

A Parent's Guide to
Early Entrance
to Kindergarten

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Legislation Governing Early Entrance to Kindergarten and Giftedness

- In December 2025, **Governor DeWine signed House Bill 114**, which changes the kindergarten age eligibility requirement for children starting kindergarten in Ohio. **Children must be 5 years old on or before the first day of school** to be eligible to enroll for the school year. This means that your scholar must be five years of age on or before the first school day for students as indicated on a district's calendar.
- A parent may request *early* admission to kindergarten if the child turns five years of age after the State's kindergarten entrance date (August 1) and before January 1. The local board of education shall determine entrance through a standardized testing program.
- Children who will not yet be the proper 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 admittance if referred by an educator within the district, a pre-school educator who knows the child, or pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.
- Early entrance to kindergarten is a subject typically addressed through gifted education. It is covered in the State of Ohio's *Model Student Acceleration Policy*. According to the Ohio Revised Code (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 Division (A), (B), (C), or (D) of Section 3324.03 of the Revised Code.

Tiffin City School District

- By parental request a child may be tested for *early* admission to kindergarten if s/he will be five (5) years of age between the first day of school and December 31st, inclusive, and exhibit the mental, social and emotional standards established by the Tiffin City Schools Board of Education. **If your child turns 5 years of age after January 1st and you believe s/he is a viable candidate for early entrance, please contact the Office of Gifted Education.**
- During the 2006 school year the Tiffin City Schools Board of Education adopted the State of Ohio's *Model Student Acceleration Policy for Advanced Learners*:

"A child who does not meet the age requirement for admittance to kindergarten or first grade, but who will be five or six years old, respectively, prior to January 1 of the school year in which admission is requested, shall be evaluated for early admittance in accordance with District policy upon referral by the child's parent or guardian, an educator employed by the district, a preschool educator who knows the child or a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child. Following an evaluation in accordance with such a referral, the Superintendent/designee decides whether to admit the child.

If a child, for whom admission to kindergarten or first grade is requested, will not be five or six years of age, respectively, prior to January 1 of the school year in which admission is requested, the child is admitted only in accordance with the District's acceleration policy adopted under State law." The Early Entrance to kindergarten process shall be reviewed annually by the Early Entrance to Kindergarten Committee.

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, s/he may not be ready for kindergarten. Social maturity, personal development, and motor development are important factors for a child's success in school.

Early entrance is *designed for the exceptional child* who is both academically ready as well as developmentally mature when compared to others his or her chronological age. 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 than him or her?
- 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., beginning college at a younger age)?
- Early entrance is not designed as a replacement for child care. Is this a *need* 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., preschool 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 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.

What is expected of students in kindergarten?

- 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.
- Parents can access the *Early Learning Content Standards* as well as the subject specific *Academic Content Standards* for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies on the *Ohio Department of Education* website.
- The *Ohio Department of Education's* website contains useful information about kindergarten, in particular, the Ohio Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Revised. There is a family guide on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment for Families page which details the assessment all kindergarten students will take within the first six weeks of school.
- Kindergarten in the Tiffin City School District is a *full-day program*. Currently we have eight sections of kindergarten from approximately 8:45 a.m. until 3:15 p.m. Students are expected to participate in the academic program throughout the day.

Ohio Department of Education (ODE)

(<http://www.ode.state.oh.us>)

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. But please remember, young children change so fast. If they cannot do something this week, you may see them do it a couple of weeks later.

