



1

Enroll

**“Every family in Hamden
should have access to free,
diverse, quality education
from Pre-K-12.”**

1

Enroll: UPK

Background | What is UPK?

What is Universal Pre-K (UPK)?

At times over the past several months the term "universal preschool" has been used to describe potential plans to expand preschool. There is not a single definition across the country for that term but, most often it refers to programs which are free for all or for a designated population. The district has already received inquiries regarding the "free" preschool program that some parents think will be available in Hamden. Hamden's intention may be to provide Pre-K to all but the term Universal Pre-K is not always clear.

Universal pre-k programs are known to "enhance both the development and school readiness of young children," especially children from low-income households and children of color. However, they can sometimes become segregated by race and income, unless special attention is paid to ensuring integration through the enrollment mechanisms.

How does Hamden Currently pay for Pre-K?

- **PDG Grant:** Federal grant (Preschool Development Grant) ends June 2020
 - PDG Grant funded 21 slots for Pre-K in Hamden
- **SRG Grant:** State grant (School Readiness Grant)
 - SRG Grant Increased by 9 new slots in February 2020
- **CDC Grant:** Child Day Care Grant (for years the state has considered folding this grant into SRG grant to simplify things, but has not as of yet)

How can parents learn more about Pre-K in Hamden?

- There is a family resource center located at Ridge Hill and Church Street Schools that has family programming from prenatal to kindergarten. It also has a full-time coordinator.
<https://www.hamden.org/resources/community/family-resource-center>

1

Enroll: UPK

Background | Pre-K in Hamden

<u>Program</u>	<u>Key Elements</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>School Schedule</u>
Hamden Early Learning Program (H.E.L.P) School Readiness Grant (S.R.G.)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tender Care Day Center: 12 slots 2. Private Center on London Drive 3. Remaining slots: private pay 4. HPS: 4 locations w/9 classrooms 5. NAEYC Accredited 6. Certified lead teachers 7. Class size based on room size (14-18 students per class) 90 slots 	Sliding scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Year • 5 Days/Week • 10 hour day
Child Day Care Contracts (C.D.C.)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sleeping Giant located at Keefe Center on 11 Pine Street 2. 30 slots 	Sliding scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Year • 5 Days/Week • 7:30-5:30 days
Hamden High Nursery School <i>Laboratory School</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2-5 days per week 2. HHS teacher is director (runs Child Development program) 3. One lead teacher (half-time, no benefits) 4. HHS students student teach for Gateway College credits 5. Emergent Curriculum/hands-on approach 6. Not NAEYC accredited, but follow NAEYC standards 	Small fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30 AM - 11:15 A.M. • M,W,F: 4 YR • T, R: mixed 3 - 4 YR
Integrated Pre-K At Alice Peck	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hamden BOE run (public) 2. Hamden certified teachers (union) 3. Typical peers serve as role models for special education students 4. No transportation for typical students 5. No food served 6. 3.5 years old and potty trained 	Free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mon-Thurs half-day sessions



1

Enroll: UPK

Policy Recommendations

1. Support existing Pre-K businesses
 - Provide vouchers to qualifying private pre-K businesses. How can we do this without using public tax dollars?
 - Create job opportunities for current private Pre-K business owners who do not qualify.
2. Create Pre-K space for five schools.
 - Spring Glen
 - Bear Path
 - Shepard Glen
 - West Woods
 - Ridge Hill
3. Provide Pre-K programming information in a central resource Center.
4. Expand the Connecticut School Readiness Grant.
5. Increase support for Special Education Services for Preschool.
 - Current half day/4 day week is insufficient to meet needs
 - Remainder of their day is spent in a childcare setting without additional supports
6. Address community concerns.
 - How can we protect private Pre-K businesses in town, especially black-owned businesses?
 - How can we address the many transitions resulting from starting at Pre-K 4?
 - How can we expand the Hamden High Pre-K laboratory school program?

1

Enroll: UPK

Budget & Resources

1. Fiscal Resources

- Connecticut serves prekindergarten children in three state-funded programs:
 1. Child Day Care Contracts (CDCC)
 2. School Readiness Program (SRP)
 3. Smart Start.

