

Is Early Entry to Kindergarten the best choice for your child?

The early entrance for kindergarten process is designed to provide an opportunity for students to enter kindergarten early. The process is designed for students who are not only academically ready and advanced, but who are also demonstrating advanced characteristics socially, emotionally, and developmentally that would demonstrate readiness for the elementary classroom environment. Students who are ready for kindergarten early are advanced in multiple areas when compared to their same-age peers, or other four-year-olds of the same birth month. Advancement is necessary in multiple areas as kindergarten's expectations are heavily based on academics and preparing our students for the 21st century. Many students can demonstrate academic ability based on the exposure provided by parents and daycare settings; however, few children will demonstrate the aptitude, or thinking ability, needed to enter kindergarten early. When considering early entrance into kindergarten, keep in mind it is a process designed to meet the academic and social needs of the child, not as a replacement for child care. Students accepted into kindergarten early will be placed in a class where peers could be up to two years older.

The following factors and questions should be considered when determining if the early entrance process is something you wish to pursue for your child:

QUESTIONS	FACTORS/CHARACTERISTICS
• Is my child capable of working successfully with children who are one year older? • Does my child adapt well to change, or will the adjustment frustrate him/her? • What long-term impacts will early kindergarten placement have on my child's long-term academic career (e.g. beginning college and high school a year early)? • Does my child ask questions to advance his/her learning? • Can my child read, comprehend, and/or make connections to a story? Can my child decode challenging words? • Does my child have an understanding of basic math concepts, such as shapes, time, and number recognition? Does my child demonstrate leadership with same-age peers? • Is my child able to maintain interest for long periods of time? • Does my child demonstrate curiosity about learning new things? • Does my child demonstrate strong memory and recall skills? • Is my child able to maintain a structured schedule for longer periods of time than same-age peers?	My child... • Believes he/she can experience success at new tasks • Can maintain personal care and hygiene with little assistance from adults (e.g. use the bathroom, tie shoes, button and zip garments) • Thoughtfully considers feedback and adjusts behavior appropriately • Has the ability to focus attention for long periods of instruction • Demonstrates fine and large motor skills • coordination • Can be separated from a parent without being upset • Demonstrates strong interpersonal skills with age-mates and older peers • Follows routines and schedules • Is enthusiastic about elementary school • Follow given and multi-step directions

Early Kindergarten Entry Specifics

The North Carolina General Assembly passed BH-1099, allowing early admission to Kindergarten of a child who has reached his/her fourth birthday by April 16th if the child demonstrates extraordinary academic ability and maturity. The State of North Carolina has created standards for the principal to use in determining if a child is appropriate for early entrance to kindergarten. North Carolina House Bill 1099 was passed as public law in July. Once the principal receives the minimum requirements, the principal shall confer with a committee of professional educators. The School-Based Committee for Early Kindergarten Entry (SBCEKE), considers for each child various standards that will indicate readiness. The SBCEKE team will consist of a member of the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Curriculum or designee, Director of AIG & Advanced Students, School Administrator, Academic Coach, AIG Facilitator, social worker or counselor, Kindergarten teacher, and PreK teacher. Hoke County Public School System Board of Education policy 4100 B: Initial Entry-Discretionary Enrollment also sets forth specific local guidelines for early kindergarten entry.

The following criteria are considered for Early Kindergarten Entry:

Student Aptitude—A child eligible to enter Kindergarten early should be precocious in academic and social development and score at the 98th percentile or higher on a standard individual intelligence test such as the Stanford-Binet, The Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, the Kaufman Anderson, the Woodcock-Johnson or any other comparable tests, that shall be administered by a licensed psychologist. Although superior aptitude is a strong indicator of extraordinary intellectual ability; every child with a score at the 98th percentile or higher in intelligence may not need Early Kindergarten Entry. Some children may have a negative experience if the demands of a structured school day are imposed too early.

Achievement—Children entering kindergarten should be able to function one to two years beyond their peers. Children eligible for early admission to kindergarten will score at the 98th percentile or higher on a standard test of achievement such as the Metropolitan Readiness Test, the Stanford Early School Achievement Test, the Mini Battery of Achievement, the Woodcock-Johnson, the Test of Early Mathematics (TEMA), the Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA) or any other comparable tests that shall be administered by a licensed psychologist. Although superior achievement is a strong indicator of extraordinary academic ability; every child with a score at the 98th percentile or higher in achievement may not need Early Kindergarten Entry. Some children may have a negative experience if the demands of a structured school day are imposed too early. Beyond reading and rote counting skills, a child ready for Early Kindergarten Entry must demonstrate analytical thinking and problem-solving using academic concepts.

