



GCPS Preschool Program Overview

2021-2022 School Year

Gloucester County Public Schools is committed to providing a high-quality educational experience for our earliest learners through a comprehensive early childhood program for children with disabilities aged 2-4 and for at-risk children aged 3-4.

For the 2021-2022 school year, GCPS preschool classrooms for ages 3 and 4 will operate with the same school calendar as the Gloucester County Public Schools K-12 program, with flexibility at the student or school level based on needs and services.

- Two-year old students are identified and served by the Office of Special Education and receive services determined by their IEP team;
- Three-year-old students will attend for a partial-day; students served by the Office of Special Education will receive services determined by their IEP team;
- Four-year-old students served by the Office of Special Education will receive services determined by their IEP team;
- Four-year-old students not served by the Office of Special Education may indicate a full- or partial-day preference at the time of application; preference will be considered but cannot be guaranteed due to enrollment and classroom considerations.
- Students not served by the Office of Special Education or eligible through VPI funding will be considered potential tuition-based students, and will be placed on waitlist by age and school zone until space is deemed available.

Partial Day for Ages 3-4	Full Day for Ages 3-4
Breakfast & Learn	Breakfast & Learn
Learning Time	Learning Time
Sensory Activity	Sensory Activity
Lunch and Learn	Lunch and Learn
Dismissal	Sensory Activity and Rest Time Learning Time Dismissal

The early childhood classroom environment is guided by a research-based curriculum aligned with the Virginia preschool standards. This curriculum promotes a child’s emotional, social, cognitive, and physical growth. Movement breaks are incorporated throughout the day.

Program Locations

GCPS Preschool for ages 3 and 4 is being planned for all five GCPS elementary school zones. Specialized preschool and the 2-Year-Old program will be at designated sites for centralized access and/or transportation.

Eligibility for the program is determined by current services through the Office of Special Education or eligibility for funding through the state VPI program or related criteria.

Placement at a school site is based on several criteria but includes home street address and proximity to one of the program sites:

- Abingdon Elementary School
- Achilles Elementary School
- Bethel Elementary School
- Botetourt Elementary School
- Petsworth Elementary School

Transportation

Transportation is provided for students living within their designated school zone, students placed by the Steering Committee in an adjacent zone due to VPI funding eligibility or class enrollment, or for students served by the Office of Special Education. Transportation might be available for tuition-based students based on route availability and classroom placement.

Information included in this Program Guide is subject to change based on annual updates during the legislative session of the General Assembly, from the Virginia Department of Education, or based on program needs determined by GCPS leadership.

Enrollment

After a child is determined to be eligible for the GCPS Preschool Program for 2021-2022, the following documentation is required for any student not currently enrolled with GCPS.

Enrollment Requirements:

1. Official copy of child's birth certificate.
2. Parent/Guardian Photo ID
3. Proof of residency (mortgage, lease, rental agreement, or deed)
4. Current utility bill
5. Child's immunization records (by August 30th)
6. Child's physical examination report by a medical professional (by August 30th)
7. Custody papers (if applicable) or statement of informal custody agreement between biological parents

Interested in GCPS Preschool?

The first step for all interested families will be to complete the online interest form. This form will then collect additional information based on the needs of the child applying for the program. Students currently enrolled and receiving services through the Office of Special Education will complete this same form to indicate their potential eligibility for VPI funding starting the 2021-2022 school year; placement will then be communicated to these families by the Office of Special Education.

Interest Form: <https://tinyurl.com/GCPSpreschool21-22>

The GCPS preschool program is for eligible two- to four-year old children who:

- are currently served through the GCPS Office of Special Education (age 2-4),
 - These families will be contacted by GCPS staff regarding placement for the 2021-2022 academic year after completing the online interest survey, and will be asked to complete a packet for consideration for VPI funding eligibility.
- are legal residents of Gloucester County that potentially meet specific needs-based criteria (see #1-4 below)**;
 - Students not served by the Office of Special Education and interested in GCPS Preschool may apply to the program if they potentially meet one of the following **needs-based criteria** established by the Virginia General Assembly to be eligible for funding through the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) (detailed information on pages 2-3):
 1. The child's family income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level for family size.
 2. The child is homeless.
 3. The child's parents or legal guardians are school dropouts.
 4. The child has an identified special need or disability, and family income is less than 350% of the Federal Poverty Level for family size.

**Participation may also be granted under select Local Eligibility Criteria, temporary state criteria due to the impacts of COVID-19, or through tuition-based placement if no other criteria are met. Potential tuition-based students will be placed on waitlist by school zone until space is deemed available. Refer to pages 4-5 of this program guide for more information. Interested families are encouraged to apply for their application to be reviewed by the Preschool Steering Committee.

Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) Funding Eligibility Information

GCPS and the state partner together to provide a high quality early childhood experience supported by the VPI legislation from the General Assembly.

The purpose of the VPI program is “...to provide quality preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds who are residents of Virginia and unserved by Head Start program funding and for at-risk five-year-olds who are not eligible to attend kindergarten...”

