

A Parent's Guide to

Early Entrance to Kindergarten

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Groveport Madison Local School District



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Legislation Governing Early Entrance to Kindergarten and Giftedness

- A parent may request *early* entrance to kindergarten if the 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. This *Model Student Acceleration Policy for Advanced Learners* was adopted by the Groveport Madison Local School Board and also addresses 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 child care. 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. This checklist can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=778&ContentID=7920&Content=84300>

The *Ohio Department of Education's* website also provides information about the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment for Literacy (KRA-L) 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 obtain an information/application packet from Mrs. Sunny Groves at the Groveport Madison School District Administration Office by calling 614.492.2520.

- Once the application has been completed, it needs to be returned to Mrs. Groves at the Administration Office **no later than August 1st** 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.
- The psychologist will administer a cognitive ability test. Students scoring 115 or higher are considered viable candidates for acceleration and will then move on to academic testing provided through the Gifted Education Department.
- The candidates will also participate in either Kindergarten Round-Up (for candidates completing the above evaluations prior to March 15) or in the kindergarten assessments occurring during the first three days of the school year.
- 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:
 - 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
- Students 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 the developmental readiness assessment, the acceleration team will then discuss and reach consensus as to what placement is best for the child.

IMPORTANT

Very few children qualify for early entrance to kindergarten. Please make sure you proceed with child care 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.