

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · CHICAGO

How to Enroll a Child in Chicago Public Schools: 2026 Guide

Neighborhood school enrollment, GoCPS, the document list, vaccine and health dates, English-learner support and the rights of immigrant families.

SHORT ANSWER

No, an SSN is not required. The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) registration document list names neither a Social Security number nor any immigration paper. Every child who lives in Chicago is entitled to a K-12 seat at the neighborhood school and needs no application: you find the school and turn up with the documents. A consular ID such as a Matricula Consular is accepted as proof of address. Health papers are due October 15. Non-neighborhood schools and all high schools go through GoCPS. For English-learner support, Multilingual Multicultural Education is on 773-527-3203.

How to enroll, step by step

- 1 **Find your neighborhood school.** Type your address into the CPS School Locator. For K-12 the neighborhood seat is yours by right and there is no application; you call the school and set up a registration appointment. Children living in Chicago can enroll from birth up to age 20.
- 2 **Gather the documents.** Four headings, none of which asks for an SSN (checklist below).
- 3 **If you cannot produce a birth certificate,** enroll anyway and, within 30 days, give either the original birth certificate or other proof of identity and age with an affidavit (a passport, visa, I-94 or State Department travel document).
- 4 **Line up the health papers.** You may enroll before they are ready, but **October 15** is a real deadline (see below).
- 5 **Fill in the Home Language Survey.** Every family new to CPS completes it, and the result decides whether the child takes the English-proficiency screener. A school with 20 or more English learners sharing a home language runs transitional bilingual education; with fewer it runs a transitional program of instruction (TPI). Turkish-speaking children are usually supported through TPI.

Document checklist

DOCUMENT	NOTE
☐ Proof of guardianship (any one)	The latest tax return listing the child, the child's original birth certificate naming the adult, a court order, a health-insurance record or a public-aid document.
☐ The child's age and identity (any one original)	A certified birth certificate, a U.S. or foreign passport or visa , a baptismal record or a medical record. The Pre-K list is narrower.
☐ The adult's photo ID	An unexpired U.S. passport, an employee ID, an unexpired driver's license or state ID, or a Chicago CityKey.
☐ Chicago address (any two)	A utility bill from the last 90 days (gas, electric, landline, water, cable or internet), a deed, a current mortgage or lease, a Medicaid card, a voter card, court documents, an Illinois public-aid card, a stamped USPS change-of-address form, an Illinois state aid or Social Security check, or another identification card issued by a federal or state agency or a foreign government consulate, such as a Matricula Consular . The address on the ID need not match the address proof, but the names on the address documents must match the person registering.
☐ Social Security card	Not asked for. Neither an SSN nor an immigration document is on the list.

Vaccine and health dates

- **October 15:** without proof of the required vaccines (DTP/Td, polio, MMR, hepatitis B, varicella, Hib for young children, MCV4 in the older grades) the child can be excluded from school.
- **Same date:** the physical exam for Pre-K, entering kindergarten, 1st, 6th and 9th grade and anyone entering Illinois schools for the first time, and the vision exam for kindergarten and anyone new to Illinois schools. The dental exam (kindergarten, 2nd, 6th and 9th grade) is due May 15.
- Get English translations of Turkish vaccination records (an e-Nabiz printout), birth certificates and report cards done early.

A seat outside your neighborhood: GoCPS and Pre-K

GoCPS is the single online application for schools other than your neighborhood school: all district and charter high schools, plus magnet, selective and choice elementary programs. You do not need it for the neighborhood school. From what we could read on the CPS pages, the 2027-28 application opened September 9, 2026 and closes Friday, November 13, 2026 at 5 p.m., with high-school offers on February 12, 2027 and elementary offers on March 12, 2027. We could not confirm those dates on the page itself, so check [GoCPS](#) before you apply. The help line is 773-553-2060, gocps@cps.edu.

Pre-K: not automatic at the neighborhood school. Applications go through Chicago Early Learning, and the City offers free full-day Pre-K for every 4-year-old.

Who to call

TOPIC	OFFICE AND PHONE
Students arriving from abroad, English learners	Multilingual Multicultural Education / International Student Services · 773-527-3203 (call or text) · newcomers@cps.edu
Transcript evaluation for foreign school records	773-553-1936
Enrollment and applications (GoCPS)	Office of Access and Enrollment · 773-553-2060
Family and Community Engagement	FACE · 773-553-3223
Special education	773-553-1800
Families without stable housing (STLS)	773-553-2242 · STLSInformation@cps.edu
Student transportation	773-553-2860 (narrow eligibility: IEP or 504 plan, 5 miles or more, STLS)

YOUR RIGHTS AS AN IMMIGRANT FAMILY

- Under Plyler v. Doe (1982) every child living in the United States may attend public school regardless of their own or their parents' immigration status. Illinois wrote that into state law with Public Act 104-0288, in force January 1, 2026.
- The Illinois State Board of Education's August 2026 guidance says districts must not inquire about the immigration status of a student or parent, and that the residency documents required, taken together, may not amount to a demand for proof of legal presence such as a Social Security number. If a staff member insists on an SSN or an immigration document, show them [that guidance](#).
- The same act required schools to adopt, by July 1, 2026, a procedure for handling requests from law-enforcement agents who want to enter a school; you can ask your school whether it has one.
- Families who are new to the country and have no settled housing are covered by the STLS program under the federal McKinney-Vento Act, and their children can enroll immediately without the documents.
- Chicago students can pick up the 81 Club student card at any Chicago Public Library branch.

TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN CHICAGO

Have a question about your immigration status?



Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in Chicago and the surrounding area, in Turkish and English.

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