



## UNDERSTANDING THE ACCELERATED PLACEMENT ACT

In the Chicago Public Schools system, students must be five years of age, on or before September 1st to enter kindergarten, and six years of age, on or before September 1st, to enter first grade.

On June 26, 2019, the Chicago Board of Education voted to adopt a policy in response to the State of Illinois Accelerated Placement Act, which allows for the following:

- Early entrance to kindergarten
- Early entrance to first grade
- Whole-grade acceleration (grade skipping)
- Single-subject acceleration

Information on each of these initiatives can be found below.

### EARLY ENTRANCE TO KINDERGARTEN

Early entrance to kindergarten is the admission of a student to kindergarten who will reach the age of five years old between the dates of September 2nd and December 31st of the year in which they wish to enroll. In order to apply for Early Entrance to Kindergarten, the student must have attended at least one year of preschool. A testing fee of \$50.00 will apply for Early Entrance to Kindergarten for city of Chicago residents; students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch waivers are exempt from the testing fee.

**Non-Chicago residents: Applicants who are not residents of the city of Chicago by the December 6, 2019, application deadline must pay a testing fee of \$250.00.**

Applicants must pass a development survey AND an academic and cognitive evaluation. Students who qualify for early entrance to kindergarten for the 2020-2021 school year can enroll in the designated neighborhood school for their home address, or they can be considered for enrollment in Choice (magnet, magnet cluster or open enrollment) Schools or Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools (Classical Schools or Regional Gifted Centers). Note that Selective Enrollment Schools require admissions testing.

The Chicago Public Schools takes seriously the decision for a child to enter school early. Accordingly, the criteria for early entry are rigorous. The evaluation process is designed to ensure that students are not hindered by the challenges of the instructional programs and the effect that early placement might have. Although a student may exhibit high ability, please be aware that they may not be ready for kindergarten. Other important factors to consider are social maturity, personal development and motor development. If a student is evaluated as a viable candidate for early entrance to kindergarten, it is important that all stakeholders are supportive of the decision.

Parents can either apply for Early Entrance to Kindergarten during the fall/winter or the spring/summer. Students can only be assessed once for the upcoming school year. Students applying during the

fall/winter will participate in the assessment at an earlier age, but are able to be considered for a greater number of schools if they qualify for early entry. Students applying during the spring/summer will participate in the assessment at a later age, but can only be considered for schools that still have seats available at that time.

The following provides information about the fall/winter application period. Please visit [go.cps.edu/accelerated-placement](http://go.cps.edu/accelerated-placement) in May 2020 for information about the application timeline for the spring/summer process, or contact the Office of Access and Enrollment at 773-553-2060 or [gocps@cps.edu](mailto:gocps@cps.edu).

#### Fall/Winter Application Period

1. The parent/legal guardian will complete a paper [Choice and/or Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools application](#) and submit it to the Office of Access and Enrollment by the December 6, 2019, application deadline. (Early Entrance to Kindergarten applicants cannot apply using the online GoCPS application.) The parent/legal guardian will identify on the application the schools to which they are interested in applying for the 2020-2021 school year, enter 'K' as the grade applying, and check the box on the application which indicates that they are applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten. NOTE: if the parent is only interested in enrolling the student in the designated neighborhood school for their home address, they will not identify any schools; they will only enter 'K' as the grade applying to, and check the box on the application which indicates that they are applying for Early Entrance to Kindergarten.
2. The parent/legal guardian will be contacted via email and robocall to schedule the first phase of the two-part assessment process, which will take place between November 2019 and February 2020. In this phase, the parent/legal guardian will visit a designated application site and submit the required documentation: (1) evidence that the student attended at least one year of preschool – non-CPS preschoolers should provide a letter signed by the student's preschool verifying this information; for CPS preschoolers, this information will be verified on site via the Aspen Student Information System, (2) student's original birth certificate, and (3) parent/legal guardian's State ID or driver's license. In addition, city of Chicago residents must provide two documents to prove city of Chicago residency. Acceptable documents for proof of residency are as follows: current utility bill, Illinois driver's license or State of Illinois identification card, deed, employee identification number, MediPlan/Medicaid card, court documents, Illinois Department of Public Aid card, stamped United States Post Office change of address form, or Illinois state aid check/social security check.
3. After documents are verified, the parent will be given a Developmental Survey, which will be completed at the application site and immediately scored by a psychologist at the application site.
4. If the result of the survey meets the requirement indicating kindergarten readiness (91st percentile), the student will be immediately scheduled for an academic and cognitive test at a CPS testing center. If the result on the Developmental Survey does not meet the minimum requirement, the parent/legal guardian will be notified at the site and the Early Entrance evaluation process for the student will end at that point.

5. Students scheduled for the academic and cognitive test will be tested by a CPS psychologist. The testing fee (if applicable) will be paid on site prior to the administration of the test via money or cashier's check made out to CPS. The exam will be scored within 72 business hours and the parent will be notified via email regarding the results. The student must score at the 91st percentile or higher on both the academic and cognitive portions of the test in order to qualify for Early Entrance into Kindergarten. If the student does not achieve this score, the parent will be notified in the email notification and the Early Entrance evaluation process for the student will end at that point.
6. If the student achieves the required minimum score on the academic and cognitive tests, the email to the parent will include a letter which confirms that the student has fulfilled the necessary requirements for early entrance to kindergarten. The parent or guardian will retain this letter and submit it to the school in which the student will enroll for the 2020-2021 school year (if applicable).
7. If the student applied to Choice Schools, the student will be included in the kindergarten lotteries for any Choice Schools to which they applied. If the student applied for Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools, the student will be scheduled for admissions testing for the Classical Schools and Regional Gifted Centers, and the parent will be notified via robocall and email of the date, time and location of the test. The student will then be included in the selection process for any schools to which they applied. If the student did not apply to Choice or Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools, the parent can enroll the student in kindergarten in their neighborhood school for the 2020-2021 school year. (The parent should contact the neighborhood school in the spring for registration instructions and timelines.)
8. Upon enrollment, the school's School Transition Team will complete an academic transition plan with the parent or legal guardian and agree on a routine for communicating student academic progress.

