

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · TEXAS

School Enrollment in Texas 2026: The Statutory List Has Three Items

The statute closes the enrollment documents with three items and a number is not one of them. There is an age limit on the document deadline that all four city guides miss.

SHORT ANSWER

State law closes the enrollment documents with **three items**: the child's birth certificate **or another document suitable to establish identity**, records from the school last attended, and an immunization record. **There is no Social Security number on the list, no immigration status, no visa, no citizenship.** On the deadline there is **an age limit all four city guides miss**: the ninety-day period applies only to children **under eleven; for eleven and over the period is thirty days.** **The real obstacle is not the number, it is proof of address**, and that list is set by **your district** rather than by the state. And a concrete gain: **the document showing only a date of birth, needed for school enrollment, is free**, and the state education agency publishes a **Turkish package** of its standard parent letters.

The three documents the statute requires

- 1 The child's birth certificate or another document suitable to establish identity.** The statute does not enumerate document types; the list is **open-ended** and the judgment belongs to the school district. A passport falls within the definition and districts accept it. **But there is no closed state-level list saying a passport is accepted;** that follows from the statute being open-ended.
- 2 A copy of the records from the school last attended.**
- 3 An immunization record.**

Those three items are all of it. A number, a status and citizenship do not appear on the list.

Deadlines and the age limit that gets skipped

SITUATION	DEADLINE
Parent delivering the documents	30 days after enrollment
District sending requested records	10 business days
Child under eleven who was not born in the United States	90 days
Child eleven or over	30 days

The only source for the ninety-day period is a separate statute creating the **missing child** regime, and that statute ties the period explicitly to a child **under eleven**. **So waiting ninety days for a high school age child is wrong information.**

IF THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE CANNOT BE PRODUCED: THE RESCUE PATH

- The same statute treats **another reliable document showing the child's identity and age plus a signed statement explaining why the birth certificate cannot be produced** as sufficient.
- **None of the four city guides contains this route**, and for a newly arrived family it is the most useful sentence in this document.
- **Do not make enrollment wait on the documents**: the statute does not condition enrollment on them, it gives you time for them. **Enroll your child and complete the documents afterwards.**

What happens if the documents are late: the school notifies law enforcement to ask whether the child has been reported missing. Know this in advance: **that is not an immigration action, it is a missing child check**, and it is the statute's own purpose. The school must also inform the parent that presenting a false document is **an offense** and can create liability for tuition.

May a school ask about immigration status

The basis has to be built correctly. On the state education agency's own site, **no direct sentence saying schools may not ask about immigration status was found**. Its enrollment page for the public says only this: find your school district, present a document showing residence, present records establishing the student's identity, provide immunization records or a valid exemption, and **school districts determine the documents that show residence**. Immigration and numbers never appear. **Research did not find it, so we say research did not find it, and we do not say it does not exist.**

THREE GROUNDS, AND ALL THREE ARE MISSING FROM THE CITY GUIDES

- **The statute's own closed list.** The three items above; status is not on the list. The separate provision setting admission conditions looks **only at residence**.
- **The state tried to pass a law in that direction and could not.** In the 2025 legislative session a bill on reporting students enrolled in public schools who are not lawfully present was filed; it was **referred to the education committee on April 3, 2025 and stayed there without becoming law**.
- **The federal framework: Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (1982).** **And the case itself is a Texas case**: a 1975 Texas statute withheld state funds for the education of undocumented children and authorized districts to deny enrollment; the Supreme Court found that contrary to the equal protection clause.
- **On the number**: it is not on the statutory list. Districts may ask for it optionally, and the state system assigns an alternative student number to a student without one; **no state page describing that procedure was found**, so we write that second sentence as **district practice** rather than as a state rule.

Proof of address: your district sets the list, not the state

The statute gives the board of trustees, or the person it designates, authority to **determine the minimum proof of residency acceptable for the district** and to **ask reasonable questions** to verify eligibility. That is why this document **gives no list of documents that work in Texas**. Ask your own district, and look at the local lists in our [Dallas](#), [Houston](#), [Austin](#) and [San Antonio](#) guides.

SITUATION	THE ROUTE THE STATUTE OPENS
Staying with a grandparent	Even if the child does not live in the district, if a grandparent lives there and provides a substantial amount of after-school care for the child, the district admits the child. This is a right granted by statute
Another relative or a third party	The board may adopt a policy accepting a person showing legal responsibility for the child in place of a guardian, outside a court order. This is the basis for the notarized statement practice, but it is optional rather than mandatory
A child who is homeless	Enrolls regardless of their own or a parent's residence
Active duty military family	Residence can be established with transfer orders, and the residence document can be deferred for up to 90 days

No single statewide rule on a notarized residency statement was found in Texas. If you are staying with a relative, ask about your district's policy **before enrollment day**; some districts want a notarized statement, and finding a notary takes a day.

