

## **Chicago's Early Learning Strategic Vision** **Universal Enrollment Online System** **April 2016**

The City of Chicago is committed to ensuring that the City's youngest learners have access to the highest quality educational opportunities. By streamlining the administration of early childhood education, improving outreach and enrollment, and developing a plan towards universal preschool, the City aims to make early education more accessible for all city residents. The new application process will replace the *Chicago: Ready to Learn* application.

### **New Online Application System for Families**

The City is taking the first step towards achieving this vision by developing a new online universal application system to improve access to preschool programming available under the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) for parents citywide. This will take place in a multi-year roll-out, ensuring that we are meeting the needs of schools and families. While this year's changes only affect 4 and 5 year old preschool students, next year will include children from birth-to-three years of age. The online system will create a coherent application process that presents comprehensive information to families, reduces paperwork, and improves coordination across community-based and school-based processes. The application and other resources will be available at [www.chicagoeearlylearning.org](http://www.chicagoeearlylearning.org).

### **Here's how it will work:**

Families who arrive at your school interested applying to preschool should be informed of the program choices offered at your school (full day, half day, hours) and how to apply through the online application process.

Beginning May 16, families will be able to submit applications online for enrollment for Fall 2016 (summer 2016 for some community-based organizations). Parents who cannot complete the application online can bring a paper copy of the application to a designated application site (times and locations will be available shortly).

- After June 10, families who applied May 16 – June 10 will receive notification of their preliminary placement results and next steps for document verification.
- After June 13, the interactive application system will be available citywide. Outreach agencies and other intermediaries across the City will have back-end access to help families complete the online application.
- Families will continue to be able to apply online or with assistance – but now they will know instantly which programs they are preliminarily eligible for and have space(s) available. They will see real-time results of their preliminary placements.
- Families who have applied will be required to visit a centralized document verification site or visit the community-based program for which they would like to enroll, to complete their enrollment process.
- Finally, staff members in school-based and community-based programs will be able to access the lists of students who have been placed at their site to assist them with preparing for school.

The new application system will serve as a comprehensive resource that will provide parents and guardians a more accurate picture of which opportunities are available for their child(ren) and where, making them better equipped to discern which opportunities work best for their families.

*For more information about the universal enrollment online system, please contact the Office of Early Childhood Education at (773) 553-2010 or [oece@cps.edu](mailto:oece@cps.edu).*