



## Sauk Rapids-Rice District Office

1833 Osauka Road NE, Sauk Rapids, MN 56379  
Phone: 320.253.4703 • Supt. Fax: 320.258.1904 • Bus. Fax: 320.255.1914 • www.isd47.org

### Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools Early Entrance to Kindergarten Family Letter

Dear Parent or Guardian,

As your child approaches school age, you may have questions about whether he/she might be ready to start school earlier than usual. Early entrance to kindergarten is a big decision. In Minnesota, children are usually required to be five years old on or before September 1 to enter kindergarten. However, there are some situations where a child's social, emotional, and academic skills make early entrance to kindergarten a possibility. In the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District, early entrance to kindergarten can be considered if a child will be five years old on or before October 31 of their entry year.

#### **How do I know if early entrance to kindergarten might be a good option for my child?**

This option is intended for children with fall birthdays who have demonstrated a readiness to be successful while younger than most peers throughout their entire K-12 schooling experience. Keep in mind, a child must meet the district birthdate requirement (October 31) and demonstrate:

- above average academic skills
- good emotional and behavioral control
- the ability to focus and persist on a task
- the ability to adapt to different classroom expectations, such as following directions and working with others

If early entrance to kindergarten is to be considered, that means information is gathered from a variety of sources to get a clear picture of the child. These include:

- information from parents
- preschool questionnaire
- observation and screening in a classroom setting
- cognitive abilities assessment

Referral for early entrance to kindergarten is a separate process from referral to the district's gifted and talented program.

The Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools Early Entrance to Kindergarten Procedures document provides more detailed information. The following are important steps for early entrance consideration:

**Aaron Sinclair**  
Superintendent of Schools  
aaron.sinclair@isd47.org

**Andi Johnson, CPA**  
Director of Business Services  
andi.johnson@isd47.org

**Dr. Eva White**  
Director of Human Resources/Admin. Services  
eva.white@isd47.org

**Jenny Bushman**  
Director of Teaching & Learning  
jenny.bushman@isd47.org

1. Obtain forms and resources needed for application, available on the district website or by request.
2. Complete the Early Entrance to Kindergarten Application and request completion of the Preschool Questionnaire.
3. Submit application and questionnaire to the Early Entrance Coordinator by March 15.
4. Arrange for the child to participate in a preliminary kindergarten screening by April 15.

Based on the application, questionnaire, and screening, an Early Entrance Committee will make a recommendation on or before April 30.

1. If the committee recommends further consideration, you will be asked to submit a cognitive abilities assessment report by May 15.
2. The Early Entrance Committee will make a placement decision for each child by May 31.
3. A student's early entrance to kindergarten will be reviewed no later than Fall Conference time in the school where the child attends, and sooner if necessary.

Current district residents missing the March 15 deadline will be expected to send children at the age appropriate time to kindergarten, unless there are special or unusual circumstances.

Whenever your child starts kindergarten, we want to be sure it is a positive experience for everyone involved. Sometimes the best option is a preschool experience that provides greater academic challenge. In those cases, it is important to find a preschool teacher or system that is well-informed about gifted education issues and best practices. I would be happy to talk with you about some of the options that might be available for your child.

The Sauk Rapids-Rice School District is committed to excellence in academic achievement for all of our students. We look forward to having the opportunity to meet the educational needs of your child. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to call your neighborhood school principal or Deb Scherber at 320-258-1272.

Sincerely,

Irene Wilcox  
Early Entrance Coordinator  
Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools  
irene.wilcox@isd47.org

# **Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools**

## **Early Entrance to Kindergarten Procedures**

### **Early Entrance to Kindergarten**

In Minnesota, children are required to be five years old on or before September 1 to enter kindergarten. It is recognized that some children may have exceptional skills and are ready to begin their formal education before they reach that age. Minnesota law also provides local school districts some flexibility in determining procedures for early entrance to kindergarten. In the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District entry to kindergarten will be considered for prospective students who will achieve the age of five years on or before October 31 of their entry year.

To be eligible for early entrance to kindergarten, children must demonstrate academic, socialization, and behavioral skills above average when compared to the skills of the majority of entering kindergarteners, based on a parent report, preschool questionnaire, and informal assessment and observations during a simulated kindergarten experience. In addition, a cognitive abilities assessment report will be required to corroborate information gathered in the application process. Referral for acceleration in the form of early entrance to kindergarten is a separate process from referral to the District's gifted and talented program.

