



**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 October 2022 lottery for enrollment in the 2023-2024 school year, children with a date of birth between April 1, 2019 - December 5, 2020 are considered age-eligible.

How do I enter the DHSP Preschool Lottery?

Lottery applications are accepted in October 2022 for the school year beginning in September 2023. 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 October 2022 (for enrollment in the 2023-2024 school year), your child's date of birth needs to be between April 1, 2019 – December 5, 2020.**

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, cable bill dated within the last 2 months, car registration, or Doubling Up Form

Where can I apply for the DHSP Preschool Lottery?

During the month of October, the DHSP Preschool Lottery application can be found at www.cambridgema.gov/presschoollottery

In-person assistance is available upon request. If needed, please contact dhsppreschools@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-6254.

How is the DHSP Preschool Lottery run?

In each of our Preschool classrooms, we reserve about half of the seats for priority families. We define priority families as families who are at or below 65% of the U.S. Dept. of Housing and

Urban Development Area Median Income (HUD AMI). ([View the 2022 HUD AMI Income Chart](#))

As we receive lottery applications and after the application process closes, we will review applications for completeness and priority status and follow up with families as necessary. During this time, we will also determine how many open priority and general seats we will have in each classroom for lottery placements.

Once we have our complete lottery pool and know the number of open seats we will have for the following school year, we run the lottery.

First, we run a lottery for our priority seats for families that meet those criteria by using a random number generator. As each family comes up, we look at their first choice and assign them to that classroom if there is an open seat. If there isn't an open seat in their first choice, we then look at their second choice and so on and so forth. If there isn't a seat available in any of their selected programs, they are added to the priority waiting pool.

After the priority lottery, we focus on applicants who have siblings currently enrolled in a DHSP Preschool classroom. Siblings are placed if there is an open seat in their selected classroom.

Next, we run a lottery for our general seats for families that haven't been placed yet by using a random number generator. As each family comes up, we look at their first choice and assign them to that classroom if there is an open seat. If there isn't an open seat in their first choice, we then look at their second choice and so on and so forth. If there isn't a seat available in any of their selected programs, they are added to the general waiting pool.

After we run the lottery, we confirm the class lists that we have with the Preschool Directors to make sure there haven't been any errors that would lead to overenrolling a classroom. Once we are able to confirm the lists, we notify families of the lottery results through Viewpoint, the online platform families use to apply to the Preschool Lottery. If offered a seat, families will be notified of the Preschool location, contact information for the Preschool for site-based questions and/or to schedule a tour, and their tuition rate.

As we learn of declined seats, we pull from our waiting pool and notify families through Viewpoint if there is a change in their status.

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 any program that you chose and you decline that seat, you forfeit your place in the lottery. You cannot request a transfer to another program.

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

You will find out in December 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 January 31, 2023. If we do not hear from a family by January 31st, 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 October 2022 lottery for enrollment for the 2023 – 2024 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 added to the waiting pool for the DHSP Lottery?

As seats become available, we will contact families from the waiting pool to offer the open seat. The waiting pool will remain in place until we start accepting applications for the next lottery (October 2023). In October 2023, the waiting pool 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 617-686-2998
- 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 2023 – 2024 school year our tuition rates are:

Gross Family Income	Approximate Tuition Rate Per Day**	Tuition Rate Per Month
\$252,401 – above	\$84.94	\$1,840.42
\$189,301 - \$252,400	\$67.95	\$1,472.33
\$151,441 - \$189,300*	\$50.97	\$1,104.25
\$126,201 – \$151,440*	\$40.77	\$883.40
\$0 - \$126,200*	*The state base daily rate for tuition is \$63.22. All families with a gross family income between \$0 - \$189,300 are subsidized by the City of Cambridge to pay less than the state daily rate. Families with a gross family income between \$0 - \$126,200 will qualify for additional 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?

The specific precautions and procedures we implement change as the science evolves around preventing the spread of COVID-19. 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. At this time, masks are optional in our programs. As the guidance changes from Cambridge Public Health, Cambridge Public Schools, and/or the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) changes, we will also shift our guidance.