

Road to Kindergarten



Presented by
The Office of Early Childhood Programs
Howard County Public School System

This event is brought to you by the
Howard County
Transition to Kindergarten Workgroup

- Community Action Council / Head Start
- Early Childhood Education consultants
- Howard County Public Library System
- Howard County Office of Children & Families
- HCPSS Early Childhood Programs
- HCPSS Early Childhood Special Education
- HCPSS Early Childhood Teachers
- Howard County Family Child Care Association
- The Judy Center at Cradlerock
- Representatives from community-based, private child care/preschool programs

Topics



- School Readiness
- HCPSS Kindergarten Program
- Registration/Transition Information

Our workgroup believes...



**All families want
what is best for their
children.**

As a child's first teacher, parents and families play a significant role in education, beginning at birth and beyond.

Going to
kindergarten is a
developmental
milestone.

**The transition to
kindergarten is not a
one-time event.**

**Not all children have
the same readiness
for kindergarten.**

**Schools must be
ready for children
and families.**

Kindergarten is an
important step
towards success in
college, career, and
life upon graduation
from high school.

Welcome to the Class of 2038

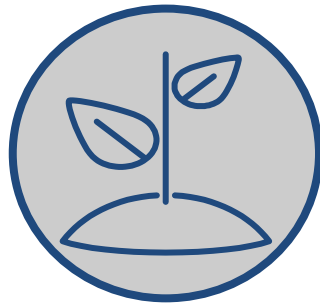
HCPSS is here to support your family during your child's educational journey.

The following is county-level information that is relevant for all 42 elementary schools.

Once you register, you'll learn specific information about your child's school and eventually, their teacher.



What does “Ready for School” Mean?



“Ready for School” means...

Real-life experience

Early vocabulary and literacy exposure

Areas of competence and strengths

Developmentally appropriate activities

Young, curious minds

“Ready for School” means...

Real-life experience

- ▣ Take advantage of places in the area to visit!
 - *The Howard County Library, hiking trails, zoos, farmer’s markets, aquarium, and more.*
- ▣ These experiences will give your child something to draw upon and relate to during lessons in kindergarten and make the learning more meaningful.
- ▣ Children have plenty of opportunity to share “background knowledge” - that is, what they already know or have experienced related to a topic.
- ▣ Sparks curiosity for new learning and interests

“Ready for School” means...

Early vocabulary and literacy exposure

- ▣ Back and forth conversation, combined with quality words, supports brain development and helps sets the stage for readiness.
- ▣ Use authentic vocabulary related to those real-life experiences and places in the community.
- ▣ Some skills related to kindergarten readiness include being able to identify many letters, produce common consonant sounds, and distinguishing sounds at the beginning of words.
- ▣ You can support these skills through everyday activities such as grocery shopping, starting with the grocery list. Say the word “apple” slowly. What’s the first sound you hear? Help your child write the letter A. When you get to the store, talk about varieties of apples, such as golden delicious. Discuss what golden and delicious mean. Can you think of or find other things that are golden or delicious? What other words mean the same thing?

“Ready for School” means...

Early vocabulary and literacy exposure

- ▣ Your lap is the best app! Read real books and give your child a chance to turn the pages, predict what will happen, discuss the story, etc. Point out simple words in the text. Before reading, make predictions about the story. After reading, discuss what happened or retell the story. Select books and subject-matter of high interest to your child.
- ▣ In kindergarten, children listen to stories that take about 15-20 minutes. Reading books with your child is a great way to also help them build stamina and discuss stories.

“Ready for School” means...

Areas of competence and strengths

- ▣ There is a developmental continuum across different domains, including Language & Literacy, Mathematics, Social Foundations, Fine and Gross Motor Skills, etc.
- ▣ Remember there will be areas of strength and areas of need or emerging skills, and those are unique to every child. Teachers use this approach to support learning and move each child forward along their own unique developmental path.
- ▣ Help your child develop additional readiness skills by supporting knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are still emerging and continuing to nurture areas of strength.

“Ready for School” means...

Developmentally appropriate activities

- ▣ Workbooks and flashcards are not needed to support readiness. Instead, capitalize on your child’s interest and their everyday world.
- ▣ Some skills related to kindergarten readiness include being able to count to 20 or recognize numbers 1-10.
- ▣ Support these skills through fun activities that engage multiple senses.
 - For example, take 10 tiny steps and practice saying the numbers in a tiny voice. Then take 10 big steps and say the numbers in a big voice. Work your way up to 20!
 - Another idea is to play Order, Order. Write numbers 1-3 on cards and mix them up. Line up on the other side of the room and have your child race to get the cards and put them in order. Work your way up to 10!

“Ready for School” means...

Young, curious minds

- ▣ It's ok to ask questions!
- ▣ Demonstrate asking questions about things you are curious about. Say things like, “I wonder...”. Read books about the things you wonder, visit related places, practice using new words you learn, etc.

“Ready for School” means...

Children don't have to come to school knowing everything. It means they have most of the foundational skills, knowledge, and behaviors that help them access new learning.

Support Readiness

Find more ideas and resources on our website!

- [Prekindergarten Family & Community Resources](#)
- [Kindergarten Family & Community Resources](#)
- [Early Childhood Beginnings](#)



Family and Community Resources

These resources have been created to provide parents with support in English / Language Arts instruction.

- Pre-Kindergarten
- Kindergarten
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5

Curriculum for Grades K–12

Curriculum for Grades K–12

Determining Readiness

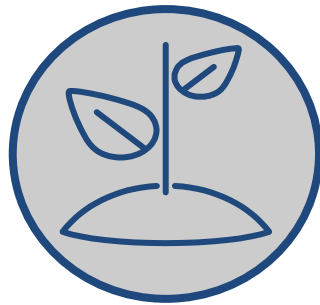
Developmentally-Appropriate Assessment Measures

- ▣ Supports targeted, differentiated instruction
- ▣ Examples include observation, brief performance tasks, etc.
- ▣ [Kindergarten Readiness Assessment](#)
- ▣ [Universal Screening](#)



HCPSS

Kindergarten Program



Our Vision

The Office of Early Childhood Programs strives to ensure that instruction at the kindergarten level:

- ▣ prepares students for success as lifelong learners by developing the academic, social and emotional knowledge, strategies, and skills needed to participate responsibly in a diverse and changing world;
- ▣ utilizes a child-centered approach to ensure that each child develops a love of learning;
- ▣ nurtures a positive school experience where all students contribute as members of the classroom community; and,
- ▣ supports an individualized approach so each student successfully acquires, demonstrates, and applies the skills and knowledge of the curriculum.





