Contact the Early Childhood Office at your local Board of Education.

Allegany County 301-759-2012  
Anne Arundel County 410-222-5441  
Baltimore City 410-396-6602  
Baltimore County 410-887-4313  
Calvert County 410-535-7264  
Caroline County 410-479-2896  
Carroll County 410-751-3048  
Cecil County 410-996-5424  
Charles County 301-934-7380  
Dorchester County 410-221-1111  
Frederick County 301-696-6864  
Garrett County 301-834-7645  
Harford County 410-588-5252  
Howard County 410-313-5659  
Kent County 410-810-3903  
Montgomery County 301-230-0691  
Prince George's County 301-808-2723  
Queen Anne's County 410-758-2403  
St. Mary's County 301-475-5511  
Somerset County 410-621-6243  
Talbot County 410-822-0330  
Washington County 301-766-2955  
Wicomico County 410-677-4523  
Worcester County 410-632-5042

Public Prekindergarten in Maryland

A Parent’s Guide

Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools

Dunbar Brooks  
President  
Maryland State Board of Education

Martin O'Malley  
Governor

For more information, contact:  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Division of Early Childhood Development  
200 W. Baltimore Street, 10th floor  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
MarylandPublicSchools.org

Phone: 410-767-0602  
Fax: 410-333-6226  
Email: mcockey@msde.state.md.us
Prekindergarten in the public schools is a state-funded program for 4-year-olds. The main goal of prekindergarten in the public schools is to provide learning experiences to help young children build their skills in many areas so that they are more likely to do well in school. High-quality prekindergarten experiences support children so that they may be fully ready to learn when they enter kindergarten. These experiences focus on personal and social development, language and literacy, scientific thinking, mathematical thinking, social studies, fine arts, physical development, and health education.

What is Public Prekindergarten?

To be eligible for public school prekindergarten, children must be 4 years old on or before September 1 of the school year when their families want them to begin. They also must be from families that are economically disadvantaged or homeless. All economically disadvantaged children who apply must be enrolled first; however, if there are spaces left, public school systems may enroll children who are not economically disadvantaged but who have school readiness needs.

Who is Eligible for Prekindergarten?

Public school systems must develop policies for prekindergarten programs that follow state regulations. A prekindergarten program is usually a half-day morning or half-day afternoon program. The class is 2½ hours long and operates five days a week during the school year. Each class has an average of 20 children. One state-certified early childhood teacher and one qualified full-time assistant are assigned to each class. Prekindergarten programs must meet state curriculum standards. Parents and teachers communicate regularly about each child’s progress. School systems are also encouraged to develop partnerships with community child care providers. For more information about the prekindergarten program in your community, call your local public school system’s Early Childhood Office (see the back of this brochure).

How are Public Prekindergarten Programs Operated?