



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

Kindergarten Entrance Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

In preparation for the 2023-2024 school year, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) developed this FAQ resource to assist school corporations with establishing local procedures and criteria related to the kindergarten entrance law.

Number	Question	Answer
1	Does IDOE establish procedures to appeal for early entrance?	No. Each school corporation may establish a procedure for parents to appeal to the superintendent/head of school for early entrance or the admission of transfer students affected by kindergarten age requirements.
2	Is there an early entrance kindergarten waiver form provided by IDOE?	No. The creation of a waiver form is the responsibility of the school corporation/non-public school.
3	Are there guidelines for establishing an appeal procedure for early entrance?	Yes, the following guidelines serve to assist corporations and non-public schools in establishing a procedure: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No parent/guardian should be required by a school corporation to incur any cost for appealing an entrance decision.• Early kindergarten entrance should not be based on a single assessment score or pre-established lists of skills that a child must have “mastered.” Standardized norm-referenced achievement tests are not appropriate for evaluating individual children at this age.• If a district chooses to use an assessment as part of the appeal process for early entry into kindergarten, the decision should not be based on a single test/assessment score or list of skills and should be based on a variety of sources of information.• Any decision to approve a parent/guardian request for early entrance should be based upon what is in the best interest of the child.
4	What is the law regarding placement of a child coming to school for the first time a year after their initial kindergarten eligibility?	The law does not require a child to be six years of age on or before August 1 to be eligible for first grade. If a student enrolls in school and has not attended kindergarten, the superintendent/head of school shall make a determination as to whether the student shall enroll in kindergarten or first grade based on the particular model assessment adopted by the governing body of the district [IC 20-33-2-7 (b)].



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5	What is the criteria for adopting a model assessment for determining initial placement?	<p>The following criteria are suggested to assist in developing assessment procedures for determining kindergarten or first grade placement for children entering school for the first time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It should be understood that children coming to school are at various developmental levels.• Decisions having a major impact on children, such as enrollment into first grade and assignment to remedial or special classes, should be based on a variety of information (not all of which will be objective) and should never be based on a single assessment score or sole criterion.• A district may use an instrument aligned to the Indiana Academic Standards for Kindergarten as a basis for deciding enrollment into first grade. Any assessment tool selected should be documented as valid and reliable and administered with fidelity. <p>Some school corporations interview the family and child together and come to a joint decision regarding the child’s best placement. When issues other than age are considered, the solution that meets the best interest of the child’s education should drive the decision. School corporations should review their appeal process annually.</p>
6	Will our school corporation receive Average Daily Membership (ADM) funding for an early entrance student who turns five on October 1?	<p>Yes. Indiana statute references “a student who is not at least five (5) years of age on October 1 of the school year.” Thus, the student can turn age five on October 1 and be counted for membership in the 2023-2024 school year.</p>
7	Is kindergarten mandatory in Indiana?	<p>No. A student is not required to first be enrolled in kindergarten prior to enrolling in first grade. Pursuant to IC 20-33-2-6, students are not required to enroll in school until the beginning of the fall school term for the school year in which the student becomes seven (7) years of age. If a student enrolls in school and has not attended kindergarten, the superintendent/head of school shall make a determination as to whether the student shall enroll in kindergarten or first grade based on the assessment adopted by the governing body of the district [IC 20-33-2-7 (b)]. <i>However, if a student is enrolled in kindergarten, that student is subject to the attendance laws of the state.</i> This means, once enrolled in kindergarten, the student is required to attend.</p>



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<p>8</p>	<p>Is a school corporation required to accept a transfer student who does not meet the kindergarten eligibility age, but who already started kindergarten in a different corporation?</p>	<p>No. It is a local decision. However, when a child transfers from another kindergarten program and does not meet the kindergarten age-eligibility requirements, the best interest of the child should be considered.</p> <p>Continuity of services, rather than age requirements, should be a strong consideration. Students still must turn five on or by October 1 to be counted for membership.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Does a Choice Scholarship pay for early entrance kindergarten?</p>	<p>Yes. Effective June 29, 2023, a Choice Scholarship would only pay for kindergarteners who are five by October 1. Pursuant to IC 20-51-1-4.3, an eligible Choice Scholarship student refers to an individual who has legal settlement in Indiana, is at least five years of age and less than 22 years of age on October 1, and is a member of a household with an annual income of not more than 400% of the amount required to qualify for the Federal Free or Reduced Lunch Program.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Can families of students receiving services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) delay kindergarten entry, despite age eligibility, and remain in preschool and continue to receive special education services?</p>	<p>As students reach the age of kindergarten eligibility, a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) should be offered through an IEP, which includes the services/accommodations/modifications needed for them to be successful in the appropriate least restrictive environment (LRE) in kindergarten. IDOE’s Office of Special Education recognizes that all parents have the right to delay kindergarten enrollment for their child. If the parents of a child with a disability elect to delay enrollment, special education services appropriate for a kindergarten-aged student may be provided for one additional year at the preschool level. The provision of these services would be determined by the child’s case conference committee (CCC).</p>

Contact IDOE’s [Office of Kindergarten Readiness](#) with additional kindergarten entrance questions, [Office of School Finance](#) for ADM funding questions, and [Office of Special Education](#) for questions regarding special education students.
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