



## Town of Colchester School Readiness Application and Selection Process General Guidelines

1. Beginning the day after the CECP lottery drawing- All families are invited to apply for School Readiness Slots for the upcoming year. Applications will be made available and announcements made that the application process is now open.
2. All families selected for a CECP lottery space will be sent an informational letter inviting them to apply for SR. They will be encouraged to do so if their income is below a level that makes them eligible for a fee reduction. They will remain in their lottery space unless selected through the School Readiness process.
3. All families on the lottery waiting list are sent an introductory letter inviting them to apply for a SR slot either via email or included with their lottery waiting list information. Lottery waiting list letters are mailed within two weeks following the completion of the lottery process (by end of February).
4. CASTLE will also share information with families expressing interest in their program.
5. Completed applications are dated when received.
6. Applications are assigned "points" based on School Readiness Admission Rubric that identifies risk factors and demographic information such as child's age, English language use, parent's education level, family composition, other services received, etc.
7. Within the first week of May, an application team will meet to review and score deidentified applications. This team will continue to meet regularly or as needed until all spaces are filled.
8. Applicant information will be kept by the SR Liaison in a spreadsheet in rubric score order with the highest score at the top of the list. Individual child hard-copy folders will also be maintained by the SR Liaison.
9. The SR Liaison will begin contacting the applicants who are income-eligible, according to the spreadsheet order until all slots are filled, if possible. **At least 60% of the spaces in each program must meet income guidelines;** e.g. 11 of the 19 SR slots at CECP and 6 of the 9 SR slots at CASTLE.
10. The following criteria will be used to select students from the current applications:
  - a. Income-eligible families will be offered positions **before** over-income families, then
  - b. Child with the higher rubric score, if children have the same score, then
  - c. Eligible five-year-olds will be given priority over 4-year-olds, and 4-year-olds over 3-year-olds, but not by specific birthdate, then
  - d. Date the application was received
11. Notification of income-eligible students will be completed by May 31st (if possible) to allow for families to participate in the preschool orientations provided by programs.

12. Students attending CECP must be 3 years of age upon entry. Children who will turn three and can attend at least one day during the first enrollment period in September can be placed beginning May 1st. If spaces remain at CECP as of August 1, a space may be held for an income-eligible student that is not yet 3 but will turn 3 before November 1st. CASTLE students can be placed immediately if their age is at least 2 years, 8 months.
13. If any spaces still remain by August 1, open slots will be offered to over-income families using the same priority criteria above.
14. If at any time, new completed applications are received for income-eligible families these families will be given priority for a slot, if available. If no slots are available, they will be placed in a School Readiness waiting pool. The waiting pool will be dynamic in response to any new applications. Selections from the pool will be made according to the priority criteria above and not "place" on a waiting list.
15. If a space becomes available but there is no one in the School Readiness waiting pool, additional applications will be sought through CECP's lottery waitlist and CASTLE's waitlist as a means to announce the vacancy and find applicants. Further outreach may take place through the newspaper, flyers, email list, and/or contacts with social services and other community resources.

### **Head Start Referrals**

The SR Liaison will actively seek to refer potentially eligible families in an effort to:

- Create awareness for the free Head Start Option
- Coordinate space usage between SR and HS
- Maximize ease in the application process for families
- Improve clarity of programming options for families

The Head Start program will be included at the bottom of the School Readiness application as an alternative option. The SR application team will identify potentially eligible Head Start families based upon the information provided by the applicant on the SR application. Any family that indicates that they would like a referral to Head Start will be referred by the SR Liaison when the applications are processed. If the family has not indicated that they would like to be referred, the SR Liaison will call the identified families and provide families with information on the Head Start program and ascertain their interest in the option. If the family is interested, the SR Liaison will ask if the family would like the liaison to make the referral to Head Start for them or provide TVCCA's phone number to the family if they'd like to make the call themselves.

If the family is also still interested in a SR option, they will remain in the waiting pool. If they have been selected for a SR program, a space will be held for them until placement elsewhere is verified. Once referred, Head Start and SR Liaison will continue to communicate until the child is enrolled in a program to maximize the opportunity for the applicant to attend preschool.