

Cuyahoga Falls City School District Guide to Early Entrance to Kindergarten or First Grade



**Cuyahoga Falls City School District
Board of Education**

431 Stow Avenue

Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221

330-926-3800

Every Student, Every Day, Every Opportunity

Legislation Governing Early Entrance

According to **Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 3321.01** a parent may request early admission to kindergarten if the child turns five years of age **after** the district's kindergarten entrance date of August 1st. The local board of education shall determine entrance criteria through a standardized testing program.

Early Entrance referrals need to be completed and submitted to the Gifted Service Coordinator before or on May 1st of the school year prior for which admission is requested. 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 preschool educator who knows the child, a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child, or at the discretion of the principal of the school to which the student may be admitted. Early Entrance referrals need to be completed and submitted to the Gifted Service Coordinator before or on May 1st of the school year prior for which admission is requested.

Acceleration is the Law (House Bill 79 amended to House Bill 66 – June 30, 2006). Please refer to the State of Ohio's Model Student Acceleration Policy for more information.

Cuyahoga Falls City School District

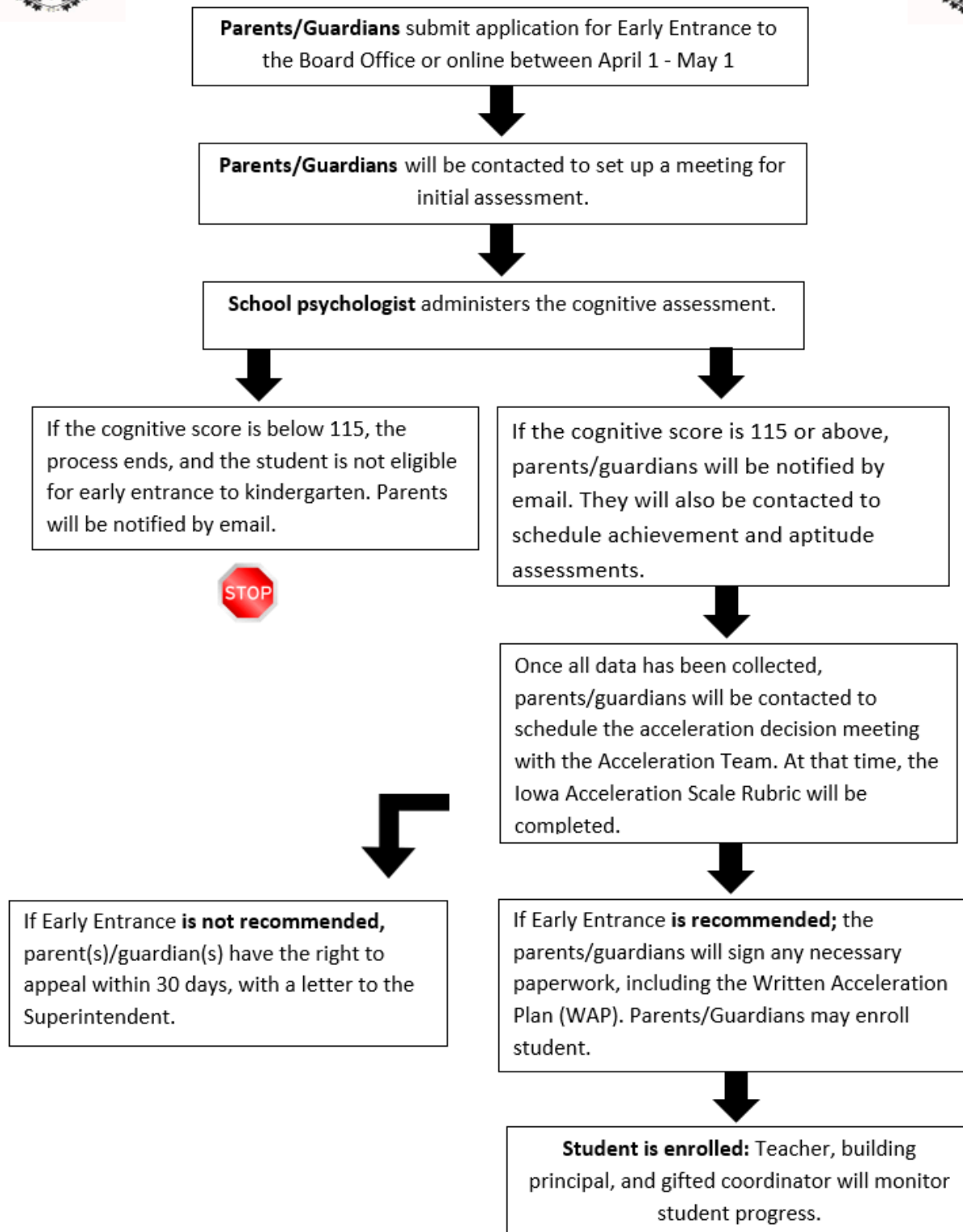
The Cuyahoga Falls City School District considers a child eligible for entrance into kindergarten if they attain the age **of five on or before August 1st** of the year they apply for entrance. A child under the age of six (6) who is enrolled in kindergarten will be considered of compulsory school age.

