



[www.countdowntokinderarten.org](http://www.countdowntokinderarten.org)

# Boston Public Schools Kindergarten Registration Guide For SY 2015-2016



# All About Boston Public Schools

## OUR MISSION

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The Boston Public Schools is committed to transforming the lives of all children through exemplary teaching in a world class system of innovative, welcoming schools. We partner with the community, families, and students to develop in every learner the knowledge, skill, and character to excel in college, career, and life.

## STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

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Boston Public Schools currently serves over 57,000 students who come from over 140 different countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. There are 128 schools within BPS and of those schools, there are:

- 5 Early learning centers (K-grade 1 or grade 3)
- 44 Elementary schools (K-5)
- 29 Elementary & middle schools (k-8)
- 8 Middle schools (6-8)
- 3 Middle & high schools (6-12)
- 26 High schools (9-12)
- 3 Exam schools (7-12)
- 7 Special education schools
- 2 Alternative (at-risk) programs



## ADDITIONAL FACTS

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- Boston guarantees a full-day kindergarten seat to every five-year-old. BPS also offers more than 2,200 full-day “K1” pre-school seats for four-year-olds as well as limited “K0” seats for three-year-olds.
- 27 early childhood programs have received NAEYC accreditation with 17 more programs currently working to meet accreditation standards.
- Since 2009, BPS has increased the number of schools with extended learning time from 4 to 24.
- In the past 12 years, the capacity of after-school programs around the city has nearly doubled to 48,000 seats, with more than 110 programs.



# Preparing for School

Talking, reading and playing with children in the early years helps them to thrive and puts them on the path for school success. The City of Boston defines a “school ready child” as one who:

1. Interacts positively with other children and adults;
2. Is curious and loves learning new things;
3. Can focus and pay attention to another person or an activity;
4. Feels good about him/herself;
5. Can manage his or her emotions;
6. Is healthy, safe, well-rested and well-nourished;
7. Has appropriate knowledge;
8. Has appropriate language skills; and
9. Has appropriate physical skills.

By doing three things with children daily- talking, reading and playing- you can support your child to be ready for school.



## Why Talk?

Talking is one of the most important things you can do to help children learn to talk and grow their vocabulary. Talk is also essential for learning to read and write. Children who learn to read and write words they have not heard before find it as challenging as learning a whole new language. In sum, children learn to listen first, then talk, read and write. Listening to your words is the first step.

*Note: talk can and should be done in the language that is most comfortable for you. Do not worry if your native language is not English.*





## read Why Read?

Reading to your children is one of the most important things you can do to help grow their vocabulary and develop a love of learning. Reading aloud is also essential for learning to read and write once your children begin school.

You can help your children learn to read by reading to them yourselves starting at infancy. Reading helps them get used to hearing language, develop a longer attention span, a larger vocabulary and an eagerness to read.



## Why Play?

Playing with children and providing opportunities for them to play independently will help them develop creativity, imagination, and social-emotional skills. Children need stimulation and interaction to foster brain development. It is through play that children solve problems, learn to work in groups, to share, negotiate, advocate for themselves, and strengthen their growing bodies.

Setting aside playtime for children will foster their imagination, build problem-solving skills, and allow them time to investigate all the exciting things they are learning about their world. No expensive toys or gadgets are needed to promote play. Simple items such as blocks, empty containers, or old clothes for dress-up can spark hours of imagination in young children!



# On the Countdown!



## 5 . NOVEMBER - JANUARY: Visit & Choose Schools

- Families who are enrolling children in kindergarten for the following school year should get their school list at “[www.DiscoverBPS.org](http://www.DiscoverBPS.org).”
- Meet schools’ principals and teachers, and see students’ school work at the **Showcase In Our Schools** in every early education, elementary, and K-8 school on November 15.

## 4 . JANUARY: Register for Schools

- Visit **any Welcome Center (WC)** to register. You can save time during your visit if you pre-register online using BPS Express.
- We strongly encourage you to **list at least five schools (more is better)** on the registration form and bring with you the required documents.
- If **English is not your child's first language** or another language is spoken at home, and your child is going to enter K2, while at the WC, your child will be scheduled for an English Language Assessment at the Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC).

