



PARENT PFA GUIDE

LAST UPDATED 2026

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Welcome to Preschool for All!

Thank you for enrolling your child in Preschool for All (PFA). This handbook will help you understand PFA and how it supports your child while they're in preschool.

If you have not applied yet, please visit our application portal at pfa.multco.us to learn how to apply.

Find the latest version of the PFA Family Handbook at multco.us/preschool/families.

The Preschool for All Family Handbook is available in:

- Simplified Chinese
- English
- Dari
- Russian
- Spanish, and
- Vietnamese

To ask for a copy of this handbook in your language please email preschoolforall@multco.us.

What is Preschool for All (PFA)?

On November 3, 2020, voters in Multnomah County voted "YES" for Preschool for All. PFA connects families in Multnomah County with FREE preschool.

Free really means free! Your child's PFA preschool provider should not charge your family for preschool. This includes fees for enrollment, field trips, meals, and supplies during PFA program hours.

There are only two eligibility requirements for PFA:

- Your child must be three or four years old on September 1 of the preschool year, and
- One or more of your child's parents or legal guardians must live in Multnomah County

The number of PFA seats grows every year!

Many families apply to PFA each year. PFA will continue to grow and have preschool seats for more children every year. In 2030, there will be free preschool for all interested families in Multnomah County.

PFA prioritizes the following children in our outreach efforts:

- Black, Brown, Native American Indigenous, and all Children of Color
- Children who speak languages other than English
- Children with developmental delays and disabilities
- Children living in or at risk of placement in foster care
- Children from families experiencing low incomes, and
- Children experiencing homelessness

Continuing Enrollment

Children enrolled in PFA when they are three can continue for a second year if they are still eligible. Families do not need to apply again. Here are some things to know:

- Children must be four on September 1 and have a parent or legal guardian living in Multnomah County.
- If your child is eligible, they will automatically be enrolled at the same location.
- Your child needs to be enrolled in PFA at the end of the preschool year to be automatically re-enrolled.
- Families do not need to submit a new application.
- If your child is eligible for a second year of PFA, we will notify your preschool provider. Your family will also receive an email from PFA.

Important Reminder: Children who turn five on or before September 1 of the program year do not qualify for PFA.

Where to view Preschool for All sites?

Please visit our home page www.multco.us/preschool to view a list of Preschool for All sites and submit an application online.

Preschool & Early Learning Division (PEL) The Preschool & Early Learning Division (PEL) leads Preschool for All. The PEL team can help with your questions.

- If you have a general question, please email us at preschoolforall@multco.us or call us at 503-988-1280.
- If your question is about your child's application, email us at pfa.support@multco.us or call us at 503-988-7818. This includes questions about changing preschools and help with the application website.
- If your question is about your child's preschool, please email or call your preschool directly. This includes questions about teachers, food, or the classroom.

Important Reminder: PFA.Support@multco.us is the first place to contact if you need help with your application. You can also choose to work with a Family Connector Organization (FCO).

Family Connector Organizations (FCO) PEL works with trusted, culturally specific family connector organizations that have family navigators. They can help you access community resources within their organization if you need support or assistance with resources.

Visit the Preschool for All website to find the most current contact information for Family Navigators.

Family Responsibilities

Communicate often with your child's preschool! Sharing about your experience will help your child and the teachers.

Preschool Program Policies

Each preschool program has its own policies for their families. Please learn about your program's policies. It's important for families to know and follow these guidelines. This helps to ensure good experiences, strong relationships between families and teachers, and clear communication. We ask parents to follow their program's policies and talk to their provider if they have questions or concerns.

Attendance

Going to preschool every day is important for your child's future school success. This helps them make friends, practice skills, and get ready for kindergarten!

Important Reminder: Each site has specific program hours. Look at the program's calendar for the year and check days and vacations the preschool will be closed. Once your child starts, follow the preschool hours. Make sure your child's teacher has your correct contact information to reach you.

Full-Time Seats

Preschool for All seats are full time. Families cannot enroll part time. This means that families should plan to attend every day. It's important that children learn each day with their friends.

Start Dates

Children should start preschool at the beginning of September. If a family receives a seat later in the year, the child should start within 2 weeks of completing enrollment. Enrollment happens at the preschool site. Your child is enrolled when the program paperwork is complete. This includes the PFA Attestation Form and any documents required by the preschool.

