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## **BEARS Enrollment and Waitlist FAQ September 2025**

### **Q: What are the key dates for enrollment?**

A: Interest forms are accepted year round. Enrollment begins 30 days prior to the start of the upcoming school year.

### **Q: How does enrollment work?**

A: Complete and submit the [BEARS Interest Form](#). Once submitted, the interest form is received and your child is added to the eligibility list. The BEARS office staff will review your interest form and your child will be ranked in order of eligibility and need. Then, the BEARS office staff will contact you when space becomes available and if you meet the eligibility and need requirements. At this time, you will be asked to submit appropriate documentation for review and then an appointment will be made once all documents have been processed.

### **Q: How do you prioritize enrollment?**

A: BEARS prioritizes families based on the following criteria:

- Family Need (A broad set of criteria, including: children are recipients of child protective services, or identified as being abused, neglected, or exploited, or at risk thereof; the family is experiencing homelessness; the family is seeking permanent housing for family stability; and parents are seeking employment, incapacitated, or enrolled in vocational training or an education program.)  
Family Eligibility (This includes: receiving protective services through the local county welfare department, current CalWORKs cash aid recipient, current family adjusted monthly income is 85 percent or below the state's median income, or

currently living in a publicly or privately operated shelter, transitional housing, or homeless support program.)

**Q: Why can't the district make more spaces available to students?**

A: We recognize the stress and frustration that some of our BUSD families face as they seek care for their children. Due to the high demand for the program, we are unable to provide care for all families.

Our long-term vision is an afterschool program that can offer a place to every Berkeley Unified child who is eligible for care based on the state requirements.

Additionally, as our TK program has grown in popularity, we now have an unprecedented number of TK applicants for our afterschool program. While the student-to-staff ratio for the BEARS program in grades K-5 is 14 students to one adult, the ratio for TK students is 10 students to 1 adult, which means that one staff member can serve fewer students.