

A Parent's Guide to
Early Entrance to Kindergarten





Groveport Madison Schools

4400 Marketing Place, Suite B
Groveport, OH 43125

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 (gifted) 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?



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- 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.

<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/OLS-Graphic-Sections/Learning-Standards/Kindergarten-Standards.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>

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?



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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.

For Frequently Asked Questions about kindergarten, visit the Ohio Department of Education's website at <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Kindergarten/FY14-Kindergarten-Schedule>.



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Applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

If you believe that your child may be a good candidate for Early Entrance kindergarten, please download an Early Entrance Application packet from the district's website at www.gocruisers.org/Kindergarten.aspx or contact [Marcy Ragland](#) at the Groveport Madison Schools District Service Center at (614) 492-2520.

IMPORTANT

Very few children qualify for Early Entrance to kindergarten. Please make sure you proceed with childcare arrangements as a contingency. If you select a preschool program, understand that those programs fill up quickly. Please register your child as you normally would, but let the preschool know that you plan to have your child screened for Early Entrance to kindergarten.

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



The Young Gifted Child: *A guide for families*



Ted Strickland, Governor

**Department
of Education**

Deborah S. Delisle,
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Office of Early Learning and School Readiness
Office for Exceptional Children

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What is giftedness?

Characteristics of young gifted children can include, but are not limited to:

- Advanced use of words and language;
- Early reading skills;
- Keen observation and curiosity;
- Unusual ability to remember information;
- Periods of intense concentration;
- Talent in the arts;
- Sticking with a task longer than other children the same age;
- Understanding concepts usually grasped at an older age;
- Seeing relationships between information and concepts better than children the same age; and
- Thinking beyond the obvious.

A child's physical, social, emotional and language development happens in steps or stages. Children usually progress through these stages in their own unique timeframe, but it is common for young gifted children to be developmentally advanced in some areas and typical in others. For example, a gifted preschool child may be able to read independently but need help tying shoelaces.

As a result, families can find it challenging to meet the educational needs of their young gifted children. Parents can benefit from working with early childhood teachers to recognize and meet the physical, social and emotional needs of their young gifted children while nurturing their children's intellectual talents.

An appropriate early childhood setting is one that offers children choices, open-ended experiences and opportunities to explore topics of special interest to them – particularly with intellectually similar friends.

Is my preschooler gifted?

Parents are often the first to observe behaviors described below that may indicate giftedness in a young child:

- Understands the meanings 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 great sense of humor and understands jokes more than other children his age;
- 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;
- Gets his feelings hurt easily;
- Reads or figures out math-related problems at an early age; or
- Shows talent in music, art or drama.





How can I develop my child's gifts and talents?

Parents play an especially important role in developing the special capabilities of a young gifted child. To be effective, parents should:

- Promote their child's growing need for independence;
- Set clear limits and guidelines;
- Communicate clearly and with enthusiasm;
- Expand vocabulary by using new words;
- Provide a variety of learning materials, especially books;
- Help develop special skills;
- Find playmates who have similar interests (young gifted children sometimes enjoy the company of older children);
- Promote creativity and encourage the child to try new things that help him value learning and creativity; and
- Read to, and engage in, creative hobbies with the child.

How do I address my child's social-emotional needs?

Because of their emotional intensity, it is not unusual for young gifted children to achieve academically in preschool, yet be judged "not ready" emotionally or socially to enter kindergarten. When a child's social and emotional needs are understood and met, she will develop a positive self-image and the coping skills necessary for meeting life's challenges. Some common social-emotional characteristics of young gifted children include:

- Intensity;
- Perfectionism;
- Persistence and prolonged concentration;
- Procrastination;
- Curiosity;
- Complexity;
- Willingness to take risks;
- Advanced imagination; and
- Frustration, moodiness and, in a minority of children, depression.

What should I consider when choosing a school?

When choosing a preschool or kindergarten, select a program that:

- Adjusts teaching methods and curriculum to the needs of gifted and talented children;
- Involves children in creative-thinking activities;
- Provides a variety of materials to explore, examine or investigate;
- Encourages children to speak, question, discuss and be actively involved in learning;
- Helps children pursue their interests and talents (Smutny, 1999); and
- Encourages parents to be involved.

Is early entrance the best option?

Parents have the option of enrolling a child in kindergarten before the age recommended by the school district. They should consider early entrance if their child demonstrates behaviors described in this brochure. All Ohio school districts are required to have a policy for “accelerating” or advancing academically gifted children, and such policies include the option of kindergarten early entrance. These policies indicate that school districts:

- Must screen a child for early entrance at a parent’s request, if the child is 5 years old before January 1;
- May screen children for early entrance if they are not 5 years old before January 1.

To learn more about your district’s early kindergarten entrance policy, contact the district’s gifted coordinator or e-mail an Education Program Specialist at the Ohio Department of Education at gifted@education.ohio.gov.

What are some additional resources?

- National Association for Gifted Children (www.nagc.org)
- Ohio Association for Gifted Children (www.oagc.com)
- Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (www.sengifted.org)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (www.naeyc.org)

For more information regarding the contents of this brochure, please contact the Ohio Department of Education at gifted@education.ohio.gov. Additional brochures may be downloaded from education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *young gifted child*.



References

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