## 3 . MARCH - JUNE: Meet Your School

- Families who registered in the first round (January 5 - January 30)** receive their school assignments in the mail in late-March.
- 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 pick up your free T-shirt at your local library and check out the free events for kindergarten families around the city.**
- Bus assignments 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, but some schools may begin earlier.





# Glossary

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

**Administratively Assign:** State law requires that every child who turns six by December 31, must attend school beginning in September. If you don't receive one of your school choices, or if you don't return an application for a student age six and older BPS will assign the student to the school closest to home that has a seat.

**BPS Welcome Centers:** Staff at any of the three locations (or the satellite offices open part-time in East Boston and Mattapan) can explain your choices and help you register for school.

**Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC):** The staff at the NACC evaluates all students who are possible English Language Learners and provides counseling on which programs are best suited to support children's learning.







**K2:** This is full-day (6-hour) kindergarten for children who are five years old by September 1. While BPS cannot guarantee a K2 seat in a school of a parent's choosing, the district will provide a K2 seat in one of its schools for every applicant that wants one.

**K1:** This is pre-kindergarten for children who are four years old by September 1. BPS has expanded its K1 programs over the past three years to more than 2,200 seats; however, seating in these programs is still limited, and assignment for K1 cannot be guaranteed.

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

**Early Education Centers (EECs) and Early Learning Centers (ELCs):** These BPS sites offer K0 or K1 through grade one and include free before- and after-school care. Seats in these programs usually fill up in the first round of registration (January 5 – January 30).

**Pilot Schools:** Pilot schools are part of the Boston Public Schools but have more flexibility to try new approaches to education.



# Choosing Schools

In January, 2014, BPS started using a new assignment policy based on a Home-Based plan for students in kindergarten through grade eight. It does away with zones and helps students attend quality schools, closer to home.

## The Home-Based school plan:

- Increases the chances that a family will receive one of their top school choices
- Increases access to quality schools overall
- Ensures every incoming kindergarten child has quality schools from which to choose
- Cuts the average distance a child travels to school by 40 percent





# Choosing Schools

**The Home-Based plan is designed to make sure every family has high-quality schools on their customized list.** We have grouped our schools into four **MCAS Tiers** according to how students performed on MCAS tests for the past two years. We take into account both overall performance and improvement. Every family has at least two of the highest scoring schools (Tier I- the top 25%) and at least four schools that are in the top half of MCAS performance (Tier I and Tier II) on their customized list. Tier III is the bottom 51%-75%. Tier IV is the bottom 25%. We know that families look at many factors beyond MCAS to decide whether to choose a school, and a new holistic, quality rating system is planned for 2015/2016.

**For English Language Learners and students with disabilities,** the Home-Based plan works a little differently, creating community clusters of schools to help ensure that students can enroll in schools that offer quality programs closer to home.

**The Home-Based plan offers more predictability and gives parents a better opportunity to get to know their school choices in advance.** This means families can learn more about schools earlier, which can help strengthen the connections between schools, students and families.







# Registering for School

**Who? If your child will be five years old by September 1, 2015, s/he is eligible for K2 Kindergarten.** A growing number of K1 kindergarten seats are also available for children who will be four (4) by September 1, 2015. A very limited number of K0 seats are available to children who will be three (3) by September 1, 2015. K1 and K0 seats are not guaranteed. Note that while BPS tries to place children in schools their families choose, this is not always possible. K2 applicants can select to be administratively assigned in order to be guaranteed a seat by the end of first round registration. Children who turn six by December 31st will be assigned a kindergarten seat if one of the applicant's choices is not available.

**Where? Register at any of the BPS Welcome Centers.** If your child is entering K2 and English is not your child's first language, your registration process will include a separate visit to the Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC) for an English language evaluation and school choice consultation.

