



Early Entrance to Kindergarten Criteria

Spring Valley District 99 complies with Illinois law which specifies that to enter kindergarten, children must be five years of age by September 1st of their kindergarten year. However, District 99 also follows SB 1223 and allows exceptions to this law for children whose potential and skills are in the very superior range when compared with their peers.

District 99 has identified early entrance to kindergarten as whole-grade acceleration, appropriate for those students who are intellectually and socially advanced. District 99 is responsible for determining whether a child is appropriate for early entrance, and the school district will complete all necessary assessments.

The decision for children to enter school early can have a profound effect on their academic and social performance for the remainder of their school career. It is a decision that needs to be taken seriously. Research indicates that early entrance and/or early reading ability is not a predictor of continued high achievement in the future.

Students who enter school early may demonstrate adaptive and social-emotional differences from peers who enter at the age-appropriate time due to their relative physical and emotional immaturity. As they progress through school, children who are young for their grade level may have more difficulty fitting in with their peers in social situations. The impact on extra-curricular activities that place students based on age or grade alone should also be considered.

To be considered for early entrance, students must demonstrate advanced characteristics in cognitive, academic, functional, and social/emotional domains. District 99 utilizes a systematic process that involves questionnaires, language and academic assessments and a social/emotional diagnostic. Very few children who complete the process meet the criteria to enter kindergarten early.

Requesting Early Entrance to Kindergarten

To be eligible for consideration for early entrance to kindergarten, the child must:

- Turn five years old by October 31st of the school year for which they are seeking entrance.
- Not have a sibling entering kindergarten.

Parents/guardians wishing to apply for early entrance for their child must:

- Contact the building principal by April 15th of the school year prior to the school year for which early entrance is sought.
- Provide a copy of the student's birth certificate.

Early Entrance Assessment and Decision-Making Process

- District 99 will conduct a screening of academic skills in reading, math, language development, and Social/Emotional development. The child must score above the 95th percentile on mid-year curriculum-based measurement probes at the kindergarten level and may only miss two on the language screener. All five areas of the KIDS Social Emotional Development Domain must be in the integrating range.
- District 99 completes a language screener to determine English proficiency for students who speak a second language or who have a second language present in the home.
- Children who are accepted for early entrance will be enrolled on a probationary basis. The school staff will assess each child's initial adjustment to school during the first 20-30 school days. If a child's initial adjustment is not satisfactory, District 99 will require that the child enroll when the child meets the state's enrollment age requirement for the appropriate grade level. The child will be placed on the preschool waiting list.