

A Parent's Guide to
**Early Entrance
to Kindergarten**



**GALION CITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**470 Portland Way North
Galion, Ohio 44833
(419) 468-3432**

Legislation Governing Early Entrance to Kindergarten and Giftedness

- A parent may request *early* admission to kindergarten if the child turns five years of age after the district's kindergarten entrance date (August 1) and before January 1. The local board of education shall determine entrance through a standardized testing program.
- Children who will not yet be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten or first grade by the first day of January of the school year for which admission is requested shall also be evaluated for possible early admittance if referred by an educator within the district, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.
- 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.

Galion City School District

- The Galion City School District considers a child eligible for entrance into "regular" kindergarten if s/he attains the age of five on or before **August 1st** of the year s/he applies for entrance. A child under the age of six (6) who is enrolled in kindergarten will be considered of compulsory school age.
- By parental request a child may be tested for *early* admission to kindergarten if s/he will be five (5) years of age between August 2nd and December 31st, inclusive, and exhibit the mental, social and emotional standards established by the Galion City Board of Education. **If your child turns 5 years of age after January 1st and you believe s/he is a viable candidate for early entrance, please call 419-468-4010.**
- The Galion Board of Education has adopted the State of Ohio's *Model Student Acceleration Policy for Advanced Learners*:

“Children who will not yet be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten or first grade by the first day of January of the school year for which admission is requested shall also be evaluated for possible early admittance if referred by an educator within the district, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child. Children who will not yet be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten or first grade by the first day of January of the school year for which admission is requested may also be evaluated for possible early admittance at the discretion of the principal of the school to which the student may be admitted.”
- The Early Entrance to kindergarten process shall be in compliance with Ohio's *Model Student Acceleration Policy*.

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 is developmental readiness. Even though a child may have a lot of ability, s/he may not be ready for kindergarten. Social maturity, personal development, and motor development are important factors for a child's success in school.

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. This opportunity is designed as a measure to meet individual differences in school readiness.

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 him or her?
- Will my child be frustrated by this placement?
- What are the possible long-term impacts for my child as s/he 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 not only has ability but easily achieves when presented 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, like many other areas of education, has changed considerably over the past couple of decades. Today's kindergarten students are engaged in a rigorous instructional program.
- Parents can easily access the *Early Learning Content Standards* as well as the subject specific *Academic Content Standards* for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies on the *Ohio Department of Education* website.
- The *Ohio Department of Education's* website contains useful information about kindergarten, in particular, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). There is a family guide on the Early Learning and School Readiness (ELSR) link about the KRA, which all kindergarten students will be administered between the first day of school and November 1st.

ODE>Early Learning>Kindergarten>Ohio's New Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

- Kindergarten in the Galion City School District is a *full-day program*. The school day runs from approximately 8:45 a.m. until 3:40 p.m. Students are expected to participate in the academic program throughout the day.

Physical Skills Development Area

Does your child:

- use a backpack
- climb a ladder
- draw and trace basic shapes;
- cut with scissors;
- bounce a ball;
- ride a tricycle;
- put toys away for storage

Ohio Department of Education (ODE)

(<http://www.ode.ohio.gov>)

Kindergarten Readiness Checklist

- Use materials that will help your child develop the motor skills needed to learn to write include crayons, markers, glue, and modeling clay.
- Help your child learn to take responsibility for their own belongings and to dress themselves.
- Activities that will help your child's coordination include climbing, jumping, skipping, playing ball, using playground equipment, and riding a tricycle.
- Use bedtime as the opportunity to read to and talk with your child.

To do well in school, children need to be supported and nurtured in all areas of development.

It is also important that your child is physically, socially and emotionally ready for school. This checklist can help serve as your guide. But please remember, young children change so fast. If they cannot do something this week, you may see them do it a couple of weeks later.

Is your child ready for kindergarten? Ask yourself these questions:

IMPORTANT

Very few children qualify for early entrance to kindergarten. Please make sure you proceed with child arrangements as a normalcy. If you are selecting a preschool program, please understand that those programs routinely fill up quickly. Please register your child as you normally would, but let the Preschool Office know that your child is being screened 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 the school or the district website or call (419) 468-4010 to have an information/application packet mailed.
- Once the application has been completed, return it to the Primary School office no later than April 30th.
- An observation by a district representative (elementary guidance counselor and/or school psychologist) in a preschool setting *may* need to be scheduled for your child. *Parents will be contacted if this observation is needed.* While some children may be cognitively ready for kindergarten, they may not be developmentally ready. This additional information may be needed to assess the social and emotional skills necessary to be successful in a school environment.
- 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:
 - 1) the principal *or* assistant principal
 - 2) a kindergarten teacher *or* a gifted services teacher
 - 3) a parent *or* legal guardian of the referred student *or* a representative designated by a parent *or* legal guardian of the referred student
 - 4) a gifted education coordinator *or* gifted intervention specialist
 - 5) a school psychologist *or* guidance counselor

How will my child be evaluated for early entrance to Kindergarten?

- Early entrance evaluation is completed in the early spring concurrently with kindergarten screening.
- The *Ohio Department of Education* has on its website a checklist for kindergarten readiness. When looking at whether early entrance is appropriate for a child, the same readiness guidelines should be considered.
- Because developmental readiness is important for success in kindergarten, students are also given a developmental screening test. Students who are viable candidates for Early Entrance to Kindergarten are expected to be developmentally “on track” with the typical kindergarten student.