



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTYWIDE PRE-KINDERGARTEN/HEAD START ONLINE APPLICATION

LEONARDTOWN, MD – St. Mary's County Public Schools is pleased to announce that beginning May 3, 2021, an online application process for Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start will be open to determine eligibility for school year 2021-2022. All families are welcome to apply and have their application and required documents screened for eligibility. The goal of the Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start program is to provide initial learning experiences to help children develop basic skills and concepts necessary for successful school performance.

The online process uses Cognito Forms that allow parents/guardians to complete the application and upload critical documents necessary to apply. Any family who is not able to access the online application should contact their home school to receive a paper application. The paper application is also available in Spanish.

Acceptance in a Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start program is based on age, income, and school eligibility. A child must be three-years-old or four-years-old on or before September 1, 2021. Proof of income must be provided. Proof of income documentation includes a 2020 W-2 form or copies of the **LAST** 3 consecutive pay stubs. Families must also disclose any supplemental income such as:

- a) temporary cash assistance
- b) child support
- c) SSA/SSI

School eligibility and placement for Pre-Kindergarten will follow regulations in accordance with COMAR (13a.06.02.03) and Head Start will follow Health and Human Services (1302.12i). Children will be admitted to the program based on income eligibility first. If vacancies remain, those will be filled using locally determined at-risk criteria and served in rank order. A limited number of Pre-Kindergarten 3 spaces are available in several Title I schools.

The required documentation includes the 2021-2022 common application, proof of birth, proof of residency, and income verification. When a child is accepted into a Pre-Kindergarten or Head Start program, parents/guardians will: complete the school registration paperwork and home language survey; provide the home school with a photo identification of the parent/guardian;

provide the child's social security number, immunization, and a medical physical examination records. A list of all required documents, acceptable proof of residency verification and guidance for applying to Pre-Kindergarten is available on the St. Mary's County Public Schools website at www.smcps.org.

The name of the child's home school is required on the application. To locate your home school zone, please use the School Locator or visit the school system website at www.smcps.org and go to: Offices, Transportation, Bus Stop, and School Locator.

New this year: Pre-Kindergarten students from Evergreen Elementary School will attend Town Creek Elementary. The Town Creek Elementary Pre-Kindergarten students will remain at their home school. Transportation will be provided for these students.

Parents/guardians of eligible children will be notified of their placement in a Pre-Kindergarten or Head Start early childhood program starting June 1, 2021. As vacancies are determined at each school, parents/guardians of children on the waitlist for their home school will be notified throughout the summer.