



STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL LOTTERY

The My School DC lottery process is available to all DC residents. No student shall be denied admission into a DC public school because of disabilities or suspected disabilities.

If a student receives a lottery match or waitlist offer, DCPS or DC public charter schools must enroll that student regardless of the student's special education status. **However, the school may serve the student at a different campus than where the student was matched to appropriately serve the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).**

LEARN

All families of students with disabilities are invited to learn about their public school options and participate in the common lottery.

Here are some resources for families:

- Learn about special education services for each school through their **special education contact**. Find them on the **school profiles** at www.myschooldc.org/schools.
- Learn about the **DCPS special education process** at <https://dcpsspecial.ed.wixsite.com/home>.
- Use the **helpful questions** created by the My School DC Parent Advisory Council when connecting with schools. It includes a section written by parents of students with disabilities. It's available in six languages at www.myschooldc.org/resources/resources-families-and-schools.
- The **DC Special Education Hub** launched in 2022 to connect families with tools, information, and one-on-one support. Their website also includes a list of terms and definitions that may be helpful to you. More information is available at <https://specialeducation.dc.gov>.

**READING ON PAPER?
SCAN HERE TO FIND
ALL LINKS REFERENCED**



APPLY

Students with disabilities use the same lottery application process and can apply to any DCPS or DC public charter school. You must still apply by the deadlines.

The application deadlines for the 2026-27 school year are February 2, 2026, for Grades 9-12, and March 2, 2026, for PK3 - Grade 8.

There is a lottery preference for an applicant that has been identified as having a high level of need in their IEP as measured on or after March 2, 2026. Currently, this preference is offered at one public charter school, Bridges PCS. Bridges PCS designates seats each year for students who have an eligible IEP. More information is available at <https://bridgespcs.org/spedlottery>.

Identification for this preference means OSSE has a record that the applicant has an eligible IEP for the high-level special education classrooms where the preference is offered.

ENROLL

Students with disabilities use the same lottery application process and can apply to any DCPS or DC public charter school. You must still apply by the deadlines.

- **DCPS Early Stages**

Early Stages is a DCPS evaluation center for children aged 2 years 8 months to 5 years 10 months. They identify delays and disabilities that may impact a child's education.

After evaluation, determination of eligibility for special education services, and development of an IEP, Early Stages provides you with a school where you can enroll and begin IEP services. You will be offered a seat at your neighborhood school if the school can implement your child's IEP and has an available seat. If not, you will be offered a seat at the next closest school.

Early Stages can only offer enrollment at DCPS schools. They cannot place children into charter schools. However, any IEP developed at Early Stages is valid at any public school in DC, including charters

If you prefer to enroll your child in a private school or child care center, or home-school your child, you may receive a Services Plan. Services Plans do not offer the full range of services available on an IEP and may not fully meet your child's educational needs. However, they do provide some level of support for children who will not be enrolled in a DCPS school. If you are eligible for a Services Plan, it will be developed at the same time as the IEP.

Siblings of children who enroll based on a DCPS Early Stages location offer are eligible for a sibling preference. Learn more about DCPS Early Stages at <https://www.earlystagesdc.org>.

- **DCPS Self Contained Classrooms**

DCPS reserves the right to serve students with 20 or more hours of specialized instruction outside of general education at a different campus within the LEA than where the student was matched to appropriately serve and implement the student's IEP. Schools with self-contained programs and feeder patterns can be found at <https://dcpsspecialized.wixsite.com/home/self-contained-feeder-patterns>. DCPS has not named any of its self-contained academic program classrooms for participation in the My School DC lottery special education preference.

QUESTIONS OR WANT MORE INFORMATION?

You can visit the [Students with Disabilities and the Public School Lottery](#) page for additional information for the the 2026-27 school year.

Additionally, the My School DC Hotline is available for your questions at **(202) 888-6336** Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. or by email at info.myschooldc@dc.gov.