



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTYWIDE PRE-KINDERGARTEN/HEAD START ONLINE COMMON APPLICATION

LEONARDTOWN, MD – St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) will open the 2022–2023 online Common Application for Pre-Kindergarten and Head Start on Wednesday, **April 20, 2022**. The Pre-Kindergarten programs provide high-quality early learning experiences to help children develop basic skills and concepts necessary for success in kindergarten. Families of age-appropriate children in St. Mary's County may submit an online application. All applications and required documents will be screened centrally by the Early Childhood Education Team in the Department of Equity, Engagement, and Early Access.

The online process uses Cognito Forms that allow parents/guardians to complete the application and upload required documents. 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. Acceptable required documents for screening may include:

- **Proof of Birth** (Birth Certificate, valid and un-expired Passport/Visa, Physician Certificate, Baptismal/Church Certificate, Birth Registration)
- **Proof of Residency** (Deed, Mortgage Statement, Rental Agreement/Lease, Building Contract, Current Property Tax Bill, Current Utility Bill, Patuxent River Naval Base housing form NOW-NATC-1110-1/15)
- **Proof of Income Verification** (2021 W2, 1040, Schedule C/1998, 3 consecutive recent paystubs, Child Support, SNAP Benefits Letter, TCA, SSA, SSI)

A list of all required documents and guidance for applying to Pre-Kindergarten are currently available on the SMCPS website at www.smcps.org.

Acceptance in a Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start program is based on age, income, risk factors and eligibility. **A child must be three-years-old or four-years-old on or before September 1, 2022.** Proof of income **must** be provided. Proof of income verification includes a 2021 W-2 form or copies of the **LAST** 3 consecutive pay stubs. Families **must** also disclose any supplemental income such as temporary cash assistance (TCA), child support, Supplemental Security Income (SSA), or Social Security Insurance (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 supported by the Judy Center Early Learning Hub.

New this Spring: Private Providers may apply for Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) grants that will broaden availability and expand access to high-quality full day Pre-Kindergarten. When MSDE publishes the list of private providers with full day Pre-Kindergarten programs, this list will also be published on the SMCPS website. More information about the Pre-Kindergarten and Head Start Programs is available at www.smcps.org or questions may be directed to Mrs. Charlottis Woodley at cmwoodley@smcps.org or (301) 475-5511, x 32136.