



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ENCOURAGES FAMILIES TO ENROLL CHILDREN IN
PRESCHOOL FOR UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR**

Preschool Applications Open April 21 in Chicago for the 2021–2022 School Year

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) today announced the launch of the 2021-22 Preschool Application at ChicagoEarlyLearning.org or via the Chicago Early Learning Hotline at (312) 229-1690. Children who will be 3 or 4 years old by September 1, 2021 are eligible to apply for an early learning program at one of the 600+ CPS or community-based preschools in Chicago.

"Early childhood education helps to put our children on the fast track toward obtaining both short- and long-term academic excellence," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Enrolling as many of our children in early learning programming as possible will not only ensure their success later in life, but it will also advance our citywide goal of helping our children heal from this pandemic and thrive long after it is over. I want to thank our early learning providers for continuing their commitment to uplifting our youngest learners and hope that many of our families will take advantage of this opportunity to give their children early access to a high-quality education."

The City encourages families to submit applications as early as possible to have the most choices in their preferred program's availability. All current early learning site locations can be found on the City's easy-to-use, interactive online portal at www.chicagoearlylearning.org. Through this website, parents or guardians can find and apply for programs at both community organizations and CPS. A step-by-step tutorial video for the application is available at <https://vimeo.com/449372309>.

"We remain committed to high-quality, full-day early learning opportunities for young children and providing comprehensive support services for the entire family," said DFSS Acting Commissioner Brandie Knazze. "Building a solid educational foundation in a child's early essential years helps create focus, persistence and teamwork development skills for long-term success."



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“Numerous studies show that early childhood education levels the playing field for low-income students, while laying the foundation for future academic success, which is why expanding access to early education remains a top priority,” said CPS CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson. “Now, more than ever, the expansion of free full-day pre-k serves as a powerful equalizer for children and families who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and we strongly encourage parents to visit CEL's website to apply.”

CPS and community-based early learning programs both operate at the same high standard, offer the same curriculum, are staffed by highly qualified teachers and have a minimum of two educators in the classroom. Providers adhere to public health guidance to ensure the health and safety of clients against the COVID-19 virus and routinely conduct environmental cleaning of all frequently touched surfaces.

Research is clear about the impact that high-quality early learning environments have on children before they enter school and the continued positive effects those experiences have on school and life success. To help meet the needs of all families in every community area, the City relies equally on community-based partners and CPS to provide high-quality services for preschool children. In addition to preschool, community-based partners also provide robust, full-day services for children birth through five.

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