Every day in kindergarten...

- ▣ Developmentally Appropriate Practices
- ▣ Expressive Language Opportunities
- ▣ Social / Emotional / Behavioral Skill Development
- ▣ Interdisciplinary Instruction



Developmentally Appropriate Practices

- ▣ Hands-on learning
- ▣ Mix of learning preferences: auditory, kinesthetic, visual, etc.
- ▣ Manipulatives (magnetic letters, dice, counters, etc.)
- ▣ Learning occurs in age-appropriate chunks of time.



Expressive Language Opportunities

- ▣ Ability to communicate using language
 - Learning to ask for help
 - Asking questions
 - Back and forth conversation
 - Staying on topic in a conversation
 - Expressing an opinion
 - Etc.



Social Emotional Skill Development

- ▣ Skills for life
 - Turn-taking
 - Working memory
 - Ability to control attention
 - Putting off favorite activities to prioritize important tasks
 - Friendship skills
 - Problem solving
 - And more!



Interdisciplinary Instruction

- ▣ Apply subjects and learning across the day
 - Listen to a read aloud about counting in math
 - Write an alphabet book about healthy habits in health
 - Use the Engineering Design Process to create structures in block center during play time
 - Etc.

A photograph of a classroom scene. A female teacher with blonde hair and glasses is smiling and looking towards a young boy with brown hair. The boy is also smiling and looking down at something in his hands. In the foreground, the back of a child's head with long blonde hair is visible. A jar of 'Ten-Frame Activity' blocks is on a table. The background shows other students and classroom shelves.

What Might a Day in Kindergarten Look Like?

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Arrival / Morning Work

Opening / Morning Meeting or Circle

Language Arts

Science / Social Studies / Health

Recess & Lunch

Quiet Time / Take Ten

Mathematics

Related Arts

Student-Selected Activities

A photograph of two young children in a classroom. In the foreground, a child with dark hair is seen from the back, sitting on a green chair. In the background, another child with blonde hair tied in pigtails is also sitting on a green chair, with one arm raised towards a window. The text "Arrival / Morning Work" is overlaid in the center in a large, bold, black serif font.

Arrival / Morning Work



Arrival / Morning Work

- ▣ Children arrive by car, bus, or as a walker
- ▣ Enter with other students
- ▣ Learn to participate in arrival routines (e.g., unpack, gather materials) with independence



Opening / Morning Meeting



Opening / Morning Meeting

- ▣ Build classroom community
- ▣ Talk about the day to come
- ▣ Share stories, songs, updates, etc.

A young girl with dark hair and bangs, wearing a bright pink zip-up hoodie, is sitting at a wooden desk in a classroom. She is smiling at the camera while playing with colorful letter and number blocks on a grey tray. The blocks are in various colors like yellow, green, orange, blue, and purple. In the background, other children are visible, including a boy in a white shirt with blue stars. There are blue storage bins and an American flag in the background. The text "Language Arts" is overlaid in a large, black, serif font across the middle of the image.

Language Arts



Language Arts

- ▣ Daily
- ▣ Mix of whole group (lessons with the entire class together), small group, partner, and independent opportunities
- ▣ Children work in small groups on lessons targeted to meet their individual learning needs.
- ▣ Reading, writing, foundational skills, and more!



Science / Social Studies / Health

Science Social Studies Health

- ▣ 30-45 minutes, depending on the unit
- ▣ Four units per subject
- ▣ Specific unit of study for each subject area.
- ▣ Learn more at the [Kindergarten Family & Community Resources](#) site.



A young boy with dark hair and a black t-shirt is smiling at the camera. He is standing in front of blue playground equipment. To his right, another child in a red shirt is partially visible. The image is framed by a white border.

Lunch & Recess



Lunch & Recess

- ▣ 30 minutes each
- ▣ Lunch available at school or bring from home
- ▣ Staff members support children with making choices, opening containers, purchasing, etc.
- ▣ Go outside for recess as much as possible, so send children to school in weather-appropriate clothing
- ▣ Practice opening containers, buttoning jackets, and other self-care skills with your child.



