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BALTIMORE CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

First Steps, Strong Start: Early Learning in Baltimore City

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Baltimore City Public Schools



Baltimore City Schools


Early Learning Vision

The Office of Early Learning Programs provides inclusive, play-based, developmentally-appropriate learning for children birth to five. We partner with families and the community to support whole-child development and kindergarten readiness. We equip educators with the training and resources needed to create safe, nurturing, and emotionally supportive classrooms.

Judy Centers


***Baltimore City Judy Centers
successfully expanded from 14
to 17 sites!***

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Maryland
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

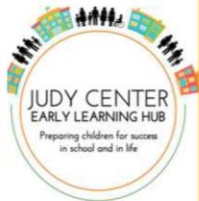
**Baltimore City
Judy Centers**
2024-2025



Children Served

PreK & K: 2,114
Ages birth to three: 504*

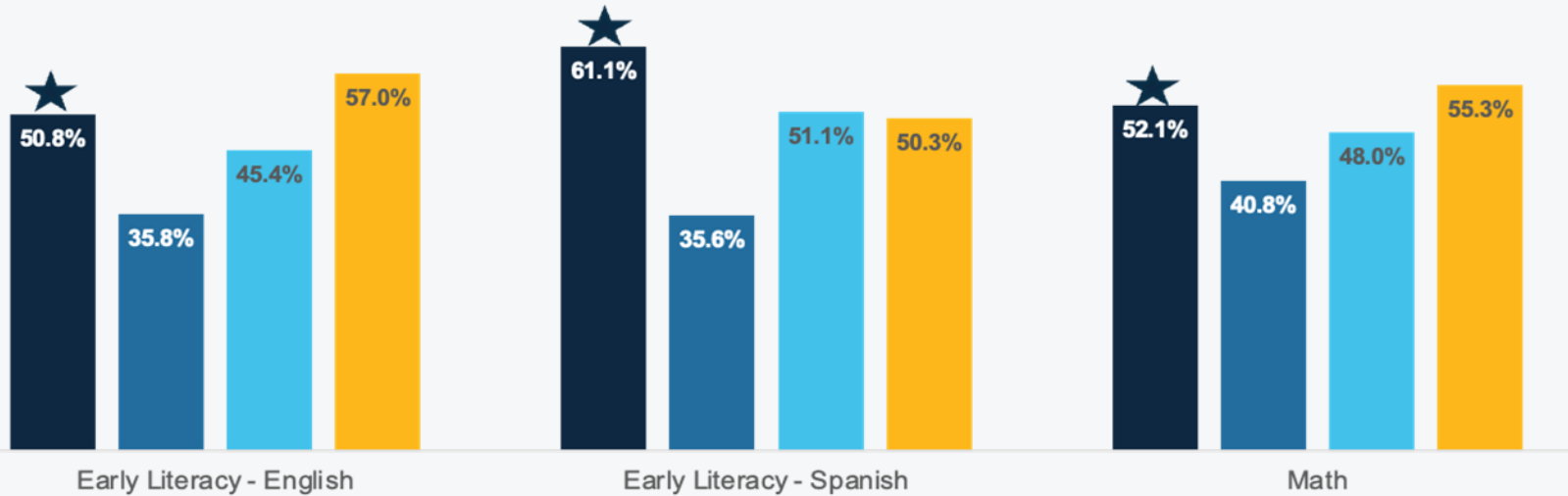
Referrals to Community Partners	% of Family Driven Goals Achieved
4,809	74%



**JUDY CENTER
EARLY LEARNING HUB**
Preparing children for success
in school and in life

City Schools pre-K students have higher readiness levels than other prior care settings

