



Licking County Educational Service Center

Office of Gifted Education

145 N. Quentin Road, Newark, OH 43055

P: 740-349-6084/F: 740-349-6107

www.lcesc.org

Dear Parents,

Thank you for contacting your Licking County Local School District regarding the evaluation of your child for early entrance to Kindergarten for the upcoming school year. This letter explains the evaluation process as adopted by Licking County. The process is based on local school board policy and the statewide model policy for academic acceleration as put forth by the Ohio Department of Education. If you have any questions about the procedures, please feel free to call or email, and your district's gifted coordinator, listed below, will be happy to answer your questions or concerns.

The assessment may involve the use of testing instruments: a cognitive ability test, and an academic achievement test. The cognitive ability test, and academic achievement test each measure a child's problem solving and thinking skills and prior understanding of academic concepts, respectively.

Process for Early Entrance Consideration:

1. Complete and return each form in the referral packet to your school district's gifted coordinator at the Licking County Educational Service Center. If your child's birthday falls between August 1 and January 1, the parent may make the referral. For those children who will not yet be the proper age for entrance to kindergarten or first grade by January 1 of the school year for which admission is requested, the referral must come from a district educator, a certified preschool teacher, a physician, or a psychologist. Please submit the signed Permission to Test form and the student information sheet with this referral.
2. An initial appointment will be scheduled for a brief cognitive test at the Licking County Educational Service Center. A student must score 115 or higher on this test in order for further testing to be done. If the score is less than 115, the process stops. The child will be placed in Kindergarten for the school year in which the child is eligible by age (the year after the upcoming year).
3. Students who do score 115 or higher on this cognitive test will be scheduled on another day for a full achievement assessment. The cognitive test may be scheduled over two additional days. Details regarding the time and place will be discussed when the appointments are made.
4. On the day of the full achievement evaluation, the parent will bring the child to the testing site. Please also bring any prior preschool evaluations or examples of the child's academic work. If possible, please arrange permission for the gifted coordinator to contact the preschool teacher to discuss the child's progress.
5. The full testing sessions include the cognitive assessment and the achievement test. Breaks will be taken throughout with a snack break (if parents choose to provide a snack) in between the various tests. After both ability and achievement testing have been completed, the gifted coordinator will review the test results. If the score does meet the requirement, the gifted coordinator will contact the parent and discuss the next steps. If the score does **not** meet the requirement, results will be shared with the parent, and the process will end with the child placed in Kindergarten for the school year in which the child is eligible by age (the year after the upcoming year).

Again, please submit the enclosed referral, information, and permission forms as quickly as possible to:

Your District Gifted Coordinator, 145 N. Quentin Road, Newark, OH 43055

Your district gifted coordinator will then call you to schedule testing. If you have any questions, please contact our office at any time, 740-349-6084.

Sincerely,

Heather Clark
Gifted Coordinator
Lakewood
Licking Heights

Holly Hartman
Gifted Coordinator
Heath
Johnstown
North Fork

Alesha Haybin
Gifted Coordinator
Granville
Licking Valley



Early Entrance to Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions

To be sure children are ready for the demands of school; students must turn five by a certain date according to your home district's policy to enroll in Kindergarten. This date is appropriate for most children, but there are times when a younger child is academically and socially advanced. In accordance with state law, the district has established a process for children to be considered for early entrance to Kindergarten. Here are common questions about the process. If you have additional questions, please contact your district Gifted Coordinator, at the Licking County Educational Service Center at 740-349-6084.

1. **How common is early entrance placement?**

Early entrance is typically reserved for the *exceptional* child. Although students do not need to be gifted for early entrance placement, students who are ultimately eligible often fall in the gifted range of ability. The goal of all placement decisions is to ensure that students entering Kindergarten are ready for what this big year has in store academically and socially. **There often are very few students, if any, who demonstrate eligibility for early entrance.**

2. **What school programs may a child enter early?**

Children may be considered for early entrance into the regular Kindergarten program if they will turn 5 after the district cut-off date or 1st grade if they turn 6 after the district cut-off date.

