

Berkshire Local Schools



Early Kindergarten Entrance

Legislation Governing Early Entrance to Kindergarten and Giftedness

- A parent may request early entrance to kindergarten if the child turns five years of age after the District's kindergarten entrance date of August 1. Entrance shall be determined through a standardized testing program.
- Children who will not yet be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten 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 preschool 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.

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 for a child is his/her developmental readiness. Even though a child may have a lot of ability, he/she may not be ready for kindergarten. Other important factors to consider are social maturity, personal development and motor development. Early entrance is designed for the exceptional child who is both academically ready as well as developmentally mature when compared to others his/her chronological age.

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 he/she?
- Will my child be frustrated by this placement?
- What are the possible long-term impacts as my child progresses through elementary, middle and high school (i.e., beginning college at a younger age)?
- 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 (i.e., preschool programs, parents working with them on skills or access to learning materials). Early entrance is designed for the child who has high ability and easily achieves when presented with 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.

Below are examples of what to look for in the areas of ability, achievement, aptitude and behavior.

My child seems advanced beyond other children his/her age in these ways:

- understands the meanings and use of words better than other children his/her age;
- is curious about many things and asks questions often;
- is very good at working puzzles or solving problems;
- has a great sense of humor and understands jokes more than other children his/her age;
- has a good memory and remembers details of conversations or stories;
- is interested in difficult concepts such as time and space;
- concentrates on certain activities much longer than other children his/her age;
- reads (and understands text) in picture books or chapter books;
- figures out math-related problems better than other children his/her age.

Expectations of Kindergarten Students

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. Ohio, along with many other states across the United States, has adopted Common CORE for the purpose of preparing Ohioans to meet the demands of the knowledge-based economy and the needs of the 21st Century. **What are some important school and academic factors? My child:**

- enjoys learning new information or skills;
- participates in community-sponsored activities such as sports, dance, gymnastics, library and museum programs;
- believes he/she is capable of succeeding at new tasks;
- has the ability to attend, or pay attention, for relatively long periods of instruction;
- he/she can draw and trace basic shapes and cut with scissors.

What are some important developmental factors? My child has the following developmental characteristics:

- He/she has average fine and large motor coordination (i.e., holding a pencil, skipping);
- He/she is able to use the computer to play games or find information;
- He/she can use the bathroom without adult help;
- He/she can button and zip up shirts and pants, tie or Velcro shoes and put on and take off his/her coat;
- He/she is able to separate from the parent without being upset.

What are some important interpersonal skills for entering school?

My child:

- thoughtfully considers feedback and criticism and modifies behavior appropriately;
- often behaves in a way that is positive and effective;
- has good interpersonal skills with age-mates, as well as with both older and younger children and with adults;
- has excellent interpersonal relationships with adults in a teaching role;
- has the ability to follow routines.

What are some important attitudes and supports necessary for success in school?

- My child is enthusiastic about going to kindergarten.
- As a parent, I understand that a child's success in school depends on support provided at home. I am able to give my child additional support to help in his/her transition to a new setting with much higher academic demands than he/she encountered in preschool.

Application Process

1. The Berkshire Local School District has established enrolling Kindergarten students must be 5 years old on or before August 1st prior to the start of the upcoming school year. This date has been elected in order to ensure a developmentally appropriate Kindergarten program. Adopting the August 1st cut-off date allows children to be better prepared socially, academically, and emotionally. This allows them to better handle the rigorous full day every day Kindergarten schedule coupled with the demands of our state mandated Kindergarten curriculum.
2. Complete the attached application form.
3. Schedule your screening from May 1st- June 16th with the Berkshire Local Schools Psychology Department. Ext 2109.
4. Your child will complete the WPSSI III and must receive a 127 or higher. Other assessments/staff may be utilized in order to measure/assess readiness.