

TURNING 5: PRESCHOOLERS TRANSITIONING TO KINDERGARTEN



As a parent of a child who may need special education services in kindergarten, you will participate in two simultaneous but separate processes: applying to kindergarten and developing a kindergarten Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Applying to Kindergarten

Every parent of a child entering kindergarten, with or without an IEP, is encouraged to participate in the Kindergarten Connect application process. You can begin this process by exploring the NYC Department of Education (NYC DOE) Kindergarten Directory and the Kindergarten Admissions section on their website in the fall the year before your child enters kindergarten. If your child is enrolled in PreK, you will receive a letter with information about NYC DOE Kindergarten Orientation Meetings, held in November/December. These are held in various languages, and interpretation is available by request. These meetings provide a complete overview of the application and special education process, including timelines. We suggest you attend.

Applications are submitted in the winter before your child enters kindergarten. Applications can be submitted online, over the phone, or at a DOE Family Welcome Center. The due date is announced in the fall.

In mid-March, you will receive an admissions offer and information about that school. You must pre-register for the school you were offered in order to hold the seat, but if another arrangement is made, such as a charter school, specialized program, or through a waiting list, your child is not obligated to attend the first offered school.

The Special Education Process/Turning 5

If your child might require special education services, you will also go through the special education process and develop a kindergarten IEP. This process is known as Turning 5, and happens separate from and in addition to the kindergarten application.

If your child does not receive preschool services, but you believe s/he may need services in kindergarten, you can make the referral request yourself directly to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) in your home district.

TURNING 5: PRESCHOOLERS TRANSITIONING TO KINDERGARTEN



The Special Education Process/Turning 5 (cont.)

For children already receiving preschool special education services, the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) will automatically refer your child to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) so they can begin next steps. You will receive a letter from the DOE in January informing you of the referral. If you do not receive this letter by February 1, contact the CSE in your home district.

Who will you work with?

Your case will be assigned to a DOE representative, who will contact you. This is often, but not always, the school psychologist at your zoned elementary school. The representative will review your child's file and determine whether any new evaluations are needed. You may also request a new evaluation in any specific discipline at this time.

The DOE representative will schedule a kindergarten IEP meeting between mid-February and June 15. If your child is found eligible for kindergarten special education services, the IEP team will create a new IEP for your child, which will include a classification, program recommendation, and related services.

Expert Tip:

The only formal evaluation automatically included in Turning 5 is a current classroom observation and a review of existing documentation. Any other evaluations needed must be specifically requested.

Your Child's School

Once a kindergarten IEP is developed, families will receive a notice called a School Location Letter in late spring. That is the most important school admission letter because it names the school where the special education services will be provided. It is usually the same school that admitted the child through the general Kindergarten Connect application process, but may be different if that school cannot provide the IEP services. If you have not already registered at this school, you will do so now.

Have questions?

For more information, guidance, or support, please contact the INCLUDEnyc Help Line at (212) 677-4660.