



A Parent/Guardian's Guide to

Early Entrance

to

Kindergarten (& 1st Grade)

2026-2027

Riverside Local School District
585 Riverview Drive
Painesville Twp., Ohio 44077

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Age Eligibility Requirements Under Ohio Law

Under Ohio law, including recent changes established through **Ohio House Bill 114**, children must turn **five years of age on or before the first day of instruction** to be eligible for regular kindergarten admission.

For **Riverside Local School District**, the first day of instruction for the **2026–2027 school year** is:
August 24, 2026

Children who turn five years old **after August 24, 2026**, do not meet the standard age requirement for kindergarten admission. These children may be considered for enrollment only through the district's **Early Entrance to Kindergarten** process.

Is Early Entrance to Kindergarten Right 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 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 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. 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 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)?
- 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 with 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.

Early entrance to kindergarten is classified as a whole grade acceleration. Children being considered for early entrance are being referred for placement at a higher grade level than is typical given the child's age and for the purpose of providing the student access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities.

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.
- Parents/guardians can easily access the *Early Learning and Development Standards* on the *Ohio Department of Children and Youth* website at:
 - [ELDS](#)
- Parents/guardians may also review what entering Kindergarten students should know and be able to do and the Ohio Learning Standards for Kindergarten students by visiting the *Ohio Department of Education and Workforce* Website :
 - [Frequently Asked Questions about Kindergarten - For Families](#)
 - [Ohio's Learning Standards](#)
- The *Ohio Department of Education and Workforce* website contains useful information about kindergarten, in particular, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) which all kindergarten students will take within the first six weeks of school.
 - [Kindergarten Readiness Assessment](#)
- The *Ohio Department of Education and Workforce* website can give you more information about kindergarten expectations, including a checklist for kindergarten readiness. When looking at whether early entrance is appropriate for a child, the same readiness guidelines should be considered
- Kindergarten in the Riverside Local School District is a *full-day program*. Students are expected to participate in the academic program throughout the day. Accommodations for partial day Kindergarten which must meet Ohio Department of Education criteria may be available, however mid-day transportation is not provided by the district to and/or from the school.

How to Begin the Early Entrance Process

Families interested in early entrance must complete and submit the required documentation to formally begin the evaluation process.

The following forms are required:

Early Entrance to Kindergarten Referral Form

This form serves as the **formal written parent request** to initiate the early entrance evaluation process.

Kindergarten Readiness Checklist

This checklist is completed by the **parent/guardian** and, when applicable, the **preschool teacher**. It provides information regarding:

- Academic readiness
- Social-emotional development
- Independence skills
- Overall maturity

Permission for Evaluation Form

This form must be **signed and returned** before any district screening or assessments can be conducted. Evaluation dates cannot be scheduled until this form has been received.

Appeal Form

Families who wish to appeal the district's early entrance determination may submit a written appeal according to district procedures.

Appeals must:

- Be submitted **in writing to the Superintendent**
- Be filed **within thirty (30) calendar days** of receiving the evaluation results
- Include any additional information the family wishes to be considered

The **Superintendent or designee** will:

- Review the appeal
- Provide written notification of the decision
- Respond within **thirty (30) calendar days** of receiving the appeal

The decision of the Superintendent or designee will be **final**.

Early Entrance Timeline

The district follows established timelines to ensure timely evaluations and communication with families.

Parent Request Deadline and Evaluation Timeline

- Referrals submitted **between August 15 and April 15** will typically be completed and a written report issued **within forty-five (45) calendar days** of submission to the school principal.
- Referrals submitted **between April 16 and August 14** will typically be completed and a written report issued **within forty-five (45) calendar days after the start of the school year**.

These timelines allow the district to complete all necessary assessments and provide families with clear recommendations.

How will My Child be Evaluated for Early Entrance to Kindergarten?

The early entrance evaluation process is designed to look at the **whole child** and determine whether early entrance to kindergarten is the best fit for your child's learning and development.

Step 1: Cognitive Assessment

Your child will first be given the **Woodcock-Johnson Cognitive Assessment (WJ-Cog)**.

This assessment looks at how your child thinks and learns. It measures skills such as:

- Problem-solving
- Memory
- Verbal reasoning
- Processing speed

If your child earns a **standard score of 115 or above**, they will move to the next step of the evaluation process.

Step 2: Full Readiness Assessment Battery

If your child meets the cognitive score requirement, they will complete additional assessments to evaluate their **academic skills, motor development, and social-emotional readiness**. These assessments help determine overall readiness for early entrance.

The additional assessments include:

Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Assessment (WJ-Ach)

This test measures early academic skills, including:

- Reading readiness
- Writing skills
- Early math skills

Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (Beery VMI)

This assessment looks at how well your child can coordinate visual and motor skills.

Behavior Assessment System for Children, Third Edition (BASC-3)

This rating scale is completed by parents (and sometimes teachers or caregivers).

It provides information about:

- Social skills
- Emotional development
- Behavior
- Adaptability

Final Review

After all assessments are completed, the evaluation team will review the results together to determine whether early entrance to kindergarten is appropriate for your child. Families will be informed of the results and recommendations, and next steps will be discussed.

*This comprehensive process and documentation are used to ensure decisions are equitable, data-based, and aligned with guidance from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce.

Kindergarten Registration Information

Kindergarten registration for the 2026–2027 school year opens: **March 30, 2026**

Families considering early entrance are strongly encouraged to begin the referral process at that time to ensure all timelines are met.

Completed forms may be submitted to:

Camille Ritt

Executive Director of Student Services
Riverside Local School District

OR

The principal of your home school

Once the **Permission for Evaluation Form** has been received, district staff will coordinate scheduling for screening and assessment dates.

If you have additional questions about the early entrance process or required documentation, families are encouraged to contact the district for assistance. Riverside staff are happy to support families as they consider this opportunity for their child.

IMPORTANT

Very few children qualify for early entrance to kindergarten. Please make sure you proceed with childcare arrangements as a contingency. If you are selecting a Preschool program, please understand that those programs routinely fill up quickly. Please register your child as you normally would, but let the Preschool Office know that your child is being screened for early entrance to kindergarten.

Gifted Coordinator: Julie Weber
(440) 352-8207