

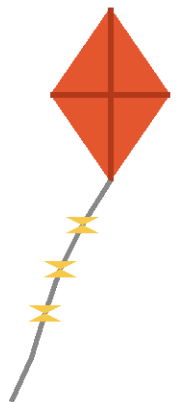
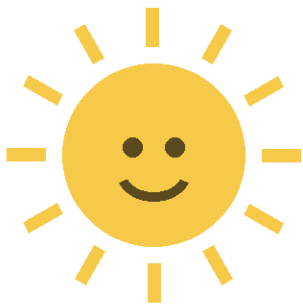
SCOPE

Education Services

Universal Pre-Kindergarten Parent & Family Handbook

2026-2027 School Year

Serving Universal Pre-Kindergarten Programs Across Long Island



A Welcome to Our Families

Dear Pre-Kindergarten Families,

Welcome to the SCOPE Education Services Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program! We are honored that you have entrusted us with your child during this remarkable year of growth, discovery, and joy. The pre-Kindergarten year is one of the most important in a child's educational journey, and our teachers and staff are dedicated to making it a safe, nurturing, and enriching experience.

SCOPE partners with school districts throughout Long Island to deliver high-quality Pre-Kindergarten instruction aligned with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) learning standards. Every element of our program — from our curriculum and classroom environments to our family communication and health and safety procedures — is designed to help your child develop the social, emotional, physical, and academic foundations for a lifetime of learning.

This handbook is intended to answer the questions families most often ask and to explain the policies and procedures that keep our classrooms safe, consistent, and welcoming. Please read it carefully and keep it available throughout the school year. If you have any questions, your child's teacher and our Instructional Services team are always happy to help.

We look forward to a wonderful year of partnership with you and your child.

Warm regards,

The SCOPE Instructional Services Team

SCOPE Education Services

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1. About SCOPE Education Services

SCOPE Education Services is a not-for-profit educational organization that has served the school districts, educators, children, and families of Long Island for more than fifty years. Headquartered in Smithtown, New York, SCOPE provides a wide range of services, including Universal Pre-Kindergarten programs, before- and after-school childcare, enrichment programs, and professional development for educators.

SCOPE's Universal Pre-Kindergarten program operates in partnership with 30 school districts across Suffolk County, serving approximately 4,000 children each day. Our classrooms are staffed by certified teachers and qualified teaching assistants, supported by an experienced Instructional Services team that provides ongoing supervision, coaching, and professional development.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide every child with a safe, nurturing, developmentally appropriate learning environment that fosters curiosity, confidence, kindness, and a lifelong love of learning — in close partnership with families and school districts.

2. Program Overview

SCOPE's Universal Pre-Kindergarten program is funded through New York State and administered in partnership with your local school district. The program is provided at no cost to families.

Program Structure

- Full-day UPK classes operate five (5) hours per day, in accordance with NYSED requirements.
- The program operates for a minimum of 180 instructional days, following your school district's calendar.
- Class sizes and staffing ratios comply with New York State Commissioner's Regulations Part 151-1 and applicable district requirements.
- Each classroom is led by a certified teacher, supported by a teaching assistant.

Eligibility

Children must be four years old on or before December 1 of the school year and must be residents of the participating school district. Registration and enrollment are conducted through your school district; SCOPE staff can help direct you to the appropriate district office with any enrollment questions.

Alignment with New York State Standards

All instruction is aligned to the New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards, which address five developmental and learning domains: Approaches to Learning; Physical Development and Health; Social

and Emotional Development; Communication, Language, and Literacy; and Cognition and Knowledge of the World.

3. Our Curriculum

SCOPE's UPK classrooms use research-based curricula and instructional practices designed specifically for four-year-old learners. Learning in Pre-Kindergarten is active, playful, and purposeful: children learn through hands-on exploration, guided play, conversation, stories, music, movement, and creative expression.

