

A Parent's Guide to Early Entrance to Kindergarten



Amherst Exempted Village Schools

**550 Milan Avenue
Amherst, Ohio 44001**

Powers Elementary School

393 South Lake Street

Amherst, OH 44001

Telephone: (440) 988-8670

Legislation Governing Early Entrance to Kindergarten

- 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.
- Acceleration is the Law (House Bill 79 amended to House Bill 66 – June 30, 2006. Early entrance to kindergarten is a subject covered in the State of Ohio's *Model Student Acceleration Policy*. Appropriate use of accelerated learning opportunities; early entrance kindergarten, whole grade, subject, and early graduation support compliance with requirements in Ohio Administrative Code 3301-35-06.

Amherst Exempted Village Schools

- The Amherst Exempted Village Schools 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 1st and January 1st, inclusive, and exhibit the mental, social and emotional standards established by the Amherst Board of Education. A checklist will be provided for the student's physician to complete. **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 Principal at Powers Elementary School.**
- On July 10, 2006 the Amherst Board of Education adopted an *Academic Acceleration Policy*:

“Pursuant to Ohio Revised 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 request of the child's parent or legal guardian. Children who will not 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 early admittance if referred by an educator within the District, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child. Such children may also be evaluated at the discretion of the principal of the school to which the student may be admitted.”

“Evaluations related to referrals submitted to the school principal between August 15th and April 15th, will be completed within sixty (60) calendar days of the submission of the referral to the school principal. Evaluations related to referrals submitted to the school principal between April 16th and August 14th will occur within sixty (60) days of the start of the school year.”

“If a child is recommended for early entrance, the acceleration evaluation committee will develop a written acceleration plan for that child.”

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*. Developmental readiness is the key to determining whether or not early entrance is appropriate. Even though a child may have a great deal 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?

For example, students are expected to ask and answer questions about key details in a text, retell familiar stories with details, ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text, and identify similarities and differences between two texts on the same topic.

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 also 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. Please take the time to review the following information:

- 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.
<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Early-Learning-Content-Standards>
- The *Ohio Department of Education's* website contains useful information about kindergarten, in particular, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). 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 quarter of school. The website also has a checklist for kindergarten readiness (see the *Kindergarten Readiness Checklist* on the next page.)

Ohio Department of Education (ODE)

(<http://education.ohio.gov>)

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 (or provide a signed waiver);• 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 not to talk to strangers;• developed a set routine for going to bed;• learned to follow safety rules?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help your children 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 and talk with your child.
Personal Needs Without 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 toothbrushing routines.• Allow your child to dress himself/herself• Practice putting on shoes.• Help your child to learn to use their words to tell other grownups when they are feeling sick or hurt.

Social and Emotional Skills

Does your child...

- 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?

- 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, please obtain an information/application packet from the principal at Powers Elementary School, or the director of curriculum for the Amherst Exempted Village Schools. You may call the principal of Powers Elementary School at (440) 988-8670 to have an information/application packet mailed.
- Once the application has been completed, it needs to be returned to the principal of Powers Elementary School no later than *April 15th*, in the year for which admission is being requested.
- An observation by a district representative 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.
- The school psychologist will coordinate the evaluation process. The evaluation will be completed within 60 days of the submission of application.
- 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 Powers Elementary School principal
 2. a kindergarten 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 supervisor
 5. a school psychologist

How will my child be evaluated for early entrance to Kindergarten?

- Early entrance evaluation is completed in the spring.
- Because developmental readiness is important for success in kindergarten, students who are viable candidates for Early Entrance to Kindergarten are expected to be developmentally “on track” with the typical kindergarten student. Should a student meet the identification criteria for Superior Cognitive identification but fail to meet the developmental readiness assessment, the acceleration team (principal, kindergarten teacher, gifted supervisor, parent and/or legal guardian(s), and school psychologist) will then discuss and reach consensus as to what placement is best for the child. The *Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition* will be the guide for early entrance and whole grade acceleration.

Instruments used:

Individual Intelligence Tests

Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence-Third Edition (WPPSI-III)

Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales- 5th Edition

According to the Iowa Acceleration Scale, a student who achieves a score of 115 or higher on the WPPSI-III or Binet-V, is a viable candidate for acceleration. Students who do not achieve this score will not be considered for early entrance to kindergarten.

Superior Cognitive identification (gifted) is 130 (minus the Standard Error of Measure, 127)

Timeline for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Deadline for Early Entrance to kindergarten applications April 15th

Return application to:
Principal
Powers Elementary School
393 South Lake Street
Amherst, Ohio 44001

Deadline for completion of evaluations 60 days after submission of application

Deadline for completion of acceleration committee meetings June 15th

Deadline for written notification of outcome of the evaluation process June 15th

Deadline to submit a written appeal to the Superintendent or his/her designee regarding the outcome of the evaluation process June 30th

Applications received *after* April 15th will be scheduled at the principal's discretion.

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 those programs routinely fill up quickly. Please register your child as you normally would, but let the preschool know that your child is being screened for early entrance to kindergarten.

Amherst Exempted Village Schools

Powers Elementary School
Principal: Brian Teppner
Assistant Principal: Mary Scott Williams

393 South Lake Street
Amherst, Ohio 44001

Phone (440) 988-6870



Application

Early Entrance to Kindergarten

RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO:

Powers Elementary
393 South Lake Street
Amherst, OH 44001

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 _____

Address _____
Street
City
State
Zip Code

Custodial Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name _____
 Relationship to child _____

Home # _____ Work # _____ Cell # _____

Email _____

Preschool Experience- (Please attach preschool report card if available)

List the nursery schools, 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	# 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)

RETURN APPLICATION & PERMISSION FOR REVIEW NO LATER THAN APRIL 15TH

 Signature, Custodial Parent/Guardian

 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” on how you rate your child’s abilities.**

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

- Performs self-help tasks independently
(dressing, undressing, zipping, toileting, eating)
- Uses hand/eye coordination to perform fine motor tasks
(drawing, writing, and cutting)
- Uses balance and control to perform large motor tasks
(walking, jumping, and skipping)

Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time

Personal and Social Development

- Shows eagerness to learn (curious, likes to investigate)
- Follows rules and routines (cleans up at playtime)
- Handles change and transition (dinnertime to bedtime)
- Separates easily from parent
- The ability to listen (attend) for at least 10 minutes

Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
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Language and Literacy

- 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 letter and words to write

Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
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Mathematical Thinking

- Can recognize numbers 0-20
- Can orally count 0-20
- Can recognize, duplicate, and extend simple patterns
(circle-triangle, circle-triangle, circle-triangle)
- Can recognize and duplicate basic shapes

Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
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Scientific Thinking

- Uses a magnifying glass to look at different objects
- Can describe and sort objects by one or more properties
- Uses the five senses to make observations about
the natural world

Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
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Social Studies

- 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

Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
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The Arts

- Likes to paint and draw
- Likes to sing and dance
- Can share ideas about a drawing/painting
- Can recognize

Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
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