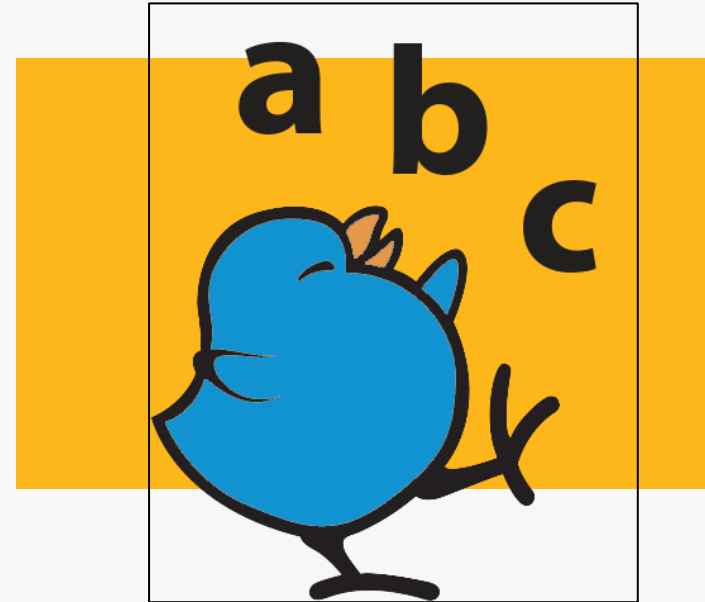
KRA % Established



City Schools pre-K | Other prior care | City Schools overall | Maryland

Long Term Impacts of Early Childhood Education

- Stronger local workforce & higher lifetime earnings boost city tax revenues.
- Reduced public spending on criminal justice, social services, and remedial education.
- Improved economic mobility for low-income families, through higher school readiness, stronger academic outcomes, and better employment prospects strengthens overall city economic health



Pre-K High Quality Curriculum Implementation & Professional Learning

Professional Learning Arc: Talk, Write, Count, Play



Year 1
Implementation

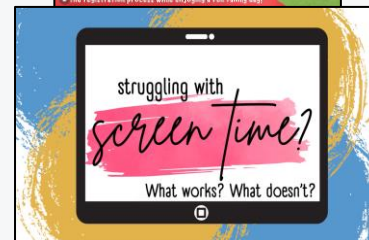
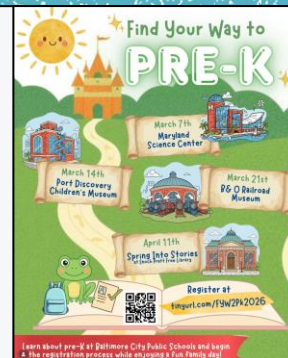
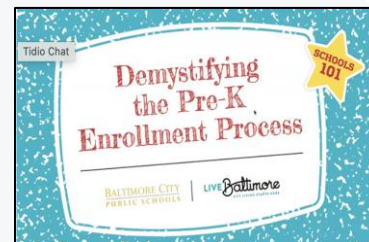
Year 2
Fidelity Checks & Coaching

Year 3
Strengthening Instructional Practices

Supporting Families in Early Learning

Through a variety of in person and virtual opportunities, Early Learning is supporting families in high needs areas:

- Pre-K Enrollment
- Potty Training/Toddler Self-Care
- Screen Time
- Typical Child Development/ Autism
- Academics: Math Focus
- Learning Opportunities Outside of School



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Blueprint for Maryland's Future

Baltimore City Public Schools
Administrative Headquarters

Blueprint Progress Report

from AIB

Pillar 1: Early Childhood Education

- "Baltimore City is the first LEA that has enough seats to serve all families with 4-year-olds who want to enroll in Pre-K."

Pre-K Mixed Delivery

The Pre-K mixed delivery system allows families to choose between public and private providers for high quality Pre-K education.

- **4100** seats for 4-year-olds in City Schools

City Schools currently has the capacity to serve an estimated 98% of four-year-old children from low-income families in public Pre-K.

- **500** seats for 3 & 4-year-olds in Community Pre-K private providers
- Quarterly collaborative meetings with Community Pre-K private providers
- Joint policy statement HB1441

Pre-K & Kindergarten Enrollment

Metrics	SY 2024-2025	SY 2025-2026
SEMS Window	Mar 3-April 16	Feb 16-Apr 17
Length of Window	45 days	61 days
Applications	1,227	1,110 (03/09)
Progress v Last Year	-----	89% to date

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Leap into Learning in Pre-K & K!

Our pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs provide safe, nurturing environments where young learners grow through rich social-emotional, language, literacy, and learning experiences.

Enroll your child in one of Maryland's top early learning programs, offering:

- Certified teachers
- High-quality, play-based learning
- Free breakfast and lunch
- Caring and supportive environments that spark creativity

Age Eligibility: Must be 4 years old (pre-K) or 5 years old (Kindergarten) by September 1, 2026

City Schools welcomes all age-eligible children to begin their educational journey, and families can now complete the entire enrollment process easily and conveniently online from home.

Application Window: February 16 – April 17, 2026
Notification Window: May 18 – 22, 2026

Beginning Monday, February 16, families can apply online through the Student Enrollment Management System (SEMS) baltimorecityschools.org/SEMS

Learn more about the registration process on our website:
www.baltimorecityschools.org/base-pre-k-and-kindergarten-registration

For questions or support, please contact the City Schools Enrollment Office at: enrollment@bcpk12.org

Enroll Now! If you'll use your child to attend a charter school, please contact that school for details about their enrollment process. Don't delay—reach out early to ensure the best options for your child!

