

A Parent's Guide for
Early Entrance

(Kindergarten and First Grade)



BUCKEYE VALLEY LOCAL SCHOOLS

2016-2017

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. School districts are permitted to determine the Kindergarten entrance date (either August 1 or Sept. 30) and **before January 1**. Buckeye Valley Local Schools has chosen August 1 as its Kindergarten entrance date. 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

Early entrance to kindergarten is a subject typically addressed through gifted education. It is covered in the State of Ohio's *Model Student Acceleration Policy*. According to the Ohio Revised Code (3324.01), "gifted" means students who perform or show potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment and who are identified under Division (A), (B), (C), or (D) of Section 3324.03 of the Revised Code.

A unique type of whole-grade acceleration is early entrance (i.e., kindergarten or first grade).

Buckeye Valley Local Schools' Procedure

1. Age Eligibility

A student must be age five (5) to enter kindergarten or age six (6) to enter grade one. Compulsory school age is six (6). However, if a child enters kindergarten at age 5, he or she is considered to be of compulsory school age. No district shall admit to the first grade a child who has not successfully completed kindergarten.

Buckeye Valley Local Schools considers a child eligible for entrance into "regular" kindergarten if s/he attains the age of five on or before **August 1st** of the year s/he 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

There are two 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.
- **1st grade:** A child will be 6 before January 1st.
- **1st grade:** A child will **not** be 6 before January 1st.

3. Board of Education Policy

State law establishes minimum age requirements for admission to kindergarten. A child who does not meet the age requirements for admittance to kindergarten or first grade, but who will be five or six years old, respectively, prior to January 1 of the school year in which admission is requested, shall be evaluated for early admittance in accordance with District policy upon referral by the child's parent or guardian, an educator employed by the District, a preschool educator who knows the child or a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child. Following an evaluation in accordance with such a referral, the Board decides whether to admit the child.

If a child, for whom admission to kindergarten is requested, will not be five or six years of age, respectively, prior to January 1st of the school year in which admission is requested, the child is admitted only in accordance with the District's acceleration policy adopted under State law.

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 agetates (e.g. can write letters upper case and lower case).

Expectations of Kindergarten Students

1. Introduction

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.

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.

Understanding a child's learning and development is critical to both families and educators. In previous school years, children took the **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment – Literacy (KRA-L)** when entering school. 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.

3. Buckeye Valley Local Schools' Kindergarten Program

Kindergarten is a *full-day program* at Buckeye Valley Local Schools. The day begins at approximately 9:15a.m. and ends at 3:40 p.m. Students are expected to participate in the academic program throughout the entire 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"> <input type="checkbox"/> enjoy outdoor play such as running, jumping, and climbing; <input type="checkbox"/> draw and trace basic shapes; <input type="checkbox"/> cut with scissors; <input type="checkbox"/> bounce a ball; <input type="checkbox"/> or 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 Skills:</u> Has your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> had required shots; <input type="checkbox"/> had a dental exam; <input type="checkbox"/> had a vision exam; <input type="checkbox"/> learned own first and last name; <input type="checkbox"/> learned first and last name of parent; <input type="checkbox"/> learned to watch for cars when crossing the street; <input type="checkbox"/> learned to not talk to strangers; <input type="checkbox"/> developed a set routine for going to bed; 	<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.

<input type="checkbox"/> follow rules for safety?	
<p><i>Personal Needs:</i> Without your help, can your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> use the bathroom; <input type="checkbox"/> wash hands; <input type="checkbox"/> brush teeth; <input type="checkbox"/> use tissue to blow nose; <input type="checkbox"/> button and zip up shirts and pants; <input type="checkbox"/> put on and take off coat; <input type="checkbox"/> 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><i>Social and Emotional Skills:</i> Does your child...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> play well with other children; <input type="checkbox"/> separate from a parent without being upset; <input type="checkbox"/> share with other children; <input type="checkbox"/> care about the feelings of others; <input type="checkbox"/> follow routines; <input type="checkbox"/> 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

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: <http://www.buckeyevalley.k12.oh.us/>

or stop by your home school to pick up an application packet.

