



BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CITY SCHOOLS) 120

DIVISION: CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

**SUBJECT: KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE STUDENT ELIGIBILITY
CRITERIA AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

- I. PURPOSE /GOVERNING POLICY/IMPLICATIONS:** Outlines attendance requirements and enrollment procedures for the Baltimore City Public Schools Kindergarten programs and early admission procedures for Kindergarten and First Grade.
- II. CITY SCHOOLS ESSENTIALS:** *Curriculum and Instruction that Supports High Achievement for Every Student.*
- III. GOVERNING POLICY/IMPLICATIONS:** Document is written in compliance with COMAR 13a.08.01.01.-13a.08.01.02-2, which applies to all public Kindergarten and First Grade programs administered by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) in Maryland and all students currently attending Baltimore City schools or transferring into the district.
- IV. RESEARCH**
- Data analyzed by the Office of Achievement and Accountability showed that children starting Kindergarten before turning 5 are much more likely to be retained in higher grades. In SY05-06, Kindergarten students with September or later birthdays had a 14 point higher retention rate in Grade 1 and a 9 point higher retention rate in Grade 2, than their peers who turned 5 before September 1st. Subsequent cohorts showed similar trends (Memo to Charlene Iannone-Campbell from Dr. Lawrence A. Adams, February 1, 2010).
 - Children who are older relative to their peers when they enter kindergarten have been found to score higher on achievement tests and are less likely to repeat grades or suffer from learning disabilities (Elder & Lubotsky, 2006).

IV. IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES:

A. Kindergarten Attendance Requirement

1. All children turning 5 on or before September 1st must attend a public Kindergarten program in their zone or in a charter school, unless they qualify for one of the following exemptions:
 - a. The child is enrolled in a non-public Kindergarten program.
 - b. The child is approved for a 1-year delay or withdrawal after parents complete the following process:
 - i. Parents submit a written request to the Early Learning Office (ELO) for a 1-year exemption from mandatory schooling by July 1st prior to the upcoming school year. The letter must detail why the parents feel their child is not ready for Kindergarten.



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- ii. Within ten days of receipt of the letter, the ELO approves or denies the request.
 - c. The child is approved for placement in one of the following alternative settings:
 - i. Full-time in a licensed child care center
 - ii. Part-time in a Head Start 5 year-old program
 - iii. Full-time in a registered family day care home
 - d. The child has been approved for home instruction, in compliance with COMAR 13a.10.01.01.
2. Parents must notify the ELO of their child's enrollment in an alternative setting before the start of the school year by submitting the following information:
 - a. Name of the program
 - b. Address
 - c. Program license or registration number and expiration date.
3. The child will only advance to First Grade the following year after parents have provided the following information to the zoned school:
 - a. Date child was enrolled in the alternative setting
 - b. Number of days child was absent

B. **Kindergarten Registration:** Starting March 15th, parents can register their children for Kindergarten by completing a *Kindergarten Registration Application* and submitting it to their zoned school. Parents with age-eligible children who transfer to Baltimore City can register their children at their zoned school any time throughout the year.

C. **Early Admission to Kindergarten:** Parents whose children turn 5 between September 2nd and September 15th of the school year may request early admission to kindergarten by completing an *Early Admission Request Packet*. Early entrance into Kindergarten is intended for children with exceptional ability who are capable of working in a classroom setting with children at least one year older.

Phase One:

Starting March 15th, parents can pick up an *Early Admission Request Packet* from their zoned school that includes:

1. *Early Admission Request Form*, to be completed by the parent and returned to the school.
2. Two *Developmental Checklists for Kindergarten Readiness* must be completed by two people other than the parents who are qualified to judge the child's developmental capabilities (e.g., physician, coach, dance instructor, educator, pastor, etc.).



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- a. If the child has attended a preschool program, one of the checklists must be completed by a former teacher.
3. Checklists must be sent directly to the principal.
4. All documents must be submitted to the zoned school by May 15th. A child cannot advance to Phase Two until all documents have been reviewed by the principal.

Phase Two:

The principal or the principal's designee will conduct a parent and child interview using the *Interview Screening Tool*.

1. A child must score 5 out of 5 to advance to Phase Three.
2. Principals or their designee must complete the *Principal Application Checklist* to certify that the child has passed the interview and that all *Early Admission Request Packet* documents are complete.
3. Schools must send the *Early Admission Request Packet*, the *Interview Screening Tool* form, and the *Principal Application Checklist* to the ELO by June 1st for the child to move to Phase Three.
4. If the child does not pass, the school must send *written notification* to the parents within one week of the date of the interview.

