

Marion Local Schools



Parent Information for Early Entrance to School

Marion Elementary School
7956 State Route 119
Maria Stein, Ohio 45860
419-925-4595
www.marionlocal.org

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Marion Local Schools Parent Information for Early Entrance to School

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Marion Local Schools Board of Education Policies:

- Entrance Age (Mandatory Kindergarten) – NEOLA Policy 5112
- Early Entrance to Kindergarten – NEOLA Policy 5112
- Acceleration – NEOLA Policy 5410

These policies can be found on our school website at www.marionlocal.org under Board of Education Neola Policies.

Early Entrance Forms to complete and return:

- Early Entrance to School Referral Form
- Parent Questionnaire for Early Entrance to School

Dear Parents,

In keeping with our district mission to “develop a sense of self-worth that allows the individual to reach his or her highest potential intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically”, the Marion Local School District is dedicated to making educational decisions that will best serve the children in our community. Because we recognize that students learn and progress at different rates we believe that all children, including advanced learners, should be appropriately challenged and supported to reach their full potential. For our youngest students, one way to accomplish this is by providing access to school at an earlier than typical age.

Early entrance to school is not appropriate for most children. It is designed to meet the needs of the *exceptional* child who possesses superior ability, is academically advanced, and is developmentally mature as compared to others of the same chronological age. For academically talented young children, early entrance to school may be an excellent option. There is significant evidence that bright children who are carefully selected for early entrance generally perform very well, both academically and socially.¹

It is very important that a careful and informed decision be made, and that everyone involved is supportive of the decision. Once the decision has been made for early entrance, it is difficult to reverse.

Because the expectations for kindergarten and first grade have changed recently, if you are considering early entrance for your child please take the time to review Ohio’s New Learning Standards, which now guide our instruction. The Ohio Department of Education website (<http://education.ohio.gov>) also has several parent resources that you may find helpful. Links to these resources and additional information are provided for you in this packet to help you make an informed determination as to whether your son or daughter is a strong candidate for early entrance.

A child’s initial entrance to school is an exciting time, filled with anticipation, hope and perhaps a bit of apprehension. We want to ensure that your child has the best possible start at Marion Local Schools. If you believe that your child is a good candidate for early entrance to school, please read through the attached information, schedule your child for Kindergarten screening and submit the required referral forms to the Elementary School office **at least 60 days prior to the first day of school.**

For more information, contact:

Mr. Nick Wilker, Principal
Marion Local Elementary School
419-925-4595
wilkern@marionlocal.org

Mrs. Wendi Moorman, Gifted Services Coordinator
Mercer County Educational Service Center
419-586-6628
wendi.moorman@mercercountyesc.org

1 *A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America’s Brightest Students*, Colangelo, et.al, 2004.

Marion Local School District

Early Entrance Policy and Procedures

Early entrance to school is typically addressed through gifted education, although gifted identification is not required. Early entrance is a type of whole-grade acceleration. For academically talented young children, early entrance to school may be an excellent option.

Referrals

- A parent may refer his/her child for early admission to kindergarten if the child will be 5 years of age **after the district entrance date of August 1 and before January 1st** of the school year in which admission is requested. Referrals will also be accepted from an educator employed by the District, a preschool educator who knows the child, or a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child.
- A child who is 5 years of age **on or after January 1st** of the school year in which admission is requested may be referred for early entrance to kindergarten by an educator employed by the District, a preschool educator who knows the child, or a pediatrician or psychologist who knows the child in accordance with the District Acceleration Policy and the State of Ohio *Model Student Acceleration Policy for Advanced Learners*.

Kindergarten Early Entrance Evaluation Process

The Marion Local School District uses the Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition, to guide the data collection and evaluation process for any whole-grade acceleration, K-8, including early entrance to school. The Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition is not a test, but a research-based tool for a team of individuals to compile information about a child, objectively look at different aspects of the student, and to make appropriate academic placement recommendations.

Kindergarten Early Entrance Assessments

Early entrance to school should be viewed as a means of meeting a child's *needs*. In order to make a good decision regarding your child's readiness for school, the following assessments will be used to determine his or her need for early entrance:

For all students entering Kindergarten-

- **Marion Local Schools Kindergarten Screening Assessments**
These include measures of Fine & Gross motor skills, Speech & Language skills and general Academic Readiness.

For Early Entrance Candidates-

- **Marion Local Schools Kindergarten Screening Assessments AND**
- **Completion of the required forms: Marion Local Schools Early Entrance to School Referral, the Parent Questionnaire for Early Entrance to School, a Preschool letter or documentation of readiness (if available), and other relevant documentation, AND**

- **Additional Evaluations and Assessments as required by Ohio Law and Rules and the Marion Local Schools Board of Education Acceleration policies including:**
 - An individual Ability test
 - An individual Achievement test
 - An Aptitude test (either based on an individual Achievement test or a test that is two years *above* the entering grade level)
 - Collection of prior school and assessment information such as preschool experiences and attendance, and any previous assessment results
 - Family information (e.g. siblings and available family support)
 - Any student participation in school or community-sponsored activities
 - Developmental factors
 - Interpersonal skills and emotional development
 - Academic attitude such as the student's motivation, self-concept and attitude toward learning, and the student's attitude toward attending school.

