

Preschool Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Rahway Families,

The Rahway Office of Early Childhood Education receives several calls regarding our preschool program. In order to address some of the questions that you may have, please see the information below.

Q: What is the cost?

A: Our preschool program is free to Rahway residents.

Q: What are the requirements to register my child?

A: Children must be three or four years old by October 1st (no exceptions), families must reside in Rahway and provide multiple confirmations of residency, and families are required to submit both a physical and an immunization record in order for the application to be approved.

Q: Is the program full day?

A: Yes, we offer full day preschool care and education services to 3 and 4 year old children. Full day is considered 6 hours of care and education, per day.

Q: Is part-day attendance an option?

A: Only full-day options are available.

Q: Do you offer transportation?

A: We **DO NOT** offer transportation.

Q: Does my child need to be toilet trained to attend?

A: No. It is not required for children to be toilet trained in order to attend.

Q: Which Rahway school will my three-year-old child be attending for the PreK 3 program?

A: The three-year-old preschool classrooms are **NOT** located within the district elementary school buildings. The district has one off-site location, at the St. Thomas the Apostle education annex. In addition, the district has collaborated with three local, privately owned and operated child care programs who provide care and education services to district enrolled three-year-old preschool children. The three collaboration sites are Rahway Day Care Center, Helping Hands Learning Academy @ Rahway Community Action Organization, (formerly known as JFK Helping Hands Learning Academy), and the Gateway Family YMCA.

Q: Are the PreK 3 classrooms district classrooms?

A: The classrooms located at the St. Thomas the Apostle education annex are district managed and operated classrooms. The provider locations (Rahway Day Care Center

Helping Hands Learning Academy @ Rahway Community Action Organization, and the Gateway Family YMCA) are owned and managed by the providers, and are **NOT** district classrooms. Providers must follow stringent state regulations and standards in order to contract with the district.

Q: What makes the provider classrooms high quality?

A: Providers are required to be licensed by the New Jersey Office of Licensing in order to enter into a contract with the district. Provider classrooms also have certified teachers in each classroom and paraprofessionals who have obtained at least an Associates degree. In addition, all classrooms follow the district's chosen preschool curriculum (Creative Curriculum), are observed and supported by district specialist's regularly, and are assessed by district staff for high quality implementation.

Q: What will arrival and dismissal times be?

A: The arrival and dismissal times are identified by the individual facility administrators. Elementary school and Academy preschool arrival and dismissal times vary. Please access the district website (www.rahway.net) for individual school hours and information. The St. Thomas location operates from 8:10am-2:27pm. Providers are required to operate for at least six hours and they determine these hours. Families can contact their enrolled provider to confirm these times.

Q: Is before and after care available?

A: Our elementary school locations have before and after care available, provided by the YMCA. **The St. Thomas, Academy and Gateway Family YMCA preschool locations do NOT provide before or after care.** Rahway Community Action Organization (RCAO) and Rahway Day Care Center both provide before and after care at their locations. Please contact the YMCA and the provider locations for details about before and after care.

Q: Will breakfast, lunch and snack be served?

A: Both breakfast and lunch are available for purchase at all of our district locations, including the St. Thomas location. Snacks are **NOT** provided at any of our district locations and families must send a snack with their child each day, as it is a required component of our daily routine. Provider locations also provide school meal options. Please check with the provider regarding their school meal services. Please be sure to observe any program food restrictions due to food allergies.

Q: How is my Spanish-speaking child supported?

A: We provide Spanish language support to children throughout several of our preschool classrooms, as more than one-half of our staff are Spanish speaking.

Q: How can I reach my child's teacher during the school day?

A: There are several ways in which you can contact your child's teacher during the school day. **1).** District locations each have office staff. Please view our district website for individual district school contact information. **2).** All staff members have district email addresses. Please reference your school's website for teacher email addresses. Please note that staff are only available to review email messages during prep times. If you have immediate questions or concerns, please contact the school office staff. **3).** All provider locations are staffed with Center Directors. You may contact the centers individually to speak with your child's teacher. **4).** Lastly, all of our schools (including

providers) utilize ClassDojo to communicate with families. Please see your school or program about how you can join their ClassDojo. Please note that teachers do not check ClassDojo during instructional time and will respond to your messages during prep times.

Q: When should I register my child?

A: Registration begins by or around the month of February each year. Spaces are limited, for both 3 and 4 year old children. Children are placed on a first come, first served basis so be sure to refer to the district website and registration portal often to ensure timely registration and submission of the required documents. Lastly, only children with completed applications will be placed on classroom rosters.

If you should have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to the district Office of Early Childhood Education @ (732) 396-2968.