## **Dorchester**

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

## **Roxbury**

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

## **Roslindale**

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

## **East Boston Satellite**

312 Border St,  
East Boston, MA  
617-635-9597  
Mon/Tues

## **Mattapan Satellite**

5 Mildred Ave  
Mattapan, MA  
617-635-9596  
Thurs/Fri

Hours of operation: Weekdays 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM  
(Except Wednesday, which is 12:00-7:00 PM)

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

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

Hours of operation: Weekdays 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM



**When? The first registration period runs from January 5, 2015 - January 30, 2015**, following an alphabetical schedule (shown below). Register in this period for the best chance of being assigned to one of the schools you want.

**Accoriding to parent/guardian last name:**

**A-I: Jan 5-9**

**J-Q: Jan 12-16**

**R-Z: Jan 20-23**

**All: Jan 26-30**

**Pre-registration** starts as early as mid December and goes through January. you can pre-register your children online using BPS Express!



*"My daughter recently told me she's a scientist because she likes to investigate in the schoolyard and do experiments! She then told me the difference between opaque, translucent, and transparent! Big concepts for a 5 year old!"*

**- BPS Parent**





# Registration Document Checklist

All families registering a new student with the Boston Public Schools must bring the following required documents to a BPS Welcome Center as part of their registration process. Applications cannot be processed without these documents.

## ALL of these:

- Child's original birth certificate, I-94 form or passport\*
- Child's up-to-date immunization record (see below)
- Parent/Guardian's photo identification

\*Use of Passport requires completion of BPS Parent Affidavit, available at BPS Welcome Centers

## Required Immunizations

| Grade                                    | K0 (age 3)            | K1/K2 (ages 4-5)     |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Hepatitis B:                             | 3 doses               | 3 doses              |
| Dtap/DTP/DT/Td:                          | ≥4 doses DtaP/<br>DTP | 5 doses DtaP/<br>DTP |
| Polio                                    | ≥3 doses              | 4 doses              |
| Hib:                                     | 1-4 doses             | 0                    |
| MMR                                      | 1 dose                | 2 doses              |
| Varicella (chickenpox):                  | 1 dose*               | 2 doses*             |
| <i>* or documentation of the disease</i> |                       |                      |



And TWO of these:

Residency documents must be pre-printed with the name and current address of the student's parent/guardian. Items cannot be from the same bullet.

- A utility bill (not water or cell phone) dated within the past 60 days
- A current lease, section 8 agreement, or BPS residency affidavit
- A deed or a mortgage statement dated within the past 60 days, or a property tax bill dated within the last year
- A W2 form dated within the year, or a payroll stub dated within the past 60 days
- A bank or credit card statement dated within the past 60 days
- A letter from an approved government agency\* dated within the past 60 days

*\*APPROVED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES: Departments of Transitional Assistance, Revenue (DOR), Children and Family Services (DCF), Transitional Assistance (DTA), Youth Services (DYS), Social Security, any communications on Commonwealth of Massachusetts Letterhead.*



# Resources

**Countdown to Kindergarten:** (617) 635-9288

**Discover BPS:** [www.discoverbps.org](http://www.discoverbps.org)

**Boston Public Schools (BPS) phone number:** (617) 635-9000

**Boston Public Schools website:** [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org)

**BOSTONavigator (locate Out-of-School Time programs in Boston):**  
[www.bostonnavigator.org](http://www.bostonnavigator.org)

**Boston School Committee:** (617) 635-9014

**English Language Learners:** (617) 635-9435

**Food and Nutrition Services:** (617) 635-9144

**Health Services at:** (617) 635-6788

**Homeless Education Resource Network:** (617) 635-8037

**Newcomer Assessment and Counseling Center (NACC):** (617) 635-1565

**Office of Engagement:** (617) 635-7750

**School Hotline (January, August and September):** (617) 635-9046

**Special Education:** (617) 635-8599

**Talk, Read, Play (resources and free activities for families with young children):** [www.talkreadplay.org](http://www.talkreadplay.org)

**Transportation:** (617) 635-9520









## Support your child's dreams...

It may seem like a long way off but even as early as kindergarten it's time to start thinking about the road to college. MEFA can help you every step of the way with all your questions about saving, planning, and paying for college. Visit [www.mefa.org](http://www.mefa.org) or call us at 800.449.6332 (MEFA)

We're here to help!

Connect with MEFA online for college planning updates:    

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for the future



