

# Early Entrance - Grade 1 Information Sheet



West Aurora School District 129 follows Illinois law which specifies that a child entering first grade must be six years of age on or before September 1 of that school term. Based upon an assessment of the child's readiness, a child will be allowed to attend first grade if he or she attended non-public preschool, continued his or her education at that school through kindergarten, and was taught in kindergarten by an appropriately licensed teacher, or demonstrates readiness skills appropriate for grade 1.

The decision for a child to enter school early can have a profound effect on his or her academic and social performance for the remainder of the child's school career. It is a decision that needs to be taken very seriously. Research indicates that early entrance and/or early reading ability is not a predictor of success in school. In fact, children with strong early reading skills often plateau by third grade. Children who enter first grade early may demonstrate social or emotional difficulties due to their relative immaturity. As they progress through school, children who are young for their grade level may have more difficulty fitting in with their peers in social situations. They are less likely to excel in sports because of their age and/or their smaller size. These and other possible effects of being younger than others in their classes should be considered carefully. Very few children screened meet the criteria to enter first grade early.

## REQUESTING EARLY ENTRANCE

Parents/guardians wishing to apply for early entrance for their child must contact the Registration office to schedule an Early Entrance Observation and complete an Early First Grade Entrance Request Form. The district administration may consider early entrance if a child meets the early entrance criteria.

## Criteria for Early Entrance to First grade

- Children must demonstrate academic skills above average when compared to the skills of the majority of entering first graders, based on an Early Entrance Observation in all of the areas listed below:
  - Literacy skills
  - Mathematical skills
  - Writing skills (the ability to clearly express thoughts and ideas orally and in writing appropriate to grade 1)
- Children must demonstrate socialization and behavioral skills more advanced than the majority of entering first graders, based upon results of the parent questionnaire and the Early Entrance Observation. Students must perform at this high level in all critical areas:
  - Ability to separate easily from parent
  - Ability to focus attention for appropriate amount of time during learning tasks
  - Ability to complete tasks in reasonable amount of time
  - Ability to transition easily from task to task
  - Willingness to participate, share and cooperate in groups
  - Relative ease in socializing with peers
  - Ability to communicate clearly with teachers and peers.

## FINAL DECISION

The determination for eligibility for early entrance to first grade is made by a decision of the District Office. This determination is considered final. Results and the final determination will be shared with parents and the home school principal. The Executive Director of Elementary Teaching is responsible for making the final decision, taking into consideration the child's academic performance and social-emotional development.