Students can be referred for early entrance to kindergarten by any source, but typically parent(s)/guardian(s) make the recommendation. Parent(s)/guardian(s) considering the early entrance of a child must complete the following steps and return the required documents on or before March 15:

### **Getting the Application Materials**

1. Forms may be requested by email or phone by contacting the Early Entrance Coordinator, Irene Wilcox, at 320-258-1272 or [irene.wilcox@isd47.org](mailto:irene.wilcox@isd47.org) on or before March 1. This will allow time to receive and complete application materials well before the March 15 due date. Forms are also available at [www.isd47.org](http://www.isd47.org). Click on Parents and Families – Kindergarten Information. There you will find all forms and resources needed for application. Assistance with materials and language translation is available upon request. Please contact Jenny Bushman, Director of Teaching and Learning, at 320-253-4703 for more information.

2. Parents/guardians must submit the following documents on or before March 15:
- a. Early Entrance to Kindergarten Application (This includes a required parent report of the child's knowledge, skills, and abilities.)
  - b. Early Entrance to Kindergarten Preschool Questionnaire and any other pertinent records from preschool program(s) attended. (The preschool questionnaire

includes required teacher observations of the child's knowledge, skills, and abilities).

3. Email, fax, or mail application materials to:

Irene Wilcox, Early Entrance Coordinator [irene.wilcox@isd47.org](mailto:irene.wilcox@isd47.org)  
Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools/Pleasantview Phone: 320-253-0506  
1009 6th Ave. North Fax # 320-253-1444  
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

4. A preliminary screening will be conducted by a District kindergarten teacher and the Early Entrance Coordinator by April 15. To meet preliminary requirements for early entrance to kindergarten, a child's screening results will indicate above average social and emotional maturity and include an assessment of a student's readiness and motivation for acceleration, the ability to satisfactorily meet kindergarten expectations, and the ability to progress to first grade in the subsequent year.

Teaching Strategies (GOLD) Assessment

If not already provided in the applicant's preschool record, the Teaching Strategies (GOLD) Assessment may be administered. This District-approved comprehensive evaluation in cognitive, social, and emotional developmental domains uses valid and reliable instrumentation and is aligned with state kindergarten expectations. In addition, this tool can be used across age ranges of three to six years and occurs in a natural setting over time.

5. A team of professionals comprised of the Early Entrance Coordinator, the Director of Teaching and Learning, a District kindergarten teacher, and the principal of the school where the child will attend will determine if preliminary eligibility requirements have been met, or if early entrance placement is not recommended. The decision of the Committee will be final and communicated immediately thereafter to the parents by the Early Entrance Coordinator, no later than April 30 preceding the anticipated enrollment. A written appeal may be addressed to the Sauk Rapids-Rice Superintendent of Schools. Copies of the information gathered and the Early Entrance Committee's decision will be available upon request.

6. If preliminary eligibility requirements are met, an individual District-approved cognitive abilities assessment, such as the most current version of the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI™ - IV), shall be administered by a licensed psychologist. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for the cost of the individual psychological assessment. A fee waiver is available based on financial need. Please contact Jenny Bushman, Director of Teaching and Learning, at 320-253-4703 for more information. To meet intellectual requirements for early entrance to kindergarten, a child's assessment must indicate *Very Superior* cognitive ability (I.Q. of 130 or above or within the 95% confidence interval). A lower score interpretation (90% confidence interval) may be considered for children whose birthday falls between September 2-8. The psychologist must provide a written report and recommendations to the Early Entrance Coordinator by May 15.

7. The Early Entrance Committee will make the placement decision for each child. The decision of the Committee will be final and communicated immediately thereafter to the parents by the

Early Entrance Coordinator, no later than May 31 preceding the anticipated enrollment. A written appeal may be addressed to the Sauk Rapids-Rice Superintendent of Schools. Copies of the information gathered and the Early Entrance Committee's decision will be available upon request. If early entrance to kindergarten is authorized by the district and accepted by the family, all other Minnesota mandated requirements for kindergarten enrollment must be met.

8. A student's early entrance to kindergarten will be reviewed by at least two members of the Early Entrance Committee no later than Fall Conference time in the school where the child attends, and sooner if necessary. If continuation is not recommended, this will be communicated by the last fall conference date at the school where the student is enrolled. During this time, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may request, in writing, the discontinuation of the acceleration without any repercussions. The accelerated placement of the student will become permanent at the end of the transition period. Once the plan becomes permanent it will be entered into the student's permanent record.

Current residents missing the March 15 deadline will be expected to send children at the age appropriate time to kindergarten, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Early entrance is a big decision for most families. The early entrance option is intended for children with fall birthdays who have demonstrated a readiness to be successful as grade-accelerated students throughout their entire K-12 schooling experience. Since your child's school success is extremely important to us, we encourage careful consideration of both the benefits and disadvantages of the early entrance option. The Sauk Rapids-Rice School District believes in excellence and wants children to thrive in school experiences so they can achieve their full potential.

