



A Parent's Guide to

# **Early Entrance to Kindergarten**

# Legislation Governing Early Entrance to Kindergarten

- A parent may request early admission to kindergarten if the child turns five years of age after the district's kindergarten entrance date (August 1) and before January 1. The local board of education shall determine entrance through a standardized testing program.
- Children who will not yet be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten or first grade by the first day of January of the school year for which admission is requested shall also be evaluated for possible early admittance if referred by an educator within the district, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.
- Acceleration is the Law (House Bill 79 amended to House Bill 66 – June 30, 2006). Early entrance to kindergarten is a subject covered in the State of Ohio's Model Student Acceleration Policy. Appropriate use of accelerated learning opportunities; early entrance kindergarten, whole grade, subject, and early graduation support compliance with requirements in Ohio Administrative Code 3301-35-06.

## Chillicothe City School District

- The Chillicothe City Schools considers a child eligible for entrance into "regular" kindergarten if s/he attains the age of five on or before August 1st of the year s/he applies for entrance. A child under the age of six (6) who is enrolled in kindergarten will be considered of compulsory school age.
- By parental request, a child may be tested for *early* admission to kindergarten if s/he will be five (5) years of age between August 1st and January 1st, inclusive, and exhibit the mental, social and emotional standards established by the Chillicothe City School Board of Education. A checklist will be provided for the student's physician to complete. **If your child turns 5 years of age after January 1st and you believe s/he is a viable candidate for early entrance, please contact the Principal at Chillicothe Primary School.**
- On August 25, 2008, the Chillicothe City School Board of Education adopted an *Academic Acceleration Policy*:

### Early Entrance to Kindergarten

State law establishes minimum age requirements for admission to kindergarten. A child who does not meet the age requirements for admittance to kindergarten or first grade, but who will be five or six years old, respectively, prior to January 1 of the school year in which admission is requested, shall be evaluated for early admittance in accordance with District policy upon referral by the child's parent or guardian, an educator employed by the District, a preschool educator who knows the child or a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child. Following an evaluation in accordance with such a referral, the Board decides whether to admit the child.

If a child, for whom admission to kindergarten or first grade is requested, will not be five or six years of age, respectively, prior to January 1 of the school year in which admission is requested, the child is admitted only in accordance with the District's acceleration policy adopted under State law.

## Acceleration

The Board recognizes that all students learn and progress at different rates and that the time it takes to reach academic standards varies among students. The Board believes students should be challenged and supported to reach their full potential and that the practice of educational acceleration is used to match appropriate learning opportunities with student abilities. The goals of acceleration are to adjust the pace of instruction to the student's capabilities, provide an appropriate level of challenge by removing the barriers to accessing appropriately challenging curriculum and to reduce the time period necessary for students to complete traditional schooling.

The District uses acceleration strategies in four academic areas.

1. **Whole-grade acceleration:** The practice of assigning a student on a full-time basis to a higher grade level than is typical, given the student's age, for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.
2. **Individual subject acceleration:** The practice of assigning a student to a higher grade level than is typical, given the student's age, for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities in one or more subject areas.
3. **Early admission to kindergarten:** The practice of admitting a student to kindergarten who has not yet reached the typical age at which students are admitted to kindergarten, for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.
4. **Early high school graduation:** The practice of facilitating the completion of the high school program in fewer than four years, for the purpose of providing earlier than typical access to postsecondary educational opportunities.

Referrals for students to be evaluated and assessed should be made to the building principal. Students referred and having parental permission are tested using a variety of assessments. The assessments are reviewed by an acceleration evaluation committee to determine the most appropriate and available learning environment for the students.

The committee issues a written recommendation to the building principal and the students' parents. Parents have the right to appeal the committee's recommendation to the Superintendent/designee.

The committee develops a written acceleration plan for any student who is admitted early to kindergarten, offered whole-grade acceleration or acceleration in one or more individual subject areas. The parents of the student are provided with a copy of the written plan.

The Board directs the administration to follow the guidelines established by the Ohio Department of Education's model acceleration policy.

## Is early entrance to kindergarten the best choice for your child?

Early entrance should be viewed as a means of meeting a child's *needs*. Developmental readiness is the key to determining whether or not early entrance is appropriate. Even though a child may have a great deal of ability, s/he may not be ready for kindergarten. Social maturity, personal development, and motor development are important factors for a child's success in school.

