A Parent's Guide to Early Entrance to Kindergarten & First Grade

Findlay City Schools
Office of Gifted and English Language Learner Services
1100 Broad Avenue, Findlay, Ohio 45840
(419) 427-5495

Defining Early Entrance and Legislation Governing Early Entrance

Ohio law establishes minimum age requirements for admission to kindergarten and first grade.[1] Early entrance is when a child is admitted to kindergarten or first grade earlier than the Ohio minimum age requirement. When a child does not meet the age requirement for admission to kindergarten or first grade, a referral can be made to assess the child for early entrance. The practice of admitting a student to kindergarten or first grade early is intended to provide access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities. Findlay City Schools follows the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's *Model Student Acceleration Policy for Advanced Learners* in these instances.

Early entrance, also known as grade skipping, is a type of whole-grade acceleration designed to meet the needs of highly advanced children. To qualify, children must demonstrate above-average cognitive ability, a high level of social maturity, and advanced academic and school readiness skills. Typically, successful candidates perform approximately 18-24 months ahead of their same-age peers.

Early entrance is not intended for students who simply miss the cutoff date for entrance into kindergarten. Only a small percentage of four-year-old children are advanced enough to qualify for early entrance to kindergarten. Please proceed with child care arrangements as a contingency. If you are selecting a preschool program or day care, please understand that those programs routinely fill up quickly.

Student Expectations in Kindergarten

Kindergarten has evolved significantly in recent years, with students now participating in a more rigorous and structured instructional program. Kindergarten in Findlay City School District is a full-day program from approximately 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Students are expected to participate in the academic program throughout the day.

Findlay City Schools aligns its curriculum and instruction with Ohio's Learning Standards. To learn more about Ohio kindergarten standards, parents can access Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies on the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce website.

Referring a Child for Early Entrance

Per Ohio law, the individual who can refer your child for early entrance evaluation depends on your child's date of birth.

[1] Per Ohio Revised Code 3321.01 HB 114, "Each school district board of education shall admit to kindergarten any student who is five or, for a student who has not completed first grade, six years of age by the first day of instruction of the school year of admittance."

- ***Is your child's birthday between the first day of school and December 31?*** Children who will not yet be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten or first grade by the first day of school but before the first day of January of the school year for which admission is requested shall be evaluated for possible early entrance if referred by parent or guardian, an educator employed by Findlay City Schools, preschool educator who knows the child, or a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.
- ***Is your child's birthday on or after January 1?*** Children who will not yet be the required 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 entrance if referred by an educator within the district, a preschool educator who knows the child, or a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.