Performance—A child shall be able to perform tasks well above same-age peers as evidenced by behaviors in one or more areas such as independent reading, problem-solving skills, advanced vocabulary, and some writing fluency. This will be part of the observational assessment conducted by school personnel. These performance assessments will be considered in addition to the portfolio submitted as part of the Early Kindergarten Entry packet. The parent shall submit a sample of the child's work that shows outstanding examples of ability in any area including, but not limited to, art, mathematics, writing, dramatic play, creative productions, science, or social interactions.

Observable Student Behavior/Student Interest—If a child is to be successful in Kindergarten, the child should be socially and developmentally mature enough to be in a structured school setting for a demanding school day. The child should be capable of following verbal instructions and functioning independently within a group setting. Many children with extraordinary academic or intellectual

ability are not mature enough to handle kindergarten at age four. The child will be observed during an observational assessment to determine mental, emotional, physical, and social maturity. Observations will be used to assess endurance, independence, social interaction, language development, vocabulary, spatial relations, and cognitive skills. The parent shall provide two recommendation letters (from non-family members) with specific documentation of physical and social maturity from preschool teachers, child care workers, pediatricians, or others who have direct knowledge of the child.

Motivation/Student Interest—A child ready for Early Kindergarten Entry should be eager to learn and excited about a new school experience. The child should display a thirst for knowledge consequently pushing the parents for new and challenging learning situations. If only the parent is interested in the child attending school, early admission is not a good option. The principal or designee shall determine this information in an informal interview with the child and a more structured interview with the parent.

Early Kindergarten Entry Timeline

If your child will be 4 years old by April 16th of the current year, and you would like to apply for Early Kindergarten Entry (EKE), below is the timeline and paperwork necessary for application:

1. Complete Early Kindergarten Entry packet
 - It is preferred that all documents be submitted on or before the first instructional day of school.
 - Documents submitted after the first 30 calendar days of the school's instructional calendar will not be considered.
2. Parents may submit complete Early Kindergarten Entry Packets either in person to the Hoke County Board of Education at 310 Wooley Street, Raeford, NC or mail to the Elementary Curriculum & Instruction (ECI) Department at 116 W. Prospect Avenue, Rm 206 Raeford, NC 28376.
3. Following the receipt of the completed packet, a decision at the district level will be made:
 - Not accepted for Early Kindergarten Entry, OR
 - Possible Early Kindergarten Entry; need additional data.
4. The parent will schedule and pay for testing for the student. Testing must be completed by a licensed psychologist.
5. Following the receipt of the test scores, a decision at the district level will be made:
 - Not accepted for Early Kindergarten Entry, OR
 - Possible Early Kindergarten Entry; need additional data.
 - The Elementary Curriculum & Instruction Office will contact parents, and if applicable, forward all appropriate documents to the student's base school.
6. The ECI Office will send the entire Early Kindergarten Entry Packet, with checklist, to the assigned home school to the attention of the principal. Upon receipt of packet at the school site, the principal, or designee, with the School-Based Committee for Early Kindergarten Entry (SBCEKE) will conduct a review within 15 days. The school will contact the parent to notify and schedule separate interviews with the child and the parent. Following the interview with parent and child, a decision at the school level will be made:
 - Not accepted for Early Kindergarten Entry, OR
 - Possible Early Kindergarten Entry; need additional data.
7. The SBCEKE will conduct an observational assessment using the NC Early Learning Inventory (typically during staggered Kindergarten start dates).
8. Once additional data has been collected, the SBCEKE will determine:
 - Not accepted for Early Kindergarten Entry Conditional Enrollment, OR
 - Accepted for Early Kindergarten Entry Conditional Enrollment.
 - i. Conditional enrollment can last up to 90 calendar days. During conditional enrollment, the Principal may accept or deny the enrollment request. Enrollment may be denied for a child who has not adjusted either socially, behaviorally, or academically based on evidence collected while implementing an intervention plan. Parents will be invited to assist with all aspects of the intervention plan. Parents will be given at least 10 days'

notice to arrange for child care, if needed, before the withdrawal of the child from school if intervention strategies are not successful.

- At the end of the conditional enrollment period, if a child has adjusted and is thriving in the school environment, the child may be officially enrolled as an Early Kindergarten Entry student.
- Some students may also meet the criteria for, and be identified in, the Academically or Intellectually Gifted program. Specific program paperwork will be generated and shared with the parent(s) by the school's AIG Facilitator, if applicable.

