



Dear Parents/Guardians,

The 2009 General Assembly passed legislation allowing a child who has reached his/her birthday by August 31st to enter kindergarten if he/she demonstrates an extraordinary level of academic ability and maturity. In determining eligibility, the principal shall convene a committee of educational professionals who will assist him/her in making decisions about each individual child. Criteria that shall be considered include the following:

- Student Aptitude
 - All testing must be administered after April 16th
- Student Achievement
 - All testing must be administered after April 16th
- Observable Student Behavior
- Student Performance
- Student Interest
- Student Motivation

Student Aptitude

A child eligible to enter school early must be precocious in academic and social development and score at the 98th percentile on a standard individual test of intelligence such as the Stanford-Bidet, The Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children or any other comparable tests, that shall be administered by a licensed psychologist. Although superior aptitude is a strong indicator of extraordinary academic ability, every child with a score at the 98th percentile in intelligence may not need early admission to kindergarten. Some children could have a negative experience if the demands of a structured school day are imposed too early.

Achievement (The most recent edition of these assessments must be used.)

Children entering kindergarten early shall be functioning two or three years beyond their peers. Children eligible for early admission to kindergarten shall score at the 98th percentile on a standard test of achievement such as the Metropolitan Readiness Test, Woodcock-Johnson, the Test of Early Mathematics (TEMA) paired with the Test of Early Readiness Ability (TERA) or any other comparable test. Also an impartial professional educator who is trained in the use of the instrument may administer such a test as long as he/she has no potential conflict of interest in the outcome of the assessment.

Performance

Children displaying a need to enter kindergarten early should be able to perform tasks well above their age peers. The principal will consider the child's ability in independent reading, problem solving skills, advanced vocabulary and some writing fluency as behaviors indicative of a

precocious preschooler. The parents must submit a portfolio of student work showing outstanding examples of ability in **any** of the following areas: art, math, writing, dramatic play, creative productions, science, social interactions, etc. A writing sample must be included. Other samples may include a list of books that the child has read without assistance, examples of math skills and information from the Parent Observation Checklist. A running record, a story retelling and math tasks will be conducted during the observational assessment.

Observable Student Behavior/Student Interest

If a child is to be successful in early admission, he/she should be socially and developmentally mature enough to be in a structured school setting for a demanding school day. The child should be capable of following verbal instructions and functioning independently within a group setting. Many children with extraordinary academic ability are not mature enough to handle the rigors of kindergarten at age four. The school system requires two recommendation letters with specific documentation of physical and social maturity from preschool teachers, childcare workers, pediatricians or others with direct knowledge of the child. Documentation checklists that might be useful are the California Preschool Competency Scale, the Harrison Scale or any other comparable scale typical of early social development. The student will also be observed during a kindergarten day to determine mental, emotional, physical and social maturity. The indicators include endurance throughout the school day, independence, social interaction, language development, vocabulary, spatial relations and cognitive skills.

Motivation/Student Interest

A child ready for early admission to kindergarten should be eager to learn and excited about a new school experience. The children should display a thirst for knowledge consequently pushing the parents for new and challenging learning situations. If only the parent is interested in the child attending school, early admission is not a good option. Principals shall determine this information in an informal interview with the child and a more structured interview with the parent. Questions the principal should ask the child would concentrate on the personal interests of the child. A child who is ready for school should respond with “school type” quests for knowledge. A child who is a candidate might watch the Discovery Channel, read everything he/she can find about dinosaurs, be able to carry on a discussion about volcanoes, etc. Documentation of the child’s intense interests and motivation are also provided by the child’s work samples and the Parent Observational Checklist.

Timelines

All testing must be administered after April 16th that follows the child’s fourth birthday. A parent pursuing early admission to kindergarten for his/he child needs to submit the completed Early Entry Packet to the **Elementary Curriculum Director for Ashe County Schools** for initial review, **prior to the first day of the school’s instructional calendar**. The Department of Curriculum and Instruction will review test results to determine if the child meets the state test score eligibility requirements for Early Admission. The Early Entry packet will be forwarded to the principal of the child’s base school to complete the process. The principal will act on the request within three (3) weeks of receipt of the packet from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

If the child is admitted to kindergarten, before the end of the first ninety (90) days of the child’s being enrolled, the principal or the parent may request that the child be withdrawn based on substantial evidence documenting that the child is not adjusting satisfactorily to the school setting. If a parent requests a withdrawal, the parent must be invited to assist in the development

of intervention strategies before a child may be exited from school. If the strategies are not successful and the decision is made to remove the child from school, parents must be given at least ten (10) days notice to arrange childcare if needed.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide the following documentation to initiate the decision-making process.

_____ Birth Certificate

_____ Student Aptitude Assessment such as the Stanford-Binet, The Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale Intelligence, the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children or any comparable tests administered by a licensed psychologist with a total score in the 98th percentile or higher. **(The most recent version of the test must be administered.)**

_____ Student Achievement Assessment for Reading and Mathematics such as:

- *The Woodcock-Johnson* (Preferred achievement test of the Ashe County Schools) Administer test 9, 10, 17A, 17B, 17C, 18A, and 18B and any additional subtests deemed appropriate by the psychologist. These subtests will yield cluster scores of Reading Comprehension and Math Reasoning.
- *Metropolitan Readiness Test*
- *Stanford Early School Achievement Test*,
- *The Mini Battery of Achievement, the Test of Early Mathematics (TEMA), the Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA)* or other comparable tests administered by a licensed psychologist or trained impartial professional educator. The student must have scored in the 98th percentile or higher in either reading or mathematics. (The most recent version of the test and/or normative update must be used.)

_____ Student Performance Portfolio to include samples of student work that shows outstanding ability in any of the following areas: Art, Math, Dramatic Play, Creative Production, science, social Interactions, etc. A sample of the student's writing must be included.

_____ Two letters of recommendation from a preschool teacher, childcare worker, pediatrician or others who can provide specific documentation of physical and social maturity.

_____ Prior Notice and Parent/Guardian Consent for Evaluation

_____ Parent Observation Checklist

Sincerely,

Kim Barnes
Director of Preschool/K-6 Curriculum