

RI Pre-K

Frequently Asked Family Questions

1. How are the Pre-K programs in my community chosen?

Programs are identified through a competitive process that evaluates the organization's readiness and capacity to provide a high quality Pre-Kindergarten instruction.

2. Does my child qualify to attend an RI Pre-K program?

To be eligible, a child must be 4 years of age by September 1st of the current year and reside in the community where the Pre-K program is located. Children may only attend RI Pre-K programs that are within the city/town in which they reside.

3. Is there transportation (busing) available in the RI Pre-K programs?

No, transportation is not provided by RI Pre-K. However, transportation may be available at individual organizations or arranged with before and after school programs.

4. How are children selected to participate in an RI Pre-K program?

The state holds a lottery for each Pre-K program and randomly selects children from the applications that have been submitted.

To enter a child into the lottery-

- Parents/legal guardians can (1) apply online (2) pick up an application at one of the RI Pre-K sites or (3) download an application from the RIDE website. Applications are available in English and Spanish.
- Parents/legal guardians must fill out the entire application. Applications must be entered online or delivered directly to the desired Pre-K program.
- There is a deadline for completing online or delivering the application to the programs. This date is noted on the application and the RIDE website.
- Parents/legal guardians may apply at any site located within their community of residence. Applicants are asked to rank their order of preference for 3 sites on the application. If selected in the lottery, enrollment is offered for one site only.
- Parents/legal guardians may only apply to each program one time. Children cannot be entered into the lottery for the same program more than once.

*** The Department of Education **does not** accept lottery applications for Pre-K.

5. How will I know if my child is chosen to attend an RI Pre-K classroom?

After the lottery is run, applicants receive an email notification (selected or not selected) using the email address that was provided on the lottery application. Pre-K programs will contact families of the children who have been selected for that program and arrange eligibility visits.

***The RI Department of Education **does not** notify families of lottery results.

6. Who can apply to an RI Pre-K program?

The RI Pre-K lottery is open to all children who are 4 years of age by September 1st of the current year **AND** reside in the community where that Pre-K program is located.

7. Why do I need to provide income documentation verifying my income prior to enrollment?

Income verification is necessary to ensure that income requirements for the RI Pre-K are met and that classrooms reflect the income distribution of the community where they are located. Income information entered on the application, will be verified once the child has been selected by the lottery. Information found to be inaccurate may impact eligibility.

8. Is there a waiting list if my child doesn't get in?

Yes, there is a waiting list for the Pre-K programs. The Department of Education retains a full list of children's names, in ranked order, for each program. It is possible that a child from the waitlist will be chosen for a seat, should one become available. Children are notified based on the order in which their name is listed. The Pre-K program will contact families/guardians based on seat availability and selection order.

9. Can I apply to more than one program?

Children may be included in the lottery for a maximum of 3 programs, however, only one application needs to be submitted per child. Parents are able to select up to 3 RI Pre-K programs within the city/town they reside and enter there first, second and third preferences. If selected during the lottery, enrollment will be offered for one site only.

10. When does the RI Pre-K program begin and end? How long is the program day?

RIDE requires that the school year begin no later than immediately following Labor Day. However, programs do have the option of beginning earlier. Pre-K programs set their own school calendar but must operate a full 6 hour Pre-K day for 180 days.

11. Is before & afterschool care available and do I have to pay for those services?

The RI Pre-K funding does not include or pay for before or after care. However, all Pre-K programs support families in accessing before & aftercare services when needed. Many have services within their buildings that accept state childcare assistance funds or work in cooperation with a licensed program that does.

12. What if my child is already enrolled in another program? (E.g. Head Start, Public Preschool, Community Child, etc.)

Each Pre-K classroom is enrolled with a minimum of 18 children and may not exceed more than 20 children. After considering all the factors you will need to decide which program you wish your child to attend. You may want to contact your local childcare, Head Start or school district to discuss this decision. If you decide not to enroll your child in the Pre-K program, that seat will be given to the next eligible child on the lottery list for that program.

13. Is preference given to families who previously participated in a Pre-K program?

No, enrollment is determined solely through selection in the state lottery system.

14. If I have twins, do I need to fill out two applications?

No, for families with multiples, there is an option to add an eligible child within a single application. When completed correctly, if one child is selected through the lottery, the ***twin sibling*** is also accepted into the program. For this reason, only one application per family is required.

15. My child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Can s/he attend the RI Pre-K?

The RI Pre-K is fully inclusive, supporting the learning and development needs of all children. Once your child is enrolled, an IEP meeting must be arranged with educators from the Pre-K program and school district to discuss your child's learning goals and how they can be achieved with special education services within the Pre-K classroom.

16. My child's primary language is not English. Can s/he attend the Pre-K if selected?

Yes, the Pre-K program supports the learning and development of all children, including children who are multi-lingual learners.

17. Where can I find out more about the program I want to apply?

Pre-K programs are open for tours to help families learn more about their program philosophy, policies and classroom curriculum. Contact the program directly to get more information about the program and arrange a tour. When you visit, here are some great questions to ask:

- Describe your curriculum and how it supports children's learning in relation to the RI Early Learning and Development Standards (RIELDS)
- How do teachers use information from families to develop their curriculum so that it reflects children's interests and family cultures?
- How do teachers assess children on a regular basis?
- How does the program support children who are at different developmental levels?
- How will I learn about my child's progress and what happens in the classroom?
- What opportunities do I have as a parent to be involved in my child's education?

18. Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Please visit the RI Pre-K page on the RIDE website at [RI Pre-K Page](#) for more information or contact Lisa Nugent at 222-8465 or Zoe McGrath at 222-8941.