



# Pillar 1

## Early Childhood Education

**BLUEPRINT**  
FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE ACT



# Goal

To significantly expand full-day preschool and to make it free for all eligible students ages 3-4 so all children can begin kindergarten ready to learn.

- ★ Significantly expand publicly-funded full-day Pre-K for all 4-year-olds and 3-year-olds from low income families through a public-private delivery system
- ★ Increase number of high-quality early childhood education providers and educators
- ★ Expand supports for young children and their families
- ★ Improve student readiness for kindergarten

## Status of Current Work

Unlike the other pillars in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the work we have undertaken in Early Childhood Education (ECE) has been supported by clear messaging from the MSDE and significant funding over the years via the Pre-K Expansion Grant and formula funding.

### Background

#### Full-Day Pre-K

In 2016, FCPS offered the first full-day Pre-K class at Monocacy Elementary. This year, FCPS has 49 traditional full-day Pre-K classrooms across the district. Just two schools are offering half-day Pre-K: Brunswick Elementary and Ballenger Creek Elementary.

#### Eligibility level

Families earning up to 300 percent the Federal Poverty level (approximately \$84,000 for a family of four) are currently eligible for Pre-K.

#### Funding benefits

FCPS has added dedicated teachers and instructional assistants. FCPS also purchased additional instructional materials and furniture.

### Assessment results

Students attending full-day Pre-K are performing significantly better than students who are attending half-day Pre-K, according to Kindergarten Readiness Assessment data. FCPS has administered this assessment since 2014.

### Taking advantage of space

#### Pre-K in high schools

FCPS implemented two innovative Pre-K classrooms at Frederick High and Tuscarora High. The traditional full day Pre-K classes are housed at a high school and taught by a Pre-K teacher and instructional assistant

#### Support from high school students

The FHS and THS Pre-K programs are supported by high school students earning Child Development Associates certification. A child development teacher guides the high school students.

### Community effort

#### Private business providers

The Blueprint calls for both public and private providers to make Pre-K available. The Learning Bee in Walkersville has 20 state-funded student seats for families who qualify.

#### Professional learning

The Learning Bee teachers can attend professional learning sessions with FCPS Pre-K teachers and support staff.

### Judy Centers

#### Providing student supports

FCPS has five Judy Center Early Learning Hubs offering social services referrals, parenting classes, infant and toddler playgroups, English classes and Pre-K enrollment support.

#### Locations

FCPS Judy Centers are located at Waverley, Hillcrest, Lincoln, Butterfly Ridge, and Monocacy elementary schools

## Focus of Future Work

### Increasing enrollment

FCPS will prioritize children whose primary language is not English and students with individualized educational plans. This will increase enrollment.

### Planning for more Pre-K students

We are determining where additional programs will be located to consider the implications on increasing staffing and classroom space.

### Assisting private providers

The Pre-K pillar relies heavily on private providers applying for state funds, hiring

certified teachers, and becoming accredited.

FCPS will provide technical assistance to support private providers with a focus on 3-year-olds, where programming is currently limited.

### Instructional assistant qualifications

Pre-K instructional assistants must have a Child Development Associates Certificate by 2025-26. The Early Childhood Education Office is collaborating with Frederick Community College to create a CDA course for our staff, which will begin spring 2023.

### Judy Center support

FCPS will continue writing Judge Center grants while considering additional locations. At this time, new sites are still funded for placement in Title I schools or an elementary school with a CDC Social Vulnerability Index of .6 or higher.