



www.countdowntokindergarten.org

Boston Public Schools Kindergarten Registration Guide For SY 2014-2015



All About Boston Public Schools

OUR MISSION

The Boston Public Schools is committed to transforming the lives of all children through exemplary teaching in a world class system of innovative, welcoming schools. We partner with the community, families, and students to develop in every learner the knowledge, skill, and character to excel in college, career, and life.

STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

Boston Public Schools currently serves over 58,000 students who come from over 140 different countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. There are 127 schools within BPS and of those schools, there are:

- 7 Early learning centers (K-grade 1 or grade 3)
- 46 Elementary schools (K-5)
- 27 Elementary & middle schools (k-8)
- 9 Middle schools (6-8)
- 3 Middle & high schools (6-12)
- 3 Exam schools (7-12)
- 25 High schools (9-12)
- 7 Special education schools
- 2 Alternative (at-risk) programs

Preparing for School

Talking, reading and playing with children in the early years helps them to thrive and puts them on the path for school success. The City of Boston defines a “school ready child” as one who:

1. Interacts positively with other children and adults;
2. Is curious and loves learning new things;
3. Can focus and pay attention to another person or an activity;
4. Feels good about him/herself;
5. Can manage his or her emotions;
6. Is healthy, safe, well-rested and well-nourished;
7. Has appropriate knowledge;
8. Has appropriate language skills; and
9. Has appropriate physical skills.

By doing three things with children daily - talking, reading and playing - you can support your child to be ready for school.



Why Talk?

Talking is one of the most important things you can do to help children learn to talk and grow their vocabulary. Talk is also essential for learning to read and write. Children who learn to read and write words they have not heard before find it as challenging as learning a whole new language. In sum, children learn to listen first, then talk, read and write. Listening to your words is the first step.

Note: talk can and should be done in the language that is most comfortable for you. Do not worry if your native language is not English.



read

Why Read?

Reading to your children is one of the most important things you can do to help grow their vocabulary and develop a love of learning. Reading aloud is also essential for learning to read and write once your children begin school.

You can help your children learn to read by reading to them yourselves starting at infancy. Reading helps them get used to hearing language, develop a longer attention span, a larger vocabulary and an eagerness to read.

play



Why Play?

Playing with children and providing opportunities for them to play independently will help them develop creativity, imagination, and social-emotional skills. Children need stimulation and interaction to foster brain development. It is through play that children solve problems, learn to work in groups, to share, negotiate, advocate for themselves, and strengthen their growing bodies.

Setting aside playtime for children will foster their imagination, build problem-solving skills, and allow them time to investigate all the exciting things they are learning about their world. No expensive toys or gadgets are needed to promote play. Simple items such as blocks, empty containers, or old clothes for dress-up can spark hours of imagination in young children!



On the Countdown!



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5 . NOVEMBER - JANUARY: Visit & Choose Schools

- ☐ Families who are enrolling children in kindergarten for the following school year should visit “www.DiscoverBPS.org.”
- ☐ Meet schools’ principals and teachers, and see students’ school work at the **Showcase IN Our Schools** in every early education, elementary, and K-8 schools on November 16.
- ☐ Use additional Preview Days to check out even more schools.

4 . JANUARY - FEBRUARY: Register for Schools

- ☐ Visit **any Welcome Center (WC)** to register. You can save time during your visit if you pre-register online at www.bostonpublicschools.org.
- ☐ **List at least five schools (more is better)** on the registration form and bring with you the required documents.
- ☐ If **English is not your child's first language** or another language is spoken at home, and your child is going to enter K2, while at the WC, your child will be scheduled for an English Language Assessment at the Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC).

3 . MARCH - JUNE: Meet Your School

- ☐ **Families who registered in the first round (January 6- January 31)** receive their school assignments in the mail in late-March.
- ☐ **Your child's new school will invite you to a Welcome Session to see classrooms**, talk to the principal and teachers, and meet other new families.

2 . JUNE - AUGUST: Get Ready for School

- ☐ **Be sure to pick up your T-shirt at your local library and check out the free events for kindergarten families around the city.**
- ☐ Bus assignments will arrive in the mail in late August.

1 . SEPTEMBER: Start School!

- ☐ Kindergarten in the Boston Public Schools typically begins the Monday following Labor Day, but some schools may begin earlier.



