

In the summer of 1997, the North Carolina General Assembly passed HB-1099, allowing early admission to Kindergarten of a child who has reached his/her fourth birthday by April 16 if the child demonstrates extraordinary academic ability and maturity



But how do you know if early admission is appropriate for YOUR child?

The first thing you need to do is to look at your child.

- Are you constantly amazed at the things your child is doing and saying?
- Does your child show a genuine interest in learning?
- Does your child seek out learning opportunities?
- Does your child learn independently?
- Does your child function well in a structured environment?
- Does your child prefer to be with older children?
- Does your child read?
- Does your child understand basic math concepts (not just counting)?

If you are answering yes to these questions, your child may be a candidate for early entry to kindergarten

Things to Consider

It is important that early entry to kindergarten be right for the child - not that early entry be right for the parents' wishes, desires, and convenience. This option should be to enhance an advanced learner's environment, not to take the place of quality childcare. This is not an appropriate option to encourage a child who is "almost there" to do better.

Most children, including most gifted children, will **not** benefit from early entrance to kindergarten. Most children will benefit from one more year to develop as a preschooler - allowing their maturity, motor coordination, and thinking skills to grow. Young children have thirteen or more years of education ahead of them. Most of these children will gain more from one more year to "be a kid".

But, for a very few children, early entrance to kindergarten will be exactly what the child needs. These children, already seeking learning situations, can benefit from the opportunity to channel their thoughts and efforts. Children who already have a gap between their chronological age and academic abilities may enjoy reduced frustration by attending school with slightly older children.

What Now?

If, after careful consideration, you decide that your child may be one of the very few who will benefit from early entrance to kindergarten, then you will need to start compiling the necessary information. The legislation states that it is the responsibility of the *parents/guardians to present information* (including arranging and paying for any required testing) *to the principal of the home school to support that the child has extraordinary academic ability and is appropriately mature to justify early admission.* We recommend beginning the application to the home school as soon as possible. Waiting until the last minute gives the school limited time to review the application, make a decision, and prepare for your child's arrival. We think it is best for your child to start school at the same time as the other children, whenever possible. Information regarding the **minimum standards** required for early admission to kindergarten is on the next page.

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.** The standards include criteria in the following areas:

1. **APTITUDE** – *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. **The parent is responsible for arranging and paying for this test.***
2. **ACHIEVEMENT** – *The child shall score at the 98th percentile on either Reading or Mathematics on a standard test of achievement 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. **The parent is responsible for arranging and paying for this test.***

NOTE: ALL TESTING MUST BE ADMINISTERED AFTER APRIL 16

When submission of the information listed above meets the minimum eligibility requirements, separate interviews by school personnel with both the child and the parent(s) will evaluate the child's level of motivation and interest in learning. **In addition, the school will conduct an assessment of the child to determine an extraordinary level of kindergarten readiness.**

3. **PERFORMANCE** – *Children displaying a need to enter kindergarten early shall be able to perform tasks above their age peers. The parent shall submit a sample of student work showing outstanding examples of ability in any (not all) of the following areas: Art, Math, Writing, Dramatic Play, Creative Productions, Science, etc. For further indication of performance, the principal may instruct a teacher to complete an informal reading assessment.*
4. **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 setting for a full school day. The child should be capable of following verbal instructions and functioning independently within a group. The school system shall require two recommendation letters with specific documentation of physical and social maturity from preschool teachers, child care workers, pediatricians, or other adults with direct knowledge of the child.*
5. **MOTIVATION TO LEARN/STUDENT INTEREST** – *A child ready for early admission to kindergarten should be eager to learn...be excited about a new school experience...display a thirst for knowledge. Principals or his/her designee shall determine this information in an informal interview with the child and a more structured interview with the parent.*

**This information is excerpted from HB-1099, as an attempt to help inform principals and interested parents.

IDENTIFICATION OF HIGHLY GIFTED FOUR YEAR OLDS

Children who will reach their fourth birthday by April 16 may enter kindergarten if they demonstrate an *extraordinary* level of academic ability and maturity. The following documentation is required for consideration for early admission:

1. **Aptitude Test Scores of 98th percentile** on the Stanford-Binet, or Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, or comparable tests administered by a licensed psychologist **after April 16th**. (Testing is the responsibility of the parent.)
2. **Achievement Test Scores of 98th percentile** on the Metropolitan Readiness Test, or Stanford Early School Achievement Test, or Mini-Battery of Achievement, or Test of Early Mathematics and test of Early Reading Ability, or comparable tests administered by a licensed psychologist **after April 16th**. (Testing is the responsibility of the parent.)
3. Student work showing outstanding ability in any of the following areas: reading, math, science, writing, art, dramatic play, creative productions, social interactions, etc.
4. Two letters of recommendation documenting the child's physical and social maturity. These should be written by a child care worker, teacher, pediatrician or others with direct knowledge of the child.

Parents must submit the required early admission information to their **home** school at any time during the school's instructional year but no later than the first thirty (30) calendar days of the school's instructional year. The school must respond within three (3) weeks. **It is the responsibility of the principal to find that the child has extraordinary academic ability and the maturity to justify admission.**

When submission of the information listed above meets the minimum eligibility requirements, separate interviews by school personnel with both the child and the parent(s) will evaluate the child's level of motivation and interest in learning. **In addition, the school will conduct an assessment of the child to determine an extraordinary level of kindergarten readiness.**

The principal may conditionally enroll the child for up to 90 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 to assist in the development of intervention strategies for the child. If those strategies are not successful, the principal shall provide the parent at least 10 days notice before exiting the child from the school so that the parent may arrange child care, if needed.