

PARENT ACTION GUIDES



TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE TO PARENTS 4

PARENT ACTION GUIDES

What Are My School Choice Options? 5

How Can I Get Involved at My Child’s School?..... 23

Early Education (Ages 0 – 5)..... 29

Preparing for Education After High School 37

**FOR EXTRAS: SCHOOL PROFILES, FAQ, METHODOLOGY, AND
MORE VISIT: WWW.TEXASSCHOOLGUIDE.ORG/RESOURCES**

DISCLAIMER

CHILDREN AT RISK is a nonprofit organization that drives change for children through research, education, and influencing public policy. Texas School Guide: Empowering Families to Succeed in Public Education has been developed independently and is not endorsed by the Forth Worth Independent School District (Forth Worth ISD). The school level information that appears in this guide has been gathered from the Texas Education Agency, the Forth Worth ISD website, or individual schools. The information in this guide is subject to change at any time and it is important that parents, community members, educators, and all others contact their schools directly to obtain the most current and accurate information.

See www.texasschoolguide.org/resources for a more detailed description of our methodology.

WELCOME TO THE FOURTH EDITION OF TEXAS SCHOOL GUIDE!

CHILDREN AT RISK hopes that *Texas School Guide: Empowering Parents to Succeed in Public Education* for the Fort Worth ISD area will be your trusted resource for making decisions about your child's education.

In this book, you will find four Parent Action Guides to help you in the process:

1. What Are My School Options?

This guide lays out a four-step process for figuring out public school options for your child in grades Kindergarten through 12th.

2. How Can I Get Involved at My Child's School?

Being involved in your child's school can help them succeed! This section explains different ways you can get involved.

3. Early Education (Ages 0 – 5)

This section is for parents or caregivers with children ages 5 and younger. It explains all of their options for education and why education is so important during the child's first few years of life.

4. Preparing for Education After High School

This section applies to parents or caregivers with students in middle school or high school. It is never too early to start thinking about the future!

You can find this same information and more at www.texasschoolguide.org/resources.

Remember, it is helpful to always contact the program or school for the most updated information. Throughout the guide, we offer many phone numbers and websites to help you navigate the system.

We encourage you to share this valuable resource with others so that more children have the opportunity for quality education and a brighter future. Please send feedback to texasschoolguide@childrenatrisk.org, so that we can continue to improve this resource for children and families!

For Children,



Dr. Robert Sanborn
President & CEO
CHILDREN AT RISK





PARENT ACTION GUIDES

What Are My School
Choice Options?

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

WHAT IS SCHOOL CHOICE?

School choice is selecting a school for your child based on the qualities of the school and your child's needs, rather than on your home address.



Parents have options other than the traditional neighborhood school assigned to their home address, but options are different for each district.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF SCHOOLS MY FAMILY CAN CHOOSE?

A **Neighborhood School** is the public school that a child is assigned based on his or her family's home address.

A **Charter School** is a public school that is not managed by a local school district. They are:

- Tuition-free.
- Open to any student within a specific area that wishes to apply.
- Usually required to use a lottery system to choose the students who may attend.
- Can have different rules than neighborhood schools (example: some charters may have a longer school day or year).

A **Program or School of Choice** is a Fort Worth ISD school option that:

- Is housed at a neighborhood school (Program of Choice) or has its own campus (School of Choice).
- Offers a more in-depth education in its focus area than traditional public schools.
- Offers a curriculum that is mostly focused on a specific subject (example: Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM), performing arts, leadership, or certain career paths).

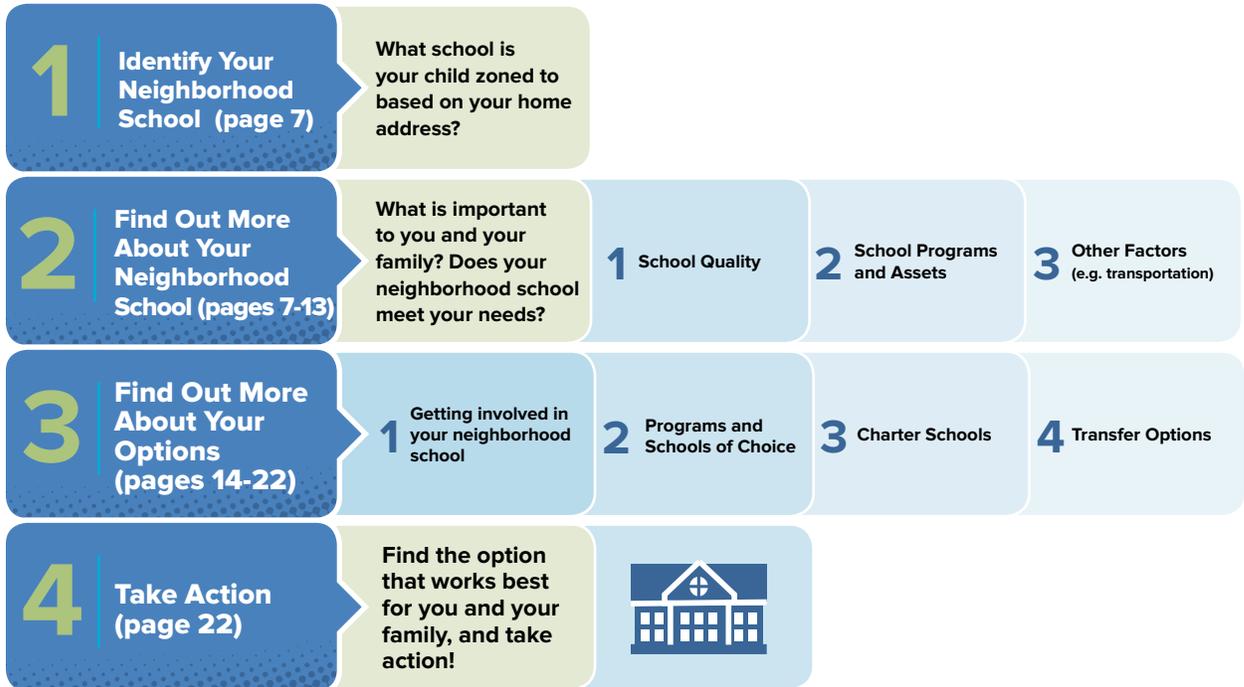
A **Private School** is a school that is not funded by the government. Private schools receive funding from individuals or a private organization. They usually require students to:

- Pay tuition.
- Complete an application process that may include applications, tests, interviews, and financial aid applications.

Private schools can have a religious affiliation or be independent. Although this guide does not include profiles of private schools, they are one of the available options for parents.

THE TEXAS SCHOOL GUIDE FOUR-STEP PROCESS

A Four-Step Guide to Finding the Right School for Your Child



STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

To find your neighborhood school, you can use Fort Worth ISD’s SchoolSite Locator at apps.schoolsitelocator.com/?districtcode=72947! You will need your child’s:

- Home address
- City
- State
- Zip code

The school district sets boundaries for all schools in the district, and these boundaries can change. Once you have found your neighborhood school, don’t forget to call them to confirm prior to enrollment!

STEP 2: FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

Once you know your child’s neighborhood school, you still need to decide if it is the best option for your child. You can look at:

- School quality.
- School programs / assets.
- Other important factors, like transportation options.

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

School Quality

Using www.texaschoolguide.org, look up your child's school profile. This profile shows a lot of information about the school, including the school's 2016 CHILDREN AT RISK School Rankings.

- School Grade – Just like students, each school is given a grade of A through F. A grade of A, B, and even some C schools are all good options for student success!
- School Ranking – Most schools across the state are ranked based on their grade received.

You can also look at the 2016-2017 Public Education Grant (PEG) List on [page 21](#) to see if the Texas Education Agency rated your child's school as underperforming. In some cases, you can transfer your child to a better school based on a school's PEG status.

Finally, be sure to look for the different organizations that are working in your school. This can be a sign that the community is making an investment to help your child's learning!



Determine what is important for your student and family. There are a variety of activities and programs that may enrich your student's learning experience.

School Programs / Assets

Academic quality isn't the only important thing about your child's school! Your child might be interested in an activity like art, music, or STEM (Science Technology Math Engineering). If so, you may want your child to be in programs that encourage their learning in those areas. And, if your child is in high school, you may want him or her to have access to a college counselor.

In the school profiles, you will find information on programs offered by all public and charter schools in the district. If a school offers the following programs, it will be included in its profile:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	MIDDLE SCHOOLS	HIGH SCHOOLS
Art Classes	Art Classes	Art Classes
Music Classes	Music Classes	Music Classes
Dual Language	Dual Language	Dual Language
Before School Program (if available, grades that are offered this program)*	Before School Program*	AP, IB, College/Dual Credit Options*
After School Program (if available, grades that are offered this program)*	After School Program*	College Counseling
Pre-K (Full Day)*	Sports/Athletics*	Sports/Athletics*
Pre-K (Half Day)*	–	–

* There may be a weekly or monthly fee associated with these programs. Contact the school for more information.