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Appendix

Baltimore City Public Schools
Administrative Headquarters

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Funding Pre-K

Baltimore City Public Schools
Administrative Headquarters

Pre-K Expansion

Tier I (Family income ≤ 300% FPL)

- Free, full day pre-k must be provided to all 4-year olds in Tier I by FY26.
- Free, full day pre-k must be provided to increasing numbers of 3-year olds in Tier I until all are served.

Tier II (Family income between 300-600% FPL)

- 4-year olds in Tier II must be enrolled to the extent space is available.
- Funding was delayed from FY25 to FY26 for up to 360% FPL only and FY27 the rest of Tier II. MSDE has developed a sliding scale to calculate the state/family share for Tier II.

Tier III (Family income ≥ 600% FPL)

- 4-year olds in Tier III may be enrolled if space is available.
- There is no Blueprint Pre-K funding for Tier III.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future provides access to free, full day pre-kindergarten for low-income three- and four-year old children.

City Schools Pre-K

City Schools has a robust free public Pre-K that serves nearly 4,000 students.

Many Pre-K students are from low-income families, but we also serve Tier 2 and Tier 3 families as space allows.

There is no waiting list, and we are serving all Tier 1 4-year-olds who wish to enroll.

Universal Pre-K

Funding Challenges

City Schools does not intend to charge tuition to Tier 2 or Tier 3; AIB has indicated district and/or city may be responsible for private provider family share.

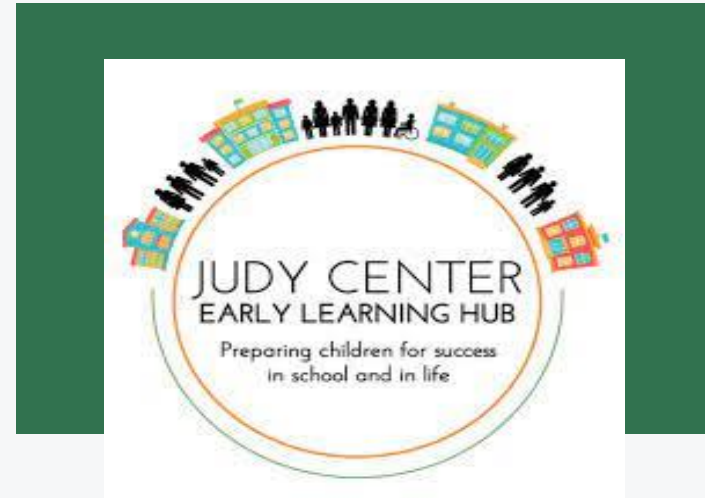
City Schools has experienced a 30% increase in children under five in need of pre-k special education programming. Opening new special ed pre-k classes is especially resource intensive.

Blueprint does not differentiate cost of service for three- and four-year olds, nor is additional funding provided for pre-k students with disabilities or multilingual learners.

No funding is provided for capital/facility improvements necessary to ensure appropriate learning spaces for young children.

Judy Centers

- Family Engagement
- Playgroups
- Parent Workshops
- Case management
- Adult Education
- Health/Developmental Screenings
- Parenting Classes
- Early identification support
- Referrals to partners
- Professional development for Child Care providers



Blueprint for Maryland's Future

- ✓ Increase student readiness for kindergarten annually as measured by the KRA
- ✓ Increase kindergarten readiness proficiency rates for each student group
- ✓ Decrease gaps in kindergarten readiness between student groups
- ✓ Increase the count of 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds from Tier 1 households (low-income, children with disabilities, homeless, or children from homes in which English is not the primary spoken language) who are enrolled in high-quality (EXCELS rating of 3+) full-day Pre-K
- ✓ Increase the count of 4-year-olds who are enrolled in high-quality (EXCELS rating of 3+) full-day Pre-K

Baltimore City Landscape Analysis



City Schools has the capacity to serve 98% of Tier I 4-year-olds



Kindergarten readiness also appears highly related to prior early care and education settings



Mixed Delivery Pre-K Seats are expanding, doubling between 2023 to 2026



Outpacing almost every other jurisdiction in the state in regards to Mixed Delivery seats

Early Childhood Coalition Building

- Citywide public-private partnership has been strengthened through (1) quarterly private provider convenings, (2) shared enrollment efforts, (3) philanthropic coordination, and (4) cross-agency problem solving
- Six (6) new private providers added in 2025-2026

