

Universal
PreKindergarten
Parent Handbook
2022

White Plains City School District
White Plains, New York

The White Plains Public Schools partner with White Plains Early Childhood agencies to provide a free Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) program for four-year old children who are born in the year 2018 and who reside in White Plains. There are a limited number of **Full Day UPK** slots available. We do not offer half day UPK.

For the 2022-23 School year, we will be partnering with the following White Plains Early Childhood Agencies:

- **YMCA** 148 Hamilton Avenue
- **Little Disciples Learning Center** 348 South Lexington Avenue
- **United Preschool** 456 North Street
- **YWCA** 515 North Street

Transportation

Transportation is NOT provided. Parents must arrange for prompt arrival and pick-up at the PreK center.

Assignment Procedures

Various factors affect the placement of children in UPK. Assignments are based upon space available and parent's preference of schools. Whenever possible, children will be assigned to the parent's first choice request, but this is not guaranteed.

Application Process

Children who will be four years old by December 31, 2022 are eligible for Universal PreKindergarten in September of 2022. Parents who want their children to attend UPK in the 2022-23 school year should apply during the April/May Application period.

- Applications are sent to families for whom we have knowledge of a child born in 2018. Applications are also available on the White Plains School District website.
- Parents indicate their preferred schools in rank order.
- Completed applications received by May 6th are batched together and processed as a group. Children are NOT assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

- A number is assigned to each application, therefore the identity of each student is unknown to the District when the school assignments are made.
- Placement for students applying after May 6th will be based on remaining available spots and parents may not have a choice in their child's assignment to a school.

Full Day Assignment

If there are more applicants than spots available for students, a lottery will be held to fill the full day slots with the children of families who request placement. Children who do not get a spot through the lottery system are put on a waiting list. The waiting list remains active until the end of the school year.

Notification of Assignment

Following the Application Period, each family is notified of the school assignment for their child during the week of May 16th.

Attendance

Once a parent enrolls their child in PreKindergarten, it is expected that their child be in attendance each day that the program is in operation, except for excused absences. If a parent withdraws their child for an extended period of time for traveling or vacation, they will have to withdraw their child from the PreKindergarten program. Upon their return, they may re-enroll if there is a space available.

Registration Process

Parents will be contacted in June by the Early Childhood Agency to which they are assigned in order to complete the registration process.

Parents must:

- complete a Registration Form
- provide required residency proof
- provide birth and immunization documentation

If registration is not completed with the Early Childhood Agency or if any documents are missing, their child's UPK slot will be forfeited.

PreKindergarten Screening Process

At the beginning of the school year, all enrolled UPK students will be assessed by their teachers for school readiness and potential developmental delays. This information will be shared with parents. Students who speak a language other than English at home will be assessed through a parent survey and screening conversation with childcare center staff over the summer prior to the beginning of UPK. The UPK program will use this information to provide appropriate supports in working with students and their families to maintain their home language and begin to develop listening and speaking skills in English. In addition, all UPK students will have a hearing and vision screening administered by White Plains School District nurses during the school year.

Early Childhood Agencies

The Early Childhood Agencies with whom we partner are licensed with the State of New York. Each Agency has a Director on site.

All PreKindergarten teachers hold New York State teacher certification in Early Childhood.

All Teaching Assistants are New York State licensed.

Curriculum

All UPK classes use “Big Day for PreK,” a comprehensive early-learning program that embraces children’s natural curiosity and encourages them to explore and connect to the world around them through eight theme related units.

Classes are organized around learning centers, allowing for small and large group instruction as well as organized social interaction among peers. Planned activities promote student learning and encourage students to be self-assured and independent through a balanced schedule of teacher-initiated and child-initiated learning activities.

The daily schedule includes a balance of active and quiet play, indoor and outdoor gross motor activities and individual and small group activities.

All Agencies have an outdoor playground, and weather permitting, children are taken outside every day.

A nutritious snack and lunch are provided every day in all classes. Parents may also opt to send a lunch and snacks to school with their child.

Promoting Language and Literacy Development

The White Plains School District serves a diverse population of students and families, many of whom are multilingual. We strongly encourage all our families to promote language and literacy skills in the home by speaking with and reading to children in the language(s) that are spoken at home by siblings, parents, and other family members. Children who enter kindergarten with strong language and literacy skills in their home language will have an easier time learning to read, write, speak, and listen in English. Books and literacy materials are available from your child's PreK teacher that will assist you in reading to your child in your home language.

In addition, please request that all information from your child's UPK program be provided to you in the language that you read and understand. A translator can be requested for parent conferences and meetings.

Family Engagement

Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in their child's UPK experience. Parents are given opportunities to volunteer for special projects, class activities, and field trips. UPK teachers and Directors are available to answer any questions that you may have about the program or your child's specific needs. Regular parent-teacher conferences are scheduled throughout the school year. Parent workshops are offered by the White Plains School District to discuss topics such as: kindergarten readiness, literacy development, health and wellness, and positive parenting techniques.

Staff at the Family Information Center, (914) 422-2038, would be happy to clarify any of the information in this handbook.