

Ann Arbor Public Schools Early Childhood Programs

Preschool Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Program Offerings

We offer tuition-based preschool serving 3 & 4-year-old children at Westerman Preschool & Family Center and 4-year olds at Allen and Thurston Elementary Schools. Free preschool for qualifying households based on income for ages 3 & 4 years old are offered at Bryant and Mitchell Elementary Schools and Westerman Preschool & Family Center. Classes are in session full days Monday through Thursday at all locations with the exception of Westerman, where some classes are ½ day a.m. or p.m. Allen and Thurston offer special STEAM Fridays for an additional fee. Please check with your school for specific start and end times as they vary by location.

Our preschool programs follow the AAPS district calendar and are in session from September to June. A “no school” day for students applies to the preschool program including closures for inclement weather. Parents are notified by automated phone call and/or text message

Q. Are there part-week or summer offerings?

A. No. All students who are registered for preschool are expected to attend every day. While there are summer programs offered through Ann Arbor Recreation and Education, those programs are not related to our preschool programs. If you are interested in learning more about summer options, you can visit the Rec/Ed website at a2schools.org/reced.

Q. Is bus transportation provided?

A. Bus transportation is available for students attending Bryant, Mitchell and Westerman. Preschool students may not be transported with K-5 students for legal reasons. Transportation is not available for Allen and Thurston locations or for students residing outside AAPS district boundaries.

Q. Do preschoolers have “specials” such as gym like other AAPS students?

A. Yes, although specials offerings may vary depending on the school your child attends. Some offerings include gym, library, music, art, and Spanish.

Q. Do preschoolers have time outside?

A. Yes! Our preschoolers play outside every day, during all seasons, except in cases of extreme weather. Our playgrounds are separate from older children and are custom built for young children. In addition, many of our classrooms take “walking field trips” during different times of the year, depending on the weather.

Q. Do preschoolers nap during the day?

A. Yes, all full day preschool students are provided with rest time. Rest time by regulation must be provided every day. Our students usually rest in the early afternoon after eating lunch.

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Eligibility and Enrollment

Q. How old does my child need to be to attend preschool?

A. At Bryant, Mitchell and Westerman, children must turn either 3 or 4 years of age on or before December 1st of the school year. For Allen and Thurston, children must turn 4 by December 1st of the school year.

Q. Do I have to live in a particular location to attend an AAPS preschool?

A. All children living in Washtenaw County are eligible to attend regardless of where you live. Limited eligibility exists if students live outside Washtenaw County or outside of one of the nine Washtenaw County School Districts.

About Free Preschool

Q. How do I find out if my child qualifies for free preschool?

A. Children who turn 3 by December 1st are eligible for free preschool if the family's income falls below 100% of the federal poverty level. For a family of four, that is \$25,750 per year. Children who turn 4 by December 1st are eligible for free preschool if the family's income falls below 250% of the federal poverty level. For a family of four, that is \$64,375 per year. Children are also eligible if they are homeless or in foster care, or if someone in their family receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Cash Assistance (TANF/FIP).

Q: What counts as income for free preschool?

A: Income is all of the money the parent/guardian(s) living with the child have earned before taxes in one year. Income includes:

- Wages or salary from a job
- Money earned from self-employment
- Retirement or disability payments
- Unemployment benefits
- Alimony
- Child support
- College/university scholarships or grants
- Interest/investment income or periodic payments from a trust
- Lawsuit settlement payments
- Gambling winnings

Q: Where can I find more information about the Federal Poverty Level guidelines?

A. You can contact us directly at 734-994-2303 for specific questions. To learn more about the Federal Poverty Level guidelines, you can visit <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>.

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Q: How are children selected for the free preschool programs?

A: *Eligibility is primarily based on family income (Federal Poverty Level) and child's age.* Our free preschool programs are federally funded or funded by the Michigan Department of Education and have a defined list of eligibility factors. Preschool interest forms are reviewed for eligibility first. Each child must qualify for the preschool program based on guidelines that include income verification and documentation of other school readiness eligibility factors.

Q. I think that I may qualify for free preschool. How do I apply?

A. You can apply for free preschool by visiting washtenawpreschool.org and completing a short demographic survey, called an interest survey. This survey is intended to gauge your interest in preschool and pre-screen your child for eligibility.

Q. Is there a deadline to apply for preschool?

A. Technically, there is no deadline. We enroll children throughout the school year based on space availability. We encourage families to begin the application process as soon as possible, ideally in March.

Q: When I complete the interest form, does that mean my child will be enrolled?

A: Not necessarily. The interest form is the first step in the process to apply for preschool. It helps us connect you with the program that you feel is best for your family. After completing the interest form, you will still need to complete a full application along with providing your income information. In most cases, this step will be done directly with the school or program to which you're applying. Priority for enrollment will be based on family income and/or other factors.

Q: I filled out my interest survey in March. Does that mean I am more likely to get in?

A: While it is a good idea to fill out your interest form as soon as possible, it generally does not impact the chances of your child getting in. Decisions to accept students are made based primarily on family income. **Enrollment begins in July**, so waiting until July or August to complete your interest form may limit the number of opportunities available to your child.

