

Preschool Application Process for the 2026-27 School Year

Our preschool programs, also called Early Childhood Education (ECE), help young children develop mentally, socially, and emotionally, and are designed to serve all students, including those with disabilities. If you're interested in enrolling your child in our ECE program, we highly encourage you to participate in Round 1 of the DPS SchoolChoice and Colorado Universal Preschool application process for your best chance of getting matched to your preferred school.

Apply for ECE-4

Children who turn 4 years old on or before Oct. 1, 2026, are eligible for ECE-4 for the 2026-27 school year. All children in Colorado are eligible for up to 15 hours of free, state-funded preschool in the year before they're eligible for kindergarten through the [Colorado Preschool Program](#), also known as Universal Pre-K (UPK). Some families may qualify for more funding based on a number of [qualifying factors](#).

If you're interested in ECE-4, you must submit both the DPS SchoolChoice and UPK applications. The matching process is based on the ranked list submitted through UPK (not SchoolChoice). To apply for ECE-4:

1. **Submit a [UPK application](#) during the first matching round** for the best chance of getting matched to your preferred school. The first family matching round is **open from Dec. 9, 2025 to Feb. 2, 2026**.
 - a. If your student does *not* have an [Individualized Education Program](#) (IEP) from the DPS Department of Special Education, rank up to 10 schools in order of preference.
 - b. If your student has an IEP, the application will ask you to submit your application without making school selections. This is expected, and you should submit the application anyway.
2. **Submit a [DPS SchoolChoice application](#) during Round 1** to notify Denver Public Schools of your intent to enroll in an ECE-4 program next year. **Round 1 is open from 10 a.m. on Dec. 2, 2025 to 4 p.m. on Jan. 20, 2026**. Select "Universal Preschool Colorado" as the school. DPS will support applicants with an IEP in selecting a school at a later time.

Resources for Families

SchoolChoice Website

The [SchoolChoice website](#) is the primary source of information for everything related to the DPS ECE application process. Users can view the content on this site in any of our district's most common languages by clicking on the "English" link at the top of any page and selecting their preferred language. Particularly helpful pages include:

- [Early Childhood Education Information](#)
- [Round 1 Information](#)
- [School Admission Priorities](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Family Resources](#)

UPK Website

The [Colorado Universal Preschool website](#) holds a lot of information and resources for families about the UPK program. Helpful pages include:

- [UPK Guide for Families](#)
- [Qualifying Factors for Additional Funding](#)
- [2026-27 Application Timeline](#)

School Finder and Enrollment Guide

In addition to contacting schools directly, there are two great resources for families to find information on DPS schools and programs.

- Families can type in their address to find their neighborhood schools or explore schools based on interests and programs by using the [School Finder](#).
- The [2026-27 Enrollment Guide](#) includes general information about choosing a school in DPS, instructions for participating in SchoolChoice and short descriptions of DPS school programs and services.

Contact Information

- If a family has questions about the SchoolChoice process, they should call the Choice Hotline at 720-423-3493, email schoolchoice@dpsk12.org or visit schoolchoice.dpsk12.org.
- If a family has questions about the Colorado Universal Preschool program, they should call 303-866-5223, email universalpreschool@state.co.us or visit upk.colorado.gov.