

The mission of Riverdale Elementary Pre-K is to instill a positive disposition toward learning, which fosters enthusiasm, curiosity, and creativity in children; supports and collaborates with families; and provides a community model for a quality, inclusive program.

Our Pre-K program is fully funded by the State of Illinois and therefore is free for families. In order to qualify for our program, every child must first receive a developmental screening. The screening determines eligibility based on the State's qualifying factors.

Screenings are administered by Blackhawk Area Special Education District (BHASED) and held throughout the year in surrounding communities. Riverdale hosts three screenings a year, usually in February, May and August. At these screenings, we are able to meet with families to discuss the screening and possibly offer the child a spot in our program that day, if they qualify. Children who do not qualify that day are placed on our waiting list.

Frequently Asked Questions:

My child is preschool aged. Why can't they automatically attend preschool?

We have 80 Pre-K spots available in our program and the State requires us to first offer those spots to children who may be at risk for academic difficulty. In order to understand if a child may be at risk or not, we gather information from a developmental screening.

The Preschool for All (PFA) grant is separate from other district funds. The separation of funds results in policies and procedures that are different from the rest of the school. Riverdale School District takes responsibility to oversee, manage and support the program.

If my child is not offered a spot and is put on the waiting list, how will I be informed if they are offered a spot?

Once a child is on the waiting list, they are not removed unless they have become eligible for Kindergarten, moved out of district, or a parent has asked for them to be removed. If and when an enrolled student has dropped from the program and a spot becomes available, we go to our waiting list and offer a spot to the child with the most qualifying risk factors. Some years there are less children "at-risk" than others so it is not something that we can easily predict. We understand the difficulties of planning around the unknown so we advise parents to make plans elsewhere for childcare/preschool unless you receive a phone call from us offering your child a spot. Summers seem to be especially difficult for parents of children on the waiting list but we will call you before school begins IF we have an available spot.

How much does Pre-K cost?

There is no cost to families. We only ask that the child bring a large backpack. Everything else (supplies, monthly field trips, snacks, etc.) is covered by the PFA grant.

Where can I get a screening done?

BHASED conducts screenings all over the IL QCA. Visit their website at <http://bhased.org/> or call them at (309) 792-6100 to locate their next offered screening. Ask them to send the screening to the Riverdale Pre-K Program. We will call you after reviewing the paperwork to inform you if we can offer your child a spot or if they will be on our waiting list.

We also host screenings at Riverdale three times a year – usually in February, May and at the beginning of August. Your child must be 3 or 4 years old to receive a screening. **You MUST call the elementary school office at 309-523-3106 to schedule an appointment in order to attend a screening at Riverdale.**

Our 2019 screening dates are as follows:

(Your child should be at least 3 years old by these dates.)

February 28th

May 23rd

August 6th

I am not able to get my child to and from school. Is transportation provided?

Yes! Our buses pick up and drop off children at any address within the Riverdale School District, including childcare facilities. A list of childcare facilities is available upon request.

Are Home Visits required?

In compliance with our Preschool For All grant from the State of IL, our Parent Coordinator is due to visit your child in their home at least once a year but preferably twice – once in the Fall and then in the Spring. Home visits are more like play-dates and they bring great joy to the children. Your child's delight is why our Parent Coordinator puts so much effort into making these visits happen. Please don't think of the visit as if we are spying on you, but as a time where you watch their face light up when their "teacher" comes to their home and where you can casually ask questions about how your child is getting along during the day. It means so much to them and they remember it for years.

Does a parent have to attend every field trip/event/meeting?

*Pre-K offers a monthly event for families to be involved in. We know that it is not feasible to take off work for every event so no, your attendance is not required. We do encourage families to consider asking extended family if they might be willing or wanting to attend. We see the children's school pride grow when they get to show it off to their family and their family to their school. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, babysitters, etc. are all welcome! The State does require at least 3 events to be attended by someone throughout the year. The Family Picnic in May (the last day of Pre-K) is the **MOST IMPORTANT** event to plan for. We plan for 100% participation at this event.*

How many days a week is Pre-K?

We are in session 5 days a week and operate under the same schedule as Riverdale Schools, with the exception of days we are closed for screenings and conferences. We have 2 morning classes and 2 afternoon classes, each serving 20 children. The morning class is from 7:40-10:40am. The afternoon class is from 12pm-3pm. We practice a lot of developmental skills during these three hours and the children establish a trustworthy routine and a love for school when they are consistently attending.

Do you serve breakfast or lunch?

We do not offer breakfast or lunch but we do offer and serve a healthy snack and milk every day.