

A Parent's Guide to Early Entrance to Kindergarten 2022 - 2023



Amherst Exempted Village Schools

550 Milan Avenue
Amherst, Ohio 44001
Phone: (440) 988-4406

Powers Elementary School

393 South Lake Street
Amherst, Ohio 44001
Phone: (440) 988-6670



Legislation Governing Early Entrance to Kindergarten

1. Requesting Early Admission - Ohio

In Ohio, a parent may request early admission to kindergarten if the child turns five years of age after the district's kindergarten entrance date of August 1 and *before January 1*. The local board of education shall determine early entrance through a standardized testing program.

2. Referral by an Educator

Children who will not yet be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten by the first day of January of the school year in 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.

3. Acceleration (State of Ohio)

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.

Amherst Exempted Village Schools

1. Age Eligibility

The Amherst Exempted Village Schools considers a child eligible for entrance into "regular" kindergarten if he or she attains the age of five on or before August 1st of the year the child applies for entrance. A child under the age of six (6) who is enrolled in kindergarten will be considered of compulsory school age.

2. Early Admission Request

By parental request a child may be tested for *early* admission to kindergarten if the child 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 he or she is a viable candidate for early entrance, please contact the Principal at Powers Elementary School.**

3. Board of Education Adopted State of Ohio Policy

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 preschool 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, he/she 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. 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 he/she progresses through elementary, middle, and high school (e.g., beginning college at a younger age or physical size for athletics)?
- 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 *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 to look for in the areas of ability/achievement/aptitude/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;
- Has excellent fine motor skills when compared with other age-mates (e.g. can write uppercase and lowercase letters).

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 (ODE) website:
<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/OLS-Graphic-Sections/Learning-Standards>
- The Ohio Department of Education contains useful information about kindergarten, in particular, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). There is a family guide on Early Learning and School Readiness (ELSR) link about the KRA, which all kindergarten students will take at screening or within the first six weeks of school.
ODE>Testing>Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Kindergarten/Ohios-Kindergarten-Readiness-Assessment>
- The Ohio Department of Education has on its website a checklist for kindergarten readiness (see the Kindergarten Readiness Checklist on the next page). When looking at whether early entrance is appropriate for a child, the same readiness guidelines should be considered.
ODE>search for: "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... <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, 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 a referral form mailed to you.

- Once the application and checklist have been completed, they need 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:
 - A. the Powers Elementary School principal or assistant principal
 - B. kindergarten teacher
 - C. a parent *or* legal guardian of the referred student *or* a representative designated by a parent *or* legal guardian of the referred student
 - D. a gifted education supervisor
 - E. a school psychologist



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

- Early entrance evaluations are 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 fail to meet the developmental readiness assessment, the acceleration team 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.

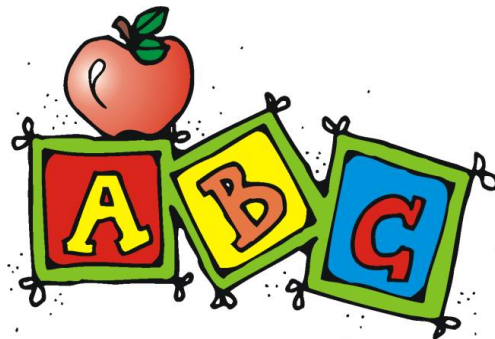
Instruments used:

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.*
 - *However, if a student scores 115 or higher on the WPPSI or Stanford-Binet Scales, additional measures of achievement and aptitude will be administered and used in consideration for early entrance.*

Individual Achievement Test

- Woodcock-Johnson IV (Reading, Language, Math, and Academic Knowledge)



Timeline for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Deadline for Early Entrance to Kindergarten applications	April 15th
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 and evaluation process	June 15th
Deadline to submit a written appeal to the Superintendent, Mr. Mike Molnar, or his designee regarding the outcome of the evaluation process	June 30th

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

Return application to: Mr. Brian Teppner, Principal
Powers Elementary School
393 SouthLake Street
Amherst, Ohio 44001

IMPORTANT

Very few children qualify for early entrance to kindergarten. Please make sure you proceed with child care 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 know that your child is being considered for early entrance to kindergarten.