



Worthington Schools

A Parent's Guide for

Early Entrance

Kindergarten and First Grade

(Revised July 2024)



(Revised July 2021)

Legislation Governing Early Entrance To Kindergarten and Giftedness

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. School districts are permitted to determine the Kindergarten entrance date (either August 1 or Sept. 30) and **before January 1**. The Worthington School District has chosen September 30th as its Kindergarten entrance date. 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 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.

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.

A unique type of whole-grade acceleration is early entrance (i.e., kindergarten or first grade). For academically talented young children, early entrance to school may be an excellent option. There is abundant evidence that bright children who are carefully selected for early entrance generally perform very well, both academically and socially (A Nation Deceived: how Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students, 2004).

Worthington School District's Procedure

1. Age Eligibility

A student must be age five (5) to enter kindergarten or age six (6) to enter grade one. Compulsory school age is six (6). However, if a child enters kindergarten at age 5, he or she is considered to be of compulsory school age. **No district shall admit to the first grade a child who has not successfully completed kindergarten.**

The Worthington School District considers a child eligible for entrance into "regular" kindergarten if s/he attains the age of five on or before **September 30th** 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.

2. Early Admission Request

There are four types of acceleration that may be requested by parents for early entrance:

- **Kindergarten:** A child will be 5 before January 1st.
- **Kindergarten:** A child will **not** be 5 before January 1st.
- **1st grade:** A child will be 6 before January 1st.
- **1st grade:** A child will **not** be 6 before January 1st.

3. Board of Education Adopted State of Ohio Policy

On August 14, 2006 the Worthington Board of Education adopted the State of Ohio's *Model Student Acceleration Policy for Advanced Learners*:

"Children who are referred for evaluation for possible accelerated placement 60 or more days prior to the start of the school year shall be evaluated in advance of the start of the school year so that the child may be placed in the accelerated placement on the first day of school. 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. 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 may also be evaluated for possible early admittance *at the discretion of the principal* of the school to which the student may be admitted."

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*. The key to determining whether or not early entrance is appropriate for a child is developmental readiness. Even though a child may have a lot of ability, s/he may not be ready for kindergarten. Social maturity, personal development, and motor development are very 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 s/he 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?

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 letters upper case and lower case).

Expectations of Kindergarten Students

1. Introduction

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. In addition, Ohio, along with many other states across the United States, has adopted Common CORE for the purpose of preparing Ohioans to meet the demands of the knowledge-based economy and the needs of the 21st century.

What are some important school and academic factors?

My child:

- *Enjoys learning new information or skills;*
- *Participates in community-sponsored activities such as sports, dance, gymnastics, library and museum programs;*
- *Believes he/she is capable of succeeding at new tasks.*
- *Has the ability to attend, or pay attention, for a relatively long period of instruction.*
- *He/she can draw and trace basic shapes and cut with scissors.*

What are some important developmental factors?

My child has the following developmental characteristics:

- *He/she has average fine and large motor coordination (i.e., holding a pencil, skipping);*
- *He/she is able to use the computer to play games or find information.*
- *He/she can use the bathroom without adult help.*
- *He/she can button and zip up shirts and pants, tie or Velcro shoes and put on and take off his/her coat.*
- *Has the ability to separate from the parent without being upset.*

What are some important 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.*
- *Has the ability to follow routines.*

What are some important attitudes and supports necessary for success in school?

- *My child is enthusiastic about going to kindergarten or first grade.*
- *As a parent, I understand that a child's success in school depends on support provided at home. I am able to give my child additional support to help in his/her transition to a new setting with much higher academic demands than he/she encountered in preschool.*

2. Ohio Department of Education Website

Parents can easily access more information about Kindergarten on the *Ohio Department of Education* website.

ODE > Topics > Early Learning > Kindergarten

ODE > search for: “Academic Acceleration for Advanced Learners”

ODE > search for: “Kindergarten Readiness Checklist”

ODE > search for: “The Young Gifted Child”

The *Ohio Department of Education*'s website also contains useful information about the next generation of assessments.

Understanding a child's learning and development is critical to both families and educators. In previous school years, children took the **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment – Literacy (KRA-L)** when entering school. In fall 2014, a new **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)** was used which is based on Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards.