Early Entrance Evaluation Team

The Principal will convene an Early Entrance Evaluation Team to review data and assessment information and determine the most appropriate available learning environment for the referred student. The committee will include the following members:

- Principal
- Current teacher of the student (if applicable)
- Teacher at the grade level to which the student may be accelerated
- Parent or legal guardian of the student, or their designated representative
- Gifted Education Coordinator or Gifted Intervention Specialist
- School Psychologist or individual(s) who completed the individual assessments
- Additional members as appointed by the principal.

For more information about the Iowa Acceleration Scale, 3rd Edition, and the Acceleration Evaluation Team Process, contact the District Gifted Services Coordinator.

Is my child a strong candidate for Early Entrance to School? ²

Below are characteristics of early entrance candidates. Review the following characteristics, considering your child with each of them. Children who will benefit from early entrance may not exhibit *all* of the characteristics listed below; however, strong early entrance candidates will exhibit *more* of the following characteristics than other children of the same age. **If your child does not exhibit many of these characteristics, early entrance may not be a good choice.** If you believe that your child is a good candidate for early entrance, complete the attached forms and additional documentation, and return to the Elementary Principal **at least 60 days prior to the first day of school.**

Ability/Achievement/Aptitude:

My child seems advanced beyond other children his/her age in these ways:

- Understands the meanings and use of words better than other children his/her age;
- Is curious about many things and asks questions often;
- Is very good at working puzzles or solving problems;
- Has a great sense of humor and understands jokes more than other children his/her age;

- Has a good memory and remembers details of conversation or stories;
- Is interested in difficult concepts such as time and space;
- Concentrates on certain activities much longer than other children his/her age;
- Reads (and understands text) in picture books or chapter books;
- Figures out math-related problems better than other children his/her age.

Academic and School factors:

My child:

- Enjoys learning new information or skills;
- Participates in community-sponsored activities such as sports, dance, gymnastics, library and museum projects;
- Believes he/she is capable of succeeding at new tasks;
- Has the ability to attend, or pay attention, for relatively long periods of instruction;
- Can draw and trace basic shapes, and can cut with a scissors.

Developmental factors:

My child:

- Has average fine and large motor coordination (i.e. holding a pencil, skipping);
- Is able to use the computer to play games or find information;
- Has the ability to separate from his/her parent without being upset;
- Is able to follow routines.

Interpersonal skills for entering school:

My child:

- Thoughtfully considers feedback and criticism and modifies behavior appropriately;
- Often behaves in a way that is positive and effective;
- Has good interpersonal skills with age-mates, as well as with both older and younger children and with adults;
- Has excellent interpersonal relationships with adults in a teaching role.

Attitudes and supports necessary for success in school:

- My child is enthusiastic about going to kindergarten or first grade.
- My child will receive additional support from his/her parents and family in order to transition to a new setting with much higher academic demands than he/she encountered in preschool.

Additional considerations in which early entrance is NOT advisable:

- My child has one or more older siblings in the grade in which he/she will be placed if admitted by early entrance, which may cause social/emotional issues in the family.
- My child often did not want to attend preschool or missed preschool often because of illness or family issues.

The Ohio Department of Education Resources

Academic Acceleration for Advanced Learners:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Gifted-Education/Resources-for-Parents/Academic-Acceleration-for-Advanced-Learners>

Information about Kindergarten:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Guidance-About-Kindergarten>

Kindergarten Readiness Checklist:

<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=778&ContentID=7920&Content=107237>

The Young Gifted Child:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Gifted-Education/Resources-for-Parents/The-Young-Gifted-Child>

Ohio's New Learning Standards:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Academic-Content-Standards/New-Learning-Standards>

Other Resources:

Acceleration Institute: <http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/>

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page Acceleration links: <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/acceleration.htm>

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Position Paper on Acceleration:

<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=383>

Early Entrance to School Forms

To refer a child for early entrance to school, please complete the following forms and submit them with a letter or documentation of Kindergarten readiness from the child's preschool (if applicable), and any other relevant information, to the Elementary Office at least 60 days prior to the first day of school.

Thank you!

