

Enrolling Your Child in Ohio

Enrollment

Starting a new school is an exciting time for children and their families. It is the start of new relationships with friends and teachers. It is also a time when your family is becoming a part of the school community. Before your children can start school, you must enroll them. During enrollment, you will learn about many programs and what the school has to offer students and families.

You will need to share information about your family and your child. This includes information about the languages you use at home. If your child attended school in another country, you may need to translate their previous school documents to English to share with the school.

Schools may ask families to bring translations of school documents when enrolling their child in a new school. In these cases, families may need to pay a fee to get the transcripts translated. Some community organizations may provide translation services at a lower cost or for free.

Your family has important rights when enrolling your child in school. For example, schools cannot force or require families to give their social security numbers. They also cannot require families to share about their immigration status as a requirement for children to enroll or attend school. To learn more about the rights of families and students, [visit our education rights page](#).

You can also watch [the video about Enrolling Your Child in Ohio](#).

When should my child enroll in school?

In the United States, every child has the right to an education. This gives children the knowledge and skills they need to have a successful future. For that reason, there are laws in

the United States that require families to enroll their children in school. All Ohio children are required to receive schooling from ages 6 to 18.

Students who are English learners may attend high school until the age of 22.

In Ohio, there are options for young children to attend early learning or preschool programs before they register for kindergarten. A child must be at least 5 years old to enter kindergarten or 6 years old to enter first grade. The latest a child can be enrolled in kindergarten is until the age of 6. Most children begin their education in kindergarten at age 5 or 6 and graduate after grade 12 at the age of 17 or 18. Each level students go through in school is called a grade.

- If your family is new to the United States or Ohio and arrives in the summer, try to enroll your child before the start of the new school year. The school year usually starts in August or September.
- If your family arrives from another state or country after the school year has already begun, enroll your child as soon as possible.
- If your child is moving from one Ohio school to another, enroll your child in the new school as soon as possible.

The academic year is usually from August to May. Students are usually on break in December and January and in the summer months. Children do not attend school during special holidays and breaks. These dates are chosen by each school district. Children usually attend school five days a week from Monday to Friday. Learn more about the U.S. school system on the [USA Hello Public School page](#).

Once your child is enrolled in school, they are expected to go to school and participate in classes every school day. Children who attend school every day have a greater chance of being successful in school and graduating on time. [Visit our attendance page to learn more.](#)

Parents in Ohio can choose to educate their children at home instead of sending them to

school. They just need to tell the superintendent of their local school district and follow the rules of Ohio law for homeschooling. Learn more on the [Home Schooling page on the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce website](#).

Enrolling Children Who Are Younger Than Six

Preschool

Children who are 3 to 5 years old can attend preschool. Preschool can also help children who need extra supports for learning to get the help they need. This means that preschool is not required. Preschool can help children develop important skills and prepare for kindergarten. Families may choose when and where to have their children go to preschool. Learn more about [preschool on the Colorín Colorado website](#).

Preschool can help children:

- Be prepared for kindergarten.
- Develop important social and emotional skills.
- Participate in activities that support their growth.
- Be curious and interested in learning.
- Learn to take care of themselves and others.
- Learn skills to prepare them to read and do math.
- Improve their thinking and language skills.

Kindergarten, the first level in school

Children may begin formal schooling as early as the age of 5. They begin by attending the first level of formal schooling in the United States, kindergarten. The latest a child may enroll in kindergarten is at the age of 6. To attend kindergarten, children must be at least 5 years old by a specific date. This date can be different for each school district.

It is important to check with your school district to know when you can enroll your child and what you need to do. At some school districts children must turn 5 by either

August 1 or September 30 to enroll in school. You can learn more about [kindergarten on the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's website](#).

- In kindergarten, children learn to read and write basic words and sentences.
- They also develop their mathematical skills by learning to count, add, and subtract small numbers.
- Children participate in various hands-on activities, such as painting, drawing, and building with blocks to enhance their creativity.
- They learn to socialize and interact with their peers through playing games and sharing in groups.
- Kindergarteners also start developing their fine motor skills through activities like cutting, coloring, and using scissors.

Learn more about pre-school and kindergarten on the [Early Learning Family Resources page of the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's website](#).

Steps for Enrolling Your Child in School

To enroll your child in school for any grade there are some steps to follow.

1. **Determine which school district serves families where you live.** You can go to [The Finder page of the Ohio Department of Taxation](#) website to find out which school district you belong to. Just enter your home address. Families in Ohio have options for where their children attend school. Choices vary based on where families live. To learn about different types of schools in Ohio, use the [Choosing a School in Ohio Tool on the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center website](#).
2. **Contact the school district to determine how you may enroll your child.** Schools may have families enroll online or in person. Some school districts may have you go to a local school or to a central enrollment center at the school district. District phone numbers and addresses may be found on the district website. You may also visit the district offices to ask in person. At this time, you can let the school district know if you need an interpreter.

An interpreter can help you talk with the school when you are enrolling your child.

3. **Complete enrollment with the school district.** Sometimes, this may be done in person or online.
4. **To enroll your child, you will need to provide the school district with information about your child and family.** Some documents and information you will need to give the district include documents that show:
 - Your child's age.
 - Your family address in the school district.
 - Your child's record of receiving necessary immunizations.
 - Information about your child's parents or guardians.
 - Your language preferences.
5. **Verify that you have the information you need from the school for your child to begin attending school.**
6. **Make sure to ask any questions you have.**
7. **Share any information you would like the school to know about your child or your family.**

Checklist of Documents to Have for Enrollment

This checklist includes the materials most schools require for enrolling students. The materials required or accepted can be different at each school. It is important to ask the school about what types of documents and materials they need from your family.