Glossary

BPS: BPS is the abbreviation for the Boston Public Schools.

Administratively Assign: State law requires that every child who turns six by December 31, must attend school beginning in September. If you don't receive one of your school choices, or if you don't return an application for a student age six or older, BPS will assign the student to the school closest to home that has a seat.

BPS Welcome Centers: Staff at any of the three locations (or the satellite office open part-time in East Boston) can explain your choices and help you register for school.

Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC): The staff at the NACC evaluate all students who are possible English Language Learners and provide counseling on which programs are best suited to support children's learning.





K2: This is full-day (6-hour) kindergarten for children who are five years old by September 1. While BPS cannot guarantee a K2 seat in a school of a parent's choosing, the district will provide a K2 seat in one of its schools for every applicant that wants one.

K1: This is pre-kindergarten for children who are four years old by September 1. BPS has expanded its K1 programs over the past three years to more than 2,200 seats; however, seating in these programs is still limited, and assignment for K1 cannot be guaranteed.

K0: A very small number of K0 seats are available for children who will be three years old by September 1. Most of these seats are filled by children with special needs or by siblings of current BPS children.

Early Education Centers (EECs) and Early Learning Centers (ELCs): These BPS sites offer K0 or K1 through 1st or 3rd grade and include free before- and after-school care. Seats in these programs usually fill up in the first round of registration (January 6 – January 31).

Pilot, Innovation or In-District Charter Schools: These schools are part of the Boston Public Schools but have more flexibility to try new approaches to education.



Choosing Schools

Starting in January 2014, BPS will use a new assignment policy for students in kindergarten through grade eight called the Home-Based plan. It does away with zones and helps students attend quality schools, closer to home.

The Home-Based school plan:

- Increases the chances that a family will receive one of their top school choices
- Increases access to quality schools overall
- Ensures every incoming kindergarten child has quality schools from which to choose
- Cuts the average distance a child travels to school by 40 percent



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Before registering in January, families will have the option to participate in our School Choice season using the Home-Based Plan:

- We will offer a customized list of school choices for every family based on their home address. It includes every school within one mile of their home plus, as needed, nearby schools that have the highest levels of MCAS performance and growth. Visit www.discoverbps.org.
- The list may also grow, as needed, to ensure that families have the opportunity to apply to schools with programs such as K0 or K1, and Advanced Work, as well as to ensure we can offer every child a seat in a school on his or her list. These schools will be called "Option Schools."
- Every kindergarten family (K1 or K2) will have at least 7 schools to choose from; most will have an average of 8-14 choices.
- Families may also select any citywide school.
- As with the previous three-zone plan, we can't guarantee that an applicant will be assigned to one of his or her top choices – but all K2 applicants will be assigned to a school on their customized list. Due to grandfathering, non transition grades cannot be guaranteed, we also cannot guarantee a school assignment to K0 and or K1, just as before.



Choosing Schools

The Home-Based plan is designed to make sure every family has high-quality schools on their customized list. We have grouped our schools into four **MCAS Tiers** according to how students performed on MCAS tests for a recent two year period. We take into account both overall performance and improvement. Every family has at least two of the highest scoring schools (Tier I- the top 25%) and at least four schools that are in the top half of MCAS performance (Tier I and Tier II) on their customized list. Tier III is the next 51%-75%. Tier IV is the last 25%. We know that families look at many factors beyond MCAS to decide whether to choose a school, and we are working with the community to develop a better long-term measure of quality.

For English Language Learners and students with disabilities, the Home-Based plan works a little differently, creating larger community clusters of schools around one's home to help ensure that students can enroll in schools that offer quality programs closer to home.

The Home-Based plan offers more predictability and gives parents a better opportunity to get to know their school choices in advance. This means families can learn more about schools earlier, which can help strengthen the connections between schools, students and families.

For more on the Home-Based Plan visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/register



Registering for School

Who? If your child will be five years old by September 1, 2014, s/he is eligible for K2 Kindergarten. A growing number of K1 kindergarten seats are also available for children who will be four (4) by September 1, 2014. A very limited number of K0 seats are available to children who will be three (3) by September 1, 2014. K1 and K0 seats are not guaranteed. Note that while BPS tries to place children in schools their families choose, this is not always possible. K2 applicants can select to be administratively assigned in order to be guaranteed a seat by the end of first round registration. Children who turn six by December 31st will be administratively assigned a kindergarten seat if one of the applicant's choices is not available.

