



UPK FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Universal Prekindergarten (UPK)?

UPK is a free preschool experience made possible through grants from the New York State Education Department (NYSED). As long as the funding remains available and as long as the district has the resources to coordinate the program, the district can offer the program. In New York State, UPK is a State and federally-funded prekindergarten program offered to families free of charge. The only eligibility requirement for UPK in New York State is a child's residency and age. UPK is not an entitlement in New York State and not all families currently have access to UPK. In districts where UPK is available, entry is based on lottery systems, and not all families who register are guaranteed a spot. Families should check with their local school district to see if they offer UPK and when registrations begins.

Is the UPK program free?

Yes. The cost of tuition for those students selected through a lottery selection process is paid for by grants. There are no fees paid by the family or the district for the five-day-a-week, full-day program.

What days are the children off from school?

Each UPK provider creates their own school calendar modeled after the Lindenhurst Union Free School District calendar. Please be aware that there may be times when the calendars differ slightly- the provider may have school on a day when the District does not have school and vice versa. In order to avoid conflicts, please be sure you have **both** calendars so you are aware of any differences in days off and you can plan accordingly. PLEASE NOTE: If your child's UPK Provider has a delayed start, early dismissal or snow day, before-care and after-care may not be available, but please check with your UPK provider directly.

How long is the program?

All the programs (Stanford, Scope, Just Kids, Little Angels) operate Monday through Friday, for 180 days (as per the district calendar). The full-day instructional program is 5 hours per day.

Is the program run by the Lindenhurst Union Free School?

The program is administered by the Lindenhurst Union Free School but is offered at community-based organizations (CBOs), also referred to as "providers".

Who is eligible? How do I apply?

Lindenhurst Union Free School children who turn (4) years of age on or before December 1st of a given year are eligible for the program. To apply, you just must complete the Universal Pre-Kindergarten Application. You may request an application by emailing upk@lufsd.org or pick up at the Administration Building. For those who wish to be included in the lottery, applications must be received in our office no later than the application deadline in February. This allows proper processing for our lottery. We accept applications all year long. **Applications received after the deadline will automatically be placed at the end of the waiting list.**

If I hand in my application right away, does that improve my child's chances of being selected?

No. All completed, eligible applications will be included in the lottery. It is best to wait to hand in your application until you have completed all applicable forms and have all of your documentation to submit with your application. Submitting documentation after handing in your application is discouraged as it makes it more difficult for the UPK Office to process your application.

How does the lottery work for twins or triplets?

Although we work at exhaust to give preference to families with twins, the selection of one twin has no effect on the selection number of any other siblings during the lottery.

Can all district 4-year-olds attend?

No. The amount of funding the New York State Education Department allocates for these grants will determine how many students can be served. Typically, every year there are more applicants than the number of available spots; therefore, a lottery is used to determine who will participate. All students who are not selected during the lottery will be placed on a waiting list. If any vacancies occur during the year, they will be filled until the waiting list has been exhausted.

When will we know if the grant is going to be offered again?

Funding is contingent upon the Governor's proposed budget. It is unknown at this time if this funding will continue. Usually, the state budget is adopted in April. Once the state budget is adopted, funds are allocated in May. Budget votes for all New York School districts take place on the 3rd Tuesday in May. After the state and local school budgets have been decided, we will know if the UPK program will be offered and for how many students.

When is the best time to drop off my application?

Completed UPK applications can be mailed to or dropped off at the Central Office Administration Building, 350 Daniel Street, Lindenhurst, NY 11757. If you have any questions, please call (631)-867-3087 or email the UPK Office at UPK@lufsd.org before mailing or bringing your application to the Central Office Administration Building.

How will I know if my child has been chosen?

The lottery usually takes place in February to determine which students will start the program in September of that respective school year. All applicants will be notified via email and asked to confirm receipt of the email. If your child is selected for one of the spots in the program, the email will identify the UPK provider where your child has been placed. If your child is not selected for one of the spots, the email will indicate your child has been placed on the waiting list. If we do not receive confirmation that you received the email, we will then attempt to reach you by phone and finally, if necessary, by a letter mailed to your home.

If selected, which UPK provider will my child attend?

During the application process, you will indicate which UPK class is your 1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice, etc. We try to place students in one of their choices unless that class is full or your child has certain medical needs, physical needs, or services that dictate they be placed at a specific UPK provider. If your child does not have any medical or physical needs and does not receive any services and their first choice is full, then we will move to the second choice, the third choice, etc. until placement is available.

How will my child's medical needs, physical needs, and/or need services (speech, OT, PT) affect which UPK provider my child will attend?

Your child's medical and physical needs as well as any services they receive may dictate which provider they will need to be placed at. If your child develops any medical or physical needs or begins receiving services after they have already been placed at one of the UPK providers, we retain the right to switch your child's placement to the UPK provider where those needs or services can best be met regardless of the time of the year.

Can we choose the locations we want our child to attend?

You can indicate on your application your 1st, 2nd, 3rd choice, etc. of the classroom you would like. We will make every attempt to accommodate your request unless your child's medical and/or physical needs dictate which provider they will need to be placed at. **We cannot guarantee placement at a specific provider.**

How does the waiting list work?

If for any reason, a child drops out of the UPK program, the next family on the waiting list will be offered the vacant spot. If the family declines the vacancy for any reason, that child will be removed from the waiting list and no longer eligible to participate in the UPK program.

What if there is a custody situation regarding my child?

You must provide custody documentation from courts when you submit your application. In addition, you must notify the UPK provider. We recommend that you follow up with the UPK provider to be sure that all the proper safeguards are in place.

Is there a religious exemption for immunization requirements?

New York State no longer offers a religious exemption for immunizations.

Is there a medical exemption for immunization requirements?

Yes. A valid medical exemption must adhere to all of the following:

- Be submitted on a signed, completed medical exemption form issued by NYSDOH
- Specify which immunizations may be detrimental to the child's health
- Contain sufficient information to determine if a medical contraindication to a specific immunization exists
- Specify the length of time the immunization is medically contraindicated
- Be reissued annually

The UPK nurse may require additional information beyond the items above. See the [attached form](#).

What is taught in the UPK program?

All UPK providers that are contracted by the district must follow the New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards and utilize the Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum. Each UPK provider is permitted flexibility in how they choose to deliver the curriculum.

Does every UPK provider have to run identical programs?

Specific teachers, lessons, and special events will vary by location. However, any UPK provider selected by the Lindenhurst Board of Education must adhere to state and local standards.

Is transportation available?

No. Families must provide transportation for their children. It is expected that students will be dropped off and picked up at the appointed starting and ending times for their particular class. All three grants pay for students to attend school for 5 hrs each day of school session, so it is not acceptable or permissible to repeatedly drop your child off late for class or pick them up early before class ends. **If you regularly do not get your child to school on time or regularly pick them up before class ends, your child's continued enrollment in the UPK program may be jeopardized.**

Is lunch provided?

Students in the full day UPK will have the choice to bring a bagged lunch or order lunch from our food service provider.

Should my child be potty trained?

While it is not a requirement for children to be potty trained to participate in UPK, if you have not already started to potty train your child, we highly recommend you do so as it will make your child's transition into UPK much smoother. Many families have found the eBook "**3 Day Potty Training**" by Lora Jensen to be a great resource. There may be a fee to purchase or download this file/eBook.