

# **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PRE-K**

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# **QUALIFYING FOR FREE PRE-K**

## **Who qualifies for free Pre-K?**

Qualifying for free pre-K is a 2-step process. To qualify, a child must meet age AND eligibility requirements. The child must be:

1. At least 4 years old by 9/1/16<sup>1</sup>
2. AND meet at least 1 of the following criteria:
  - a. Low family income (see chart).
  - b. Child speaks a language other than English at home, so he/she is unable to speak or comprehend English or has limited English.<sup>2</sup>
  - c. Child has ever been in Foster Care or CPS custody.
  - d. Child is homeless or lives in a shelter, or family is migrant.
  - e. Mom or dad is an active member of the Armed Forces, including state military forces or reserves; or mom or dad was injured or killed while in active duty.

### **Children with no documentation of US Citizenship ARE eligible for pre-K!**

*Children with a disability may qualify for District Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities through a different school evaluation process. Ask your school district.*

# of Household Members	Gross Income (effective July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017)				
	Annual	Monthly	Twice Monthly	Every 2 weeks	Weekly
2	\$29,637	\$2,470	\$1,235	\$1,140	\$570
3	\$37,296	\$3,108	\$1,554	\$1,435	\$718
4	\$44,955	\$3,747	\$1,874	\$1,730	\$865
5	\$52,614	\$4,385	\$2,193	\$2,024	\$1,012
6	\$60,273	\$5,023	\$2,512	\$2,319	\$1,160
7	\$67,951	\$5,663	\$2,832	\$2,614	\$1,307
8	\$75,647	\$6,304	\$3,152	\$2,910	\$1,455
For each additional family member, add	+\$7,696	+\$642	+\$321	+\$296	+\$148

<sup>1</sup> Some school districts serve children who are 3 years old as of 9/1/16. Ask your school district.

<sup>2</sup> Your child may need to complete a simple assessment at the school to qualify.

### **What if my child is not 4 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup>?**

Some districts serve children who are 3 years old as of September 1<sup>st</sup>. Ask your school district. Anyone can also access a FREE parent guide to school readiness at <http://e3alliance.org/pre-k/>. It provides easy-to-use tools to help your child successfully prepare to enter school. You can also contact 211 for a referral to a high quality child care center that offers Pre-K programming.

### **What if my child doesn't qualify for free Pre-K?**

Families who do not qualify for free pre-K can contact 211 for a referral to high quality childcare centers who offer pre-K programming. Some districts also offer tuition slots for children who do not qualify for free pre-K. Ask your district.

Also, any caregiver can access a FREE parent guide to school readiness at <http://e3alliance.org/pre-k/>. It provides easy-to-use tools to help your child successfully prepare to enter school.

### **Do parents have to be U.S. citizens?**

No. Also, schools do not ask for immigration status of children. Children born in other countries ARE eligible for free pre-K. *(See documentation required on page 4.)*

### **Is there a lottery system to get in?**

No! All children who meet eligibility requirements can enroll.

## **ENROLLING IN PUBLIC SCHOOL PRE-K**

### **What phone number do I call to enroll my child?**

Contact your school districts at the number below:

Austin ISD: 512-414-PREK

Leander ISD: 512-570-0320

Bastrop ISD: 512-772-7115

Lockhart ISD: 512-398-0060

Del Valle ISD: 512-386-3040

Manor ISD: 512-278-4470

Elgin ISD: 512-281-3457

Pflugerville ISD: 512-594-7735

Georgetown ISD: 512-943-5000 x6038

Round Rock ISD: 512-464-5024

Hays CISD: 512-268-8962

San Marcos CISD: 512-393-6031

Hutto ISD: 512-759-3771

Smithville ISD: 512-237-2487

Lake Travis ISD: 512-533-6023

Taylor ISD: 512-352-2275

## What documentation do I need to provide to enroll my child?

To enroll in a public school Pre-K program, parents must provide the following documents:

