

ELIGIBILITY FOR FOUR YEAR OLDS TO USE K12 SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS TO ATTEND KINDERGARTEN

For a student who has reached the age of four on or before April 16 to be eligible to use the Opportunity Scholarship award or the ESA+ scholarship funds to attend kindergarten in North Carolina, G.S. §§ 115C-562.1(3)a.3. and 115C-391(3)a require that the student must meet the requirements set forth below.

Specifically, in order to use scholarship funds, the child must meet certain testing requirements and the Head of school where you wish to enroll your student must find “that the child is gifted and that the child has the maturity to justify admission to the school.”

Phase 1 – Evaluation and Testing

All testing must be administered after April 16th following the child’s 4th Birthday.

- (1) **Student Aptitude.** The student must score at the 98th percentile or above on a national aptitude (IQ) test such as the Stanford-Binet, the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, The Kaufman Anderson, or any other comparable tests. The test must be administered by a licensed psychologist. Schools and parents should work together to arrange for this testing.
- (2) **Student Achievement.** The student must score at the 98th percentile or above on a nationally normed achievement test in either Reading or Mathematics, such as the Metropolitan Readiness Test, the Stanford Early School Achievement Test, the Mini Battery of Achievement, the Woodcock-Johnson, the Test of Early Mathematics (TEMA), the Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA), or any other comparable test. The licensed psychologist who administers the aptitude test may also administer the achievement test or have a member of his/her professional staff administer the test. Also, an impartial professional educator who is trained in the use of the instrument may administer the achievement test, as long as they have no potential conflict of interest in the outcome of the assessment.

If the student meets the test scoring requirements, the student may proceed to Phase 2. If the student does not meet the testing requirements in Phase 1, we would encourage the family to re-apply for the scholarship for the following school year.

Phase 2 – Student Performance, Observable Student Behavior/ Student Interest, Motivation/Student Interest.

After the testing requirements have been met, the Head of School at your school of choice makes the decision as to whether your student meets the Phase 2 standards indicating that your four-year-old demonstrates readiness to attend Kindergarten.

- (1) **Work Sample.** Parent will need to submit one or more work samples to the school in the following areas: Independent reading, problem solving, advanced vocabulary, and some writing fluency. The work sample should show outstanding ability in art, math, writing, dramatic play, creative productions, science, social interactions, or any other area.

- (2) **Letters of Recommendation.** Parent will need to submit two recommendation letters to the school from preschool teachers, childcare workers, pediatricians or other adults with direct knowledge of the child that provide documentation of the following: Demonstration of social and developmental maturity needed for a structured school setting for a full school day and Capability of following verbal instruction and functioning independently within a group. Documentation checklists that might be useful are the California Preschool Competency Scale, the Harrison Scale or any other comparable scale of early social development.
- (3) **Interview with Parent and Child.** The Head of School or his/her designee shall conduct an informal interview with the child and a more formal interview with the parent to determine if the child demonstrates a “thirst for knowledge” and seeks “new and challenging learning situations.” The interview with the child may take place in a warm and inviting environment such as the kindergarten classroom. The principal or his/her designee should ask the child questions about the personal interests of the child.

Timeline

- The testing, writing sample and the letters of recommendation must be given to the school within the first thirty (30) calendar days of the school’s instructional year.
- The head of school will decide whether to grant the parent’s request for enrollment to kindergarten within three (3) weeks of the parent’s submission.

Documentation of Enrollment Decision

The Head of School will attest on a Form provided by the Authority that (1) he/she has reviewed the student’s aptitude and achievement testing scores and that the student scored in the 98th percentile or above and (2) he/she has found “that the child is gifted and that the child has the maturity to justify admission to the school.” A copy of this signed Form must be submitted to the Authority in order for the student to be eligible to use the Opportunity Scholarship and/or ESA+ Award.

The child’s test scores and all other submissions associated with the admissions process (writing samples, letters of recommendation) must be kept at the school and be presented to the Authority upon request. All records relating to the decision to enroll the student, including test scores, must be retained for a period of five years after the student has either graduated or separated from the school.