

Early Admission to Kindergarten: Is it Right for MY Child?

In the summer of 1997, the North Carolina General Assembly passed HB-1099, allowing early admission to kindergarten of a child who has reached his/her fourth birthday by April 16 if the child demonstrates extraordinary academic ability and maturity.



How do you know if early admission is appropriate for YOUR child?

The first thing you need to do is to look at your child.

- Are you constantly amazed at the things your child is doing and saying?
- Does your child show a genuine interest in learning?
- Does your child seek out learning opportunities?
- Does your child learn independently?
- Does your child function well in a structured environment?
- Does your child prefer to be with older children?
- Does your child read?
- Does your child understand basic math concepts (not just counting)?

If you are answering yes to these questions, your child may be a candidate for early entry to kindergarten.

Things to Consider

It is important that early entry to kindergarten be right for the child, not that early entry be right for the parents' wishes and desires. This option should be to enhance an advanced learner's environment, not to take the place of quality childcare. This is not an appropriate option to encourage a child who is "almost there" to do better.

Most children, including most gifted children, will not benefit from early entrance to kindergarten. Most children will benefit from one more year to develop as a preschooler allowing their maturity, motor coordination and thinking skills to grow. Young children have thirteen or more years of education ahead of them. Most of these children will gain more from one more year to "be a kid".

But, for a very few children, early entrance to kindergarten will be exactly what the child needs. These children, already seeking learning situations, can benefit from the opportunity to channel their thoughts and efforts. Children who already have a gap between their chronological age and academic abilities may enjoy reduced frustration by attending school with slightly older children.

What Now?

If, after careful consideration, you decide that your child may be one of the few who will benefit from early entrance to kindergarten, then you will need to start compiling the necessary information. The legislation states that it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to present information (including arranging and paying for any required testing) to the principal of the school to support that the child has extraordinary academic ability and is appropriately mature to justify early admission. We recommend beginning the application to school as soon as possible. Waiting until the last minute gives the school limited time to review the application, make a decision, and prepare for your child's arrival. We think it is best for your child to start school at the same time as the other children, whenever possible.

Identification of Highly Gifted Four Year Olds

Note: All testing must be administered after April 16.

Children who will reach their fourth birthday by April 16 may enter kindergarten if they demonstrate an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity. The state of North Carolina has created standards for the principal to use in determining if a child is appropriate for early entrance. The following documentation is required for consideration for early admission:

1. Aptitude Test Scores of 98th percentile on the Stanford-Bine, or Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, or comparable tests administered by a licensed psychologist. The parent is responsible for arranging and paying for this test.
2. Achievement Test Scores of 9th percentile on the Metropolitan Readiness Test, or Stanford Early School Achievement Test, or Mini-Battery of Achievement, or Test of Early Mathematics and test of Early Reading ability, or comparable tests administered by a licensed psychologist. The parent is responsible for arranging and paying for this test.
3. Children displaying a need to enter kindergarten early shall be able to perform tasks above their age peers. The parent shall submit a sample of student work showing outstanding examples of ability in any (not all) 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.
4. 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. The school system shall require two letters of recommendation with specific documentation of the child's physical and social maturity from preschool teachers, child care workers, pediatricians, or other adults with direct knowledge of the child.
5. A child ready for early admission to kindergarten should be eager to learn...be excited about a new school experience...display a thirst of knowledge. Principals or his/her designee shall determine this information in an informal interview with the child and a more structured interview with the parent. Questions should concentrate on the personal interests of their child.

Parents must submit the required early admission information to their neighborhood school at any time during the school's instructional year, but no later than the first thirty (30) calendar days of the schools' instructional year. The school must respond within three (3) weeks. It is the responsibility of the principal to find that the child has extraordinary academic ability and the maturity to justify admission.

APPLICATION FOR EARLY ADMISSION TO KINDERGARTEN

Based on North Carolina Law and State Standards for Early Admission
PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to present information to the schools to support that the child has extraordinary academic ability and is appropriately mature to justify early admission.

North Carolina Standards for Early Admission

STUDENT NAME:

(Please Print Clearly) Last First Middle

BIRTHDATE:

PARENTS' NAMES: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: Home _____ Work _____ FAX _____

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL: _____

1. APTITUDE TEST SCORE OF 98% on a standard individual test of intelligence administered by a licensed psychologist after April 16th. Document attached _____
2. ACHIEVEMENT TESTS SCORE OF 98% on a standard individual test of reading and math administered by a licensed psychologist after April 16th. Document attached _____
3. STUDENT WORK showing outstanding ability in any of the following areas: art, math, writing, dramatic play, creative productions, science, reading, social interactions, etc. Maximum of six items. Quality will be given greater consideration than quantity. Document attached _____
4. TWO LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION with specific documentation of physical and social maturity from child care workers, pediatricians, or others with direct knowledge of the child. Document attached _____

Date Submitted: _____