



Information Regarding Early Admission to Kindergarten for the 2012-2013 School Year

Early admission to kindergarten for the 2012-2013 year is **open only to children whose fifth birthday falls between September 2 and October 15, inclusive.**

Please read carefully the following information regarding early admission to the Howard County Public School System's kindergarten program. The section below entitled "Considerations" is also provided to support decisions to apply for early entrance to school. If, after reading this packet, you have questions about the application process you may also want to read "Frequently Asked Questions About Early Admission to Kindergarten" for further explanation about the early admission process. If you would like to consult with school system staff about your decision to apply for early admission, call 410-313-5693 (Office of Early Childhood Programs).

Considerations Regarding Early Entrance to School

- All Howard County public schools have full-day kindergarten programs.
- Your child will be the youngest in his or her class, often a year younger than many peers.
- Entering school early is a decision that will have long-term effects on your child. The potential social/emotional impact on your child as he/she progresses through elementary, middle, high school and beyond is not predictable.
- Young children are emotionally vulnerable and may become stressed and anxious when adult expectations for their performance exceed their developmental capabilities.
- All children tend to learn best when they are appropriately challenged at a level for which they are ready.
- Although a capable young child needs to be challenged, those challenges should be closely aligned with his or her social and emotional development.
- When your child's peer group reaches adolescence and is old enough to date, drive, and assume other young adult privileges, the same rights will be denied your child who is chronologically younger.
- There is evidence that children carefully selected for early entrance to school tend to do very well, academically and socially.

Standards, Registration, and the Trial Period

The State of Maryland has determined that five years of age is an appropriate age to begin kindergarten.¹ In many cases, children admitted early to school will be working in a setting with other children that are significantly older. To develop a positive perspective about the school experience, children should feel comfortable, competent, and confident as they learn in the classroom setting. Therefore, only children who meet **rigorous** admission standards will be accepted early into the kindergarten program. To meet these rigorous standards, children must have demonstrated exceptional ability in social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Children who meet these standards will be allowed to register for kindergarten. However, all children admitted early into kindergarten will be observed for a 30-calendar-day trial period at the beginning of the school year to determine if their classroom performance reflects the skills, abilities, and disposition needed for continuing as an early admission student. Acceptance for early admission and registration into kindergarten do not guarantee continuation beyond the 30-calendar-day trial period.

Early admission does not guarantee that the child will be promoted to the next grade. Decisions regarding promotion of early admission kindergartners to first grade will be based on performance during the kindergarten year. Applicants denied early admission to kindergarten will not automatically be placed in prekindergarten.

Testing Procedures

For early admission in the 2012-2013 school year, the testing period for applicants will begin **February 27, 2012 and conclude May 4, 2012**. One testing date will be assigned to each applicant. Rescheduling of the testing date will only occur for uncontrollable circumstances (i.e., illness). The date, time, and location of the individualized testing will be mailed to parents/guardians. The testing results, along with the other application information, will be used to determine early admission to school.

The testing results and a child's prior performance and experience are important to consider as decisions are being made. However, a child's actual performance in the school's classroom setting is a necessary part of determining if early admission is in the child's best interest. Therefore, if a child is admitted to school, the teacher will provide a weekly report of the child's classroom progress for the first month (30 calendar days) of school. The teacher's observations of the child's classroom performance during the trial period serve as the final assessment of the child's readiness for the program.

Notification of Decision

Parents/guardians will be notified by letter from the Office of Early Childhood Programs regarding the decision of acceptance or denial for early admission. These letters will be mailed on May 25, 2012.

¹In the Howard County kindergarten program, instruction in reading and mathematics is differentiated. This means that, for certain periods of the day, it is delivered in small groups that are based on the different skills and abilities that individual students demonstrate on beginning-of-year assessments and ongoing teacher observations. Furthermore, kindergarten students performing above grade level can be considered for acceleration to first grade after opportunity for teacher observation and assessments according to Policy 8010 – PREKINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 8 GRADING AND REPORTING.

Application Documents and Timeline

A complete application includes the following:

- *Application for Early Admission to Kindergarten***
- *Developmental Checklist A (For Children Being Considered for Early Admission to School)*
This form is to be completed by the child’s preschool teacher or an adult other than the parent/guardian or family member. **
- *Developmental Checklist B (For Children Being Considered for Early Admission to School)*
This form is to be completed by the child’s parent(s) or guardian, and mailed to the address at the bottom of the form.**

****ALL DOCUMENTS MUST BE DELIVERED OR POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN MARCH 31, 2012.**

KINDERGARTEN TIMELINE

Early Admission Procedures	Date/s
Parent(s)/Guardian(s) submit <i>Application</i> and <i>Developmental Checklist B</i> to the Early Childhood Office, Howard County Public Schools Parent(s)/Guardian(s) request that preschool teacher or other adult (not related to the child) submit <i>Developmental Checklist A</i> to the Early Childhood Office, Howard County Public Schools	February 1 – March 31, 2012
Parent(s)/Guardian(s) receive letter with child’s testing date, time, and location via U.S. Mail	February 17 – April 20, 2012
Children take assessments (Location announced in letter)	February 27 – May 4, 2012
Parent(s)/Guardian(s) receive notification regarding acceptance or denial of application	Letters will be mailed on May 25, 2012
Parent(s)/Guardian(s) register children accepted for early admission at home school	As soon as possible after receipt of acceptance letter for early admission
Parent(s)/Guardian(s) receive from the classroom teacher weekly progress reports during the child’s 30-calendar-day trial period	August 27 – September 28, 2012
Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may appeal decision of early admission	Within 10 calendar days of receipt of denial for early admission (no later than June 9, 2012)
Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may appeal decision of non-continuation after 30-calendar-day trial period	Within 10 calendar days of receipt of notification of non-continuation (no later than October 8, 2012)