

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · PENNSYLVANIA STATE

Pennsylvania School Enrollment Guide 2026

Public school enrollment rules, documents, and rights for immigrant families.

SHORT ANSWER

Under the Pennsylvania Department of Education's enrollment circular, last revised September 22, 2026, schools may neither request nor require a Social Security number, and a child's admission cannot be conditioned on immigration status. Before enrolling, a district may require only three documents: proof of the child's age, immunization records, and proof of residency. Even with missing paperwork, a child is normally allowed to attend the next school day, and in all cases within 5 business days. Pennsylvania sets no single statewide kindergarten age; each local school board decides its own.

Rules that apply statewide

- **SSN barred:** Pennsylvania's Department of Education "Enrollment of Students" circular (issued May 1, 2026, last revised September 22, 2026) states schools "may neither request nor require" a Social Security number for enrollment.
- **Immigration status barred:** "A child's right to be admitted to school may not be conditioned on the child's immigration status," and a school may not ask about a student's immigration status during admission. A child's or parent's visa cannot be required either. Legal basis: Plyler v. Doe and 22 Pa. Code § 11.11.
- **Only three things a district may require:** (1) one document proving date of birth (a birth certificate, passport, baptismal record, prior school record, or a notarized statement); (2) immunization records (medical/religious exemptions exist, and provisional enrollment applies for homeless, transfer, and foster-care students); (3) one current document, dated within the last 3 months, proving residency and showing the parent/guardian's name and address (a utility bill, lease, deed, bank statement, or government mail). A signed Parent Registration Statement disclosing prior suspensions/expulsions is also required.
- **Missing documents don't block enrollment:** "A child shall normally be permitted to attend school on the next school day after presentation for enrollment, and in all cases within five (5) business days."
- **Homeless students (McKinney-Vento) enroll immediately,** without proof of residency; unaccompanied homeless youth may enroll without an adult and without documents.
- **The Home Language Survey** is completed at every first-time enrollment and cannot delay it.
- **No single statewide kindergarten age.** "The local school board has the right and responsibility to establish the age at which a child can begin the kindergarten program." Check your district for its cutoff.
- **School-age entitlement** runs from a child's admission to school through high school graduation or the end of the term in which they turn 21, whichever comes first.

Document checklist

DOCUMENT	NOTES
☐ Proof of date of birth	Birth certificate, passport, baptismal record, prior school record, or a notarized statement
☐ Immunization records	Medical or religious exemptions available; provisional enrollment for homeless, transfer, and foster-care students
☐ Proof of residency	A utility bill, lease, deed, bank statement, or government mail dated within the last 3 months
☐ Parent Registration Statement	A signed form disclosing prior suspensions/expulsions
☐ Home Language Survey	Completed at every first-time enrollment; cannot delay it
☐ Social Security card	Cannot be required; no Pennsylvania school can ask for an SSN

YOUR RIGHTS AS AN IMMIGRANT FAMILY

- No Pennsylvania school district can require a Social Security number for enrollment or ask about your child's immigration status.
- Before enrollment, only proof of the child's date of birth, immunization records and proof of residency can be required (plus the Parent Registration Statement and Home Language Survey you fill out).
- Even with missing documents, your child must be let into class within 5 business days.
- Homeless or unstably housed families can enroll their children immediately, without standard documents.
- Bring an English translation of your child's Turkish vaccine record.

TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN PENNSYLVANIA



Have a question about your immigration status?

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