Where? Register at any of the BPS Welcome Centers. If your child is entering K2 and English is not your child's first language, your registration process will also include a separate visit to the Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC) for an English language evaluation and school choice consultation. A WC staff member will make the appointment for you.

Dorchester	Roxbury	Roslindale
1216 Dorchester Ave. Dorchester, MA (617) 635-8015	75 Malcolm X Blvd. Roxbury, MA (617) 635-9010	515 Hyde Park Ave. Roslindale, MA (617) 635-8040

Hours of operation: Weekdays 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM
(Except Wednesday, which is 12:00-7:00 PM)

Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC)

Madison Park High School Complex
55 Malcolm X Blvd.
(617) 635-1565

Hours of operation: Weekdays 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Monday through Friday

When? The first registration period runs from January 6, 2014 - January 31, 2014, following an alphabetical schedule (shown below). Register in this period for the best chance of being assigned to one of the schools you want.

According to parent/guardian last name:

A-I: Jan 6-10

J-Q: Jan 13-17

R-Z: Jan 21-24

All: Jan 27-31

Pre-registration starts in early December and goes through January. You can pre-register your children online from the comfort of your home.



"My daughter recently told me she's a scientist because she likes to investigate in the schoolyard and do experiments! She then told me the difference between opaque, translucent, and transparent! Big concepts for a 5 year old!"

- BPS Parent



Registration Document Checklist

All families registering a new student with the Boston Public Schools must bring the following required documents to a BPS Welcome Center as part of their registration process. Applications cannot be processed without these documents.

ALL of these:

- Child's original birth certificate, I-94 form or passport*
- Child's up-to-date immunization record (see below)
- Parent/Guardian's photo identification

*Use of Passport requires completion of BPS Parent Affidavit, available at BPS Welcome Centers

Required Immunizations

Grade	K0 (age 3)	K1/K2 (ages 4-5)
Hepatitis B:	3 doses	3 doses
Dtap/DTP/DT/Td:	≥4 doses DtaP/ DTP	5 doses DtaP/ DTP
Polio	≥3 doses	4 doses
Hib:	1-4 doses	0
MMR	1 dose	2 doses
Varicella (chickenpox):	1 dose*	2 doses*
<i>* or documentation of the disease</i>		

And TWO of these:

Residency documents must be pre-printed with the name and current address of the student's parent/guardian. Items cannot be from the same bullet.

- A utility bill (not water or cell phone) dated within the past 60 days
- A current lease, section 8 agreement, or BPS residency affidavit
- A deed or a mortgage statement dated within the past 60 days, or a property tax bill dated within the last year
- A W2 form dated within the year, or a payroll stub dated within the past 60 days
- A bank or credit card statement dated within the past 60 days
- A letter from an approved government agency* dated within the past 60 days

**APPROVED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES: Departments of Transitional Assistance, Revenue (DOR), Children and Family Services (DCF), Transitional Assistance (DTA), Youth Services (DYS), Social Security, any communications on Commonwealth of Massachusetts Letterhead.*



Resources

Countdown to Kindergarten: (617) 635-9288

Boston Public Schools (BPS) phone number: (617) 635-9000

Boston Public Schools website: www.bostonpublicschools.org

BOSTONavigator (locate Out-of-School Time programs in Boston):
www.bostonnavigator.org

Boston School Committee: (617) 635-9014

English Language Learners: (617) 635-9435

Food and Nutrition Services: (617) 635-9144

Health Services: (617) 635-6788

Homeless Education Resource Network: (617) 635-8037

Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC): (617) 635-1565

Office of Family and Student Engagement: (617) 635-7750

School Hotline (January, August and September): (617) 635-9046

Special Education: (617) 635-8599

Talk, Read, Play (resources and free activities for families with young children): www.talkreadplay.org

Transportation: (617) 635-9520



College begins in kindergarten!

Now that you are registering for kindergarten, it's time to start thinking about the road to college. MEFA can help with your college savings plans. With as little as \$15 per month, you can get started now. Call 800.449.6332 (MEFA) or visit www.mefa.org for more details.

We're here to help!

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