

A Parent/Guardian's Guide to

Early Entrance

to

Kindergarten (& 1st Grade)



Willoughby-Eastlake City School District
35353 Curtis Blvd. Eastlake, OH 44095
Telephone: 440-975-5000

Legislation Governing Early Entrance and Giftedness

- By Ohio Department of Education guidelines, a parent may request regular *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 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 is a subject typically addressed through gifted education. 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.

Willoughby-Eastlake City School District

- The W-E City School District considers a child eligible for entrance into "regular" kindergarten if s/he attains the age of five on or before **August 1** 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 regular *early* admission to kindergarten if s/he will be five (5) years of age between August 2 and January 1st, inclusive, and exhibit the mental, social and emotional standards established by the W-E Board of Education. **If your child turns 5 years of age after January 1, 2023 and you believe s/he is a viable candidate for early entrance in the 2022-23 school year, please contact the district Coordinator of Gifted Services at (440) 283-2227.**
- A child is eligible for entrance into 1st grade if s/he attains the age of six (6) on or before August 1 of the year in which s/he applies for entrance and has completed the kindergarten program of this district or an equivalent program elsewhere and has been recommended by the teacher for advancement to the first grade. This requirement may only be waived if the acceleration evaluation committee decides it is appropriate for the child. **If your child turns 6 years of age after January 1st, has not yet completed Kindergarten, and you believe s/he is a viable candidate for Early Entrance to 1st Grade, please contact the district Coordinator of Gifted Education at (440) 283-2227.**
- **As per the ODE's Model Acceleration Policy:**
"Children who are referred for evaluation for possible accelerated placement sixty or more days prior to the start of the school year shall be evaluated in advance of the start of the school year so that the child may be placed in the accelerated placement on the first day of school. Children who are referred for possible accelerated placement sixty or more days prior to the start of the second semester shall be evaluated for possible accelerated placement at the start of the second semester. In all other cases, evaluations of a referred child shall be scheduled at the student's principal's discretion and placed in the accelerated setting(s) at the time recommended by the acceleration evaluation committee – if the committee determines the child should be accelerated. Pursuant to Ohio Administrative Code 3321.01, all children who will 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 be evaluated upon the request of the child's parent or legal guardian. 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.
- To be considered for Early Entrance, proof of residency within our school district and proof of age is required.

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 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/guardians can easily access the *Early Learning Content Standards* on the *Ohio Department of Education* website at:
<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=1389&ContentID=1629&Content=135483>
- Parents/guardians may also review the new Common Core State Standards in Math and ELA and Ohio Department of Education's new State Standards in Science and Social Studies for Kindergarten students by visiting:
<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?Page=2&TopicID=1695&TopicRelationID=1696>
- The *Ohio Department of Education's* website contains useful information about kindergarten, in particular, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment – Revised (KRA-R). There is a family guide on the Early Learning and School Readiness (ELSR) link about the KRA, which all kindergarten students will take within the first six weeks of school.
<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Kindergarten/Ohios-Kindergarten-Readiness-Assessment/Kindergarten-Readiness-Assessment-for-Family>
- Kindergarten in the W-E City School District is a *full-day program*. Students are expected to participate in the academic program throughout the day. Accommodations for partial day Kindergarten which must meet Ohio Department of Education criteria may be available, however mid-day transportation is not provided by the district to and/or from the school.

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
Physical Skills Does your child... <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.
Health and Safety Needs Has your child... <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.
Personal needs Without your help, can your child... <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.
Social and Emotional Skills Does your child... <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 that your child may be a good candidate for Early Entrance to Kindergarten, this information/application packet can be obtained from Gifted Services or the Director of Curriculum at the W-E City School District Board of Education building (35353 Curtis Blvd Eastlake OH 44095), within each elementary building, on the district website at www.weschools.org, or by phone (440) 283-2227 or (440) 975-3755 to request).