## **EARLY ENTRANCE TO FIRST GRADE**

Early Entrance to First Grade (previously known as the First-Grade Age Exception) is the admission of a student to first grade who will reach the age of six years old between the dates of September 2nd and December 31st of the year in which they wish to enroll. There are no changes to the district's current policy related to the First Grade Age Exception. In order to apply for Early Entrance to First Grade, students must: (1) turn six years old between September 2nd and December 31st of the school year for which they are applying; (2) have attended preschool and kindergarten at the same non-CPS school (daycare centers do not qualify for this process); (3) have been taught in kindergarten by an appropriately certified teacher; and (4) be deemed ready by the non-CPS school to work at the first grade level.

Follow the steps below to apply for Early Entrance to First Grade for the 2020-2021 school year:

1. The parent/legal guardian will complete a [paper Choice and/or Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools application](#) and submit it to the Office of Access and Enrollment by the December 6, 2019, application deadline. The parent/legal guardian will identify the schools to which they are interested in applying for the 2020-2021 school year, enter '1st grade' as the grade applying,

and check the box on the application which indicates that they are applying for Early Entrance to First Grade. NOTE: if the parent is only interested in enrolling the student in the designated neighborhood school for their home address, they will not identify any schools; they will only enter '1st grade' as the grade applying, and check the box on the application which indicates that they are applying for Early Entrance to First Grade.

2. If the student applied to Choice Schools, the student will be included in the first grade lotteries for any Choice Schools to which they applied. If the student applied for Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools, the Office of Access and Enrollment will schedule the student for testing and notify the parent via robocall and email of the date, time and location of the test(s). The student will then be included in the selection process for any schools to which they applied. If the student did not apply to Choice or Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools, the parent can enroll the student in first grade in their neighborhood school for the 2020-2021 school year. (The parent should contact the school in the spring for registration instructions and timelines.)
3. The parent/legal guardian will need to obtain a letter signed by the principal or director of the student's current school which verifies that the student (1) attended the school for both preschool and kindergarten, (2) was taught in kindergarten by an appropriately certified teacher and (3) is ready for first grade work. This letter should be submitted to the Office of Access and Enrollment at [gocps@cps.edu](mailto:gocps@cps.edu), prior to registering the student for the 2020-2021 school year. If the letter meets the requirements of the process, the Office of Access and Enrollment will send the parent a letter verifying that the student qualifies for Early Entrance to First Grade. The parent will present this letter to the school where the student will enroll.

## WHOLE-GRADE ACCELERATION

Whole-grade acceleration (also known as grade skipping) is the full-time admission of a student in grade 3 through grade 6 who meets the criteria set forth by the district, to a higher grade level than is typical given the student's age, for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities. Students can only apply for Whole-Grade Acceleration for the school in which they are currently enrolled. A testing fee of \$250.00 will apply for whole-grade acceleration; students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch waivers are exempt from the testing fee.

## SINGLE-SUBJECT ACCELERATION

Single-subject acceleration is the admission of assigning a student in grade 3 through grade 7 to math or reading at the next higher grade level than is typical given the student's age for the purpose of providing access to appropriately challenging learning opportunities. A testing fee of \$35.00 will apply to single-subject acceleration; students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch waivers are exempt from the testing fee.

**To apply for Whole-Grade Acceleration or Single-Subject Acceleration, the parent/legal guardian will complete an Accelerated Placement Act application between December 16, 2019, and February 7, 2020, and submit it to their child's school.**

**For information on the Whole-Grade Acceleration application and assessment process, please visit [go.cps.edu/accelerated-placement](http://go.cps.edu/accelerated-placement) starting December 16, 2019, or contact the Office of Access and Enrollment at 773-553-2060 or [gocps@cps.edu](mailto:gocps@cps.edu).**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**If my child doesn't qualify for Early Entrance to Kindergarten in the fall/winter, can I reapply in the spring/summer?**

No. Your child can only be assessed once for the upcoming school year.

**What are my options if my child does not qualify for Early Entrance to Kindergarten?**

You can visit [chicagoearylearning.org](http://chicagoearylearning.org) for preschool options, and you can apply in fall 2020 for kindergarten for the 2021-2022 school year by visiting [go.cps.edu](http://go.cps.edu).

**If my child qualifies for Early Entrance in the fall/winter, but doesn't get an offer from any of the schools I applied to, what are my options?**

You can contact the Office of Access and Enrollment at 773-553-2060 or [gocps@cps.edu](mailto:gocps@cps.edu) in July for information about Choice and Selective Enrollment schools that still have seats available.

**Where can I get information about the spring/summer application process?**

Visit [go.cps.edu](http://go.cps.edu) in May 2020 or contact the Office of Access and Enrollment at 773-553-2060 or [gocps@cps.edu](mailto:gocps@cps.edu).

**My child did not attend the same school for preschool and kindergarten because I moved to another state. Can my child qualify for Early Entrance to First Grade?**

No. In order to apply for Early Entrance to First Grade, the student has to have attended preschool and kindergarten at the same school.

**Can my child apply for Early Entrance to First Grade next year if my child is in a CPS preschool now?**

No. The Early Entrance to First Grade process is only for students attending non-CPS schools.