

The 1997 General Assembly passed legislation allowing a child who has reached his/her birthday by April 16 to enter kindergarten at the beginning of the upcoming school year if he/she demonstrates an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity. In determining eligibility, the principal shall convene a committee of educational professionals who will assist him/her in making decisions about each individual child.

Early kindergarten entry is equivalent to whole grade advancement (skipping a grade) therefore, consider the following:

- Can the needs of the child best be met through Early Kindergarten Entry or can the needs of the child be met through Kindergarten the following year?
- Does the child demonstrate an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity in all areas (cognitive skills, social-emotional skills, early learning skills and mastery of academic skills)?
- What is the child's maturity level (sharing with others, cooperative play, taking turns, following directions, and handling frustration)? Remember that Kindergarten is a full school day, and the child must share a teacher's time with many other children.
- Is the child confident interacting with older children and adults (social confidence and communication skills)?
- Is the child ready for school (following routines, working independently, self-help skills including dressing and eating)?

Criteria that shall be considered include the following:

- Student Aptitude
- Student Achievement
- Observable Student Behavior
- Student Performance
- Student Interest
- Student Motivation

***The parent/legal guardian is responsible for arranging and paying for independent testing as specified below. The child must be four years old on or before April 16 in the year early Kindergarten entry is requested. Testing must be administered after April 16.**

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

Achievement (The most recent edition of these assessments must be used.) Children entering kindergarten early shall be functioning two or three years beyond their peers. Children eligible for early admission to kindergarten shall score at the 98th percentile on a standard test of achievement such as the Metropolitan Readiness Test, Woodcock-Johnson, the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT), or any other comparable test administered by a licensed psychologist, a member of the psychologist's professional staff, or a professional educator who is trained in the use of the instrument and who has no conflict of interest in the outcome of the assessment.

Performance Children displaying a need to enter kindergarten early shall be able to perform tasks well above their age peers. The principal shall consider the child's ability in independent reading, problem solving skills, advanced vocabulary and some writing fluency and behaviors indicative of a precocious preschooler. The parents shall submit a portfolio of student work showing outstanding examples of ability in **any** of the following areas: Art, Math, Writing, Dramatic Play, Creative Productions, Science, Social Interactions, etc. A writing sample must be included. Other samples may include a list of books that the child has read without assistance, examples of math skills and information from the Parent Observation Checklist. A running record, a story retelling and math tasks will be conducted during the observational assessment.

Observable Student Behavior/Student Interest If a child is to be successful in early admission, he/she 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 ability are not mature enough to handle the rigors of kindergarten at age four. The school system shall require two recommendation letters with specific documentation of physical and social maturity from preschool teachers, childcare workers, pediatricians, or others with direct knowledge of the child. Documentation checklists that might be useful are the California Preschool Competency Scale, the Harrison Scale, or any other comparable scale typical of early social development. If early kindergarten entry is granted, at the beginning of the school year the student will be observed during a kindergarten day to determine mental, emotional, physical and social maturity; indicators include endurance throughout the school day, independence, social interaction, language development, vocabulary, spatial relations and cognitive skills.

Motivation/Student Interest A child ready for early admission to kindergarten should be eager to learn and excited about a new school experience. The children should display an eagerness to learn, consequently pushing the parents for new and challenging learning situations. If only the parent is interested in the child's attending school, early admission is not a good option. Principals shall determine this information in an informal interview with the child and a more structured interview with the parent. Questions the principal might ask the child would concentrate on the personal interests of the child. A child who is ready for school should respond with "school type" quests for knowledge. For instance, a child who is a candidate might watch educational television shows, read everything he/she can find about dinosaurs, be able to carry on a discussion about volcanoes, etc. Documentation of the child's interests and motivation are also provided by the child's work samples and the Parent Observation Checklist.

Timelines

The child must be four years old on or before April 16 in the year early Kindergarten entry is requested. Testing must be administered after April 16. The completed early entry packet must be submitted to the Principal at least 30 days before the beginning of the school year. The Principal and the school's AIG (Academically Intellectually Gifted) Specialist will review the packet to determine if the child's testing scores and other documentation meet the minimum requirements for consideration for early kindergarten entry. If the child meets the requirements, the principal will convene a school based committee, including the AIG Specialist. The principal will act on the request within three (3) weeks of receipt of the packet from the parent/legal guardian.

