

WALKER COUNTY PRE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Purpose of Walker County's Pre-K Program

The purpose of Walker County's Pre-K Program, funded by the Georgia Lottery, is to provide full-day (6.5 hours of instructional services), five days per week, 180 days per year of appropriate educational/instructional services to eligible four-year old children.

Preregistration, Enrollment and Classroom Expectations

Enrollment in the Pre K Program will be open to all children who are Georgia residents and who are four (4) years of age by September 1. Children living in Walker County and in the school zone attendance area where the pre-k class is located will be given priority. Children living outside the zoned attendance area where the class is located will be the second priority. Children living outside of the Walker County attendance area will be the third priority.

The application process includes a lottery drawing, which is held each spring semester. When enrollment numbers exceed class space, initial placement of children in pre-k classes will be based on the lottery drawing with the first 22 students placed in the class and the remaining students placed on a waiting list in the order in which their names are drawn. Twins will be drawn equally: In zone with other in zone applicants and twins out of zone with other out of zone applicants. If one twin is drawn for the class, the other twin will be automatically placed. Out of county applicants are last priority.

A child enrolled in a Walker County Pre-K class who has attended at least 5 months and moves into another attendance area or county in Georgia, may continue to participate in the class if the parents can provide transportation. Attendance must be regular. Late arrivals and early dismissals should occur only in the event of an emergency.

Children being served in another pre-k center who are also on Walker County's pre-k waiting list will be notified of vacancies as they occur and parents given a choice as to where their children will be served.

Identifying information, such as a picture I.D. and/or Social Security Card must be provided for anyone who is to pick up a child from the pre-k class.

A current telephone number, address and emergency telephone number where someone can be reached at all times **MUST** be provided. If this information changes during the school year, parents are responsible for providing new information immediately or the child will be asked to stay home until it is provided.

If a child has a fever or exhibits other symptoms indicating illness such as diarrhea, vomiting, inflammation in the eyes, or severe coughing and sneezing, the parents will be called and asked to pick the child up for the remainder of the day. If the child returns to school continuing to exhibit the symptoms the parents will be called again. If a child is out 3 days a doctor's excuse will be required.

Parents are expected to participate in at least two documented individual parent/teacher conferences per year. Workshops for parents will be provided to enhance knowledge of their child's development.

Procedure For Accepting Walker County Five-Year Olds

The Walker County Pre-K Program is intended for children that are four years of age on September 1, of the school year. Specifically, students residing in the WCS district by zone will be given highest priority.

Walker County five-year olds can be considered for class placement after all the four year olds have been selected if all of the following criteria are met:

- The child is five years old, and has a late birthday (birthday in June, July, or August).
- The child has a documented deficit in any one or more of the following: language development, social interaction, communication, or motor skills. This documentation must be provided through a psychological evaluation indicating deficits of one standard deviation or more in two developmental areas. (This means an IEP).
- The child did not attend the Georgia Pre-K program as a four-year old.

Facility Based Special Education Applications

Before the beginning of the school year, children who are being served in the facility based component of the preschool Special Education program, who have a current IEP and are age appropriate with a level of performance indicating that they are ready to transition to a regular 4 year old class, will be given priority to participate in the pre-k lottery class in their base school attendance area. Parents must complete a pre-k application for the child to be eligible to participate in the pre-k program.

This policy is developed to provide for a smooth transition for the child and to assure support for continuity of the performance level which the child has reached.

Related Service Agency Referrals

When a related service agency (i.e. Head Start, DFCS, Lookout Mountain Community Services, Babies Can't Wait, etc.) identifies a child with areas of developmental concern and makes a referral to the Walker County Pre-K program, the child may be placed as priority on the waiting list after the nature of the child's needs have been determined and documented by the referring agency and the Walker County pre-school staff.

Placement considerations include:

- Non-compliant, oppositional, or aggressive behaviors that require specific intervention techniques
- Needs opportunity for social interaction with same age peers
- Needs strong language-based program to assist in developing age-appropriate communication skills
- Needs an environment where independent and self help skills can emerge and be encouraged
- Needs a consistently structured, nurturing environment conducive to developing emotional security
- Needs learning opportunities and experiences that are challenging and developmentally appropriate for the child's age and abilities

Transportation

Parents of prekindergarten children who want transportation provided between home and the pre-k site must live in the school attendance area where the class is located.

For safety reasons all children riding the bus must behave according to the established transportation guidelines.

If problem behaviors occur and reasonable intervention strategies are not successful, the child will no longer be allowed to ride the school bus. Parents will then be responsible for the child's transportation.