



CHESHIRE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Smart Start Preschool Program

- The preschool program is taught by certified teachers and supported by para educators.
- The curriculum is based on CT Early Learning and Development Standards.
- The child must be 4 years old by 9/1/2026. Kindergarten age children are not eligible for the Smart Start Preschool Program.
- Program school hours are Monday - Friday 8:20-2:50; the YMCA offers before or after school care for an additional fee.
- Tuition is calculated based on family income and family size using a slide fee scale. It is calculated into 10 monthly payments due August-May. Non-payment of tuition may result in dismissal of the student from the program.
- The Smart Start program is a state funded preschool program overseen by the CT Office of Early Childhood. The program supports families that might not otherwise be able to send their child to preschool since it is not a grade that public schools provide to all children. The Smart Start program priorities children with family income meeting guidelines below 75% of state median income and multiple languages. These children will be given priority placement. Other applicants, regardless of economic factors, will then be selected.
- Inclusive classrooms-students with disabilities are members of each classroom.
- The program follows Cheshire's district school year calendar.
- Snacktime, lunch and a nap are part of the daily schedule.
- Transportation is provided by parents.

Smart Start Preschool Important Dates

Oct. 1, 2025 Preschool applications will be available online <https://www.cheshire.k12.ct.us/schools/darcey-school/> then click on school resources and then click on preschool program option or click here [Link for Full day Preschool Program](#)

Please do not go to Powerschool to Pre-register your child until the school contacts you in March.

by Mar. 1, 2026 Parents will be notified if their child has been accepted into the program with information regarding registration requirements and tuition fees.

There is a \$35 non-refundable deposit due at registration.

For more information, please contact Darcey School 203-272-3343



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What age does my child have to be to be considered for the Smart Start Preschool Program?

Children who will be turning 4 by Sept. 1 of the year of enrollment are eligible to apply for the program.

Do you offer other preschool programs for children age 3 or age 4?

Yes, there is the Integrated half-day Early Intervention Program at Darcey for 3 and 4 year olds.

What happens if my child does not get into the Smart Start Preschool Program?

We encourage families to consider the Integrated half-day Early Intervention Program at Darcey or to consider other available programs in the area.

Children not chosen by March 1 will be placed on a waiting list. If an opening becomes available, the families on the waiting list will be contacted and offered a spot in the program.

What is the cost of the program?

Family tuition rates are determined through a sliding fee scale provided by the Office of Early Childhood. Rates are based on household income and household size. Your family's actual tuition will be determined when income documentation (copy of tax return) is received and reviewed.

Tuition is due monthly.

Is transportation provided?

No, families transport to and from school each day.

Is lunch provided?

Families can choose to send a lunch each day, or have their child purchase lunch through the school cafeteria.