

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · INDIANAPOLIS

School Enrollment in Indianapolis: Eleven Districts, One Memo, 2026

An Indianapolis address does not mean your child goes to the city's own district. The city and the county merged; the schools did not.

SHORT ANSWER

Start with the thing most people get wrong: **an Indianapolis address does not mean your child goes to the city's own school district.** Marion County has **eleven separate school districts**; the city district keeps only the **old, pre-merger city limits**, and eight township districts and two town districts are separate bodies. The city and the county merged; **the schools did not.** On numbers the statewide answer is clear and in writing: **lacking a Social Security card, proof of address, a birth certificate, English or immigration status is not a ground to refuse enrollment.** The one real limit is immunization, and there **enrollment and attendance come apart.**

Which district you are in: find out before you sign a lease

The districts in the county are these: the city's own district, **Indianapolis Public Schools**; eight township districts, meaning **Decatur, Franklin, Lawrence, Perry, Pike, Warren, Washington and Wayne**; and two town districts, **School City of Beech Grove** and **School Town of Speedway**. Most township districts are named in the pattern **Metropolitan School District of**, while one is the **Franklin Township Community School Corporation**. **We could read those names only from secondary sources** and could not verify them against the state education department's own list; confirm the name on the district's own site before you write to it. What is established is the structural answer: school districts are **legally separate bodies** from the municipality or township they sit in.

There is a further layer: the city runs a separate structure for **charter schools sponsored by the mayor's office**. The bodies involved are the **Office of Education Innovation** and **The Indianapolis Charter School Board**, and the city explains on its own page how to enroll in one. So a family here has at least three routes: **the district you live in, a transfer application to another district, and charter schools.**

Grounds that cannot be used to refuse, from the state's own memo

GROUND	WHAT THE MEMO SAYS
No rent receipts, mortgage document, driver's license, Social Security card or lease	State law requires no document bearing an address as a prerequisite to enrollment. A school may ask for documents to determine legal settlement, but if a parent cannot produce them, a child may not be refused for that reason alone

GROUND	WHAT THE MEMO SAYS
Being undocumented, not being a citizen	Where a child intends to remain in Indiana for at least thirty days , enrollment must be immediate and without regard to legal domicile ; the memo cites a 1982 Supreme Court decision
Not speaking English	Also set out in writing, also grounded in a Supreme Court decision
No birth certificate	A school may ask for a certified copy or other reliable proof of date of birth; if it is not produced within thirty days the school notifies the state clearinghouse for missing children. That notification is a routine step rather than an accusation and the child is not removed from the roll
No stable residence, moving during the year, living with a relative, arriving late in the term	All on the memo's list of grounds that cannot be used

THE ONE REAL LIMIT IS IMMUNIZATION, AND ENROLLMENT IS NOT ATTENDANCE

- The memo's own sentence is that children **must be enrolled** whether or not they have the required immunizations.
- But if they do not and the school does not grant the statutory **twenty-day waiver**, the child **may not attend beyond the first day of school**.
- So **enrollment must happen in every case; attendance need not**. That distinction is the most useful sentence in this section: enroll the child and close the immunization gap in parallel.
- **Bring your child's immunization record from Türkiye** and have it translated into English from the outset. Have the school reports translated early too.

An honest gap, and it is the biggest in this guide

For none of the eleven districts in the county could we verify the enrollment documents, the immunization requirements, the English-language support or the languages the district actually serves. We do not say there are none; the research could not reach the districts' own enrollment pages this round. So this guide gives you no document list. **Open your own district's enrollment page and take the list from there**, and keep the tension below in mind while you do.

TURKISH IS ON NONE OF THE LANGUAGE LISTS, AND WE WRITE THAT PLAINLY

- The one indicator we could measure is at city level: **the city's tenant rights notice is published in four languages**, English, Spanish, Burmese and Portuguese.
- **The city site's translation menu lists twelve languages**, and the library publishes its paper application in **thirteen**.
- **Turkish is in none of the three**. So rather than expecting Turkish support in Indianapolis, plan on **asking for an interpreter at enrollment and in writing**, and on repeating the request before the next parent meeting.
- **One statewide mechanism does work and you can use it**: a **home language survey** is completed once at enrollment; if a language other than English is indicated the student is given a placement screener and English learner status is determined **within thirty calendar days**.
- **Leaving Turkish off that survey deprives your child of support**. That may be the one-sentence value of this whole section.

We write one tension as it stands

Districts' own enrollment pages can ask for more than the state memo does; in this state we saw a district's enrollment letter stating that proof of residency must be collected for all students, which is the opposite of what the memo says. **We take no side but we do state the hierarchy: the state memo is the higher source**. Our advice: take as many of the documents on the district's list as you can, **but do not postpone enrollment because something is missing**. If you are turned away, mention that you can take the matter to the department's attendance officer; the memo was written for exactly these situations.

- 1 **Find out which district you are in first**. In Indianapolis that is not a question with one answer; check the district of the home you are renting **before you sign**.
- 2 **Pack the bag**: the child's passport, the birth certificate and its translation if you have them, the immunization record, whatever proof of address you hold (a lease works) and the previous school's report card. **Things will be missing, and that is normal**.
- 3 **Enroll now and close the gaps afterwards**. Enrollment must happen in every case; the limit on attendance is immunization.
- 4 **Write Turkish on the home language survey**. Language support flows from that survey and status is determined within thirty calendar days.
- 5 **Ask for an interpreter at enrollment, in writing**. Turkish is absent from every language list the city publishes.
- 6 **Ask about the transfer and charter routes too**. Changing district after you move means a transfer application.
- 7 **Get the library card the same week**. Enrollment also opens other doors for the family: meal assistance, the school nurse and language support.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN INDIANAPOLIS

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