

Early Entrance to Kindergarten

2011-2012 Application Guide

Application Deadline

APRIL 15, 2011



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If you have any questions about applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten, please contact the Enrollment Center:

Address: 7051 Brooklyn Blvd.
Brooklyn Center, MN 55429
Phone: (763) 585-7350
Fax: (763) 585-7368
Email: enrollmentcenter@district279.org

Si necesita ayuda en español para llenar esta forma, por favor llame al siguiente número de teléfono: 763-585-7376.

Yog koj xav tau kev pab los yog muaj lus nug txog daim ntauv no, thov hu rau tus xov tooj 763-585-7375.



Things for parents to consider

Because you are considering early entrance to kindergarten, you probably have observed some behaviors in your child that lead you to think he or she might be ready for kindergarten. Indeed, some children are ready, and that's why our school district provides a process for early entrance.

It's an important decision that can affect your student's academic and social performance for the remainder of his or her school career, so we urge you to take it very seriously. Here are some things to consider:

- Research indicates that early entrance and/or early reading ability is not a predictor of success in school.
- Children with strong early reading skills often plateau by third grade.
- Children who enter kindergarten 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 may be less likely to excel in sports because of their age and/or their smaller size.

Why is a special process required for early entrance?

The assessment process helps determine whether children whose birth dates are between September 2 and November 1 are likely to succeed if offered early entrance to kindergarten. Even a few months can make a difference in a child's readiness.

Children with birth dates after November 1 are not eligible to apply for early entrance; there is no appeal process.

THREE PERSPECTIVES ON EARLY ENTRANCE

A Parent's Viewpoint...

Parents sometimes assume that an early start in school provides an educational advantage for their child. This assumption runs counter, however, to research that indicates that *children who start early enjoy no long lasting advantage over those of equal ability who start later*. While pursuing what they believe is best for their child, parents may not be considering all of the dimensions of child development; they might also overlook the importance of early success in building confidence for the future.

After considering the possible effects of early entrance, some parents choose not to go through with the evaluation. Those who continue with the process understand that the vast majority of children do not meet the criteria for acceptance *but still have normal development*. Frequently, parents of students who are accepted for early entrance choose to enroll later because they recognize the implications of starting early and want their child to have a positive first school experience.

A Teacher's Viewpoint...

Many experienced teachers express concerns about early entrance into kindergarten based on their experience and research on learning. Even the most well-rounded, mature children encounter frustration when exposed to the rigors of a daily school routine, competition with older children, and the challenges of learning. Younger children may also experience social difficulties in a predominantly older group.

Early entrance into kindergarten is further complicated by the pressure children feel to excel in school. Sometimes, because children are bright, parents expect them to do well and may fail to recognize what the child has accomplished just by starting school early. Some children react by withdrawing from such pressure. They may try to blend in with the group and become average learners.

Teacher observations are included in the early entrance assessment process, which extends into the first six weeks of school. Progress and social adjustment are carefully monitored to ensure that the child can cope with the demands over a prolonged period. Parents are encouraged to keep in close contact with the teacher and to provide input.

A School Psychologist's Viewpoint...

Most school psychologists have strong opinions about the topic of early entrance. As child advocates and professionals who spend considerable time with children who have learning issues, they are very concerned about early learning experiences and their impact on school success. School psychologists tend to be conservative in making a determination in favor of early entrance in an effort to reduce the likelihood of unpleasant or unsuccessful school experiences.

The role of the school psychologist during the assessment process is to gather information regarding the child's independence and readiness, responses to standardized assessment of cognitive functioning and, in some cases, adaptive behavior.

The importance of early school success and self-image are stressed by the school psychologist. Parents are encouraged to minimize pressure to "pass" and to present the experience more like a visit for an annual physical where measurements are taken to document growth.

KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE EXPECTATIONS

Families, early childhood teachers, and caregivers all contribute to a child's readiness for a positive kindergarten experience. The development of skills varies from child to child. It is expected that children will meet most of these expectations before entering kindergarten.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL:

- The child is able to attend to task/listen for 10-15 minutes in a group setting.
- The child is able to manage transitions and accept changes in routines.
- The child is able to respond appropriately to limits and directions.
- The child interacts easily with one or more children in a variety of activities.
- The child is able to interact easily with adults asking for help or making their needs known.

SELF-HELP:

- The child is able to perform self-care tasks such as using the bathroom, wiping nose, and washing hands independently.
- The child is able to dress self including outdoor clothing.
- The child takes care of personal items and classroom materials.
- The child has practiced ways to accept disappointment and mistakes.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY:

- The child listens and responds to stories and books.
- The child is able to follow simple 2-3 step directions.
- The child is able to communicate needs, wants, and thoughts through words and age-appropriate sentence structures.
- The child begins to associate sounds with words or letters.
- The child is able to recognize and name some letters of the alphabet, especially those in own name.
- The child has engaged in writing activities using scribbles, pictures, shapes, or letters using a variety of tools such as crayons, pencils, and paintbrushes.

MATH/PROBLEM SOLVING:

- The child names basic colors and common shapes.
- The child demonstrates understanding of one-to-one correspondence through counting objects.
- The child sorts objects into groups by color, shape, or size.
- The child understands math concepts of "above, under, in front, behind, beside, few, more, big, little, long, and short".
- The child recognizes and names some numbers.

FINE MOTOR:

- The child has practiced using pencils, crayons, and scissors.
- The child has used play dough, Legos, puzzles, and stringing beads to strengthen hand muscles.

If you have any questions regarding kindergarten entrance expectations, please contact the Coordinator of Early Childhood Programming at 763-391-8765.

HOW TO APPLY

1 CONFIRM ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for enrollment in kindergarten, your child must turn age 5 on or before September 1 of the school year desired.

Children who turn age 5 between September 2 and November 1 of the school year desired are eligible to apply for early entrance to kindergarten.

2 ENSURE EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENING IS COMPLETE

Early childhood screening must be completed prior to applying for early entrance to kindergarten.

Early Childhood Developmental Screening is required by the State of Minnesota for kindergarten admission and is a careful check of your child's health, well-being, and development. The results of the screening will help identify needs that may require special attention before your child enters school.

You may have your child's Early Childhood Developmental Screening completed by:

- The ISD 279 Screening Office. Call (763) 391-8776, Monday-Thursday, September through May to schedule an appointment. *There is no cost for your child to be screened by ISD 279.*
- Your family physician, if a standardized development test is used. Check with your doctor's office to see if their screening meets the state's requirement.

Children who attend Head Start or Early Childhood Special Education programs may not need to be screened. For more information call (763) 391-8776.

3 SUBMIT APPLICATION BY APRIL 15

The Early Entrance to Kindergarten Application **must be received** at the Enrollment Center by **APRIL 15**.

A COPY OF YOUR CHILD'S EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING MUST BE ATTACHED TO THE APPLICATION.

4 VERIFY RECEIPT OF APPLICATION (OPTIONAL)

You may verify the receipt of your application by contacting the Enrollment Center at:

Phone: (763) 585-7350

Email: enrollmentcenter@district279.org



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if I missed the April 15 application deadline?

If you missed the April 15 deadline, early entrance to kindergarten is no longer an option. Your child may enroll in kindergarten next fall.

What if my child was accepted for early entrance to kindergarten in another school district?

Each school district's early entrance to kindergarten process is specific to that school district. In order for ISD 279 to continue your child's early entrance to kindergarten enrollment, the previous school district's early entrance requirements must be similar.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 15, 2011

APPLICATION REQUIREMENT: Attach early childhood developmental screening results

1 STUDENT

1. Legal Name:

EXACTLY AS IT APPEARS ON BIRTH CERTIFICATE OR OTHER LEGAL DOCUMENT

Last (family)

First

Middle

Jr., III, etc.