1. Child's official birth certificate
  - Schools do not ask for immigration status of children. If a child is born in another country, parents can provide that birth certificate. If a child does not have a birth certificate, parents can instead provide any 1 of the following documents:
    - A statement of the child's date of birth issued by the division of the Texas Department of State Health Services responsible for vital statistics for school admission purposes
    - Passport
    - School ID card, records, or report card
    - Military ID
    - Hospital birth record
    - Adoption records
    - Church baptismal record
    - Any other legal document that establishes identity and age.
2. Child's up-to-date immunization record.
3. Current proof of address: *like a utility bill, lease or tax bill with parent name and address.*
4. Parent/guardian photo identification.
5. To establish eligibility based on status, 1 of the following documents may be required:
  - Current proof of family income: *like a current paycheck stub or pay envelope; a letter from employer stating gross wages paid & how often they are paid; unemployment document; Worker's Compensation or Disability payment stub; **OR** documentation of eligibility for SNAP or TANF benefits.*
  - For current or former Foster children, a letter from DFPS.
  - For children of active members of the armed forces, a copy of mom or dad's Department of Defense ID or a statement of service.
  - For homeless or migrant children, parents will complete a residency questionnaire or migrant survey at time of registration.

## What if I don't have all of these documents?

You'll need all of these documents to officially enroll your child, but your school will work with you to make sure you have everything you need. Call your school or school district and let them know what you have and don't have.

### **What is the deadline for enrolling?**

Schools enroll all year long! It is best to enroll your child over the summer so that he/she can attend all year, but if you don't enroll before the school year starts, you can still enroll your child in the fall, winter or even spring.

## **WHY SHOULD MY CHILD GO TO PRE-K?**

### **Why is Pre-K important?**

Pre-K activities build the foundation of academic and social/emotional skills needed for school success. Students who attend pre-K are less likely to need to repeat a grade or receive special education services. AND students who attend pre-K have higher graduation rates and even higher wages as adults!

### **Will my child like Pre-K?**

Most children love pre-K, so your child probably will too. Children enjoy meeting and playing with friends, learning letters and numbers, playing games, listening to and making up stories, playing outside, and learning from a loving, caring teacher.

## **OTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT PRE-K**

### **What happens in Pre-K?**

Children participate in individual and group activities like story time, learning centers, music and movement lessons, art projects, and letter and number lessons. Children also play with friends and practice learning with other children. In Pre-K, children build creativity and curiosity, and learn problem solving skills. This will help your child be ready for school on his/her first day of kindergarten!

### **What are the hours of public school Pre-K, and where are classes held?**

Class times vary by school district. In general, "full day" Pre-K is about 6 hours/day, and "part-time" Pre-K is about 3 hours/day. Ask your school district for exact times.

### **Is there a bus to take my child to Pre-K?**

Some schools provide transportation to/from schools and some do not. Call your school or school district to find out the answer.

### **Is after school care provided?**

Afterschool childcare may or may not be available. Ask your school or school district.

### **What if my child does not speak English well?**

That's okay! The classes will help your child learn English so that he/she is ready for Kindergarten.

### **How much does Pre-K cost?**

For families that meet eligibility requirements, Pre-K is free! (See eligibility requirements on page 2.) Some schools offer tuition slots for students who don't meet the eligibility requirements for free Pre-K. Ask your school or school district.

### **What can I do at home to help my child be ready for Kindergarten?**

Children get ready for school at home by listening, talking, playing and loving. Simple things you can do with children can make a big difference. The E3 Alliance has a free school readiness guide you can download with easy-to-use tools to prepare your child for school. It's in English and Spanish. Visit <http://e3alliance.org/pre-k/>.

### **What phone number can I call for more information?**

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Smithville ISD: 512-237-2487

Lake Travis ISD: 512-533-6023

Taylor ISD: 512-352-2275

*Some districts offer tuition slots for non-eligible students so just ask if you would like to participate!*