Other Important Factors

- What else is important to you and your family?
- Is transportation a concern?
- What is the school's climate?
- What resources are available for students with special needs?



You have the right to ask questions and find the resources you need for your child.

Transportation Options in Fort Worth ISD

Getting your child to and from school can sometimes be a challenge. Many parents have busy work schedules or may not have a vehicle at home. Fort Worth ISD has some options.

Fort Worth ISD students are eligible to ride the bus if they live within district boundaries and:

- Are in grades K-12, live two or more miles away from their neighborhood school or from the program or school of choice if they have been accepted; or
- Are a special education student between the ages of 3 and 21, who has disabilities that prevent them from using regular transportation.

Out of district students are responsible for their own transportation.

Parents should reach out directly to the district and also to their school principals for a definitive answer about PEG transfer transportation.

Visit texasprojectfirst.org/FAQTransportation.html to learn more about transportation options available for students with special needs. If you have any questions, please call the main Special Education Department at (817) 814-2852.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Fort Worth ISD Transportation Office
(817) 815-7900**

www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Departments_Programs/Departments__L-Z_/Transportation

Resources for Students with Special Needs

Fort Worth ISD has a Special Education Department that offers programming, information, and services to families with students who have special education needs. The Department provides support in the delivery of all services as determined by an Admission, Review, or Dismissal (ARD) Committee or as stated in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals.

In Fort Worth ISD, each school provides special education instructional support for students based on their need. Instructional services can take two forms:

1. Direct to the student.
2. Consultation services to the teacher.

Visit Fort Worth ISD's Special Education website to learn more about:

- All St.A.R.S. Program
- Inclusion
- Learning in Natural Communities and Teaching to Academic Potential
- PACER Center
- Parent 2 Parent
- Parent Guide to ARD Meetings
- Partners Resource Network
- Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities
- Procedural Safeguards-Rights for Parents
- Social Emotional, Academic Support (SEAS)
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Surrogate Parent Information
- Tarrant Cares

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Fort Worth ISD Special Education Department
(817) 814-2852**

www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Departments_Programs/Departments__L-Z_/Special_Education

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

There are many organizations in the Fort Worth area that help parents who have children with special needs, including:

ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	MISSION / PURPOSE	PHONE	WEBSITE
Achievement Center of Texas	Garland, TX	Provides day care, day habilitation (life skills training), arts exploration, educational assistance, and community inclusion for children and young adults with special needs.	(972) 414-7700	www.achievementcenteroftexas.org
Association for Independent Living	Dallas, TX	Strengthens the independence of young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through life skills education, vocational guidance, community integration, and spiritual growth in a supportive living environment.	(214) 351-0798	www.afildfw.org
Callier Center for Communication Disorders	Dallas, TX Richardson, TX	Transforms the lives of those with communication disorders by providing outstanding, leading-edge clinical services, conducting meaningful and innovative basic and applied research into new treatments and technologies, and training the next generation of caring clinical providers.	Dallas: (214) 905-3000 Richardson: (972) 883-3630	www.utdallas.edu/calliercenter
Camp Summit	Dallas, TX	Provides barrier-free outdoor experiences that promote personal growth and foster independence for children and adults with disabilities.	(972) 484-8900	www.campsummittx.org
Chase's Place	Richardson, TX	Supports students in discovering their abilities so that they develop independence to their maximum potential, allowing them to live life to the fullest.	(972) 243-2676	www.chasesplace.org
Child Study Center	Fort Worth, TX	Provides children with complex developmental and behavioral disabilities the highest quality diagnosis, treatment and education, helping them achieve their full potential.	(817) 336-8611	www.cscfw.org
Citizens Development Center	Dallas, TX	Training center and employment placement organization for adults with intellectual, mental health and/or physical disabilities (clients) living in Dallas and surrounding areas.	(214) 637-2911	www.citizensdevelopmentcenter.org
Community Homes for Adults, Inc. (CHAI)	Dallas, TX	Provides programs and services to enable adults with cognitive disabilities to live full, rich lives in a safe environment and to meaningfully participate in the community.	(214) 373-8600	www.chaidallas.org
Dallas Center, Inc.	Dallas, TX	A non-profit, non-denominational, early intervention and training center for infants, children, and adults with developmental differences serving the greater Dallas metropolitan area.	(214) 328-4309	www.dallascenter.org

ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	MISSION / PURPOSE	PHONE	WEBSITE
Dallas Services	Dallas, TX	Committed to providing affordable, inclusive, and unique pre-school learning opportunities and low vision services to all individuals in our culturally and economically diverse community.	(214) 828-9900	www.dallasservices.org
Decoding Dyslexia Texas	Texas	Grassroots movement to raise dyslexia awareness, empower families to support their children, and inform policy-makers on best practices to identify, remediate, and support students with dyslexia in Texas schools.	None listed	www.decodingdyslexiatx.org
Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas	Richardson, TX	Provides accurate and current information, resources, and support for people with Down syndrome, their families, and the community.	(214) 267-1374	www.downsyndromedallas.org
Easter Seals North Texas	North Dallas, TX South Dallas, TX Fort Worth, TX Grapevine, TX	Spreads help, hope and answers, creating opportunities that advance the independence of individuals with disabilities and other special needs.	North Dallas: (972) 394-8900 South Dallas: (214) 372-3300 Fort Worth: (817) 332-7171 Grapevine (817) 424-9797	www.easterseals.com/northtexas
Evergreen Life Services	Dallas, TX Fort Worth, TX Sherman, TX Texarkana, TX Longview, TX	Offers a wide range of community-based services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, designed to not only meet basic needs, but also teach life skills and help each individual reach his or her own personal potential.	Dallas: 972) 386-4834 Ft. Worth: (817)285-8011 Sherman: (903) 893-0149	www.evergreens.org
Great Lakes Academy	Plano, TX	Provides students with average to above-average intelligence, diagnosed with various Learning Differences, Asperger's Syndrome, ADD or ADHD, a stimulating environment and favorable atmosphere which affords each student opportunities to develop.	(972)-517-7498 x 103	www.greatlakesacademy.com
Hill School	Fort Worth, TX	Provides students who learn differently and are of average to above average intelligence a student-centered educational environment that focuses on intellectual development, while supporting social, emotional, and physical well-being.	Fort Worth: (817) 923-9482	www.hillschool.org
Jo Kelly Special	Fort Worth, TX	Provides for the needs and education of students with multiple disabilities and medical fragility that they may develop to their fullest potential.	(817) 815-5900	jokelly.fwisd.org/pages/JoKelly
Lakes Regional MHMR	Various Locations	Serves the communities of 15 counties in Northeast Texas with mental health, mental disability and recovery services.	(972) 524-4159	www.lakesregional.org

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	MISSION / PURPOSE	PHONE	WEBSITE
LifePath Systems	McKinney, TX	Provides critically needed assistance to the intellectually disabled, mental illness treatment, and early childhood intervention, for developmentally delayed infants and their families.	(972) 562-0190	www.lifepathsystems.org
Metrocare Services	Dallas, TX	Dedicated to helping people with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and severe emotional problems live healthier lives.	(214) 743-1200	www.metrocareservices.org
Metrocrest Community Services	Carrollton, TX	Provides quality services to individuals with developmental disabilities and other related disabilities by supporting them in day habilitation, vocational and community services of their choice.	(972) 323-1220	www.metrocrestcs.org
My Possibilities	Plano, TX	The first full day, full year continuing education program in Collin County for disabled Texans who have “aged out” of public education.	(469) 241-9100	www.mypossibilities.org
Notre Dame School	Dallas, TX	Educates students with intellectual disabilities and facilitates their integration into society.	(214) 720-3911	www.notredameschool.org
Partners Resource Network	Texas	A non-profit agency that operates the Texas statewide network of Parent Training and Information Centers.	Region 9 and 11: (817) 988-7717 Region 10: (214) 425-3056	www.partnerstx.org
Sage Care Therapy	Dallas, TX	Aims to provide the most effective, function-centered therapies to children, and promote the most therapist-friendly Pediatric Home Health Care Company in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex area.	(214) 295-5374	www.sagecaretherapy.com
The Arc	Texas	Advocates for and serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, encompassing all ages and all spectrums from autism, Down syndrome, Fragile X and various other developmental disabilities.	The Arc of Collin, Dallas and Rockwall Counties: (214) 634-9810 The Arc of Greater Tarrant County: (817) 877-1474	www.thearcdallas.org www.arctc.org
The Shelton School	Dallas, TX	Serves students with learning differences, including dyslexia and related disorders.	(972) 774-1772	www.shelton.org
Therapy 2000	Dallas, TX Fort Worth, TX	Delivers high quality individualized home care rehabilitation services to children, such as occupational, physical, and speech therapy services to children (birth-21) with special needs, including disabilities, developmental delays and autism spectrum disorders.	Central Division - Dallas: (214) 467-9787 West Division - Ft. Worth: (817) 507-1500	www.t2000.com

School Climate

School climate is important because the school's environment sets the tone for your student's learning. It can include:

- The relationships between students and teachers.
- General school environment (how different parts of the school look and feel to you).
- Front office staff behavior.
- Bullying prevention on the school campus.
- Safety measures.

