

UNION COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



PRE-K SCHOLARS

YOUR GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE RIGHT FIT

UCPS is committed to offering outstanding early education experiences. With four distinct Pre-K programs, we cater to the diverse needs of every child. Whether your child benefits from specialized support or flourishes in inclusive environments, there is a program for them. It is important to note that UCPS does not have a general enrollment process for preschool programs. Each Pre-K option offered by UCPS has specific eligibility requirements. Families are encouraged to review the guidelines for their preferred program to determine eligibility and next steps.

The application period begins in February. This guide will help your family with information about each option, helping you select the perfect fit for your child's educational path.

OPTION 1: TITLE I PRE-K

UCPS Title I Pre-Kindergarten is a free, full-day program designed to promote each child's optimal development and learning through a strengths-based, play-based approach to joyful, engaged learning. Learning experiences are meaningful and relevant for each child and are culturally, linguistically, and ability appropriate.

This enriching program is free for qualifying children and available at eight of our 13 Title I schools. Classes are small, with a maximum of 18 students, ensuring individualized attention.

Eligible children must be four years old on or by Aug. 31 of the school year for which they apply and show a need based on a state-approved pre-kindergarten assessment. **The application period is Feb. 2 through March 20.**

OPTION 2: NORTH CAROLINA PRE-K (NC PRE-K) PROGRAM

NC Pre-K is a no-cost, high-quality state program designed to strengthen classroom, academic and social/emotional skills for eligible children who are four years old by Aug. 31, 2026. Licensed teachers employ engaging, play-based methods to nurture children's growth and skill development in a structured classroom environment. Families earning less than 75 percent of the state median income are eligible for the program. UCPS partners with the Alliance for Children to provide NC Pre-K classrooms in three school sites. Visit www.theallianceforchildren.org for the NC Pre-K application, eligibility and frequently asked questions.

OPTION 3: PRE-K PEER PALS

In the Pre-K Peer Pals program, children with and without special needs learn together. Located in select elementary schools across the county, it offers a blend of inclusivity and growth. Before and after-school care is not available on-site. There is a monthly fee for this program. Applicants must be three or four years old on or before Aug. 31 of the current year, must demonstrate age-appropriate communication and positive social skills, must be fully potty-trained, and families must provide transportation.

OPTION 4: EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN PRESCHOOL

The Exceptional Children's option is for children aged three to five who have undergone evaluations, qualify for special education and need specialized instruction to address their unique needs due to a disability. The program is free of charge. Admission is based on decisions made by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and does not guarantee full-time enrollment. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/3m6rwn3r> for information on referrals.

Families are welcomed to visit our Pre-K office from 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. to ask questions, and get help with applications. Interpreters are available to provide support.

Walter Bickett Education Center

501 Lancaster Ave. | Monroe, NC 28112 | 704-296-0152

2026



PARENT INFORMATION SESSIONS

Staff will be available at the sessions to help parents complete Pre-K applications.

Please bring proof of address and birth certificates for students.



FEBRUARY 5

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Porter Ridge High Auditorium
2839 Ridge Road
Indian Trail, NC 28079



FEBRUARY 12

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Sun Valley High Auditorium
5211 Old Charlotte Highway
Monroe, NC 28110



FEBRUARY 26

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Central Academy of Technology & Arts
600 Brewer Drive
Monroe, NC 28112



<https://www.ucpsnc.org/academics/pre-k-scholars>

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www.ucpsnc.org