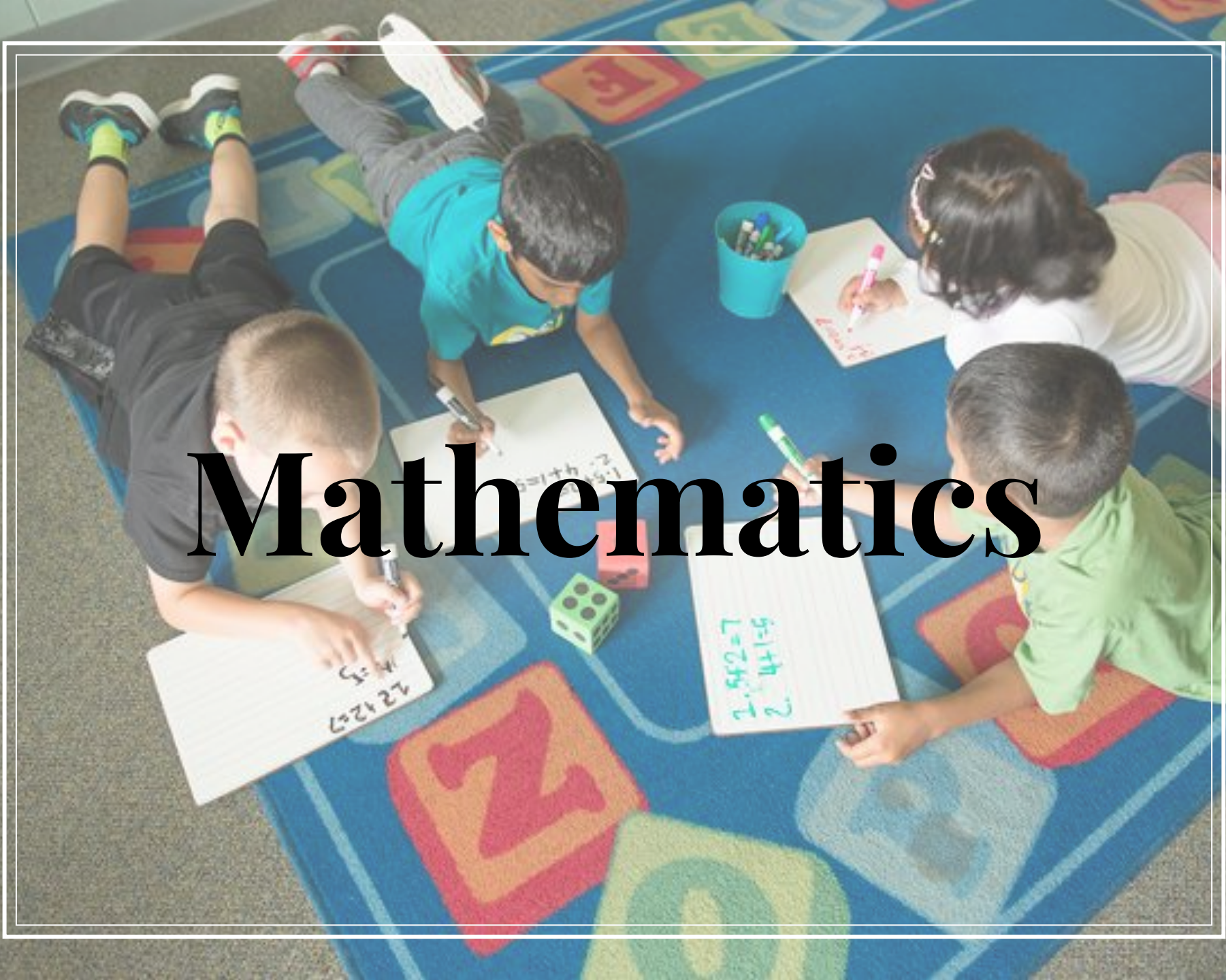
Quiet Time / Take Ten



Quiet Time / Take Ten

- ▣ Quiet Time is not nap, but a chance to calm after high energy moments.
 - *It is important for children to have down time and an opportunity to rest their brains.*
- ▣ Take Ten is movement, usually set to music. Includes dancing, songs, etc.

Mathematics





Mathematics

- ▣ Daily
- ▣ Whole group (lessons with the entire class together), small group, partners, and independent opportunities
- ▣ Children work in small groups on lessons targeted to meet their individual learning needs.
- ▣ Lots of games and hands-on materials like dice, dominoes, animal-shaped counters, etc.

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a white shirt, is focused on painting a white paper boat. He is using a blue paintbrush to apply blue paint to the side of the boat. The background is a warm, yellowish-brown wall. The text "Related Arts" is overlaid in a large, bold, black serif font on the left side of the image.

Related Arts

- ▣ Art
- ▣ Music
- ▣ Physical Education
- ▣ Library Media
- ▣ Technology



- ▣ Daily
- ▣ Range from 30-60 minutes, depending on the subject
- ▣ Go to other classrooms (Art Room, Gym, etc.),
- ▣ Have different teachers for each subject

Centers





Student-Selected Activities

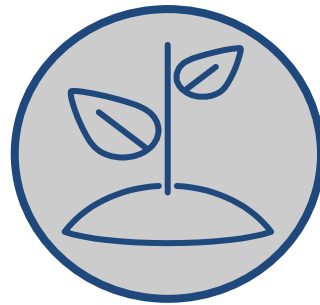
- ▣ Daily
- ▣ 30-40 minutes
- ▣ Time to play, make choices, bring learning to life
- ▣ May include blocks, painting, dramatic play, water table, science table, etc., and change throughout the year



Kindergarten Instruction = Differentiated Instruction

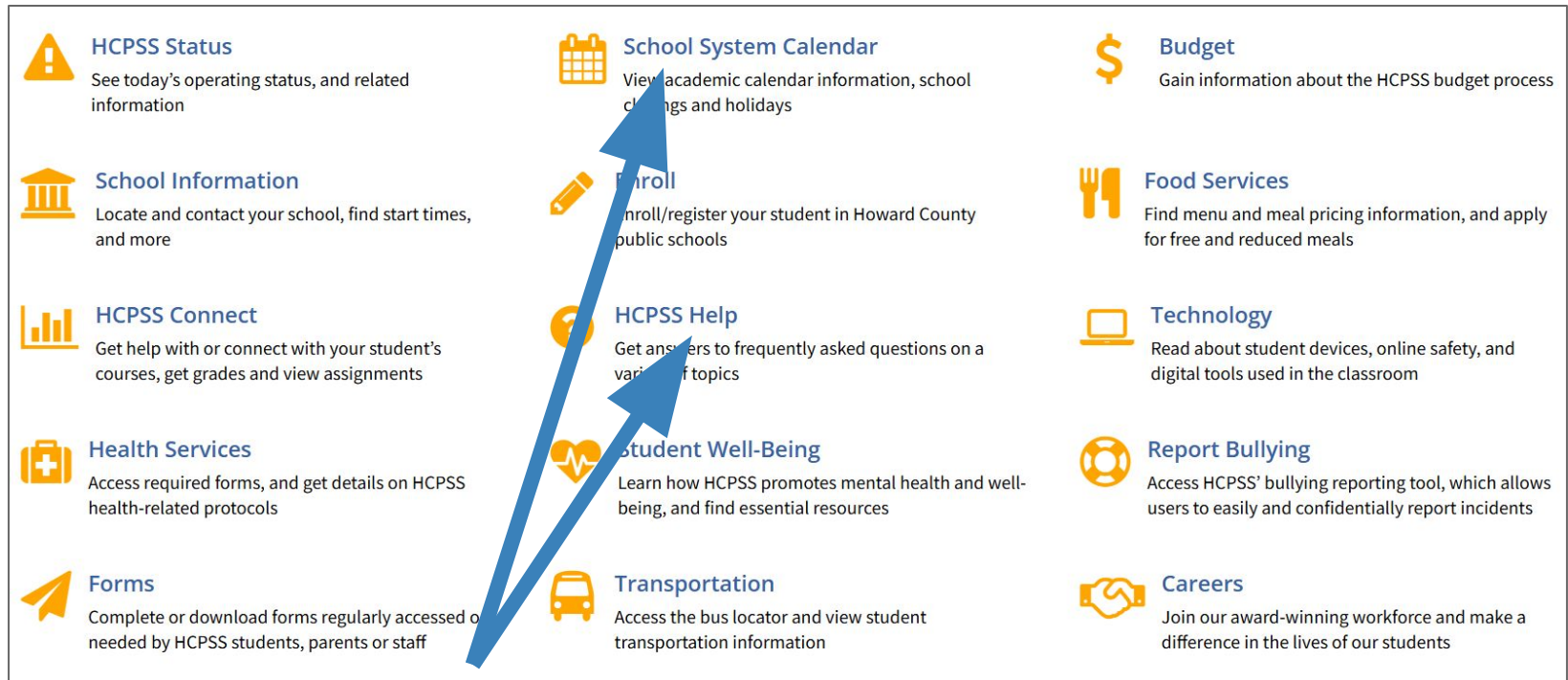
Designed to meet each child's academic needs in each subject, moving them forward through individualized instruction and activities.
















