

Middletown City Schools

One Donham Plaza, 4th floor

Middletown, OH 45042

Parent's Guide for Early Entrance to

Kindergarten





Legislation Governing Early Entrance to Kindergarten and Giftedness

1. Requesting Early Admission - Ohio

In Ohio, a parent may request *early* admission to kindergarten if the child turns five years of age after the district's kindergarten entrance date of August 1 and before the following January 1. The local board of education shall determine entrance through a standardized testing program.

2. Referral by an Educator

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.

3. Acceleration

State of Ohio

Acceleration is the Law (House Bill 79 amended to House Bill 66 – June 30, 2006). Early entrance to kindergarten is a subject covered in the State of Ohio's *Model Student Acceleration Policy*. Appropriate use of accelerated learning opportunities; early entrance kindergarten, whole grade, subject, and early graduation support compliance with requirements in Ohio Administrative Code 3301-35-06.

Middletown City Schools Procedures

1. Age Eligibility

Middletown City School District considers a child eligible for entrance into "regular" kindergarten if he/she attains the age of five on or before August 1st of the year he/she applies for entrance. A child under the age of six (6) who is enrolled in kindergarten will be considered of compulsory school age.

2. Early Admission Request

By parental request a child may be tested for *early* admission to kindergarten if he/she will be five (5) years of age between August 1st and January 1st, inclusive, and exhibit the mental, social, and emotional standards established by the Middletown Board of Education.



If your child turns 5 years of age after August 1 and you believe he/she is a viable candidate for early entrance, please contact the Gifted Department.

There are four types of acceleration that may be requested by parents for early entrance:

- **Kindergarten:** A child will be 5 before January 1st.
- **Kindergarten:** A child will **not** be 5 before January 1st.
- **First grade:** A child will be 6 before January 1st.
- **First grade:** A child will **not** be 6 before January 1st.

3. Board of Education Adopted State of Ohio Policy

Middletown City Schools Board of Education adopted the State of Ohio's *Model Student Acceleration Policy for Advanced Learners*:

"Children who are referred for evaluation for possible accelerated placement 60 or more days prior to the start of the school year shall be evaluated in advance of the start of the school year so that the child may be placed in the accelerated placement on the first day of school."

"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. 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 may also be evaluated for possible early admittance *at the discretion of the principal* of the school to which the student may be admitted."

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 for a child 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 very 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. 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 or physical size for athletics).
- 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 to look for in the areas of ability/achievement/aptitude/behavior?

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.
- Has excellent fine motor skills when compared with other age mates (e.g. can write letters upper case and lower case).

Expectations of Kindergarten Students

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. In addition, Ohio, along with many other states across the United States, has adopted Common CORE for the purpose of preparing Ohioans to meet the demands of the knowledge-based economy and the needs of the 21st century.

Parents can easily 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.



<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?page=2&TopicRelationID=463>

What are some important school and academic factors?

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.*
- *Has the ability to attend, or pay attention, for relatively long period of instruction.*
- *He/she can draw and trace basic shapes and cut with scissors.*

What are some important developmental factors?

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.*
- *He/she can use the bathroom without adult help.*
- *He/she can button and zip up shirts and pants, tie or Velcro shoes and put on and take off his/her coat.*
- *Has the ability to separate from the parent without being upset.*

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.*
- *Has the ability to follow routines.*

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 understand that a child's success in school depends on support provided at home. 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.*

2. Ohio Department of Education Website

Parents can easily access more information about Kindergarten on the *Ohio Department of Education* website.

ODE > Topics > Early Learning > Kindergarten



ODE > search for: “Academic Acceleration for Advanced Learners”

ODE > search for: “Kindergarten Readiness Checklist”

ODE > search for: “The Young Gifted Child”

The *Ohio Department of Education’s* website also contains useful information about the next generation of assessments.

In fall 2014, a new **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)** was used which is based on Ohio’s Early Learning and Development Standards. The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment or KRA, will give kindergarten teachers a comprehensive picture of a child’s learning and development at kindergarten entry, pinpointing where each child is in physical well-being and motor development, language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies and social skills.

ODE> Testing > Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

3. Middletown City School District’s Kindergarten Program

Kindergarten in the Middletown City School District is a *full-day program*. The day begins at approximately 8:45 a.m. until 3:50 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><u>Physical Skills</u> - Does your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ enjoy outdoor play such as running, jumping, and climbing; ▪ draw and trace basic shapes and letters; ▪ 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><u>Health and Safety Needs</u> - 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><u>Personal needs</u> - 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><u>Social and Emotional Skills</u> - 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

1. If you believe that your child may be a good candidate for early entrance, please obtain an information/application packet by visiting our web site: www.middletowncityschools.com and complete the application or call 513-423-0781 (Curriculum and Instruction Department) to request testing appointment.
2. All evaluations will be scheduled through the Gifted Coordinator's Office. Your application will be processed and the appropriate assessments will be scheduled.

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. Please register your child as you normally would, but let the Preschool Office know that your child is being screened for early entrance to kindergarten.