



Parent's Guide and Application for Early Entrance to Kindergarten



**Austintown Local Schools
Department of Curriculum & Instruction
700 S. Raccoon Rd.
Austintown, OH 44515**

Austintown kindergarten is a **full-day program**. Students are expected to participate in the academic program throughout the day. Austintown considers a child eligible for entrance into “regular” kindergarten if he/she attains the age of 5 on or before August 1st of the year he/she applies for entrance. The Austintown Local School Board adopted the **State of Ohio’s Model Student Acceleration Policy for Advanced Learners**.

What is Austintown’s Early Entrance to Kindergarten policy?

- **If a child is age five (5) between August 2 and December 31**, then early entrance to kindergarten may be considered. **The application is to be completed and submitted by the parent/guardian(s) of the child.** This application (pages 5-7), is included within this informational packet, or can be obtained at the Board of Education office. **Applications are accepted from April 15th- August 15th.**
- **If a child is age five (5) January 1 or after**, then early entrance to kindergarten may be considered. **The application (pages 5-8), must be filled out by an educator within the district, a preschool educator who knows the child, or a pediatrician/psychologist who knows the child, along with the parent/guardian.** This application is included within this informational packet, or can be obtained from the Gifted & Talented Students Director, located at the Board of Education office.
- Students exhibiting advanced intellectual ability and reason should be considered for early entrance. The evaluation consists of a test of **cognition** and **achievement** where students will be evaluated using nationally-normed standardized tests as recommended by the Iowa Acceleration Scale. Motor skills and socialization evaluation also allow the Licensed School Psychologist a broader picture of the child to assess readiness for kindergarten.
- Only residential students can be evaluated for Early Entrance to Kindergarten.
- The Board policy can be viewed in its entirety at: [Austintown Local Schools Board Policy](#).

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, he/she may not be ready for kindergarten. Other important factors to consider are social maturity, personal development and motor development.

Early entrance is **designed for the exceptional child** who is both academically ready as well as developmentally mature when compared to others his/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 he/she?
- Will my child be frustrated by this placement?
- What are the possible long-term impacts as my child progresses through elementary, middle and high school (i.e., beginning college at a younger age)?
- 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 (i.e., preschool programs, parents working with them on skills or access to learning materials). Early entrance is designed for the child who has high ability and easily achieves when presented with 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.

Below are examples of what to look for in the areas of ability, achievement, aptitude and 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.

Expectations of Kindergarten Students

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. 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 relatively long periods 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;

- He/she is able 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.
- 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.

How to Apply for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

1. The application documents are included in this packet if you believe that your child may be a good candidate for early entrance to kindergarten. You may download this Early Entrance to Kindergarten packet by visiting our website: www.austintownlocalschools.org. Under "**Departments**," select "**Pupil Services**." Once selected, the right side of the page will read "**Early Entrance to Kindergarten**." Select this tab for the application. Hard copies may also be obtained from the Board of Education office.
2. Complete the applications **by August 15th** and return to:
Austintown Local Schools
Board of Education Office: Gifted & Talented Students Director
700 S. Raccoon Rd., Austintown, OH 44515
3. Upon receiving completed applications, the Licensed School Psychologist will contact the guardian to schedule the evaluation (detailed evaluation process explained in next section).

Early Entrance to Kindergarten Evaluation Process

Once all of the required application documents have been received, arrangements will be made to begin the evaluation process.

1. Your child will be screened using the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test, Second Edition (KBIT-2 2) . This screening will be administered by a Licensed School Psychologist at **Austintown Elementary School, 245 Idaho Rd., Austintown, Ohio 44515**.
2. You will receive the results of your child's KBIT-2 screening:
 - a. If your child *does not* receive a 115 or higher on the KBIT-2, you will receive notification from the Gifted & Talented Students Director that your child does not meet criteria to continue the evaluation process for Early Entrance to Kindergarten.

- b. If your child scores 115 or higher on the KBIT-2, a Licensed School Psychologist will contact the parent/guardian to schedule a second assessment- Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scales of Intelligence (WPPSI-IV).
 - c. Students who move on for further cognitive testing, may be given a state approved assessment including the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scales of Intelligence (WPPSI-IV). Scores of a 127 or higher will qualify for superior cognition.
 - d. Academic skills assessment is conducted utilizing an approved achievement test. Scores are to be in the 95th percentile rank for further team discussion towards early entrance criteria. This assessment may be the Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement, Third Edition.
3. Upon completion of the three assessments, you will be invited to be part of an *Acceleration Evaluation Committee* (see below for committee details). The **Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition**, in accordance with **ODE Model Policy for Academic Acceleration** will be used to review the results of the comprehensive evaluation and determine the most appropriate available learning environment for your child. The team will conduct a fair and thorough evaluation of the child and results will be known by the conclusion of the meeting.
 - If your child is recommended for early entrance to kindergarten, a Written Acceleration Plan (WAP) will be completed. You will receive an acceptance letter with instructions on how to register your child for kindergarten.
 - If your child is not recommended for early entrance to kindergarten, you will receive an outcome letter from the acceleration evaluation committee. Results may be disputed by reaching out to the Superintendent via phone or in writing within 30 days of response by the team.