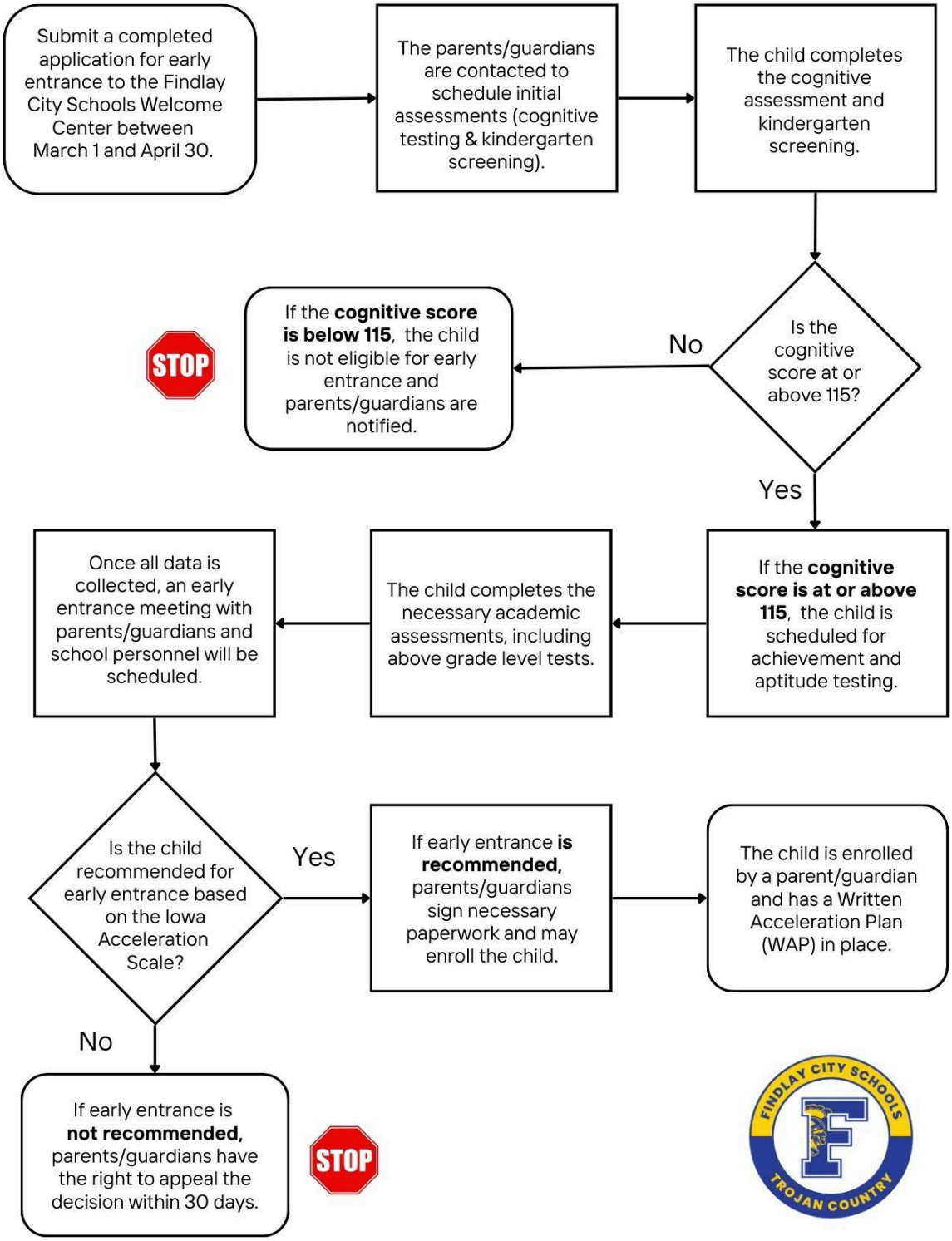
Evaluation Process for Early Entrance

Findlay City Schools follows the *Iowa Acceleration Scale, Third Edition,* as it is the only acceleration assessment process approved by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce for evaluating children for early entrance and whole grade acceleration.

- A parent/guardian submits a completed Early Entrance Application to the Findlay City Schools' Welcome Center between **March 1 and April 30**.
- A school employee will contact the family to schedule a time for the child to be assessed.
- The child completes kindergarten screening and a cognitive assessment. According to the state-approved *Iowa Acceleration Scale*, the child ***must*** score a 115 or higher on the cognitive assessment to continue the process. To put a score of 115 into perspective, a score of 100 is considered average.
- The child's parent or guardian will be notified of the results.
    - If the child **does not score a 115 or higher** on the cognitive assessment, then the evaluation process ends.
    - If the child **scores a 115 or higher** on the cognitive assessment, the child will be scheduled for academic assessments.
- The child takes academic assessments that measure their achievement and aptitude.
    - **Achievement** - These tests measure what a child has already learned. A child needs to score at or above the 90th national percentile rank in reading, writing, and/or math when compared to peers of the same age.
    - **Aptitude** - These above-grade-level assessments measure a student's potential to learn and succeed when provided with the appropriate environment and support.
- An early entrance meeting will be scheduled to discuss the results of the child's entire evaluation.A final decision related to early entrance will be communicated to the family.

EARLY ENTRANCE EVALUATION PROCESS FLOW CHART

FINDLAY CITY SCHOOLS



Written Acceleration Plan

If your child is accepted into school for early entrance, they will receive a Written Acceleration Plan. With the Written Acceleration Plan, the child will have a transition period to ensure that early entrance is truly the best fit for their social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs.

