



Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Early Entrance Packet

GARFIELD HEIGHTS CITY SCHOOLS

Special Education Department

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Garfield Heights, Ohio 44125

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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 recommended is to evaluate the student's ability, achievement, and aptitude. These attributes are defined as follows:

Ability – measures a student's general potential to succeed in a school setting

Aptitude – measures an individual's problem solving ability for learning new content material that has not yet been formally presented to the learner

Achievement – measures a student's learning in specific subject matter

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 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.

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?

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 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 *Common Core State Standards* for English language arts and mathematics and the *Academic Content Standards* for science and social studies at the following website:

<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?Page=2&TopicID=1695&TopicRelationID=1696>

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/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=778&ContentID=3930&Content=117686>

Applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

The Garfield Heights Board of Education states that "a child is eligible for kindergarten if he/she attains the age of five (5) on or before August 1st 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:

1. Complete and submit the following documents found in this Early Entrance Packet.
 - *Early Entrance to Kindergarten Application*
 - *Early Entrance to Kindergarten Checklist*
 - *Early Entrance to Kindergarten Evaluation and Review Permission Form*
2. Provide a copy of your child's birth certificate indicating your child will be turning five during the next school year.

Return the items listed above to the Garfield Heights Board of Education/Special Education Department no later than March 31 to ensure evaluation prior to the start of the coming school year.

Early Entrance to Kindergarten Evaluation Procedure

The Garfield Height City School District evaluates students for Early Entrance to Kindergarten 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 gifted intervention specialist is not available in the district, a school psychologist or 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 a staff member to schedule your child's individual cognitive ability assessment.
2. When your child's cognitive score is calculated:
 - a. You will be contacted by a staff member 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.

EARLY ENTRANCE TO KINDERGARTEN APPLICATION

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Please complete this application if you feel your child exhibits many of the behaviors and characteristics associated with children who are strong candidates for early entrance to kindergarten.

Student/Family Information

Child's Name _____ Gender (circle one): M F
First Middle Last

Birth Date ____ / ____ / ____ Language Spoken at Home _____
Month Day Year

Home Address _____
Street City State Zip

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Relationship to Child _____

Home Phone _____ Work _____ Cell _____

Preschool Experience

List the preschools, Head Start, special programs, and other day care programs attended.
 Please attach your child's preschool report card if available.

Name of School/Program	Dates of Attendance	# of Hours/Week

Parent/Guardian Checklist

- Early Entrance to Kindergarten Application* *Early Entrance to Kindergarten Evaluation and Review Permission Form*
- Early Entrance to Kindergarten Checklist*
- Copy of birth certificate
- Referral by pediatrician, psychologist, district educator or pre-school teacher for children who will not be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten by January 1 of the school year for which admission is requested.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the contents of the *Early Entrance to Kindergarten* packet.

 Print Custodial Parent/Guardian Name

 Signature of Custodial Parent/Guardian

 Date

PLEASE RETURN THE APPLICATION, CHECKLIST AND THE EVALUATION AND REVIEW PERMISSION FORM NO LATER THAN THE LAST DAY IN MARCH TO ENSURE EVALUATION PRIOR TO THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

EARLY ENTRANCE TO KINDERGARTEN CHECKLIST

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Children who are strong candidates for early entrance to kindergarten typically exhibit many of the following characteristics as compared to other children.

OBSERVED BEHAVIORS and CHARACTERISTICS	Yes	No
Understands the meaning and use of words better than other children her age		
Is curious about many things and asks questions often		
Is very good at working puzzles or solving problems		
Has a good memory and remembers details of conversations or stories		
Is interested in difficult concepts such as time and space		
Has an active imagination that may include imaginary friends		
Concentrates on certain activities much longer than other children her age		
Has a great sense of humor and understands jokes more than other children his age		
Reads or figures out math-related problems at an early age		
Shows talent in music, art or drama.		
Recognizes relationships between information and concepts better than children the same age		
Is a fast learner		
Likes to work independently		
Is willing to persist on challenging tasks		
Is very observant		
Solves problems in unique ways		
Asks thoughtful questions		
Is able to express themselves well		
Is unusually able to order things in a logical sequence		
Uses previously learned things in a new context		

Child's Name _____
First Middle Last

EARLY ENTRANCE TO KINDERGARTEN
EVALUATION AND REVIEW PERMISSION FORM
GARFIELD HEIGHTS CITY SCHOOLS

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____ Referred by: _____

In giving my permission, I understand that any or all of the following may occur in accordance with the *Ohio Department of Education Model Policy for Academic Acceleration*:

Administration of Assessments (e.g. cognitive, achievement, aptitude, and any other appropriate measures to determine appropriate placement);

Review of relevant records (releases of information will be included);

Observation(s) of my child;

Interview with caregiver and/or parent/guardian;

No assessment, evaluation or review will be done without your written permission.

I understand that if I grant permission, my child will receive assessment(s) by designated school personnel and that their information may be shared, as required, with teachers, principals, and other appropriate school personnel.

Permission is given to conduct the evaluation and review

Permission is denied

Print Name of Custodial Parent/Legal Guardian

Signature of Custodial Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

Please Note: *Granting permission does not guarantee access to acceleration options.