What to look for in a school climate:

- *Office staff* (school secretary, office manager, etc.) who are friendly and encouraging, and display other supportive behaviors with students, staff, and parents.
- Teachers who are *helping and speaking positively* with students in the hallways and classrooms.
- Teachers who are keeping the *students engaged and thinking critically*.
- *Parents are encouraged to visit* the school, participate in different activities, and ask questions.
- Students who are *friendly* with one another.
- The school has a *hopeful and supportive environment*, such as posters on the walls with sayings that encourage students to “reach for the stars,” etc.
- *Safety measures* in place throughout the school, such as automatic locks or gated entrances to the front office during the school day.
- *Safe and clear resources* for students with emotional, mental, and physical disabilities, such as unobstructed ramps for wheelchair access.



School climate is important because the school's environment sets the tone for your student's learning.

You can call the school or request an in-person tour to learn more about the school climate. Below are some questions you can ask to learn more about the school climate.

- How does the school provide information to parents about their child's behavior?
- How do office staff or teachers communicate positive feedback to the students?
- If a parent contacts the school, how long does it usually take to get a response?
- How does the school prevent and respond to bullying?
- Are there any official rules that require the school to notify parents when bullying happens in their child's classroom?
- What rules are in place to keep drugs from being shared on school grounds?
- How does the school support students' social and emotional growth?
- What resources and trainings does the school have to help teachers and staff support students' social and emotional growth?
- How does the school encourage parents to talk with teachers and school staff if their child is having a problem?
- How does the school support emotional and physical growth for students with special needs?

STEP 3: FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS

In this section you can explore how to:

- Visit a school.
- Get involved in your child's school.
- Look into other school options, like schools and programs of choice.
- Consider transfer options.
- Enroll in a charter school.

Visit a School

Whether you want to learn more about your neighborhood school, a charter school, or a school of choice, one of the most important things you can do when finding the best school for your child is to visit the campus!

Questions to Ask When Visiting a School

General School Priorities

- What is the school's *mission*? The mission statement is usually a sentence or two that describes the school's values and purpose.
- How does the school approach *safety*?
- How does the school approach *discipline*?
- What are the school's *greatest successes*?
- What are the school's *greatest challenges*?
- What is the *student attrition rate*? (The student attrition rate represents the number of students leaving the school each year for reasons other than graduation.)
- What is the *teacher attrition rate*? (The teacher attrition rate represents the number of teachers leaving the school each year.)

Meeting Student Needs

- How does the school keep track of *student academic progress*?
- How do teachers instruct students with *limited English proficiency*?
- What *strategies* do teachers use to help students catch up if they are falling behind?
- What services do you have for students with *special needs* or learning disabilities?
- How do students get to school? Is *bus transportation* available?
- Does the school have *free or reduced-price meals* for students who qualify based on family income?
- If a child is doing really well in his or her classes, does the school have *advanced courses or programs* that help them continue to succeed?

Classroom and Curriculum

- What *rules and systems* are most important in classrooms?
- What is the typical *class size*? What is the maximum class size?
- How is *technology* used to support teaching and learning?
- What *non-academic activities* are available for students?
- How does *fine arts* fit into the curriculum?

Parent Involvement

- How can parents to *get involved*?
- How do teachers and staff *communicate with parents*?
- Are *parent-teacher conferences* scheduled regularly throughout the year?

Get Involved in Your Child's School

If you are not happy with your child's school, you can try to make changes to the campus. For example, if you feel like your child's neighborhood school isn't meeting your child's academic needs, start by asking questions. If the school is on the Public Education Grant (PEG) List or if it scored a D or an F in the CHILDREN AT RISK Rankings, you have a right to find out why.

You can start by scheduling a meeting with a school staff member or the principal. If you don't get the answers you need, reach out to your School Board Representative. Find out more about how to get involved on [page 23](#).



If you are not happy with your child's school, you can try to make changes to the campus.

Check Out Programs and Schools of Choice

Fort Worth ISD's programs and schools of choice provide a curriculum focused around a particular subject (such as science) or a particular career, in addition to regular academic subjects. These are the three main categories of choice:

1. Programs of Choice
2. Schools of Choice
3. Gold Seal Programs of Choice

Programs of Choice are available at some middle and elementary schools across Fort Worth ISD. They offer a focus on certain subjects, such as science, math, art, foreign language, or communication.

Fort Worth ISD **Schools of Choice** can offer students a unique learning environment, such as a Montessori school. These schools are stand-alone campuses that can serve children in elementary, middle, and high school grade levels on the same campus.

Gold Seal Programs of Choice are available at every Fort Worth ISD high school and prepare students for college or a career after graduation. The programs can include:

- Licensures and certifications.
- College credit hours.
- Internship opportunities.
- "Real world" experiences.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND
CURRENT DEADLINES, CONTACT:
817-814-2580
karen.ponder@fwisd.org

www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Departments_Programs/Departments__A-K_/Choices

Programs and Schools of Choice Application Process

Be sure to first check the updated deadlines and application requirements listed on the website:

www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Departments_Programs/Departments__A-K_/Choices

THE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR SCHOOLS OF CHOICE	
End of October – November	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentations are made to 5th and 8th grade students about the programs and application process.• Applications become available online and in schools.• The Choices Expo is held.• Open House/Parent Tours are hosted at individual schools.
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applications are due• Do not submit applications to individual schools.• Submit applications online or to: The Advanced, Accelerated and Innovative Learning Department located in the Fort Worth ISD Administration Building at 100 N. University Dr., Suite NE226, Fort Worth, TX 76107
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acceptance letters are sent to students

All Programs and Schools of Choice require an application. Some schools have additional requirements (see table on pages 17-19). You can submit a paper application or apply online during the application period at: www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Departments_Programs/Departments__A-K_/Choices.



Application Tips:

- Any student interested in a Program or School of Choice must submit an application, even if the program or school is at the student's neighborhood school.
- Students can apply for up to 3 programs, and the student can list the programs in order of preference on the application.
- Transportation is provided to Fort Worth ISD students if they choose a program or school that is not available at their neighborhood school.
- A computer randomly selects students for the programs and schools through a lottery process.

Even though selection is random, students will be given priority in the order below:

1. Students living in the zoned area to the school at which they are applying.
2. Siblings of resident students who are already enrolled in the school's Program of Choice.
3. Children of resident District employees.
4. Students living in the District but outside of the attendance zone.
5. Children of non-resident District employees.
6. Students living outside of the District.

Below is a list of Programs and Schools of Choice in Fort Worth ISD. On the school's profile you will see the CHILDREN AT RISK Letter Grade. Please keep in mind that this Letter Grade is for the entire school, not specifically the Program of Choice that might be housed within the school.

SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL	AREA OF FOCUS	REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS
A.M. Pate Elementary	KG - 05	Science; Technology; Engineering; Aviation; Communication	Application only
Alice Carlson Applied Learning Center	KG - 05	Applied Learning and Enrichment Programs	Application only
Applied Learning Academy	06 - 08	Applied Learning and Enrichment Programs	Application only
Arlington Heights High School	09 - 12	Creative Arts; College Credit; Agriculture and Horticulture; Marketing	Application only
Benbrook Middle-High School	09 - 12	Entrepreneur Student Training; Public Leadership and National Security	Application only
Burton Hill Elementary	PK - 05	Spanish Immersion	Application only
Carter-Riverside High School	09 - 12	Eagle Scholars Academy/College Credit; Information Technology; Medical Academy	Application only
Christene C. Moss Elementary	PK - 05	Technology; Engineering	Application only
Como Elementary	PK - 05	Music	Application only
Como Montessori	KG - 08	Montessori	Application only
Daggett Montessori	KG - 08	Montessori	Application only
Diamond Hill-Jarvis High School	09 - 12	Early College; Building Trades and Design; Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine; Engineering and Robotics	Application only
Eastern Hills High School	09 - 12	Fire Science Technology; Law Enforcement; Legal Services; Teacher Academy and Early Childhood	Application only
Handley Middle School	06 - 08	Environmental Science and Technology	Application only
Hazel Harvey Peace Elementary	PK - 05	Engineering and Technology	Application only
J Martin Jacquet Middle School	06 - 08	Math; Science; Communication	Application only
J. P. Elder Middle School	06 - 08	Science and Art	Application only
J.T. Stevens Elementary	PK - 05	Applied Learning; Enrichment Programs	Application only
Leonard Middle School	06 - 08	International Baccalaureate	Application only
Marine Creek Collegiate High School	09 - 12	Early College	Application, Early College High School Application, teacher recommendation, and most recent report card