Early Entrance Application: By request, a child may be recommended for evaluation for early entrance to kindergarten if they will be five (5) years of age between August 2nd and December 31st, inclusive. The child will also need to exhibit the mental, social and emotional standards established by the Cuyahoga Falls Board of Education. Parents/guardians are required to complete the early entrance packet or online application and return it *on or before May 1st* of the year intended for possible early entrance to kindergarten.

The Cuyahoga Falls Board of Education adopted policies (*JEBA Early Entrance to Kindergarten and IKEB Acceleration*) related to Early Entrance and Acceleration that can be found here at [BoardDocs](#). Evaluations related to referrals submitted to the school principal, gifted coordinator or Curriculum Department after May 1 in the year for which admission is being requested will be considered by the Assistant Superintendent and Gifted Coordinator.



EARLY ENTRANCE TO KINDERGARTEN FLOW CHART



*Acceleration Team consists of: Parent/Guardian, School Psychologist, Principal, Grade Level Teacher, and Gifted Coordinator

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Is early entrance to kindergarten the best choice for your child?

Early entrance is a whole-grade acceleration, and should be viewed as a means of meeting a child's needs. Developmental readiness is important in determining whether or not early entrance is appropriate. Though a child may have a lot of ability, they may not be ready for kindergarten. Understanding and assessing social maturity, personal development, and motor development are key 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. This opportunity is designed as a measure to meet individual differences in school readiness.

Some considerations when determining if early entrance is right for a child:

- Is my child capable of working in a classroom setting?
- Will my child be frustrated by this placement?
- What are the possible long-term impacts for my child when progressing through elementary, middle, and high school (e.g., beginning college at a younger age)?
- Early entrance is not designed as a replacement for preschool.
- Understanding the expectations for students in kindergarten today - for example, students are expected to ask and answer questions about key details in a text, retell familiar stories with details, ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text, and identify similarities and differences between two texts on the same topic (examples and additional information in section 'What is expected of students in kindergarten?').

There is a difference between ability and achievement. Some children may appear exceptional simply because of their access to opportunities (e.g. preschool programs, caregivers working with them on skills, or access to learning materials and opportunities). Early entrance is designed for the child who not only has ability, but easily achieves when presented with new material, as compared to other students already of kindergarten age.

It is important that all stakeholders are supportive of the decision for early entrance if the child is evaluated as a good candidate.

What is expected of students in kindergarten?

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. Please take time to review the following information:

- Early Learning Content Standards and subject specific Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies on the [Department of Education and Workforce website](#).
- The Department of Education and Workforce website which contains useful information about kindergarten, including the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment: [KRA](#).
- The Department of Education and Workforce's website also has a checklist for kindergarten readiness. When considering if your child is a good candidate for early entrance, the readiness [checklist](#) should be considered. However, this checklist does not replace the use of the Iowa Acceleration Scale.

Kindergarten in Cuyahoga Falls City Schools is currently offered as a full-day program.

Applying for Early Entrance

If you believe that your child may be a good candidate for early entrance, please complete the Early Entrance Application and Kindergarten Screening Checklist, available for printing on the district website, in paper form at the Board Office, or electronically on the district website.

The Department of Teaching and Learning will coordinate the early entrance process and contact you regarding testing. A school psychologist will administer the assessment(s). The evaluation will be completed within 45 school calendar days from receipt of the completed packet.

As developmental readiness is important for success in kindergarten, students who are viable candidates for Early Entrance to kindergarten are expected to be developmentally 'on track' or above the typical kindergarten student. As defined by the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW), **early entrance to kindergarten is considered a whole grade acceleration and therefore grade acceleration procedures and specific assessments must be completed.** The Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition, will be the guide for early entrance and whole grade acceleration. This is a multi-tiered process that begins with an individual cognitive assessment. To be considered eligible for whole grade acceleration, there

must be a reasonable expectation for success for the student's long-term general level of achievement.

An individually administered test will be used for this initial assessment to measure superior cognitive ability. According to the Iowa Acceleration Scale, a student who achieves a score of 115 or higher on the cognitive assessment is a viable candidate for acceleration, and the process continues. **Students who do not achieve this score will not be considered for early entrance to kindergarten and the process concludes.** If a student does achieve a 115 or higher on the cognitive assessment, additional measures of achievement and aptitude will be administered and used in consideration for early entrance.

An observation, meeting, interview or additional information from preschool staff or extracurricular instructor(s) may be scheduled to assist with the determination if your child meets the IQ and/or specific academic score to continue. Parents will be contacted if this observation/information is needed. This additional information may be needed to assess the social, emotional, and behavioral skills necessary to be successful in a school environment.