Immunization: a narrow exemption path with its own rules

- Three grounds: **medical contraindication, reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, and active duty in the armed forces.**
- The form is obtained **from the state health agency only**. Requests may be made by mail, courier, fax, online or in person; **telephone and email requests are not accepted**. Processing takes about **three weeks**.
- **Each blank exemption affidavit is valid for two years from the date it is notarized. So the form has to be notarized.**
- A child with an exemption **may be excluded from school** during an official emergency or epidemic declared by the school or a public health authority.
- **We keep a source distinction:** many districts state that the form must be delivered to the school **within 90 days** of notarization. **That ninety days does not appear on the state health agency's own exemption page** (measured). This is not a contradiction but a difference of source: treat the ninety days as **district practice** rather than a state rule.
- **Provisional enrollment exists:** a student transferring from another Texas school may enroll provisionally **for up to 30 days** while immunization records are awaited; the school must review the situation **every 30 days**.

A FREE DOCUMENT SHOWING THE DATE OF BIRTH: ABSENT FROM ALL FOUR GUIDES

- The statute's own sentence: **on the request of a child's parent or guardian, the state registrar issues, without charge, the document required for school enrollment or employment;** the document is limited to **a statement showing only the child's date of birth.**
- **So you do not have to pay \$22.00 for a certified copy when an enrollment needs only the date of birth.**
- Other fee waivers: for military personnel, for homeless youth, and for a birth certificate obtained for voter identification.

English language support and parent rights

In Texas these students are called emergent bilingual students; the term was changed in 2021. **The program threshold is in the statute, and we write the consequence for Turkish honestly:** a school district must provide bilingual education or a special language program if it has **20 or more** students in the same grade level with the same language classification. **In practice that threshold is very hard to meet for Turkish in a Texas district.** So a Turkish child will most likely enter an **English as a second language program** rather than a bilingual one. That is not a guess; it follows directly from the threshold.

- By level: bilingual programs in prekindergarten and elementary grades; bilingual, English as a second language or a state-approved transitional program through eighth grade; **English as a second language in grades nine through twelve.**
- **A parent must approve the student's entry into the program, exit from it and placement.** The district or the parent may appeal the decision.
- **The home language survey** is done within **the first four weeks** of enrollment and, in the statute's words, **in English and in the home language.**
- **The right to notice in the home language is in the statute with its own deadline: no later than the tenth day** after the student is classified, the language proficiency assessment committee must notify the parent of the classification **in writing, and the notice must be in English and in the parent's home language.**
- The committee's mandatory members include **a parent of a student in the program;** that parent may not be an employee of the district.

YOU CAN ASK THE SCHOOL FOR THE TURKISH PARENT LETTER PACKAGE

- **First measurement:** the state education agency's own site was measured on October 13, 2026 in four languages: **Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic and Simplified Chinese. No Turkish.**
- **Second measurement, and it favors the reader:** the agency's portal for English learner students publishes **ten standard letters** for communicating with parents statewide, and **the Turkish package exists and is live;** the file was downloaded and verified on October 13, 2026.
- **You can go to the school and ask for this:** the **Turkish version** of the language proficiency assessment committee's standard parent letters. The school needs no separate approval to download it and give it to you.
- The page also provides a **request form** for a language not on the list. **None of the four city guides contains this information.**
- **One note:** the portal runs on a .org domain and is linked from the state education agency's pages; its institutional affiliation was written from a second-degree source, while the existence and language of the letters were measured directly.

- 1 Do not postpone enrollment.** You have time for the documents, and if there is no birth certificate the route of another reliable document plus a signed statement is open.
- 2 Note the age limit:** ninety days applies only to a child under eleven; for an older child your calendar is thirty days.
- 3 Ask your district for the proof of address list,** and if you are staying with a relative ask about the district's policy before enrollment day.
- 4 If only a date of birth is needed, ask for the free document;** there is no need for a \$22.00 certified copy.
- 5 If you are considering an immunization exemption, request the form from the state health agency** and book the notary in advance; processing takes about three weeks.
- 6 Request the Turkish parent letter package from the school.**
- 7 Every form you fill in at enrollment is a statement.** If you believe the school is asking something it may not ask, **talk to your lawyer** before filling it in.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN TEXAS

Have a question about your immigration status?

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