

Early Entrance to Kindergarten

TACOMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HIGHLY CAPABLE SERVICES

Who can apply to be tested for Early Entrance to Kindergarten?

Washington law specifies that the age for entering kindergarten is five years old by August 31st.

- ▶ Students who will turn 5 between September 1st and October 31st.
- ▶ Students who reside in the Tacoma School district boundaries.
 - ▶ [Address Look-Up Tool](#)
- ▶ Students who meet kindergarten readiness standards
 - ▶ [Kindergarten Report Card](#)
 - ▶ [TPS Curriculum and Instruction Kindergarten Page](#)

What are the predictors of kinder readiness?

Your student's eligibility for early entrance to kindergarten will be based on readiness for kindergarten and beginning academic skills, language development, physical coordination, and social maturity.

In the last 5 years, approximately 2% of students that were tested met all of testing criteria.

- ▶ Knowledge of numbers and early cardinality
- ▶ Vocabulary
- ▶ Knowledge of letters and words
- ▶ Beginning and ending word sounds
- ▶ General knowledge of the physical world and social sciences
- ▶ Verbal skills
- ▶ Auditory memory
- ▶ Visual memory
- ▶ Persistence
- ▶ Attentiveness
- ▶ Emotional/behavioral regulation
- ▶ Fine and visual motor skills

What are the intellectual and academic indicators of readiness?

Preschoolers

- ▶ Asks questions and explores
- ▶ Counts up to 20 objects correctly
- ▶ Identifies 10 or less letter sounds correctly

5-year-olds

- ▶ Relates information learned about the natural world
- ▶ Uses basic number and counting operations accurately
- ▶ Blends letter sounds into words

What are the language indicators of readiness?

Preschooler

- ▶ Has receptive vocabulary of several hundred words
- ▶ Describes characteristics of objects

5-year-old

- ▶ Has extensive vocabulary, including technical terms (e.g. pediatrician)
- ▶ Describes simple relationships between objects

What are the fine motor indicators of readiness?

Preschooler

- ▶ Writes some recognizable letters
- ▶ Copies basic shapes

5-year-old

- ▶ Writes most letters in own name
- ▶ Able to copy more complex shapes and designs

What are the social emotional indicators of readiness?

Preschoolers

- ▶ Focuses on tasks of interest
- ▶ Uses one or two strategies to solve a problem
- ▶ At times needs help to express strong emotions appropriately

5-year-olds

- ▶ Sustains focus until task is completed
- ▶ Accepts reasonable challenges and continues through frustration
- ▶ Expresses self without fighting, crying etc.

What are the disadvantages to Early Entrance?

- ▶ Unnecessary pressure/stress of early exposure to kindergarten expectations
- ▶ Possibility of a negative first experience with academics/school may carry forward and impact child's feeling about him/herself and learning.
- ▶ Long term issues with age differences throughout school career (physical size and development, driving, dating, peer pressure)
- ▶ Repeating kindergarten is not typically an effective intervention as it has long term emotional impacts.

How do I apply for testing.

Applications for Early Entrance testing is annually in June and the application window opens in April.

You will need to

- ▶ Submit a completed application form and parent questionnaire.
 - ▶ If your student meets the requirements, you will be called for a testing appointment and you will need to bring the following documents.
 - ▶ A copy of birth certificate verifying student will turn 5 between September 1 and October 31st.
 - ▶ Proof of residency in the Tacoma Public School district (current utility bill, rental/lease agreement, mortgage statement, official mail from a public agency such as DSHS. Dated within the past 8 weeks in parent/guardian name).

What is the testing process

- ▶ The test is approximately 60 minutes.
- ▶ Testing takes place at the Willard Early Learning Center at 3201 S D ST, Tacoma WA 98148.
- ▶ Testing is one-on-one while parents wait outside of the testing room.
- ▶ Tests are administered in English only.
- ▶ Results will be given after student completes the test.
 - ▶ In the last 5 years, approximately 2% of students that were tested met all of testing criteria.

If your child qualifies

- ▶ Enrollment is not guaranteed and is dependent on space available at your neighborhood school
- ▶ Enrollment is for a 30-day trial period.
 - ▶ After the trial period, the kindergarten teacher and the building principal will review your child's performance in the classroom to determine whether your child should continue in kindergarten.
 - ▶ Determination of final placement into kindergarten is the decision of the school principal and the kindergarten teacher.
 - ▶ If student is disenrolled, there is no guarantee space will be available in a preschool program. (There is typically a wait list prior to the start of school.)

If your child does not qualify

If your child does not qualify,

- ▶ Decisions are final.
- ▶ There is no appeal of the testing results per district policy no. 3110.
- ▶ There maybe space available in a preschool program.
 - ▶ Contact Early Learning for availability at <https://www.tacomaschools.org/departments/early-learning-preschool>.

If you have additional
questions or concern

PLEASE CONTACT THE HIGHLY CAPABLE OFFICE AT
HCSERVICES@TACOMA.K12.WA.US OR 253-571-1120