

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



Madison Local School District

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Mansfield, Ohio 44905
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Application Deadline: April 30
prior to school year requested for early entrance

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.

3324.03 School districts to identify gifted students.

- The board of education of each school district shall identify gifted students in grades kindergarten through twelve as follows:
- (A) A student shall be identified as exhibiting "superior cognitive ability" if the student did either of the following within the preceding twenty-four months:
 - (1) Scored two standard deviations above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved individual standardized intelligence test administered by a licensed school psychologist or licensed psychologist;
 - (2) Accomplished any one of the following:
 - (a) Scored at least two standard deviations above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved standardized group intelligence test;
 - (b) Performed at or above the ninety-fifth percentile on an approved individual or group standardized basic or composite battery of a nationally normed achievement test;
 - (c) Attained an approved score on one or more above-grade level standardized, nationally normed approved tests.
- (B) A student shall be identified as exhibiting "specific academic ability" superior to that of children of similar age in a specific academic ability field if within the preceding twenty-four months the student performs at or above the ninety-fifth percentile at the national level on an approved individual or group standardized achievement test of specific academic ability in that field. A student may be identified as gifted in more than one specific academic ability field.
- (C) A student shall be identified as exhibiting "creative thinking ability" superior to children of a similar age, if within the previous twenty-four months, the student scored one standard deviation above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on an approved individual or group intelligence test and also did either of the following:
 - (1) Attained a sufficient score, as established by the department of education, on an approved individual or group test of creative ability;
 - (2) Exhibited sufficient performance, as established by the department of education, on an approved checklist of creative behaviors.

- (D) A student shall be identified as exhibiting “visual or performing arts ability” superior to that of children of similar age if the student has done both of the following:
- (1) Demonstrated through a display of work, an audition, or other performance or exhibition, superior ability in a visual or performing arts area;
- (2) Exhibited sufficient performance, as established by the department of education, on an approved checklist of behaviors related to a specific arts area.

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- The Madison Local 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 January 1st, inclusive, and exhibit the mental, social and emotional standards established by the Madison Local 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 contact the school your child will be attending.**
- The Madison 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 reviewed annually by the Early Entrance to Kindergarten Committee.

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 for Literacy (KRA-L). There is a family guide on the Early Learning and School Readiness (ELSR) link about the KRA-L, which all kindergarten students will take within the first six weeks of school.

ODE>Learning Supports>Early Learning and School Readiness>Kindergarten>KRA-L

- Kindergarten in the Madison Local School District is a *full-day program*. The school day runs from 9:00 a.m. until 3:10 p.m. Students are expected to participate in the academic program throughout the day.

Ohio Department of Education (ODE)

(<http://www.ode.state.oh.us>)

Kindergarten Readiness Checklist

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:

Development Area	Tips and Activities to Help Prepare Your Child
<p>Physical Skills Does your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• enjoy outdoor play such as running, jumping, and climbing;• draw and trace basic shapes;• cut with scissors;• bounce a ball;• ride a tricycle?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials that will help your child develop the motor skills needed to learn to write include crayons, markers, pencils, glue, scissors, paper and paint, puzzles, legos and blocks.• Activities that will help your child's coordination include climbing, jumping, skipping, playing ball, using playground equipment and riding a tricycle.
<p>Health and Safety Needs Has your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• had required shots (<i>or provide a signed waiver</i>);• had a dental exam;• had a vision exam;• learned own first and last name;• learned first and last name of parent;• learned to watch for cars when crossing the street;• learned to not talk to strangers;• developed a set routine for going to bed;• learned to follow safety rules?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help your child learn his or her full name, address and telephone number.• Help your child to look both ways when crossing the street.• Talk with your child about strangers and who to go to for help.• Use bedtime as the opportunity to read to and talk with your child.
<p>Personal needs Without your help, can your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• use the bathroom;• wash hands;• brush teeth;• use tissue to blow nose;• button and zip up shirts and pants;• put on and take off coat;• tie and/or use velcro shoes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create morning and bedtime bathing and tooth-brushing routines.• Allow your child to dress themselves.• Practice putting on shoes.• Help your child learn to use their words to tell other grownups when they are feeling sick or hurt.
<p>Social and Emotional Skills Does your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• play well with other children;• separate from a parent without being upset;• share with other children;• care about the feelings of others;• follow routines;• put toys away when asked?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give your child small chores to learn responsibility.• Help your child learn to follow directions by giving simple steps.• Encourage your child to share.• Praise your child when he or she does something well.• Provide guidance when your child is having difficulty.

Applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

- If you believe your child may be a good candidate for early entrance, please obtain an information/application packet from the school your child will be attending or download the forms on the district website.
- Once the application has been completed, it needs to be returned **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.

IMPORTANT

Very few children qualify for early entrance to kindergarten. Please make sure you proceed with child care arrangements as a contingency. 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.