



**City of Cambridge
DHSP Childcare and Family Support
Preschool Lottery
Frequently Asked Questions**

Who is eligible to enter the DHSP Preschool Lottery?

Cambridge residents with age-eligible children can enter the DHSP Preschool Lottery. For the May 2021 lottery for enrollment in the 2021-2022 school year, children with a date of birth between April 1, 2017 -- December 1, 2018 are considered age-eligible.

How do I enter the DHSP Preschool Lottery?

Lottery applications are accepted in May 2021 for the school year beginning in September 2021. Your child is considered age-eligible for preschool enrollment when they are between the ages of 2 years 9 months – 4 years 5 months. **For example, to enter the lottery in May 2021 (for enrollment in the 2021-2022 school year), your child’s date of birth needs to be between April 1, 2017 – December 1, 2018.**

In order for your lottery application to be considered complete, you must submit the following documents:

- **DHSP Preschool Lottery Application**
- **Proof of Income and Family Size:** Tax return and 4 consecutive pay stubs (or last 30 days) or current award letters for any benefits you are receiving (TANF, SSI, SNAP, WIC, etc.)
- **Proof of Child’s Age:** Child’s birth certificate or child’s passport
- **Proof of Address:** Lease, mortgage, letter from housing provider, utility bill dated within the last 2 months, or Doubling Up Form

Where can I apply for the DHSP Preschool Lottery?

DHSP Preschool Lottery Applications are available to complete online at www.cambridgema.gov/presschoollottery.

Print applications and in-person assistance are available upon request. If needed, please contact dhsppreschools@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-6254.

How do I increase my odds of getting a seat in a DHSP Preschool?

The more programs you select the better your chances are for getting a seat. If there are any programs that you wouldn’t be able to send your child to because of hours or location, please

do not select them. If you are selected for a seat in a program that you are not able to send your child to, you forfeit your seat and are waitlisted for the other programs you selected.

When will I find out if my child has a seat in a DHSP Preschool?

You will find out by July following the lottery.

If I am offered a seat in a DHSP Preschool, do I need to confirm that I want to enroll my child in the program?

Yes. All families who are offered a seat will be asked to accept or decline the seat by July 23, 2021. If we do not hear from a family by July 23rd, we will offer the seat to another child on the waitlist

Is there sibling preference in the DHSP Preschool Lottery?

Siblings of children currently enrolled in one of our Preschool programs at the time of the lottery are prioritized, but are not guaranteed a seat.

Can I enter my child in the DHSP Preschool Lottery if I am a City of Cambridge or Cambridge Public Schools employee, but not a Cambridge resident?

As always, Cambridge residents are our top priority. For the May 2021 lottery for enrollment for the 2021 – 2022 school year, City of Cambridge and Cambridge Public Schools employees who are not Cambridge residents will be able to enter the lottery.

We will reevaluate the ability of City of Cambridge and Cambridge Public Schools employees who are not Cambridge residents each year prior to the lottery. In place of the Proof of Address documentation, City of Cambridge and Cambridge Public Schools employees who are not Cambridge residents are required to submit proof of employment.

What do I do if I am waitlisted from the DHSP Lottery?

As seats become available, we will contact families from the waitlist to offer the open seat. The waitlist will remain in place until we start accepting applications for the next lottery (October 2021). In October 2021, the waitlist expires and families with children that are still age-eligible are welcomed to enter the lottery again for the next year's enrollment.

If you need help finding an alternative program, there are the following resources for finding preschools:

- Find It Cambridge: finditcambridge.org or 617-652-5232
- Birth to 3rd Partnership: cpsd.us/departments/b3 or 617-349-6554
- Department of Early Education and Care: eeclead.force.com/EEC_ChildCareSearch
- Center for Families: 617-349-6385

How much does it cost to attend a DHSP Preschool?

The DHSP Preschool tuition rates are on a sliding scale based on income. The scale is released each year with the DHSP Preschool Lottery materials.

In the Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP), we strive to make our programs accessible to all Cambridge families. We accept vouchers and we also offer significant tuition assistance for families that qualify. The amount of tuition assistance a family receives is based on gross family income, household size, and personal hardship.

For the 2021 – 2022 school year our tuition rates are:

Gross Family Income	Approximate Tuition Rate Per Day*	Tuition Rate Per Month
\$214,201 – above	\$82.38*	\$1,785.00
\$160,651- \$214,200	\$65.91*	\$1,428.00
\$128,521 - \$165,650	\$49.43*	\$1,071.00
\$107,101 – \$128,520	\$39.54*	\$856.80
\$0 - \$107,100	The base daily rate for tuition is \$39.54. All families with a Gross Family Income between \$0 - \$107,100 will qualify for some tuition assistance. The amount of the tuition assistance will be based on gross family income, household size, and personal hardship. Please contact us for more information on individual scholarship rates.	

*Tuition is charged based on the monthly rate. The daily rate is calculated based on having an average of 22 billable days in a month.

How do I apply for a scholarship?

You do not need to fill out any additional paperwork! We use the documents you submit to enter the lottery to calculate tuition rates, including tuition assistance.

If I would be paying the top rate, do I need to submit proof of income and family size?

If your income falls in the top range, you do not have to prove income or family size. You do still need to prove your child's age and address.

What are the hours of operation of the DHSP Preschools?

All of the DHSP Preschools run 12 months a year and 5 days a week (Monday – Friday). The Haggerty, Kennedy/Longfellow, M.L. King and Windsor Preschools run from 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. The King Open, Morse, and Peabody Preschools run from 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Are there any part time seats in the DHSP Preschools?

We do not offer part time seats in any of our programs. All seats are for 5 days a week and 12 months a year.

What COVID-19 precautions are the DHSP Preschools currently taking?

We are following the State of Massachusetts' mandatory public health guidance for preschool operation, including cleaning procedures, mask wearing, social distancing, and COVID-19 testing. Our top priority is the health and safety of our children, families, and staff. Therefore, we work closely with the Cambridge Public Health Department to implement and follow COVID-19 protocols and make decisions for our programs.