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL	AREA OF FOCUS	REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS
Maude I. Logan Elementary	PK - 05	Robotics; Engineering	Application only
Meacham Middle School	06 - 08	Pre-Vet; Robotics	Application only
Meadowbrook Middle School	06 - 08	STEM Prep Academy; Computer Science; Engineering	Application, STARR scores, and attendance at parent/student orientation
Monnig Middle School	06 - 08	Mastering Advanced Academics and Artistic Integration; Visual and Performing Arts	Application, assessment, attendance at parent/student orientation, and parent/student commitment
Morningside Elementary	PK - 05	Science, Math and Technology; Spanish Immersion	Application only
Morningside Middle School	06 - 08	International Studies	Application only
North Side High School	09 - 12	Culinary, Hospitality and Event Management; Medical Professions; Music Excellence Through Mariachi Education; Scholars Academy	Application only
O. D. Wyatt High School	09 - 12	Automotive; Construction; Nursing, Medical Billing and Coding and Pharmacy Technician; Culinary Arts and Restaurant Management Institute	Application only
Paul Laurence Dunbar High School	09 - 12	Aviation Technology; Business Development; Engineering and Robotics	Application only
Polytechnic High School	09 - 12	Advanced Media Production and Communications; Automotive Technology; Culinary Arts; Engineering; Teaching and Learning	Application only
R. L. Paschal High School	09 - 12	Engineering, Math and Science; Advanced Accelerated Academy; Multimedia Technology	Application only
Riverside Applied Learning Center	PK - 05	Applied Learning; Enrichment Programs	Application only
Rosemont 6th	06 - 06	Junior Cadet Corps Leadership	Application only
Rosemont Middle School	07 - 08	Junior Cadet Corps Leadership	Application only
South Hills High School	09 - 12	Academy of Teaching and Learning; Culinary Arts; Digital Graphics and Gaming	Application only
Southwest High School	09 - 12	Broadcast Journalism and Media Technology; Fine Arts Through Music Excellence; Southwest Engineering Academy	Application only
Stripling Middle School	06 - 08	Biomedical Sciences Preparatory	Application only

SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL	AREA OF FOCUS	REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS
Tarrant County College South/Fort Worth ISD Collegiate High School	09 - 12	Early College; Science; Technology; Engineering; Arts; Mathematics	Application, Early College High School Application, teacher recommendation, and most recent report card
Texas Academy of Biomedical Sciences	09 - 12	Early College; STEM	Application, Early College High School Application, teacher recommendation, and most recent report card
Trimble Technical High School	09 - 12	Advanced Applied Learning Program; Culinary Arts; Retail Entrepreneurship; Theater Arts Production; Welding Fabrication and Metal Art; Course Pathways	Application, most recent report card, and essay
Wedgwood 6th Grade School	06 - 06	Fine Arts through Band (FAB); Broadcast Journalism; Pre-Engineering in Petroleum Technology	Application only
Wedgwood Middle School	06 - 08	Fine Arts through Band (FAB); Broadcast Journalism; Pre-Engineering in Petroleum Technology	Application only
Western Hills High School	09 - 12	Audio/Video Production; International Baccalaureate; STEM; Teaching and Learning	Application only
William James Middle School	06 - 08	College Readiness	Application only
World Languages Institute	06 - 12	Dual Language Enrichment; Spanish Immersion	Application, hand-written essay, and copy of most recent report card
Young Men's Leadership Academy	06 - 12	Leadership; Coursework paths in Engineering and Business Marketing Technology	Application, most recent report card, hand-written essay, 2 teacher recommendations, and student interview
Young Women's Leadership Academy	06 - 12	Math, Science, Technology; Leadership Skills; Bio-Mechanical Engineering; Integrated Digital Media and Animation	Application, most recent report card, hand-written essay, 2 teacher recommendations, STARR scores, and record of attendance

Transfer Your Child to Another Fort Worth ISD School

A student's neighborhood school is based on his or her home address. Students can apply for transfer requests to other schools if they meet one of these 2 requirements:

1. **Open Transfers:** Initiated because of student/family needs.
2. **Public Education Grant (PEG) School Transfers:** If your neighborhood school has a track record of failing to meet state requirements.

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

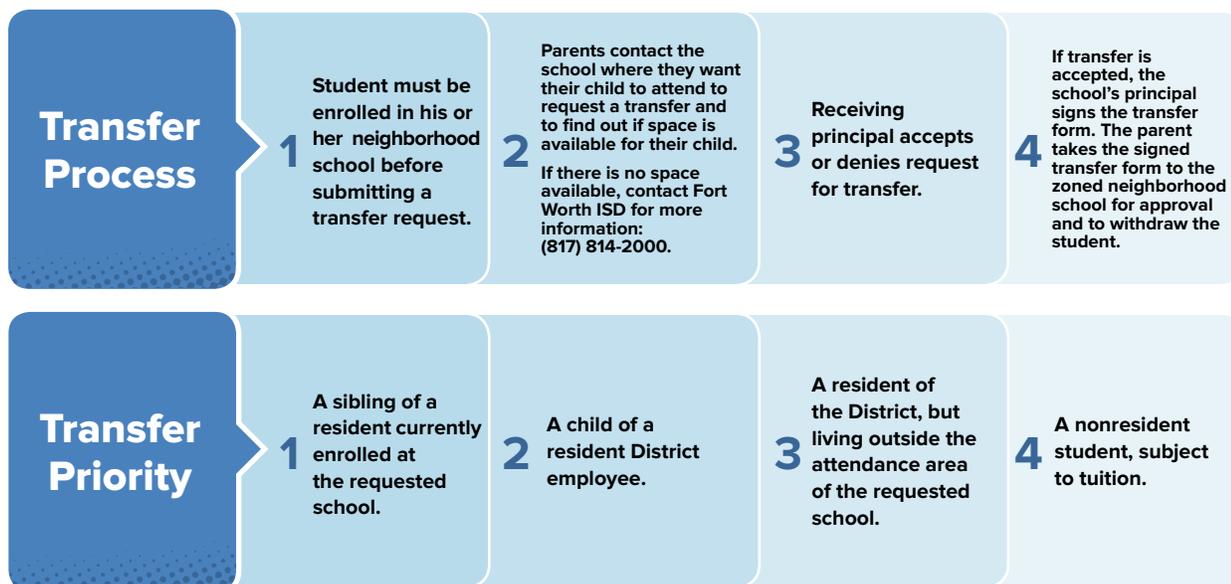
All transfer requests depend on space available at the chosen school. You should contact the district directly at (817) 814-2000 to learn about the most current deadlines.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND UPDATED DEADLINES, CONTACT:
Fort Worth ISD Main Office
(817) 814-2000

www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Parents/School_Information/Transferring_Student

Open Transfers

If the school has space available, a student can request an open transfer based on his or her needs. If the student needs to request a transfer for medical reasons, they will require an official letter from the doctor.



Source: www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Parents/School_Information/Transferring_Student

PEG Transfers

Your student can request a transfer to a different school within Fort Worth ISD if he or she is attending a neighborhood school that is listed as a Public Education Grant (PEG) school.

PEG schools are low-performing schools where;

- 50% or fewer students passed the STAAR exam in any two of the most recent three years (2013, 2014, and 2015), or
- The school was rated by the state as “Improvement Required” in 2013, 2014, or 2015.



Every year, the state provides districts with a list of PEG schools. The districts are then required to inform parents of students in PEG schools by February 1st.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
Texas Education Agency's website

tea.texas.gov/PEG.aspx

**PEG****2016 – 2017 FORT WORTH ISD PEG SCHOOLS**

A. M. Pate Elementary School	I. M. Terrell Elementary School
Atwood McDonald Elementary School	Jean McClung Middle School
Bill J. Elliott Elementary School	John T. White Elementary School
Carter Park Elementary School	Kirkpatrick Elementary School
Cesar Chavez Elementary School	Kirkpatrick Middle School
Christene C. Moss Elementary School	Leonard Middle School
Clifford Davis Elementary	Lowery Road Elementary School
Como Elementary School	Maude I. Logan Elementary School
Daggett Elementary School	Maudrie Walton Elementary School
De Zavala Elementary School	Meacham Middle School
Dolores Huerta Elementary School	Mitchell Boulevard Elementary School
Dunbar High School	Morningside Elementary School
Dunbar Middle School	Morningside Middle School
East Handley Elementary School	O. D. Wyatt High School
Eastern Hills Elementary School	Oaklawn Elementary School
Eastern Hills High School	Polytechnic High School
Forest Oak Middle School	Rufino Mendoza Sr. Elementary School
George Clarke Elementary School	S. S. Dillow Elementary School
Glen Park Elementary School	Sunrise - McMillan Elementary School
Glencrest 6th Grade School	T. A. Sims Elementary School
Greenbriar Elementary School	Van Zandt-Guinn Elementary School
Handley Middle School	Wedgwood 6th Grade School
Harlean Beal Elementary School	West Handley Elementary School
Hazel Harvey Peace Elementary School	Western Hills Elementary School
Hubbard Elementary School	Woodway Elementary School

Charter Schools in the Fort Worth Area

Charter Schools are not a part of Fort Worth ISD, but they are still public schools. Most charter schools accept students through a lottery system, which is a random drawing.

