



DENVER  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

Early Education  
Joyful Learning from the Start

THE EARLY WORD - JANUARY 2019



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# Digging in to Our Big Vision: How does School Choice lead to Joyful Learning?

We believe that families and children instinctively know how they learn best. Because of this, the opportunity for families to choose early education programming is highly valued, at the district-level and at the department-level.

We are continually striving to provide families and children with choices, regarding educational philosophy and curricular approaches. We know that education is not a "one size fits all" endeavor, therefore we will continue to provide a variety of early education options. When families can make a choice, children are more apt to have joyful, engaged learning experiences!

We encourage families to visit multiple programs when making decisions about preschool and kindergarten. We work to make sure that every neighborhood school choice is high-quality, and we also support families when they seek options outside of their neighborhoods.

In this issue, we'll describe the variety of programs we offer, outline the choice process and timeline, and provide questions for families to consider as they visit school programs.

# The DPS Choice Process: Find, Apply, Register!

## 1 Find

The School Choice department has developed many user-friendly resources, to make the choice process easier than ever. Their website is: <http://schoolchoice.dpsk12.org>

- Use the mobile-friendly **School Finder**
- Read the **Enrollment Guide**
- Attend a **Regional School Expo**, Jan. 15-17, 2019
- Tour individual schools and ask about their approaches to early learning

### What do the different ECE and Kindergarten curriculum choices mean?

#### Creative Curriculum/Project Approach

"A comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning."

#### Expeditionary Learning

"Students and teachers engage in work that is challenging, adventurous and meaningful, so that learning and achievement flourish."

#### Montessori

"A method of education that is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning and collaborative play. Children make creative choices in their learning."

#### Reggio-Inspired

"Children are capable of guiding their own learning and they form an understanding of themselves and their place in the world through their interactions with others."

#### Tools of the Mind

"Children are engaged in rich make-believe play with peers, have the opportunity for free play, and engage in daily literacy, math and science learning activities."

Sign into your SchoolChoice account, or create an account. We recommend using your DPS Parent Portal username and password. Once signed in, you can:

Apply during SchoolChoice Round 1,  
Jan. 15 to Feb. 15, 2019

2 Apply to a school during Round 2 (ECE only)

If you are new to Denver, apply for Mid-Year Entry to a school other than your neighborhood school

## Apply

Following Round 1 of SchoolChoice:

Families will receive their school placement results in late March

3 Register online or at your school in late summer

## Register

# Spotlight on Community Sites: Connections Lead to Choice



**DENVER PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

**JOIN US!**

7th Annual  
**PRESCHOOL SHOWCASE**  
2019

FREE EVENT

**SATURDAY, JAN. 12**  
**9 A.M. – 12 P.M.**  
**THE DENVER ZOO**  
2300 STEELE ST, DENVER, CO 80205  
EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE IN NORGREN HALL

## Community Sites offer many choices for families

The DPS Early Education department relies on ongoing partnership and collaboration with Denver Preschool Program and the Denver Early Childhood Council.

We are all committed to improving access to early education for children across the city. When preschool programs across the city work together to increase quality, children and families benefit!

A great way to learn about community preschool offerings and DPS school-based offerings is to attend the DPP Preschool Showcase on January 12, at the Denver Zoo (see attached flyers in English and Spanish).

The Denver Preschool Program (DPP) created a fun, free and convenient way to learn more about your preschool options and the tuition support available through DPP. The Preschool Showcase offers the opportunity to meet and ask questions of preschool staff and directors from dozens of local preschools and find out how you can lower your monthly tuition payments... all in one convenient place.

**IN ADDITION, ENJOY:**

- Family-friendly entertainment
- Healthy snacks
- Photo ops with the Minions
- Entry to the zoo
- Early childhood resources



# Spotlight on Kindergarten: The Choice Process in Kindergarten

The transition to Kindergarten is an exciting time for families and kids. In collaboration with community groups such as Road to Reading and Countdown to Kindergarten, we aim to ease the challenges of the transition, and focus on proactive ways to support families.

For more ideas, check out the attached "Getting Ready for Kindergarten" PDF in English and Spanish.

