

## **Early Entrance to Kindergarten**

According to state law, a child must be five (5) years of age as of midnight August 31 of the year of entry to be entitled to enter kindergarten. The law also provides for the Yakima School District to allow for individual exceptions in instances where parent(s)/guardian(s) with children having birth dates which narrowly miss the cut-off date to request early entrance consideration. Research and experience in education and child development have shown that children who enter school young for their grade level are at a great risk for later lack of academic and/or social success than children who are either age-appropriate or older than their classmates. There are times when children may be academically ready, but have not had the time to develop the social and emotional skills needed to be successful in a school setting. While this may not always be apparent at the kindergarten level, it can become a much larger issue in the middle and high school years.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) who wish to apply for an exception to entrance, must follow the following procedures.

### **1. Eligibility**

The parent(s)/guardian(s) who desire early entrance for their child should contact the Discovery Early Learning Center.

Students who will turn five (5) years of age after the cut-off date of midnight August 31, but before midnight October 31, can be considered for early entrance into kindergarten at parent(s)/guardian(s) request, provided that the student meets screening criteria for early entrance.

### **2. Screening Procedure**

- 2.1. **Deadline:** Parent(s)/guardian(s) must request the screening of their child through the Discovery Early Learning Center by June 30th of the prior school year.
- 2.2. **Screening Fee:** There will be a screening fee of four-hundred dollars (\$400) per student.
- 2.3. **Complete forms as described below:**
  - 2.3.1. **Application for Exception to Entrance Age Requirement, 3112.1X:**  
Personal information and social-emotional screening questionnaire to support child's readiness for school from parents.
  - 2.3.2. **Information from Physician, 3112.2X (optional) and Information from Preschool Experience, 3112.3X (if any):**  
Obtain statements and complete forms 3112.2X and 3112.3X regarding the child's readiness for school from any person(s) who are competent to make such judgment, if available. These may include the child's physician, preschool teacher, or others who know the child from a professional standpoint. If the child did not attend preschool, parents are requested to complete the form to the best of their knowledge. If the child has attended a private kindergarten, parents should obtain reports from the teacher of that kindergarten. Others may submit statements in letter form to be submitted with the completed forms.
  - 2.3.3. **Permission for Testing, 3112.4X:**  
Give consent to the Yakima School District to test your child for school readiness by completing and signing form 3112.4X. Assessments may include the following: cognition, language, fine/gross motor, academic readiness, visual/auditory processing, and social/emotional development and such other areas as related to success in school.

- 2.4. Completed applications: Must be delivered to the Discovery Early Learning Center building and submitted to the Early Learning Principal/Assistant Principal. Applications will be accepted beginning on the day of Spring Kindergarten Registration for the following year and must be received no later than June 30th. Children for whom applications are received will be reviewed by an assessment team comprised of district staff members, in some instances, the assessment team may advise against testing based on the application information submitted. If no test is conducted, then no fee will be collected.
- 2.5. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of a screening date. Screening will occur during the month of August.
- 2.6. Each child will be assessed individually by an assessment team, which could include a school psychologist and a speech and language pathologist, using assessment instruments/processes to assess the areas of cognition, language, fine/gross motor, pre-academics, visual/auditory processing, and social/emotional development. These assessments will determine if your student meets the Yakima School District criteria for early entrance. Standard scores are converted to percentiles for the cognitive, academic readiness and adaptive skills assessments given by the school psychologist. The assessment team, including Early Learning administrators, will review the results of the assessment. In order for your child to meet requirement for early entrance to kindergarten, children must have standard scores at the fiftieth (50<sup>th</sup>) percentile rank or higher in all areas and must have two out of three (2/3) at the ninetieth (90<sup>th</sup>) percentile rank or higher.
- 2.7. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing based on screening results whether or not the child met eligibility criteria for early entrance. Recommendations for early entry will not be based on whether the child is ready to start school, but whether the child is *exceptionally* advanced beyond typical children meeting entrance age requirements and who are likely to do as well entering school this year and next. If the child meets eligibility criteria, it will be the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to enroll the child through the central registration office with the letter stating the results of the evaluation. Children who do not complete the screening will not be eligible.

### 3. Conditional Assignment

If the child meets eligibility criteria for early kindergarten entrance and the parent(s)/guardian(s) elects to early enroll the child, he/she will attend a kindergarten classroom for a four (4)-week trial period to determine the appropriateness of the placement.

The building principal and kindergarten teacher will determine whether or not the child successfully completes the trial period and will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the results. If the child does not successfully complete the trial period, the child will be withdrawn from the assignment and must wait until the following school year to attend. If the child successfully completes the trial period, the assignment will be made official.

### 4. Out-of-State Transfers

Kindergarten students who transfer into the Yakima School District from another state with earlier age entrance standards for Kindergarten will be allowed to transfer into the district for up to a four (4)-week trial period at first grade to determine the appropriateness of the placement.

To be considered for a trial enrollment, a student must have attended a kindergarten program for at least twelve (12) weeks. The building principal and kindergarten teacher will determine whether the child successfully completes the trial period and will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the results.

If the child does not successfully complete the trial period, the principal will notify the parents and the child will be withdrawn from the assignment and must wait until the following school year to attend.

If the child successfully completes the trial period, the assignment will be made official.

## **5. Appeals**

There is no appeal to the early entrance assessment. All decisions are final and are made in the best interest of student success. If your child does not qualify, they will need to wait until the next school year to begin kindergarten.

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### Cross References:

(cf.: 3111 – Age of Admission)

(cf.: 3120 – Compulsory Attendance)

(cf.: 3121 – Enrollment and Attendance Records)

### Legal References:

RCW 28A.225.010 Attendance mandatory – Age

RCW 28A.225.160 Qualifications for admission to district's schools – Fees for pre-admission screening

WAC 180-39-005 to 035 Pupils – Uniform entry qualifications

### Adoption Date:

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