The Acceleration Evaluation Committee may consist of:

- Building Administrator
- Current Pre-School Educator or Pediatrician of the referred student
- Teacher at the grade level to which the student may be accelerated
- Parent or legal guardian of the referred student or a representative designated by a parent or legal guardian of the referred student
- Mahoning County Educational Service Center Gifted & Talented Students Education Coordinator
- Licensed School Psychologist



APPLICATION PART 1: PARENT REFERRAL FORM (REQUIRED)
AUSTINTOWN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
PARENT REFERRAL FORM (COMPLETED BY PARENT)

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 entrance.

Referral for:

Child's Name _____ Potential School _____

Child's Address _____

Parent's Name _____ Phone _____

Parent's Address if Different _____

Email _____

Type of Acceleration Requested:

- ☐ Early Entrance to Kindergarten (my child is age 5 between August 2nd and December 31st)
☐ Early Entrance to Kindergarten (my child is age 5 January 1st or after)
☐ Early Entrance to 1st Grade (my child will be 6 before January 1)
☐ Early Entrance to 1st Grade (my child will **not** be 6 before January 1)

Preschool/Daycare Experience

List the preschools, Head Start, special programs, and other day care programs attended. Include the teacher name(s), dates of attendance and phone number.

Name of Schools/Programs	Teacher	Dates of Attendance	Phone Number

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 and attach, if needed.)

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

Print Name of Parent/Legal Guardian	Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian	Date
-------------------------------------	------------------------------------	------

APPLICATION PART 2: KINDERGARTEN READINESS CHECKLIST (REQUIRED)**AUSTINTOWN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT****KINDERGARTEN READINESS CHECKLIST (COMPLETED BY PARENT)**

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, how you rate your child's abilities.

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
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	Never
Shows eagerness to learn (curious, likes to investigate)			
Follows rules and routines (cleans up at play time)			
Handles change and transition (dinner time 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	Never
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	Never
Can recognize numbers 0-20			
Can orally count forward to 20			
Can recognize, duplicate, and extend simple patterns			
Can recognize and duplicate basic shapes			

Scientific Thinking	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
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	Never
Recognizes self and other 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			

Social Studies	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Likes to paint and draw			
Likes to sing and dance			
Can share ideas about a drawing/painting			
Can recognize basic colors			

APPLICATION PART 3: EVALUATION PERMISSION FORM (REQUIRED)
AUSTINTOWN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
EVALUATION PERMISSION FORM (COMPLETED BY PARENT)

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Address: _____ Phone: _____
Parent/Guardian: _____
Referred by: _____

In giving my permission, I understand that any or all of the following may occur in accordance with the Ohio Department of Education Model Policy for Academic Acceleration:

- Administration of Assessments (e.g. cognitive, achievement, aptitude, and any other appropriate measures to determine appropriate placement);
- Review of relevant records;
- Interview with caregiver and/or parent/guardian;
- Acceleration Team Evaluation meeting

No assessment, evaluation or review will be done without your written permission. I understand that if I grant permission, my child will receive assessment(s) by designated school personnel and that their information may be shared, as required, with teachers, principals, and other appropriate school personnel.

- ☐ Permission is given to conduct the evaluation and review
- ☐ Permission is denied

Print Name of Parent/Legal Guardian

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

Please Note: Granting permission does not guarantee access to acceleration options.

APPLICATION PART 4: EDUCATOR/MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL REFERRAL FORM

AUSTINTOWN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
EDUCATOR/MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL REFERRAL FORM

If the child is 5 years of age as of January 1, or later, this referral form must be filled out by a non-family member that is an educator within the district, a preschool educator who knows the child, or a pediatrician/psychologist who knows the child.

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Name of person making this referral: _____

Title of person making this referral: _____

Name of your Organization/Practice: _____

Business Address: _____ Phone: _____

How do you know the applicant?

Do you feel the applicant would be prepared for Kindergarten in August? Please explain why or why not:

Briefly state the characteristics you see in the applicant that you feel make him/her school ready:

Please return this form to:

**Austintown Local Schools
Board of Education Office
Gifted & Talented Students Director
700 S. Raccoon Rd.
Austintown, OH 44515**