



# Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools

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“WHERE STUDENTS COME FIRST”

## **Early Entrance to Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions**

To be sure children are ready for the demands of school, Gahanna students must turn five by August 1 to enroll in Kindergarten. This date is appropriate for most children, but there are times when a younger child is academically and socially advanced. In accordance with state law, the district has established a process for children to be considered for early entrance to Kindergarten. Here are common questions about the process.

### **Is Early Entrance to Kindergarten right for my child?**

The standards for early entrance are high to ensure that students are not frustrated by their advanced placement. Although a bright young child needs to be challenged, those challenges should be closely aligned with his or her social and emotional development.

### **What information is used to determine if a child may enter Kindergarten early?**

Assessment for early entrance to Kindergarten uses information from a cognitive ability test that measures a child's ability to think, problem solve, and understand new ideas. The assessment also includes a test of academic skills, including reading, writing, and math.

### **What is on the test?**

The cognitive ability test looks at a child's ability to follow directions, communicate through speaking, problem solve, and recognize patterns and relationships among ideas and objects. The achievement testing measures a child's basic reading and writing skills, understanding of math concepts, and general knowledge of the world around him or her. The tests are designed to allow the child to go as far as possible in order to gauge how the child compares to other same-age peers, as well as the average Kindergartener.

### **What are the criteria for early entrance placement?**

School districts in Ohio are required to utilize assessment tools selected from an approved list that is published annually by the Ohio Department of Education. Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools uses the Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) for making early entrance placement decisions. This instrument makes recommendations based on points assigned to certain test scores and certain behaviors. Along the way, students are required to have minimum scores in order to continue with the process. Based on the guide established in the IAS, students must have a cognitive ability score of at least 115 to continue through the process. To put that into

perspective, 100 is considered average, 130 is considered gifted, and 115 is considered to be above average. Also, students must exhibit advanced academic skills to earn the required rating points to continue the process. Typically, students need to score at or above the 90th percentile in most subject areas when compared to students of the same age to get enough points to continue with the assessment. These base scores do not guarantee early entrance placement rather they indicate a continuation of the assessment process. Students considered for early entrance are expected to score much higher than an average child entering Kindergarten. This is based on research regarding child development and acceleration practices in accordance with state guidelines.

### **How common is early entrance placement?**

Early entrance is typically reserved for students far exceeding typical developmental expectations. Although students do not need to be gifted for early entrance placement, students who are ultimately eligible often fall in the gifted range of ability. The goal of all placement decisions is to ensure that students entering Kindergarten are ready for what this big year has in store academically and socially. There often are very few students who qualify for early entrance.