



## **School Enrollment and Transfers: Know Your Rights**

### **How do I get my child into school?**

You have to apply to get your child into school. Plan on starting the application in the fall or winter before your child would start at the new school. ***The application deadline for Pre-K is March 4. For elementary school, the deadline is January 15. For middle and high school, the deadline is December 1.***

You will need to apply to different schools when your child moves to a new school level—elementary to middle school, or middle school to high school. You also have to fill out a new application when your child moves from Pre-K to kindergarten.

Every child in New York City can attend a Pre-K program at 4 years of age. Your child is guaranteed a spot in a NYC Pre-K program. However, there is no guarantee your child will be enrolled in the specific program you want.

When you apply, list your top school choices. You will receive priority for your zoned schools. Make sure you think carefully when completing this list. Almost all students are placed at a school that they list.

### **What happens after I apply?**

After you send in your application, no extra steps are needed for non-specialized schools. Specialized middle and high schools might require more, such as an interview or audition. The school district will mail out an “offer” or “match” letter. This letter will tell you your child’s school. If you are happy with the school, you can register. If your child is starting grades Pre-K-8, you register at the school. If your child is enrolling in high school, you register at a Family Welcome Center.

### **What do I need at registration?**

If you can, you should bring your child when you register. You will also need the following documents:

- an official document proving your child’s age (like a passport or birth certificate)
- your offer or match letter
- your child’s immunization records
- any report cards or transcripts
- any IEPs or 504 Plans
- two proofs of address

A list of what can be used as proof of address can be found at <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/NewStudents/default.htm>. After you register, the school will tell you the next steps to prepare for school.

### What if I don't like the school?

If you don't like the school, you can appeal. Your appeal will be strongest if you can give a specific reason why the school is not right for your child. This can be anything from a safety concern to an extremely long commute. If they agree, the Department of Education (DOE) will give you a new assignment.

### What if my child leaves the city and then comes back?

If your child was enrolled in a New York City public school, left to enroll elsewhere, and then wishes to return, you may be able to skip the application process. Your child can be gone only for less than a year. Your child can then return to the previous school, if it has space. The school must still be appropriate for your child. If it is not, the Office of Student Enrollment will help you find a new school.

If your child was gone for more than a year, you will need to re-apply.

### What is a transfer and how do I request one?

A transfer is leaving the school where your child is enrolled and changing to another. School transfers can be hard to get. They are usually given only if there is a specific problem with the school. To request a transfer, contact the school's guidance counselor. You will need to schedule a meeting with school officials. At the meeting, you should describe why you need the transfer. You should ask the school to gather the necessary documents and give you copies. Each type of transfer has specific requirements.

***For a full list, see the table on the next page.***

When everything is ready, the school will submit the transfer packet. If you have questions or want to check the status, contact your school's guidance office and your Family Welcome Center.

Type of transfer	What grade levels are eligible?	How do I qualify?	What paperwork do I need?	What schools can I transfer to?
<b>Childcare Hardship</b>	Kindergarten through fifth grade	Show that the school's distance from your workplace or childcare location is causing you hardship.	Documents from your employer or childcare provider showing the distance.	A school that is closer to your employment or childcare location.
<b>Sibling</b>	Kindergarten through fifth grade	Show that you have multiple children living in the same home that are attending different schools.	Documents showing that the children at different schools are living in the same home.	A school that one of your children is already attending.
<b>Medical</b>	Any grade	Show that your child has a severe medical need that cannot be addressed by the current school.	A note from a doctor, on letterhead, that explains the condition and recommends a transfer.	A school that can better meet your child's medical needs.
<b>Safety</b>	Any grade	Show that your child's school poses a threat to the child's safety.	If there has been an incident, the school must conduct a full investigation and submit the documents.	A school that is safer for your child.

<b>Travel Hardship</b>	Ninth through twelfth grade	Show that traveling to and from school takes over an hour and fifteen minutes, or at least three changes on public transportation.	Documents showing how long the trip takes from school to the home.	A school that is a shorter travel distance from your home.
<b>Guidance</b>	Any grade	Show that your child is not progressing, academically or socially.	The Office of Student Enrollment may contact the school's principal for documents.	A school that provides a better chance for your child to progress.
<b>Public School Choice</b> (also called No Child Left Behind transfers)	Any grade	Your child's school must be among the lowest in statewide performance, or the DOE must be closing it.	Eligibility is determined by federal law. If you qualify, you will receive an application by mail.	You will be given an application to fill out for a new placement.

### How does this change if my child has special needs?

If your child has special needs, you will need to get an Individualized Education Program (IEP). For more information about the IEP process, see MFY's *Individualized Education Program* fact sheet. After you get the IEP, the DOE will send you a Final Notice of Recommendation (FNR). The FNR will assign a school for your child. After you get the school assignment, you should visit and make sure it is appropriate. The school must be able to provide your child's IEP services. If it is, you can accept the assignment and your child can start school.

If you need to, you can look for a different school placement. You do this by sending a letter to the DOE. The letter should say why you are rejecting the school. If the DOE agrees with you, they will give you a new assignment. If the DOE disagrees, you may need to seek a hearing to make them provide a new assignment. You should speak with a lawyer.

### Where do I go for my information?

Visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/schoolsearch/> to find your zoned schools. You can go to <http://schools.nyc.gov/choicesenrollment/default.htm> to find your child's school level and location. If you don't have internet access, your Family Welcome Center can answer your questions. A list of Family Welcome Centers can be found at the end of this fact sheet.

### Family Welcome Centers

#### Bronx

1 Fordham Plaza, 7th Floor  
Bronx, NY 10458  
Districts Served: 7, 9, 10

1230 Zerega Avenue, Room 24  
Bronx, NY 10462  
Districts Served: 8, 11, 12

**Brooklyn**

1780 Ocean Avenue, 3rd Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11230  
Districts Served: 17, 18, 22

415 89th Street, 5th Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11209  
Districts Served: 20, 21

1665 St. Marks Avenue, Room 116  
Brooklyn, NY 11233  
Districts Served: 19, 23, 32

29 Fort Greene Place (BS12)  
Brooklyn, NY 11217  
Districts Served: 13, 14, 15, 16

**Manhattan**

333 Seventh Avenue, 12th Floor, Room 1211  
New York, NY 10001  
Districts Served: 1, 2, 4

388 West 125th Street, 7th Floor, Room 713  
New York, NY 10027  
Districts Served: 3, 5, 6

**Queens**

28-11 Queens Plaza North, 3rd Floor  
Long Island City, NY 11101  
Districts Served: 24, 30

30-48 Linden Place, 2nd Floor  
Flushing, NY 11354  
Districts Served: 25, 26

90-27 Sutphin Boulevard, 1st Floor  
Jamaica, NY 11435  
Districts Served: 27, 28, 29

**Staten Island**

715 Ocean Terrace, Building A  
Staten Island, NY 10301  
District Served: 31

**DISCLAIMER: This fact sheet gives general information  
for NYC residents; it is NOT legal advice.**