

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SHOREWOOD

421 Guideline(2)

Criteria for Eligibility for Early Admission to Senior Kindergarten

The Early Entrance application deadline is May 1st.

Shorewood School District follows Wisconsin law, which specifies that, to enter kindergarten or first grade, children must be five years of age by September 1st of their kindergarten year or six years of age by September 1st of their first grade year.

Occasionally, exceptions are made for children whose potential and skills are in the very superior range to apply for early entrance into kindergarten or first grade.

Early entrance is not available for the SSD four-year-old kindergarten program (4K). Students who attend four-year-old kindergarten must be four years old on or before September 1 in the year he/she proposes to enter four-year-old kindergarten. Attendance or non-attendance in four-year-old kindergarten does not preclude a family from applying for early entrance to kindergarten or first grade.

The Shorewood School District has identified early entrance to kindergarten or first grade as full-grade acceleration, appropriate for those students who are intellectually gifted. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has defined intellectually gifted, versus those being specific academic gifted, as:

Intellectually Gifted children show early and rapid development of language ability; large vocabulary; strong powers of reasoning, analysis and/or synthesis; and advanced ability in critical thinking and problem solving. Typically these children are noted for being several years beyond their peers in their cognitive ability. In addition, they understand complex concepts, draw inferences between content areas and enjoy hypothesizing.

Specific Academic Gifted children who show early and rapid development of interest and ability in one or more of the specific academic areas of literacy, science, social studies, or math. Their vocabulary, enthusiasm, memory and

recall for their area of giftedness are often outstanding. They demonstrate strong powers of reasoning, analysis and/or synthesis, and advanced ability in critical thinking and problem solving in their subject area. Achievement or ability testing in their area shows high aptitude for the subject(s).

Current enrollment for Kindergarten or first grade will be a factor in whether early admission is granted or the school the child may attend if granted early enrollment. However, additional assessments may be done and completion of a Kindergarten or first grade program alone will not meet early entrance criteria.

Please consider:

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.

How to request early entrance:

1. Parents/guardians wishing early entry for their child will make a written request (not e-mail) to the Principal postmarked by May 1 of the previous school year. The request shall include the rationale for making the request and any academic or other information that supports the child's readiness for kindergarten admission. This request should include the child's name, date of birth, the type of request (Early Entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade), and contact information.

2. The principal shall meet with the child's parent or guardian to discuss the reasons for requesting the child's kindergarten admission early and determine if additional information or evaluation is needed. If so, the principal shall request parental permission for evaluating the child and appoint appropriate staff members to complete the evaluation.

3. Appointed district staff will send a screener for parents to complete and schedule a time for the child to be screened by the kindergarten teacher. These screeners must be submitted to the District by May 15th to ensure completion of needed assessments prior to registration deadlines. Children meeting achievement and behavioral criteria on the screener will be referred for additional evaluation.

4. Parents will receive a call from district staff, usually a school psychologist, who will discuss additional assessments that are needed and schedule a date and time to begin the assessments. Additional assessments will consist of:

- (1) Cognitive Assessment
- (2) Academic Assessments in reading and mathematics
- (3) Other assessments as determined by the District may be administered based upon the results from any of the above assessments.

Please note that these assessments will be administered in order. Students not meeting district criteria in a particular assessment will not be assessed further.

- 1. Once assessments are completed, the principal shall meet with the child's parent or guardian to present the results of the evaluation and the recommendation regarding admission to kindergarten. A written summary of the student's performance compared to district standards as well as whether the request is approved or not will be sent to the parents/guardians and a copy kept on file in the District.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. If I put my child in private kindergarten, will she automatically be eligible for first grade the following year?

A. No. To be considered for early entrance to first grade, children who are not six by September 1 will have to meet the early entrance requirements.

Q. *Who makes the decision about whether my child can enter kindergarten or first grade early?*

A. The Shorewood School District early entrance team will make the decision, taking into consideration test results and indicators of the child's social-emotional readiness. The District will notify parents of the final decision regarding early entry. This decision will apply to all district elementary schools.

Q. *Who should I contact about having my child screened for early entrance?*

A. Contact the appropriate elementary school's Principal. Please specify whether the request is for Kindergarten or First Grade. Submit this by April 1st of the school year preceding the school year early entry is desired to allow time for the process to be completed.

Q. *Why do children applying for early entrance have to be assessed when other children entering kindergarten do not?*

A. Children who turn 5 on or before September 1 are age-eligible according to Wisconsin state law and therefore entitled to enter kindergarten. A child whose birth date falls between September 1st and October 15th may be considered for early entrance but must meet criteria that demonstrate the child's skills are in the very superior range.

Q. *What are the assessors looking for in the assessments?*

A. Children cannot study or prepare for developmental readiness. Assessments include a variety of activities that measure each child's progress in the following developmental domains:

1. Intellectual development
2. Academic skills and/or readiness
3. Personal/social readiness

Q. *Is early entrance to kindergarten the best choice for my child?*

A. Please consider the following:

1. The intent of the early entrance process is to make kindergarten available to younger students who are capable of excelling in a classroom setting with children one year older.
2. The standards for early entrance are high to ensure that students are not frustrated by their advanced placement.
3. The potential social/emotional impact that entering school early will have on your child as he or she progresses through elementary, middle, high school, and beyond is not predictable.
4. Early entrance to Kindergarten is not a replacement for childcare.

Q. What is expected of students in kindergarten?

A. The Shorewood School District kindergarten curriculum is a rigorous instructional program that includes:

1. A daily 90-minute reading/writing/language arts block,
2. A daily 60-minute mathematics,
3. Regular assessments to monitor progress and plan for continued instruction,
4. Small and large group instruction, and
5. Independent learning activities.

Children will increase their knowledge and skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, observing, naming and categorizing objects, and counting and comparing throughout the year. They will share stories and ideas from books and experiences.

Q. What are some of the social-emotional skills children should have to be considered for early entry?

A. The following social-emotional skills should be evident for students who would be successful in full-grade acceleration:

- The ability to play cooperatively with other children who are of the grade being considered.
- The ability to participate effectively in-group activities.
- The ability to follow teacher/adult instructions and independently begin tasks set 3
- The ability to easily separate from his/her parents/guardians.

- The demonstration of ability to address challenging tasks without signs of unusual levels of frustration, anxiety, avoidance or withdrawal.
- The demonstration of normal self-help skills for a kindergarten aged child.
- The demonstration of sustained attention to a task or project, based upon grade level standards.

Criteria for Eligibility:

Shorewood School District has developed standardized criteria and procedures to allow for careful consideration of parents' requests for early entrance to kindergarten and first grade.

REVIEWED: