



The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) offers free, high quality, full-day Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) education to three- and four-year-old children across all Wards in DC. Every compulsory age student who lives in Washington, DC, has at least one right-to-attend DCPS school per elementary, middle and high school— a school where they can enroll at any time based on the student'



As explained in question #2, DCPS adheres strictly to the age requirements defined in local regulations and therefore does not allow promotions to occur from Pre-K3 into Pre-K4 or from Pre-K4 into Kindergarten unless the age requirements are also met. This means that students who are new to DCPS and receive a Pre-K3 or Pre-K4 seat via the MSDC lottery must complete their grade of enrollment before being promoted to the next grade level at the end of the school year. Please note: Families who apply for and receive a Pre-K lottery seat for a child with a birthdate that does not align with these age cutoffs – for example, applying for a Pre-K4 seat for a Pre-K3 aged child – will forfeit the seat and be directed to reapply for the correct grade through MSDC.

Under DC law, all children residing in DC are required to attend school at an educational institution beginning the school year in which the child is (or have become) age five by September 30. This requirement is called compulsory attendance. DC Code § 38-202(a). The only exception to required attendance at an educational institution is for parents and guardians who seek to homeschool a child and file an intent to homeschool with OSSE. Please see <https://osse.dc.gov/service/homeschooling-district-columbia> for more information about homeschooling requirements.

Students who are five years old or who will turn five years old on or before September 30 have a right to attend Kindergarten in their in-boundary DCPS school and can apply for seats in out-of-boundary schools through MSDC. Find your in-boundary school: <https://enrolldcps.dc.gov/node/41>.



Find Your In-Boundary School: <http://enrolldcps.dc.gov/node/41>

My School DC: <https://www.myschooldc.org/>

DCPS Enrollment and Lottery Handbook: <https://enrolldcps.dc.gov/node/66>

DCPS Early Stages: (202) 698-8037 or www.earlystages.org

OSSE Strong Start, the DC Early Intervention Program: (202) 727-3665 or www.eip.osse.dc.gov

[SY21-22 Retention and Promotion Guidance](#)

[OSSE Homeschool Program: https://osse.dc.gov/service/homeschooling-district-columbia](https://osse.dc.gov/service/homeschooling-district-columbia)

Questions about this guidance document: dcps.earlychildhood@dc.gov