

TURNING 5: PRESCHOOLERS TRANSITIONING TO KINDERGARTEN



As a parent of a child who may need special education services in kindergarten, you will participate in two simultaneous but separate processes: kindergarten admissions and the special education (Turning 5) process.

The Kindergarten Admissions Process

Every parent of a child entering kindergarten, with or without an IEP, is encouraged to participate in the Kindergarten admissions process. You can begin this process by exploring the NYC Department of Education (NYC DOE) Kindergarten Directory and the Kindergarten Admissions section on their [website](#) in the fall the year before your child enters kindergarten. Families should receive a yellow letter that includes information about upcoming NYC DOE Kindergarten Orientation Meetings, held in late fall/early winter. They are held in English and Spanish and interpretation is available by request. These meetings provide a complete overview of the Kindergarten admissions and special education processes, including timelines. We suggest you attend.

Applications are submitted in the winter before your child enters kindergarten. Applications can be submitted online at [myschools.nyc](https://myschools.nyc.gov), over the phone by calling (718) 935-2009, or at a [DOE Family Welcome Center](#). The Kindergarten application deadline is typically announced in the fall.

In the spring, you will receive an admissions offer letter. You must pre-register for the school you were offered in order to hold the seat, but if you applied and your child was accepted at a charter school, [specialized program](#), or through a community school waiting list, your child is not obligated to attend the first school offered through the Kindergarten admissions process.

The Special Education Process/Turning 5

If your child might require special education services, you will also go through the special education process and develop a kindergarten Individualized Education Program (IEP). This special education process is also known as Turning 5.

If your child does not receive preschool special education services, but you believe s/he may need services in kindergarten, you can make the referral request directly to the [Committee on Special Education \(CSE\)](#) in your home district.

For children already receiving preschool special education services, the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) will automatically refer your child to the Committee on Special Education (CSE), so they can begin next steps. If your child is being referred for the first time for an initial evaluation, you will receive a [blue letter of referral](#) from the DOE. If you do not receive this letter by February 1, contact the [CSE](#) in your home district.

Who will you work with?

Your case will be assigned to a DOE representative, who will contact you. This is often, but not always, the school psychologist at your zoned elementary school. The representative will review your child's file and determine whether any new evaluations are needed. You may also request a new evaluation in area of concern, such as speech or physical therapy at this time.

The DOE representative will schedule a kindergarten IEP meeting between mid-February and June 15. If your child is found eligible for kindergarten special education services, the IEP team will create a new IEP for your child, which will include a disability classification, program recommendation, and related services, such as occupational therapy.

Expert Tip: The only formal evaluation automatically included in Turning 5 is a current classroom observation and a review of existing documentation. Any other evaluations will need to be specifically requested.

Your Child's School

Once a kindergarten IEP is developed, families will receive a notice called a green [School Location Letter](#) in spring/end summer. This letter names the school where your child's special education services will be provided. It is usually the same school that admitted your child through the general Kindergarten admissions process, but may be different if that school is not appropriate based on the IEP recommendations. If you have not already registered at this school, you will do so now.

Have questions?

For more information, guidance, or support, please contact the INCLUDEnyc Help Line at (212) 677-4660.