Is your child ready for kindergarten? Ask yourself these questions:

Development Area	Tips and Activities to Help Prepare Your Child
<p>Physical Skills Does your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enjoy outdoor play such as running, jumping, and climbing; • draw and trace basic shapes; • cut with scissors; • bounce a ball; • ride a tricycle? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Health and Safety Needs Has your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • learned to watch for cars when crossing the street; • learned to not talk to strangers; • developed a set routine for going to bed; • learned to follow safety rules? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help your child learn his or her full name, address and telephone number. • Help your child 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 read to and talk with your child.
<p>Personal needs Without your help, can your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the bathroom; • wash hands; • brush teeth; • use tissue to blow nose; • button and zip up shirts and pants; • put on and take off coat; • tie and/or use velcro shoes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create morning and bedtime bathing and tooth-brushing routines. • Allow your child to dress themselves. • Practice putting on shoes. • Help your child learn to use their words to tell other grownups when they are feeling sick or hurt.
<p>Social and Emotional Skills Does your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play well with other children; • separate from a parent without being upset; • share with other children; • care about the feelings of others; • follow routines; • put toys away when asked? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give your child small chores to learn responsibility. • Help your child learn to follow directions by giving simple steps. • Encourage your child to share. • Praise your child when he or she does something well. • Provide guidance when your child is having difficulty.

Applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

If you believe that your child may be a good candidate for early entrance, please put your request for early entrance in writing by sending the application form to the building principal **no later than May 1** in the year for which admission is being requested. The principal interviews the parent(s) and child and arranges for testing. The child's mental age should be between 14 and 16 months above his/her chronological age as determined by standardized tests. The child's I.Q. *should* be at least 125 on a deviation scale as determined by standardized testing, however special consideration will be given to children with August birthdays.

- An observation by a district representative (elementary guidance counselor and/or school psychologist) in a preschool setting *may* need to be scheduled for your child. *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 necessary to be successful in a school environment.
- Evaluations will be completed by July.
- 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 the following: the home school principal, a kindergarten teacher *or* a gifted services teacher, a parent *or* legal guardian of the referred student *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?

- Early entrance evaluation is completed in the late spring concurrently with kindergarten registration.
- The *Ohio Department of Education* has a checklist for kindergarten readiness on its website. When looking at whether early entrance is appropriate for a child, the same readiness guidelines should be considered.
- Students who are viable candidates for Early Entrance to Kindergarten are expected to be developmentally “on track” with the typical kindergarten student. Should a student meet the identification criteria for Superior Cognitive identification but fail to meet the developmental readiness assessment, the acceleration team (principal, kindergarten teacher, gifted services specialist, parent and/or legal guardian(s), guidance counselor, and school psychologist) will then discuss and reach consensus as to what placement is best for the child.

Instruments that *may* be used:

Adaptive Behavior

Vineland-II Adaptive Behavior Scales: Survey Interview Form

Achievement

Woodcock Johnston IV

Cognitive Ability

Kbit 2

Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence-Third Edition (WPPSI-III)

Social-Emotional Functioning

Child Behavior Checklist for Ages 1.5 – 5 (CBCL 1.5- 5)

Visual-Motor Integration

Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (VMI)

Timeline for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

May 1	Deadline for Early Entrance to kindergarten applications
	Return application to: Washington Elementary School 151 Elmer St Tiffin, OH 44883 (419) 447-1072
May (Third week)	Deadline for assigned psychologist(s) to complete evaluations and assessments
May (Fourth and fifth weeks)	Deadline for school to complete acceleration committee meeting(s)
June (first and second weeks)	Deadline for written notification of outcome of the evaluation process
July (first week)	Deadline to submit a written appeal to the Superintendent or his/her designee regarding the outcome of the evaluation process

IMPORTANT

Very few children qualify for early entrance to kindergarten. Please make sure you proceed with child care arrangements as a contingency. If you are selecting a Preschool program please understand that those programs routinely fill up quickly.

Washington Elementary School

151 Elmer St.
Tiffin, Ohio 44883

Phone: (419) 447-1072

Principal: Jennifer Watson



ACADEMIC ACCELERATION FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS

Application FORM Due by May 1

EARLY ENTRANCE

ABOUT EARLY ENTRANCE ~ A unique type of whole-grade acceleration is early entrance to school (i.e., kindergarten or first grade). 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...Brightest Students, 2004*)

REFERRAL FOR:

Child Name _____ **Potential School** _____

Date of Birth _____

Address _____ **Phone** _____

Email _____

Type of Acceleration Requested: *check one*

- Early Entrance to Kindergarten (my child will be 5 after the first day of school but before January 1)
- Early Entrance to Kindergarten (my child will **not** be 5 before January 1)
- Early Entrance to 1st Grade (my child will be 6 after the first day of school but before January 1)
- Early Entrance to 1st Grade (my child will **not** 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.