Financial support is available to 21 Priority School Readiness districts, as defined by legislation, and 46 Competitive School Readiness municipalities that have one or more schools in which 40% or more of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or are one of the communities identified within the 50 lowest wealth-ranked towns in the state, as defined by legislation.

(source: http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/EE_Connecticut_2018.pdf)

- Connecticut has a number of programs subsidized by both the federal government and state government. Many of these programs are free or low cost to those who qualify.
(source: https://www.publicprek.com/state.php?page_value=connecticut)
- Pre-Kindergarten Grant Opportunities:
[Grants for Preschools, Early Childhood Grants in Connecticut, Bridgeport, New Haven, Stamford, Hartford, Waterbury](#)
[Preschool Development Grants Program](#)

2. People Power

- Hamden BOE Grant Writer (The district is in need of a full-time grant writer.)
- Hamden Pre-K teachers (currently 9)
- Hamden Early Learning Program
- Family Resource Center
- Kindergarten teachers



1

Enroll: Choice

Background

What is residential districting?

Traditionally, many towns use a student's address to determine what school they will go to. As a result of racist housing laws and city planning, this has caused disparities in the neighborhoods and thus impacts their access to an equitable education.

What are community schools?

Community schools provide additional resources to a community to help students thrive. These may include a family resource center, health clinics, and food services. This may also be the site of where the community should go in case of a community disaster.

What is Controlled Choice?

Many cities that want to try to create racially integrated and equitable schools have tried using a format called "controlled choice." These are called "choice" plans because families express preferences, and school assignments try to take into account those preferences. (Usually, they also try to limit students' travel time and keep siblings together.) However, the assignments are also "controlled" to ensure that schools will be racially and socioeconomically diverse. The communities use information about students to "control" for diversity using a matching algorithm with certain weights. To honor federal equal protection law, cities generally use one of three different models.

- Individual-level information about socioeconomic status (SES). Most commonly, they measure this by whether a student receives free and reduced lunch, or "FRL."
- Individual-level SES information plus other demographic information.
- Neighborhood-level information to try to capture an aggregate measure of how the student has been affected by racial segregation.



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Enroll: Choice

Policy Recommendations

1. Begin Controlled Choice at the Pre-K Level.

- Students who enroll after Pre-K or who have circumstances that change their enrollment factors (i.e. they get identified for special needs or fall into Tier 3 for more than 3 cycles) will have the option of staying or changing their school.
- As Pre-k students enroll, connect them with the district wide resource center
- All for students who live in Hamden but do not attend Hamden Pre-k to pre-enroll for K to allow for planning and resources (i.e. class projections)

2. Weigh the following factors in the matching algorithm

1. Socioeconomic Status
2. Neighborhood level data
 - Priority zip codes historically impacted by segregation
 - Priority catchment areas historically impacted by segregation and school closures
3. Home Language Other than English
4. Special Education
5. Students receiving Tier 3 services in the SRBI intervention program
6. Total Commute Time
7. Sibling Preference
8. Family Systems-Involvement
 - Connecticut Department of Children & Families (DCF)
 - Connecticut Department of Justice
9. Setting a base class size that allows and plans for a change of (6+/-) students
 - Set a general class size perhaps (x<20 students)

3. Create centralized community resource center to share information.



1

Enroll: Choice

Budget and Resources

1. **Budget lines**

- Title I
- ECS funding
- CEA funds and scholarships
- NEA funds and scholarships
- Grant opportunities to design the matching algorithm for controlled choice.

2. **People Power**

- Aligned teacher leaders for each grade level.
- Coordinated principals and assistant principals.
- Parents and guardians engaged in resource center.



1

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Timeline

1. September 2020

- Establish a Pre-K Enrollment task force in HPS
- Hold community forums on new enrollment algorithm and priorities

2. September 2021

- Create a complete district-wide redistricting plan focusing only on ways to reflect the towns overall diversity makeup within 10 points to give families a baseline to see where they would go to school using
- Hire algorithm design consultant to create enrollment algorithm for 2022

3. September 2022

- Develop entrance protocols for HPS
- Admissions Cycle I at elementary level

4. September 2023:

- Admissions Cycle II at preschool level

5. September 2024

- Evaluate Admissions Cycle I-II

6. September 2025

- Create new 5 YR strategic plan.