Registration/Transition Information



www.hcpss.org

Homepage



 HCPSS Status See today's operating status, and related information	 School System Calendar View academic calendar information, school closings and holidays	 Budget Gain information about the HCPSS budget process
 School Information Locate and contact your school, find start times, and more	 Enroll Enroll/register your student in Howard County public schools	 Food Services Find menu and meal pricing information, and apply for free and reduced meals
 HCPSS Connect Get help with or connect with your student's courses, get grades and view assignments	 HCPSS Help Get answers to frequently asked questions on a variety of topics	 Technology Read about student devices, online safety, and digital tools used in the classroom
 Health Services Access required forms, and get details on HCPSS health-related protocols	 Student Well-Being Learn how HCPSS promotes mental health and well-being, and find essential resources	 Report Bullying Access HCPSS' bullying reporting tool, which allows users to easily and confidentially report incidents
 Forms Complete or download forms regularly accessed or needed by HCPSS students, parents or staff	 Transportation Access the bus locator and view student transportation information	 Careers Join our award-winning workforce and make a difference in the lives of our students

- ▣ Check out the **School System Calendar** for early dismissals, closures, etc. so you can plan ahead!
- ▣ Visit **HCPSS Help** for Frequently Asked Questions

<https://www.hcpss.org/hcpss-news/>

HCPSS News Email and Text Messaging

[Sign-up \(Non-HCPSS Parents/Guardians\)](#)

[Sign-Up \(Staff Only\)](#)

[Review Account \(Non-HCPSS
Parents/Guardians & Staff Only\)](#)

[HCPSS News FAQs](#)

Not Receiving Emails/Texts?

Please contact your child's school if you are not receiving emails and/or text messages.

Parent Subscriptions

Parents/guardians of enrolled HCPSS students SHOULD NOT sign up for, or manage an HCPSS News account. All parents/guardians are automatically enrolled to receive HCPSS and school emails. Subscription information comes directly from the Family File information parents/guardians complete in the HCPSS Connect system.

Text Messages

To comply with wireless carrier requirements, parents/guardians must opt into receiving HCPSS and school text message alerts. Standard data fees and text messaging rates may apply based on your mobile plan. If you are unsure if you have already opted in, text the word "YES" to 67587 from the cell phone number on file in HCPSS Connect.

Please contact your child's school if you have questions regarding your information in HCPSS Connect.

Please note! Unsubscribing from any school or district email or text will unsubscribe a user from all messaging, including emergency notifications.

<https://www.hcpss.org/hcpss-news/>



- ▣ Parents/guardians of enrolled HCPSS students DO NOT need to sign up for, or manage an HCPSS News account.
- ▣ If your oldest/only child is starting school in the fall, you will be automatically signed up for HCPSS News messages in early August from HCPSS and the school your child will be attending.
- ▣ Subscription information comes directly from the Family File information parents/guardians complete in the HCPSS Connect system.
- ▣ Community members or any non-HCPSS parent must sign up to receive email and/or text messages from the district and/or specific schools.

FOLLOW US – WE'RE SOCIAL!

X / Twitter
@hcpss (emergency notifications only)
[Follow us on X](#)





Instagram
@hocoschools
[Follow us on Instagram](#)



Flickr
/hcpss
[Follow us on Flickr](#)



LinkedIn
/company/hcpss
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Mobile Apps
[hcpss.org/mobile-apps/](#)
[Download our free mobile apps](#)

- Follow HCPSS on various social media platforms.



School Information

Locate and contact your school, identify bus stop and times, and get attendance information.

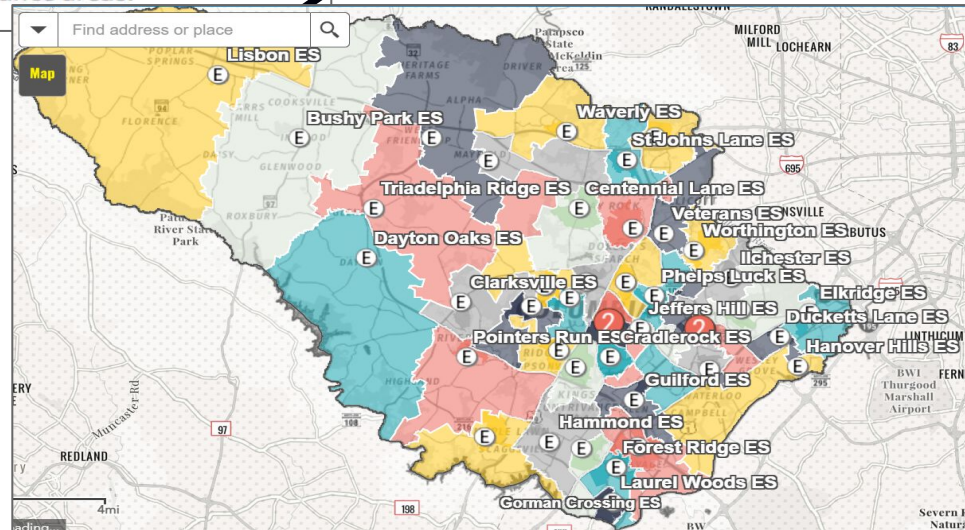
School Locator

Use our online map application to locate your address within the county, find your planning polygon number, and view adopted attendance areas.

SY 23-24 Assignments

Longfellow ES (bus)
Harpers Choice MS (bus)
Wilde Lake HS (bus)

Details about bus routes can be found using the [bus stop locator](#).



- Find your assigned school using [School Information](#) from the homepage. Look for **School Locator**.
- Children attend the school to which they are assigned.
- Bus service available if you live more than one-mile from school.