Core Curriculum Components

- **English Language Arts:** CKLA (Core Knowledge Language Arts) from Amplify builds vocabulary, listening comprehension, background knowledge, and early literacy skills through rich read-alouds and knowledge-building domains.
- **Mathematics:** Eureka Math Pre-K develops early number sense, counting, shapes, patterns, comparison, and problem-solving through hands-on, story-based lessons.
- **Social-Emotional Learning:** The Pyramid Model framework supports children's social competence, emotional understanding, friendship skills, and self-regulation.
- **Screening and Assessment:** The Brigance Early Childhood Screen helps teachers understand each child's developmental strengths and needs early in the year.

Learning Through Play

Play is the primary vehicle through which young children learn. Our classrooms include learning centers — such as blocks, dramatic play, art, library, science and discovery, sensory, and writing — where children build language, mathematical thinking, creativity, cooperation, and independence. Teachers intentionally plan center activities that connect to curriculum goals while honoring children's interests and choices.

4. A Day in Pre-Kindergarten

While each classroom's schedule reflects its district and site, a typical five-hour UPK day includes the following elements:

- Arrival, greeting, and morning routines (sign-in, hand washing, table activities)
- Morning meeting: calendar, songs, movement, and community building
- Whole-group literacy instruction (CKLA read-aloud and skills)
- Learning centers and small-group instruction
- Snack and social time
- Whole-group mathematics (Eureka Math Pre-K)
- Outdoor play or gross-motor activity

- Lunch (where applicable, per district schedule)
- Rest or quiet time, as developmentally appropriate
- Music, art, science, or special activities
- Closing meeting, reflection, and dismissal routines

Daily routines are intentionally consistent and predictable, because young children thrive on knowing what comes next. Visual schedules are posted in every classroom at children's eye level.

5. Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival

- Please arrive on time each day. Consistent, on-time arrival helps your child transition smoothly and participate fully in morning routines.
- Children must be escorted to the classroom door (or designated drop-off point) and released directly to a SCOPE staff member. Never leave a child unattended.
- If you arrive after the program has begun, please follow your site's late-arrival procedure and sign your child in at the designated location.

Dismissal

- Children will be released only to parents/guardians or to individuals listed on the child's emergency card/authorized pick-up list.
- Photo identification is required for anyone picking up a child until staff are familiar with them — and at any time upon request.
- Any change in pick-up arrangements must be provided to the teacher in writing (or per your site's approved communication procedure) before dismissal.
- Please pick your child up on time. Repeated late pick-ups will be documented and may require a meeting with the program administration.

Custody Matters

If there are custody orders or legal restrictions affecting who may pick up your child, a copy of the current court order must be on file with the program. Without documentation, we cannot legally deny a parent access to their child.

6. Attendance

Regular attendance matters — even in Pre-Kindergarten. Children who attend consistently build stronger routines, friendships, and learning habits that carry into kindergarten and beyond.

- SCOPE follows school district protocols and procedures regarding attendance and tardiness policies.

Family vacations during the school year are discouraged; if unavoidable, please notify the teacher in advance.

7. Health and Safety

Health Requirements

A current physical examination and complete immunization record, as required by New York State law, must be on file before your child may attend. Emergency contact information must be complete, current, and updated immediately whenever it changes.

Illness Policy

SCOPE follows school district protocols and procedures regarding the treatment of identified illnesses.

If a child becomes ill during the program day, a parent/guardian will be contacted for immediate pick-up. The child will rest in a supervised, comfortable area until picked up.

Medication

SCOPE staff may not administer medication except as specifically authorized and documented in accordance with district and site health office procedures. If your child requires medication (including emergency medication such as an EpiPen or inhaler), please contact program administration to complete the required authorization forms with your child's health care provider.

Allergies

Please notify the program in writing of any allergies, dietary restrictions, or medical conditions. Individual health care and allergy action plans will be maintained confidentially and shared with staff on a need-to-know basis. Many classrooms operate as nut-aware environments; please follow your site's guidance regarding food brought from home.

Injuries and Incidents

Minor injuries (bumps, scrapes) are treated with basic first aid, and parents are informed through an incident/accident report. In the event of a serious injury or medical emergency, staff will call 911 first and then notify parents immediately.

