



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

1. 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. 21 of the 35 SR slots at CECP, 6 of the 10 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. Priority will be given to children who will turn 5 between September 2 and January 1.
  - c. Child with the higher rubric score, if children have the same score, then
  - d. Older child will receive priority but not by specific birthdate, e.g. four-year-old over three-year-old; then
  - e. Date the application was received

11. If possible, notification of income-eligible students will be completed by May 31st (if possible) to allow families to participate in the preschool orientations provided by programs.
12. Considerations for students not yet three at the start of school:
  - a. 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. If spaces remain, students can be placed as they turn three throughout the school year.
  - b. CASTLE students can be placed immediately if their age is at least 2 years, 8 months. Both the parents and the program director must provide authorization for the enrollment of the child as a three-year-old. Students turning 3 after Jan 1 will require additional inquiry to ensure the developmental appropriateness of the placement.
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 the 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 school-day space becomes available during the school year at either site, selections will be made from the original spreadsheet in the order outlined above. This allows the opportunity for families that are already enrolled in a School Readiness space to shift to a different space type if their applications indicated a desire for the open space type.
16. 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.

***Note: Any current student who is still age-eligible for School Readiness shall remain in their current placement until they enter Kindergarten, unless the family requests a change in placement. Changes will be made according to availability and the Selection Process.***

### **Shifting from Part-Day to School-Day for an Upcoming School Year**

Families with a child in part-day may reenter the application pool for a School-Day space at either CASTLE or CECP. As there are a limited number of these spaces within the School Readiness program, not all requests can be granted. The CECP School Day classroom is designed for children who will be attending kindergarten in the following year. Families should complete the *School Readiness Request for School-Day Form* as soon as possible. After the application is

received, the child will be considered with all other applicants in the waiting pool. The application will not impact their part-day space in case a school-day space is not available.

### **K-Eligible Students**

Families who wish to have their kindergarten-eligible child (already 5 or will be 5 by September 1 of the upcoming school year) remain in preschool must notify their classroom teacher as soon as possible. School Readiness legislation only allows 5% of our total school readiness spaces to remain in preschool for an additional year. For Colchester, that equates to one to two children across **all** programs. If more than two K-eligible children request to remain for an additional year of preschool, the application team will review the needs of all children and allow the children with the highest need to remain. The School Readiness Liaison and/or the program director will notify families if they are able to remain in School Readiness.