

College and career readiness roadmap

Many factors play a role in students' success as they move through school and begin preparing for either college or a dedicated career. Some of the most critical milestones occur early on. Meeting these milestones will give your child a strong foundation for future success.



Birth through PreK and kindergarten

Children begin learning as soon as they are born. Playing with, reading with, and

talking to your child builds a strong bond and helps your child's brain develop. If you live in the city of Pittsburgh and the child you care for will be three years old before September 30th of the upcoming school year, he/she is eligible for the PPS Early Childhood Program (ECP), or preschool. Some ECPs are located in K-5 and K-8 schools and others are in separate locations, including one at the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and another at the Carnegie Science Center. (In this report, K-5 and K-8 schools with "PreK" in the school name have an ECP in the building.) Children who apply for a magnet kindergarten program get extra chances to be chosen if they have attended a PPS ECP (see page 4 for more information).

In addition to ECP sites, there are a variety of early childhood education providers throughout Pittsburgh. Our friends at Trying Together (www.tryingtogether.org) have a variety of resources to help you find a program that is right for you and your child.



Third grade

Grades K-3 set a critical foundation for future school success. Ask about any additional resources for reading and math

that you and your child can work on together at home, and be sure to ask if your child is on track to reading at or above grade level by third grade. **Grade-level reading by third grade is an important indicator that your child is on track for high school graduation.** Before the end of third grade, children should be able to read aloud fluently, understand what they are reading, use strategies (such as sounding out) to pronounce unfamiliar words, and know how to find clues to their meaning.

To learn more, go to www.aplusschools.org to sign up for an upcoming "Fall in love with literacy" workshop, where you will learn strategies to help your child learn to read.

You can also ask the school about opportunities for children to get involved through clubs or sports. Participating in a group or activity that interests them helps children feel more connected to the school. Also, consider having your child screened for the PPS Gifted and Talented Program (see page 19 for more information).



Middle grades

Students should consider taking Algebra I in 8th grade. This puts them on track to

take advanced placement math classes in high school, which prepares them for college-level math courses. If your child needs extra help in any subject, ask for it! The district has many free resources, including tutors and mentors. The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is another free, local resource. The main library in Oakland has a popular program for teens.



High school

As your child begins 9th grade, there are two indicators for success to monitor. The first is GPA (grade point average) and credit

status. The guidance counselor can provide information about what credits your child will need to graduate. Second, consider the rigor of classes your child selects. Taking classes that are too easy or beyond challenging can leave students either bored or discouraged.

Taking challenging courses in high school will help your child prepare for a possible career or college path. Pittsburgh students also have the opportunity to be granted a college scholarship from the Pittsburgh Promise. To be eligible, students must maintain at least a 2.5 GPA (or a 2.0 to attend community college) and attend school at least 90% of the time over the four years of high school. For the full requirements, go to www.pittsburghpromise.org or call 412-281-7605.

Ask your child's guidance counselor or social worker about opportunities to go on college tours, or participate in research programs or apprenticeships for particular trades. Have your child consider summer internships after their junior and senior years to explore potential career options. The College Board offers free online resources for preparing for the SAT (www.collegeboard.org), and the district offers the SAT free to every student through the SAT School Day program.