

Kettering City Schools



Parent Information for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Dear Families,

In keeping with our district mission to “guarantee the best education for all students”, Kettering City Schools is dedicated to making educational decisions that will best serve the children in our community. Because we recognize that students learn and progress at different rates we believe that all children, including advanced learners, should be appropriately challenged and supported to reach their full potential. For our youngest students, one way to accomplish this is by providing access to school at an earlier than typical age.

Early entrance to school is considered a whole grade acceleration and is not appropriate for most children. It is designed to meet the needs of the *exceptional* child who possesses superior ability, is academically advanced, and is developmentally mature as compared to others of the same chronological age. Once the decision has been made for early entrance, it is difficult to reverse. Therefore, it is very important that a careful and informed decision be made, and that everyone involved is supportive of the decision.

For academically talented young children, early entrance to school may be an excellent option. There is significant evidence that bright children who are carefully selected for early entrance generally perform very well in school, both academically and socially.¹ In order to make the best possible recommendation for children referred for early entrance, Kettering City Schools uses the Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition: A Guide for Whole-Grade Acceleration K-8. Based on research, this tool is used to objectively facilitate acceleration decisions, and enables a team to determine the best placement for a child who is referred for whole-grade acceleration, including early entrance.

Because the expectations for kindergarten have changed considerably over the past few decades, if you are considering early entrance for your child take the time to review the national Common Core Standards which now guide our instruction (www.corestandards.org). The Ohio Department of Education also has several parent resources that you may find helpful. These resources and other information in this packet may help you determine if your child is a strong candidate for early entrance.

A child’s initial entrance to school is an exciting time, filled with anticipation, hope and perhaps a bit of apprehension. We want to ensure that your child has the best possible start at Kettering City Schools. If you believe that your child is a good candidate for early entrance to school, **please read through the attached information and submit the required referral forms** to Kettering City Schools, Lynn Cannarozzi, Elementary Gifted Education Coordinator, 500 Lincoln Park Blvd. Suite 300, Kettering, OH 45429 or Lynn.Cannarozzi@ketteringschools.org It is strongly encouraged to have the forms turned in no later than April 1.

For more information, contact:

Lynn Cannarozzi, KCS Elementary Gifted Education Coordinator

Lynn.Cannarozzi@ketteringschools.org

¹ *A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America’s Brightest Students*, Colangelo, et.al, 2004.

Early Entrance to School: Evaluation Process & Considerations

As required by the Ohio Department of Education, Kettering City Schools utilizes the Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition, to guide the data collection and evaluation process for any whole-grade acceleration, K-8, including early entrance to school. The Iowa Acceleration Scale is not a test, but a research-based tool for a team of individuals to compile information about a child, objectively look at different aspects of the student, and make appropriate academic placement recommendations.

In addition to the district Kindergarten Screening, the evaluation of a child for early entrance requires that we complete a number of assessments and gather information such as:

- An individual Ability test
- An individual Achievement test
- An Aptitude test (either based on an individual Achievement test or a test that is one to two years *above* the entering grade level)
- Prior school information, such as preschool experiences, attendance and assessments
- Family information (e.g. siblings and available family support)
- Student participation in school or community-sponsored activities
- Developmental characteristics
- Interpersonal skills and emotional development
- Academic attitude such as the student's motivation, self-concept and attitude toward learning, and the student's attitude toward attending school.

Although the process is not simple, it is designed to make objective and informed decisions about educational placements in which your child will most likely succeed.

Is my child a strong candidate for Early Entrance to School? ²

Below are characteristics of early entrance candidates. Review the following characteristics, considering your child with each of them. Children who will benefit from early entrance may not exhibit *all* of the characteristics listed below; however, strong early entrance candidates will exhibit *more* of the following characteristics than other children of the same age. *If your child does not exhibit many of these characteristics, early entrance may not be a good choice.*

Ability/Achievement/Aptitude:

Compared to other same age peers, my child seems advanced beyond other children their age in these ways:

- Understands the meanings and use of words better than other children;
- 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;
- Has a good memory and remembers details of conversation or stories;
- Is interested in difficult concepts such as time and space;
- Concentrates on certain activities much longer than other children;
- Reads (and understands text) in picture books or chapter books;
- Figures out math-related problems better than other children.

Academic and School factors:

My child:

- Enjoys learning new information or skills;
- Participates in community-sponsored activities such as sports, dance, gymnastics, library and museum projects;
- Believes they are capable of succeeding at new tasks.

Developmental factors:

- My child has average fine and large motor coordination (i.e. holding a pencil, skipping);
- My child is able to use the computer to play games or find information.

Interpersonal skills for entering school:

My child:

- Thoughtfully considers feedback and criticism and modifies behavior appropriately;
- Often behaves in a way that is positive and effective;
- Has good interpersonal skills with age-mates, as well as with both older and younger children and with adults;
- Has excellent interpersonal relationships with adults in a teaching role.

Attitudes and supports necessary for success in school:

- My child is enthusiastic about going to kindergarten or first grade.
- My child will receive additional support from his/her parents and family in order to meet the increased academic demands of a school placement.

Additional considerations in which early entrance is NOT advisable:

- My child has one or more older siblings in the grade in which they will be placed if admitted by early entrance, which may cause social/emotional issues in the family.
- My child often did not want to attend preschool or missed preschool often because of illness or family issues.

Resources:

Common Core Standards: www.corestandards.org

Hoagies' Gifted links to acceleration resources: <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/acceleration.htm>

A Nation Deceived report: http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/nation_deceived/

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) position paper on acceleration:
<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=383>

Ohio Department of Education's resources for "Academic Acceleration for Advanced Learners":
<http://www.ode.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?Page=3&TopicRelationID=962&Content=115578>

Ohio Department of Education's "Kindergarten Readiness Checklist":
<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=778&ContentID=7920&Content=107237>

Ohio Department of Education's publication, "The Young Gifted Child":
<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=741&ContentID=67720&Content=103508>

² Based on the Ohio Department of Education, *Early Entrance Referral Form Example*, 2011.