



## **COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN** Information Sheets

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Important BPS Contact Information
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Before- and After-School Care; Transportation

For additional information about Kindergarten programs, activities you can do at home to promote learning and other school readiness information, call our hotline at 617-635-3276 or visit: [www.countdowntokindergarten.org](http://www.countdowntokindergarten.org).

# THE TIMELINE

SHEET #1

## Counting Down to Kindergarten in the Boston Public Schools

### 5 OCTOBER-JANUARY: Visit & Choose Schools

- Families who are enrolling children in kindergarten for the following school year should [use the "What are my schools?" tool to get a list of schools](#) available to your family.
- Meet many schools' principals and teachers, and see students' schoolwork under one roof at the [BPS Showcase of Schools on October 24](#), from 1:00-4:00 PM, at the Reggie Lewis Track & Field Center.
- Check out ["School Preview Time" from November 2 to January 22](#), when schools open their doors so you can visit to learn about their offerings. A schedule of school visits is available online and at all BPS Family Resource Centers or Boston Public Libraries.

### 4 JANUARY-FEBRUARY: Register for Schools

- Visit [any Family Resource Center](#) or one of their satellite offices to register (see reverse side).
- You will need to [list at least five schools](#) (more is better) on the registration form and bring with you several required documents (see inside).
- If English is not your child's first language or another language is spoken at home, and your child is going to enter K2, your child will be referred to the Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC) for an English language evaluation to determine whether or not he/she is in need of a Sheltered English Immersion Program (SEI) to support his/her English language development. School choices for English Language Learners will be made at the NACC.

### 3 APRIL-JUNE: Meet Your School

- Families who registered in the first round (January 4 - February 5) [receive their school assignments in the mail in mid-March](#). *If you are one of a small number of families not assigned to one of the schools you listed, go back right away to a Family Resource Center to apply for schools that still have openings.*
- Your child's new school will [invite you to a Welcome Session](#) to see classrooms, talk to the principal and teachers, and meet other new families.

### 2 JUNE-AUGUST: Get Ready for School

- Be sure to check out the [free events for kindergarten families](#) around the city, including neighborhood kindergarten parties and a city-wide celebration at the Boston Children's Museum.
- If your child is eligible for yellow bus transportation, the [bus assignment will come in the mail in late August](#).

### 1 SEPTEMBER: Start School!

- Kindergarten in the Boston Public Schools typically [begins the Monday following Labor Day](#).

## **IMPORTANT BPS NUMBERS & BASIC INFORMATION**

- Main Boston Public Schools (BPS) phone number: (617) 635-9000
- BPS website: [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org)
- School Hotline (August and September; January): (617) 635-9046
- Special Education: (617) 635-8599
- Transportation: (617) 635-9520
- English Language Learners: (617) 635-9435
- Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC): (617) 635-1565
- Food and Nutrition Services: (617) 635-9144
- Homeless Student Unit: (617) 635-8037
- Extended Learning Time, After School Services (DELTAS): (617)-635-1578
- Boston School Committee: (617) 635-9014

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### **BPS Family Resource Centers (FRCs):**

Hours of operation: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday

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#### **East Zone**

**1216 Dorchester Ave.  
Dorchester, MA**

**(617) 635-8015**

(Help in English, Spanish,  
Cape Verdean Creole,  
French & Haitian Creole)

#### **North Zone**

**75 Malcolm X Blvd.  
Roxbury, MA**

**(617) 635-9010**

(Help in English, Spanish,  
Chinese, Cape Verdean  
Creole & Portuguese)

#### **West Zone**

**515 Hyde Park Ave  
Roslindale, MA**

**(617) 635-8040**

(help in English, Spanish  
Cape Verdean Creole,  
Haitian Creole & French)

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### **Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC):**

Hours of operation: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday

#### **Madison Park High School Complex**

**55 Malcolm X Blvd.  
Roxbury, MA**

**(617) 635-1565**

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### **Additional sites and hours -- First Round registration period only:**

**Please call a Family Resource Center to inquire about satellite sites and any extended hours during the registration season.**

#### **Other Resources:**

- **Countdown to Kindergarten information line:** (617) 63-LEARN
- **Countdown website:** [www.countdowntokindergarten.org](http://www.countdowntokindergarten.org)
- **Child Care Choices of Boston** (additional K0-K2 options): (617) 348-6641
- **Bilingual Parent Advisory Councils:** (617) 635-8339
- **BOSTNET** (resource for before- and after-school programs): (617) 720-1290
- **BOSTONavigator** (the place for locating Out-of-School Time programs in Boston):  
[www.bostonnavigator.org](http://www.bostonnavigator.org)
- **Talk, Read, Play** (resources and free activities for families): [www.talkreadplay.org](http://www.talkreadplay.org)

# CHOOSING SCHOOLS:

SHEET #2

## A Tip Sheet

When registering for kindergarten, a family's options typically include schools in their assignment zone, schools within one mile of their home (regardless of zone), and any citywide listings. Visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org) for your customized list of schools.

