

SUBJECT: Getting Ready for Kindergarten: Enrollment and Special Education Guidance

Dear Rising Kindergarten Families,

We are excited to welcome you and your student as you prepare for kindergarten in Seattle Public Schools (SPS). We know this process can feel confusing, especially when families are planning for special education services. Our goal is to share clear information and support you every step of the way.

Open Enrollment: Jan. 5–31

All families interested in a school that is not their neighborhood school should apply during **Open Enrollment (Jan. 5–31)**. Late applications for open enrollment are accepted until March 31 but will not be considered for tiebreakers.

- Please apply as a **general education student**.
- Apply to the schools you are interested in.

After Open Enrollment, some families may receive a message that their student has been selected for a school as a general education student. **This selection does not guarantee assignments in a Special Education Intensive Pathway** at that school.

Special Education Intensive Pathway Placements

Special Education Intensive Pathways include **Focus, Distinct, and Extended Resource**.

- These assignments are decided **by the district**, not by individual schools.
- The district will consider open enrollment requests submitted during the **priority period (Jan. 5–31)**. Late applications for open enrollment are accepted until March 31.

Transition IEP Meetings: March–April

In **March and April**, families will meet with their student's IEP team for a **transition IEP conference**.

- Families are important members of the IEP team.
- The team will discuss the **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** and the supports your student will need for kindergarten.
- Decisions from this meeting help guide LRE placement and school assignments.

School Assignment Notification: April–May

After transition IEP meetings are complete:

- Special Education Intensive Pathway assignment will be finalized.
- Families will receive school assignment information for the **2026–27 school year** in **April or May**. The assigned school may differ from the school you applied to or were offered under the general education during the Open Enrollment School Choice process, as not all Special Education Intensive Pathway services are offered at every school.
- Families may utilize the **Transfer Appeal Process** outlined on the district’s enrollment website if they would like further consideration of their case following school assignments.

If you have questions or need support, please contact your **case manager**. They are available to help you understand each step of this process.

Thank you for being part of SPS. We look forward to partnering with you as your student begins kindergarten.

Warmly,

Whitney Smith

Director of Early Learning

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