- These schools require some kind of application.
- Many applications can be submitted online, but the process can be different for each school.
- Check with each school for its requirements, like documents or an interview/audition.
- If your child is on a charter school’s waiting list, it may help to contact the school to let them know that you are still interested if space becomes available.

Charter schools must follow the same rules as traditional public schools when it comes to services for children with special education needs. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask your school’s administrators.

Here you will find a short list of charter schools in the area to help you get started, but make sure to:

1. Look up their grade and campus profile in the 4th edition of *Texas School Guide* or at www.texaschoolguide.org.
2. Visit each of the school’s websites to learn more about updated deadlines and application process.
3. Google search the school to see if you find any recent news articles about the school.
4. Ask the school whether they “Met Standard” for the 2015-2016 school year. If they did not, they would be rated as “Improvement Required,” which means they failed at some portion of the state education standards.

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL	APPLICATION PERIOD	ADMISSIONS MODEL	PHONE NUMBER	WEBSITE
Chapel Hill Academy	PK - 05	January 20 - February 27	Open enrollment/lottery	(817) 289-0242	www.lenapopehome.org/chapel-hill-academy
East Fort Worth Montessori Academy	EE - 05	January 1 - February 28	Open enrollment/lottery	(817) 496-3003	www.efwma.org
Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts	03-06 07-12	January 9 – February 17	Audition	(817) 924-1482	www.fwafa.org
Fort Worth Can Academy – Campus Drive	09 - 12	Contact school	Open enrollment/lottery	817-531-3223	www.fortworthcan.org
Fort Worth Can Academy – Lancaster Avenue	09 - 12	Contact school	Open enrollment/lottery	(817) 735-1515	www.fortworthcan.org
Harmony School of Innovation	05 - 12	November 1 - February 10	Open enrollment/lottery	(817) 386-5505	www.hsifortworth.org
Harmony Science Academy	KG - 04	November 1 - February 10	Open enrollment/lottery	(817) 263-0700	www.hsafortworth.org
International Leadership of Texas – Keller Elementary and Middle School	KG-05 06-08	Typically January through April	Open enrollment/lottery	(817) 665-0646	www.iltexaskk8.com
International Leadership of Texas – Keller High School	09 - 11	Contact school	Open enrollment/lottery	(817) 431-5135	www.iltexaskhs.com
Premier High School of Fort Worth	09 - 12	Contact school	Open enrollment/lottery	(817) 731-2028	responsiveed.com/premierfortworth/
Richard Milburn Academy of Fort Worth	09 - 12	Contact school	Open enrollment/lottery	(817) 731-7627	www.maschools.org

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION!

There are so many options when it comes to school choice in Fort Worth ISD. You know what is right for you and your family. Be confident that once you have made an informed decision – charter school, program or school of choice, or just getting involved in your neighborhood school – it is the right decision. Act on it!



PARENT ACTION GUIDES

How Can I Get Involved
at My Child's School?

GETTING INVOLVED

As a parent, your involvement in your child's school is important to his or her success. A student with involved parents is more likely to:

- Earn good grades.
- Attend school regularly.
- Have a positive attitude about school.
- Have good behavior.

Taking the time to be involved in your child's education shows your student how important his or her academic success is to your family. It also gives you the opportunity to make sure your child is receiving the quality education he or she deserves. Advocating for your child's education means making sure that your child is getting the very best education possible.



In this section you can learn how to:

- Build relationships with people at your child's school.
- Help your child at home.
- Join parent organizations on campus.
- Find your School Board Representative.
- Access services provided by community organizations.

Building Relationships

The first step to advocating for your child's education is getting to know your child's teachers, counselors, coaches, and other school staff. Forming these relationships will make it easier for you to talk to them about your child's education.

You don't have to be an expert in the school system! Here are some great options to get started:

- *Attend school events*, such as open houses, performances, or award ceremonies.
- *Request a conference with your child's teacher, counselor, or school administrator.* If you work during the school day, you can request a conference at a time that works for you.
- *Join parent groups* or organizations at your child's school.
- If your child has special needs or a learning disability, *join a support group* in your community or school district, such as the Dyslexia Parent Education/Support Group sponsored by your school district.
- Ask the program leader how you can *help with your child's after school program.*
- *Volunteer at your child's school* or in your child's classroom.
- *Vote* in the School Board of Trustees election.

Also, you will find on [page 27](#) a list of community organizations that can help you get involved.

FIND OUT HOW TO GET INVOLVED:
Contact your school directly or Fort Worth ISD
Parent Information at:
817-814-2970
parentinfo@fwisd.org

www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/parents

Help Your Child at Home

Outside of attending events and direct contact with the school, you can advocate for your child by talking to him or her about the importance of education.

You can show your child that education is important by:

- Making sure your child *attends school regularly*.
- Making sure your child *does his or her homework*.
- Making sure your child *gets to school on time*.
- Regularly *checking your child's progress* through **Parent Portal** at www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Parents/Parent_Portal to identify any problems early. On Parent Portal, you have access to many school related indicators, including your student's grades, homework assignments, and teacher contact information.
- Setting aside a *time and place* for homework.
- *Talking to his or her teacher* regularly.
- Regularly *ask your child* about his or her classes.
- Making your child's *education a focus of your life* at home.
- *Reading together* at home.

Parent Groups and Organizations

Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and **Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs)** are groups that parents can join to advocate for their children.

- A **PTA** is connected to a larger local, state, or national group.
- A **PTO** is specific to an individual school.

Many of these groups keep parents involved and informed about what is going on at school. For example, they might organize a school fundraiser, work with teachers, or provide parent trainings on how to get involved at school.

If you are interested in getting involved in these organizations, contact your school's office about how to join. If your school does not currently have a PTA or a PTO, you can start one!

Organizing a Parent Teacher Association:

Any school official, parent, or interested person can organize a **PTA**. You might begin by talking to the school principal and a few teachers to gain their support of the idea. For more information about organizing a new local PTA contact Texas PTA's Director of Member Services, Michelle Jackson, at mjackson@txpta.org, 1-800-TALK-PTA, or visit the website at www.txpta.org.

Organizing a Parent Teacher Organization:

To start a PTO at your school, get a group of parents and/or teachers together that also want to start a PTO. As a group, agree on a common goal, like improving parent involvement or giving kids more options for after school activities. Then create a plan to make it happen. Examples include running an ice cream social for parents, students, and teachers to get to know one another, or planning a school fundraiser to raise money. Because every PTO is an independent organization, bylaws vary for each group. Learn more about organizing a PTO at www.ptotoday.com.

Site Based Decision Making Committee:

If you are interested in getting involved in the decision-making that goes on at your child's campus, you might

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED AT MY CHILD'S SCHOOL?

consider joining your school's Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) Committee. SBDM Committees hold school based meetings that include teachers, administrators, community leaders, and parents and are open to the public. Even if you don't become a member of the committee, attending an SBDM Committee meeting is a good way to meet school officials and learn about the latest updates at your child's school. Contact your school principal directly to learn more about your school's SBDM Committee.

If you have concerns...

If you have concerns about your child's learning or your child's school, you have multiple options:

1. As a first attempt to resolve a concern, contact the school teacher or staff member that is involved.
2. If the teacher or staff member is not able to help, contact the school principal.
3. If the principal is not able to help, contact the Fort Worth ISD Office of the Board of Education at (817) 814-1920.

Your School Board Representative

The Fort Worth ISD School Board includes 9 trustees that are elected by people who live in each trustee's district. Trustees serve for a period of 3 years and have a variety of responsibilities including:

- Setting policies for the District.
- Hiring the District Superintendent.
- Finding additional money for the District.
- Looking at how schools perform.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INCLUDING UPCOMING BOARD MEETING DATES, CONTACT:
Fort Worth ISD Office of the Board of Education
2903 Shotts Street
Fort Worth, TX 76107
(817) 814-1920

www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Board_of_Education

Some helpful links:

- ▶ **FWISD Board of Trustees Information:**
www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Board_of_Education/Meet_the_Board
- ▶ **Maps of FWISD Board Districts:**
www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Board_of_Education/Board_Member_District_Maps
- ▶ **Voting information:**
access.tarrantcounty.com/en/elections.html



Anyone can attend a Board Meeting. The meetings are also shown on local TV stations and streamed live from the FWISD website.