8. Toileting and Self-Care

Pre-Kindergarten is a year of growing independence, and self-care skills — including toileting — are part of that growth. We understand that four-year-olds develop at different rates, and occasional accidents are a normal part of early childhood.

- Children are encouraged and supported by using the bathroom independently, with staff supervision appropriate to their age.

- Toileting accidents are handled calmly, privately, and without shame. Your child will be helped to change into clean clothing.
- Please send a complete change of clothing (labeled with your child's name) to keep at school, including underwear, socks, pants, and a shirt. Please refresh it seasonally.
- If your child is still working toward toileting independence, please speak with your child's teacher so we can partner with you on a consistent, supportive approach between home and school.
- Staff follow strict hygiene and supervision procedures for all toileting assistance, consistent with program policy.

9. Social-Emotional Learning and Positive Behavior

Learning to understand feelings, make friends, solve problems, and manage big emotions is at the heart of the pre-Kindergarten year. SCOPE classrooms use the Pyramid Model, a nationally recognized, research-based framework for promoting young children's social-emotional competence.

How We Support Positive Behavior

- Building warm, trusting relationships between children and adults
- Predictable routines, clear and simple expectations, and visual supports
- Explicit teaching of friendship skills, emotional vocabulary, and problem-solving
- Calming spaces in each classroom where children can safely regulate strong emotions with adult support
- Positive, specific feedback that notices and encourages children's kind and helpful choices

Our Approach to Challenging Behavior

Challenging behavior in young children is communication — it tells us that a child needs help with a skill they have not yet learned. Our staff respond with patience and teaching, never with punishment that shames or isolates a child. Corporal punishment, withholding of food, and humiliation are strictly prohibited.

When a pattern of challenging behavior emerges, teachers will partner with families to understand the behavior and develop consistent, positive supports at school and at home. Our Pre-K Code of Conduct, available from your site, describes these expectations and procedures in detail.

10. What Your Child Should Bring and Wear

Please Send

- A backpack large enough to hold a folder, artwork, and a change of clothes
- A complete, labeled change of clothing (kept at school)
- Any items requested by your child's teacher (e.g., family photo, rest-time item where applicable)

Please Dress Your Child For

- Active, sometimes messy learning — paint, glue, sand, and water are part of the fun; washable play clothes are best
- Outdoor play in all appropriate weather — we go outside daily whenever conditions allow, so please send coats, hats, and gloves in cold weather
- Independence — clothing and shoes your child can manage on their own (elastic waistbands and Velcro sneakers are ideal; please avoid flip-flops and belts)

Please Leave at Home

- Toys, jewelry, money, and other valuables (they can be lost or cause conflict)
- Any food not requested by the classroom, in consideration of allergies

Please label everything — backpacks, lunch boxes, coats, and all clothing — with your child's first and last name.

11. Snacks and Nutrition

Snack time is part of our daily routine and an opportunity for children to practice conversation, manners, and independence. Snack and meal procedures vary by site and district; your child's teacher will let you know whether snacks are provided or sent from home.

- If sending food from home, please choose healthy options such as fruit, vegetables, cheese, yogurt, or whole-grain crackers, and follow all site allergy guidelines.
- Please cut foods such as grapes and hot dogs to prevent choking hazards and avoid whole nuts and hard candies.
- Water is available to children throughout the day. Please do not send soda, candy, or gum.

12. Birthdays and Celebrations

We are happy to recognize your child's birthday and make them feel special in the classroom! Because of food allergies and health guidelines, please follow these procedures:

- Speak with your child's teacher in advance before planning any birthday recognition.
- Many sites request non-food celebrations (a favorite book donated to the class, stickers, or a special classroom job) your teacher will advise you of your site's policy.
- Party invitations may be distributed at school only if the entire class is included; otherwise, please mail or distribute them privately.

The classroom holiday and seasonal activities are inclusive and developmentally appropriate. Please share any family or cultural considerations with your child's teacher — we welcome the opportunity to celebrate the diversity of our classroom communities.

13. Assessment and Progress Reporting

Assessment in Pre-Kindergarten looks very different from testing in older grades. Our teachers learn about your child through observation, conversation, work samples, and developmentally appropriate screening tools.