If the child is admitted to kindergarten, before the end of the first ninety (90) days of the child's being enrolled, the principal or the parent/legal guardian may request that the child be withdrawn based on substantial evidence documenting that the child is not adjusting satisfactorily to the school setting. If a parent requests a withdrawal, they must be invited to assist in the development of intervention strategies before a child may be exited from school. If the strategies are not successful and the decision is made to remove the child from school, parents must be given at least ten (10) days notice to arrange childcare if needed.

Legal References:

G.S. 115C-288, -364; 130A-109; House Bill 1099; 16 N.C.A.C. 6E.0105; State Board of Education Policy GCS-J-001

Submitted for Information: March 7, 2013

Checklist of Items Required from the Parent/Legal Guardian:

- Certified Copy of Child’s Birth Certificate**
- Parent’s Photo Identification**
- Proof of Residence** – Current utility bill, signed lease/rental agreement, current mortgage statement (telephone bills, cable/satellite TV bills, and address on driver’s license do not quality)
- Student Aptitude Assessment**
 - The only aptitude tests accepted for early kindergarten entry are:
 - Stanford-Binet,
 - Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI-R)
 - Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children
 - Other comparable tests as approved by the Special Services Department
 - The most recent version of the test must be administered.
 - The tests must be administered by a licensed psychologist or a licensed psychologist associate.
 - Total test score must be at or above the 98th percentile.
 - Prorated scores are not accepted.
 - Assessments must be completed after April 16 of the current year.
- Student Achievement Assessment for Reading and Mathematics**
 - The only achievement tests accepted for early kindergarten entry are:
 - Woodcock-Johnson (preferred) – Administer subtests 9, 10, 17A, 17B, 17C, 18A, and 18B. These subtests will yield cluster scores of Reading Comprehension and Math Reasoning.
 - Metropolitan Readiness Test
 - Stanford Early School Achievement Test
 - Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)
 - Other comparable tests as approved by the Special Services Department
 - The most recent version of the test must be administered.
 - The tests must be administered by a licensed psychologist, licensed psychologist associate, or a trained impartial professional educator
 - Assessments must be completed after April 16 of the current year.
- Student Performance Portfolio** to include samples of student work that shows outstanding ability in any of the following areas: Art, Math, Dramatic Play, Creative Production, Science, or Social Interactions, etc. A sample of the child’s writing must be included.
- Two Letters of Recommendation**
 - One letter must come from the child’s pediatrician and should include a completed Harrison Scale.

- One letter may come from a preschool teacher, childcare worker, or others who can provide specific documentation of physical and social maturity.
- **Parent/Guardian Release Form**
 - Gives permission to Buncombe County Schools to review testing documentation provided.
- **Parent Observation Checklist**

**PARENT OBSERVATIONAL CHECKLIST:
DEMONSTRATED LEARNING BEHAVIORS**

Student: _____ Student ID#: _____ Current Grade Level: _____

Form Completed By: _____ Date: _____ School: _____

| Characteristics | | Not Observed | Sometimes Observed | Often Observed |
|--|--|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 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. | | | |
| 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. | | | |
| 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. | | | |
| 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. | | | |

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| Characteristics | | Not Observed | Sometimes Observed | Often Observed |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 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. | | | |
| | My child generates a large number of ideas or solutions | | | |
| | My child is an innovative risk taker who finds imaginative ways of solving ideas. | | | |
| | My child enjoys “playing with ideas.” | | | |
| Memory | My child knows numerous facts about many subjects. | | | |
| | My child demonstrates quick mastery and recall of factual information. | | | |
| 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. | | | |
| Interest | My child reads a great deal of frequently selects books well beyond his/her age. | | | |
| | My child enjoys learning for its own sake. | | | |
| | My child displays an intense interest and skill in an area. | | | |
| 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 needing few directions and little supervision. | | | |
| 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. | | | |