Accelerated Placement Act: Early Entrance to Kindergarten
Frequently Asked Questions

What is Early Entrance to Kindergarten?

The Illinois State Legislature approved the Accelerated Placement Act, which has provisions for several accelerated education opportunities in the state’s public school districts. One of these provisions allows students to enroll in kindergarten at an age that is earlier than the school district’s designated age requirement. On July 26, 2019, the Chicago Board of Education approved the Chicago Public Schools policy that governs the implementation of the Accelerated Placement Act, which includes Early Entrance to Kindergarten.

What students are eligible to apply for early entrance into kindergarten?

In order to apply for early kindergarten entrance for the 2019-2020 school year, students must turn five years of age between September 2, 2019, and December 31, 2019. In addition, students must have completed a full year of preschool. In order to begin the early entrance application process, the parent/guardian must have the following:

1. Evidence that the student attended 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;
3. Parent or guardian’s driver’s license or State ID; and
4. Two documents that provide proof of 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.)

What is the first step of the application process?

The parent/guardian must visit an application center to complete and submit an Early Entrance application and a Developmental Survey. (Application centers are housed in elementary schools and libraries throughout the city.) The survey will be scored at the time of submission, and the parent will receive a letter of approval or denial.

Is there a deadline to complete the application and the Developmental Survey?

In order for a student to be considered for early entrance to kindergarten for the 2019-2020 school year, the application and Developmental Survey must be completed and submitted between July 1, 2019, and July 19, 2019.

Is there a fee to submit the application and the Developmental Survey?

No.
What score is required in order for the survey to be approved?

A score at the 91st percentile or above is required in order for the survey to be approved.

How long does it take to complete the survey and have it scored?

The Developmental Survey should take parents approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. It will take the school psychologist approximately 15 minutes to score the survey.

What is the next step of the application process?

If the Developmental Survey results are approved, the student will immediately be scheduled to take an academic and cognitive test at a testing center the following week. (The testing centers are housed in four sites citywide.) The test will be administered by a CPS psychologist. The test will be scored upon completion, and the parent will receive a letter of approval or denial.

Is there a fee to take the academic and cognitive test?

Yes. The testing fee is $50. The fee is waived for students who qualify for free and reduced lunch; a waiver form will be made available upon request.

What are the payment options?

Parents can pay by cashier’s check or money order.

What score is required in order for the student to qualify for early entrance?

The student must score at the 91st percentile or higher (score of 120) on the cognitive ability assessment and at the 91st percentile or higher (score of 120) on the academic task assessment.

How long does it take to complete the cognitive and academic test and have it scored?

The test is approximately 90 minutes long. It will take the psychologist approximately 40 minutes to score the test.

Can I be in the room with my child during the test?

No. The test is a one-on-one evaluation and parents and guardians are not allowed to be in the testing room.

Do I have to stay at the school while my child is being tested?

Yes. Parents are required to remain at the test site during the entire assessment process.

Can students take a break during the testing process?

Students are offered a 10-minute break between the academic and the cognitive assessment. Additional breaks may be taken during testing upon request or at the discretion of the examiner.

Can a child bring a snack for the testing process?

Yes.

Will there be activities for families/other children while the child is being tested?

No. We recommend that you bring reading matter or other material to occupy you or other children while your child is being tested.

Can I have my child tested outside of CPS and submit those results?

No. Students applying for early entrance into kindergarten must be tested by the Chicago Public Schools.
If my child’s application is approved, what is the next step?

If the student qualifies for early entrance, the parent will be provided with information regarding options and next steps for the 2019-2020 school year. Options will consist of (1) the designated neighborhood school for the student’s home address, (2) Choice (magnet, magnet cluster and open enrollment) schools that still have seats available, and (3) Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools that still have seats available.

How will I know what Choice Schools have seats available?

If your child qualifies for early entrance, you will be provided with a list of schools that have seats available in kindergarten. If you are interested in any of the schools listed, you will directly contact the school, which will provide you with a Post-Application Process form. Your completed form will be submitted to the Office of Access and Enrollment; upon receipt, your child can be enrolled at the school.

If I am interested in Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools, does my child have to take another test?

Yes, if any Selective Enrollment Elementary Schools still have seats available at the kindergarten level, and the parent is interested having the student considered for these schools, the student will be administered an admissions exam. The parent will be provided with a Selective Enrollment application at the testing center, which identifies schools that still have kindergarten seats. The parent will submit the completed application to the Office of Access and Enrollment; upon receipt, the student will be scheduled for testing.

How will a school know that my child is qualified for early entrance to kindergarten?

At the testing center, the parent will be provided with a verification letter which states that the student has fulfilled the early entrance requirements and is qualified for early entrance for the 2019-2020 school year. The parent will present this letter to the school in which the student will enroll.

If my child applies for early entrance to kindergarten, but does not qualify, based on their results on the academic and cognitive test, can I apply for kindergarten for the 2020-2021 school year?

Yes.

When does the application process open for the 2020-2021 school year?

The application period for the 2020-2021 school year opens on September 30, 2019.

Who manages the Accelerated Placement Act for Chicago Public Schools?

For more information about the CPS policy related to the Accelerated Placement Act, please contact the Office of Access and Enrollment at 773-553-2020 or oae@cps.edu. For individual questions about services at the building level, please contact the principal.