



## **Preschool Program Frequently Asked Questions**

### **2023-2024 School Year**

#### **What is Preschool Expansion Aid (PEA)?**

Preschool Expansion Aid (PEA) serves to establish or expand access to high-quality, full-day preschool programs. The Voorhees Township Public Schools demonstrated to the NJDOE that it can provide a high-quality preschool program for three and four-year-old students, and as a result, was awarded the grant in 2022. A high-quality preschool program is defined as a full-day program with a certified teacher, an aide, and small classes that are inclusive of children with special needs. The district has been awarded PEA funds for the 2023-2024 school year. PEA will help to fund a comprehensive preschool program for all eligible students. The program will include a researched-based curriculum and assessment program; materials and supplies to support the curriculum; differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners; professional development for teachers; parental support programs; and the extension of learning outside of the classroom walls through partnerships with community stakeholders.

**If I would like my child to attend the Preschool Program during the 2023-2024 school year, what should I do?**

**FALL 2023 UPDATE: PLEASE NOTE 23-24 REGISTRATION HAS CLOSED. SEE THE QUESTION BELOW FOR 24-25 REGISTRATION INFORMATION.**

Registration for the preschool program will open February 1st through March 15th. The required application can be accessed here:

<https://genesis.voorhees.k12.nj.us/genesis/openReg?screen=welcomeScreen&action=form>

**PRESCHOOL LOTTERY APPLICATIONS for the future school year:** Please select the 2024-25 for the school year, **Pre School** for the school. Please select the appropriate grade based on your child's date of birth; **3F** (DOB: 10/2/2020-10/1/2021) or **4F** (DOB: 10/2/2019-10/1/2020).

*If you have questions please contact the district registrar, Tanya Weinstock, at [weinstock@voorhees.k12.nj.us](mailto:weinstock@voorhees.k12.nj.us)*

### **When will registration open for the 2024-2025 school year?**

Registration will open for the 24-25 school year on February 1, 2024. (The district posts the specific date registration will start on the homepage of the district website.) ***To register for the program, you must be a Voorhees Township resident and provide proof of residency.***

### **If my student is already enrolled in the preschool program, do I need to register again?**

No; however, you will receive a letter to confirm your child's intent to remain enrolled. This must be responded to by the deadline provided in that letter. If you do not respond, your child's spot will be forfeited. Your child will be in the same school they attended this past year if you choose for them to continue in the program.

Four-year old students who will be 5 by October 1st and are currently enrolled will rollover into kindergarten and re-registration is not required.

### **How are students selected to participate in the preschool program?**

Student selection is based on a random election or lottery system drawn in accordance with the district's policy. Children who are selected to participate in the preschool program are randomly placed in a class and program location.

### **How many preschool seats will be available in 2024-2025? Will preschool be open to all Voorhees Township 3- and 4-year olds?**

We will be allocating seats for our 13 current classrooms, accommodating a total of 195 students. This allocation also considers our special education inclusion students.

In anticipation of the opening of the Voorhees Early Childhood Development Center in the fall, we plan to utilize the lottery list to assign students to the 19 new classrooms, totaling 285 additional seats when the school opens.

### **When will the new preschool building be opening?**

The district will have a better idea of an estimated opening date once we award a renovation contract, which involves a formal bidding process. We will move as quickly as possible to get the building ready and open for our families.

### **My child is old enough to attend Kindergarten, but I do not believe he/she is ready. Can I enter him/her in the lottery?**

While we understand this concern, due to limited availability of seats and an expected waitlist, children are classified as 3, 4 or 5 (Kindergarten) by their age on October 1, 2024. We will not make exceptions to this. We encourage you to enroll your child in our Kindergarten program.

**When will families be notified of their child's acceptance into the 2024-2025 program and assigned location?**

Families will begin to receive notification of their acceptance into the program by May of 2024.

School assignments will be delivered in June 2024.

Once you receive notification of your acceptance into the program, you must have your paperwork submitted by the deadline indicated on your acceptance letter to ensure your child's spot. Your acceptance indicates that you are willing to accept a random placement and intend to participate full-time in the program.

**How old must a child be to enroll in the preschool program?**

Students enrolled in the three-year-old program must be 3 years old by October 1st, 2024.