Q. What documentation do I need to provide when applying for free preschool?

A. In general, parents are asked to provide proof of income, proof of residency, and proof of birth for the applicant child, as well as photo identification.

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About Tuition Preschool

Q. How much does tuition preschool cost?

A. The monthly cost of tuition preschool is \$930/month. Steam Fridays are available for an additional \$150/month. We offer a \$50/month discount for early bird registration (by May 31st) and a \$90/month discount for AAPS employees.

Q: Are there other fees aside from tuition?

A. A deposit of \$515 is required to reserve an enrollment space. \$75 of the deposit is a non-refundable registration fee, the remaining \$440 is ½ month tuition and is applied to June tuition. You may also add on hot breakfast and lunch. Monthly tuition fees are due the 15th of each month beginning in August through April. All tuition fees are paid via this website <https://www.mypaymentsplus.com/welcome>.

Q: Lunches and snacks?

A. All students in the full day program eat lunch at school. They may bring a sack lunch from home or purchase hot lunch. The cost for lunch (milk included) is \$2.50. Milk purchased a la carte is \$0.40, prices subject to change. Sample hot lunch menus can be viewed here: [Ann Arbor Schools Menus](#). Meal payments can be made online at: <https://www.mypaymentsplus.com/welcome>. Qualifying students receive free lunch.

B. The preschool provides each child a healthy daily snack.

Q. How do I register for tuition preschool?

A. You can also learn more and register by visiting annarborpreschool.com. On the enrollment tab you find the enrollment forms to download and complete along with the link to MyPaymentsPlus website. We invite you to visit one of our schools and learn more.

Program Quality

Q. What sets Ann Arbor Public Schools Early Childhood Programs apart from other early childhood and preschool programs?

A. With our early childhood programs, you receive a preschool experience with the quality you expect from Ann Arbor Public Schools. Our teachers are highly qualified AAPS certified teachers, our facilities meet high AAPS standards. We are supported by a team of caring staff such as, social workers, behavioral and speech therapists and occupational therapists. Our experienced administrators are focused on providing safe and nurturing environments to meet the needs of each and every child. We believe in an inclusive learning experience.

2.10.2020

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Q. What is your program's philosophy?

A. Our programs use best-practice research in early childhood education to provide a social-emotional and academic foundation for kindergarten and beyond. We celebrate diversity by supporting and respecting cultural, racial, linguistic, and religious differences. Parent participation at all levels is encouraged and valued because we understand that a strong parent-school relationship is crucial to your child's success.

Q. What curriculum do you use?

A. Our early childhood programs use *The Creative Curriculum*. It is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum specifically designed for preschool-aged children. It features exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, creativity, and life-long critical thinking skills. *The Creative Curriculum* focuses on child development in areas: social/emotional development, physical development, cognitive development, and language development. Progress for all children is measured throughout the school year using *Teaching Strategies GOLD* – an observation-based assessment system that analyzes the development of children through 38 research-based objectives.

Q. Are your programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the State of Michigan's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)?

A. All of our programs are rated 4-stars ++ using QRIS. Our Westerman Preschool and Family Center is also NAEYC accredited, all of our programs meet high standards recommended by NAEYC for quality preschools.

Q. What are the credentials of your teaching staff?

A. All AAPS Preschool teachers are highly qualified and certified in Early Childhood Education. All assistant teachers have a minimum of a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) and most have at least an associate's degree in Early Childhood Education.

Q. What is the staff-student ratio?

A. At a minimum, the ratio is 1 staff for every 8 students. Many classrooms have smaller ratios than that. Classrooms are capped at 16 students each.

Miscellaneous

Q. Does my child need to be potty-trained to attend preschool?

A. No, for Bryant, Mitchell and Westerman locations it is not required. Supports to assist students with toilet-training are in place at these locations only.

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Q. If my child attends preschool at a K-5 building, does that mean my child will stay there for Kindergarten?

A. Not necessarily. Elementary in kindergarten is determined by attendance boundaries. If a school you wish to attend is not in an area, in which you live, you can apply to attend through the In-District Transfer or Schools of Choice application processes.

Q. Can my child and I come for a visit?

A. Yes, you may call to schedule a tour directly with the school.

Allen Elementary:	734-997-1210
Bryant Elementary:	734-997-1212
Thurston Elementary	734-994-1970
Westerman Preschool:	734-994-2303

Q. Will there be opportunities for parents to volunteer or visit the preschool classrooms?

A. Yes! Parent participation is a critical part of our programming. Please see your child's teacher to learn of those opportunities at your school.

Q. Are there other requirements I must meet for my child to attend preschool?

A. Yes. Per the State of Michigan Child Care Licensing, all children are required to be up-to-date on their immunizations or be able to provide an immunization waiver signed by the health department. Parents must also provide the school with a physical examination conducted within 1 year prior to the child's start date and signed by a physician listing any limitations the child may have in fully participating in a preschool environment.