Early Kindergarten Entry Required Documents

Parents will submit all documents listed below to initiate the Early Kindergarten Entry process. It is recommended that all documents be submitted on or before the first instructional day of school. Please consider all school calendars (traditional and year-round) when submitting documents. Documents submitted after the first 30 calendar days of the school's instructional calendar will not be considered. Please complete all documentation and submit to: either in person to the Hoke County Board of Education at 310 Wooley Street, Raeford, NC or mail it to the Elementary Education (ECI) Department at 116 W. Prospect Avenue Rm 206 Raeford, NC 28376.

☐ **Candidate Information Sheet**

Parents complete Sections I and II on the Application for Early Admission to Kindergarten.

☐ **Birth Certificate**

Provide a certified copy of the candidate's birth certificate.

☐ **Picture ID**

Parents must provide a copy of identification that includes their picture.

☐ **Proof of Residence**

Proof of residence (current mortgage statement/rental contract and current electric/water bill and current identification)

☐ **Student Performance Portfolio**

A student performance portfolio should include student work samples that show outstanding ability in any of the following areas: Art, Math, Reading Comprehension, Dramatic Play, Creative Production, Science, or Social Interactions, etc. A sample of the child's writing must be included.

☐ **Two letters of recommendation**

These may be from a preschool teacher, childcare worker, pediatrician or other professionals who can provide specific documentation of physical and social maturity.

☐ **Results of Standardized Aptitude and Achievement Tests**

☐ **Parent Consent for Evaluation and Data Collection**

☐ **Parent Observation Checklist: Demonstrated Gifted Learning Behavior**

Complete including any anecdotal notes to support any checks made in the "Often Observed" column. Submit anecdotal notes on an attached sheet labeled according to Learning/Behaviors Observations.

APPLICATION FOR EARLY ADMISSION TO KINDERGARTEN

Based on North Carolina Law and State Standards for Early Admission

PARENT/STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to present information to Hoke County Schools to support that the child has extraordinary academic ability and is appropriately mature to justify early admission.

SECTION I

STUDENT NAME: _____

(Please Print Clearly) Last

First

Middle

BIRTHDATE: _____

PARENTS' NAMES: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: Home _____ Work _____

HOME SCHOOL: _____

SECTION II

Information to Submit	Please initial that the following documents are included:
STUDENT WORK —Showing outstanding ability in any of the following areas: art, math, writing, dramatic play, creative productions, science, reading, social interactions, etc. Maximum of six items. Quality will be given greater consideration than quantity.	
TWO LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION —With specific documentation of physical and social maturity from child care workers, pediatricians, or others with direct knowledge of the child (non-family members).	
PARENT OBSERVATION CHECKLIST —With specific documentation of work samples that support any checks in the "Often Observed" column and parent anecdotal notes.	

When submission of the information listed above meets the minimum eligibility requirements, determination will be made whether to move forward with testing. If a child does not meet both aptitude and achievement test expectations the process stops there and a submission to the school is not necessary. If the student meets the minimum aptitude and achievement test expectations, **separate** interviews by school personnel with both the child and the parent(s) will evaluate the child's level of motivation and interest in learning. In addition, the school will conduct an assessment of the child to determine an extraordinary level of kindergarten readiness.

Parent Signature _____ Date Submitted _____

Parent Observation Checklist: Demonstrated Gifted Learning Behavior

Child: _____ School: _____

Person Completing Form: _____ Date: _____

This checklist is designed to provide essential information about your child to the School Based Committee for Early Kindergarten Entry. Please check the description that most accurately reflects your child's performance and behavior. Please check only one box in each row.

Please provide 2-3 work samples and anecdotal notes to support any checks in the "Often Observed" column below. Submit anecdotal notes on an attached sheet. Include the Learning Behaviors and Characteristic descriptions your notes are describing.

Learning Behaviors	Characteristics	Not Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed
1. Reasoning / Logical Thinking	My child independently reasons things out for himself/herself.			
	My child easily draws conclusions from presented information.			
	My child is able to go from the concrete to the abstract.			
2. Problem Solving Ability	My child offers unique and clever responses.			
	My child avoids typical ways of doing things, choosing instead to adapt, improve, and/or modify a problem or topic.			
3. Inquiry / Intellectual Curiosity	My child constantly asks questions about anything and everything.			
	My child is curious about the "how and why" of his/her surroundings.			
	My child is willing to challenge accepted ideas.			

