



Guidelines for Applying for Early Admission to Prekindergarten

COMAR 13A.08.01.02 (2) states that 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 to Prekindergarten*, 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 to Prekindergarten requests are considered.

Early admission to Prekindergarten will be considered in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may request early admission to 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 school 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 the BCPS Office of Pupil Personnel Services.
 - d. The child is toilet trained.
2. A written request for early admission to 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. (Dates are subject to change based on when BCPS is notified of schools reopening to students).
3. The letter of request for early admission to 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

Upon receipt of a written request for early admission to Prekindergarten, the home school will determine and/or verify if the child meets **one** of the following criteria:

- a. Is economically disadvantaged based upon the information and documentation of income provided by the parent/guardian on the *Income Verification and Automatic Criteria Form*.
 - b. Homeless based upon documentation from a pupil personnel officer from the BCPS Office of Pupil Personnel Services.
4. 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 BCPS Office of Pupil Personnel Services.
5. A conference in person or by phone will be conducted between a school administrator and the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the early admission to Prekindergarten request. During the meeting the following information should be shared:
- a. Economically disadvantaged or homeless students will be considered for early enrollment to 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, homeless or have an IEP for classroom instruction will be enrolled before students whose birthdays fall beyond September 1.
 - c. Children who are granted early admission to 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 to Kindergarten*, which includes the administration of a standardized assessment. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to sign the *Early Enrollment to Prekindergarten form (Refer to Appendix S)*, indicating they are aware that **automatic advancement to Kindergarten will not occur. This signed form should be retained in the student's school record, and a copy should be sent to the Office of Early Childhood Programs.**
6. If early admission to Prekindergarten is still requested following the conference with an administrator, then entrance into the home school's Prekindergarten program **should be considered only if space is available as of September 30 and only if the child meets all of the criteria listed** previously in item #1 above. (Date is subject to changed based on when BCPS is notified of schools reopening to students).
7. The parent(s)/guardians(s) of a child who is granted early admission into Prekindergarten must sign the *Early Enrollment to Prekindergarten* form, indicating their understanding that enrollment into Kindergarten the following year will not automatically occur. The original *Early Enrollment to Prekindergarten* form signed by the parent(s)/guardians(s) shall be kept on file at the home school. **A copy of the signed form shall be sent to the Office of Early Childhood Programs.**
8. A parent/guardian who does not agree with the early admission decision made by the home school principal may appeal that decision in accordance with the following process. All appeals must be in writing; no electronic communication will be accepted.

9. Appeal to the Executive Director
 - a. A decision of the principal to deny early admission to Prekindergarten under these guidelines may be appealed to the Executive Director, Department of Academic Services (hereinafter, Executive Director).
 - b. The appeal must be made in writing and filed with the Executive Director **within fifteen (15) calendar days** of the date of the notice of early admission denial.
 - c. The appeal shall be mailed to:

Executive Director, Department of Academic Services
Baltimore County Public Schools
105 W. Chesapeake Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204
 - d. The Executive Director, or his/her designee, will review the facts of the case and issue a final decision in writing.

10. Appeal to the Superintendent
 - a. If the appeal is denied or the party is not satisfied with the decision rendered by the executive director, he/she may further appeal that decision by filing an appeal with the superintendent.
 - b. The appeal must be made in writing and filed with the superintendent **within ten (10) calendar days** of the date of the executive director's decision.
 - c. The appeal shall be mailed to:

Office of the Superintendent
Attn: Ms. Allyson Huey, Manager, Employee and Student Appeals
6901 Charles Street
Towson, Maryland 21204
 - d. The superintendent, or his/her designee, will review the facts of the case and issue a final decision in writing.

11. Appeal to the Board of Education
 - a. A decision of the superintendent, or his/her designee, regarding the denial of early admission to Prekindergarten may be appealed to the Board of Education of Baltimore County.
 - b. The appeal must be made in writing and filed with the Board **within thirty (30) calendar days** of the date of the superintendent's decision.
 - c. The appeal shall be mailed to:

Board of Education of Baltimore County
Attn: Senior Executive Administrative Assistant to the Board
6901 Charles Street
Towson, Maryland 21204