



Early Childhood Education Program Overview

We offer children from fifteen months to five years a range of preschool programs designed to make the most of each child's natural desire to learn. We encourage you to apply for the 2024-2025 school year now. The initial application deadline for currently enrolled children and siblings is February 1, 2024. Families who are interested in newly enrolling a child also are invited to apply now. See the final page of this Program Overview for application process information. Visit our website at www.claytonschoools.net/familycenter to learn more about our program and curriculum or call the Family Center (314-854-6900) with questions.

How Our Early Childhood Classes Are Organized

The Early Childhood Education Program (ECE) offers the weekly options shown below. All of our classrooms include two early childhood educators. To serve the needs of all children, in some of our classrooms, an early childhood special education educator is part of the teaching team. Class size increases with each age group.

We strive to meet the needs of our community. Please note that classes may be reorganized around enrollment preferences of families. We welcome your comments and ideas for classes that meet your needs. Please share comments on the back of the enrollment form or in the email with your application attached.

15 – 35 Month Old Classes

Two-morning class: Children must be 15 months and not yet 28 months by 7/31/24.
Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Three-morning class: Children must be at least 24 months and not yet 36 months by 7/31/24.
Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Five-morning class: Children must be at least 24 months and not yet 36 months by 7/31/24.
Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

3 – 5 Year Old Classes

Four-morning class: Children must be 36 months by 7/31/24.
Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Three full school day class: Children must be 36 months by 7/31/24.
Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Four full school day class: Children must be 36 months by 7/31/24.
Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Five full school day class: Children must be 36 months by 7/31/24.
Monday - Friday 8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Kid Zone – Before and after school program

Separate registration is required (forms available online in the spring).

Morning: 7:30-8:45/9:00 a.m. for all classes

Afternoon: 3:15-5:30 p.m. for full day classes

Program Curriculum

Our play-based and integrated curriculum is influenced by Missouri Early Learning Goals, the National Association for the Education of Young Children and current child development theory. We are inspired by the innovative public preschool system of Reggio Emilia, Italy, that emphasizes respect for each child and the child's ability to influence his or her own learning. Children's prior experiences, backgrounds and early theories are starting points for this inquiry-based education.

We believe young children learn to make sense of their world through play, exploration, inquiry, collaboration and interaction with others including peers, teachers, families and their environment. When given the time and space for play, children practice regulating their emotions and further develop their social and cognitive skills while gaining self-confidence to engage in new experiences. We invite children to explore and solve problems independently or in small groups where cooperation, collaboration and disagreements intermix through an environment that is rich with possibilities and provocations.

We believe in reciprocal learning relationships among children, teachers and families. We value all children's capabilities and intelligence, teachers as researchers, and families as their child's first teachers. We are a community of learners. Children, teachers and families work together to create trust and connections with others and the environment that surrounds them.

Our Family Center teachers work closely with Clayton kindergarten teachers and other district colleagues. These relationships support children's transition from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten, ongoing curricular development and teacher professional learning.

Daily Experiences

Through daily play, children learn and practice the social-emotional and problem-solving skills they will use throughout their lives. Children eat snack, make plans for their day during morning meeting, listen to stories, play in the classroom, and explore outdoor spaces, including our playgrounds and nature areas. We offer opportunities to explore block construction, dramatic play, drawing and writing, as well as music and movement, and science and nature exploration. Children take responsibility for caring for their classroom and their friends.

Teachers carefully listen to and observe children. Children's current understandings and ideas are shared with families through a classroom blog. This process supports children as they revisit and reflect on their experiences. It also makes the children's learning visible to families. Children in the full school day classes have additional time in the afternoon to explore, play and eat lunch. Afternoon rest is also part of the daily routine in full day classes.



Gay Avenue Campus

On the Gay Avenue campus, children may enjoy cooking in the kitchen, growing vegetables and herbs in the gardens and exploring our nature trail and surrounding grounds. This campus includes classrooms for children fifteen months to kindergarten entry.

Family Involvement

Involvement by family members is a vital component of our program. Parents and guardians are encouraged to lead and serve on PTO committees, organize events, collect materials or undertake other responsibilities of their choice. Whatever form it takes, parents and guardians are encouraged to share their many talents, as family involvement benefits everyone: it familiarizes parents and guardians with the Family Center; it increases resources available to children; and, it demonstrates to children that their families value their education.

Parenting education is another crucial component of our program. Families enroll in Clayton Schools' Parents as Teachers (PAT) program to receive personal visits with a certified parent educator, trained in child development and eager to support parents and guardians in their critical parenting role. We strongly suggest that all families access this free program. Parents and guardians will learn about their child's developmental milestones; access language, motor, social-emotional and intellectual developmental screenings; and, connect to community resources. A Family Center parent educator will contact each family after enrollment. Parent educators also support families through our fee-based Parent Coaching program and Parent Workshops.



Enrollment Requirements

Children must be within the age parameters designated for each class (see front page). Age ranges coincide with the State of Missouri's kindergarten entrance date.

The District is committed to an ECE program that reflects the diversity of our community and includes the following:

1. School District of Clayton Resident Families
2. Families participating in the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice program with children in Clayton's K-12 program (are charged the same rate as School District residents)
3. Families of School District Employees: parent(s) employed full time by the School District of Clayton and who have received Board Grant approval (are charged the same rate as School District residents)
4. Non-resident families

Application Process

Families with **currently enrolled children** and **siblings** are asked to meet the initial application deadline by returning the application form to the office by **February 1, 2024**. An **enrollment deposit** is required with this application. The deposit is 1/9 of the total tuition. If we cannot accommodate your first choice and you do not accept placement in your second choice the deposit will be returned. **Otherwise it is nonrefundable**. Class placement will be determined by **February 9, 2024** when we then begin accepting new families.

- Children who are currently enrolled in any of the 2023-2024 ECE classes are given first priority. Siblings of currently enrolled children are given second priority.
- Families who are interested in **newly enrolling a child** in the ECE program are invited to apply as well. New resident applicants are given third priority, and will be informed of the status of their application (enrolled or wait-listed) beginning **February 12, 2024**. New non-resident applicants will be informed beginning **February 26, 2024**. Non-refundable deposits will be due upon acceptance of class space.
- If your child has special education needs (IEP, First Steps enrollment), please address questions to Jean Das, Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator, 314-854-6900.

Financial Assistance

We strive to make our programs available to all interested families. If you are in need of financial assistance to meet the cost of the ECE programs, we have these possible options available: PTO Scholarship grant for residents and families participating in the VICC program only (see number 1 and 2 above) and individualized payment plans. Please address your questions to either Bridget Hihn, Administrative Assistant, or Amy Perry, Director, at 314-854-6900 or email bridgethihn@claytonschoools.net.

Annual Tuition for 2024-2025	
R = Resident, NR = Non-Resident	
3 – 5 Year Old Classes	
Four-morning	R \$5193 NR \$5913
Three Full School Day	R \$7047 NR \$8010
Four Full School Day	R \$9396 NR \$10,683
Five Full School Day	R \$11,736 NR \$13,338
15 – 35 Month Old Classes	
Two-morning	R \$2673 NR \$3168
Three-morning	R \$3960 NR \$4698
Five-morning	R \$6606 NR \$7506
Initial deposit due upon acceptance. After enrollment confirmation, specific details on scheduled payment plans (monthly, trimester, etc.) and method of payment options will be available.	
Separate registration and fees required for Kid Zone.	

Running of classes is subject to minimal enrollment. Families will be kept informed of enrollment status.