



Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you may or may not be aware, the General Assembly changed the statutory cut-off date in 2012 for initial admission to public schools from October 1 to August 1 and created an early enrollment option for those students not meeting the birthday deadline but wishing to attend kindergarten. A parent may request early entrance to kindergarten if the child turns five years of age after the state's kindergarten entrance date of August 1. Entrance shall be determined through standardized testing, parent ratings, and Early Entry Committee review.

McCracken County Public Schools is pleased to work with you as you consider the very important decision of whether or not to have your child enter kindergarten early. By early, we mean that your child's birthday falls after the state-established guideline of five years old by August 1. As a district, we believe for some children whose birthdays fall after Kentucky's birthday deadline, early entrance may be appropriate. For most children, however, waiting until they are five years old to enter kindergarten will enable them to grow and learn at a comfortable, age-appropriate rate – not only in kindergarten but also throughout their school years. A child having a successful school experience is important for all of us. Being the youngest in his/her peer group may not bring about concerns in kindergarten, but may become evident as the child ages and is the youngest among peers who are heading off to middle school, dating, sports, driving or even heading off to college. The child's entire school career needs to be taken into account toward the most likely course of success for the child selected.

The best way for all of us to work as a team to make a decision on early entry is to collect as much information as possible. While we can never be positive that a decision is right or wrong, years of experience have enabled us to look for certain factors which will likely determine a child's chance for overall success.

McCracken County Public Schools believes that it may be appropriate for some children who are mature and intellectually advanced to begin formal schooling at a chronological age younger than Kentucky's officially approved entry age. The purpose of early entrance is to provide an appropriate match between the child's learning needs and a suitable learning environment.

Many children achieve wonderful readiness skills through their enriched home, preschool or daycare. These skills may include:

- Getting along with peers and handling emotions;
- Showing an interest in learning;
- Recognizing letters and beginning letter sounds;
- Utilizing a rich oral vocabulary;
- Understanding beginning number concepts;
- Writing their own name; and
- Following directions and sitting still.

These children may appear as if they are ready to enter kindergarten even though they have not yet reached their 5th birthday. It is imperative, however, to also consider that age and maturity play a significant role in adjustment to school, and early school experiences can have a profound effect on a child's academic and social performance for the remainder of his/her school career. It is for this reason that the decision to have a child enter school early is one that should be taken very seriously.

If, after reading the enclosed brochure and going over the parent/guardian information, you still wish to have your student assessed and considered for early entrance, please return the completed application packet to your desired school no later than June 1.

Following receipt of your completed packet, you will be contacted to schedule an appointment for assessment in June. On the appointment day, district staff will observe and assess your child in multiple areas such as vocabulary, early reading, and math. It is important that your child feel comfortable during the assessment process. Parents/guardians are asked not to say anything to the child about having to pass a test to "get into" kindergarten or about seeing if they are "ready". Instead, you are asked to advise your child they will have a chance to show others how much they already know. This experience should not create a stressful situation for your child. Please be prepared to allow your child time to interact with district staff alone.

A District Early Entry Committee comprised of a testing specialist, guidance counselor, Director of Pupil Personnel, school administrators, and kindergarten teachers will review data to determine if your child meets the recommended standard. Decisions about placement will be communicated to you on or before July 1.

If your child does not meet the assessment criteria, it will be recommended that the child enroll in kindergarten the following year as scheduled. You will also be given information regarding McCracken County's Preschool program.

Again, we are pleased to work with you as you consider this very important decision of whether to have your student assessed for early entrance to kindergarten. Should you have any questions or require additional information regarding this process, please do not hesitate to contact McCracken County Schools at 270-538-4000 or desired school principal.

McCracken County Schools
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