3. **Who can request a child be considered for early entrance?**

Referrals may come from parents, family members, educators, or health professionals, such as a psychologist or pediatrician, if the child will be 5 years by January 1 of the school year in question. The referral must come from an educator, pediatrician, or psychologist if the child turns 5 after January 1 of the school year in question. Parents must sign a consent form for assessment. Forms are available from the county gifted coordinator or the school and district offices.

4. **When does someone request assessment for early entrance?**

Assessment requests for the following school year should be made at least 60 days before the start of the school year to ensure time for assessment and any necessary placement prior to the start of the school year.

5. **How does the process work?**

There are multiple phases to the process, and students must meet criteria for the previous phase in order to move forward with the remainder of the evaluation. The basic steps are:

- a. The referral is made and parents grant permission to test. After the referral is received, an initial screening appointment will be made.
- b. The initial appointment takes about an hour and includes a cognitive ability screener. **The student must score at least a 115 for additional testing to be completed.** The initial test is scored immediately and shared with the parents to determine next steps.
- c. If the child meets the initial screening criteria of 115, parents will bring their child in for a second appointment for more complete cognitive ability testing and a third appointment for more complete academic achievement testing. Each of these sessions may last up to 3 hours **each** and includes regular breaks. Parents should bring a snack for their child.
- d. If the child meets the criteria to continue with the evaluation, the county gifted coordinator may contact the child's preschool teacher or other individual with a working knowledge of the child to learn more about how the child interacts in a group.
- e. Once all data is collected, the gifted coordinator will communicate the test results or arrange a placement meeting.

6. When does assessment take place?

Students referred **60 or more days** prior to the start of the school year are evaluated in advance of the start of the school year.

7. Who conducts the assessment?

The gifted coordinator, school psychologist, or other trained staff may administer the assessments.

8. What information is used to determine if a child may enter Kindergarten early?

Assessment for early entrance to Kindergarten uses information from a cognitive ability test that measures a child's ability to think, problem solve, and understand new ideas. The assessment also includes a test of academic skills and an evaluation of the child's social, emotional, and physical maturity.

9. How long does the assessment take?

The assessment process varies in length. Students who are eligible to go through the entire evaluation could go through about 3-4 hours of actual testing. The remainder of the process could take up to two weeks to collect all other necessary information.

10. What is on the test?

The cognitive ability test looks at a child's ability to follow directions, communicate through speaking, problem solve, understand how shapes and space go together, and recognize patterns and relationships among ideas and objects. The achievement testing measures a child's basic reading and writing skills, understanding of math concepts, and general knowledge of the world around him or her. The tests are designed to allow the child to go as far as possible in order to gauge how the child compares to other children the same age as well as the average Kindergartener.

11. What is the criteria for early entrance placement?

Licking County ESC uses the *Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS)* for making placement decisions. This instrument makes recommendations based on points assigned to certain test scores and certain behaviors. Along the way are required minimum scores in order to continue with the process. Based on the guide established in the *IAS*, students must have a cognitive ability score of at least 115 to continue through the process. To put that into perspective, 100 is considered average, 128 is considered gifted, and 115 is considered to be above average/bright. Also, students must have enough advanced academic skills to earn the required rating points to continue the process. Typically, students need to score at or above the 90th percentile in most subject areas when compared to students of the same age to get enough points to continue with the assessment. These base scores do not guarantee early entrance placement. That decision is based on the total profile of the child. These scores simply serve as a guide for continued consideration. *Students considered for early entrance are expected to score much higher than an average child entering Kindergarten.* This is based on research on child development and acceleration practices and in accordance with state guidelines.

12. Who makes the decision to place or not place a child in Kindergarten early?

For students who meet the minimum requirements for acceleration, a placement team, which typically includes the parents, gifted coordinator, building principal, and a Kindergarten teacher, will make decisions about placement for any child who completes the *entire* assessment process. The decision is a result of group consensus based on the data gathered during the assessment process.

