

CAROLINE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Top Ten Questions About School Enrollment

1. Where do I start with enrolling my child in school for the first time?

If this is the first time your child will be enrolling in any school, **call the school** and ask what you must bring with you to enroll your child. At a minimum, schools require the following documents: birth certificate; proof of custody/guardianship (documentation which determines with whom the child resides and who has decision-making authority); proof of residency; and record of immunizations (DHMH Form 896).

2. What do I do if my child is transferring from one school to another?

Call the school your child last attended and ask the school to prepare a **Maryland Transfer Form**. Tell them the last day your child will attend school and ask if you may pick up the Maryland Transfer Form, or if it can be mailed to you or brought home to you by your child. The Maryland Transfer Form will contain all the information you need to enroll your child in the new school.

Call your child's new school and schedule an appointment. Be sure you bring the Maryland Transfer Form. The appointment will ensure that time is set aside to speak with you and to answer any questions you may have. Also ask what items you need to bring with you to enroll your child in the new school.

3. Why is proof of custody/guardianship required?

Proof of custody/guardianship is required to identify who is legally responsible for the child and who can be contacted in case of an emergency. This tells the school who can make educational decisions for the child. Documents accepted as proof of custody include a court order; a separation or divorce decree; or a birth certificate that identifies the parents. A notarized statement giving guardianship is not acceptable.

4. Why is proof of residency required?

The residence of the parents/legal custodian/guardian determines the child's right to attend a particular public school. Documents accepted as proof of residency include a property tax bill, deed, or mortgage account statement; renter's agreement or lease; or electric, gas, or oil bill. The documents must contain both the applicant's name and address.

5. Do the requirements for school enrollment include children in Kinship Care?

These requirements include Formal Kinship Care (when a child is removed from his/her family and is placed with a relative by a State child welfare agency) and Informal Kinship Care (when a parent or legal guardian places a child with a relative). In addition to these requirements, relatives of children in Informal Kinship Care must file an affidavit with Pupil Services and provide documentation to prove a serious family hardship.

6. Why do I need to bring proof of age?

Proof of age is particularly important the first time a child enrolls in school. It helps determine which services and programs are available to the child. Maryland's mandatory attendance law applies to children between the ages of five to sixteen.

Acceptable documents are a birth certificate or registration, passport or visa, hospital certificate, church certificate, or doctor's certificate. A copy of your documentation will be made by the school and attached to your child's record.

7. Why do I need to bring immunization records?

All children need to have an up-to-date copy of their immunization records to be enrolled in and to attend school. If your child's immunizations need to be updated and you can bring written proof of an appointment within 20 days to obtain the immunizations, you may temporarily enroll your child pending receipt of the required immunizations. Your doctor or health clinic can provide the DHMH 896 Form, or a computer-generated form for you to take to the school.

8. Why do I need to complete the Blood Lead Testing Certificate?

Children exposed to lead can develop physical and behavioral problems as well as learning disabilities. Beginning in school year 2003-2004, **all** children enrolled in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade who currently live or have ever lived in the targeted ZIP codes must show evidence of blood lead testing. To comply with this new law, parents/guardians must complete the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Blood Lead Testing Certificate, which is available from your school or doctor. The Blood Lead Testing Certificate requires parents/guardians to:

- ∞ Provide the dates of blood lead tests **if** your child **currently lives or has lived** in any of the targeted ZIP Codes identified on the back of the form; or,
- ∞ Certify that your child **does not live, nor has ever lived**, in the ZIP Codes identified on the back of the form.

If your child has never had a blood lead test and needs one, please contact your child's doctor. If your child does not have a doctor, your school nurse may be able to assist you in obtaining the required test.

9. Why do I need to bring the current Individualized Education Program (IEP) for my child who receives Special Education services?

This will ensure that your child receives the appropriate special education and related services that were specifically developed for your child. It will also provide the school with the dates for the annual IEP review of your child's program as well as any evaluations that may be required.

10. Do I need to bring the most recent report card and/or withdrawal grades?

This information is very helpful in matching up a continuing program for your child. It tells the school what courses your child was taking and may indicate the instructional level. For elementary school children, it may indicate the reading or math series that was used to teach your child. For high school students, it may indicate credits earned and/or graduation requirements that have been met.

*For more information, call your child's school or the
Pupil Services Department at (410) 479-3253.*