Marion Local Schools
Referral and Permission Form for Early Entrance

Please return this completed form and the Parent Questionnaire for Early Entrance to School, along with a letter or documentation of Kindergarten readiness from the child's preschool teacher(s), if applicable, with any additional relevant information at least 60 days prior to the first day of school to:

Mr. Nick Wilker, Principal, Marion Local Elementary School, 7956 State Route 119, Maria Stein, Ohio 45860

Student:	First MI Last	DOB		Age		M	F
Address	Street City State Zip code						
Parent(s)/Guardian(s)							
Phone:							
Home#			Work#			Cell#	
Email address:				School Year for Early Entrance:			
<input type="checkbox"/> This child will be 5 years of age <u>after</u> August 1st <u>and before</u> January 1st.							
<input type="checkbox"/> This child will be 5 years of age <u>on or after</u> January 1st.							

<u>Preschool Experiences:</u> <i>(Please attach any available report cards, skill lists and assessment data.)</i>		
List the nursery schools, Head Start, day care, preschool and other programs the child has attended.		
Name of School/Program	Dates of Attendance	Number of hours per week
<i>Please attach a letter from the child's current preschool teacher(s), indicating the child's readiness for school.</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>This child did not attend a preschool program.</i>		

Referral Questionnaire:

Why are you referring this child for Early Entrance to School?

Has this child been screened or assessed before by a professional educator or psychologist? Y N
If yes, by whom and when? (Please attach assessment results.)

How has this child demonstrated that he/she is performing ***above*** the level of his/her age peers?
(Give *specific examples* of academic, social and/or developmental skills, demonstration of an intense interest or talent, and activities or projects that this child has initiated or completed.)

What skills does this child exhibit that lead you to believe he/she is ready for enrollment in school?

Does this child have any limitations that may interfere with his/her ability to succeed in school? Y N
If yes, please explain.

Referral Signature:

Print Name of Person Initiating Referral

Signature

Position/Relationship to Child

Phone #

Date

Parent Permission:

I hereby give permission to Marion Local Schools to collect data regarding my child in consideration for possible early entrance to school. In giving my permission, **I understand that any or all of the following may occur:** Review of relevant records; Interviews with the student, teacher(s), including preschool staff and parent(s); and Observations of the child. **I further grant permission** for informal and formal assessments and screenings to be given to my child that may include: ability assessments, achievement tests, aptitude tests, developmental and readiness assessments, and screening instruments, to gather information needed by the Early Entrance Evaluation Team.

I also understand and agree that the information collected by the school district will then be reviewed by the Early Entrance Evaluation Team of which I will also be a member. The Team will complete a summary report and make a recommendation for my child.

Signature of Parents/Guardian s

Relationship to child

Date

I do NOT give permission for the evaluation for Early Entrance to School.

Signature of Parents/Guardians

Relationship to child

Date

Return this form, the completed “Parent Questionnaire for Early Entrance to School”, a letter from the child’s preschool teacher(s), if applicable, and additional relevant information to the Marion Local Elementary School principal at least 60 days prior to the first day of school.

The Principal will forward copies of all information to the district Gifted Services Coordinator.

Marion Local Schools
Parent Questionnaire for Early Entrance to School

*Please return this completed form, and the Early Entrance to School Referral Form, a letter from your child's preschool teacher(s), if applicable, and any additional relevant information at least 60 days prior to the first day of school to:
Mr. Nick Wilker , Principal, Marion Local Elementary School, 7959 State Route 119, Maria Stein, Ohio 45860*

It is important that your child be intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically ready for school. Please help us to determine your child's readiness for school by completing the following:

- 1) Why do you feel your child is a good candidate for early entrance to school?
- 2) How does your child interact with other children? Please explain.
- 3) What are the ages of your child's friends?
- 4) How long does your child maintain interest in a game or activity at a given time?
- 5) How does your child respond when she/he tries but cannot do something?
- 6) What responsibilities does your child have at home? What happens if he/she does not follow through?
- 7) How does your child respond to adults such as teachers?
- 8) Has your child memorized any songs, poems, books or lists of things? Please give an example.

9) Is your child able to read independently? If so, what books has he/she read recently without assistance?

10) Is your child able to do mathematical activities independently? Please explain.

11) Is your child able to write simple words and sentences without assistance? Please give an example.

Please initial the following items, sign and date on the signature lines below:

- _____ I have received the *Marion Local Schools Parent Information for Early Entrance to School* packet and have read the contents.
- _____ I have considered the assessment requirements and the information in the *Marion Local Schools Parent Information for Early Entrance to School* packet in light of my child's academic, social and developmental levels and believe he/she is a good candidate for early entrance to school.
- _____ My child is enthusiastic about going to kindergarten.
- _____ As a parent, I understand that a child's success in school depends on support provided at home. I am able to give my child additional support to help in his/her transition to a new setting with much higher academic demands than he/she encountered in preschool.

I believe that my child exhibits a number of the characteristics that indicate he/she would benefit by entering school at an earlier than typical age. I have reviewed the considerations and do not feel they would negatively impact my child's success in school. I request an evaluation for my child for possible early entrance to school.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Relationship to child

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Relationship to child

Date