Learning Behaviors	Characteristics	Not Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed
4. Insight	My child is keenly observant; he/she usually “sees more or gets more” out of a story, film, experiment, problem, etc. than others.			
	My child shows emotional sensitivity to world issues.			
	My child is concerned with right and wrong and good and bad.			
5. Communication Skills	My child uses advanced vocabulary for his/her age in written and oral communication.			
	My child demonstrates expressive and effective use of words, numbers, and symbols.			
6. Creativity / Imagination	My child generates a large number of ideas or solutions and elaborates upon them.			
	My child is an innovative risk-taker who finds imaginative ways of solving problems.			
	My child enjoys “playing with ideas.”			
7. Self-Awareness	My child displays a keen sense of humor.			
	My child is individualistic and does not fear being different.			
	My child strives towards perfection and is self-critical.			
	My child is adamant about his/her beliefs.			
	My child adapts readily to new situations.			
8. Memory	My child knows numerous facts about many subjects.			
	My child demonstrates quick mastery and recall of factual information.			

Learning Behaviors	Characteristics	Not Observed	Sometimes Observed	Often Observed
9. Student Academic Performance	My child demonstrates well-developed organizational skills.			
	Routine tasks easily bore my child.			
	My child sets high personal goals and strives for academic excellence.			
10. Interest	My child reads a great deal and frequently selects books well beyond his/her age.			
	My child enjoys learning for his/her own sake.			
	My child displays an intense interest and skill in an area.			
11. Motivation to Learn	My child needs little external motivation and enjoys the challenge of new and different topics.			
	My child is a “self-starter” who works well alone, needs few directions, and little supervision.			

Comments: Please list any academic awards, special interests, talents, competitions and/or extracurricular activities you feel would help the District Based Committee better understand your child.

Parent Consent for Evaluation and Data Collection

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____

Parent Name: _____

Address: _____

Dear Parents,

You are requesting for your child to be considered for Early Kindergarten Entry (EKE). The EKE process requires standardized test scores in both aptitude and achievement. Additionally, the EKE process involves observations, interviews and data collection. This data will be used to determine your child's eligibility for early kindergarten entry.

Recommendation(s) resulting from the review of the standardized test scores, interviews and/or observations will be sent to you as each phase of the process is completed.

EKE Information: Found at: www.hcs.k12.nc.us

Consent for Evaluation

PLEASE return one signed copy to the Elementary Education Department with your complete Early Kindergarten Entry Packet and keep one copy for your files.

_____ **Yes**, I give my permission for my child's standardized test scores to be used in considering EKE eligibility. I also give my permission for my child to participate in the required interviews, observations and/or conditional enrollment in kindergarten to determine eligibility for EKE. This permission remains in effect as long as my child is part of the Early Kindergarten Entry process.

_____ **No**, I do not give my permission for my child's standardized test scores to be used in considering EKE eligibility or for my child to participate in the required interviews, observations and/or conditional enrollment in kindergarten to determine eligibility for EKE. In denying permission, I am aware that Early Kindergarten Entry will not be considered for my child.

Parent Signature

Date

Early Kindergarten Entry Candidate Information Sheet

Child's Name: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Contact: _____

EKE Packet Submitted

Date Received: _____ **Date Reviewed:** _____

Packet is complete and contains work samples _____, two letters of recommendation _____, and parent survey _____.

___ Not accepted for Early Kindergarten Entry

___ Possible EKE; need additional data.

Testing

___ Testing Scheduled

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Testing Information

Date Received: _____ **Date Reviewed:** _____

Student has met state test requirements of 98% on aptitude & achievement for Early Kindergarten Entry: _____

Student has not met state test requirements of 98% on aptitude & achievement for Early Kindergarten Entry: _____

___ Not accepted for Early Kindergarten Entry

___ Possible EKE; need additional data.

Date Parent Contacted: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Sent to the School

Submitted to home school: _____ (Date)

Principal Name: _____

The parent has completed the EKE packet and the above information is accurate; **your school should continue the EKE process/data collection and complete the appropriate steps as applicable for an EKE**

decision/recommendation.

Date Parent Contacted: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Student/Parent Interview

Date Parent Contacted for Interview: _____ **Scheduled Interview Date and Time:**

Student interviewed by: _____

Parent interviewed by: _____

Date of Team Meeting: _____

Team Members in Attendance: _____

___ Not accepted for Early Kindergarten Entry

___ Possible EKE; need additional data

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Student Behavior Observed (NCELI)

Date Parent Contacted for Observation: _____ **Scheduled Observation Date and Time:**

Student observed by: _____

Date of Team Meeting: _____

Team Members in Attendance: _____

___ Not accepted for Early Kindergarten Entry

___ Accepted for Early Kindergarten Entry

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____