Income Determination from the State

2021 Poverty Guidelines Percentage Thresholds – for Applying the Family Income Eligibility Criteria and Reporting Requirements for VPI as Stated in the Virginia Appropriation Act			
Persons in family/household	2021 Poverty Guidelines Percentage Thresholds Applicable to VPI Requirements		
	130%	200%	350%
1	\$16,744	\$25,760	\$45,080
2	\$22,646	\$34,840	\$60,970
3	\$28,548	\$43,920	\$76,860
4	\$34,450	\$53,000	\$92,750
5	\$40,352	\$62,080	\$108,640
6	\$46,254	\$71,160	\$124,530
7	\$52,156	\$80,240	\$140,420
8	\$58,058	\$89,320	\$156,310

Income Documentation

- **Includes** gross money income, before taxes. Partial year income (i.e., single pay period, monthly, etc.) information must be annualized for an estimate of annual family income.
- **Include** as income:
 - employment earnings
 - unemployment and workers’ compensation payments
 - veterans’ benefits payments or survivor benefit payments
 - pension or retirement income
 - interest and dividends, rents and royalties, income from estates and trusts
 - income from educational assistance, alimony, and child support
 - any other financial assistance from outside the household
- **Do not** include noncash benefits such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (i.e., food stamps), Medicaid, public housing, housing subsidies, or military allowances (e.g., housing allowance).
- **Do not** include capital gains or losses.

- Based on the income items listed in the bullets above in this section, only include as “family income” the total annual income of the child’s “parent” or “parents” as those terms are defined in Section 22.1-1, *Code of Virginia*, as the “parent, guardian, legal custodian, or other person having control or charge of a child.” Do not include as “family income” the income of other immediate or extended family members living in the household or non-relatives in the household, such as housemates.

Additional Information related to VPI Eligibility Criteria

Definition of Homelessness: (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, ESEA, Title X, Part C; IDEA 2004)

An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth:

living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate housing	having a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations
sharing housing due to loss of housing or economic hardship	living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations
living in emergency or transitional housing	migratory students meeting the description
abandoned in hospitals	awaiting foster care
unaccompanied youth meeting the description	

Determination of School Drop-out:

An individual who does not complete High School with a standard or advanced diploma, or GED, at the same time as their 9th grade cohort (e.g., enter Fall 2010, Class graduates Spring 2014).

Health or Developmental Disabilities:

Preschoolers may be found eligible for Early Childhood Special Education services under one or more of these disability categories, which are defined in the federal and state regulations (this will be the standard of use for VPI programs):

Deaf-blind	Emotional disability	Traumatic brain injury
Multiple disabilities	Hearing disability	Visual impairment/blindness
Orthopedic impairment	Learning disability	Developmental Delay
Other health impairment	Speech or language impairment	

Locally Established Eligibility Criteria

If funded spaces are available and a child does not meet the state’s primary criteria, then school divisions may consider locally established criteria listed below.

If applications outnumber the available VPI funding allocation, the following locally-selected criteria may be considered in addition to the state’s primary criteria to identify the students with the greater risk factors that may affect academic achievement:

The child lives in a single-parent household.	The child is an English language learner
The child exhibits behavioral concerns or undiagnosed developmental concerns that are not typical for their age.	One of the child’s parents or guardians are chronically ill.
The child is in the care of a non-biological guardian who has custody (e.g., step-parent, grandparent).	The child’s family is under stress as evidenced by episodes of violence, crime, or incarceration of a parent.
The child’s family is under stress due to a military deployment, recent deployment, or recent relocation related to a military assignment.	The child is in foster care or at risk based on involvement in the child welfare system.
Abuse/Trauma: A family member suffers from abuse including all forms of trauma and/or adverse childhood experiences.	

February 2021 Update for COVID-19 Impacts

Virginia recognizes that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on many young children and families.

Our 2021-2022 application process will collect information related to COVID-19 impacts to be considered under the Local Eligibility Criteria. Please review the list below as it may apply to your family’s current situation due to impact of COVID-19, and complete the COVID-19 Impact form in the VPI Eligibility packet:

- Termination of employment of one or both parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Furlough from employment without pay for an extended period of time for one or both parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Parent/guardian resigned from employment due to lack of child care services
- Loss of child support payments due to termination of employment
- Negative impact on household budget due to “catching –up” by paying accumulated rent and utility payments that were temporarily suspended during COVID-19 outbreak
- COVID-19 illness of a family member
- Death of a family member due to COVID-19
- Household or family has experienced hardship as a result of parent or guardian being considered essential personnel related to COVID-19 support
- Child’s behavior and/or mental health has been significantly impacted by COVID-19

GCPS Preschool helps 4-year-olds become ready for school!

Children are ready for school when they can:

- Communicate by labeling objects and feelings, provide simple descriptions for events
- Use language to solve problems and negotiate with adults and other children
- Answer questions, tell stories, and learn to use new words
- Show interest in books when they are read by adults or other children
- Draw and pretend to write their name or letters and symbols
- Use numbers to describe and compare (3 stickers, more cookies)
- Identify simple patterns
- Explore and show curiosity
- Use their five senses to observe the world around them
- Practice different movements to control their bodies

Adapted from: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/early-childhood/school-readiness/va_school_readiness_definition.pdf

If you have additional questions about GCPS preschool, please email vpi@gc.k12.va.us.

Gloucester County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs, activities, or employment.



Inspiring Quality Learning and Healthy Habits from Birth to Kindergarten!

Gloucester County *Ready to Grow, Ready to Go!* Community Action Team

Gloucester County Public Schools staff along with other Gloucester County public, private, and parochial preschool providers, and Gloucester County health and service organizations, convened a committee entitled *Ready to Grow, Ready to Go!* in 2019. The goal of the committee is to support the needs of families with children from birth to Kindergarten. Based on the results of a needs survey conducted with a sample of these families, the committee has begun to develop and share resources that support the social, emotional, motor skills, and academic development of their children aged birth to 5.

For updates and information, visit the Ready to Grow, Ready to Go Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Ready-to-Grow-Ready-to-Go-104895681207176/>