Early entrance is *designed for the exceptional child* who is both academically ready as well as developmentally mature when compared to others his or her chronological age. This opportunity is designed as a measure to meet individual differences in school readiness.

Some considerations when determining if early entrance is right for a child:

- Is my child capable of working in a classroom with children who are one year older than him/her?
- Will my child be frustrated by this placement?
- What are the possible long-term impacts for my child as s/he progresses through elementary, middle and high school (e.g., beginning college at a younger age)?
- Early entrance is not designed as a replacement for child care. Is this a *need* or a *want*?
- Do I understand the expectations for students in kindergarten today?

For example, students are expected to ask and answer questions about key details in a text, retell familiar stories with details, ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text, and identify similarities and differences between two texts on the same topic.

There is a difference between *ability* and *achievement*. Some children may appear exceptional simply because of their access to opportunities (e.g., preschool programs, parents working with them on skills, or access to learning materials). Early entrance is designed for the child who not only has ability but also easily achieves when presented new material.

Once the decision has been made for early entrance, the choice is difficult to reverse. If a child is evaluated as a good candidate for early entrance to kindergarten, it is important that all stakeholders are supportive of the decision.

## What is expected of students in kindergarten?

Kindergarten, like many other areas of education, has changed considerably over the past couple of decades. Today's kindergarten students are engaged in a rigorous instructional program. Please take the time to review the following information:

- Parents can easily access the *Early Learning Content Standards* as well as the subject-specific *Academic Content Standards* for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies on the *Ohio Department of Education* website.
- The *Ohio Department of Education's* website contains useful information about the kindergarten, in particular, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). There is a family guide on the Early Learning and School Readiness (ELSR) link about the KRA, which all kindergarten students will take within the first quarter of school).

Parents are encouraged to explore the following resources prior to applying for early entrance to Kindergarten. Use the camera on your phone to scan the QR code or type the keywords into any search engine to access the websites.



SCAN ME  
Ohio  
Department  
of Education -  
Getting Ready  
for  
Kindergarten



SCAN ME  
Preparing a  
School Ready  
Child



SCAN ME  
Ohio  
Department  
of Education  
Standards by  
Grade Level  
Kindergarten

## Applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

- If you believe that your child may be a good candidate for early entrance, please obtain an information/application packet from the principal at Chillicothe Primary School or Registration Office.
- Once the application has been completed, it needs to be returned to the principal of Chillicothe Primary School no later than *May 15th*, in the year for which admission is being requested.
- An observation by a district representative in a preschool setting *may* need to be scheduled for your child. *Parents will be contacted prior to the observation.* While some children may be cognitively ready for kindergarten, they may not be developmentally ready. This additional information may be needed to assess the social and emotional skills necessary to be successful in a school environment.
- The school psychologist will coordinate the evaluation process. The evaluation will be completed within 60 days of the submission of application.
- A kindergarten teacher will complete a screening assessment to gather basic academic, social, and motor skill information. If the student's score indicates that they are developmentally on-track with a typical kindergarten student, they will be referred for evaluation for acceleration.
- Once the evaluations are completed, an acceleration evaluation committee will convene for the purpose of conducting a fair and thorough evaluation of the child. This committee may include the following:
  - a. the Chillicothe Primary School principal
  - b. a kindergarten teacher
  - c. a parent *or* legal guardian of the referred student *or* a representative designated by a parent *or* legal guardian of the referred student
  - d. a gifted education supervisor
  - e. a school psychologist



## How will my child be evaluated for early entrance to Kindergarten?

**Good candidates for early entrance are expected to perform beyond a typical entering kindergarten student on the academic assessments.**

- Early entrance evaluation is completed in the spring and early summer.
- Academic Assessments will be administered by classroom teachers
  1. Basic skills inventory
  2. Benchmark Assessment System – Fountas and Pinnell
  3. Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words
  4. Fine motor assessment
  5. Developmental Observations
- The Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition will be the guide for early entrance and whole-grade acceleration.