- The following items must be provided at this appointment to allow screening to occur:
 - Birth Certificate - A certified copy of the child's birth certificate and/or passport
 - Parent/Guardian's valid Ohio driver's license or State of Ohio identification card
 - **Divorce, Custody or Guardianship** cases - Court documents (certified copy) required, as follows:
 - Divorce – Divorce decree (must establish residential parent for schooling purposes)
 - Custody – Journal entry from Juvenile Court
 - Guardianship – Letter of Guardianship from Probate Court
 - Proof of residency –
 - Two pieces of mail addressed to Parent/Legal Guardian at current address, dated within the last 30 days. This may include business or utility correspondence (water/sewer bills are not accepted)
 - One of the following:
 - **Homeowner** – mortgage document or, if a recent purchase, a purchase agreement with a closing date.
 - **Renter** – current signed lease, certificate of occupancy, or renter's permit.
 - **Residents living in the home of a family member** – The family member must be the homeowner and must complete and have notarized the *Property Owner's Affidavit of Residency* (available at the Registration Department or online at www.weschools.org). The Affidavit must list all residents in the dwelling to ensure that the homeowner is in compliance with city housing and zoning codes.
- Appointments may be scheduled by calling the Curriculum Department at (440) 975-3749. Please bring the completed application to your scheduled appointment. The following timeline will be used, which adheres to our district Acceleration Policy:
 - **February/March Screening:**
 - Those received between January 1st and building-scheduled Kindergarten Registration date will ordinarily be completed and a written report issued no later than the end of March.
 - **May/June Screening:**
 - Those received after building-scheduled Kindergarten Registration dates and no later than June 1st will ordinarily be completed and a written report issued within 45 days to inform decisions to be made before the start of the school year in the year for which admission is being requested.
 - **Individual Screening during the Summer & First Semester of the School Year:**
 - Those received between June 1st and December 31st will ordinarily be completed and a written report issued within forty-five (45) calendar days of submission of referral to the school principal or Gifted Coordinator.
- Students who will turn age 5 after January 1st of the school year to be enrolled are considered Grade Acceleration candidates and require the submission of a written referral from an educator within the district, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child, in addition to testing for the purpose of gifted identification. (If you are unable to access any of these individuals to gain a referral, please indicate this in writing and submit with your child's registration information.) Your child may require an observation by a district representative (elementary guidance counselor and/or school psychologist). *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 Regular Early Entrance to K evaluation of a student who will turn age 5 after January 1st of the school year to be enrolled is complete, 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: *the home school principal or assistant principal, a kindergarten teacher or a gifted intervention specialist, a parent and/or legal guardian of the referred student or a representative designated by a parent or legal guardian of the referred student, a gifted education coordinator or gifted intervention specialist, a school psychologist or guidance counselor.*

How will my child be evaluated for Early Entrance to Kindergarten?

- Regular Early Entrance to Kindergarten Screening begins with an individual screening in which the child is assessed in 4 areas of development: School Readiness, Social/Emotional Development, Visual Motor Skills, and Cognitive Development.
- Children who meet the established criteria in at least 3 of the 4 areas continue in the process and are assessed individually with a Psychologist on a nationally standardized ability assessment, which assesses verbal skills, non-verbal reasoning skills, and spatial skills. Assessed students who have a score which is ≥ 1 standard deviation above the mean (115) are eligible for Regular Early Entrance to Kindergarten. **If the child turns age 5 after January 1st of the school year to be enrolled, he/she will go on for further evaluation.*

Instruments used - Individual Ability Test: Weschler Preschool and Primary Scales of Intelligence, Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales, Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test.

- The *Ohio Department of Education* website can give you more information about kindergarten expectations, including a checklist for kindergarten readiness. When looking at whether early entrance is appropriate for a child, the same readiness guidelines should be considered.

IMPORTANT

Very few children qualify for early entrance to kindergarten. Please make sure you proceed with childcare 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.