SCHOOLS

Our online school directory

SCHOOL LISTINGS AND CONTACTS

[School Directory](#)

Browse and list all HCPSS schools. Quickly access each school's phone number, building address, website, school opening and closing times, and school profiles.

[School Locator](#)

Use our online map application to locate your address within the county, find your planning polygon number, and view adopted attendance areas.

[School Transportation](#)

Find a link to our bus stop locator, and learn more about transportation safety and emergency closing information.

[Community Superintendents](#)

Browse the list of Community Superintendents and their assigned schools.

[Board Member Cluster Assignments](#)

Individual Board members are assigned to specific schools visit, attend special events, and become additional points of contact for each school community.

[School Planning](#)

Get more information about projected student enrollment, school boundary studies, attendance area adjustments, and our annual feasibility study.

- Once you use **School Locator** to find your school, use the **School Directory** to learn more.
- Access the **School Directory** from the main page using **School Information** OR from the **Schools** option in the navigation bar.

- ▣ View school profiles, find contact information, etc.
- ▣ School times are unique to each school - this is important to know so you can arrange before and after-care, if needed.



Atholton Elementary School

410-313-6853

 [Web Site](#)

6700 Seneca Drive, Columbia, MD 21046

Principal – Robin Mancotti

9:25 a.m. – 3:55 p.m.

[View School Details](#)



Bellows Spring Elementary School

410-313-5057

 [Web Site](#)

8125 Old Stockbridge Road, Ellicott City, MD 21043

Principal – Julie Schrufer

9:25 a.m. – 3:55 p.m.

[View School Details](#)



Bollman Bridge Elementary School

410-880-5920

 [Web Site](#)

8200 Savage-Guilford Road, Savage, MD 20763

Principal – Connie Fowlkes

8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

[View School Details](#)

YOUR CHILD'S DAILY ACTIVITIES**Food Services**

We serve more than 5.5 million high-quality meals per year. View menus, daily prices, and how to pay for meals.

**Transportation**

Provides safe, reliable, and efficient transportation to and from school for enrolled students living beyond a one-mile walking distance from elementary and middle schools and a one and one-half mile walking distance from high schools.

**Before and After Care**

Get the contact information for the agencies that support before and after school care for your child's school.

[Bus Stop FAQs](#) [Safety](#) [Delays](#) [Contact](#)**Our Bus Services**

Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) provides safe, reliable, and efficient transportation to and from school for enrolled students living beyond a one-mile walking distance from elementary and middle schools and a one and one-half mile walking distance from high schools.



- Find out [Transportation information](#) via **Supports** in the navigation bar.
- On the first day, it is recommended to send your child to school the way they will travel every day. Plenty of adults will help guide them and they get to experience the “newness” - and excitement, nerves, anticipation - with their classmates while learning new routines.

YOUR CHILD'S DAILY ACTIVITIES



Food Services

We serve more than 4 million high-quality meals per year. View menus, daily prices, and how to pay for meals.



Transportation

Provides safe, reliable, and efficient transportation to and from school for students living beyond a one and one-half mile distance from elementary and middle schools.



MENUS, NUTRITION & ALLERGIES

Menus

All school menus can be accessed through the LINQ Connect parent/guardian portal, on the public-facing LINQ Connect website, or in the mobile app.

Please note, the public-facing LINQ website defaults to display Atholton Elementary. Users can select their child's school by selecting the School box at the top left and choosing their school.

The LINQ Connect online menus additionally display nutritional information, allergens, dietary and religious restrictions, and more. Families with children in more than one school building can easily toggle between buildings via the same screen.

Nutritional and Allergen Concerns

All nutritional information for HCPSS meals is available via the [LINQ Connect website](#).

Students with known food allergies (shellfish, tree nuts, gluten, lactose, etc.) must have a formal notice of their allergies from a doctor and submitted to the school nurse. Students who would like to purchase food from the cafeteria can have accommodations made that are suited to their allergies.

MEAL PAYMENTS

Meal Payment

Meal payments may be made via credit card using the [LINQ Connect portal](#). On-site payments and prepayments may be made using cash or check.

Each student is assigned a unique, 6-digit cafeteria PIN, which cashiers can look up if a student forgets. This PIN allows HCPSS to receive reimbursements from the National School Lunch Program. Any meals purchased without a PIN will incur an additional charge of \$0.30 for breakfast and \$0.60 for lunch.

[To request a refund of meal balances at any time, complete this brief](#)

Unpaid Meal Charges

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing their student(s) with money for meals, or packing a meal from home. If a student forgets or does not have lunch, HCPSS practice is to ensure that no student goes hungry or is traumatized for lack of funds. A meal will be provided and a charge will be applied to the student's meal account. Meals will never be taken away when there are no funds or a negative balance in a student's meal account.

More information is provided in [Board of Education Policy 4200 Meal Charges](#).

- Find [Food Services information](#) via **Supports** in the navigation bar.
- Information includes nutrition, allergens, pricing, online payment, etc.

YOUR CHILD'S DAILY ACTIVITIES

Food Services



Transportation

[Before and After Care](#)

Get the contact information for the agencies that support before and after school care for your child's school.

Agencies That Serve Howard County Public Schools

Below is the contact information for the 2 agencies that serve Howard County public schools. The elementary and middle schools that are aligned with these programs, are listed after the agency.

Columbia Association

Before and After School Care – School Age Services

- **Howard County Recreation and Parks**
- Before and After School (for elementary children)

- Find [Before and After Care information](#) via **Supports** in the navigation bar.
- If you need before and/or after care, **sign up early** (check with agencies for specific dates) - *programs fill up quickly!*

K-12 INSTRUCTION

Career and Technical Education

Allows students to explore a variety of technology concepts from computer science to engineering, and includes advanced-level coursework to prepare students for in-demand careers.

English/Language Arts

We maintain a student-centered, integrated instructional approach to ensure that learners become thinking, problem-solving users of language.

Fine Arts

The arts are an essential part of every child's learning and cognitive development, sharpening analytical skills, encouraging abstract associations, innovative thinking, and creative problem solving.

Gifted & Talented

The G/T Program seeks to provide advanced-level learning programs and activities for advanced learners.

Family and Community Resources

These resources have been created to provide parents with support in English / Language Arts instruction.