Once the evaluation(s) are completed, **if your child qualifies for early entrance**, the acceleration evaluation committee will convene for the purpose of conducting a fair and thorough evaluation of the child. If your child does not qualify based on the data, the psychologist will share the results and the process is concluded at that time. This committee may include the following:

- Parent/legal guardian or representative designated by the parent/guardian
- Psychologist or guidance counselor
- Principal or assistant principal of school to which the child may be admitted
- Teacher at the grade level at which the student may be admitted
- Gifted Coordinator
- Assistant Superintendent

Appeal Process

The Cuyahoga Falls City School District Board of Education Policy states that parents / guardians have the right to appeal any decision about the results of any identification for gifted services for a student. Board Policies can be located at: <https://www.cfalls.org>

Appeals must be made in writing to the Superintendent within thirty (30) school calendar days of the parent/guardian receiving the results of the evaluation. The Superintendent or their designee shall review the appeal and notify the parent/guardian of their decision within thirty (30) school calendar days of receiving the appeal. The Superintendent's or their designee's decision will be final.

Timeline for Early Entrance to Kindergarten /First Grade

- Starting January 1, early entrance application packets will be available; however, applications will be accepted between April 1 - May 1 of the year the potential acceleration will take place.
- Evaluations will be completed within 45 school calendar days after submission of the application.
- Deadline to appeal to Superintendent: Within 30 school calendar days after notification of results.

If you choose to complete the [online application](#), please do so by May 1.

If you choose to complete the paper application, please send your completed application postmarked no later than May 1 to:

Curriculum Department
Attn: *Tamara Belko, Gifted Intervention Specialist*
Cuyahoga Falls Board of Education
405 Tallmadge Rd.
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221
Or via email: cf_belkot@cftigers.org

Transition / Acceleration Plan:

Should your child meet the criteria for Early Entrance admittance, they will be provided with a Written Acceleration / Transition Plan (WAP). The Cuyahoga Falls City School District WAPs will include strategies to ensure success as well as applicable staff members responsible for monitoring academic progress until the end of the transition period. Academic, behavioral, and social goals will be jointly developed with the team. The WAP will provide a transition period of 6 to 9 weeks.

At the end of the transition period, the accelerated placement shall become permanent, if the team agrees it is an appropriate placement during that time. The student's record shall be modified accordingly and the acceleration implementation plan shall become part of the student's permanent record in order to facilitate continuous progress through the curriculum.

Early Entrance to Kindergarten/1st Grade Application

Directions: Please complete both forms found below or electronically on the district website: The Application for Early Entrance and the Early Entrance Checklist.

Application: Please complete this application if you believe your child demonstrates academic, social, emotional, and physical maturity appropriate for placement in kindergarten/1st grade.

Child's Information - Please print clearly

Name _____
(First Name, Middle Name, Last Name)

Birthdate ____/____/____ Male ____ Female ____

Address _____
(Street, City, State, Zip Code)

Custodial Parent/Guardian Information

Name _____
(First Name, Middle Name, Last Name)

Relationship to Child _____

Home Phone # _____ Work # _____ Cell # _____
(Circle preferred number for communication)

Email _____

(continued)

Preschool/Kindergarten Experience - Please attach a preschool/kindergarten report card, if available. List all preschool, kindergarten, Head Start, special programs, and/or daycare programs attended, completing all boxes. Use additional paper, if needed.

Name of School Program	Dates of Attendance	# of Hours per Week Attended

Explain why you feel your child would be ready for a kindergarten/1st grade program. Comment on your child's social behavior and academic skills (use additional paper, if needed).

Early Entrance to Kindergarten Screening Checklist - Please complete the identifying information and the checklist below, indicating with a check-mark ✓ whether each behavior is **Observed Most of the Time, Observed Some of the Time, or Not Observed**.

Child's Name (First)	Child's Name (Last)	Date of Birth	Gender

Social-Emotional Development	Observed Most of the Time	Observed Some of the Time	Not Observed
Separates easily from parent			
Is able to listen and attend for at least 10 minutes			
Shows eagerness to learn and explore			

Approaches Toward Learning	Observed Most of the Time	Observed Some of the Time	Not Observed
Uses imagination and creativity to interact with objects/materials			
Focuses on activities with deliberate concentration despite distractions			
Asks questions to seek explanations			

(continued)

Language and Literacy	Observed Most of the Time	Observed Some of the Time	Not Observed
Orients books correctly for reading, turning one page at a time			
Recognizes and names some upper and lower case letters, in addition to those in first name			
Recognizes some sounds associated with letters			
Is able to retell a simple story after hearing it			
Demonstrates grasp of writing tool and letter formation in writing			

Cognition and General Knowledge	Observed Most of the Time	Observed Some of the Time	Not Observed
Sorts and classifies objects by one or more attributes (size, shape, color, etc.)			
Demonstrates one-to-one correspondence when counting objects to 10			
Understands and uses names of shapes when identifying objects			
Demonstrates cooperative behaviors such as taking turns			

Parent/Guardian Signature - Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the contents of the Early Entrance packet, and give permission to have your child assessed.

(Parent/Guardian/Custodial Parent Signature)

(Date)

Updated 1/2025