Identification Materials from Parents or Guardians

Some options include:

- Driver's license.
- Photo identification from the United States.
- Green card.
- Passport.

- Visa.
- I-94 form.

□ Documents Showing When Your Child Was Born

Some options include:

- Birth certificate.
- Passport that shows date and place of birth.
- Certified religious record showing date and place of birth.
- Birth affidavit.

□ Documents Showing That Your Family Lives in the School District

Some options include:

- Recent utility bill (gas, electric, water) addressed to a parent or guardian's name.
- Recent pay stub with the name and address of a parent or guardian.
- Current lease agreement with a parent or guardian's name.

□ Documents Showing That Your Child Has the Necessary Immunizations

The school may require these or other immunizations and tests:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DPT).
- Polio (IPV).
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella.
- Hepatitis B.
- Varicella (chicken pox).
- Meningococcal (for grades 7 and 12).
- Negative tuberculosis test (for students born outside of the United States or who recently traveled to another country).

You can learn more about the immunizations required at different ages on the [Ohio Department of Health website](#).

If you do not wish to vaccinate your child for religious or other reasons, talk with the school, or ask about this when enrolling your child.

Information from the Previous School, If Available

Options include:

- Special education documents, like Individual Education Plan (IEP), 504 plan, or Evaluation Team Report.
- Attendance record.
- Transcript (grades from previous school).
- Test or assessment scores.

Forms and Information for Enrollment

Some school districts have registration forms that they ask families to complete when enrolling their children. The forms and ways different schools collect student information may not look the same. The school you enroll your child in should explain which forms you need to complete.

- Emergency contact form** – The school may ask you to provide information about one or more people that it can contact when there is an emergency if it is unable to contact the parents or guardians.
- Home Language Survey** – This form is used by the school to understand what languages are used at home and what language your family understands best. This information also helps the school know if your child may benefit from getting help to [improve their English skills](#).
- Student records from the previous school** – Students who are enrolling in a new school district may be asked to provide information from their previous schools. This can include information about their grades, attendance, and test scores.

- Special education documents** – Families with children who received special education in

their previous schools may be asked to provide information about the children's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the Evaluation Team Report, or a 504 plan.

- **Household information survey** – This survey may ask for information about your family and your household income. The school may ask how much money your family makes. This is to see if your family or child may receive extra help.
- **Free and reduced meals form** – During enrollment, a school may ask families to provide information. This is to see if your child can get free or discounted meals from the school. The school may also ask about how much money your family makes.
- **Transportation forms** – During enrollment, a school may ask families to provide information to see if your child needs help getting to school. The school may ask about the people who are allowed to pick your child up from school.
- **Custody forms** – A child may live with someone other than a biological parent or with parents who are separated or divorced. The school may ask for documents that show who has legal custody of the child.

Tips and Questions Families Can Use During Enrollment

The school may ask for a lot of information from you. This is also a good time for you to learn about the school. You can ask questions that will be helpful to you and your child. Here is a list of possible questions.

Questions You Can Ask During Enrollment

- How can the school help my child learn English?
- How will I get information from the school once my child is enrolled?
- Can the school help with getting my child to school or home?
- Does the school have before- or after-school programs? How do I enroll my child in those programs?
- My child takes medicine during the day. How can I make sure my child takes the medication during school?

- Where can I find information about the meals offered by the school?
- Does the school require uniforms or have a dress code?
- What are the school's hours?
- Is there a school calendar available that shows holidays and school breaks?
- What can I do if my family celebrates a holiday that is not on the school calendar?
- What school supplies does my child need for the first few days of school?

Tips for Families

- When you are making an appointment to enroll your child let the school know if you would like help from an [interpreter](#).
- Make sure to tell the school about any allergies, medical conditions, or medications your child needs.
- If possible, visit your school and district websites to see what information is available to help you prepare for enrolling your child.
- Ask for a school calendar and information about when the school may open late or close early.



Additional Resources

- This USA Hello page provides more information about how schools work in the U.S. <https://usahello.org/education/children/public-school>
- This school registration webpage from USA Hello provides additional enrollment information in different languages. <https://usahello.org/education/children/register-child-in-school>
- This English Learner Family Toolkit is available in four languages (English, Arabic, Chinese and Spanish) and includes information about enrollment. Just follow the link and select Chapter
- <https://ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/family-toolkit>
- This how to enroll fact sheet from the Education Law Center explains how to enroll children living with someone other than their parents. <https://www.elc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/how-to-enroll-a-child-living-with-caregivers-1302-fact-sheet.pdf>
- This Ohio Department of Health immunization webpage explains what immunizations students need to attend school. <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our->

- [programs/immunization/media/immunization-summary- school](https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Supporting-Young-Dual-Language-Learners)
The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce supporting young dual language learners webpage explains the identification process.
<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Supporting-Young-Dual-Language-Learners>

These resources aim to bolster academic, student wellness, and college and career outcomes for Ohio's English Learners. Resources were created through a collaborative effort between the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and The Ohio State University's Center on Education and Training for Employment along with a dedicated group of family advocates, community leaders, school district personnel, and teachers.