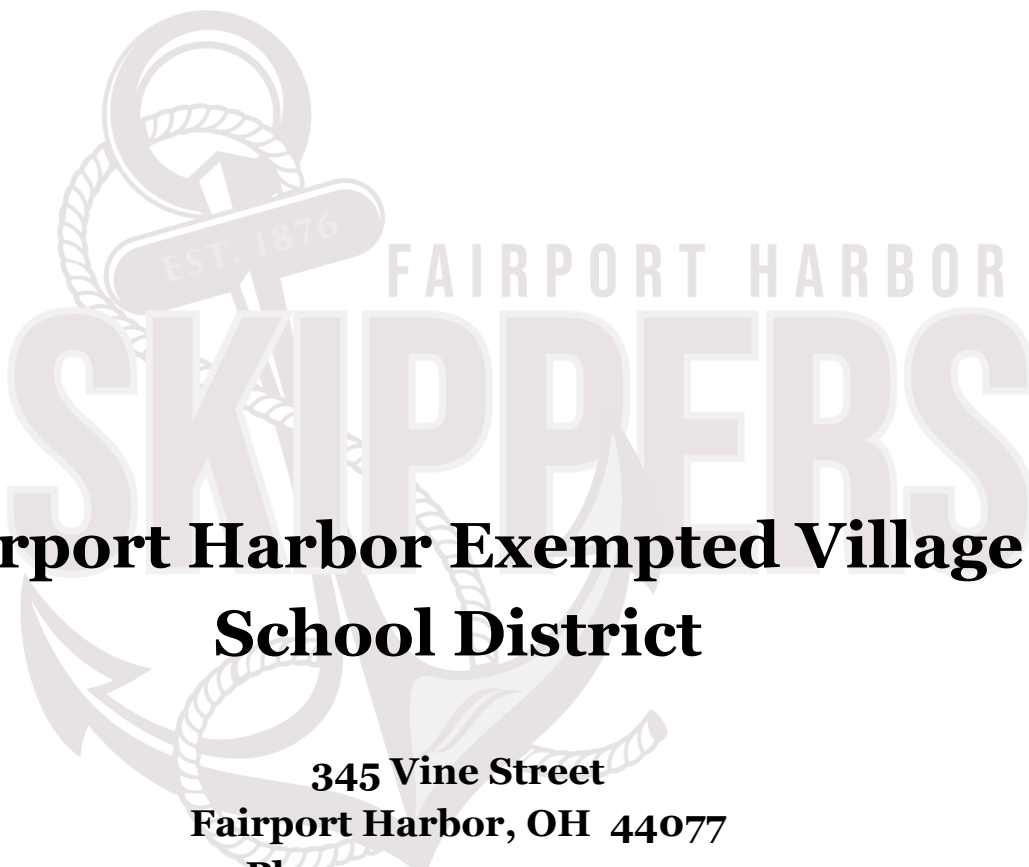


A Parent's Guide to

Early Entrance to Kindergarten



**Fairport Harbor Exempted Village
School District**

**345 Vine Street
Fairport Harbor, OH 44077
Phone: 440.354-5400**

Legislation Governing Early Entrance to Kindergarten and Giftedness

A child's parent or guardian, an educator employed by the district, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child may request *early* entrance to kindergarten as long as the child turns five years of age after the district's first day of instruction and before January 1. Early entrance to kindergarten shall be determined through the district Academic Acceleration Policy in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 3324.10 [ORC Section 3321.01(A)(2)].

Early entrance to kindergarten is addressed through **gifted education**. It is covered in the State of Ohio's *Model Student Acceleration Policy for Advanced Students (ODEW, 2006)*. According to ORC Section 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 Divisions (A), (B), (C), or (D) of ORC Section 3324.03.

Fairport Harbor Schools

Fairport Harbor Schools considers a child eligible for entrance into kindergarten if the child attains the age of five (5) on or before the first day of instruction of the year of application for entrance. Ohio's 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. ORC Section 3321.01 states that "[n]o district shall admit to the first grade a child who has not successfully completed kindergarten."

