

Early Kindergarten Admission - Eligibility Determination Process

The [Code of Virginia](#) § 22.1-199 regarding kindergarten admissions states:

In those school divisions implementing such programs, children whose fifth birthday occurs between October 1 and December 31 of the school year may be enrolled in kindergarten after an appropriate readiness evaluation has demonstrated that attendance in these programs will educationally benefit such children.

This memo summarizes RPS's process for identification, assessment, and placement of children when families request early entry to kindergarten for their child.

Who is eligible for early kindergarten entry?

Children who have had at least one year of formal preschool education in a school-based setting (including current RPS children), Head Start or VPI program, NAEYC accredited program, or [licensed childcare facility](#) using a research-based curriculum may be eligible for early kindergarten entry. If a child does not meet this minimum threshold, they will not be eligible or considered for assessment.

In addition to having attended a year of preschool, RPS requires that a letter from the teacher or child care director be provided in order to verify the developmental readiness of the child and the recommendation that the child be enrolled in kindergarten. In addition to the letter, the parent will need to provide the latest progress report or report card for the child dated December 2024 or later. If the child has an active IEP or has recently had an assessment regarding a suspected developmental delay or disability, this should also be provided with the application.

How are requests made?

Requests to enroll a child in kindergarten early (i.e. if they will turn 5 years old between October 1st and December 31st of the desired enrollment year) can only be made by the child's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). These parties (hereafter referred to as 'families') may request their child be considered for early admission **through April 7th** of the preceding school year. Requests made after April 7th, will not be considered.

Requests can be made to the RPS Enrollment, Placement, and Planning Department via enrollrps@rvaschools.net. The Enrollment, Placement, and Planning Department will be responsible for communicating with families regarding the process and initiating the next steps.

What is the early kindergarten assessment process?

A member of the Early Kindergarten Diagnostic team (EKD), who is appropriately credentialed and trained on best practices in early childhood assessment, will use screening tools to determine the child's readiness for early entrance to kindergarten in the following areas:

- K-Level Development in Academic Skills
- Social/Emotional Readiness

Once the initial application has been screened by the Early Kindergarten Diagnostic Team (EKD), eligible families will be contacted to schedule a date for the formal assessment.

Should interpretation services be necessary, screenings will be conducted in the primary language of the child.

Families will be given an assigned appointment location (where all screenings will be administered) and time (approximately 30-60 minutes in length). Screenings will all be conducted on two designated screening days in April. Screening dates will be shared with eligible families based on their requested dates.

Screenings will be offered in a child-friendly setting and children will be given appropriate breaks throughout the screening time-frame. Screenings will be administered in person only and will be administered in the child's home language.

After completing the assessment process, the screening will be scored by the member of the EKD team that administered it. Students eligible after the assessment will be contacted for an observation in their current preschool classroom. After the observation, the EKD team will review all completed early-entry submissions and their related results (screener, recommendations, input from the exceptional education team, etc.) and the supervisor will sign off on final decisions for each child.

What happens after the screeners have been administered?

Determination about acceptance into early kindergarten will be communicated to families by June 12th, 2026.

If a child is found eligible for early kindergarten entry, EKD staff will:

- provide a letter to the family summarizing the child's assessment results and approval for early kindergarten admission
- provide the family with instructions on the [kindergarten enrollment process](#); the family will still be required to complete RPS enrollment for a new kindergarten child at their zone school
- notify the child's zone school of the child's pending enrollment
- attach the development screener results in the child's cumulative records

If a child is not found eligible for early kindergarten entry, EKD staff will:

- provide a letter to the family summarizing the child's assessment results and the decision that the child was not accepted for early Kindergarten admission
- discuss with the family RPS preschool eligibility or other options for participation in a four-year-old preschool program
- provide recommendations for their child's continued development, highlighting strengths and any areas for focus or potential delays
- attach the development screener results in the child's cumulative records

I want to apply via Open Enrollment. Can I apply for a kindergarten Open Enrollment seat while waiting on my results?

Students are not eligible to apply for kindergarten open enrollment until they have received official notification that they may enter kindergarten a year early. If you receive an acceptance letter, you may apply for a seat at an out of zone school or at Patrick Henry School of Science and Arts through the Late Open Enrollment process. For more information, email enrollrps@rvaschools.net.