

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Guidelines for Applying for Early Admission into Prekindergarten

COMAR 13A.08.01.02 (2) states that beginning with the 2005-2006 school year and each school year thereafter, a child admitted to the prekindergarten program in the public schools shall be four (4) years old or older on September 1 of the school year in which the child applies for entrance.

COMAR 13A.08.01.02A. (3) requires local school systems to adopt a regulation permitting a three-year-old child, upon request by the parent or guardian, to be admitted to prekindergarten. As a result, Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) has developed the *Guidelines for Applying for Early Admission into Prekindergarten* document, which has been applicable since the 2006-2007 school year.

Note: Children, who are four (4) years old or older on September 1 of the school year for which they apply for entrance, will be admitted before any early admission into prekindergarten requests are considered.

Early admission into prekindergarten will be considered in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Parents/guardians may request early admission into prekindergarten when **all** of the following criteria apply:
 - a. The child turns four (4) years of age between September 2 and October 14 of the school year for which early admission is requested.
 - b. The child is from an economically disadvantaged background (i.e., eligible for free or reduced-price meal program as established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture) **or** is homeless.
 - c. The child lives within the boundaries of the school at the time of the request for early admission into prekindergarten. Residency must be verified by the home school; shared domicile must be approved by a residency officer from BCPS' Office of Pupil Personnel Services.
 - d. The child is toilet-trained.
2. A written request for early admission into prekindergarten may be submitted to the home school principal between September 15 and September 30 of the school year for which early admission is requested.
3. The letter of request for early admission into prekindergarten must include the following information:
 - Name of child
 - Child's date of birth
 - Name, address, and phone number of parent(s)/guardian(s)
 - Reason for request

4. Upon receipt of a written request for early admission into prekindergarten, the home school will determine and/or verify if the child is **one** of the following:
 - a. Economically disadvantaged based upon the information and documentation of income provided by the parent/guardian on the *Prekindergarten Selection Criteria Form*.
 - b. Homeless based upon documentation from a pupil personnel officer from the Baltimore County Public Schools' Office of Pupil Personnel Services.

5. If the child is determined to be economically disadvantaged, the home school will verify that **one** of the following applies:
 - a. The child resides within the boundaries of the home school.
 - b. Shared domicile has been approved by a residency officer from the BCPS' Office of Pupil Personnel Services.

6. The home school will conduct a meeting between a school administrator and the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the early admission into prekindergarten request. During the meeting the following information should be shared:
 - a. Economically disadvantaged or homeless students will be considered for early enrollment into prekindergarten only if space is available in the home school's prekindergarten session(s).
 - b. Children meeting the Maryland State Department of Education's age-of-entry guidelines for prekindergarten, but who are not economically eligible or homeless, will be enrolled before students whose birthdays fall beyond September 1.
 - c. Children who are granted early admission into prekindergarten will not automatically advance to kindergarten the following year. The parent(s)/guardian(s) must clearly understand that they will be required to follow the *Guidelines for Applying for Early Admission into Kindergarten* which includes the administration of a standardized assessment. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to sign the *Early Enrollment into Prekindergarten* form, indicating that they are aware that **automatic advancement to kindergarten will not occur**.

7. If early admission into prekindergarten is still requested following the meeting, then entrance into the home school's prekindergarten program **should be considered only if space is available and only if the child meets all of the criteria listed** previously in item # 1 above.

8. A decision regarding early enrollment into prekindergarten will be determined by the home school principal. Written notification of the decision will be mailed to the parent(s) or guardian(s) during the first week of October of the school year for which early enrollment is requested.

9. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child who is granted early admission into prekindergarten must sign the *Early Enrollment into Prekindergarten* form indicating their understanding that enrollment into kindergarten the following year will not automatically occur. The original *Early Enrollment into Prekindergarten* form signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be kept on file at the home school. A copy of the signed form shall be sent to the Office of Language Arts, Elementary-Early Childhood Programs.

10. A parent/guardian who does not agree with the early admission decision made by the home school principal may appeal the decision to the associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction.
11. An appeal of the early admission into prekindergarten recommendation may be filed in accordance with the following procedures:
 - a. The appeal requesting that the decision be reviewed should be mailed to:
Associate Superintendent
Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Baltimore County Public Schools
6901 Charles Street
Towson, Maryland 21204
 - b. The associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction or designee will research and evaluate the appeal, and issue a written decision.
 - c. If the appeal is denied by the associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction, or designee, the written decision will inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the right to appeal, in writing to: Office of the Superintendent, 6901 Charles Street, Towson, Maryland 21204, Attention: Dr. Carol Batoff within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of the associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction or designee's denial letter or the postmarked date, whichever is later.
 - d. The superintendent's designee will research and evaluate the appeal and issue a written decision on behalf of the superintendent.
 - e. If the appeal is denied by the superintendent's designee, the written decision will inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the right to appeal in writing to: Mr. Ernest E. Hines, president, Board of Education of Baltimore County, 6901 Charles Street, Towson, MD 21204, Attention: Ms. Brenda Stiffler, within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the denial letter in accordance with Section 4-205 of the Education Article of the *Annotated Code of Maryland* and the Board of Education Policy 8339-Internal Board Policies: Operations, Appeal Before Hearing Examiner. An appeal will be considered filed timely, if, within the allotted time period, it has been delivered to the Board of Education, postmarked, or deposited in the U.S. Mail as registered or certified mail.