

Frequently Asked Questions about the Plainview-Old Bethpage Universal Pre-kindergarten Program

1. What is Universal Pre-kindergarten (UPK)?

Universal Pre-kindergarten (UPK) refers to state government-funded preschool programs that are free for those who attend. As defined in Commissioner's Regulations 151-1.2(c) an eligible child means a child who resides within the school district who is four years of age on or before December 31st of the year in which he or she is enrolled or who will otherwise be first eligible to enter public school kindergarten commencing with the following school year.

2. Who is eligible for the Plainview-Old Bethpage UPK program?

To be eligible for the Pre-kindergarten program, the student must turn 4 years-old on or before December 31, 2024.

3. How do I enroll my child in the Plainview-Old Bethpage program?

Selection for this program is lottery-based and requires the completion of an application. Applications for the lottery must be received by 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 18, 2024. Parents can fill out the online application by visiting the District's website at www.pobschools.org or may obtain a copy through the Curriculum Office located at 106 Washington Avenue, Plainview, NY 11803.

4. What is the deadline for applying for the UPK program?

Applications must be received by 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 18, 2024.

5. How many openings are there for the UPK program?

The District is likely to receive funding for up to two-hundred and thirty (230) UPK slots.

6. What will happen if more than 230 children enroll in the program?

The District will have a randomized lottery in more students apply than there are seats. The lottery will be conducted electronically by auditors from the firm Cullen & Danowski LLP. The first 230 children will be randomly sorted and may select from one of the four UPK providers that the District has contracted with: Miss Debbie's Creative Childcare, Mid Island Y JCC, Shalom Day Care, The Learning Experience or Good Shepherd, pending availability. Parent/guardians will have 24 (twenty-four) hours to confirm their acceptance of the placement. If the parent/guardian does not accept the placement within 24 hours, they will lose the slot and it will be offered to the next family on the list. All families that have applied for the program will be given a randomized slot on the list. Families that apply for the program after Thursday, January 18, 2023 at 3:00pm will be placed on the waiting list in the order they have submitted their application.

7. My child is already attending one of the childcare centers (Miss Debbie's, Mid Island Y/JCC, Shalom/The Learning Experience/Good Shepherd). Can my child still attend for the UPK program?

The UPK application requests that you rank the four centers in order of your preference to attend. If space is available at your preferred center when we get to your position in the lottery, your child will be placed in your first preference. If that program is full, and space is available in your second preference, your child will be placed in that center. If you choose not to send your child to the center that you marked as your second preference, then you will have declined enrollment in the UPK program.

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8. What is a typical day in the UPK program like?

The daily UPK program is five (5) hours long (exclusive of naps/rest periods) with a minimum of two-and-one half (2.5) hours of instruction. It will run for at least 180 days during the 2024-2025 school year and will begin on or about September 3, 2024, depending on the center.

The calendar is left to the discretion of the childcare center. The program must be non-sectarian so there is no religious instruction. Please know that religious symbols may still be present in classrooms and the centers will not be directed to remove them. The specific daily schedule is at the discretion of each center. The school district has general oversight over the instructional program but does not dictate the instructional schedule or the specific instructional materials used. Each program will provide the following services to students and families:

- Strengthening their cognitive skills.
- Increase early literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening and information processing).
- Increase their creative and artistic abilities.
- Improve inter and intra-personal skills, feelings of self-worth, and become independent at a developmentally appropriate level.
- Increase appreciation of diversity and improve understanding of their own heritage and its relationship to self-image and interactions with others.
- Enhance personal, physical and emotional wellness following the components of NYSED Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks.
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ss/SEL.html>
- Increase physical skills including fine and gross motor movement, kinesthetic and spatial relationships.
- Encourage parental involvement in their child's education.
- Ensure parents have ease of utilization and access to program and program services.
- Integrate preschool children with disabilities.

The program will also meet the needs of English Language Learners in the following categories:

- Understand language development.
- Recognize the connection between the home language and English.
- Connect oral language to emergent literacy.
- Provide bilingual supports

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9. What if I need my child in the program more than 5 hours a day?

The four centers may offer “wrap around” hours at an additional cost. Specific information about wrap around hours or additional hours is available from the specific centers and will not be provided by the District.

10. Is transportation provided as part of the UPK program?

No.

11. How do I get additional questions answered about the program?

Please email your questions to POBUPK@pobschools.org. We will make every attempt to answer your questions promptly.