



A Parent's Guide to

Early Entrance To Kindergarten

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Legislation Governing Early Entrance to Kindergarten and First Grade along with Giftedness

- In December 2025, Governor DeWine signed House Bill 114, which changes the kindergarten age eligibility requirement for children starting kindergarten in Ohio. **Children must be 5 years old on or before the first day of school** to be eligible to enroll for the school year. This means that your student must be five years of age on or before the first school day for students as indicated on the district's calendar.
- A parent may request *early* admission to kindergarten if the child turns five years of age after the district's published first day of school 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.
- Early Entrance to kindergarten is a subject typically addressed through gifted education. It is covered in the State of Ohio's Model Student Acceleration Policy. According to the Ohio Revised Code (3324.01), "gifted" means students who perform or show potential for performing at remarkable high levels of accomplishment when compared to others their age, experience, or environment and who are identified under Division (A), (B), (C), or (D) of Section 3324.03 of the Revised Code.

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 is developmental readiness. Even though a child may exhibit a significant ability to do and understand many concepts, 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 setting with children who are one year older than him or 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 childcare. Is this a *need* or a *want*?
- 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 (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 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, 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.
- Parents can 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 and Workforce](#) website.
- The [Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's](#) website contains useful information about kindergarten, particularly the Ohio Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Revised. There is a family

guide on the [Kindergarten Readiness Assessment for Families](#) page which details the assessment all kindergarten students will take within the first six weeks of school.

- Kindergarten in your district is a *full-day program*. Students are expected to participate in the academic program throughout the day.

Applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

If you believe that your child may be a good candidate for early entrance to kindergarten, please put your request in writing by sending the completed Early Entrance Referral to either Colette Smith, Gifted Education Coordinator or Traci Ehrick, Teaching & Learning Coordinator no later than May 1 prior to the academic year you want your child assessed for potential entrance to kindergarten prior to when they will be age ready.

Items needed for referral (balance of this document):

- Early Entrance to Kindergarten Referral
- Acceleration Questionnaire
- Pre-School Evaluation for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Early entrance evaluation is completed in the late spring concurrently with kindergarten registration.

The [Ohio Department of Education and Workforce has a checklist](#) for kindergarten readiness on its website. When looking at whether early entrance is appropriate for a child, the same readiness guidelines should be considered.

Students who are viable candidates for Early Entrance to Kindergarten are expected to be developmentally “on track” with the typical kindergarten student.

Instruments that may be used:

- Cognitive Ability:
 - o Kbit 2 – initial screener
 - if student meets 115+, the process continued
 - if student does NOT meet 115, the process stops
 - o NNAT3
- Achievement:
 - o The Iowa Assessments
 - o Woodcock Johnson IV

Early Entrance to Kindergarten Referral

Please complete this referral form if you feel that your child demonstrates academic achievement, social, emotional, and physical maturity appropriate for Kindergarten placement and should be considered for early entrance into Kindergarten.

REFERRAL FOR:

Child's Name _____ Male ___ Female ___ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____ Relationship to Child: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____ Referred By: _____

****If DOB is between January 1 and August 1, referral must come from a physician, psychologist, district educator, or preschool teacher with knowledge of the referred child. (ORC 3314.06, 3314.08, 3321.01, 3324.01 et seq., OAC 3301-51-15)**

Please consider the above student for the following type of early entrance acceleration:

- Early Entrance to Kindergarten (my child will be five before January 1)
- Early Entrance to Kindergarten (My child will **NOT** be five before January 1)
- Early Entrance to First Grade

Preschool Experience – please attach preschool report card if available

List the nursery schools, Head Start, special programs, and other day care or preschool programs attended.

Name of School/Program/Day Care/Preschool	Date of Attendance	# of Hours/Week
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Why do you feel that your child would be ready for a Kindergarten (or first grade) program?

Comment on your child's social behavior and academic skills.

Signature _____ Relationship to Child _____ Date _____

Please return to
 Colette Smith, Gifted Education Coordinator AND Traci Ehrick, Teaching & Learning Coordinator
Colette.Smith@mvesc.org AND Traci.Ehrick@mvesc.org
 Muskingum Valley ESC, 205 N. Seventh St., Zanesville, OH 43701
 740-452-4518



Acceleration Questionnaire

Student Name: _____ **DOB:** _____

Student Address: _____

Parent Phone: _____ **Parent Email:** _____

Father's Name: _____ **Occupation:** _____

Is father living with child?

Mother's Name: _____ **Occupation:** _____

Is mother living with child?

Siblings:

Name	Gender	Age	School Grade	Name of School

Age: **Youngest / Average / Oldest** in present grade.