**TIP: Every school has something different to offer.** Think about the needs of your child and your family. Consider school location, size, enrichment opportunities (art, music, languages, etc.), teaching staff, atmosphere and more.

**TIP: You can check out schools in different ways:**

- The best way is to visit schools during School Preview Time! (See below)
- Attend BPS Showcase of Schools on October 24 from 1:00- 4:00 PM at the Reggie Lewis Track & Field Center to learn about many schools at once.
- Visit the BPS website: [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org).

**TIP: November 2 - January 22 is School Preview Time (SPT),** when every school hosts three visits for families. See the school, meet teachers and ask questions. View the schedule at [www.countdowntokindergarten.org](http://www.countdowntokindergarten.org) or visit any BPS Family Resource Center (FRC).

**TIP: Boston uses a controlled choice assignment plan** and assignments are made by a computer. For the best chance at being assigned one of your choices:

- Register in the first round (January 4-February 5) during the week assigned for your last name. Visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org) for a current schedule.
- Pick at least five schools (more is better). List every school you think could be a good fit for your child. List your first choice first, second choice second, and so on.
- Before you list your choices, consider these six things:
  1. How popular is the school? The more people who apply for a school, the less chance you have of being assigned. Explore the many "hidden gems" in the system.
  2. Is the school in your walk zone? Fifty percent of seat assignments are saved for students in the walk zone. (Check with FRC staff or visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org) for walk zone information.)
  3. Does your child have a sibling in the school? (Siblings get priority over non-siblings.)
  4. Are K1 programs (for 4-year-olds) in the school? (K1 students typically move up and take some of the K2 seats for five-year-olds.)
  5. Does the school provide a program or services to support English Language Learners (SEI, ESL and qualified teachers to teach English Language Learners)?
  6. Does the school provide before- or after school care for your child's age group? Be sure to check before choosing.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS TO KNOW

**BPS:** BPS is the abbreviation for the Boston Public Schools.

**Assignment Zone:** Boston is divided into three school assignment zones: East, North and West. Elementary school families may choose from schools within their zone or within one mile of their home, regardless of the assignment zone. They may also consider any citywide options.

**Walk Zone:** Fifty percent of seats at each school are saved for families in its walk zone (one mile radius for elementary families). Visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org) or call any BPS Family Resource Center to find out which schools your child is eligible to attend, including those in your walk zone.

**BPS Family Resource Centers (FRCs):** Staff at any of the three locations (or the satellite offices open during the first round) can explain your choices and help you register for school.

**Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center:** The staff at the Center evaluates all students who are possible English Language Learners and also provides counseling on which program is best suited for your child.

**K2:** This is full-day (6-hour) kindergarten for children who are 5-years-old by September 1. BPS guarantees a school seat for every child who registers for K2.

**K1:** BPS has expanding its K1 kindergarten programs for 4-year-olds. In 2009, BPS had 84 K1 classrooms with nearly 2,000 seats available. However, seating in these programs is still limited and assignment for K1 cannot be guaranteed.

**K0:** There are a very small number of K0 seats available for children who will be 3-years-old by September 1. Most of these seats are filled by children with special needs or by siblings of current BPS children.

- **Remember that a school day is six hours (typically 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM or 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM). Be sure a school's hours fit your needs, including after school options, and also be sure to have a back-up child care plan. Seating is not guaranteed for K0 and K1, and most schools do not host after school services for children under five. For additional pre-school and Head Start program options call Child Care Choices of Boston at (617) 348-6641.**

**Early Education Centers (EECs) and Early Learning Centers (ELCs):** These BPS sites offer K0 or K1 through 1<sup>st</sup> grade and include free before- and after-school care. Seats in these centers usually fill up in the first round of registration (January 4 – February 5).

**School Preview Time (SPT):** This is the period from November 2 through January 22 when Boston Public Schools invite you to see what they have to offer before you register your child. You can get a schedule at any FRC or library starting in November, or visit [www.countdowntokindergarten.org](http://www.countdowntokindergarten.org).

**Pilot Schools:** Part of BPS, these public schools help parents, teachers and school administrators try out new education strategies to share with other schools.

**Charter Schools:** These public schools are NOT part of the BPS system. They are overseen by the state Department of Education. For a list and more information, call (781) 338-3227.