- [Pre-Kindergarten](#)
- [Kindergarten](#)
- [Grade 1](#)
- [Grade 2](#)
- [Grade 3](#)
- [Grade 4](#)
- [Grade 5](#)
- [Parent Page for Secondary English](#)

[Learn more about the Secondary English Curriculum](#)

Mathematics

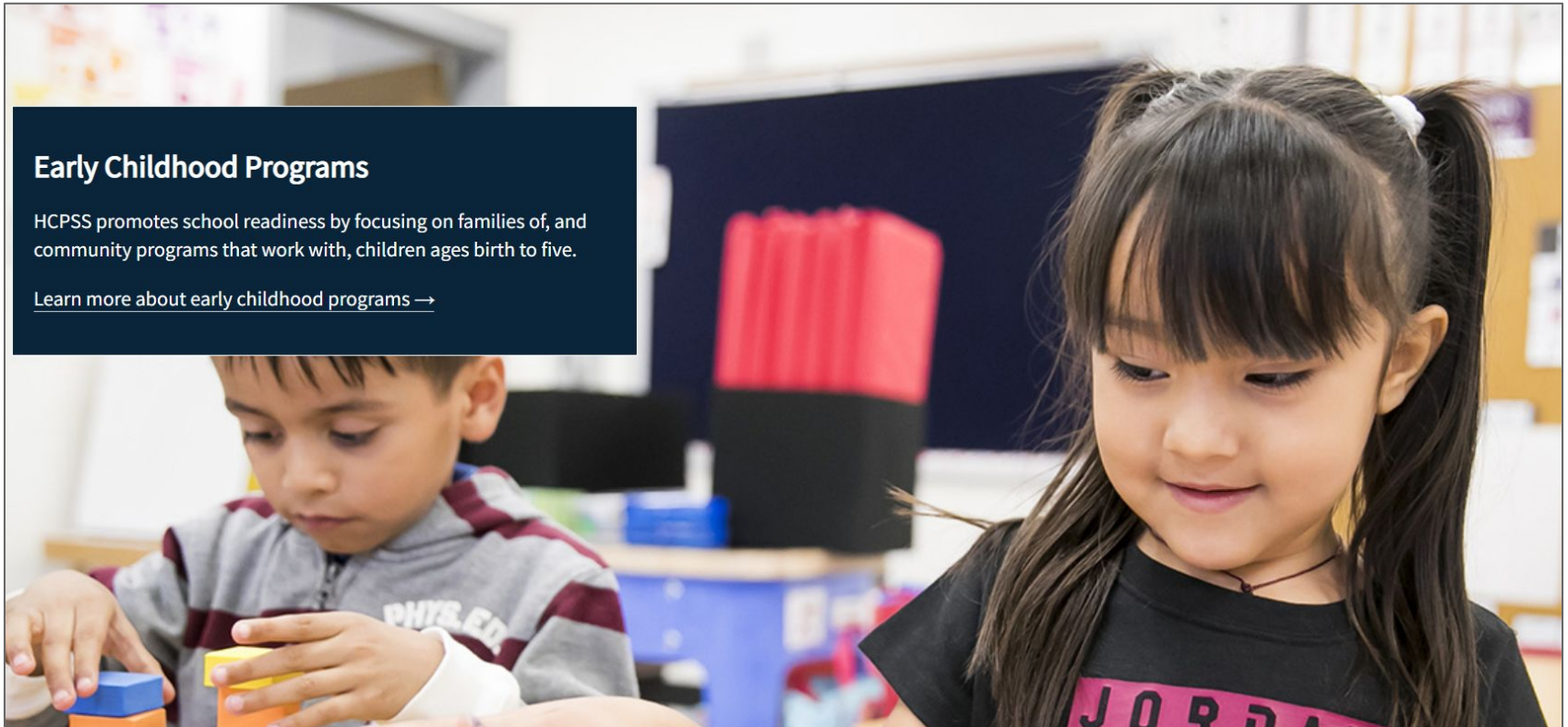
Calls on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges.

- Find information about academics, look for resources, etc.
- [What Your Child Will Learn Guides/Family and Community Resources](#)

Early Childhood Programs

HCPSS promotes school readiness by focusing on families of, and community programs that work with, children ages birth to five.

[Learn more about early childhood programs →](#)



- ▣ Visit **Early Childhood Programs** for Birth to Five information, including kindergarten readiness and more!

Early Childhood Programs

HCPSS provides high quality early childhood education that is rigorous yet developmentally appropriate. HCPSS also supports and promotes school readiness by focusing on families of, and community programs that work with, children ages birth to five.

Early Learning Resources (Birth-5)

Parents are a child's first and most important teacher. There are many things a parent or caregiver can do, starting at birth, to help their child. There are numerous resources available to support families as they create everyday learning opportunities for children, which will ultimately ensure that the children are prepared to succeed in school and later life.

View resources, quick facts and figures, and educational opportunities for:

[Students Birth to Age 3](#)

[Students Ages 3-5](#)

[View guidelines for prekindergarten \(RECC and pre-K programs\) Late Opening/Early Dismissals](#)

Have a child from ages birth-5? Learn more about our [Launch into Learning initiative](#) →

Prekindergarten

HCPSS Pre-kindergarten programming includes a range of supports based on either economic or developmental needs.

- Regional Early Childhood Center (RECC) – Our special education preschool programs serve children **three and four years of age** who have a disability or developmental delay. [Learn more about HCPSS](#)

Kindergarten

Children **must be 5 years old by September 1** in order to enroll in kindergarten. Every child who is 5 years old by September 1 must be enrolled in a kindergarten program or have an [approved waiver](#).

[Find out more about preparing and registering for kindergarten](#) →

- [Find out more](#) about readiness, what you can do the year before kindergarten, registration, and more.

[about HCPSS pre-K programs](#) →

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

[← Back to Enrollment and Registration](#)

Overview

HCPSS kindergarten is a full-day program. Registration for the 2025-2026 school year begins March 3, 2025. Children must be 5 years old by September 1, 2025, in order to enroll in kindergarten. Every eligible child must be enrolled in a kindergarten program this fall or have an approved **waiver form**. Waiver forms will be available in March.

[← Start the enrollment process](#)
















Helping Your Child Get Ready for Kindergarten

Kindergarten teachers are prepared for children to enter school with varying abilities, strengths and needs. Each child is taught at their appropriate level through differentiated instruction. Learn more [what your child will learn in kindergarten](#).

Prior to kindergarten there are many things parents can do to support their child's transition to school. We recommend attending a [Road to Kindergarten parent information session](#) for information about kindergarten readiness, the kindergarten program, and registering your child for school. From making sure appropriate documentation is gathered, to playing with, reading with and listening to their child, the year before kindergarten is a great opportunity to develop school readiness!



