

Johnston County Public Schools Standards for Early Admission to Kindergarten

The 1997 General Assembly passed legislation allowing a child who has reached his/her fourth birthday by April 16 to enter kindergarten if he or 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. Criteria that shall be considered include the following:

- Student Aptitude
 - All testing must be administered after April 16th.
- Student Achievement
 - All testing must be administered after April 16th.
- Observable Student Behavior
- Student Performance
- Student Interest
- Student Motivation

Student Aptitude (The most recent edition of these assessments must be used.)

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 to 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 Test of Early Mathematics (TEMA) paired with the Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA),** or any other comparable tests. A licensed psychologist will have access to appropriate standard tests of achievement. The licensed psychologist or a professional member of his/her staff may administer the test. Also an impartial professional educator who is trained in the use of the instrument may administer such a test as long as her/she has no potential 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 as 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. The student will also 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. These children 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'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 should 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. A child who is a candidate might watch the Discovery Channel, read everything he/she can find about dinosaurs, be able to carry on a discussion about volcanoes, etc. Documentation of the child's intense interests and motivation are also provided by the child's work samples and the Parent Observational Checklist.

Timelines

All testing must be administered after April 16th that follows the child's fourth birthday. A parent pursuing early admission to kindergarten for his/her child shall submit the completed Early Entry Packet to the school principal in the appropriate attendance district for initial review. The principal will act on the request within three (3) weeks of receipt of the packet from Central Services.

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 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, the parent 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 child care if needed.