

Early Entrance to Kindergarten Guidelines

6:135-AP

Purpose of Early Entrance to Kindergarten

CCSD 89 considers Early Entrance to Kindergarten as a form of whole-grade acceleration (Board Policy 6:135 - Accelerated Placement Program). This is an educational intervention that may be appropriate for some children who will turn five between September 2 and December 31.

Early Entrance to Kindergarten is reserved for children with exceptionally high ability and developmental levels 1 to 1.5 years above their actual age in the following areas: cognitive ability, social and emotional maturity, academic ability, and gross- and fine-motor coordination. Therefore, Early Entrance to Kindergarten is not appropriate for most children. In fact, there will be very few students who qualify for Early Entrance to Kindergarten each year.

Should I consider my child for Early Entrance to Kindergarten?

Early school experiences shape self-confidence and influence children for the rest of their lives. Even children who demonstrate exceptional developmental levels may not benefit from Early Entrance to Kindergarten. Some children may have a negative experience if the demands of a structured school day are imposed too early. Therefore, parents should consider the following:

- Can the needs of my child best be met through Early Entrance to Kindergarten, or can the needs of my child be met through kindergarten the following year?
- What is my child's maturity level (sharing with others, cooperative play, taking turns, following directions, and handling frustration)?
- Is my child confident interacting with older children and adults (social confidence and communication skills)?
- Is my child ready for school (following routines; working independently; using self-help skills, including dressing and eating)?
- Will my child be able to attend a full six-hour school day and share a teacher's time with many other children?
- Is my child a "self-starter" who works well alone and needs few directions and little supervision?
- Does my child demonstrate analytical thinking and problem solving using academic concepts?
- Is my child ready for academic content and rigor 1 to 1.5 years above their actual age?
- Does my child use advanced vocabulary for their age in written and oral communication?

What is the process for determining if a child qualifies for Early Entrance to Kindergarten?

Step 1- Parent request / student packet

A parent/guardian of children who turn 5 between September 2 and December 31 and would like their child to be evaluated for Early Entrance to Kindergarten must contact the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning to request their child be evaluated for Early Entrance to Kindergarten. This can be done by calling the district office at (630) 469-8900.

- Parents/guardians must then come to the district office and prove residency within the district.
- Once residency has been approved, the district will give the parent/guardian a "Student Packet" that must be completed and returned to the district office by **April 1** of the preceding school year the parent is requesting entrance to kindergarten.
- The "Student Packet" consists of the following items:
 - Parent/guardian **Request for Early Entrance to Kindergarten** form
 - **Professional Referral for Early Entrance to Kindergarten** form
 - Link (to be sent via email) to complete the ASQ-3 Ages and Stages Questionnaire

Step 2- Parent request / student packet review

By April 14, the information included with the parent request/student packet will be reviewed by the Early Entrance to Kindergarten team (principal, school psychologist, school social worker, two kindergarten teachers, instructional coach, assistant superintendent for teaching and learning) to determine if evaluation screening is warranted. The team may request a consultation with the child's current teacher or other individual making the request and/or a conference with the child to gather more information.

The team will provide the student's parent/guardian with written or oral notification of the team's request determination. For cases not warranting further evaluation, the process ends there. For cases warranting further evaluation, the team will proceed to the steps below.

Step 3- Pre-screening evaluation

Within five school days, an appointment will be made with the parent/guardian to bring the child in to complete initial standardized literacy and numeracy assessments. Based on the results of the preliminary assessments, additional kindergarten benchmark assessments for literacy and numeracy may be administered. If results do not demonstrate that the child is performing 1 to 1.5 years above their age on the pre-screening assessments, the team will provide the student's parent/guardian with written or oral notification and the process ends there. For cases warranting further evaluation, the team will proceed to step 4.

Step 4- Screening observation

An observation of the student in a current district kindergarten classroom will be conducted.

- Within five days of the results of the pre-screening evaluation, the parent/guardian will be contacted to arrange a half-day observation in the spring before the end of the school year.
- What is an observation?
 - The observation will be held in a kindergarten classroom with current kindergarten students.
 - The Early Entrance to Kindergarten team will observe the child focusing on the following areas of kindergarten readiness (ISBE KIDS Assessment):
 - Approaches to Learning-Self Regulation (ATL-REG)
 - Social Emotional Development (SED)
 - Language and Literacy Development (LLD)
 - Cognition: Math (COG: Math)
- Evidence collected by the team during the observation must consistently demonstrate that the child is in the "Later" stage of the "Integrating" ratings of the KIDS Assessment.
- The early entrance to kindergarten team will convene after the observation to review the data collected.
- Parents/guardians will be notified by phone and in writing within 5 school days of the observation if their child is a candidate for early entrance to kindergarten. If the team determines that the child is not a candidate for Early Entrance to Kindergarten the screening process ends here. If the team determines that the child may be a candidate for Early Entrance to Kindergarten, the process moves to step 5.

Step 5- Intelligence testing

The final step of the screening process will be an intelligence test administered by a CCSD 89 school psychologist. The school psychologist will contact the parent/guardian within 10 days after the observation recommendation is communicated. After testing is complete, the Early Entrance to Kindergarten team will review the results and will make a final recommendation for Early Entrance to Kindergarten and the parent/guardian will be notified by phone and in writing of the decision within 10 days of intelligence testing. If the team determines that the child is not a candidate for Early Entrance to Kindergarten, the screening process ends here. If the child does qualify for Early Entrance to Kindergarten, the parent will then register the child for kindergarten in the district.