2. Preferred First Name:

3. Gender: Male Female

4. Birth Date:

STUDENT MUST BE AGE 5 BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2 AND NOVEMBER 1

Month

Day

Year

2 SIBLINGS

5. List all of the student's siblings:

Sibling Name				Gender		Birth Date		
Last (family)	First	Middle Initial	Jr., III, etc.	Male	Female	Month	Day	Year
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	/	/	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	/	/	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	/	/	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	/	/	

3 EARLY ENTRANCE PREPARATION

6. Please list your child's experience with groups of other children away from his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), such as nursery school, preschool, etc.:

Name of Facility or Provider	Phone Number		Dates of Attendance			to	Birth Date		
	Area Code	-	Month	Day	Year		Month	Day	Year
	()	-	/	/			/	/	
	()	-	/	/			/	/	
	()	-	/	/			/	/	
	()	-	/	/			/	/	

7. How do you think it would benefit your child to start school a year early?

8. In what ways does your child demonstrate above average intellectual and social readiness for school?

9. How does your child feel about school?

2011-2012 EARLY ENTRANCE TO KINDERGARTEN APPLICATION

4 STUDENT

10. In the event that this page is separated from the first page, please provide the following information:

Legal Name (EXACTLY AS IT APPEARS ON BIRTH CERTIFICATE OR OTHER LEGAL DOCUMENT)

Last (family) First Middle Initial Jr., III, etc.

Gender

Male Female

Birth Date

Month Day Year

5 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

Early Childhood Developmental Screening must have been completed prior to applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten.

Early Childhood Developmental Screening is required by the State of Minnesota for kindergarten admission and is a careful check of your child's health, well-being, and development. The results of the screening will help identify needs that may require special attention before your child enters school.

You may have your child's Early Childhood Developmental Screening completed by:

- The ISD 279 Screening Office. Call (763) 391-8776, Monday-Thursday, September through May to schedule an appointment. *There is no cost for your child to be screened by District 279.*
- Your family physician, if a standardized development test is used. Check with your doctor's office to see if their screening meets the state's requirement.

Children who attend Head Start or Early Childhood Special Education programs may not need to be screened. Call (763) 391-8776 for more information.

11. Provide the date and location where your child's Early Childhood Developmental Screening was completed:

Location

Name of School District, Physician/Clinic, Head Start, or Early Childhood Special Education Program

Date of Screening

Month Day Year

12. I have attached a copy of the results of my child's Early Childhood Developmental Screening.

Initials of Parent/Guardian:

6 ASSESSMENT AND CONDITIONAL ADMISSION

13. I understand that if my child does not meet the criteria for any of the three phases (observation, review, and evaluation) of the Early Entrance to Kindergarten assessment, he/she will not be authorized to continue in the Early Entrance to Kindergarten process.

Initials of Parent/Guardian:

14. I understand that, due to the time and resources required for the Early Entrance to Kindergarten process, all decisions regarding my child's eligibility are final.

Initials of Parent/Guardian:

15. I understand that entering kindergarten early as a four-year-old means conditional admission through the end of the first trimester. I will be notified by the school principal if the needs of my child would be better met by entering school as a kindergartner the following year.

Initials of Parent/Guardian:

7 PARENT/GUARDIAN

14. Parent Name:

Last (family) First M.I.

15. Address:

Number and Street Apt.

City State Zip Code

16. Telephone:

Primary Alternate
() - () -
Area Code Area Code

17. I hereby give consent for the assessment of my child. The school district has my permission to contact any of the early entrance preparation facilities or providers listed. I certify the information given above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature:

Date:

Month / Day / Year

Mail, Fax, Email or Deliver to:

ISD 279 - Osseo Area Schools
Enrollment Center
7051 Brooklyn Boulevard
Brooklyn Center, MN 55429

Fax: (763) 585-7368

Email: enrollmentcenter@district279.org



AFTER YOU APPLY

The assessment portion of the early entrance to kindergarten process consists of three phases:

1. Observation
2. Review
3. Evaluation

After each phase, children who have met the criteria established for that particular phase will be authorized to continue in the early entrance to kindergarten assessment process.

