



Caswell County Schools

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Early Entry to Kindergarten Process

The North Carolina General Assembly passed BH-1099, allowing early admission to Kindergarten of a child who has reached his/her fourth birthday by April 16th if the child demonstrates extraordinary academic ability and maturity. The State of North Carolina has created standards for the principal and district to use in determining if a child is appropriate for early entrance to kindergarten. Caswell County School Board policy 407 supports the state standards and outlines procedures and specifies further information Caswell County Schools requires and evaluates. The principal shall confer with a district committee of professional educators to evaluate and consider the various components that will indicate readiness of the individual child. The process begins once the principal has the minimum requirements and submits them to the district level.

Standards established by the state of North Carolina and Caswell County Schools are described as follows:

- **Student Aptitude** - The child shall 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.*
- **Achievement** - Children entering kindergarten early shall be functioning 2 to 3 years beyond the child's person. The child shall score at the 98th percentile on either Reading or Mathematics on a standard test 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 that shall be administered by a licensed psychologist.*

**Note: Parents are responsible for arranging and paying for these tests. Caswell County Schools cannot provide a recommendation for a psychologist. It is recommended parents/guardians obtain recommendations from the child's pediatrician or family physician. All testing should be administered after the April 16th that follows the child's fourth birthday.*

If the above two standards are met at the required levels, then the process of continued data collection surrounding the remaining state and local standards would continue. Information concerning the following readiness indicators would be requested:

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- * **Performance** - The child shall be able to perform tasks well above same-age peers as evidenced by behaviors in one or more areas such as independent reading, problem-solving skills, advanced vocabulary, and some writing fluency. The parent shall submit a sample of

the child's work that shows outstanding examples of ability in any area including, but not limited to, art, mathematics, writing, dramatic play, creative productions, science, or social interactions. For further indications of performance in Caswell County, the principal/committee may request an informal reading assessment.

- **Observable Student Behavior/Student Interest** - The child shall demonstrate social and developmental maturity sufficient to participate in a structured setting for a full school day. The child shall be capable of following verbal instructions and functioning independently within a group. The parent shall provide two recommendation letters (from non-family members) with specific documentation of physical and social maturity from preschool teachers, child care workers, pediatricians, or others who have direct knowledge of the child. Useful documentation checklists include *The California Preschool Competency Scale*, the *Harrison Scale* or any other comparable scale of early social development. For further indications of readiness, Caswell County Schools requires the *Harrison Scale* be given to the two recommending agencies/individuals.
- **Motivation/Student Interest** - The principal or district committee's designee shall conduct an informal interview with the child and a more structured interview to determine if the child displays a thirst for knowledge and seeks new and challenging learning situations.
- **Caswell County Schools requires a score at the 98th percentile on the *Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale: Interview Edition*.**

Parents wishing to have their children considered must submit information within the first 30 calendar days of the school's instructional year. All testing should be administered after the April 16th that follows the child's fourth birthday. The district committee and principal shall decide whether to grant the parents' request for enrollment within three weeks of receiving this information. Per state policy, the school district may conditionally enroll the child for up to ninety days in order to observe whether the child is able to adjust to the school setting. If the principal determines that the child has not adjusted to the school setting, the principal shall deny the request for enrollment. However, before the child is exited from school, the principal shall invite the parent to assist in the development of intervention strategies for the child. If those strategies are not successful, the principal shall provide the parents at least 10 days notice before exiting the child from school so the parent may arrange child care, if needed.

Early admission to kindergarten shall not automatically result in the placement of the child in the program for academically gifted students. By the time the child has been enrolled for 90 calendar days, or at any earlier time that school officials determine that the child has adjusted satisfactorily and shall be allowed to remain in school, the school's Needs Determination Team shall review the child's information to determine if the child meets the expectations established by the LEA's Plan for Gifted Education. If the team determines the child is eligible to receive gifted services, it shall develop an Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP) for the child.

Is Early Entry to Kindergarten the best choice for your child?

The early entrance for kindergarten process is designed to provide an opportunity for students to enter kindergarten early. The process is designed for students who are not only academically ready and advanced, but who are also demonstrating advanced characteristics socially, emotionally, and developmentally that would demonstrate readiness for the elementary classroom environment. Students who are ready for kindergarten early are advanced in multiple areas when compared to their same-age peers, or other four year-olds of the same birth month. Advancement is necessary in multiple areas as kindergarten's expectations are heavily based on academics and preparing our students for the 21st century. Many students can demonstrate academic ability based on the exposure provided by parents and day care settings; however, few children will demonstrate the aptitude, or thinking ability, needed to enter kindergarten early. When considering early entrance into kindergarten, keep in mind it is a process designed to meet the academic and social needs of the child, not as a replacement for child care. Students accepted into kindergarten early will be placed in a class where peers could be up to two years older.

The following factors and questions should be considered when determining if the early entrance process is something you wish to pursue for your child:

Questions to Consider	Factors/Characteristics to Consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is my child capable of working successfully with children who are one year or more older? Does my child adapt well to change, or will the adjustment frustrate him/her? What long term impacts will early kindergarten placement have on my child's long term academic career (e.g. beginning college and high-school a year early)? Does my child ask questions to advance his/her learning? Can my child read, comprehend, and/or make connections to a story? Can my child decode challenging words? Does my child have an understanding of basic math concepts, such as shapes, time, number recognition? Does my child demonstrate leadership with same-age peers? Is my child able to maintain interest for long periods of time? Does my child demonstrate a curiosity about learning new things? Does my child demonstrate strong memory and recall skills? <p>Is my child able to maintain a structured schedule for longer periods of time than same-age peers?</p>	<p>My child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believes he/she can experience success at new tasks Can maintain personal care and hygiene with little assistance from adults (e.g. use the bathroom, tie shoes, button and zip garments) Thoughtfully considers feedback and adjusts behavior appropriately Has the ability to focus attention for long periods of instruction Demonstrates fine and large motor skills coordination Can be separated from a parent without being upset Demonstrates strong interpersonal skills with age-mates and older peers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows routines and schedules Is enthusiastic about elementary school <p>Follow given and multi-step directions</p>

What Steps Should I Take as a Parent If I Feel That My Child is Eligible and Ready for Kindergarten in the Caswell County School System?

1. Schedule aptitude and achievement tests with a licensed private psychologist. It is recommended you receive a referral from your pediatrician or your family physician. Testing is at the cost of the parent and must occur after April 16th.
2. If the child meets the minimum testing expectations of 98% percentile on aptitude and 98% percentile on reading, or math achievement, begin to gather work samples and letters of recommendations. If the child does not meet these expectations the process should stop.
3. Upon gathering all standard information described above: aptitude scores, achievement scores, performance or work samples, letters of recommendation (from non-family members) and completed Harrison Scales, please complete the application for early admission to kindergarten (page five of this packet).
4. Submit all documentation and application to the school principal.
5. If an administrator feels the submitted packet meets the minimum requirements, the principal contacts the Elementary Education Director.
6. A committee of school and district level personnel (including the Director of Elementary Education and Academically Gifted) will request any additional data necessary and evaluate all information to determine readiness for kindergarten.
7. Upon a final decision regarding the placement of a candidate, parents may reach out to the principal or elementary education director if questions or concerns arise.