# **VISITING SCHOOLS:** **A Work Sheet**

SHEET #3

School Name:

Location:

Number of grades (K-5 or K-8):

Number of classrooms per grade:

School hours next year:

Total number of students and class size:

Facilities (playground, gym, cafeteria, library, pool?):

School appearance and overall atmosphere:

Curriculum:

Specialties/enrichment (music, art, science, physical education?):

Sheltered English Language Program & Services for English Language Learners (ESL class):

Qualified Teachers to teach English Language Learners:

MCAS scores:

Before- or after-school programs (starting at what age?):

Opportunities for parent involvement:

Diversity of students and staff:

Second Language(s) of staff members:

Additional notes (uniform policy, style of discipline, other issues of concern to you):

## **BPS FAMILY INFORMATION SESSIONS**

At these informal workshops, you will learn all about the school application process – how to register, what to bring, and how the BPS school choice plan works.

Tuesday, November 10, 2009 6:00 PM

The English High School  
144 McBride St., Jamaica Plain  
*Translation available*

Monday, November 16, 2009 6:00 PM

Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School  
270 Columbia Road, Dorchester  
*Translation available*

Thursday, November 19, 2009 6:00 PM

Umana Middle School Academy  
312 Border St., East Boston  
*In English & Spanish/ En inglés y español*

Monday, December 7, 2009 5:00 PM

Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center  
885 Washington St., Boston  
*Translation available*

## REGISTERING FOR KINDERGARTEN

**Who?** **If your child will be 5-years-old by September 1, 2010**, you are guaranteed a seat for kindergarten, called K2. (A growing number of K1 kindergarten seats are also available for children who will be 4 by September 1. A very limited number of K0 seats are available to children who will be 3 by September 1. K1 and K0 seats are not guaranteed.)

**When?** **The first round of registration runs from January 4 - February 5, following an alphabetical schedule (A – I in week one and so forth).** Register in this round for the best chance of being assigned to one of the schools you want.

**Where?** **Register at any of the BPS Family Resource Centers:**

**If your child is entering K2 and English is not your child's first language, you must visit the Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC) for an English language evaluation before registering.**

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### **East Zone**

1216 Dorchester Ave.  
Dorchester, MA  
**(617) 635-8015**

### **North Zone**

75 Malcolm X Blvd.  
Roxbury, MA  
**(617) 635-9010**

### **West Zone**

515 Hyde Park Ave.  
Roslindale, MA  
**(617) 635-8040**

### **Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC)**

Madison Park High School Complex  
55 Malcolm X Blvd.  
**(617) 635-1565**

Hours of operation: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

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### **Additional sites and hours -- First Round registration period only:**

Please call a Family Resource Center or check the BPS web site for additional information on satellite sites and extended hours during the registration season.

**How?** **When you register, bring these things with you:**

- ✓ An original birth certificate or passport for your child
- ✓ AT least three proofs of address (see other side for approved list)
- ✓ A form from your child's health provider with proof of immunizations (see other side for list)

**List at least five schools** on your application; more is better. Include lesser-known schools and keep in mind walk zone and sibling preferences for the best chance of getting a school on your list. To learn more about your school options, visit [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org)→register for schools→school choice→ what are my schools? Or, visit [www.countdowntokindergarten](http://www.countdowntokindergarten) for information on Visiting Schools, Showcase of Schools and other ways to learn more about your options.

# BPS RESIDENCY POLICY

All applicants must submit at least three current proofs of residency from the list below. Documents must be pre-printed with the name and current address of the student's parent or guardian\* and must be presented at the time of registration.

This residency policy does not apply to homeless students. If you think your living situation could be considered homeless or have other extraordinary living arrangements, please consult the Homeless Student Unit at (617) 635-8037.

**When registering for school, all applicants must submit IN PERSON at least one document from each group to prove Boston residency: Group A, Group B, and Group C. All must show the same current address.**

GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C
<p>You must submit BOTH documents within a set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These 2 documents: Copy of deed <u>AND</u> record of most recent mortgage payment</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These 2 documents: Copy of lease (including BHA and HUD leases) <u>AND</u> record of most recent rent payment</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ These 2 documents: Legal affidavit from landlord affirming tenancy <u>AND</u> record of most recent rent payment</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ This document: Section 8 Agreement</li> </ul>	<p>Utility bill or work order dated within the past 60 days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Gas bill</li> <li>■ Oil bill</li> <li>■ Electric bill</li> <li>■ Home telephone bill</li> <li>■ Cable bill</li> </ul> <p>We do not accept cellular phone bills or water &amp; sewer bills.</p> <p>If a family is sharing housing with an individual or family and does not pay rent, the family may submit a utility bill in the name of the person who owns or leases the property.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Valid Massachusetts driver's license</li> <li>■ Current vehicle registration</li> <li>■ Valid Massachusetts photo identification card</li> <li>■ Valid passport</li> </ul> <p>Dated within the past year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ W-2 form</li> <li>■ Excise tax bill</li> <li>■ Property tax bill</li> </ul> <p>Dated within the past 60 days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Letter from an approved government agency</li> <li>■ Payroll stub</li> <li>■ Bank or credit card statement</li> </ul>
<p>Additional requirements for registration: (1) Up-to-date immunization record; please see below for details (2) Birth certificate or passport for Kindergarten and Grade 1 students</p>		

\* Legal guardianship requires additional documentation from a court or agency. For more information about the residency policy call 617.635.9014.

## IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

### Required Immunizations to Register for School

	K0 (age 3)	K1/K2 (ages 4-5)	Grades 1-6	Grades 7-12
Hepatitis B	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses
DtaP/DTP/ DT/Td	≥ 4 doses DTaP/DTP	5 doses DTaP/DTP	≥ 4 doses DTaP/ DTP or ≥ 3 doses Td	4 doses DTaP/DTP or ≥ 3 Td <i>plus</i> 1 Td booster
Polio	≥ 3 doses	4 doses	≥ 3 doses	≥ 3 doses
Hib	1-4 doses	0	0	0
MMR	1 dose	2 measles, 1 mumps, 1 rubella	2 measles, 1 mumps, 1 rubella	2 measles, 1 mumps, 1 rubella
Varicella (chickenpox)	1 dose*	1 dose*	1 dose*	< 13 yrs: 1* ≥ 13 yrs: 2*

\*or documentation of disease

# A TYPICAL DAY IN KINDERGARTEN

During the six-hour kindergarten day learning takes place through a range of activities. The flow varies from school to school, but a typical day often includes:

- A morning meeting including songs, counting how many children are present, talking about the weather, and other creative ways to learn numbers, practice speaking in a group, and discuss ideas;
- A “literacy block” where students take part in large and small groups to build reading and writing skills;
- Flexible time for children to choose different centers or stations for playing and learning;
- Time for math games and activities that help children learn basic concepts like patterns and counting by twos or tens; and
- Recess time for exercise and play.
- Rest time is included in all K1 classrooms; however, most K2 programs do not include rest time or phase it out over the course of the year.

## During the Week:

- Children often spend time with specialists who may teach art, computer skills, music or other subjects;
- Children may go to the school library, into other classrooms to learn about science or social studies, or go outside with a health teacher to exercise;

## Meals:

Schools serve breakfast and lunch every day, available to all children.

- To see if you qualify for free or reduced price meals, call the BPS Dept. of Food Services: (617) 635-9144.
- Children may also bring their own lunch or purchase lunch from school. Some, but not all, schools are peanut-free sites. Be sure to ask if peanuts or peanut butter is an issue for your child.

## Class Size:

- Regular education K2 kindergarten classrooms have one full-time teacher and up to 22 children. K2 classrooms usually have at least a part-time teacher’s aide.
- Regular education K1 kindergarten classrooms have one full-time teacher, a full-time teacher’s aide and up to 22 children.
- Sheltered English Immersion classrooms have one full-time teacher and up to 20 children.
- Special education and inclusion classes (which blend regular and special education students) have fewer children in each class and two or more adults in the room.

## **BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Programs vary from school to school; some schools provide this service on site while others contract with nearby organizations for support. Some are available for children 4 years old and older, but most are only open to children age five and older. A few don't start until children are 6 years old. Be sure to ask the school for details about program activities, hours, costs and age requirements.

For additional program offerings in your community check out:

- The **2008-2009 Guide to Boston's Before and After School Programs**, available from BOSTNET at all libraries and BPS Family Resource Centers or on-line at [www.bostnet.org](http://www.bostnet.org).
- **Child Care Choices of Boston** can also help parents find programs via their parent line at: 617-348-6641 (M-F 9:30-3:30), or through face-to-face meetings with a counselor.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Elementary school age children typically receive bus transportation if they live beyond a mile from the school. Your child's school assignment notice will let you know if you receive transportation. If you are entitled to a bus, you will receive a mailing in late August with your child's bus stop and schedule. (To inquire about transportation for a child with disabilities or a serious medical condition call BPS Health Services, 617-635-6788, or Special Education, 617-635-8599.)

### **Bus Stop Locations:**

Most students who take a school bus are picked up and dropped off at a corner near their home. If you have concerns about your bus stop location, call the BPS Transportation Department at 617-635-9520.

### **Alternate Bus Stops:**

If your child needs to be picked up or dropped off some place other than your house, such as a grandparent's home or an after-school program, you can request an "alternative transportation" application from your principal, BPS Family Resource Center, or online at [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org). It can take 2-3 weeks to process the request, which could be approved if:

- The stop you request is on an existing bus route to or from the school; and
- There is room on the bus; and
- Your request does not add time to a bus route.

### **For help with transportation questions call:**

- The BPS Transportation Department: 617-635-9520
- BPS Family Resource Centers: 617-635-8015, 617-635-9010, 617-635-8040
- The BPS Hotline (August and September only): 617-635-9046