are in-boundary applicants without siblings at the school given higher preference than out-of-boundary applicants with siblings at the school?

DCPS seeks to create consistent pathways for students throughout their school years. Thus, all out-of-boundary students who are admitted to a school receive the right to continue attending that school through all its available grades, as well as to attend the school's "destination school" in the feeder pattern. In order to minimize potential overcrowding, pre-school and pre-k students who have a right to attend their in-boundary school beginning in kindergarten are given higher preference in the Pre-school and Pre-k Lottery for that school. The only exceptions to this are Oyster-Adams and Tyler Spanish Immersion, in order to support the programs' language acquisition goals.

9. I want to place my two-year-old in pre-school / I want to place my three-year-old in pre-k. Is this allowed?

No. DC Municipal Regulations state that students applying for pre-school must turn three by September 30, 2010, and students applying for pre-kindergarten must turn four by September 30, 2010.

10. Where can I learn more about the school(s) I'm interested in applying to?

Visit dcps.dc.gov for more information about DCPS schools, including information about Open Houses and continuing updates on the Pre-school and Pre-k Lottery process and policies.