Phase Three:

Once the ELO receives completed early admission packets, an early childhood professional will contact parents to set up a testing session. The child must score 90 percent or above in each category of the assessment to be eligible for early enrollment.

1. The ELO will notify parents of the test results and the outcome of their application in writing by July 1st.

- D. **Early Admission to First Grade:** Parents whose children turn 6 between September 2nd and September 15th of the school year may request early admission to First Grade by completing an *Early Admission Request Packet*. Early entrance into First Grade is intended for children with exceptional ability who are capable of working in a classroom setting with children at least one year older.

Phase One:

Starting March 15th, parents can pick up an *Early Admission Request Packet* from their zoned school that includes:

5. *Early Admission Request Form*, to be completed by the parent and returned to the school.
6. Three *Developmental Checklists for First Grade Readiness* must be completed by three people other than the parents who are qualified to judge the child's developmental capabilities (e.g., physician, coach, dance instructor, educator, pastor, etc.).
 - a. One of the packets must be completed by the child's former teacher.
7. Checklists must be sent directly to the principal.



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8. All documents must be submitted to the zoned school by May 15th. A child cannot advance to Phase Two until all documents have been reviewed by the principal.

Phase Two:

If the child has been a student at the school, the principal will write a letter recommending him/her for early admission to first grade and send it to the ELO with all the application materials by June 1st.

If the child is new to the school, the principal or the principal's designee will conduct a parent and child interview using the *Interview Screening Tool*.

5. A child must score 5 out of 5 to advance to Phase Three.
6. Principals or their designees must complete the *Principal Application Checklist* to certify that the child has passed the interview and that all *Early Admission Request Packet* documents are complete.
7. Schools must send the *Early Admission Request Packet*, the *Interview Screening Tool* form, and the *Principal Application Checklist* to the ELO by June 1st for the child to move to Phase Three.
8. If the child does not pass, the school must send *written notification* to the parents within one week of the date of the interview.

Phase Three:

Once the ELO receives completed early admission packets, an early childhood professional will contact parents to set up a testing session. The child must score 90 percent or above in each category of the assessment to be eligible for early enrollment.

2. The ELO will notify parents of the test results and the outcome of their application in writing by July 1st.

E. Important dates for Early Admission Applications:

Date	Action
March 15 th	Application process begins. Parents can pick up an Early Admission Packet from their zoned school.
May 15 th	Last day that schools will accept Early Admission Packets. Schools must have received all contents of the Early Admission Packet for the child to be considered for early admission.
June 1 st	Last day that the ELO will accept completed Early Admission Packets. All documents must be included for the packet to be complete. Incomplete packets will be returned to the zoned school.
July 1 st	Date by which parents will be notified of the outcome of the test.



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F. **Early Admission to Charter Schools:** Parents follow similar processes for early admission to charter Kindergarten or First Grade, with some modifications to requirements and deadlines. Approval for early admission does not guarantee enrollment in the charter school; it makes a student eligible to be considered in the charter lottery.

Phase One:

Starting November 1st, parents can pick up an *Early Admission Request Packet* from the charter school that includes the same documents as applications to zoned schools.

9. All documents must be submitted to the charter school by December 5th.

Phase Two:

The charter principal or their designee checks the application for completeness and forwards the request packet to the ELO.

1. All documents must be received by the ELO by December 23rd.

Phase Three:

Once the ELO receives completed early admission packets, an early childhood professional will contact parents to set up a testing session. The child must score 90 percent or above in each category of the assessment to be eligible for consideration in the charter lottery.

3. The ELO will notify parents of the test results and the outcome of their application in writing by February 5th.

G. Timeline for Early Admission Applications to Charter Schools

Date	Action
November 1 st	Parents can pick up an Early Admission Packet from the charter school.
December 5 th	Last day that charter schools will accept Early Admission packets. Charter schools must have received all contents of the Early Admission Packet for the child to be considered for early admission.
December 23 rd	Last day that the ELO will accept completed Early Admission Packets. All documents must be included for the packet to be complete. Incomplete packets will be returned to the charter school.
February 5 th	Date by which parents will be notified of the outcome of the test.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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