By request, as stated above, a child may be tested for early entrance to kindergarten if the child will be five (5) years of age between the first day of school and January 1, inclusive, and exhibits the mental, social, and emotional standards established by FHEVS and Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Development (ODEW). If the student turns five on or after January 1, the student can only be admitted pursuant to the district's acceleration policy.

FHEVS adopted the State of Ohio's *Model Student Acceleration Policy for Advanced Learners*, which states, in pertinent part, as follows:

REFERRALS and EVALUATION:

- A. Any student residing in the district may be referred by a teacher, administrator, gifted education specialist, guidance counselor, school psychologist, or a parent or legal guardian of the student to the elementary principal of his or her school for evaluation for possible accelerated placement.
- B. The Early Entrance to Kindergarten Committee will review the evaluation and provide in writing their decision to a parent or legal guardian of the evaluated child.

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 is *developmental readiness*. Even though a child may have a lot of ability, the child may not be ready for kindergarten. Social maturity, personal development, and fine and gross motor development, as well as focus on tasks for at least 10 minutes are essential for a child's success in kindergarten.

Early entrance is designed for the exceptional child who is both academically accelerated as well as developmentally (social, emotional, motor) mature when compared to same-age peers. This opportunity is designed as a measure to meet individual differences in school readiness.

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?
- Is my child capable of appropriately interacting with peers (*e.g.*, sharing with others, taking turns, keeping hands/feet to self)?
- 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.*, maturity level of classmates, beginning college at a young age)?
- Early entrance is not designed as a replacement for child care. Is this a need for the child 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.*, pre-school 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 with new material/curriculum.

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 is expected of students in kindergarten?

Kindergarten, like many other areas in education, has changed considerably over the last several decades. Today's kindergarten students are engaged in a rigorous instructional program. Please take time to review *Ohio's New Learning Standards for Kindergarten*.

[Ohio's Learning Standards | Ohio Department of Education and Workforce](#)

The *Ohio Department of Education's* website contains useful information about kindergarten, in particular, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), which includes assessment in the areas of Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Social Foundations, and Physical Well Being and Motor Development.

[Ohio's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment | Ohio Department of Education and Workforce](#)

Kindergarten at FHEVS is a *full day, every day program*. School hours are provided on the building website, as well as in the elementary.

Ohio Department of Education (ODEW)

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Guidance-About-Kindergarten/Kindergarten-Readiness-Checklist>

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.

Is your child ready for kindergarten?

Development	Tips and Activities to Help Prepare Your Child
Physical Skills: Does your child . . . • Enjoy outdoor play such as running, jumping, and climbing • Draw and trace basic shapes • Cut with scissors • Bounce a ball • Ride a tricycle/bicycle	• 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/bicycle
Health and Safety Needs: Has your child . . . • 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(s) • learned to watch for cars when crossing the street • learned not to talk to strangers • developed a set routine for morning, evening, bedtime • learned to follow safety rules	• Help your child learn her or his full name, address, telephone number • Help your child learn 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 spend time reading to and talking with your child
Personal Needs: Without your help, can your child . . . • use the bathroom • wash hands • brush teeth • use tissue to blow nose • button and zip shirts, pants, coats • put on/take off coat/boots • tie and/or velcro shoes	• Create morning and bedtime bathing and tooth brushing routines • Allow your child to dress themselves • Practice putting on (tying) and taking off shoes/boots • Help your child learn to use their words to tell other grownups when they are feeling sick, hurt, or in need of help
Social and Emotional Skills: Does your child . . . • play well with other children • separate from parent without being upset • share with other children • care about the feelings of others • follow routines • put toys and supplies away when asked	• Give your child small chores to learn responsibility • Help your child learn to follow directions by giving simple steps • Encourage and provide opportunities for sharing • Praise your child when s/he does something well • Provide guidance when your child is having difficulty

Applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

If you believe your child may be a good candidate for early entrance, please obtain an information/application packet from the school. The application can also be found at the bottom of this packet.

Once the application has been completed it needs to be submitted to the office. Evaluations will then be completed.

