

Preschool Enrollment Guide



PRE4CLE

Table of Contents

<u>What is Quality Preschool?</u>	2
---	---



<u>Financial Assistance</u>	4
-----------------------------------	---



<u>What's Next?</u>	6
---------------------------	---





What is Quality Preschool?

Why Quality Matters:

Early experiences affect the development of a child's brain, building a strong foundation for Cleveland's kids. **By the age of 5, your child's brain is already 90% developed.**

Research shows that children who participate in high-quality early childhood programs are more likely to:

- Have better-developed language and social skills when they get to kindergarten
- Reach high school graduation.
- Pursue college or vocational training programs, and have good careers as adults.

School readiness starts well before children enter the door to kindergarten. By enrolling your 3- or 4-year-old in a high-quality preschool program, you are providing them with the tools and fundamentals needed to be successful in kindergarten and beyond.

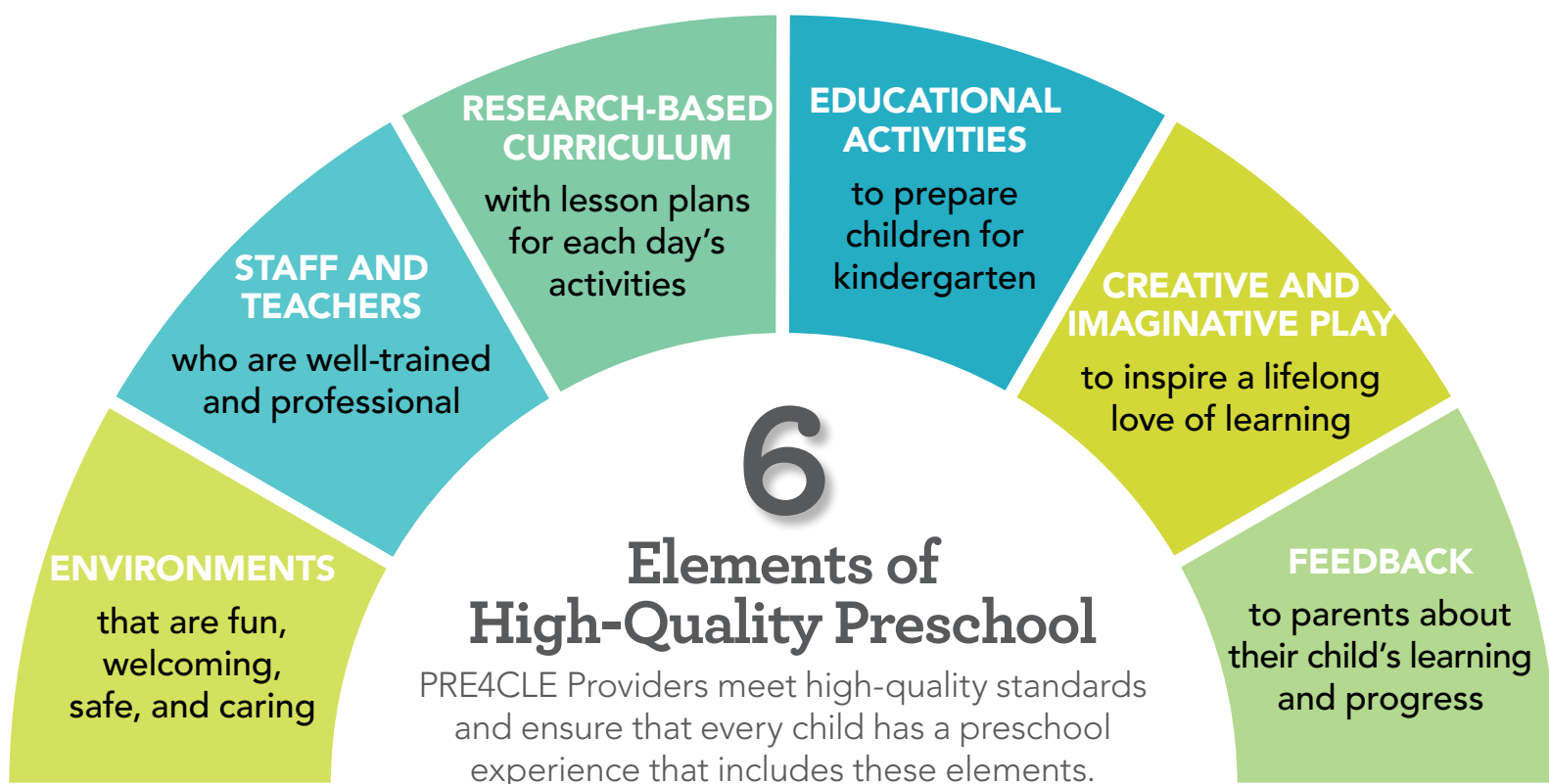
Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)

Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) is a five-star quality rating and improvement system administered by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. SUTQ recognizes and promotes learning and development programs that meet quality program standards that exceed licensing health and safety regulations. The program standards are based on national research identifying standards which lead to improved outcomes for children. High-quality programs have earned 3, 4, or 5 stars in the Step Up To Quality system. Learn more at www.earlychildhoodohio.org/sutq



What is Quality Preschool?

continued



High-Quality Preschool Video

Know what to look for when finding the right preschool program for your child by watching this video highlighting the six elements of a high-quality preschool.

pre4cle.org/video

Financial Assistance

Preschool can be expensive, but most programs offer scholarships. The high-quality preschool you choose can offer more guidance on how to connect with these financial supports. To find out what scholarships and financial assistance you and your child might be eligible to receive, visit pre4cle.org/family/#find

Program	Description	Eligibility Requirements
Private Pay	Many preschool providers accept private payment from parents. Fees vary by preschool; contact the provider for rate information	None
Head Start	Head Start is a program that provides free preschool education for 3-to-5-year olds and helps both children and parents prepare for kindergarten and for a life of learning. Through either direct service or referrals, Head Start children also receive numerous health services ensuring good physical, dental, nutritional, and mental health. Head Start programs are available for half day or full day, depending on your eligibility. Some Head Start programs also offer extended hours of care through subsidized or private-pay child care services.	100% FPL* and additional requirements determine length of program day (half or full)
Subsidized Child Care	The Child Care Assistance program helps you pay a portion of your child care expenses each month. The Child Care Assistance Program gives you the flexibility to choose a quality preschool program in a child care center or child care home based on your family's individual needs. Child care programs often offer extended hours (typically 6:00 am to 6:00 pm) and full-year calendars to meet the needs of working families, and also many offer care for infants, toddlers, and after-school time as well. Choosing a preschool program in a child care setting can be a good choice for families looking for flexible hours and care for siblings in one location. You can choose quality child care options based on a Step Up to Quality rating to make sure you are choosing a high-quality program.	142% FPL*
Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) Preschool	The CMSD preschool program is a free program that follows the Cleveland Metropolitan School District school year calendar, providing preschool for 6 hours a day, 10 months a year. The program is available to 4-year-olds who live in Cleveland and is offered in a number of CMSD school sites. The CMSD program does not offer after school or summer preschool programming.	Cleveland resident

Financial Assistance

continued

UPK	Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) in Cuyahoga County makes high-quality early care and education accessible to families at selected sites by providing scholarship assistance to families within the eligibility guidelines to reduce their parent fee by one third. These scholarships make UPK more affordable.	400% FPL*, Cuyahoga County Resident
Early Childhood Education (ECE) Grants	Early Childhood Education (ECE) Grants provide high-quality early learning preschool services through scholarships to children within the eligibility guidelines. Preschool programs that offer ECE Grants must be high-quality and designed to meet the needs of four-year-old children.	200% FPL*, 4 years old by September 30th
Head Start for Children with Special Needs	Head Start programs welcome children with special needs. Parents/guardians of children with suspected or diagnosed disabilities, developmental, social and/or emotional delays, etc., should discuss their child's needs with the Family Service Worker/ Family Advocate at the center. Head Start for Children with Special Needs is typically a partial day program (3.5 hours in the morning or afternoon) and may be complemented by additional services or programs. Some Head Start programs also offer extended hours of care through subsidized or private-pay child care services.	Students with disabilities
CMSD Special Education	The Special Education Preschool Program is a free program for children between the ages of 3 years to 5 years old who demonstrate a disability or exhibit significant delays. The goals and activities of the Special Education Preschool Program represent the cooperative efforts of early childhood intervention specialists, related service providers and parents working together. Each child's participation in a program that provides readiness, socialization, language and literacy skills as well as meeting individual needs, prepares him or her for success in school.	Students with disabilities

* The poverty guidelines are issued each year in the Federal Register by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and are used to determine financial eligibility for certain programs. For current poverty guidelines, refer to the last page of this resource.

What's Next?

This helpful checklist will guide you through the process of enrolling your child in preschool.

- ☐ Visit pre4cle.org/family to find high-quality preschools near you or call Starting Point at 216-575-0061 to speak to a specialist.
- ☐ Set up times when you and your child or children can visit several preschools, child care centers, or family child care homes that meet your needs to find the one that's right for you.
- ☐ When you do visit, trust your first impressions—they're often on target. Remember to look for PRE4CLE's **6 Elements of Quality**:

1. **Environments** that are fun, welcoming, safe, and caring

- Do the caregivers seem to really care about the children, respond patiently to questions and discipline gently and fairly?
- Are the children happy?
- Are the children safe and secure?
- Is the facility clean, pleasant and well-organized?
- Are good health and nutrition practices followed?
- Ask staff about their policies regarding child sign-out, food allergies, hygiene, building security, immunizations, cleanliness, and any other safety concerns.

2. **Staff and Teachers** who are well-trained and professional

- Are there enough teachers to give good care?
- Are the teachers loving and responsive?
- Are the teachers well-qualified? Teachers should be appropriately certified and teacher credentials will be displayed or available for review.
- Ask staff about their ongoing training and professional development.

