

Students

Early Admission to Kindergarten

Purpose/ District Position

District 66 believes that the early years of a student's education provide the solid foundation critical to ongoing academic success. Since the early childhood years are so essential to a successful long-term educational experience, every effort is made to ensure that students entering kindergarten and first grade are ready to learn and be successful. Balancing current understanding of the long-term effects of early education with the unique needs of each student requires careful consideration.

Illinois law which specifies that to enter kindergarten or first grade, children must be 5 years of age by September 1st of their kindergarten year or 6 years of age by September 1st of their first-grade year (105 ILCS 5/34-19, Sec. 34-19). District 66 believes that students are best served when they enter school at the ages research indicates most conducive to long-term success. However, District 66 procedures also consider the individual needs of students for early entrance.

Considerations

The decision regarding early entrance to kindergarten and first grade requires careful consideration of a variety of factors. The academic, social, and emotional readiness, as well as the student's physical development and well-being, must be weighed, and other factors may also be considered.

The decision for a child to enter school early can have a profound effect on his or her academic and social performance for the remainder of the child's school career. It is a decision that needs to be taken very seriously. Research indicates that early entrance and/or early reading ability is not a predictor of success in school. In fact, children with strong early reading skills often plateau by third grade.

Children who enter kindergarten or first grade early may demonstrate social or emotional difficulties due to their relative immaturity. As they progress through school, children who are young for their grade level may have more difficulty fitting in with their peers in social situations. They are less likely to excel in sports because of their age and/or their smaller size. These and other possible effects of being younger than others in their classes should be considered carefully. Very few children screened meet the criteria to enter kindergarten or first grade early.

Early Entrance Qualifications, Kindergarten

Requests for early admission to Kindergarten should be made in writing to the school principal by March 1 of the preceding school term. To qualify for an early entrance screening for kindergarten, a parent/guardian must provide proof of the following to the school principal:

- Proof of residency within District 66
- The child's fifth birthday falls between September 2nd and October 31st of the school term.
- Child's attendance records from an early childhood center or non-public preschool.
- Completion of Parent Questionnaire (forms on district website above).

- Completion of Teacher Recommendation form (forms available on the district website). The Teacher Recommendation must be sent directly from the teacher in a sealed envelope or emailed directly to the school principal.
- Participation in the standard kindergarten screening during the annual Kindergarten Registration (typically April/May).
- A psychologist from the district's recommended list of testers administers one of the following measures* from each of four areas: ability, achievement, social/emotional, and motor to determine the child's readiness for kindergarten.
- The child's scores are as follows:
 1. Performance on any one of the above must be at the 93rd percentile or above (1 1/2 or more Standard Deviations above the mean on the test given).
 2. Well within or above the 5-year-old range on the social/emotional measure.
- If the child attended a preschool, the teacher confirms the child's readiness for kindergarten.
- The required evaluation must include one component from each of Sections 1 - 4 as listed below.
 1. Assessment of Intelligence/Cognitive Skills - The following instruments, or the most current edition of each measure, would be considered acceptable:
 - a. Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence - Third Edition (WPPSI-III)
Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children - Second Edition (KABC-2)
 - b. Differential Ability Scales-Second Edition (DAS-II)
 - c. Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale-Fifth Edition
 - d. Performance on any one of the above must be at the 93rd percentile or above (11/2 or more Standard Deviations above the mean on the test given).
 2. Assessment of Academic Readiness - The following instruments would be considered acceptable norm-referenced tests:
 - a. Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement - Third Edition (KTEA-III)
 - b. Woodcock-Johnson IV - Tests of Achievement
 - c. Wechsler Individual Achievement Test - Third Edition (WIAT-III)
 - d. Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA-4)

Performance on achievement tests must be at or above the 93rd percentile (1 1/2 or more Standard Deviations above the mean on the test given). It is also recommended that a criterion referenced instrument which assesses readiness skills (letter, number & shape recognition, following directions, conceptual understanding, counting, personal information, etc.) such as the Brigance also be administered or Bracken School Readiness Assessment Third Edition.

3. Assessments of Social-Emotional Functioning - The following instruments would be considered acceptable:

- a. Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)
- b. Social Skills Improvement System Rating Scales
- c. Behavior Assessment Rating System (BASC)
- d. Behavior and Emotional Rating Scale (BERS)

4. Assessments of Motoric Functioning - The following instruments would be considered acceptable:

- a. Bender Visual Motor-Gestalt Test Developmental Test Second Edition
- b. Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration Fifth Edition

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