Appeals Process

An appeal by the parent/guardian is the reconsideration of the results of any part of the process, including screening procedures or assessment instruments, scheduling a child for assessment, and/or placement of a child in any program.

To appeal a decision, parents/guardians should submit a letter to the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning outlining the nature of the concern. The assistant superintendent may convene a meeting with the parent/guardian, which may include other school personnel. The assistant superintendent will issue a written final decision within 30 days of the appeal. This written notice will include the reason(s) for the decision.

Early Entrance Application

If you are interested in having your child screened for early entrance to kindergarten or first grade at Findlay City Schools, please complete the following portion of this packet and return it to the Findlay City Schools Welcome Center, Attn. Gifted Coordinator, 1100 Broad Avenue, Findlay, Ohio 45840. Applications are due March 1 - April 30.

Early Entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade Application

Findlay City Schools

Child's Name	
Date of Birth	
Name of Parent/Guardian	
Address	
Phone Number	
Parent Email	

Please check items that usually or often apply to your child.

Social Skills			
	Separates easily from parents		Participates in new situations
	Initiates conversation with familiar adults		Asks for adult help when needed
	Often plays with older children		Describes his/her feelings
	Asks permission to use others' possessions		Discriminates between socially acceptable and unacceptable behavior
	Asserts self in socially acceptable ways		Recognizes feelings of others
	Cooperates in group activities		Plays cooperatively with peers
	Initiates conversations with peers		Asks for the reasons for the rules
	Serves as a leader in peer relationships		Complies with adult directions
	Follows classroom rules and directions		Waits for his/her turn for an adult's attention
	Copes with criticism and teasing		Copes independently in problem situations
	Recognizes another's need for help and gives assistance		Demonstrates ability to "show and tell" without major discomfort
	Respects the property and rights of others		Admits responsibility for errors or wrongdoing
	Shows a positive attitude toward school		Insists that people be "fair"

Readiness Skills			
	States address		States phone number
	States birthday		Can print first, middle, and last name
	Knows the names of basic colors		Can recognize numbers 1-12 (out of order)
	Can count to 20		Can count objects to 20
	Recognizes all capital letters		Recognizes all lowercase letters
	Recognizes letter-sound association		Listens to stories
	Uses 5-6 word sentences routinely		Communicates effectively
	Recalls events from a story presented orally		Discriminates between real words and similar nonsense words
	Memorize books		Reads words
	Reads books		Follows three-step verbal commands

Motor Skills			
	Hops forward on one foot without support		Copies simple words
	Catches ball		Writes simple sentences
	Stands on each foot alternately with eyes closed		Jumps rope without assistance
	Walks down stairs alternating feet		Holds paper with one hand while drawing or writing with the other hand
	Folds sheets of paper		Throws a ball accurately at the target
	Uses scissors to cut paper		Ties shoes
	Skips on alternate feet for 20 feet		Copies a triangle and a square
	Draws a person with six body parts		Hops on one foot for 10 feet
	Copies words with upper and lowercase letters		Assembles puzzles designed for older children

Cognitive Skills			
	Identifies the larger of two numbers		Has an excellent memory
	Recalls facts from stories presented orally		Groups objects by shape and color
	Has a long attention span for activities that interest him/her		Sequences familiar events in order
	Solves simple math problems (+/-)		Identifies past and present activities
	Uses advanced sentence structure and vocabulary		Is interested in what is on television and in newspapers, including cartoons and comics
	Categorizes familiar objects by function		Reasons well
	Is eager to try new things		Thinks of creative ways to solve problems
	Has an advanced sense of humor		Identifies first, middle, & last objects in a row
	Is extremely curious		Repeats six-digit sequences

I believe that my child exhibits many characteristics listed above that indicate my child might benefit from early entrance to kindergarten or first grade. I have reviewed the Parents' Guide for Early Entrance to Kindergarten and First Grade, and I understand that early entrance is designed to meet the needs of highly advanced children. I request an evaluation for my child for possible early entrance to kindergarten or first grade.

Type of Whole Grade Acceleration Requested (mark one):

☐ Kindergarten ☐ First Grade

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Parent/Guardian Printed Name:

Date:

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