Below is a list of the current Fort Worth ISD Board of Trustees:

- **District 1:** Jacinto “Cinto” Ramos, Jr. (term expires 2017)
- **District 2:** Tobi Jackson (term expires 2019)
- **District 3:** Christene Chadwick Moss (term expires 2019)
- **District 4:** Theophlous Aron Sims, Sr. (term expires 2017)
- **District 5:** Judy Needham (term expires 2019)
- **District 6:** Ann Sutherland (term expires 2019)
- **District 7:** Norman Robbins (term expires 2017)
- **District 8:** Matthew Avila (term expires 2017)
- **District 9:** Ashley Paz (term expires 2017)

Community Resources

Local community centers, churches, and nonprofit organizations can help you get involved in your child's education. For example, some organizations offer parent trainings that can help you learn how to request and have positive conferences with teachers, counselors, and school administrators. Here is a brief list of some organizations working with students and parents in the community:

ORGANIZATION NAME	SERVICES	WEBSITE
AB Christian Learning Center	Programs include the Higher Education Resource Center, Parental Information Resource Center, and Tutoring/Mentoring. The Stop Six Community Go Center helps students with tutoring, homework assistance, college readiness, scholarship, and FAFSA assistance.	www.abchrist.org
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Core programs include Community-Based Mentoring and School-Based Mentoring. Some special programs offered are Military Mentors Program, Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing Mentoring, Sports Buddies, and The Big Hope Network.	www.bbbstx.org
Boys and Girls Club	The Clubs offer a variety of programs and services to promote and enhance the development of boys and girls. These programs focus on education and career, character and leadership, health & life skills, the arts, sports, fitness and recreation, and various other specialized programs.	www.fortworthkids.org
Camp Fire First Texas	Campfire offers youth centered and family focused programs that include overnight and day camp, after school, out of school or preschool care, teen programs, early childhood professional development, family camp weekend, and many others.	www.campfirefw.org
Catholic Charities	Some of the initiatives include: Translation and Interpretation Network, Transportation with Purpose, and Worn for Peace.	www.catholiccharitiesfortworth.org
Clayton YES! (Youth Enrichment Services)	Some initiatives include: free after school programs, high quality fee-based before and after school programs, and full-day care during summer and holidays.	www.claytonyes.org
Early Childhood Matters	Early Childhood Matters offers free Parent Engagement Classes in both English and Spanish to help parents boost their child's future success in school and beyond.	www.fortworthtexas.gov/library/earlychildhood

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED AT MY CHILD'S SCHOOL?

ORGANIZATION NAME	SERVICES	WEBSITE
Fort Worth SPARC	Out-of-school-time programs include before-school, after-school, summer, weekend, and holiday programs.	www.fortworthsparc.org
Fort Worth Public Library	Some programs and events the Library hosts are family movie nights, book clubs, story times, puppetry festivals, youth activities, computer classes, and art exhibits.	www.fortworthtexas.gov/Library
Fortress Youth Development Center	Programs are designed to ignite spirituality, engage relationally, and equip academically. Some programs offered are after school care, summer camps, preschool programs, and parent engagement programs.	www.fortressydc.org
Girls inc. of Tarrant County	Some programs include College and Career Readiness, Girls Beyond Bullying, STEM programs, Literacy Initiative, and Girls Inc. Leadership and Community Action.	www.girlsinctarrant.org
New Day Services	New Day Services helps rebuilds children's lives by helping their fathers and mothers gain the tools they need to redirect their lives. New Day offers parenting classes, mentors, pastoral care, and various family services programs.	www.newdayservices.org
Santa Fe Youth Services	Services include community programs, school based programs, and juvenile services programs. All services are free of charge.	www.santafeyouth.org
The Parenting Center	Services include various classes and programs over Co-Parenting, Counseling, Empowering Families, Parenting Advice Line, Parenting and Family Life Education, and Parenting Education Program in Schools.	www.theparentingcenter.org
YMCA	The YMCA offers a vast array of programs, some of which include, youth mentor programs, child care, health and wellness, seniors social groups, sports, summer camps, and family nights.	www.ymcafw.org



PARENT ACTION GUIDES

Early Education
(Ages 0-5)

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY EDUCATION

Deciding on a child care or Pre-Kindergarten program for your child is extremely important. Here are a few things to consider when making that choice for your child:

- Program quality
- Learning environment quality
- Location
- Cost
- Hours of operation

Some information can be found by making a quick phone call or visiting the program's website. However, understanding if the program is a quality program or not needs to be a priority and may require more effort.

WHY IS EARLY EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

Did you know that the first 5 years of a child's life are the most important in brain development? During this time, children learn at a much faster rate than at any other period in their lives. According to research by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), children who attend high quality early education programs are more likely to:

- Be ready for Kindergarten.
- Be successful readers in 3rd Grade.
- Graduate from high school.
- Have higher paying jobs as adults.
- Have fewer behavioral problems.
- Not engage in smoking or drug use, or have depression.



A supportive and engaging early education program is critically important because it starts infants, toddlers, and preschool children on the path to lifelong success.

High quality early education programs can set children up to be successful students before they start Kindergarten. They also help children become more comfortable with the routines and structure of a school classroom.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

Child Care

These are programs that are typically privately owned. Though it varies by provider, child care programs will generally accept children from birth through age 12. You either pay a fee up front or you might be eligible for **financial assistance** from the government if you meet certain criteria.

Child care financial assistance: Families meeting specific requirements (financial and other factors) are eligible for child care assistance. For more information on child care assistance, call (817) 831-0374 or visit tarrantcountycems.org.

In Texas, there are four main types of child care providers:

1. Licensed Centers – Care for 7 or more children. They must follow minimum standards set by the state, including cleared background checks and passing inspection at least once a year.
2. Licensed Homes – Care for 7 to 12 children. They must follow minimum standards set by the state, including cleared background checks and passing inspection at least once a year.
3. Registered Homes – Care for no more than 12 children, with no more than 6 of them related to the home provider. They receive a registration certificate, are inspected every 1-2 years, and follow different minimum standards than licensed homes.
4. Listed Family Homes – Care for 1 to 3 unrelated children. They are not inspected unless there is a report of abuse/neglect and must not follow minimum requirements.

Early Head Start and Head Start

This is a free program that offers many services for children from birth to age 5, including education, health, nutrition, and social services. Household income must be at or below the poverty level. For example, a family of 4 people can make no more than \$24,300 per year. Families may also qualify if they are homeless, have children in foster care, or receive assistance from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). You can find a Head Start location by calling 1-866-763-6481 or visiting this website: eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices.

Public Pre-K

Public Pre-K is a full-day program offered by Fort Worth ISD and is free to eligible 4-year-olds. A few elementary schools offer half-day or full-day programs to eligible 3-year-olds. For more information, see [page 35](#).

Non-Profit and Community Programs

Organizations like the YMCA or your local church may provide child care services. The fees and program rules vary by location.

HOW DO I KNOW IF THE EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM IS QUALITY?

Visiting the Program

You should spend at least **20-30 minutes** talking to teachers and watching classroom routines. Circle time, read alouds, and center time are the best times to observe. Try not to visit during meal and nap times, as you will be less likely to see the quality of learning activities and interaction between the teachers and children.



You should spend at least 20-30 minutes talking to teachers and watching classroom routines.

The questions below are available for you to print and take with you when you visit a child care provider. To print these questions, visit www.texaschoolguide.org/resources.

Things to look for in the classroom:

- Is the classroom clean?
- Is there enough floor space for infants to crawl and explore?
- Are the ratios of teachers to children in a classroom close to the recommended standards? (see chart below)
- Are the tables, chairs, and bookshelves short enough for the children?
- Are posters and pictures hanging at your child's eye level?
- Is the classroom open and easy for children to be seen by the teacher? This ensures that the teachers can always see your child and make sure that your child is not at risk for injury or participating in unsafe activities.
- Do you see activities that are both academic (numbers, letters, and books), developmental (puzzles and blocks), and creative (paints and crayons)?
- Is the child's sleep area safe and calm?
- Do they offer time for the children to be outside every day?

Recommended Teacher-to-Child Ratio, according to National Association for the Education of Young Children:

AGE	MAXIMUM TEACHER-TO-CHILD	MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE
Infant - 0 to 15 months	1 teacher for every 4 children	8 children
Toddler - 12 to 28 months	1 teacher for every 4 children	12 children
Toddler - 21 to 36 months	1 teacher for every 6 children	12 children
2.5 to 4 years	1 teacher for every 9 children	18 children
4 to 5 years	1 teacher for every 10 children	20 children

Things to look for in the program:

- Do the teachers follow a curriculum?
- Are infants' activities based on the needs of the child (napping, meals, or play time)?
- Is music ever played?
- Are there different types of age-appropriate toys?
- Are there goals set for each child?
- Do teachers encourage the children to try things on their own?
- Are there opportunities for the child to work both in groups and individually?
- Are the children read to by adults?
- Is there a daily lesson plan posted in the room that includes planned activities?