Preschool Start Times (Drop-Off)

It's important to be on time for preschool! This helps children follow schedules and routines because they know what to expect. On-time arrival gives you time to speak with your child's teacher. This helps to build a strong relationship. It also helps the teachers learn about your family and support your child's learning.

Preschool End Times (Pick-Up)

It's important that you pick up your child on time every day, before the program's closing time. Late pick-ups are stressful and difficult for preschools. Please plan ahead and have a back-up plan to avoid late pick-ups.

There may be rare times when you are running late. If you think you might be late to pick up your child, please communicate with the program as soon as possible. Try to arrange for someone else to pick your child up on time.

If you find that getting to your child's preschool on time is difficult for your family, the location may not be a good fit. Please email pfa.support@multco.us or call 503-988-7818 to talk about transferring to a different preschool.

What to Expect from Preschools in PFA

PFA sites work to make their classrooms safe and welcoming for all children and families.

PFA providers agree to welcome and support all children and families. This includes:

- Children with delays or disabilities,
- Children who are not potty trained,
- Children and families that speak other languages,
- Families who come from diverse cultural backgrounds, and
- Families who may be experiencing challenges such as homelessness PFA No

Suspension/Expulsion Policy

PFA providers follow a No Suspension/Expulsion Policy. That means they have agreed to not exclude children from classroom activities, put children on a shortened schedule, or ask that they be picked up early.

Every preschool is different. PFA providers have a wide range of experience and expertise in serving diverse needs. It is important to connect with your preschool's director or preschool provider and teaching team to understand how they will welcome your child into their community. Families are encouraged to share any specific needs that would help your child feel comfortable and supported. If your child has an IFSP, it's important to reach out to your MECP provider to schedule a placement meeting as soon as possible – ideally before your child begins attending. This will go a long way in helping your child's transition into a new environment go smoothly.

Curriculum: Preschool Teaching Styles

Each preschool uses a curriculum that aligns with the State of Oregon's Early Learning & Kindergarten Guidelines.

Please talk with your child's preschool to learn about their curriculum and how they support learning. Revised 9.25.2025 9

Preschool for All Locations

There are new sites joining Preschool for All every year. In 2025-26, PFA will have over 200 locations in Multnomah County. Please check our website at multco.us/preschool to see the current list of participating sites.

Types of Preschool Settings

PFA offers three main types of preschool settings. Our requirements are the same for all providers, regardless of setting type. Each of the setting types has unique strengths and may have benefits for your family.

What is Family Child Care?

Family Child Care is a small business that operates in a home setting with a family atmosphere.

What are Child Care Centers?

Child Care Centers are larger facilities that have classrooms for different age groups. Though child care centers serve different age groups, PFA seats are only available to eligible preschoolers.

What about school districts?

School districts offer preschool programs in public schools. School districts vary by neighborhood. Families can only enroll in a school district if they live within that district's boundary. If you're not sure which school district you live in, visit www.portlandmaps.com. Enter your home address to find your neighborhood school district.

Types of Schedules

Preschool for All currently offers two types of preschool schedules:

Full Day / Full Year

Gives your child ten hours of preschool five days/week, throughout the calendar year.

School Day / School Year

Gives your child a school schedule of at least six hours of preschool each day, on a school schedule that runs from September until June. Most sites have preschool 5 days a week. There are a limited number of programs that have preschool 4 days a week.

Most PFA seats are full time, five days a week. Families must enroll and plan to attend every day.

Fees for Late pickups

Preschools can charge families late fees if they pick up their child after PFA program hours end. Please talk to your preschool about their late fee policy.

Example: Preschool A's PFA program hours are 7:30 am - 5:30 pm. Preschool A can charge late pick-up fees for any time after 5:30 pm.

Transportation: Getting to Preschool

Some of our preschools offer transportation and can pick up and drop off your child. Please talk to your preschool about their transportation options.

Transfer Requests

If you would like to change your child's preschool, you will need to join a waitlist at a new preschool location. Being placed on a waitlist does not guarantee that your child will get a seat at that site. All placements are based on the availability of seats and our prioritization process.

If you want to add, update, or change the order of your preschool choices, you can contact the PEL Team at pfa.support@multco.us or 503-988-7818.

