

Standards for Early Admission to Kindergarten

The 1997 General Assembly passed legislation allowing a child who has reached his/her fourth (4th) birthday by April 16 to enter kindergarten if he or she demonstrates an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity. In determining eligibility, the principal shall convene a committee of educational professionals who will assist him/her in making decisions about each individual child. Criteria that shall be considered include the following:

- Aptitude
- Achievement
- Performance
- Observable Student Behavior
- Motivation to Learn
- Student Interest

Student Aptitude

A student eligible to enter school early shall be precocious in academic and social development and score at the **98th percentile (full scale score) on a standard individual test of intelligence such as the Stanford-Binet V. The Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI-IV), Differential Ability Scales (DAS-II), Woodcock-Johnson Test of Cognitive Ability (Woodcock-Johnson-IV),** or any other comparable test, that shall be administered by a licensed psychologist. Although superior aptitude is a strong indicator of extraordinary academic ability, every child with a score at the 98th percentile, in intelligence may not need early admission to kindergarten. Some children could have a negative experience if the demands of a structured school day are imposed too early.

Achievement

Children entering kindergarten early shall be functioning two (2) to three (3) years beyond their peers. Children eligible for early admission to kindergarten shall score at the 98th percentile on either Reading or Mathematics on a standard test of achievement such as the **Kaufman-Test of Educational Achievement (K-TEA-III), Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT-III), Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement-IV, Bracken Basic Concept Scale-III,** or any other comparable tests. A licensed psychologist administers the Aptitude test and may also administer the achievement test. An impartial professional educator who is trained in the use and

administration of the achievement instrument may also administer the achievement test as long as he/she has no potential conflict of interest in the outcome of the assessment.

Performance

Children displaying a need to enter kindergarten early shall be able to perform tasks well above their age peers. Some indicators the principal may observe are the child ability in independent reading, problem solving skills, advanced vocabulary and some writing fluency. A child ready for kindergarten would not necessarily demonstrate precociousness in all of these areas. The parents shall submit a sample of student work showing outstanding examples of ability in any of the following areas: art, math, writing, dramatic play, creative productions, science, social interactions, etc. For further indication of performance, the principal may instruct a teacher to complete an informal reading assessment.

Observable Student Behavior/ Student Interest

If a child is to be successful in early admission, he/she should be socially and developmentally mature enough to be in a structured setting for a full school day. The child should be capable of following verbal instructions and functioning independently within a group. Not every child with extraordinary academic ability is mature enough to attend public school early. The school system shall require **two recommendation letters with specific documentation of physical and social maturity**. One of the letters must be from a pediatrician, indicating that the child is developmentally mature. The other may be from preschool teachers, child care workers, or other adults with direct knowledge of the child. Documentation checklists that might be useful are the **Adaptive Behavior Assessment System (ABAS-III)**, **Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC-3)**, or any other comparable scale of early social development.

Time Lines

A parent wishing to submit his/her child for consideration for early admission to kindergarten shall present to the principal of his/her local school the required information within **the first thirty (30) calendar days of the school's instructional year. All testing must be administered after April 16. The principal will act on the request within three (3) weeks. If the child is admitted to kindergarten, before the end of the first ninety (90) calendar days of the child's being enrolled, the principal may rescind his/her approval based on substantial evidence documenting that the child is not adjusting satisfactorily to the school setting. Before a child may be exited from school, the parent must be invited to assist in**

the development of intervention strategies. If the strategies are not successful and the decision is made to remove the child from school, parents must be given at least ten (10) days notice to arrange child care if needed.