

Preschool Enrollment for Families Living in Temporary Housing



DID YOU KNOW...

- If you or your child are living in a shelter or another temporary housing situation, your child can get priority placement in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) preschool programs and other city-funded preschool programs.
- Your child can enroll without needing proof of address, income, guardianship, or other documents that are usually required.

What counts as a Temporary Living Situation?

- Staying with others because you lost your home or can't afford housing.
- Living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or campground due to lack of stable housing.
- Staying in an emergency or transitional shelter.
- Living in a car, on the street, or in another unsafe or unstable place.

When can you apply?

- Applications are open as of April 2026 for the 2026-27 school year.
- You can apply anytime during the year, but we recommend you apply early and mention your temporary housing situation for priority placement.

When will you get a decision?

- After applying, you'll get an email letting you know where your child has been placed.

Is transportation help available for students in temporary living situations?

- If your child is attending a CPS preschool, they have a right to free transportation.
- If your child is attending a community-based preschool, ask the program what transportation options are available.

What if your child is undocumented?

- Your or your child's immigration status does not matter for their school enrollment, and the school can't ask about your child's immigration status.

Who can enroll in preschool?

- For CPS preschool programs, your child must be 4 years old by September 1, 2026 to enroll for the 2026-27 school year.
- For community-based programs, there are options for children from infants to 5 years old.

How do you apply?

- Online at www.cps.edu/ChicagoEarlyLearning/how-to-apply
- By phone at (312) 229-1690 (Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)



What to do after your child receives a spot?

- 4 ways to accept or decline your placement offer:
- Online by logging into your account at ChicagoEarlyLearning.org
 - Call the Family Support Hotline at 312-229-1690
 - Call the school where your child was offered a seat
 - Visit the school in-person

NEED HELP?

If you have questions about the application, contact:
Alyssa Phillips at the
Law Project of the Chicago Coalition to end Homelessness

(872) 588-6800 aphillips@chicagohomeless.org

