

A Parent's Guide to
Early Entrance to Kindergarten





Legislation Governing Early Entrance to Kindergarten and Giftedness

- A parent may request *early* entrance to kindergarten if their child turns five years of age after the district's kindergarten entrance date of August 1 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 pre-school 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.
- 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 remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment and who are identified under Division (A), (B), (C), or (D) of Section 3324.03 of the Revised Code. The Groveport Madison Local School Board of Education adopted this *Model Student Acceleration Policy for Advanced Learners* and applies the policy when considering early entrance to kindergarten, as well as, whole grade and subject acceleration.

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 (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 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 has changed considerably over the last 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 K-12* for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies on the *Ohio Department of Education* website.

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?Page=2&TopicID=1695&TopicRelationID=1696>

The *Ohio Department of Education* provides parents with a ***Kindergarten Readiness Checklist***, which can act as a guide for parents to determine if a child is ready for kindergarten. See the chart below for examples of kindergarten readiness:

Physical Skills	Health & Safety Needs	Personal Needs	Social and Emotional Skills
<i>Does your child...</i>	<i>Has your child...</i>	<i>Without your help, can your child...</i>	<i>Does your child...</i>
enjoy outdoor play such as running, jumping, and climbing?	had required shots?	use the bathroom?	play well with other children?



Physical Skills	Health & Safety Needs	Personal Needs	Social and Emotional Skills
<i>Does your child...</i>	<i>Has your child...</i>	<i>Without your help, can your child...</i>	<i>Does your child...</i>
draw and trace basic shapes?	had a dental and vision exam?	wash hands?	separate from a parent without being upset?
cut with scissors?	learned their home address?	brush teeth?	share with other children?
bounce a ball?	learned their own first and last name?	use tissue to blow nose?	care about the feelings of others?
ride a tricycle?	learned the first and last name of parent?	button and zip up shirts and pants?	follow routines?
	learned to watch for cars when crossing the street?	put on and take off coat?	put toys away when asked?
	learned to not talk to strangers?	climbing-woman-silhouette	
	developed a set routine for going to bed?	open a juice box, use eating utensils, and open a condiment package?	
	learned how they will get to and from school?		
Source: http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Guidance-About-Kindergarten/Kindergarten-Readiness-Checklist			

The *Ohio Department of Education's* website also provides information about the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment for Literacy-Revised (KRA-R) which all kindergarten students take within the first six weeks of school.

Kindergarten in the Groveport Madison Local School District is a *full-day program*. Students are expected to participate in the academic program throughout the entire day.

Applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

- If you believe that your child may be a good candidate for early entrance, please download an Early Entrance Application packet from the district's website at www.gocruisers.org/Kindergarten.aspx or by contacting Laticia Gilpen at the Groveport Madison Schools District Service Center.



Groveport Madison Schools

4400 Marketing Place, Suite B
Groveport, OH 43125

- Once the application has been completed, return it to Laticia Gilpen at the District Service Center, 4400 Marketing Place, Suite B, Groveport, Ohio, **no later than May 12** in the year for which admission is being requested.
- The application will then be routed to a school psychologist, who will set up a time to begin the evaluation process and contact the home school principal and Gifted Coordinator.
- The psychologist will administer a cognitive ability test. Acceleration is *not recommended* for students scoring less than 115 on the cognitive ability test.
- Academic testing is provided.
- Once the evaluations are completed, an acceleration evaluation committee will conduct a fair and thorough evaluation of the child. This committee may include the following:
 - the home school principal
 - a kindergarten teacher
 - a parent or legal guardian of the referred student
 - a gifted education coordinator
 - a school psychologist or guidance counselor

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 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.

Resources: Ohio Department of Education, Berea City Schools, Iowa Acceleration Scale