Willoughby-Eastlake City School District

35353 Curtis Blvd.
Eastlake, OH 44095
Phone: (440) 946-5000

Gifted Coordinator: Alison Ciferno
(440) 283-2227

Willoughby-Eastlake City School District - Elementary Schools

Please bring the completed application form to your testing appointment or send to:

Willoughby-Eastlake City School District
ATTN: Gifted Services Coordinator – Early Entrance to K
35353 Curtis Blvd. Eastlake, OH 44095

Please complete this application if you feel that your child demonstrates academic achievement, social, emotional, and physical maturity appropriate for kindergarten placement and should be considered for early placement in kindergarten.

Child's Name _____			
Last	First	Middle Initial	
Birthdate* _____ / _____ / _____		Male _____	Female _____
<i>*IF CHILD TURNS 5 AFTER 12/31/17, WRITTEN REFERRAL NEEDED</i>			
Address _____			
Street	City	State	Zip Code
Custodial Parent(s) / Guardian(s) Name _____			
Relationship to child _____			
Phone: _____			
Email: _____			

Preschool Experience - *(please attach preschool teacher reports, if available)*

List the preschools, Head Start, special programs, and other day care programs attended. Include the dates of attendance and the approximate number of hours per week attended.

Name of School/Program	Dates of Attendance	# of Hours/Week
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Why do you feel that your child would be ready for a kindergarten program? Comment on your child's social behavior and academic skills. *(Use additional paper, if needed)*

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the contents of the Early Entrance to Kindergarten brochure:

Signature, Custodial Parent / Guardian / /
Date

RETURN SIGNED APPLICATION & PARENT CHECKLIST on or before initial screening date.

PARENT CHECKLIST

The seven broad developmental dimensions provide the framework for the kindergarten instructional program. This checklist will help in determining your child's readiness for a kindergarten program. **Please read each statement and indicate by placing a "checkmark" how you rate your child's abilities.**

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Performs self-help tasks independently (dressing, undressing, zipping, tying, toileting, eating)	_____	_____	_____
Uses eye/hand coordination to perform fine motor tasks (drawing, writing, and cutting)	_____	_____	_____
Uses balance and control to perform large motor tasks (walking, jumping, and skipping)	_____	_____	_____

Personal and Social Development	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Shows eagerness to learn (curious, likes to investigate)	_____	_____	_____
Follows rules and routines (cleans up at play time)	_____	_____	_____
Handles change and transition (dinnertime to bedtime)	_____	_____	_____
Interacts easily with one or more children	_____	_____	_____
Separates easily from parent	_____	_____	_____
The ability to listen (attend) for at least 10 minutes	_____	_____	_____

Language and Literacy	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Listens for meaning in stories, discussions, and conversations	_____	_____	_____
Speaks clearly, to share ideas and thoughts	_____	_____	_____
Can identify most letters (uppercase and lowercase)	_____	_____	_____
Can identify some beginning sounds	_____	_____	_____
Use some letters and words to write	_____	_____	_____

Mathematical Thinking	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Can recognize numbers 0-20	_____	_____	_____
Can orally count forward to 20	_____	_____	_____
Can recognize, duplicate, and extend simple patterns (circle-triangle, circle-triangle, circle-triangle)	_____	_____	_____
Can recognize and duplicate basic shapes	_____	_____	_____

Scientific Thinking	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Has extreme interest in a particular topic or animal	_____	_____	_____
Can describe and sort objects by one or more properties	_____	_____	_____
Uses the five senses to make observations about the the natural world	_____	_____	_____

Social Studies	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Recognizes self and others as having same and different characteristics	_____	_____	_____
Describes roles and responsibilities of people (Mom is a doctor, she helps sick people)	_____	_____	_____
Recognizes the reasons for rules	_____	_____	_____

The Arts	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Likes to paint and draw	_____	_____	_____
Likes to sing and dance	_____	_____	_____
Can share ideas about a drawing/painting	_____	_____	_____
Can recognize basic colors	_____	_____	_____