



DCPS Early Childhood Education Overview

At DCPS we believe that all young children are capable and competent learners, and their voices and ideas are welcomed and valued in our classrooms.

In DCPS' early childhood classrooms children learn through a combination of play and well-planned teacher-led lessons and engaging learning experiences. Classrooms are designed to promote children's active engagement with the environment, and teachers design learning experiences to promote children's language development, critical thinking skills, creativity, and early academic skills in order to ensure that children are well prepared for success in kindergarten and beyond.

ECE School Calendar

DCPS PK3 and PK4 classrooms operate on the regular school system calendar, except for Early Childhood Transition Week. This special transition period occurs during the first week of the school year. To help ease the transition from home or daycare to school, most schools opt to start PK3 and PK4 with a shortened week. All enrolled Early Childhood families will receive direct communication about Transition Week closer to the start of the school year.

ECE Classroom Sizes

Class Type	Definition	Adult/Student Ratio
PK3	3 Year Old's	2:16
PK4	4 Year Old's	2:20
Mixed Age	3- and 4-Year Old's. No more than 50 percent may be 3 Year Old's	2:17

Research-Based Curriculum

DCPS' early childhood classrooms utilize The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that promotes exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills.

Recess and Rest Time

Children have daily recess and rest time (nap time). 3-year-old children are given the opportunity to nap for 90 minutes each day. 4-year-old children are given the opportunity to nap for 60 minutes each day.

Special Subjects/ Electives

Early childhood students have access to special subjects or electives, such as music, art, or physical education. Special subjects or electives are scheduled at times that do not interrupt learning centers or small-group instructional time. Whenever possible, specials are provided in the classroom to build on and integrate the work (themes, projects, learning goals, etc.) as developed by the classroom teaching team.

Health and Nutrition

Current Head Start early childhood classrooms spend 30 minutes per day engaging students in a family style mealtime (students eat lunch in the classroom in a family style manner as outlined by Federal Head Start Guidelines). Current Head Start early childhood classrooms spend at least 10 minutes per day supporting students in tooth brushing.

Additional Services

At Head Start schools, the DCPS Early Childhood Education Division provides comprehensive wraparound services including family supports, developmental screenings, assistance accessing social services, and vision, hearing, and dental screenings.

DCPS Early Childhood Education Division Contact

Have additional questions about the DCPS Early Childhood Program? The DCPS Early Childhood Education Division can be reached via email at dcps.earlychildhood@k12.dc.gov.