Physical Size: **Smaller / About Same Size / Larger** than most student in present grade.

Motor Coordination: **Less / About As / More** coordinated than student in present grade.

Background:

Do you know of or suspect any problems with _____ vision or _____ hearing?

Please explain:

Does your child take medications? If so, explain _____

Does your child have any health problems? If so, explain _____

Are there any specific home factors that might affect your child's performance in school? If so, explain _____

Attendance at School

- Has a history of frequent unexcused absences and tardiness
- Has a history of frequent excused absences and tardiness due to illness or family issues
- Absences and tardiness are average compared to same-age children
- Has excellent attendance

Motivation:

- Student does not complete assignments and appears disinterested in schoolwork.
- Student completes those tasks that are of interest to him/her.
- Student completes virtually all assignments on time and shows a positive attitude.
- Student completes most assignments more quickly and more comprehensively than other classmates.

Attitude toward learning:

- Student is disinterested and/or frustrated when presented with new academic challenges.
- Student completes assignments competently but inconsistently
- Student completes assignments but rarely seeks further challenges
- Student is receptive to and enthusiastic about new academic challenges
- Student actively seeks and persists in new and rigorous academic challenges

Participation in school-sponsored or community sponsored extracurricular activities (athletics, music, art, clubs, etc.)

- School activities are available for the student's age or grade level, but student does not participate
- Student shows limited participation in available activities
- Student participates in two or more activities and does well but has not received special recognition
- Student has a leadership role or has received recognition in one or more activities

Academic Self-Concept:

- Student's academic self-concept is weak (underestimates abilities)
- Student's academic self-concept is inflated (overestimates abilities)
- Student's academic self-concept is positive and realistic

Emotional Development:

- Student exhibits a pattern of emotional disturbances (depression, inappropriate emotions and interactions, aggressive behavior, etc.)
- Student reacts aggressively and/or defensively when criticized
- Student is very sensitive to criticism or remarks
- Student thoughtfully considers feedback and criticism and modifies behavior appropriately

Behavior

- Student has a history or frequent discipline problems in the classroom, home, community, or with law enforcement.
- Student has occasional discipline problems
- Student has no history of discipline problems but is not exemplary
- Student's behavior is exceptionally positive and effective.

Relationship with Peers

- Student has extremely poor interpersonal skills and virtually no friends.
- Student has poor interpersonal relationships with most teachers
- Student has good interpersonal relationships with most teachers
- Student has excellent interpersonal relationships with virtually all teachers

General Information – Supporting Requests

- **In what ways do you think your child is advanced for her/his age?**

- **What does your child do when faced with a challenging task?**

- **Does your child participate in any activities or lessons outside of preschool/day care (e.g. dance, art, music, sports, etc.)? Examples**

- **What does your child do when frustrated?**

- **Is your child more outgoing or shy? Describe her/his interactions with other children who are:**
 - **Younger?**

 - **The same age?**

 - **Older?**

- **What else can you tell us about your child? Special interests? Love of a certain subject or topic? Energy level? Sensitivity?**

Completed by: _____ **Position/Relationship:** _____

Date: _____

**Pre-School Evaluation for Early Entrance to Kindergarten
in accordance with the Iowa Acceleration Scale**

Child's Name: _____

Name of Pre-School: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____

Please rate the following using a scale of **0, 1, 2, or 3.**

_____ **Child's Attendance:** with 0 being frequent unexcused absences/to 3 being excellent attendance

_____ **Motivation:** with 0 being incomplete assignments/to 3 completing assignments more quickly and comprehensively than most classmates

_____ **Attitude toward Learning:** with 0 being disinterested and frustrated with new challenges/to 3 seeking and persisting in rigorous challenges

_____ **Academic Self-Concept:** with 1 being weak or inflated/ to 2 being positive

_____ **Physical size:** with 1 being smaller than most/to 3 being larger than most peers

_____ **Motor coordination:** with 1 being less coordinated than most/to 3 being more coordinated than most peers

_____ **Emotional Development:** with 0 being a pattern of emotional disturbances/to 3 considering feedback and criticism and modifies behavior appropriately

_____ **Behavior:** with 0 being a history of frequent discipline problems/to 3 being exceptionally positive and effective

_____ **Relationship with Peers:** with 0 being extremely poor and virtually no friends/to 3 being good interpersonal skills with age mates and older and younger

_____ **Relationships with Teachers:** with 0 being poor with all teachers/to 3 being excellent with all teachers

Please fax to 740-455-6702. Your input will help families make this important educational decision for their child, and we appreciate your insight. Thank you.

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