Due to the time and resources required for the early entrance to kindergarten assessment process, all decisions regarding your child's eligibility for early entrance are final.

OBSERVATION (May 1-20)

An observation team composed of administrators, kindergarten and early childhood teachers will conduct an initial review of your child in a simulated kindergarten environment looking for social and emotional maturity, self-regulation, language skills, and fine motor skills.

The Enrollment Center will notify the parent/legal guardian via letter with the date and time of their child's observation. Rescheduling is typically limited. Instructions for confirming your child's observation and directions to the observation site will be included with the letter. Also included with the letter will be a questionnaire to be completed by the parent/guardian to evaluate the child's social-emotional behaviors. This questionnaire must be brought and submitted at the child's observation.

OBSERVATION RESULTS (May 25)

The Enrollment Center will notify the parent/legal guardian via letter if the child:

- May proceed to the review process; or
- Will not be admitted for early entrance but may enroll in kindergarten the following fall.

If the child is recommended to proceed to the review process, the Enrollment Center will provide the parent/guardian with the date and time of their child's academic readiness review appointment.

REVIEW (June 1-15)

For those children recommended to proceed to the review process, an early childhood specialist will conduct a review of your child's academic readiness. Examples of academic readiness are identification of basic colors, common shapes, letters, and numbers.



REVIEW RESULTS (June 20)

The Enrollment Center will notify the parent/legal guardian via letter if the child:

- May proceed to the evaluation process; or
- Will not be admitted for early entrance but may enroll in kindergarten the following fall.

EVALUATION (June 25 - July 15)

For those children recommended to proceed to the evaluation process, the Enrollment Center will provide the names of psychologists outside of the school district who can administer a psychological assessment for your child.

- **The parent/legal guardian has sole responsibility to pay for and schedule the child's assessment.**
- The organization providing the assessment typically uses a sliding fee scale to adjust the cost of the assessment in relation to the parent/legal guardian's income. The school district does not have any influence on the cost of the assessment or the sliding fee scale.

The Enrollment Center will provide the parent/guardian the information necessary to schedule the child's evaluation. In addition, the Enrollment Center will work with the psychologists to ensure that all families have scheduled and completed their child's evaluation.

EVALUATION RESULTS (July 20)

The Enrollment Center will notify the parent/legal guardian via letter if the child:

- May enter kindergarten early on a conditional admission; or
- Will not be admitted for early entrance but may enroll in kindergarten the following fall.

If the child is recommended for conditional admission, the Enrollment Center will provide the parent/guardian with the information needed to enroll the child in kindergarten.

PREPARING FOR ASSESSMENT

Once parents have become informed about Early Entrance into kindergarten and decided to proceed with assessment, the child should be given every opportunity to perform well. Prepare the child physically by getting him or her to bed early the night before, providing breakfast, comfortable play clothes, and gym shoes. Parents should maintain a positive, relaxed attitude rather than emphasizing pieces of information for the child to memorize in order to “pass.” Trying to study or “cram” in order to help your child prepare for the assessment often produces confusion and anxiety rather than confidence.

The best approach is usually a straightforward one. Tell your child that he or she will be working with someone who helps the teachers at school and that there may be other children waiting to do the same activities. The activities are fun, and they should enjoy the session while doing their best. Bring things for your child to work on quietly if they have to wait a few minutes for their appointment.

Remember, the focus is on gathering information to help adults make decisions about your child’s readiness to enter school early and have a successful and positive school experience. Many children who participate in the assessment are developing normally, but may not meet the criteria for Early Entrance. Be supportive of your child, and help him or her have a good experience.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How will my child feel if he/she is not among the children who met the criteria for acceptance?