- The Brigance Early Childhood Screen is administered early in the year to give teachers a picture of each child's developmental strengths and needs. It is a screening — not a test your child can pass or fail.
- Teachers document children's growth across all learning domains throughout the year using ongoing observation and curriculum-based measures.
- Progress is shared with families through parent-teacher conferences and periodic progress reports, per your district's schedule.
- If a screening or observation suggests your child may benefit from additional support, staff will speak with you about the next steps, which may include a referral to your school district's Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). Families may also initiate this process at any time.

14. Family Engagement and Communication

You are your child's first and most important teacher, and family partnership is central to our program. When families and teachers communicate openly and work together, children flourish.

How We Communicate

- Daily folders/backpack mail for notices, artwork, and important forms
- Newsletters and curriculum updates describing what children are learning
- Parent-teacher conferences and progress reports
- Family workshops and asynchronous video resources on topics such as social-emotional development, early literacy and math, and child development
- Site- or district-approved communication apps, where applicable

How You Can Partner with Us

- Read with your child every day — it is the single most powerful thing you can do for early literacy
- Talk with your child about their day, their feelings, and the world around them
- Keep routines (sleep, meals, arrival times) consistent and predictable
- Attend conferences, workshops, and family events whenever you can
- Share information with the teacher — changes at home, in health, or in routines help us support your child

15. Emergency Procedures and School Closings

Emergency Drills

Children participate in regularly scheduled fire drills and emergency response drills (including lockdown/lockout drills) as required by New York State. Drills are conducted in a calm, age-appropriate manner, and teachers prepare children so drills are practiced routines rather than frightening events.

School Closings and Delays

SCOPE UPK programs follow the host school district's decisions regarding weather-related closings, delayed openings, and early dismissals. If your district closes or delays, the UPK program follows the district's schedule. Please make sure you are signed up for your district's notification system and keep your emergency contacts current so we can reach you quickly if an early dismissal occurs.

Building Emergencies

In the event of a building evacuation or relocation, children will be moved to designated safe location and families will be notified with pick-up instructions. Children will be released only to authorized adults with photo identification.

16. Confidentiality and Student Records

All child and family records — including enrollment information, health records, assessments, and incident reports — are maintained confidentially and in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and applicable New York State regulations.

- Records are accessible only to authorized staff with a legitimate educational need.
- Parents/guardians have the right to review their child's records upon request.
- Information is not released to outside parties without written parental consent, except as required by law.
- Photographs and images of children are used only in accordance with your district's and program's media release procedures. Please complete the media consent form indicating your preference.

Please note that all staff are mandated reporters under New York State law and are legally required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment.

17. Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does my child need to be toilet trained to attend?

Children are not excluded from UPK based on toileting. We partner with families to support growing independence. Please speak with your child's teacher about a consistent approach.

Q: What if my child cries at drop-off?

Separation difficulty is very common in the first weeks and almost always brief. A short, warm, confident goodbye works best. Our teachers are experienced in helping children settle in, and we are happy to reassure you with an update during the day.

Q: Will my child nap?

Rest or quiet-time practices vary by site and follow developmentally appropriate guidelines. Your child's teacher will share your classroom's routine.

Q: How will I know what my child is learning?

Through newsletters, curriculum updates, daily folders, conferences, and family workshops. And ask your child open-ended questions — 'What made you laugh today?' often works better than 'What did you do today?'

Q: Who do I contact with a concern?

Start with your child's teacher — most questions are resolved there. For further support, contact your site supervisor or SCOPE's Instructional Services office.

18. Contact Information

SCOPE Education Services

100 Lawrence Avenue

Smithtown, NY 11787

Phone: (631) 360-0800, ext. 133/138

Website: www.scopeonline.us

Instructional Services Division

For questions regarding Universal Pre-Kindergarten programs, curriculum, or this handbook, please contact the SCOPE Instructional Services office.

Your Site Information

Site/School: _____

Teacher: _____

Site Phone: _____

District Office: _____

*Thank you for sharing your child with us. *

We look forward to a joyful and rewarding Pre-Kindergarten year!