



North Carolina Early Entry to Kindergarten Process



Early entrance to Kindergarten is a process designed as an opportunity for students to enter kindergarten early. This process is designed for students who are not only academically ready and advanced, but who are 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 same-age peers, or other four year olds of the same birth month. Advancement is necessary in multiple areas as kindergarten expectations are heavily based on academics and preparing our students for the future. Many students can demonstrate academic ability based on exposure provided by the parents/guardians and day care settings; however, few children will demonstrate the aptitude, or thinking ability, needed to enter kindergarten early. When considering early entrance to kindergarten, keep in mind it is a process designed to meet the academic and social needs of an advanced child, not a replacement for child care. Students who are accepted into kindergarten early are placed in classrooms where peers could be up to two years older.

The 1997 General Assembly passed legislation (BH-1099) allowing a child who has reached his/her fourth birthday by April 16th to enter kindergarten if he or she demonstrate extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity and is presented to the principal of the school within the first thirty (30) calendar days of the school year. In determining eligibility, the principal shall convene a committee of educational professionals who will assist him/her in making decisions about each individual child.

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. Once the principal receives the minimum requirements and the application for early entrance to kindergarten, the principal shall confer with a committee of professional educators to consider each child's various indicators that indicate readiness. Standards established by the state of North Carolina are described as follows:

- **Student Aptitude Indicator - 98th Percentile** - A child eligible to enter school early shall be precocious in academic and social development. The child shall 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 Anderson*, or any other comparable tests, that shall be administered by a licensed psychologist outside of MICS. The psychologist should send the completed battery of test results to the principal of the school. The AIG department nor the principal will accept test results from the child's parents/guardians.
- **Student Achievement Indicator - 98th Percentile** - A child entering kindergarten early shall be functioning two to three years beyond their same-age peers. The child shall score at the 98th percentile on either Reading and Mathematics on a standard test 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 outside of MICS. The psychologist should send the completed battery of test results to the principal of the school. The AIG department nor the principal will accept test results from the child's parents/guardians.

- **Student Performance Indicator - Student Work Sample** - The 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. 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 Interests Indicators - 2 Letters of Recommendation & Social Development Checklist** - The child shall demonstrate social and developmental maturity sufficient to participate in a structured setting for a full school day. The child shall be capable of following verbal instructions and functioning independently within a specific documentation of physical and social maturity from preschool teachers, child care workers, pediatricians or others who have direct knowledge of the child. Useful documentation checklists include the *California Preschool Competency Scale*, the *Harrison Scale*, or other comparable scale of early social development. In accordance with general assembly legislation passed in 1997, MICS requires two letters of recommendation with specific documentation of physical and social maturity from people outside the student's family such as preschool teachers, child care workers, pediatricians, or other adults with direct knowledge of the child.
- **Motivation/Student Interest Indicator - Parent & Student Interviews** - The principal or principal's designee shall conduct an informal interview with the child and a more structured interview with the parent/guardian to determine if the child displays a thirst for knowledge and seeks new and challenging learning situations.

Parents wishing to have their children considered for early entrance to kindergarten must submit information within the first 30 calendar days of the school's instructional year. **All testing should be administered after the April 16th that follows the child's fourth birthday.** The principal shall decide whether to grant the parent's/guardian's request for enrollment within three weeks of receiving this information. The principal may conditionally enroll the child for up to ninety days in order to observe whether the child is able to adjust to the school setting. If the principal determines that the child has not adjusted to the school setting, the principal shall deny the request for enrollment. However, before the child is exited from the school, the principal shall invite the parent/guardian to assist in the development of intervention strategies for the child. If those strategies are not successful, the principal shall provide the parent/guardian at least 10 days' notice before exiting the child from the school so that arrangements for the child can be made, if needed.

Early admission to kindergarten does not automatically result in the placement of the child in gifted services. By the time the child has been enrolled for 90 calendar days, or at any earlier time that school officials determine that the child has adjusted satisfactorily and shall be allowed to remain in school, the school's AIG Team shall review the child's information to determine if the child meets the expectations established by the MICS AIG Plan for Gifted Education. If the team determines the child is eligible to receive gifted services, it shall develop an Individualized Differentiated Education Plan (IEP) for the child and contact the parent/guardian.

Steps for Parents to Take

1. Schedule aptitude and achievement testing with a licensed psychologist outside of MICS. It is recommended that parents/guardians receive a referral from the child's pediatrician and/or family physician. Testing is at the cost of the family and must occur after April 16th of the child's fourth birthday.
2. If the child meets the minimum testing expectations of 98th percentile on aptitude and 98th percentile on reading and math achievement, begin to gather work samples, two letters of recommendation (from non-family members), and a social development checklist. If the child does not meet these expectations, the process stops here.
3. Upon gathering all standard information: aptitude scores, achievement scores, student work samples, letters of recommendation (from non-family members), and social development checklist, complete the application for early admission to kindergarten (this is the online enrollment form).
4. Submit all documentation and application to the principal of MICS.
5. If an administrator feels submitted documentation meets the minimum requirements, a school-based interview/assessment will be scheduled to meet the child and parent/guardian.