Hamilton County Voluntary Pre-K Program
2020-2021
Pre-Kindergarten Family Information

Thank you for your interest in our Hamilton County Schools’ Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) program. Our program is designed to serve our most at-risk student populations and is funded by Title 1 Federal funds and/or State funds. This is not a first come-first served application process. State and federal guidelines must be followed for enrollment in the program. Completion of a Pre-K application does not guarantee admittance into the program. Incomplete applications will **NOT** be considered.

Students who are accepted for enrollment must meet the eligibility guidelines in order to fulfill federal and state criteria. Administrators and teachers will review your child’s application packet and required documents to determine if your child meets the criteria for enrollment.

Families are strongly encouraged to apply for Pre-K at their zoned school if a Pre-K class is offered. This allows a child a seamless transition into kindergarten and his/her elementary years. Please note: If you apply and are accepted at a school that is NOT your zoned school, your child must register at his/her zoned school upon entrance into kindergarten.

Hamilton County School’s Pre-K program is an all-day program. Students are required to attend the full 7-hour day. We are **NOT a drop-in or part time program**. Students accepted to the program are expected to arrive on time, remain for the full day, and be in attendance every day. If you cannot meet these expectations, you will be dismissed from the program. **Please note Before/After School Care is NOT provided for Pre-K students.** Our program follows the school calendar for Hamilton County Schools.

Again, thank you for your interest in our Pre-K program. Once you submit a complete application with all required documents, you will receive a letter informing you of your child’s enrollment status. If your child is accepted, you will be required to attend a parent meeting during the month of August.

Sincerely,

Becky W. Covington
Director of Early Learning
Requirements for Students Applying for Pre-Kindergarten
Hamilton County Schools
2020-2021

All Pre-Kindergarten students who apply to Hamilton County’s Voluntary Pre-K Program are required to have the five (5) documents listed below at registration time. Any application lacking all documents will not be considered until all documents are included with the application.

1. **Original CERTIFIED COPY OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE** (Child must be 4 years old by August 15, 2020)

2. **SOCIAL SECURITY CARD** (We will make a copy of your original)

3. **PROOF OF INCOME**

4. **TWO PROOFS OF RESIDENCY**
   (Examples: Lease or mortgage statement, any utility bill (electric, gas, water, phone, cable), insurance or government documents in parent(s) or guardian’s name).

5. **TENNESSEE IMMUNIZATION CERTIFICATE WITH CURRENT PHYSICAL EXAM**
   (This certificate has BOTH immunization and physical exam information) or Proof of Appointment for the physical exam (If student is entering Hamilton County Schools for the first time, the physical exam must have been completed within the last 12 months.)

**Children entering Pre-Kindergarten:**
Current immunization requirements:
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis (DTaP, or DT if appropriate)
- Poliomyelitis (IPV or OPV)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (1 dose of each, usually given together as MMR)
- Varicella (1 dose or history of disease)
- Hepatitis B (HBV)
- Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib): age younger than 5 years only
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV): age younger than 5 years old
- Hepatitis A (1 dose by 18 months of age)

If your child needs any immunizations listed above or in need of a physical exam, please contact your child’s medical provider. You may contact the Hamilton County Health Department for a certified copy of your child’s birth certificate. Please do not wait to obtain any of these documents. Your child’s application will not be reviewed or considered until all required documents are submitted. Please be prepared will all 5 required documents on Application Day.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.
Pre-Kindergarten Eligibility Criteria 2020-2021

The following criteria determine eligibility into the pre-kindergarten program for the 2020-2021 school year. All programs are designed to serve “at risk” children. Eligibility requirement for ALL Pre-K students is they MUST BE 4 YEARS OLD ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 15, 2020 and live within Hamilton County. Pre-K classes located in a Hamilton County school will enroll at least half of students zoned for the school.

“At risk” children shall be defined as follows:

a) Children who qualify as economically disadvantaged per the Income Eligibility application and income guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, regardless of the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) status; or

b) Are dependent children, as defined by T.C.A. § 49-6-101(f)(1)(A) whose parent was killed, died as a direct result of injuries received as a result of war, or is or has been officially reported as a prisoner of war or missing in action.