The evaluation may include an observation by a district representative (for example, an elementary guidance counselor and/or school psychologist) in a pre-school setting. *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, as well as the motor development, of your child 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 may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- FHEVS elementary principal
- a kindergarten teacher from the FHEVS elementary building
- a parent or legal guardian of the referred child *or* a representative designated by a parent or legal guardian of the referred student
- a gifted education coordinator *or* gifted intervention specialist
- a school psychologist *or* guidance counselor

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

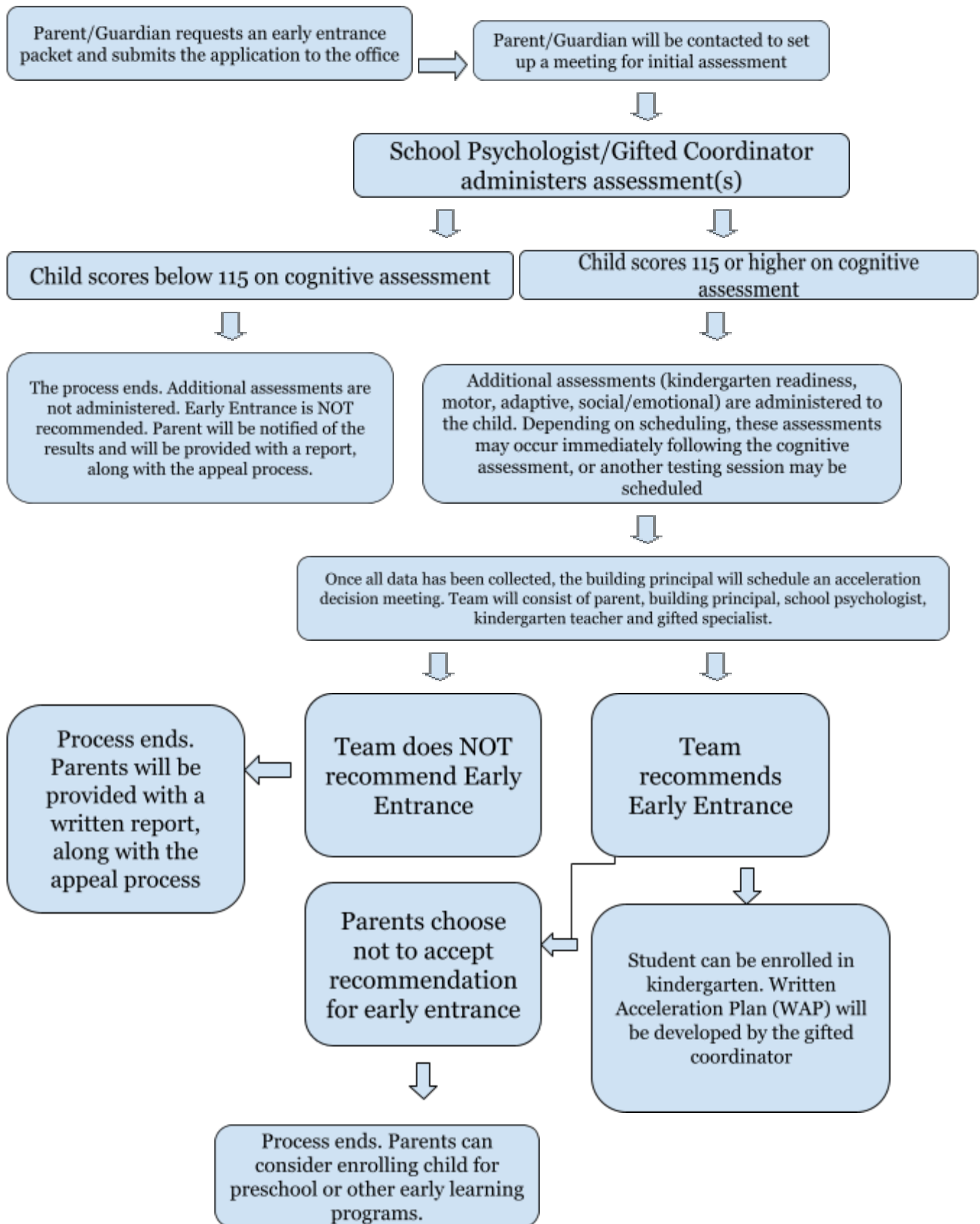
Children considered for early entrance shall be evaluated using the acceleration assessment process approved by the Ohio Department of Education.

