

A Parent's Guide to Early Entrance to Kindergarten



PERKINS LOCAL SCHOOLS

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Legislation Governing Early Entrance to Kindergarten and Giftedness

- Early entrance to kindergarten is considered one type of academic acceleration as defined by the Ohio Department of Education. Students who do not meet the age requirement for kindergarten but who exhibit the ability and readiness for kindergarten on the IOWA Acceleration Scale (IAS) will be offered the opportunity to enroll in kindergarten early.
- A parent may request *early* entrance to kindergarten if the child turns five years of age after the district's kindergarten entrance date of September 30 and before January 1.
- Early entrance to kindergarten for children not age five before January 1 will only be considered if the child is referred by an educator within the district, a preschool educator who knows the child, a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child, or at the discretion of the principal of the school to which the student may be admitted.

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*. The key to determining whether or not early entrance is appropriate for a child is developmental readiness. Even though a child may have a lot of ability, he/she may not be ready for kindergarten. Other important factors to consider are social maturity, personal development, and motor development.

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.

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

- Is my child capable of working in a classroom setting with children who are one year older than he/she?
- Will my child be frustrated by this placement?
- What are the possible long-term impacts as my child progresses through elementary, middle, and high school (i.e., beginning college at a younger age)?
- Do I understand the expectations for students in kindergarten today?

There is a difference between *ability* and *achievement*. Some children may appear exceptional simply because of their access to opportunities (i.e., preschool programs, parents working with them on skills, or access to learning materials). Early entrance is designed for the child who has high ability **and** easily achieves when presented with 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 in the Perkins Local School District is a *full-day program*. Students are expected to participate in the academic program throughout the entire day.

Kindergarten has changed considerably over the last couple of decades. Today's kindergarten students are engaged in a rigorous instructional program. Educational standards help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning. Parents can access the *Ohio Learning Standards* at the following website:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Ohios-Learning-Standards>

The Ohio Department of Education's website provides information about the kindergarten readiness assessment for literacy (KRA-L) which all kindergarten students take within the first six weeks of school. Parents can access the website at: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Kindergarten/Ohios-Kindergarten-Readiness-Assessment>

Applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Perkins Board of Education states that "a child is eligible for kindergarten if he/she attains the age of five (5) on or before September 30th of the coming school year". Children who do not meet the age criteria may apply for early entrance.

Early entrance to kindergarten may be permitted if all of the following requirements are met:

1. The child's cognitive ability, academic achievement, and aptitude result in an acceptable composite score on the Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition.
2. The child possesses and demonstrates social and emotional characteristics that permit conformity with behavior commonly expected of children in kindergarten.

To request early entrance into kindergarten for your child, please follow the steps outlined below to ensure that the process is completed properly and in a timely manner:

1. Obtain *A Parent's Guide to Early Entrance to Kindergarten* from Furry Elementary.
2. Provide a copy of your child's birth certificate indicating your child will be turning five during the next school year.
3. Complete and sign the *Early Entrance to Kindergarten Referral Form* and the *Early Entrance Evaluation and Review Permission Form*.
4. Return the items listed above in Steps 2, 3 and 4 to Jennifer Long, Furry Elementary Principal

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.

Early Entrance to Kindergarten Evaluation Procedure

The Perkins Local School District evaluates students for Early Entrance to Kindergarten using the *Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd edition* (IAS) in accordance with *ODE Model Policy for Academic Acceleration*. As required, an Acceleration Evaluation Committee will review the results of the comprehensive evaluation and determine the most appropriate available learning environment for your child.

The Acceleration Evaluation Committee Members:

1. The child's receiving principal or assistant principal
2. A teacher at the grade level to which the student may be accelerated
3. A parent or legal guardian of the referred student or a representative designated by a parent or legal guardian of the referred child
4. A gifted education coordinator or gifted intervention specialist. If a gifted coordinator or a gifted intervention specialist is not available in the district, a school psychologist or a guidance counselor with expertise in the appropriate use of academic acceleration may be substituted.

Once all of the required acceleration documents have been received, arrangements will be made to begin the evaluation process.

1. You will be contacted by the school psychologist to schedule your child's individual cognitive ability assessment.
2. When your child's cognitive score is calculated:
 - a. You will be contacted by the school psychologist to schedule your child's individual achievement and aptitude assessment.

OR

- b. You will be notified in writing if your child's ability score is below the recommended score of 115.
3. When your child's IAS results are complete, the Acceleration Evaluation Committee will be convened to conduct a fair and thorough evaluation of the child.
4. The Acceleration Evaluation Committee will issue a written decision to the principal and the student's parent or legal guardian based on the outcome of the evaluation process. This notification shall include instructions for appealing the outcome of the evaluation process.
5. The Acceleration Evaluation Committee will develop a Written Acceleration Plan (WAP) for students who will be admitted early to kindergarten.

Please Note: The *Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition* identifies the follow issues as critical to the success of an accelerated student and does not recommend accelerating students if:

- The student would be accelerated into the same grade as (or a higher grade than) a sibling.
- The student currently has a sibling in the same grade.
- The student indicates that he/she does not want to be whole-grade accelerated.