## For Kids

- Meet kindergarten students
- Meet the kindergarten teachers
- Read great books about kindergarten!



## For ECE Teachers

- Talk with families about kindergarten options in your school and beyond
- Organize and guide visits to kindergarten classrooms (for kids & families)



## For School Administrators

- Share information about School Choice fairs
- Be prepared to host school tours and showcase your kindergarten program

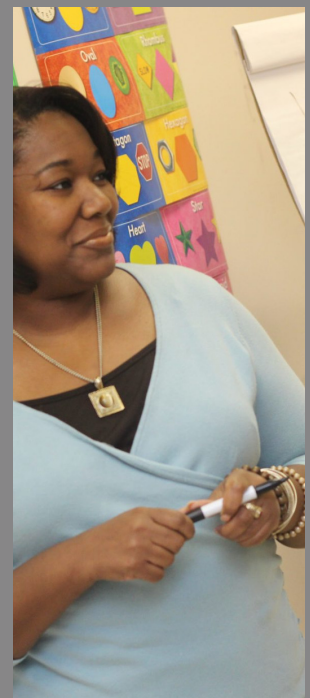
## For Families

- Visit the kindergarten classrooms in your current school or schools of interest
- Ask questions about how the program fits your child's learning style



## For Kinder Teachers

- Connect with current ECE children and families, to share the value of staying in your school program
- Create opportunities for ECE & kindergarten kids to collaborate



# Spotlight on Learning Communities: Digging In To Curriculum Increases Choice Options!

**Creative Curriculum and the Project Approach**



**Montessori Study Group**

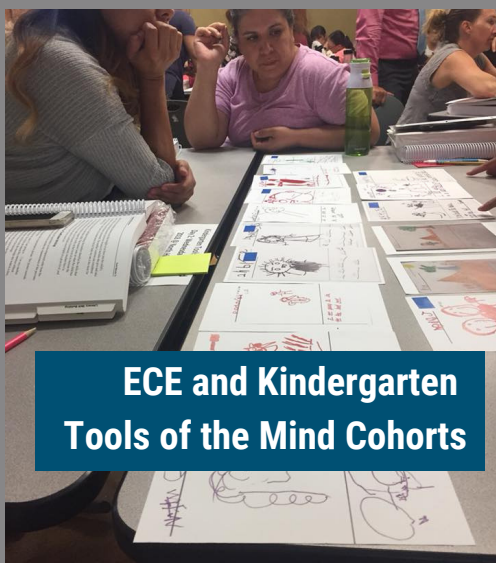


In order to provide the high-quality program choices that we strive for, teachers and paraprofessionals across the district and community are consistently engaged in learning communities to increase their depth of knowledge.

Learning communities have formed to support Creative Curriculum/Project Approach, Montessori practices, Tools of the Mind, and Reggio-Inspired practices. Here are just a few of our learning communities in action!



**Reggio-Inspired Learning Spaces**



**ECE and Kindergarten Tools of the Mind Cohorts**

**2018 Reggio-Inspired Study Tour**



## Mindfulness Minute: From the Field



This month's mindfulness feature comes from Hazuki Tochihara and Jean Smith, at Pascual LeDoux Academy. Along with teammates, they've spearheaded a #radicalselfcare campaign (inspired by Dr. Franita Ware), which includes yoga practice on Monday afternoons in their cafeteria. We think you're all om-azing!

If you'd like to win a prize, submit your best mindfulness idea to [elise\\_edwards@dpsk12.org](mailto:elise_edwards@dpsk12.org)!

## Important Dates



<b>Jan. 7</b>	First day back for students
<b>Jan. 9</b>	SW Kindergarten Fair at Pascual LeDoux Academy
<b>Jan. 12</b>	DPP Preschool Showcase for families
<b>Jan. 15</b>	DPS Choice window opens
<b>Jan. 15 - 17</b>	DPS Regional School Expos
<b>Jan. 28</b>	TS Gold winter checkpoint due for DPS ECE & Kindergarten

## How to Find Us

### In person:

9th Floor, 1860 Lincoln St., Denver CO 80203

### On the phone:

720-423-2678, 720-423-2679 or 720-423-2676

### On a computer:

<http://earlyeducation.dpsk12.org/>