2) Subject to availability of space and resources after exhausting all efforts to enroll at risk four (4) year-olds (as defined by A.1. Student Eligibility), Hamilton County Schools will enroll additional students who don’t meet the income eligibility requirements but are residing in the Hamilton County district in accordance with the following priorities and in accordance with guidelines set by the State:

a) Children who are four (4) years of age on or before August 15 for the current school year with disabilities, students identified as English Learners (EL), in state custody, or who are screened and identified as educationally at-risk

b) Children who are four (4) years of age on or before August 15 for the current school year who have been in the Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS) or Even Start program

3) Enrollment in the VPK program shall be voluntary

Title 1 Funded Pre-K Sites Child MUST be zoned for a Hamilton County Title 1 Elementary School

Students who are automatically eligible include:

- Children who participated in Head Start or a Title 1 preschool program at any time in the past two years
- Children who received services under Part C or Title 1 (migrant education) in the past two years
- Homeless preschool-age children

- Children who are in a local institution for neglected or delinquent children and youth or attend a community-day program (EX. Bethel, Tennessee Baptist Children’s Home)

Other preference criteria include (Determined by a rubric which includes points for each criteria):

- Completion of application and parent/guardian interview
- Results of students screening scores
- Children who are zoned for Opportunity Zone, priority or focused schools
- Children who meet federal income guidelines for free or reduced meals
- Children with other at-risk factors such as ELL, speech and language, and/or foster care

**Head Start applicants must be income eligible first and meet Head Start criteria.**

**NOTE:** Parents/Guardians who children are accepted into Hamilton County Schools’ PreK program will be required to attend a parent meeting on their child’s first phase-in day.
Hamilton County Schools Pre-K Attendance Policy

Young children’s growth and development is maximized through consistent participation in a high-quality environment. Establishing consistent attendance routines in Pre-K will increase students’ chances of success in all future school experiences. With this in mind, Hamilton County’s PreK has adopted this Pre-K attendance guidance in collaboration with the state, to help develop attendance policies.

Excused Absences: Attendance is a key factor in student achievement, but certain situations can require a student to miss school. The following are examples of acceptable reasons for excused absences:

- The child has a personal illness or injury;
- The child has other ongoing health related ailments which temporarily prevent attendance;
- The child contracts a communicable disease (virus or flu);
- Religious observances;
- Death in the family;
- Limited medical/dental/therapy appointments (these should be made outside school hours unless necessary).

Hamilton County Schools also recognizes there are additional circumstances or emergencies that may arise. In these situations, written justification provided by the parent/guardian will be considered by the director as a valid reason for the student’s absence.

Concerns regarding attendance should first be discussed with the child’s teacher. If needed, the Pre-K Social Worker will join the conversation.

If a child has four (4) or more consecutive or unexcused absences OR tardies/early dismissals within one (1) month—the teacher will contact the family and determine the child’s participation status. The teacher will document attempts to contact the family and the outcome of those attempts and/or communications.

If a child has five (5) or more unexcused consecutive absences OR tardies/early dismissals or in a three (3)-month period, the teacher will contact the Pre-K Social Worker who will contact the family to develop an attendance plan.

Every effort will be made to ensure the child has access to our quality program. However, these spots are made available through a state grant and are limited by funding. **Students who have more than five (5) unexcused absences per month, or ten (10) unexcused absences OR tardies/early dismissals in a year, may be terminated** from the program for failure to follow the district Pre-k attendance policy.
Hamilton County Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Sites (43)
2020-2021

State/Title 1 Funded Pre-Kindergarten Sites (12)
Criteria: Students must be zoned for a Title 1 school and meet Title 1 eligibility requirements
*Battle Academy
*Brown International Academy (2 classes)
*East Brainerd Elementary
*East Lake Elementary (2 classes)
*Lakeside Academy of Math, Science and Technology (2 classes)
*Lookout Valley Elementary
*North Hamilton County Elementary
*Orchard Knob Elementary
*Red Bank Elementary

Title 1 Funded Pre-Kindergarten Sites (7)
Criteria: Students must be zoned for a Title 1 school and meet Title 1 eligibility requirements
*Hardy Elementary (2 classes)
*Harrison Elementary (2 classes)
*Rivermont Elementary (2 classes)
*Woodmore Elementary (1 class)

State and Head Start Collaboration Sites (9)
Criteria: Students must be income eligible first by Head Start guidelines and meet additional Head Start criteria
Avondale Head Start Center (3 classes)
Cedar Hill Head Start Center (1 class)
*East Brainerd Elementary (1 class)
*East Ridge Elementary (1 class)
Middle Valley Elementary (1 class)
*Orchard Knob Elementary (1 class)
*Woodmore Elementary (1 class)

State Funded Sites (14)
Criteria: Students must meet income criteria & state eligibility requirements
Chambliss Center for Children (2 classes)
*Daisy Elementary (1 class)
*Calvin Donaldson Environmental Science Academy (2 classes)
*East Ridge Elementary (1 class)
Middle Valley Elementary (1 class)
Ooltewah Elementary (2 classes)
Snow Hill Elementary (2 classes)
*Soddy Elementary (1 class)
*Spring Creek Elementary (1 class)
*Wolftever Creek Elementary (2 classes)

* Indicates Title School

Additional Title Schools without a PreK Program:
Alpine Crest
Barger Academy
Clifton Hills Elementary
Dupont Elementary
East Side Elementary
Hixson Elementary
Bess T. Shepherd