

State Board Policy

State Standards for Early Admission to Kindergarten

Policy ID Number: GCS-J-001

Administrative Procedures Act Reference Number and Category: 16 NCAC 6E.0105

The 1997 General Assembly passed legislation allowing a child who has reached his/her fourth 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 child eligible to enter school early shall be precocious in academic and social development and score at the 98th percentile on a standard individual test of intelligence such as the **Stanford-Binet, the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, The Kaufman Anderson**, or any other comparable tests, 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 to three 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 **Metropolitan Readiness Test, the Stanford Early School Achievement Test, the Mini Battery of Achievement, the Woodcock-Johnson, the Test of Early Mathematics TEMA), the Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA)**, or any other comparable tests. The licensed psychologist who administers the aptitude test may administer the achievement test or have a member of his/her professional staff administer the test. Also an impartial professional educator who is trained in the use of the instrument may administer such a 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's 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 school 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 from preschool teachers, child care workers, pediatricians, or other adults with direct knowledge of the child. Documentation checklists that might be useful are the **California Preschool Competency Scale**, the **Harrison Scale**, or any other comparable scale of early social development.

Motivation/Student Interest

A child ready for early admission to kindergarten should be eager to learn and be excited about a new school experience. These children should display a thirst for knowledge consequently pushing the parents for new and challenging learning situations. If only the parent is interested in the child's attending school, early admission is not a good option. Principals or his/her designee shall determine this information in an informal interview with the child and in a more structured interview with the parent. An appropriate interview with a child would take place in a warm and inviting environment, such as the kindergarten classroom. The child might even be invited to spend a day with a kindergarten teacher. Questions the principal or his/her designee should ask the child would concentrate on the personal interests of the child. A child who is ready for school should respond with enthusiasm when asked to tell about a special collection or a topic about which he/she has a great deal of knowledge or extreme interest. A child who is a candidate may be one who watches the *Discovery Channel*, reads everything he/she can find about dinosaurs, be able to carry on a discussion about volcanoes, etc.

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 the April 16th that follows the child's fourth birthday. 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.

Local Flexibility

Although the State Board of Education has adopted these statewide standards defining requirements for early admission to kindergarten, each local education agency may add additional information needed from a parent or make very specific requirements in each category for consideration.

Note: 1997 House Bill 1099 states that it is the responsibility of the principal to find that the child has extraordinary academic ability and has the maturity to justify admission to school and, further, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to present information to the principal to support that the child has extraordinary academic ability and is appropriately mature to justify early admission.

Information for the Receiving School

Although early admission to kindergarten does not automatically place a child in the program for academically gifted students, the child obviously has very special learning needs. Once the child has been enrolled ninety (90) calendar days or at any time before ninety (90) calendar days once the school is satisfied the child has adjusted satisfactorily and will remain in school, the child shall be reviewed by the Gifted Identification Team. If the team recommends the child receive services, either a *Differentiated Education Plan* or an *Individual Differentiated Education Plan* shall be developed.

Questions concerning the early admission to Kindergarten should be addressed to the Primary Education Section, (919) 807-3848.