Ask teachers and staff about their qualifications. You are trusting them with your child and have the right to make sure they are qualified!

Things to look for in a healthy and safe space:

- Do they offer healthy snacks that are limited in sugar?
- Are menus posted for parents?
- Are food, drinks, and medicines labeled with the child's name and date, and stored in a safe place?
- Are the toys cleaned daily or as needed?
- Are the bathrooms clean and easily available to the children?
- Are there fire drills?
- Are there working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors?
- Are there safety gates?
- How often do the teachers wash their hands?
- Are children taught proper hand-washing?
- Is there a teacher trained in CPR?
- Is there a first aid kit?
- How do the teachers handle potty training?
- What happens when a child is bitten by another child?
- Do the teachers have paid sick days?

Things to look for in the teachers:

- Does a teacher greet children warmly when they arrive?
- Do teachers welcome questions and visits from parents?
- Do teachers use a warm and pleasant tone when talking to children?
- Do teachers encourage children to talk to other children and the teachers?
- Do teachers discipline the children in a caring, consistent, and calm manner?
- Has your child's teacher been there for more than 2 years?
- Does the teacher have a certification or degree from a college or university?
- Does the teacher have formal training in child growth and development?
- How often and for what subjects do the teachers have professional training throughout the year? (Examples include safety practices, curriculum, and first aid.)

Checking the Teacher Qualifications

Ask teachers and staff about their qualifications. You are trusting them with your child and have the right to make sure they are qualified! Early childhood teachers should have formal training in the field of early childhood education.

The most common qualifications for early education instructors are:

- **Early Childhood Associates Degree or Child Development Associates Degree from an accredited program:** teachers holding this degree have spent 2 years learning how to provide the appropriate environment and curriculum for children in their classrooms.
- **Bachelor's Degree in Education (or another field) with a teaching certificate from the state specifying an Early Childhood qualification:** teachers holding this degree and certification have rigorous training in classroom management, curriculum, and at least one semester of practicum in a classroom under the observation of a mentor teacher.

Minimum Standards

Licensed child care providers are monitored and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The state routinely inspects these facilities and enforces basic health and safety standards. You can view records of the state's inspections at www.dontbeinthedark.org/.

Quality Accreditations

It is important to try to find a program that meets a specific set of quality standards, not just the state's minimum standards.

For children receiving child care through government financial assistance (Workforce Solutions or Tarrant County CCMS), quality child care programs are certified as Texas Rising Star (TRS). These providers normally accept children both with and without the state subsidy. TRS providers can be found here: texasrisingstar.org/parents/find-a-trs-provider

In addition, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredits and certifies centers. The NAEYC standards are much higher than the state's minimum standards. A list of centers accredited by NAEYC is available at www.naeyc.org/academy/accreditation/search.

Other national quality certifications include:

- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Child Care and Education (NAC)
- Association of Christian School International (ACSI)
- Council of Accreditation (COA)
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
- AdvancedED Quality Early Learning System (QELS)

Other Important Things to Consider:

- **Waiting lists:** Many early education programs have waiting lists and a registration process, including a non-refundable deposit.
- **Food menus:** Some programs ask parents to provide the food for their child, while others offer meals and snacks. For those that serve food, menus should be available to give you an example of the types of foods being served. If parents are expected to provide meals and snacks, ask how the food is stored throughout the day (refrigerator or at room temperature) so you know what you should pack.
- **Time spent doing physical activity:** Children should spend 30-45 minutes doing physical activity in the morning and again in the afternoon. Ask your provider what exercise activities they plan each day. For a list of activities that parents can do with their children, please visit: www.a-better-child.org/page/387090269.
- **Screen time (Tablets, Smart Phones, TV, and Computers):** For children from birth to age 2, screen time is not recommended. For children over age 2, screen time should be limited to 90 minutes for the entire day, including at home. Screen time for any children under age 5 should be primarily educational and allow for the caregiver to interact with the child. Ask your child care provider how they use screens if your child is under 5.

HOW DO I LOCATE CHILD CARE?

If you need help locating child care, there are resources available!

For high quality providers, see the “Quality Accreditations” section above for options to locate these providers that are certified to have quality programs and teachers.

If you receive financial assistance from the government through Workforce Solutions or Tarrant County CCMS, you can find child care by calling (817) 831-0374 or visiting tarrantcountycms.org. You are also eligible to send your children to Texas Rising Star quality certified providers, which can be found here texasrisingstar.org/parents/find-a-trs-provider.

You can also call 2-1-1 to get information from United Way about child care options in your area.

You can also search for child care providers online using the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care/search_texas_child_care. Once you search, you can click on a provider's name to see important information like licensing violations.

After checking if the program has quality certifications or if it has any licensing violations, you should visit the provider to gain a better sense of both the physical and emotional environment.

What Are My Pre-K Options in Fort Worth ISD?

Fort Worth ISD offers a free, full-day Pre-K program to children who turn 4 years old on or before September 1st of the upcoming school year. To see which schools have Pre-K spots open, visit www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Pre-K_Vacancy_Map.

If your child does not meet the federal guidelines below, he or she is considered a Universal Pre-K (UPK) student. Schools must serve the Pre-K students who meet the federal guidelines first before serving UPK students. In order to meet federal guidelines, a child must be one of the following:

- Unable to speak or understand English.
- Eligible to participate in the free or reduced price lunch program. For income guidelines, call FWISD at (817) 814-2450.
- Currently homeless.
- Parent who is an active duty member of the U.S. armed forces.
- Has ever been in foster care.

Fort Worth ISD also has three schools that offer full-day programs for 3-year-olds, but your home address must be zoned for those schools: Carroll Peak Elementary, Morningside Elementary, and Briscoe Elementary. To find your zoned neighborhood public school, visit apps.schoolslocator.com/?districtcode=72947.

How Can I Register My Child for Pre-K?

You can register your child for the Fort Worth ISD Pre-K program during Pre-K Round-Up in February, March, and April. During these 3 months, each elementary school will have a time for parents to visit the school and register in-person. Parents must visit their zoned neighborhood school, which can be found at apps.schoolslocator.com/?districtcode=72947.

If you miss the Pre-K Round-Up, you can apply in-person at your zoned neighborhood school if they have Pre-K spots open. Call first to check. If they do not have any Pre-K spots open, you can apply at any other FWISD elementary school that has open Pre-K spots.

You will need these items to register your child for Pre-K:

- Birth Certificate.
- Shot Record.
- Social Security Card (if available).
- Proof of Residency (utility bill or copy of lease agreement).
- Proof of Income (if the child is eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches).

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND UPDATED DEADLINES, CONTACT:
Fort Worth ISD Early Childhood Department
(817) 814-2450

www.fwisd.org/pages/FWISD/Pre-Kindergarten_Roundup



PARENT ACTION GUIDES

Preparing for Education
After High School

GETTING STARTED

There are many options for higher education in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Higher education can include a four-year university, a two-year college, or a trade school.

As a parent, it is important to set expectations for your child early. By setting the expectation that your child will attend some type of schooling or earn a certification after high school, they are much more likely to enroll in a higher education program.



In this section you can learn more about:

- When to Start Thinking About Higher Education.
- Higher Education Opportunities in the Dallas-Fort Worth Area.
- The Application Process.
- Financial Aid Resources.
- How Students Can Stay on Track With a Middle and High School Timeline.

WHEN TO START THINKING ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION

It's never too early! It is helpful to know about the different opportunities for higher education early in your child's school career.

By knowing early, you can make sure that you do not miss:

- Important application deadlines.
- Required middle and high school courses for particular college or career programs.
- Other steps that must be taken prior to admission to a program.
- Anything you can do to help your child prepare for the high cost of tuition, such as encouraging your child to save money from a part-time job.

If your child wants to attend a college or university, you may want to look at different characteristics of the middle and high school he or she attends. High schools that provide good preparation for college should offer an academically challenging curriculum, create a college-bound culture, and have a support system for navigating college admissions.

Indicators of these characteristics can include:

- Wide offering of advanced courses like Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and/or Honors courses.
- High percentage of students taking the SAT or ACT exams.
- Available and knowledgeable college and career counselors.

HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN NORTH TEXAS

TWO-YEAR COLLEGES IN THE AREA			
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR COLLEGES			
<p>Dallas Community College District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brookhaven College • Cedar Valley College • Eastfield College • El Centro College • Mountain View College • North Lake College • Richland College 	<p>Tarrant County Community College District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northeast Campus • Northwest Campus • South Campus • Southeast Campus • Trinity River Campus • Trinity River Campus East 	<p>Collin College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allen Center • Central Park Campus • Collin Higher Education Center • Courtyard Center • Preston Ridge Campus • Rockwall Center • Spring Creek Campus 	<p>North Central Texas College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowie Campus • Corinth Campus • Flower Mound Campus • Gainesville Campus • Graham Campus
FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES IN THE AREA			
PUBLIC COLLEGES			
<p>Texas A&M University Commerce</p> <p>Texas Women's University</p> <p>University of North Texas</p> <p>University of North Texas at Dallas</p>	<p>University of North Texas Health Science Center</p> <p>University of Texas at Arlington</p> <p>University of Texas at Dallas</p> <p>University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center Dallas</p>		
PRIVATE COLLEGES			
<p>Arlington Baptist College</p> <p>Criswell College</p> <p>Dallas Baptist University</p> <p>Dallas Christian College</p> <p>***Dallas Theological Seminary</p> <p>Northwood University</p> <p>**Parker University</p> <p>Paul Quinn College</p> <p>Southern Methodist University</p>	<p>Southwestern Adventist College</p> <p>Southwestern Assemblies of God University</p> <p>***Southwestern Theological Seminary</p> <p>Texas Christian University</p> <p>Texas Wesleyan University</p> <p>*The Art Institute of Dallas</p> <p>*The Art Institute of Fort Worth</p> <p>University of Dallas</p> <p>*Wade College</p>		

* Two-year programs are also offered in addition to four-year degree
 ** Offers various online and on-campus programs such as: graduate, doctoral, and certificate programs
 *** Offers masters and doctoral programs

APPLICATIONS

Most higher education programs require some kind of application. Community colleges have an open admissions policy, which means that students are admitted regardless of their grades in high school. However, families should be advised that students in Texas entering a public institution, including community colleges, must meet the minimum score on the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Assessment unless they are otherwise exempt. If students do not meet this score, they may be required to enroll in developmental education or Adult Basic Education classes, which do not count towards a degree and are fee-based, before they are eligible to enroll in college coursework. You can learn more about this requirement at www.thecb.state.tx.us.

The Common App and Apply Texas are two widely used application processes for four-year colleges and universities. The Common App is used by hundreds of colleges throughout the United States. Apply Texas allows students to apply for admission to any Texas public university, as well as to participating community and private colleges. To learn more about which schools accept these applications, application deadlines, and other information visit the individual sites:

- Common App: www.commonapp.org
- Apply Texas: www.applytexas.org
- The website for the higher education program in which your child is interested

FINANCIAL AID

The costs to attend higher education programs can seem overwhelming for parents, families, and students. However, there are many financial aid opportunities available. Each university or college has its own financial aid program, which may include grant and scholarship opportunities. There are also opportunities to get financial aid through the state and federal government, nonprofits, and private organizations.

You won't know just how much money a college or university is able to offer you in financial aid until you apply to the university and apply for government financial aid. Financial aid can be used to cover expenses such as tuition, dorm fees, meal plans, books, supplies, or other college fees.



You should submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), as it is will make your student eligible for the largest source of financial aid available.

You should submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), as it is will make your student eligible for the largest source of financial aid available. The application becomes available in early January, but deadlines are different for each program. You will want to submit the FAFSA as early as possible to make sure that you can take advantage of as many aid opportunities as possible.

If your child is undocumented, he or she will need to use the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA). Visit www.aie.org/state/tasfa/ for more information. Students file their first FAFSA or TASFA form beginning their senior year of high school and will re-file every year they intend to enroll in college courses.

How Do I Prepare for the FAFSA?

- The FAFSA asks for financial information, including balances of savings and checking accounts and information from tax forms.
- Filing your 2016 income taxes early and electronically enables you to use the IRS Data Retrieval System when completing the 2017-2018 FAFSA. Using the IRS Data Retrieval System helps make sure your FAFSA information is correct. Errors in the FAFSA could delay your application.
- If you haven't done your taxes, it's okay to estimate the amounts.
- You can base your estimates on your last pay check for the 2016 calendar year. After you file your taxes you must update your FAFSA. You can update your FAFSA with actual 2016 information by using the IRS Data Retrieval System or the information from your tax return.
- Before your student's senior year, he or she can use the FAFSA4caster to get a sense of how much federal aid may be available when he or she applies. Visit www.studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/estimate for more information.

How Can I File for FAFSA?

- Online at www.fafsa.gov.
- You can download or order a paper FAFSA application.
- Ask the financial aid office at your student's college or career school if it can be filed there.

Here is a brief look at the financial aid opportunities and the timelines for filling out the FAFSA from the Federal Student Aid website:

AID PROGRAM	DEADLINE INFORMATION
Federal student aid	For the 2017-18 school year, you should submit your FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1, 2016. It is not recommended, but you are able to submit it as late as June 30, 2018. There are a few federal student aid programs that have limited funds, so be sure to apply as soon as you can.
State student aid	For the 2017-18 school year, the deadline for Texas public colleges is due by March 15, 2017. Funds are limited, so be sure to apply as soon as possible. You can find state deadlines at www.fafsa.gov or on the paper or PDF FAFSA. For undocumented students, you can find more information at www.aie.org/state/tasfa .
College or career school aid	Check the school's website or contact its financial aid office. School deadlines are usually early in the year (often in February or March).
Other financial aid	Some programs other than government or school aid require that you file the FAFSA. For instance, you can't get certain private scholarships unless you're eligible for a Federal Pell Grant—and you can't find out whether you're eligible for a Pell Grant unless you file a FAFSA. If the private scholarship's application deadline is in early to mid-January, you'll need to submit your FAFSA before that deadline.

Source: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa>

School Timeline for Your Child

It is important to plan ahead for higher education. In order to apply to a four-year university or college, your child will need to take the SAT and/or ACT exam, typically during his or her junior year of high school.

You also should be aware of the admissions requirements for the program(s) your child may wish to attend, so that they can be sure to fulfill all requirements during high school. For example, some universities may require more science or math course credits than your child's high school requires as the minimum. Your child may also need to take elective courses to be adequately prepared for college.

Here is an example of a timeline that can help students stay on track to obtaining an advanced degree or certification:

Middle School Years (Grades 6 – 8)

- Take challenging classes—If possible, enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) Courses, upper level math, science, and language classes. Pre-algebra and English classes that are also college prep classes are good examples.
- Talk with school counselors about which classes to take for acceptance into certain colleges or career paths.
- Explore extracurricular activities. Get actively involved in extracurricular and volunteer activities. Be sure to keep track of the number of hours spent on these activities.
- Figure out options for high school, including charter schools and schools of choice.

Freshman and Sophomore Years (Grades 9 – 10)

- Talk with an assigned guidance counselor about taking college preparatory classes and exploring higher education options.
- Continue getting involved in extracurricular and volunteer activities. Keep track of the number of hours spent on those activities.

PREPARING FOR EDUCATION AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

- Register and take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT).
- Schedule a tour of a local college to get a feel for what college might be like. These tours are free, and you can call the admissions office to schedule a tour at a time that works best for you.
- Register for classes that will challenge you. Look at admissions requirements for various colleges to understand what high school classes they may require applicants to have completed. Not all high school graduation plans will meet admissions standards set by the college.

Junior Year (Grade 11)

- Continue to be involved in volunteer and extra-curricular activities. This can help you try out different careers you might want to pursue after high school. It is also good to include on college applications.
- Continue to take classes that challenge you.
- Work with your guidance counselor to make a list of the higher education options that you are interested in.
- Begin researching scholarship and financial aid opportunities for your higher education options.
- Register and take the SAT and/or ACT exams.
- If possible, visit the individual college or career training campuses that you will be applying to.
- Start working on your college application essays the summer before your senior year. Essay topics typically stay the same year to year. Check the higher education program's application website for the essay prompt.

Senior Year (Grade 12)

- **August – September**
 - » Narrow down school options, and create a list of application deadlines and required materials. This should include scholarship and financial aid deadlines, essays, letters of recommendation, and transcripts.
 - » Register for or retake SAT and/or ACT exam if necessary.
 - » Begin thinking about whom to request your letters of recommendation from.
 - » Request transcripts from your high school.
- **October – November**
 - » Draft any required college admissions or scholarship essays.
 - » Gather your letters of recommendation, if required. Try to ask for letters of recommendation at least one or two months before the application is due. This gives the recommender time to write a quality letter.
 - » Make sure that your transcripts are correct.
- **December – January**
 - » Final application dates for many schools. However, early decision applications are typically due in November.
- **February – March**
 - » College acceptance letters begin to arrive.
 - » Parents need to file taxes to prepare for filling out the FAFSA or TASFA. Remember to complete the FAFSA or TASFA by your intended college's priority deadline.
- **April – May**
 - » Review your admissions information and submit any required materials to the college or program of your choice. This may include housing information, final transcripts, a tuition deposit, etc.
 - » Check your email regularly and register for the college's online portal, if they have one, to make sure you receive all information in a timely manner.