- Access [Enrollment information](#) here or from the homepage.
- For students who are the right age but parents feel aren't ready and want to wait, there is an option for a waiver.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
|  HCPSS Status
See today's operating status, and related information |  School System Calendar
View academic calendar information, school closings and holidays |  Budget
Gain information about the HCPSS budget process |
|  School Information
Locate and contact your school, find start times, and more |  Enroll
Enroll/register your student in Howard County public schools |  Food Services
Find menu and meal pricing information, and apply for free and reduced meals |
|  HCPSS Connect
Get help with or connect with your student's courses, get grades and view assignments |  HCPSS Help
Get answers to frequently asked questions on a variety of topics |  Technology
Read about student devices, online safety, and digital tools used in the classroom |
|  Health Services
Access required forms, and get details on HCPSS health-related protocols |  Student Well-Being
Learn how HCPSS promotes mental health and well-being, and find essential resources |  Report Bullying
Access HCPSS' bullying reporting tool, which allows users to easily and confidentially report incidents |
|  Forms
Complete or download forms regularly accessed or needed by HCPSS students, parents or staff |  Transportation
Access the bus locator and view student transportation information |  Careers
Join our award-winning workforce and make a difference in the lives of our students |

- Assess [eligibility and register your child](#) for school.
- The early admission application process is designed for students born within a designated window.
- Those seeking school enrollment one year early can find application information here.

Step 1 – Assess Eligibility and Needs

New Students

Students who have never attended a HCPSS school must be registered by their custodial parent (biological, adoptive, legal guardian).

New Kindergarten Students

Children must be 5 years old by September 1 in order to enroll in kindergarten. Every child who is 5 years old by September 1 must be enrolled in a kindergarten program this fall or have an approved [waiver](#).

[More information about registering a Kindergarten student →](#)

New Prekindergarten Students

HCPSS offers a high-quality, half- or full-day pre-k programs at selected sites. Students must be four years old on or before September 1 to be considered for the program. Unlike enrollment for K-12, parents must first [apply](#) and be accepted into the program before beginning online registration.

[Learn more about prekindergarten program →](#)

Seeking Early Admission?

The early admission process is designed for students who are born between September 2 – October 13 and are seeking enrollment to school one year early.

[Learn more about Early Admission to see if your child qualifies →](#)

Step 2 – Find Your School

Parents must live in the attendance area of the school where they plan to enroll their student. Use our School Locator tool to find and verify your school and attendance area.



[Verify your child's school attendance area](#)

Step 3 – Gather Documentation

Having all your documentation prepared in advance of registration will keep the process moving quickly. If you have a change of address, please notify your school and complete the [Change of Address form](#).

Student Identification Documentation

- Student's evidence of birth (birth certificate, passport/visa, physician's certificate, baptismal or church certification, hospital certificate, parent/s affidavit or birth registration.)
- Proof of parental relationship, custody, or guardianship. If applicable, bring legal proof of custody (court order).
- Any additional paperwork that may be necessary due to special living arrangements or circumstances.

Academic Documentation

- Student's most recent grade report, transcript, report card from last school attended at time of withdrawal.
- Documentation of Special Education (IEP), 504, Psychological Report, or related services.

Parent Identification Documentation

- Parent picture ID: driver's license, passport, MVA identification or other legal form of photographic identification.
- Signed original, current complete lease or complete deed with your address, valid dates, signatures.
- Current utility bill with name and address (non-cellular telephone, gas and electric, cable bill issued in the last 45 days.)

Health Documentation

- A [physical exam form](#) is required for students who have never attended a Maryland Public School, including Prekindergarten and Kindergarten.
- An [immunization form](#) is required for students who have never attended a Maryland Public School, including Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten. Proof of immunizations from a Maryland school outside of Howard County can also be used.

Additional [health information/forms for students](#) who have never attended a Howard County public school is available online.

- ▣ Required documentation for registration is listed here.
- ▣ Specific, updated information related to health documentation (immunizations, medication, allergies, etc.) can be found at the link.

Step 4 – Begin Registration Process

BEGIN ONLINE REGISTRATION

After clicking on the green Begin Registration Process button above, please be sure to select the correct school year in the registration portal.

[Guide to Online Registration for New Students](#)

Kindergarten

Parents/guardians of children who were five as of September 1, 2025, must enroll their children in kindergarten for the 2025-2026 school year.

To [register your child for kindergarten](#), please complete the online registration by selecting the green “Begin Online Registration” button to the left. While completing the online registration form, you can also upload the required documents.

Prekindergarten

Before you can begin the online registration process for the pre-k program, please make sure that you have completed the [HCPSS Pre-K Application](#). Applications are currently being accepted for the 2024-2025 school year. Families accepted into the HCPSS Pre-K program will receive an official acceptance letter. This letter is a required piece of the online registration process and should also be used as a point of reference when making pre-k program selections throughout the online registration process.

[Learn more about the HCPSS Pre-K program](#) →

- ▣ After gathering the required documents, begin the online registration process.
 - *Parents/guardians without access to a computer should call their child’s designated school for more information.*
- ▣ Finalize registration with your assigned school. This final step confirms area residency, guardianship of the child and ensures that the registration process is completed correctly.

Kindergarten Registration Begins

March 3-7, 2025

You will need:

- Picture I.D. (driver's license, passport, MVA identification or other legal form of photographic identification)
- Signed original, current complete lease or deed (to show address, valid dates, signatures)
- Current utility bill with name and address (non-cellular telephone, gas and electric, cable bill issued in the last 45 days.)
- Child's evidence of birth (birth certificate, passport/visa, physician's certificate, baptismal or church certification, hospital certificate, parent/s affidavit or birth registration)
- Evidence of immunization and physical examination (completed immunization and physical examination forms).
- Proof of parental relationship, custody, or guardianship.

Kindergarten Registration Begins

March 3-7, 2025

- ▣ Language support is available through the Multilingual Family Registration Center at 410-313-1297 and 410-313-1525 (Spanish/English).
- ▣ Children already enrolled in a HCPSS school as a prekindergarten student (Pre-K, MINC-PK, MINC-EL) **DO NOT** need to re-enroll for kindergarten. Parents will receive information from child's current school and records will be transferred.
- ▣ If you are buying, building, or leasing a home in another attendance area than where you live, or haven't yet settled on your home, contact Student Reassignment via student_reassignment@hcpss.org.
- ▣ For any questions regarding residency, multiple family living arrangements, students experiencing homelessness, or custody/guardianship, please contact the Office of Pupil Personnel at 410-313-6646.