Timeline for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Application for Early Entrance:

Evaluations will be completed and final determination issued within 45 days of submission of written application

Early Entrance to Kindergarten Timeline Flowchart



Application Packet for Early Entrance

Please complete the following information in its entirety and return the completed documents to the office.

1. Part 1: Referral and Consent for Early Entrance Evaluation
2. Part 2: Parent Checklist

Part 1: Referral and Consent for Early Entrance Evaluation

ABOUT EARLY ENTRANCE

A unique type of whole-grade acceleration is early entrance to school. 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*)

REFERRAL FOR:

Child's Name _____ Child's Date of Birth _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Daycare, Preschool, or Kindergarten Experience:

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.

Name of School/Program	Dates of Attendance	# of Hours per Week
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Type of Acceleration Requested:

____ Early Entrance to Kindergarten (my child will be 5 before January 1)

____ Early Entrance to 1st Grade (my child will be 6 before January 1)

Children who will benefit from early entrance may not exhibit all of the characteristics listed below; however, strong candidates will exhibit more of these characteristics than other children.

My child seems advanced beyond other children his/her age in these ways: CHECK ALL THAT

APPLY

- ☐ 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

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.

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.

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.

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.

Other considerations:

- ☐ My child: Has one or more older siblings in the grade in which he/she will be placed if admitted by early entrance which may cause social/emotional issues in the family. In which case, acceleration may not be advisable.
- ☐ Often did not want to attend preschool or missed preschool often because of illness or family issues.

I believe that my child exhibits a number of the characteristics listed above that indicate he/she might benefit by entering the grades K-12 program. I have reviewed the considerations and do not feel they would negatively impact my child's success in school.

I request and give consent for an evaluation of my child for possible early entrance to kindergarten or first grade.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the contents of the Early Entrance brochure and give permission to have your child assessed.

School Representative Receiving Referral (building administrator):

Date Referral Received: _____

Return this form, along with the Part 2 Parent Checklist (next page) to the office.

Part 2: Parent Checklist

The seven broad developmental dimensions provide the framework/foundation 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" FOR RATING. **PLEASE RETURN WITH APPLICATION.**

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

Performs self-help tasks independently (dressing, undressing, zipping, tying, toileting, eating, buckling, snapping)

Uses eye/hand coordination to perform fine motor skills (drawing, writing, cutting, gluing)

Uses balance and control to perform gross motor skills (walking, jumping, skipping)

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

Personal and Social Development

Shows eagerness to learn (curious, likes to investigate)

Follows rules and routines (cleans up after playtime)

Handles change and transition w/o incident (dinnertime to bedtime)

Interacts appropriately with one or more children

Separates w/o incident from parent/guardian

Possesses ability to listen (attend/focus) for at least 10 minutes

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

Language and Literacy

Listens for meaning in stories, discussions, conversations

Speaks clearly to share ideas and thoughts

Can identify all upper and lowercase letters

Can identify beginning sounds of most letters

Uses some letters and words to write

Can print first name and knows letter that begins last name

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

Mathematical Thinking

Can orally count forward to 20

Can recognize numbers 0 to 20

Can recognize, duplicate, and extend simple patterns

(circle-triangle, circle-triangle, circle-triangle)

Can recognize and duplicate basic shapes

(square, circle, triangle, star, rectangle, oval)

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

Scientific Thinking

Uses a magnifying glass to look at different objects

Can describe and sort objects by one or more properties

(size, shape, color, type)

Uses the five senses to make observations about the natural world

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

Social Studies

Recognizes similarities/differences between self and others

Describes roles and responsibilities of people

(e.g., mom is a doctor and she helps sick people)

Recognizes the reasons for rules

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

The Arts

Likes to paint, color, and draw

Likes to sing and dance (makes up songs/dances)

Can share ideas and thoughts about drawings/paintings

Can recognize and identify basic colors

(red, yellow, orange, blue, green, purple, pink, black, brown, white)

Frequently

Sometimes

Never

Return this form, along with the Part 1 Referral and Consent (previous page) to the office.