



PREKINDERGARTEN

The Howard County Public School System

10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, Maryland 21042-6198 410-313-6600

Only children who would qualify for free or reduced meals may apply and be considered for early admission to Prekindergarten. Parents who think they qualify for free or reduced meals must complete the Application for Early Admission to Prekindergarten, including the "Household Members & Monthly Income" section.

Upon receipt and review of the Prekindergarten application, parents will be notified via mail regarding an assessment date for their child or their status as a non-qualified applicant.

Information Regarding Early Admission to Prekindergarten for the 2009-10 School Year

Early admission to prekindergarten for the 2009-10 school year is **open only to children whose fourth birthday falls between September 2 and October 15, 2009, inclusive.**

Please read carefully the following information regarding early admission to the Howard County Public School System's Prekindergarten 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 or 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). You may also want to read "Frequently Asked Questions About Early Admission to Prekindergarten and Kindergarten" for further explanation about the early admission process.

Considerations Regarding Early Entrance to School

- Your child will be the youngest in his or her class.
- Young children are emotionally vulnerable and may become stressed and anxious when adult expectations for their performance exceed their developmental capabilities.
- 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 to your child who is chronologically younger.
- All Howard County schools have full-day kindergarten programs.

Standards, Registration, and the Trial Period

The State of Maryland has determined that four years of age is an appropriate age to begin prekindergarten. 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 are income eligible and meet **rigorous** admission standards will be accepted early into the prekindergarten 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 prekindergarten. However, all children admitted early into prekindergarten 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 prekindergarten 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 prekindergartners to kindergarten will be based on performance during the prekindergarten year.

Testing Procedures

For early admission in the 2009-10 school year, the testing period for applicants will begin **March 9, 2009 and conclude May 1, 2009**. 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

During the week of May 11, 2009, parents/guardians will be notified by letter from the Early Childhood Office regarding the decision of acceptance or denial for early admission.

Application Documents and Timeline

(Only application documents from qualified prekindergarten applicants will be considered.)

A complete application includes the following:

- Application for Early Admission to Prekindergarten**
- 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 on the bottom of the form.**

****ALL DOCUMENTS MUST BE DELIVERED OR POST-MARKED NO LATER THAN MARCH 13, 2009.**

Early Admission Procedures	Date/s
Parents request application	January 26 – March 31, 2009
Parents submit application and Developmental Checklist B to the Early Childhood Office, Howard County Public Schools	January 26 – March 31, 2009
Parents request that preschool teacher or other adult (not related to the child) submit Developmental Checklist A to the Early Childhood Office, Howard County Public Schools	
Parents receive letter with child’s testing date, time, and location via US Mail <u>or</u> notification of non-qualification for free or reduced meals	February 16 – April 10, 2009
Children take assessments (Location announced in letter)	March 9 – May 1, 2009
Parents receive notification regarding acceptance or denial of application	Week of May 11, 2009
Parents register children accepted for early admission at home school	As soon as possible after receipt of acceptance letter for early admission
Parents receive from the classroom teacher weekly progress reports during the child’s 30-day trial period	August 31 – September 30, 2009*
Parents may appeal decision of early admission	Within 10 calendar days of receipt of denial for early admission (no later than May 26, 2009)
Parents may appeal decision of non-continuation after 30-day trial period	Within 10 calendar days of receipt of notification of non-continuation (no later than October 12, 2009)

*These dates are subject to change when the 2009-10 Howard County Public School System calendar is approved.