### **Instruments used:**

- Individual Intelligence Tests
- Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence-Third Edition (WPPSI-III)

According to the Iowa Acceleration Scale, a student who achieves a **score of 115 or higher** on the WPPSI-III, is a viable candidate for consideration for acceleration. *Students who do not achieve this score will not be considered for early entrance to kindergarten.*

**Superior Cognitive identification (gifted) is 130 (minus the Standard Error of Measure, 127)**

\*\*\*Because developmental readiness is important for success in kindergarten, students who are viable candidates for Early Entrance to Kindergarten are expected to be developmentally “on track” with the typical kindergarten student. Should a student meet the identification criteria for Superior Cognitive identification but fail to meet the developmental readiness assessment, the acceleration team (principal, kindergarten teacher, gifted supervisor, parent and/or legal guardian(s), and school psychologist) will then discuss and reach consensus as to what placement is best for the child.

## Timeline for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Deadline for Early Entrance to kindergarten applications      May 15th

Return application to:      Principal  
   Chillicothe Primary School  
   235 Cherry Street  
   Chillicothe, Ohio 45601

Deadline for completion of evaluations                      60 days after submission of application

Deadline for completion of acceleration committee meetings                      July 15th

Deadline for written notification of outcome of the evaluation process                      July 15th

Deadline to submit a written appeal to the Superintendent or his/her designee  
regarding the outcome of the evaluation process                      August 1st

Applications received after May 15th will be scheduled at the principal's discretion.



## Summary of the Process for Early Entrance Consideration

- Referral filed with principal and/or coordinator. If the child's birthday falls between August 1 and January 1, the parent makes a referral. If the child's birthday is after January 1, the referral must come from the district educator, certified preschool teacher, physician, or psychologist. Referral must meet the referral deadline of August 1.
- Students will be given a Kindergarten Readiness Screening to gather information about their current skill level. This will be conducted by a Chillicothe Primary School staff member. The results will be shared with the family. If the student performs beyond a typical entering kindergarten student, an evaluation will be recommended.
- An evaluation appointment will be made with the school psychologist. Testing will typically take 45 minutes. Students MUST score 115 or higher to be considered for Early Entrance. If the score does not meet the requirement, results will be shared with the parent, and the process will end.
- Students who score 115+ will be scheduled for a full team meeting. If the score does not meet the IAS requirement, results will be shared with the parent, and the process will end with the child being placed in Kindergarten for the following year.
- If the process goes through all of these steps, data will be summarized on the IAS. A meeting will be convened with the gifted teacher, principal, Kindergarten teacher, and parents to discuss the best placement for the child in the upcoming year (continued preschool or Kindergarten). This meeting should be held no later than the beginning of June to allow for appropriate fall planning.

### **IMPORTANT**

**Very few children qualify for early entrance to kindergarten. Please make sure you proceed with childcare arrangements as a contingency. If you are selecting a Preschool program please understand that those programs routinely fill up quickly. Please register your child as you normally would, but let the preschool know that your child is being screened for early entrance to kindergarten.**

Dear Parents,

Thank you for contacting us regarding the evaluation of your child for early entrance to Kindergarten for the upcoming school year. I am writing to explain the evaluation process as adopted by the Chillicothe City School District. This process is based on local school board policy and the statewide model policy for academic acceleration as put forth by the Ohio Department of Education. If you have any questions about the procedures, please feel free to contact the Principal at Chillicothe Primary School or the Director of Curriculum and Instruction at the District Office. They will be happy to put you in contact with the appropriate resource.

The assessment involves the use of four instruments: the Iowa Acceleration Scale, a brief screener, a full cognitive ability test, and an academic achievement test. The screener, cognitive ability test, and academic achievement test measure a child's problem-solving and thinking skills and prior understanding of academic concepts, respectively. The Iowa Acceleration Scales serves as a tool for understanding the child's total cognitive, academic, and social/emotional profile in order to make a placement recommendation.