The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment or KRA, will give kindergarten teachers a comprehensive picture of a child's learning and development at kindergarten entry, pinpointing where each child is in physical well-being and motor development, language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies and social skills.

ODE> Testing > Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

3. Worthington School District's Kindergarten Program

There are two options available for kindergarten in Worthington Schools: half day and full day. Depending on school of attendance and completion of the early entrance assessment process, full or half day program may not be available at your child's home school.



Ohio Department of Education (ODE)

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us>

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
<p><u>Physical Skills</u> - Does your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ enjoy outdoor play such as running, jumping, and climbing; ▪ draw and trace basic shapes and letters; ▪ 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.
<p><u>Health and Safety Needs</u> - Has your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ had required shots (<i>or provide a signed waiver</i>); ▪ 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 to not talk to strangers; ▪ developed a set routine for going to bed; learned to follow safety rules? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help your child 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 to and talk with your child.
<p><u>Personal needs</u> - Without your help, can your child...</p> <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 tooth-brushing routines. ▪ Allow your child to dress themselves. ▪ Practice putting on shoes. ▪ Help your child learn to use their words to tell other grownups when they are feeling sick or hurt.
<p><u>Social and Emotional Skills</u> - Does your child...</p> <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, please obtain an information/application packet by visiting our web site: www.worthington.k12.oh.us > Academics tab > Gifted Services > Early Entrance to Kindergarten
- Once the application has been completed, it is strongly recommended that it is returned to Gifted Services **no later than March 15th** in the year for which admission is being requested.
- For the current academic year, the evaluations will be coordinated through the Gifted Services Department. Once an application has been received, parents will be called to schedule an individual intelligence assessment for their child at the Worthington Education Center. Students who score at least one standard deviation above the mean on intelligence assessment will then move on to academic achievement testing.
- An observation by a district representative (elementary guidance counsellor and/or school psychologist) 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.
- 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 should include the following:
 - 1) the home school principal *or* assistant 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 intervention specialist
 - 5) a school psychologist *or* guidance counselor
- For successful candidates, a Written Acceleration Plan (WAP) shall be completed prior to the accelerated setting. It shall include strategies to support a successful transition.

The Evaluation Process

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

- Most early entrance evaluations are completed in the late winter/early spring concurrently with the kindergarten enrollment process.
- The *Ohio Department of Education* has on its website a checklist for kindergarten readiness. When looking at whether early entrance is appropriate for a child, the same readiness guidelines should be considered.
- The Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) requires ability and aptitude measures. The Woodcock-Johnson III-NU is used for reading and math assessments.
- Our evaluation teams will err on the side of caution and recommend that a child wait another year should there be any concerns. Our goal is to ensure that a child's first exposure to school is successful.

INSTRUMENTS USED:

INDIVIDUAL INTELLIGENCE TESTS

Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence- Fourth Edition (WPPSI-IV)

- According to the ***Iowa Acceleration Scale (3rd ed.)***, a student who meets the Critical Item (Section III) of one standard deviation above the mean (115) is a viable candidate for acceleration. All students may move on in the process for consideration, but whole-grade acceleration is ***not recommended*** if a critical item is checked.
- Superior Cognitive identification (gifted) is 130 (minus the Standard Error of Measure, 127)

INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

Woodcock-Johnson IV (WJIII-NU)

- Reading, Language, Math, and Academic Knowledge

Timeline for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Important Information: For the Current School Year

- **March 15: Strongly encouraged** deadline for Early Entrance to Kindergarten applications.
Return application to: Gifted Services
200 E. Wilson Bridge Road
Worthington, Ohio 43085
- **PLEASE NOTE:** Should a student qualify for Early Kindergarten and parent would like to be entered into the ALL Day Kindergarten Lottery, applications must be received by **JANUARY 31.**
- If applications are received after January 31st, the student may not be able to enter the lottery.
- Deadline for written notification of outcome of the evaluation process is 45 days after the submission of the referral.
- Within 30 days of the being notified of the committee's selection, parents may submit a written appeal to the Superintendent or his/her designee regarding the outcome of the evaluation process.