Students enrolled in the four-year-old program must be 4 years old by October 1st, 2024.

**Do I get a say in where my child goes?**

At this time, there is no parental choice. Our preschool program will be consistent across all schools and provider sites and will offer the same educational experience to all students through the researched-based and state approved Creative Curriculum.

**I have siblings who are both eligible for preschool. If one is accepted, will the other be accepted?**

If there is a sibling currently in the program who will continue, your other child will be accepted into the program. However, if your child is eligible for kindergarten, and another child is eligible for preschool, a spot is not guaranteed.

**I have twins/multiples. What if one gets in, does the other automatically become eligible for the program?**

We agree that this creates a challenge for both parents and the district. We want to be fair to all involved and agree that twins/multiples should not be separated. For lottery purposes, we assign ONE number to each family. If that number is selected, all are eligible for the program.

**Is there before and after care?**

At this time, there is no before and after care offered to our preschool students.

**Are there half-day hours available?**

No. All schools will run a full day program 8:55-3:25. Full-time participation is expected with your child's acceptance into the preschool program.

**Is a flu shot required for my child to attend?**

The flu vaccine is a requirement for childcare/preschool attendance for those who are 6 through 59 months of age. At least one dose of flu vaccine is due by December 31 of each year.

**How many hours are in a full-day program?**

The anticipated time for the full-day preschool program will be 6.5 hours (8:55 a.m. to 3:25 p.m.)

**How many children are in a class?**

Most classes, with the exception of the self-contained special education classrooms (which will have a maximum of 12), will have a maximum of 15 students with one teacher and one instructional associate.

**Will transportation be provided?**

For the 2024-2025 school year, transportation will be provided.

**What are the teacher qualifications?**

All teachers are New Jersey State Certified, with a minimum of a bachelor's degree. The District is committed to hiring dual certified teachers for their preschool program. Dual certified teachers have certification in both early childhood education and special education.

**What is an inclusion classroom?**

An inclusion classroom consists of students with special programming and general education students.

**What were the locations of the preschool classrooms for the 2023-2024 school year?**

In the 2023-2024 school year, the district has offered classes in our school district and at our provider sites, which include: Today's Learning Center (1201 White Horse Road), One Step at a Time (219 South Burnt Mill Road), and Fervent Beginnings (904 Cooper Road). The district will continue to establish these valued partnerships with provider sites, as we work toward our dedicated goal to offer a high-quality preschool experience to all students.

**What is a provider site?**

A provider site is a certified preschool program in the township of Voorhees that chooses to partner with the district to educate preschool students enrolled in the Voorhees Township Public Schools. The district will partner with provider sites and use their classrooms to educate our preschool students. The in-district preschool program will be replicated at the provider sites. As a result, students attending the provider sites will receive the same high-quality instruction including all educational experiences outside of the classroom (field trips). The district will work with provider sites to ensure that all NJDOE curriculum, instruction, and assessment mandates are met.

### **What curriculum will be used in the program?**

Creative Curriculum is one of four State approved curricula. Creative Curriculum provides for positive interaction, social emotional competencies, constructive play and Teacher-Family interactions. Creative Curriculum is research based and is offered in English and Spanish. The curriculum consists of a comprehensive collection of daily practice and knowledge building.

### **What are the components of a typical preschool full-day program?**

Students will participate in a full-day schedule that consists of morning meeting, small instructional group time, large group time, shared reading, shared writing, learning centers, structured play, gross motor experiences, rest time, and lunch/snack time. Student learning will address the ten major categories listed below, which are critical for school success:

- social and emotional development
- physical development and health
- language
- cognitive
- literacy
- mathematics
- creative arts
- science and technology
- social studies
- English language acquisition

Children will be immersed in a language rich environment as they explore their world through play, literacy and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) activities. Each class will be taught by a certified teacher with the assistance of a classroom aide.

### **How can a certified preschool program become a provider site?**

During the 2022-2023 school year, the district hosted a Provider Orientation. During this orientation, information about partnering with the district to educate three and four year old students was provided. For questions about becoming a provider in future years, please contact Julie Lyons, Director of Early Childhood.