



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. Enrollment for the 2025-2026 school year begins on February 3, 2025. See the final page of this Program Overview for information about the application process. 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. In many 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 7/31/25.

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 7/31/25.

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 7/31/25.

Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

3 – 5 Year Old Classes

Four-morning class: Children must be 36 months by 7/31/25.

Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Three full school day class: Children must be 36 months by 7/31/25.

Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Four full school day class: Children must be 36 months by 7/31/25.

Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Five full school day class: Children must be 36 months by 7/31/25.

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 Standards, 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 in 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.



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. School District of Clayton Employees' Families
3. 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 3, 2025**. An **enrollment deposit** is required with this application for currently enrolled families. 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, the deposit is non-refundable. Class placement will be determined by **February 10, 2025** when we then begin accepting new families.

- Children who are currently enrolled in any of the 2024-2025 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 13, 2025**. New non-resident applicants will be informed beginning **February 24, 2025**. 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 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 2025-2026		
R = Resident and District Employee NR = Non-Resident		
3 – 5 Year Old Classes		
Four-morning	R \$5301 (\$589 dep/monthly)	NR \$6093 (\$677 dep/monthly)
Three Full School Day	R \$7191 (\$799 dep/monthly)	NR \$8253 (\$917 dep/monthly)
Four Full School Day	R \$9585 (\$1065 dep/monthly)	NR \$11,007 (\$1223 dep/monthly)
Five Full School Day	R \$11,970 (\$1330 dep/monthly)	NR \$13,743 (\$1527 dep/monthly)
15 – 35 Month Old Classes		
Two-morning	R \$2727 (\$303 dep/monthly)	NR \$3267 (\$363 dep/monthly)
Three-morning	R \$4041 (\$449 dep/monthly)	NR \$4842 (\$538 dep/monthly)
Five-morning	R \$6741 (\$749 dep/monthly)	NR \$7731 (\$859 dep/monthly)
A non-refundable enrollment deposit is due upon acceptance and applied to the annual tuition. Deposits may be paid via check, cash or credit card.		
Tuition can be paid monthly (September through April) with the deposit applied to your May tuition payment. 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.