What's Next?

continued

3. **Research-Based Curriculum** with lesson plans for each day's activities

- Are lesson plans posted?
- Do lesson plans reflect intentional and purposeful activities and experiences that meet the needs, interests and abilities of the class?
- Look for learning centers for different kinds of play, materials such as books and art supplies, and displays of letters, numbers, shapes, colors, and student work.

4. **Educational Activities** to prepare your child for kindergarten

- Do the activities lead to learning and development?
- Do you see evidence of activities such as reading, counting, sorting, active play, following instructions, and taking turns?
- Look for teachers engaging students through conversation, questions and positive interactions.

5. **Creative and Imaginative Play** to inspire a lifelong love of learning

- Is there evidence of activities that encourage imaginative thinking, experimenting, problem solving, and decision-making?
- Look for creative activities like dress-up, playing with dolls or stuffed animals, art, and music.

6. **Feedback** about your child's learning and progress

- Do teachers and parents work together for the child's well-being?
- Ask how the preschool will provide daily written or verbal feedback about your child's learning and progress.
- Ask about the process for transitioning to kindergarten.
- Are there community services available to you and your child?
- Are there opportunities for you to engage in activities at the center?

☐ After visiting, determine if the child care costs, hours, and policies match your needs.

☐ Choose the preschool that meets the needs of you and your child.

What's Next?

continued

After you have chosen a preschool for your family:

- ☐ **Get an enrollment packet from the Preschool.**
- ☐ **Make and keep a doctor's appointment for physicals and to be sure your child(ren) are up to date on immunizations.**
 - Ask your doctor to test your child for lead.
- ☐ **Make and keep a dental appointment for a dental check-up.**
- ☐ **Complete ALL enrollment forms and gather ALL important documents that apply to your family in one folder/envelope and return to the preschool of your choice.**

These documents include:

- W-2 Income Tax Form
- Paystub
- Child's Birth Certificate
- Social Security Cards
- Proof of Residency (e.g. Driver's License, Bank Statement, Tax Documents, etc.)

Visit pre4cle.org/enrollment-toolkit to download our Enrollment Toolkit, which includes a checklist of required documents and helpful resources to make enrolling your child in a high-quality preschool as easy as possible.

- ☐ **Turn in your enrollment documents.**
- ☐ **Be sure your child attends preschool regularly and on time.**
- ☐ **Stay engaged with your child's teachers and school to support their learning.**
- ☐ **You can support your child's learning at home, too.**

Visit pre4cle.org/family/#resources for ideas.



High-Quality Preschool Options:

*Visit pre4cle.org/family to find high-quality preschools near you or call Starting Point at 216-575-0061 to speak to a specialist.**

*PRE4CLE and its administrative entities do not rate, recommend, or regulate child care programs and resources provided through Starting Point's child care referral service. We make every effort to supply current information on providers, but cannot guarantee providers' capabilities. We encourage parents to use information on choosing quality child care to assist in evaluating and selecting child care providers. We urge parents to interview several providers to determine the best option for their family's needs.

PRE4CLE

PRE4CLE is a plan to ensure all 3- and 4-year-old children in Cleveland have access to a high-quality preschool by:

- Increasing the number of high-quality preschools in Cleveland
- Helping preschool providers improve their quality rating
- Connecting families to quality preschool programs

We are a part of Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools (The Cleveland Plan), a plan that is reinventing public education in the City of Cleveland. High-quality preschool is the first step on the education continuum for transforming Cleveland's schools, providing a strong foundation for K-12 success, increased high school graduation, and increased higher education participation.

Through connecting families with high-quality, affordable preschool education opportunities, PRE4CLE provides a gateway for Cleveland's children to start strong and Cleveland communities to prosper.



[Subscribe to our Newsletter](#)



PRE4CLE

6393 Oak Tree Blvd. | Independence, OH 44131
216.901-4214 | PRE4CLE.org | info@pre4cle.org

Starting Point

Starting Point links families to programs and services that meet their children's early care/education and related needs, and strengthens the community's capacity to respond to those needs.

Starting Point for child care, early education and out-of-school time care is Northeast Ohio's child care, early education and out-of-school time resource and referral agency--serving families, early childhood professionals and organizations and the community. A 501 (c)3 nonprofit agency formed in 1990 on the recommendation of the landmark Cuyahoga County public-private initiative (The Child Day Care Planning Project), Starting Point works to:

- Link families with child care, early education and out-of-school time services
- Increase the supply of and improve access to child care, early education, literacy and out-of-school time programs
- Improve the quality of child care, early education and out-of-school time services
- Stimulate early education and out-of-school time alternatives
- Plan child care, early education and out-of-school initiatives
- Address child care, early education and out-of-school issues

Starting Point serves Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, and Lake counties. Starting Point books and publications are available throughout the U.S.



4600 Euclid Avenue, Suite 500 | Cleveland, Ohio 44103
www.starting-point.org | 216.575.0061 | 800.880.0971 (Toll-free)