Process for Early Entrance Consideration:

1. The referral is filed with the district. If the child's birthday falls between August 1 and January 1, the parent may make the referral. If the child's birthday is after January 1, the referral must come from a district educator, a certified preschool teacher, a physician, or a psychologist. Please submit the signed Permission to Test form and the student information sheet with this referral.
2. A screening appointment will be scheduled for a brief intelligence test. If you have not already scheduled this session, please do so immediately. If you cannot make your scheduled appointment, please be sure to call the office ahead of time to cancel or reschedule. We typically attempt to schedule all of these appointments for late May or early June. Details regarding time and place will be discussed when the appointment is made. The initial screening will take approximately 30 minutes and will be completed by a CPS staff member.
3. If your student demonstrates kindergarten readiness skills they will be referred to a school psychologist to complete additional testing needed to qualify for academic acceleration. These testing sessions are scheduled in 45-minute blocks. This includes time to get to know the child, 20 minutes of actual testing, and a brief time to review results with you.
4. Students who score 115 or higher on this screener will be scheduled for a full assessment period. Details regarding time and place will be discussed when the appointment is made.
5. On the day of the full evaluation, the parent will bring the child to the testing site. Please also bring any prior preschool evaluations or examples of the child's academic work. If possible, please arrange permission for the gifted coordinator to contact the preschool teacher to discuss the child's progress.
6. The full testing session includes an hour-long cognitive assessment and an hour-long achievement test. Breaks will be taken throughout with a snack break (if parents choose to provide a snack) in between the two tests. After both the ability and achievement testing have been completed, the gifted coordinator will review the test results. At that point, if the score meets the continuation requirement as stipulated by the Iowa Acceleration Scale, the gifted coordinator will contact the preschool teacher, with the parent's permission, to gain additional information about the child's academic and social development. If the score does not meet the Iowa Acceleration Scale requirement, results will be shared with the parent, and the process will end with the child placed in Kindergarten for the school year in which the child is eligible by age (the year after the upcoming year).
7. If the process goes through all of these steps, the data will be summarized on the Iowa Acceleration Scale. When all data has been compiled, the gifted coordinator, the Kindergarten principal, a Kindergarten teacher, and parents will meet to discuss the best placement for the child in the upcoming year. Our hope is to hold this meeting by the middle of June to allow for appropriate planning for the fall placement.

Again, please submit the enclosed referral, information, and permission forms as quickly as possible so we can schedule testing in a timely manner. If you have any questions, please contact us at any time.

Sincerely,  
Chillicothe Primary Staff



## Written Referral for Acceleration

Child's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Type of Acceleration Requested

- Whole-grade acceleration  
 Individual subject acceleration  
 Early admission to kindergarten  
 Early high school graduation:

## Permission to Test for Academic Acceleration

I grant permission for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to be assessed by designated Chillicothe City School District personnel using assessment instruments approved by the State of Ohio and included in the district's approved identification plan for identification of gifted students. Within thirty days of completion of the assessment, I will be informed of whether or not my child qualifies, according to the State of Ohio criteria for gifted identification. (Choose one)

I give permission for the assessment(s) to be conducted.

I do not give permission for the assessment(s) to be conducted.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



Please complete this application if you feel that your child demonstrates academic achievement, social, emotional, and physical maturity appropriate for kindergarten placement and should be considered for acceleration.

**Child's Full**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Birthdate:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ **Male** \_\_\_\_\_ **Female** \_\_\_\_\_

**School Year Requested for Early Entrance:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School History (Please attach a copy of preschool report card if available)**

List the preschool, Head Start or daycare programs attended.

<b>Name of School/Program</b>	<b>Dates of Attendance</b>	<b>Number of Hours per week</b>
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Siblings**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Name of School</b>

## Parent Questionnaire

**Why do you feel that your child would be ready for a kindergarten program? Comment on your child's social behavior and academic skills. (Use additional paper, if needed)**

**Tell us about the friends of your child. Are they the same age, older, younger, both? Many or few?**

**What characteristics have you recently observed in your child which lead you to believe that he/she is ready for kindergarten?**

**How does your child handle frustration?**

**Is there any additional information you would like the team to consider?**

# Parent Questionnaire

Has your child received a formal evaluation (e.g. from a psychologist, social worker, or learning specialist) for disabilities or disorders? Please complete below and attach all relevant reports.

Disability	Specific type	Date of Diagnosis	Special services received/comments
<b>Specific Learning:</b> Written Language, Math, Reading, etc.			
<b>Developmental:</b> Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, PDD-NOS, etc.			
<b>Other Health Impairment:</b> ADD, ADHD, etc.			
<b>Social- Emotional/Psychiatric:</b> Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, etc			
<b>Physical:</b> Visual, Hearing, Motor, Traumatic Injury, etc.			