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CHEROKEE NATION®
 Early Childhood Unit

ELIGIBILITY ENROLLMENT CRITERIA LIST 2026 - 2027

Approved by the Policy Council – February 19th, 2026

Based on age as of September First (1st)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

	CP Points
Homeless*	+ 20pts
Foster*	+ 20pts
Public Assistance –TANF, SNAP, or SSI*	+ 20pts
Siblings Currently Enrolled in Our Program	+ 20pts
Tribal Citizen Transition EHS Students	+ 20pts
Tribal Citizen w/ Disabilities	+ 15pts
Cherokee Nation Employee, Tribal Citizen	+ 20pts
Tribal Citizen	+ 15pts
Non-Tribal Citizen	+ 5pts
Non-Tribal w/ Disabilities	+ 10pts
Non-Tribal Transition EHS Students	+ 12pts
Teen Parent (high school student)	+ 20 pts
Teen Parent	+ 10pts
Single Parent	+ 5pts

**Categorically eligible with documentation. Points are automatically applied by ChildPlus.*

AGE OF CHILD

A – 4 years old	+ 10pts
B – 3 year old	+ 8pts
C – 2 year old	+ 6pts
D – 1 year old	+ 4pts
I – Infant	+ 2pts

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

All applications, including those from public schools, will be screened and entered into ChildPlus upon receipt by the Main Office. Eligibility will be determined using the eligibility points pre-entered into ChildPlus. Categorically eligible (*) families will have points automatically applied based on guidelines and information from the application. Any other applicable points listed under the Eligibility Criteria will be applied manually.

Points for Tribal Citizenship will be awarded to applicants presenting a Tribal Citizenship Card for the child or parent from the Cherokee Nation or any Federally Recognized Tribe.

ChildPlus will prioritize applications for enrollment based on the number of points and the date received. Due to guidance from the Office of Head Start, the Eligibility Criteria have been updated to eliminate income guidelines for enrollment. This policy update aims to give additional points to Cherokee Nation citizens employed by the Nation, addressing the shortage of facilities for employees' children. Tribal citizens not employed by the Nation will also receive additional points. This new guidance will prioritize Tribal citizens' participation in our program.

The program's screening process will continue to ensure fairness and eliminate any bias toward any family. These criteria are set within the ChildPlus database, and once applications are entered, a score is generated. The highest-scoring applications will be selected in descending order to fill all vacancies.

Staff members are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity and honesty. Under no circumstances will any application or document be falsified. All information provided must be accurate and truthful to ensure a fair and transparent enrollment process.

***Early Head Start students are in the program for up to 3 years, however Transition*

FROM *Early Head Start to Head Start requires a new application***