Once the application has been completed, it is strongly recommended that it is returned to the elementary school office **no later than May 1st** in the year for which admission is being requested.

For the 2016-2017 academic year, the evaluations will be coordinated through the Gifted Services Department. Once an application has been received, parents will be called to schedule an individual intelligence assessment. Students who are eligible will then move on to a developmental screening at the home elementary building.

For successful candidates, a Written Acceleration Plan (WAP) shall be completed prior to the accelerated setting. It shall include strategies to support a successful transition.

An observation by a district representative (elementary guidance counselor and/or school psychologist) in a preschool setting *may* need to be scheduled for your child. *Parents will be contacted if this observation is needed.* While some children may be cognitively ready for kindergarten, they may not be developmentally ready. This additional information may be needed to assess the social and emotional skills necessary to be successful in a school environment.

Once the evaluations are completed, an acceleration evaluation committee will convene for the purpose of conducting a fair and thorough evaluation of the child. This committee should include the following:

1) the home school principal *or* assistant principal

2) a kindergarten teacher

3) a parent *or* legal guardian of the referred student *or* a representative designated by a parent *or* legal guardian of the referred student

4) a gifted education coordinator

5) a school psychologist

The Evaluation Process

How will my child be evaluated for early entrance to Kindergarten?

Most Early entrance evaluations are completed in the late winter/early spring concurrently with kindergarten enrollment process. Students enrolled in the BV preschool program shall be evaluated at their schools. All other applicants will be contacted to make an appointment for evaluation.

- The *Ohio Department of Education* has on its website a checklist for kindergarten readiness. When looking at whether early entrance is appropriate for a child, the same readiness guidelines should be considered.
- Because developmental readiness is important for success in kindergarten, students are also given the *Gesell* developmental screening test. Students who are viable candidates for Early Entrance to Kindergarten are expected to be developmentally “on track” with the typical kindergarten student. Should a student meet the cognitive criteria but fail to meet the developmental readiness assessment, the acceleration team (principal, kindergarten teacher, gifted education coordinator, parent and/or legal guardian(s), and school psychologist) will then discuss and reach consensus as to what placement is best for the child. If the team cannot agree, majority vote is used for a final determination.
- The Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) requires ability and aptitude measures. The Woodcock-Johnson III-NU is used for reading and math assessments.
- Our evaluation teams will err on the side of caution and recommend that a child wait another year should there be any concerns. Our goal is to ensure that a child's first exposure to school is successful.

INSTRUMENTS USED:

INDIVIDUAL INTELLIGENCE TESTS

Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence-Third Edition (WPPSI-III) (last day to be used 6/30/2016)¹

- According to the ***Iowa Acceleration Scale (3rd ed.)***, a student who meets the Critical Item (Section III) of one standard deviation above the mean (115) is a viable candidate for acceleration. All students may move on in the process for consideration, but whole-grade acceleration is ***not recommended*** if a critical item is checked.
- Superior Cognitive identification (gifted) is 130 (minus the Standard Error of Measure, 127)

INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

Woodcock-Johnson III (WJIII-NU) (last day to be used 6/30/2016)¹

- Reading and Math

¹After 6/30/2016, newer versions of these instruments must be used.



BUCKEYE VALLEY LOCAL SCHOOLS

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I, _____, hereby give my permission for the Buckeye

Parent/Legal Guardian

Valley Local Schools to respond to a request for consideration of early entrance to kindergarten for:

Name of Child

In giving my permission, I understand that any or all of the following may occur:

- Review of relevant records
- Interviews with caregiver and/or parent/ guardian
- Observation(s) of my child
- Assessment (e.g., curriculum-based, screening, and other appropriate measure to determine interventions)
- Other

I understand and agree that the information collected by the school district will be reviewed by the early entrance to kindergarten team to develop a transition plan and designate the personnel and resources needed to successfully implement the plan.

Print Name of Parent/ Legal Guardian

Signature of Parent/ Legal Guardian

____/____/____

(mm/dd/yyyy)