What to look for in the areas of ability/achievement/aptitude/behavior? *Check all that apply*

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.

What are some important school and academic factors? *Check all that apply*

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? *Check all that apply*

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 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.

Some 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 (early entrance) 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 evaluation for my child for possible early entrance to kindergarten or first grade.

Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Please return this application to the principal of Washington K-1 Elementary or The Tiffin City Schools *Office of Gifted Education*, 103 Shepherd Drive, Tiffin, Ohio 44883 by May 1 in the year for which admission is being requested. The referral request will be processed and parents will receive the final determination for early entrance in 45-60 days from the date the referral is received so long as that referral was received on or before May 1.

TCS Employee Receiving Referral**Date****Preschool Experience** - *(please attach preschool report card if available)*

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/Week
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

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, if needed)*

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the Early Entrance to Kindergarten handbook:

_____/_____/_____
 Signature, Custodial Parent / Guardian Date

PARENT CHECKLIST

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
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	None of the time
Shows eagerness to learn (curious, likes to investigate)	_____	_____	_____
Follows rules and routines (cleans up at play time)	_____	_____	_____
Handles change and transition (dinnertime 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	None of the time
Listens for meaning in stories, discussions, and conversations	_____	_____	_____
Speaks clearly, to share ideas and thoughts	_____	_____	_____
Can identify most letters (uppercase and lowercase)	_____	_____	_____
Can identify some beginning sounds	_____	_____	_____
Use some letters and words to write	_____	_____	_____

Mathematical Thinking	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Can recognize numbers 0-20	_____	_____	_____
Can orally count forward to 20	_____	_____	_____
Can recognize, duplicate, and extend simple patterns (circle-triangle, circle-triangle, circle-triangle)	_____	_____	_____
Can recognize and duplicate basic shapes	_____	_____	_____

Scientific Thinking	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
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 the natural world	_____	_____	_____

Social Studies	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Recognizes self and others 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	_____	_____	_____

The Arts	Frequently	Sometimes	None of the time
Likes to paint and draw	_____	_____	_____
Likes to sing and dance	_____	_____	_____
Can share ideas about a drawing/painting	_____	_____	_____

Pre-School TEACHER CHECKLIST

Teacher completing this form _____ email _____

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

Frequently

Sometimes

None of the time

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

None of the time

Shows eagerness to learn (curious, likes to investigate)	_____	_____	_____
Follows rules and routines (cleans up at play time)	_____	_____	_____
Handles change and transition (dinnertime 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

None of the time

Listens for meaning in stories, discussions, and conversations	_____	_____	_____
Speaks clearly, to share ideas and thoughts	_____	_____	_____
Can identify most letters (uppercase and lowercase)	_____	_____	_____
Can identify some beginning sounds	_____	_____	_____
Use some letters and words to write	_____	_____	_____

Mathematical Thinking

Frequently

Sometimes

None of the time

Can recognize numbers 0-20	_____	_____	_____
Can orally count forward to 20	_____	_____	_____
Can recognize, duplicate, and extend simple patterns (circle-triangle, circle-triangle, circle-triangle)	_____	_____	_____
Can recognize and duplicate basic shapes	_____	_____	_____

Scientific Thinking

Frequently

Sometimes

None of the time

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 the natural world	_____	_____	_____

Social Studies

Frequently

Sometimes

None of the time

Recognizes self and others 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	_____	_____	_____

The Arts

Frequently

Sometimes

None of the time

Likes to paint and draw	_____	_____	_____
Likes to sing and dance	_____	_____	_____
Can share ideas about a drawing/painting	_____	_____	_____
Can recognize basic colors	_____	_____	_____