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 Office know that your child is being screened for early entrance to kindergarten.



Application: Early Entrance to Kindergarten/First Grade DATE:

RETURN COMPLETED FORM 60 DAYS PRIOR TO START OF SEMESTER TO:
Gifted Services, Worthington Schools, 200 E. Wilson Bridge Road, Worthington, OH 43085

Please complete this application if you feel that your child demonstrates academic achievement, social, emotional, and physical maturity appropriate for kindergarten/first grade placement and should be considered for early placement.

PLEASE PRINT/TYPE ALL INFORMATION

Child's Name: _____

Birth date: ____/____/____ [] Male [] Female

Home Address: _____

Day care or Preschool Name and Address: _____
Name & Address City Zip

Custodial Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Type of Acceleration Requested (CHECK ONE):

[] Early Entrance to Kindergarten (my child will be 5 before January 1) - May be completed by Parent, educator within the district, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.

[] Early Entrance to Kindergarten (my child will NOT be 5 before January 1) - Page 17 Must ONLY be completed by educator within the district, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.

PERSON COMPLETING REFERRAL: _____ TITLE _____

[] Early Entrance to First Grade (my child will be 6 before January 1)- May be completed by Parent, educator within the district, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.

[] Early Entrance to First Grade (my child will NOT be 6 before January 1) - Page 17 Must ONLY be completed by educator within the district, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.

PERSON COMPLETING REFERRAL: _____ TITLE _____

Preschool Experience Preschool teacher must complete page 18 of application.

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.

Table with 3 columns: Name of School/Program, Dates of Attendance, Days/Hours/Week

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the contents of the Early Entrance brochure.

Print Custodial Parent/Guardian Name

Signature of Custodial Parent/Guardian

ABILITY CHECKLIST – TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENTS

EARLY ENTRANCE

These seven broad developmental dimensions provide the framework for the grade appropriate instructional program. This checklist will help in determining the child’s readiness for early entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade. **Please read each statement and indicate, by placing a “checkmark”, how you rate the child’s abilities.**

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Performs self-help tasks independently (dressing, undressing, zipping, tying, toileting, eating)			
Uses eye/hand coordination to perform fine motor tasks (drawing, writing, and cutting)			
Uses balance and control to perform large motor tasks (walking, jumping and skipping)			

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Shows eagerness to learn (curious, likes to investigate)			
Follows rules and routines (cleans up at play time)			
Handles change and transition (dinnertime to bedtime)			
Interacts easily with one or more children			
Separates easily from parent			
The ability to listen (attend) for at least 10 minutes			

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Listens for meaning in stories, discussions, and conversations			
Speaks clearly, able to share ideas and thoughts			
Can identify most letters (uppercase and lowercase)			
Can identify some beginning sounds			
Uses letters and words to write			

MATHEMATICAL THINKING	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Can recognize numbers 0-20			
Can orally count forward to 20			
Can recognize, duplicate, and extend simple patterns (circle-triangle, circle-triangle, circle-triangle)			
Can recognize and duplicate basic shapes			

SCIENTIFIC THINKING	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
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			

SOCIAL STUDIES	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
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			

THE ARTS	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Likes to paint and draw			
Likes to sing and dance			
Can share ideas about a drawing/painting			
Can recognize basic colors			



PERMISSION FOR REVIEW Early Entrance

I, _____, hereby give my permission for the **Worthington School District**
(Custodial Parent / Legal Guardian Name)

to respond to a request for assessment for: _____
(Name of Child)

Child's date of birth: _____.

In giving my permission, I understand that any or all of the following may occur based on the timeline specified in the **Early Entrance** brochure:

1. Review of relevant records (releases of information will be included);
2. Interviews with caregiver and/or parent/guardian;
3. Observation(s) of my child;
4. Assessment (e.g. curriculum-based, screening, and other appropriate measures to determine placement); and/or;
5. Other, as needed.

ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT

All instruments used must be on the Ohio Department of Education's Chart of Approved Gifted Identification/Screening Instruments including screenings for Specific Academic Abilities (WJIII). The Worthington District typically uses one or more of the following individual testing instruments for the Early Entrance Process:

- **Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence – Third Edition (WPPSI-IV)**
- **Woodcock-Johnson III (WJIII-NU)**

PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

1. Is a second language spoken in the home: NO YES

If YES, what language(s) _____

2. Does your student have and IEP or need assistive technology or other accommodations in order to be tested?

NO YES **If YES, please specify** _____

Please use this space to provide any additional information that you would like to include (continue on the reverse side of this form if necessary.)

I further understand and agree that the information collected by the school district will then be reviewed by the team for the purpose of evaluating my child as a candidate for Early Entrance.

PRINT NAME of Custodial Parent / Legal Guardian SIGNATURE of Custodial Parent / Legal Guardian Date

The Worthington School District, in compliance with Section 3324.03 of the Ohio Revision Code, annually identifies gifted students. Educational opportunities are offered without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, and/or handicap.



Background Information

Early Entrance - To Be Completed by Parents

1. What were some early childhood indicators which demonstrated your child was advanced for his/her age?

2. Describe recently observed characteristics that indicate child is ready for early entrance?

3. Does your child prefer to play with pre-packaged games or games he/she creates? Explain and/or give example(s).

4. How long does your child maintain interest in a play activity or game at any given time?

5. How does your child approach a challenging task? Provide at least one example.

6. How does your child interact with his/her age peers? Please explain and consider whether or not your child shares, takes turns and cooperates with others.

7. Describe your child's preferred playmates.

8. How does your child interact with adults (i.e. community members, strangers, neighbors, and/or lesson instructors)

9. Does your child participate in any activities or lessons (i.e. dance, art, sports, music, etc.)? If so, please include description and any special awards or recognition received.

10. How does your child handle frustration?

11. How does your child handle transitions and new situations?

12. What type of reading activities does your child engage in at home?

13. Please provide any other information about your child which you believe is important for us to know.

PROFESSIONAL REFERRAL
(Required if child's birthday is January 1 or later)

I believe that the referred child exhibits a number of the characteristics below. I have reviewed the considerations below and do not feel they would negatively impact the child's success in school. I request evaluation for this child for possible early entrance to school.

- Is enthusiastic about going to kindergarten/1st grade;
- Enjoys learning new information or skills;
- Is curious about many things and asks questions often;
- 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;
- Due to social/emotional concerns for the child or family, acceleration may not be advisable if:
 - Has one or more older siblings in the grade in which he/she will be placed if admitted by early entrance;
 - Often did not want to attend preschool or missed preschool often because of illness or family issues.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____ State License Number: _____

Practice or School: _____

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

The referral request will be processed, and parents will receive the final determinations for early entrance within 60 days from the date the referral is received.

Additional information you would like to share with Worthington Schools:

Early Entrance Teacher Checklist – To Be Completed by a Preschool Teacher Familiar with the Child

A request has been made by parent/legal guardian for the above named student to be considered for early entrance admission to either Kindergarten or 1st grade. As the professional with knowledge of the child, we are requesting your assistance with this checklist.

The link below is for the Ohio Department of Education’s learning standards and outlines the grade level indicators and benchmarks of skills expected of all kindergartners in Ohio. Please evaluate the above name student based on the criteria presented in the link:

<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/OLS-Graphic-Sections/Learning-Standards/Kindergarten-Standards.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US?>

Skill	Mastered Skill 90%+ Accuracy	Working on Skill 75% - 90%	Instructional Phase Skill 50% -75%	Not Introduced or Observed Skill
Language Arts				
Reading Standards for Literature				
Reading Standards for Informal Text				
Foundation Skills				
Writing				
Speaking and Listening Language				
Math				
Counting and Cardinality				
Operations and Algebraic Thinking				
Number and Operations – Base Ten				
Measurement Data				
Geometry				
Science				
Earth and Space Sciences				
Life Sciences				
Physical Sciences				
Social Studies				
History				
Geography				
Government				
Economics				

Please rate this child’s performance in relation to his/her current peer group (circle below):

Top 5% Top 10% Top 25% Upper Half Lower Half

Evaluator Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

School Affiliation: _____

State License Number (if Applicable): _____