Waitlists

Your child is automatically added to the waitlist if your top preschool choice is not available. When you are on a waitlist, there is no "waitlist number" assigned. When a seat becomes available, you and all other families on the waitlist are considered. This process is done by the application algorithm. It does not matter when you joined the waitlist.

You can accept a preschool seat at one location and stay on the waitlist for other preschools. These sites need to be included on your application.

Important Reminder: Each preschool has a unique waitlist. You may join as many as five waitlists while enrolled. This automatically happens as part of the application process. Your child will be on the waitlist for any programs that you ranked higher than the preschool where you enrolled.

Inclusion

An important piece of the Preschool for All program is making sure all children have the same opportunities to learn and grow. This means that every child is included in activities, no matter what their needs or abilities are.

To help support the needs of all children, our preschools work closely with local agencies that help preschool-age children in Multnomah County. These agencies include MECP (Multnomah Early Childhood Program) and Multnomah County. If families have questions or are interested in getting more help for their children, PFA providers can connect them to resources.

If PFA providers think a child could benefit from additional support, they will work together with the family to figure out if support from an outside agency could help in meeting the child's needs.

How Preschool for All (PFA) Supports Inclusion

Helping families with MECP and IFSPs

PFA providers and teachers assist families in understanding Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs), sharing information about developmental delays or disabilities, and working together with the Multnomah Early Childhood Program (MECP) to support children.

Welcoming all children

PFA sites welcome every child, no matter their needs or abilities. They focus on making initial calls, visits, and transitions smooth, as these can sometimes be challenging.

Adapting to individual needs

Staff are flexible and ready to adjust classroom materials and activities to match each child's learning style.

Providing professional development

PFA encourages staff to take part in training that focuses on inclusion practices.

Creating accessible environments

Indoor and outdoor spaces are modified as much as possible so that all children can join in every activity.

Establishing supportive routines

Learning environments have consistent daily routines and schedules, minimize transitions, and offer chances for children to build relationships with caring adults.

Providing information and problem-solving

Staff help families find answers to questions about their child's needs and work together to find solutions.

Important Reminder: Families will be asked to share information about their child's strengths and needs, disabilities, or developmental delays with the preschool provider. This will help to create an inclusive, developmentally appropriate preschool experience.

What is an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)?

If your child has a documented developmental delay or disability, it is likely that they have an Individualized Family Service Plan, or IFSP. IFSPs are legal documented plans teachers must follow so children can learn with their classmates while getting help for their specific needs.

Multnomah Early Childhood Program (MECP)

If your child has an IFSP document, you will be contacted by MECP. This is the agency responsible for making sure your child is getting their needs met. All services provided by MECP are free of charge to eligible children and are independent from Preschool for All.

If your PFA preschool provider believes that they need more tools to support your child in the classroom, they should talk with your family first. If the preschool providers and family are in agreement, they may refer your child to MECP for an assessment. Your child cannot be directly observed or assessed without your consent.

Early Childhood Consultations

The Early Childhood Consultants (ECC) support Preschool for All providers. Their team consists of both prevention and treatment ECCs. Treatment ECCs have specialized training to provide counseling services to children and families who have experienced difficulties and need individualized therapeutic support. [Get to know the team here!](#)

Families who would like to access counseling can complete this [Family Interest Referral Form](#).

Grievances: How to Share your Concerns

If you have any concerns about your child's experience at a PFA site, please start by talking to your child's teacher or the preschool director/owner. We encourage you to do this quickly when a concern comes up. Each PFA preschool has their own processes. These include hiring and supporting teachers, keeping the preschool clean, providing meals, and managing behavior.

If you have a concern, please follow the preschool's grievance policy. Most of the time, you and the preschool staff will be able to resolve the concerns.

It is possible that you might not feel comfortable talking to your child's preschool directly about some repeated concerns. If that happens, you have the option to email us at preschoolforall@multco.us or call 503-988-1280. You can ask for the Preschool Partnerships Supervisor or the Inclusion & Retention Supervisor.

When there are concerns about the quality of care, PEL staff work closely with providers to understand the concern(s) and to support next steps.

If you have concerns about the health and safety of your child's PFA preschool site, you can call 1-800-556-6616 or [submit a complaint online](#) to the Child Care Licensing Division at the Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care.

Revised 9.25.2025 16

