

Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Children may be considered for early entrance to kindergarten if their birthday falls between September 2 and October 31. The criteria for acceptance into kindergarten early are described below. Kindergarten and first grade teachers, school psychologists, and advanced academics education staff members will administer and evaluate the assessments.

Criteria for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

- Children will be considered for early entrance if their fifth birthday falls between September 2 & October 31.
- Children must demonstrate above average academic skills, similar to a current kindergarten student in the eighth month of school.
- Children must demonstrate superior intellectual ability, defined as performance at or above a score of 125 (superior range) on a nationally normed, individually administered test of cognitive ability.
- Children's skills will be assessed and observed in a simulated kindergarten experience that focuses on the following areas and abilities:
 - Writes name with clarity
 - Fine motor development (writing and cutting)
 - Large motor development
 - Recognizes all letters of the alphabet (lower and upper case) and their sounds
 - Identifies initial and ending sounds in words, and is able to blend sounds to read 3-letter words
 - Sounds out words and is beginning to read high frequency words such as *the* and *is*
 - Recognizes numerals 1-25
 - One-to-one correspondence (counting objects) to 15
 - Knows basic shapes
- Children must demonstrate socialization and behavioral skills more advanced than the majority of entering kindergartners, performing at high levels in all critical areas:
 - Ability to separate easily from parent
 - Ability to focus attention for appropriate amount of time during learning tasks
 - Ability to complete tasks in reasonable amount of time
 - Ability to transition easily
 - Willing to participate, share and cooperate in groups
 - Relative ease in socializing with peers
 - Ability to verbalize with teachers and peers

Decision Making

- There are potentially three steps in the early entrance process. Children begin with the first step and if recommended, move to the next step in the process.
 1. An individual screening
 2. A group screening which simulates a kindergarten classroom experience
 3. An individual evaluation by a school psychologist
- The determination for eligibility for early entrance to kindergarten is made by a consensus decision of the assessment team. This determination is considered final. Results and the final determination will be shared with parents/guardians and the home school principal through a written assessment report.
- If accepted for early entrance, students may then be enrolled for kindergarten at Central Enrollment at the District Center

2025-26 Timeline, Procedures and Fees for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

- JANUARY - MARCH:
 - Parent/guardian receives information regarding Early Entrance at the Kindergarten Welcome Fair, Early Childhood Screening, the district website or a district staff member. Parents and guardians should contact the Advanced Academics and Talent Development (AATD) office at 651-604-3749 or trina.hira@isd623.org to request the early entrance questionnaire and screening sign up form.
 - **February 3:** Parents are encouraged to register for PreK for 2026-27. Families not receiving a scholarship pay a nonrefundable \$100 registration fee.
- MARCH 3, 2026
 - Families may attend [Kindergarten Welcome Night](#) at 6:00 p.m. on March 3 with the understanding that their child may not qualify for early entrance in the fall. The event is held at each elementary school. This session gives parents more information about the kindergarten program at the school.
- APRIL:
 - **April 1:** Registration for the early entrance to kindergarten process is due.
 - **April 6-10:** Individual Screening to help determine who is a viable candidate for the early entrance process will include school readiness skills, behaviors, and problem-solving skills.
 - **April 15:** Families will receive the results of the individual screening. Students who are recommended to continue will move to the group screening in May.
- MAY:
 - **May 15:** Group Screening will be completed by district teachers and school psychologists. Group screening will include children participating in several different situations to test developmental areas. Some tests will be individual, others in a group. These include following directions in completing a project, counting objects, reading high frequency words, demonstrating gross and fine motor coordination, answering questions, and displaying student and adult interaction.
 - **Note:** For families living outside of district boundaries, there may be a fee for the group screening. Information will be updated soon.
 - Results from the Group Screening will be sent to families by May 22. Results will indicate that (1) early entrance would not be in the best interests of your child, or (2) the child demonstrates some kindergarten readiness skills and further individualized assessment with a school psychologist will need to be completed to determine the final decision.
- JUNE:
 - **June 30:** Individual evaluations by a school psychologist will be completed by this date. The psychologist will give the child a standardized intellectual ability test to determine her or his cognitive functioning. Additional assessments identified by the screening team may be used as well. There may be a fee for families living outside of district boundaries. This information will be updated soon.
 - Families will be notified in writing about the results of the assessment, specifying whether the child is accepted for early entrance or should enter school the following year at the age-appropriate time.
 - Any PreK tuition paid will be refunded to families of students who are accepted as early entrants to kindergarten. Families contact [Melissa Brady](#) at 651-604-3578 to request the tuition refund.