Early Entrance to Kindergarten Parent Checklist

Please read each statement and indicate by placing a "checkmark" how you rate your child's abilities.

| <u>Physical Well-Being and Motor Development</u> | <u>Frequently</u> | <u>Sometimes</u> | <u>None of the time</u> |
|---|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 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) | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| <u>Personal and Social Development</u> | | | |
| Shows eagerness to learn (curious, likes to investigate) | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Follows rules and routines (cleans up at playtime) | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Handles change and transition (dinnertime to bedtime) | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Interacts easily with one or more children | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Separates easily from parent | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Has the ability to listen (attend) for at least 10 minutes | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| <u>Language and Literacy</u> | | | |
| 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 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Uses some letters and words to write | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| <u>Mathematical Thinking</u> | | | |
| 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 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| <u>Scientific Thinking</u> | | | |
| Can describe and sort objects by one or more properties | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Uses the five senses to make observations about the natural world | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| <u>Social Studies</u> | | | |
| Recognizes self and others as having the same and different characteristics | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Describes roles and responsibilities of people (Mom is a doctor, she helps sick people) | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Recognizes the reasons for rules | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| <u>The Arts</u> | | | |
| Likes to paint and draw | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Likes to sing and dance | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Can share ideas about a drawing/painting | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Can recognize basic colors | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Children who will benefit from early entrance may not exhibit all of the characteristics listed below.

My child:

- Understands the meanings and uses 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?

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?

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
- 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 has 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 may not be advisable.
- Often did not want to attend or missed preschool because of illness or family issues.

I believe that my child exhibits a number of characteristics listed above that indicate he/she might benefit by entering kindergarten. 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.

Signature, Parent / Guardian

_____/_____/_____
Date



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.

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 • 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 rules for safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help your child learn their 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 a tissue to blow nose • button and zip up shirts and pants • put on and take off coat • tie and/or 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 shoes on. • 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. |



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REFERRAL AND PERMISSION FOR ACCELERATION EVALUATION

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
 District: _____ Grade: _____ Homeroom: _____ Building: _____
 Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Parent/Guardian Email (print VERY clearly): _____
 Address: _____
(include city & zip code)

Student data will be evaluated for acceleration using a pre-determined process. Placement decisions will be made by an acceleration committee. The student may be given any assessment from the Ohio Department of Education's list of approved instruments for gifted identification. Results will be shared with the parent and appropriate school personnel.

Mark the type of Acceleration Referral:

- SINGLE-SUBJECT ACCELERATION** in the area of ... MATH SCIENCE READING SOC.STUD. OTHER
 Name of Potential Course: _____
- WHOLE-GRADE ACCELERATION** (if approved, the student would skip an entire grade)
- EARLY ENTRANCE ACCELERATION** (to begin kindergarten early). Evaluation will begin with a cognitive abilities test. Cognitive testing will take place from 9:00am-10:00am in a small group setting.
 Designate a testing session date you are available: 4/11/19 5/9/19 5/23/19 6/6/19

- I request that my child be evaluated for acceleration. I give permission for my child to be tested by a gifted coordinator. I understand that prior testing results will also be reviewed.
- I understand that my child may be tested on any business-day within 45 days after the referral is received by the gifted coordinator. In addition, the acceleration committee will provide results within the same 45 days.
- I understand that these testing results will be evaluated for potential acceleration according to my district's policies and procedures. A parent referral does not **guarantee** my child a position in accelerated placement.
- I understand that I may appeal the acceleration committee's final placement decision, but must do so in writing, submitted to my District's superintendent, within 30 days of the acceleration results letter.
- Please indicate below if your child receives special services and already has a **formal** document outlining testing accommodations: IEP 504 ESL NONE *Attach documentation if available.
- Early Entrance Only:* I give permission to contact my child's preschool teacher. I understand that the early entrance process can take up to 45 days. Depending on the testing session selected, candidates may not be finished with the process before the first day of school. Pre-school teacher/phone: _____

Signature

Relationship to Child

Date

Questions or Concerns? Contact your district's Gifted Coordinator at the Licking County Educational Service Center

Heather Clark

Lakewood & Licking Heights
 hclark@laca.org 740.349.6105

Holly Hartman

Heath, Johnstown-Monroe, & North Fork
 hhartman@laca.org 740.349.6094

Alesha Haybin

Granville & Licking Valley
 ahaybin@laca.org 740.349.6083

Equal access will be available to all students for screening, further assessment, identification, and placement in eligible services, including minority or disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and students for whom English is a second language.

To be Completed by Gifted Coordinator

Date Received: _____

Previous Area/s of Identification: SC MTH SCI R SS CT VPA NONE

Coordinator Initials: _____