A child’s reaction usually depends on how the situation has been presented and how parents react to the admission decision. Parents who react strongly to the results may send the message to the child that he/she has failed or done something wrong. The child will maintain self esteem if parents present the information positively and stress how much better prepared the child will be after another year in preschool.

What are some reasons children do not meet the criteria?

The basic reason is that most children are developing normally or at a rate that is only slightly above average. Occasionally, results indicate that a child may be delayed in some area of development included in the screening. In such cases, parents are advised of the specific findings the day of the evaluation or by a phone call soon afterward.

Why are the standards for early entrance so rigorous?

Past experience and research have shown that most children do better when they enter school with their age group. Children who enter early are placed in a highly competitive situation with others who may be a year older who have had the advantage of additional life experience and development. Only a few advanced children are ready to compete on this level where emotional stress can be intense. High standards in the assessment process help ensure that kindergarten readiness is demonstrated consistently among several areas of development.

Early entrance to kindergarten enrollment is conditional until the end of the first trimester.

The principal of the child's school will notify the parent/guardian by the end of the first trimester if the child is recommended to:

- continue in kindergarten; or
- withdraw for the remainder of the school year and return for kindergarten the following fall.

ABOUT CONDITIONAL ADMISSION

Conditional admission means that school staff will be monitoring your child to ensure that kindergarten is appropriate to his/her learning, social-emotional, and developmental needs. If the kindergarten setting is not an appropriate match for the needs of your child, he/she may be removed from school and asked to enroll the following fall.

It will be important to attend school conferences, maintain communication with the classroom teacher, and have a back-up plan in the event that kindergarten is not appropriate for your child at this time. If a child were to be removed prior to the end of the conditional admission period, we highly recommend that the child attend a preschool program.



PLEASE REMEMBER...

YOU as the parent/guardian make the final decision to enroll your child through Early Entrance to Kindergarten on a conditional basis, once all acceptance criteria have been met. You may choose to withdraw your child at any point in time during the assessment process.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I choose the school that my child attends?

Yes, with some limitations. Parent/legal guardians applying for early entrance to kindergarten for their child may apply through school choice for their child to attend a school outside of their assigned neighborhood school or resident district after the child has been approved for early entrance to kindergarten. Since the early entrance process is not finalized until July/August of the school year desired, the number of kindergarten spaces available through the school choice option, including magnet schools, may be limited.



Are there any full-day kindergarten options?

Yes. All-day tuition-free kindergarten programs are available at Crest View, Fair Oaks, Garden City, Park Brook, and Zanewood Elementary Schools. These programs are limited to children who live within each school's attendance area. A tuition-based all-day program, "Kindergarten Extra," is offered at Basswood, Cedar Island, Fernbrook, Rush Creek, and Woodland Elementary. Sponsored by the Community Education Department, Kindergarten Extra programs are open to all students.

We strongly encourage parents/legal guardians to wait until after their child has been approved for early entrance to kindergarten before applying for the tuition-based Kindergarten Extra program. For more information about Kindergarten Extra, please contact the Community Education Department at (763) 391-7120 or visit www.district279.org.

Are there any school-age care options?

Yes. Kindergarten Kidstop is a fee-based school-age care program that complements and enhances what is taught during the school day. Students attend Kindergarten Kidstop during the other half of the school day when they are not in kindergarten. In addition, there is also an option for supervised care before and/or after the school day and on non-school days for an additional fee.

We strongly encourage parents/legal guardians to wait until after their child has been approved for early entrance to kindergarten before applying for Kidstop. For more information about Kidstop, please contact the Community Education Department at (763) 391-7120 or visit www.district279.org.

QUESTIONS?

ENROLLMENT CENTER
7051 Brooklyn Boulevard
Brooklyn Center, MN 55429
(763) 585-7350
enrollmentcenter@district279.org
www.district279.org

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**Our mission is to inspire and prepare
all students with the confidence,
courage and competence to achieve
their dreams; contribute to community;
and engage in a lifetime of learning.**



10/15/10