



ISD #318 Early Entrance Procedure

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide criteria and procedures for early entrance of students into Independent School District # 318. Based on teacher input and committee research we recognize that using early entrance as an appropriate and effective intervention for select highly able students is contingent on that student demonstrating advanced cognitive, social/emotional and behavioral development. The early entrance assessment is designed to select students who demonstrate superior development in all of these areas. A very small percentage of students are recommended for early entrance to kindergarten, typically less than 1% of the population. State law indicates, “No person shall be admitted to any public school (1) as a kindergarten pupil, unless the pupil is at least five years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences... except that any school board may establish a policy for admission of selected pupils at an earlier age.” (Statute 120A.20 Admission to Public School)

Part 1: Parent Request

The parent will review the ISD #318 website for more information on the benefits and challenges associated with early entry to kindergarten. The child’s birthdate must fall between September 1- October 15. If the parent still feels their child is a candidate for early entrance they will follow this procedure:

1. The parent will initiate contact with ISD #318. [Early Childhood Screening](#) must be completed and results provided to the district by the parent.
2. A Letter of Support from the child’s preschool or child care provider should be included if the child is attending a program out of the home.
3. The parent must submit the [ISD #318 Application for Early Admission](#) form to the building administrator by March 1st with a non-refundable \$150 processing and assessment fee. To apply for a waiver, determined by eligibility, complete the [Free and Reduced Lunch Application](#)
4. Parents will meet with the building principal to present the application. Information and assessment results from any childcare/preschool setting must accompany the application.

Part 2: Initial Screening

1. The gifted education coordinator gathers and reviews existing student data including Early Childhood Screening, preschool data, and parent application. Early Childhood Screening results should be at or above the 95th percentile in all areas to be considered for early entrance.
2. The administrator will meet with an identified child study team, consisting of the building principal, gifted education coordinator, classroom teacher, school psychologist, and other school personnel deemed necessary by the building administrator, to discuss the request.
3. A kindergarten teacher will be sent to the child's current group setting (preschool, childcare) to observe kindergarten readiness and social-emotional skills. As a part of the observation, the teacher will complete the [ISD #318 Social-Emotional Checklist](#).
4. The checklists and observation results will be shared with the child study team. Additional checklists or data from preschool may be requested. If the child is not attending childcare or preschool, a simulated kindergarten experience can be provided to gain this information.
5. The child study team will review the existing data and make a recommendation about proceeding with formal assessments.

Part 3: Formal Assessments

Children who meet the above guidelines will move onto formal assessments by school staff:

- CogAT 7
- Iowa Acceleration Scale
- Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, Fourth Edition (WPPSI-IV)
 - Intellectual ability score of 130 (Full Scale IQ) on an individual measure of intellectual ability.
 - Students who have an ability score lower than 130, but are within the 95% confidence interval to the target score of 130 may also be considered.

Critical considerations include:

- *Access to referral for consideration of acceleration is open to all students.*
- If a child would be accelerated to the same grade as an older sibling, alternative servicing is recommended. Research indicates this can negatively impact sibling relationships and self-esteem. If the child does not want to be grade-skipped, regardless of the reason, there is a lower chance of success. Grade acceleration is not recommended.
- The child study team reviews results and creates an individualized plan to layout recommendations and program plans. Child study team meets with parents to present results and recommendations.

If early entrance is recommended:

If early entrance is recommended, the district gifted services coordinator will notify the building principal of the decision. Documentation data will be placed in the student's cumulative file. This includes all testing documents and observation inventories submitted by the family for consideration. The district gifted coordinator will compile this data and submit to the building principal.

If early entrance is not recommended:

If the building team decides that kindergarten is not the best learning environment for the child, either academically, socially, or emotionally the process will be halted and the building principal will communicate the information to the parent/guardian. The district is not responsible to place the child in a preschool or childcare setting should the kindergarten placement not continue.

Part 4: Individual Early Entrance Plan

If early entrance is recommended, the building principal will inform the incoming classroom teacher of the placement. The building principal, classroom teacher, and district gifted coordinator will determine a timeline for periodic classroom observations. All early entrance placements are on a trial basis.

During the first six weeks of school the district gifted coordinator, classroom teacher, or principal will conduct classroom observations and note whether the child is: socially integrated, progressing academically, able, and willing to follow directions, demonstrating acceptable emotional maturity and appropriate independence.

As a result of the observations, a building review team including the gifted coordinator, the classroom teacher, and the building principal will determine whether the placement is appropriate. The district is not responsible to place the child in a preschool or childcare setting should the kindergarten placement not continue.

The student's support team: including their teacher, gifted coordinator, principal, and parent or guardian, will meet to write goals based on demonstrated strengths to create an individualized learning plan that covers:

- goals based on academic strengths
- how instruction will be modified
- how progress will be monitored
- educational outcomes (expected grades or performance)

The GATE team will meet annually to review progress and revise the plan or by request for effectiveness and efficiency.

See also [ISD #318 Academic Acceleration Flowchart](#)