Kindergarten Registration Begins

March 3-7, 2025

- ▣ If you cannot register March 4-8, that's ok, but you are encouraged to register your child as soon as possible to receive information about upcoming kindergarten transition events, etc.
- ▣ After registration kickoff week (March 3-7, 2025), you will need to schedule an appointment with your child's school to finalize the registration process.



Events At YOUR School May Include

Sample of School Events for Parents and/or Children*

- ▣ Visitation / Tours
- ▣ Parent Information Session
- ▣ Spring Picnic
- ▣ Summer Playdates
- ▣ Orientation
- ▣ Back-to-School Night

**Not all events listed occur at every school. Information about events specific to your child's school will be shared when you register.*

This Might Be of Interest to You!

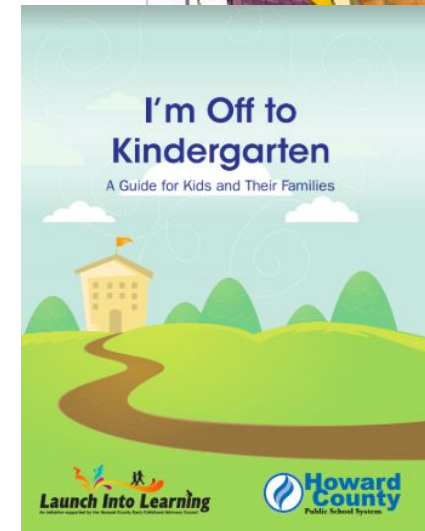
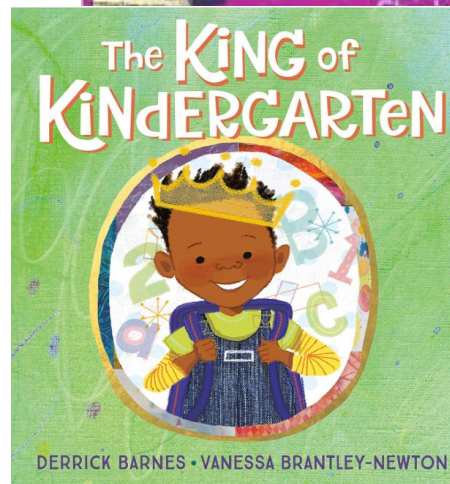
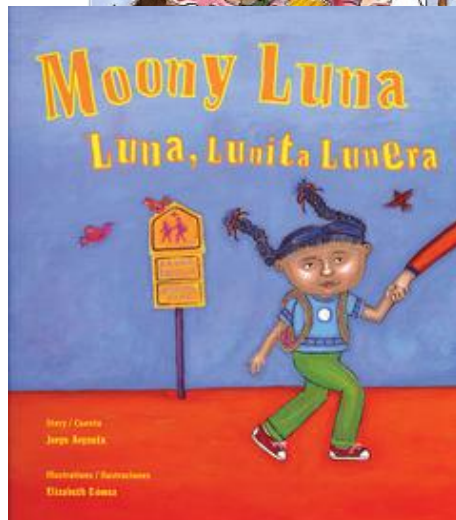
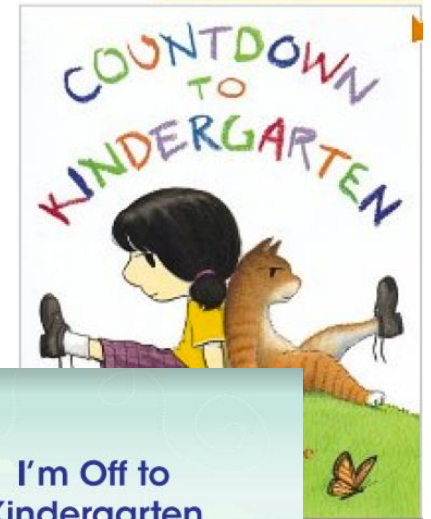
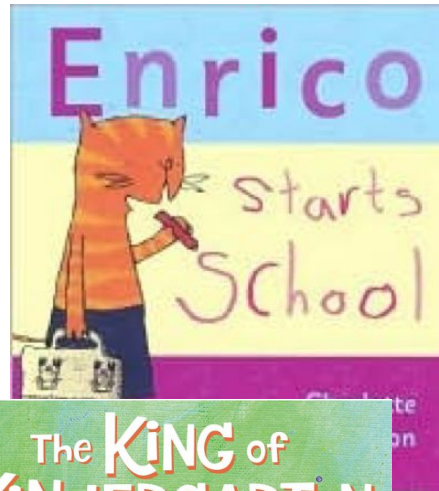
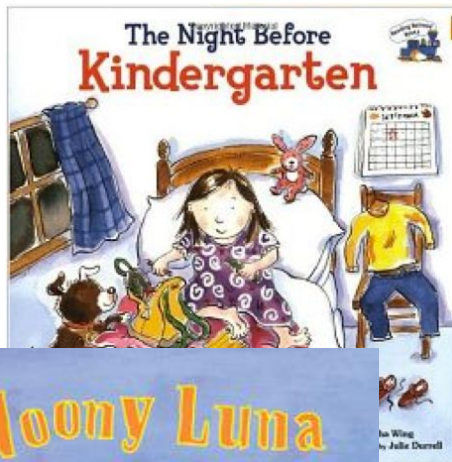
Annual Children's Discovery Fair

Saturday, April 5
10:00 am - 1:00 pm
East Columbia
50+Center

Kindergarten Here We Come! **Classes**

Local HC Libraries
August
Dates/Times TBD

Read Stories About School With Your Child!



Advice for Kindergarten Parents

- ▣ Become involved in your school - find ways to volunteer, join the PTA, go to school events!
- ▣ Sign up for email or text alerts!
- ▣ Get to know other parents!
- ▣ Never be afraid to ask questions!
- ▣ Know that it's *normal* to feel a wide range of emotions!
- ▣ Share your excitement and curiosity with your child (not your anxiety)!



Have a great next stop in
KINDERGARTEN!

Any Questions?

Office of Early Childhood Programs

410-313-5693

Department of Special Education

410-313-7017

Multilingual Family Registration Center

410-313-1297 and 410-313-1525

(Spanish/English)