Bright young children who are ready for more academic challenge but are not necessarily ready for success in a school system via early entrance to kindergarten might consider alternative or nontraditional school settings. A preschool teacher well-informed about gifted education issues and best practices might be able to meet the needs of such a student. Assistance in seeking options is available by contacting Deb Scherber or Megan Rogholt, Interim Early Childhood Director, at 320-255-8910.

The Sauk Rapids-Rice School District is committed to excellence in academic achievement for all of our students. We look forward to the opportunity to meet the educational needs of your child. Should you have any questions regarding early entrance to kindergarten or this procedure, please do not hesitate to contact Deb Scherber or your neighborhood school principal.

Irene Wilcox  
Early Entrance Coordinator  
Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools  
irene.wilcox@isd47.org  
320-253-0506 (Pleasantview Elementary School)

**Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools**  
**Early Entrance to Kindergarten Application**  
**Date Due: March 15**

Please consider all questions and statements. Be sure each response is as complete as possible. For assistance completing this form, please contact Irene Wilcox 320-253-0506.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ School child will be attending: \_\_\_\_\_  
Open Enrollment:    N    Y    Home District: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s)/Guardian(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Developmental History**

Date this form is completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sibling: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sibling: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sibling: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary language spoken at home: \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_ At what age did your child walk independently?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ At what age did your child begin to talk in clearly understood phrases?
3.    Y    N    Does your child nap in the afternoon?
4.    Y    N    Does your child have any on-going health concerns or illnesses? If yes, please describe.

5. Check the self-help tasks your child can perform independently:

_____ zip	_____ dress in outer clothing
_____ button	_____ manage toileting
_____ tie	_____ wash hands

**Preschool Information**

List all preschools attended and dates of attendance. Please provide **Preschool Questionnaire** to the most recent preschool your child has attended for completion.

School:\_\_\_\_\_ Dates attended:\_\_\_\_\_

Person to contact:\_\_\_\_\_ Phone:\_\_\_\_\_

School:\_\_\_\_\_ Dates attended:\_\_\_\_\_

Person to contact:\_\_\_\_\_ Phone:\_\_\_\_\_

If your child has not attended preschool, please list any preschool-type experiences your child has had:

Is there someone we could speak with who has worked with your child in a group situation?

Person to contact:\_\_\_\_\_ Phone:\_\_\_\_\_

Describe this group setting or situation.

Please sign below to indicate your permission to contact these preschools/people for additional information if needed.

Parent/Guardian Signature:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

## **Reason for Request**

1. State your rationale for requesting early entrance to kindergarten for your child.

2. Describe any behaviors or accomplishments that lead you to believe your child has exceptional and early development.

3. What do you see as possible advantages and disadvantages of acceleration?

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

## **Child's Characteristics**

1. Provide examples of how your child reasons things out, recognizes relationships, or comprehends abstract meaning.

2. Describe your child's curiosity.

3. Describe your child's interest in books and reading.

4. If your child does read, how did this learning occur?

5. What knowledge of numbers and basic arithmetic does your child display?

6. What are your child's favorite activities?

7. What is your child's interest and skill level in fine motor activities (cutting, writing, etc.)?

8. Describe the gross motor activities your child enjoys (skipping, swinging, catching, etc.).

9. Describe some of your child's favorite playmates.

10. Describe your child's ability to play or work with others.

11. Describe your child's persistence or ability to follow through to completion on an activity that excites him/her. Please use examples.

12. Describe how your child deals with conflicts or problems, such as conflicts with others, not getting his/her own way, having to make a choice between three favorite things, taking turns, etc.

13. Describe your child's ability to take risks. How does your child deal with unfamiliar activities or being away from home?

14. Describe how your child deals with frustration and manages emotions.

15. Describe your child's attention span.

16. Please give any additional information which you feel is significant.

17. What questions do you have about your child entering kindergarten early?

**Please print this application and return it to:**

Irene Wilcox, Early Entrance Coordinator  
Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools/Pleasantview  
1009 6th Ave North  
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

[irene.wilcox@isd47.org](mailto:irene.wilcox@isd47.org)

Phone: 320-253-0506

Fax # 320-253-1444

Thank you for completing.

**DUE DATE: March 15**

To: Families interested in Early Entrance to Kindergarten

As part of the early entrance process, the district would like to learn more about your child from his or her childcare/preschool teacher. If applicable, please share the Early Entrance to Kindergarten Preschool Questionnaire with the most appropriate individual in your child's preschool setting. If your child has not had a preschool experience, this will be noted on the registration materials you complete. Once completed, the form can be emailed or mailed to Irene Wilcox, Early Entrance Coordinator, at the contact information included on the questionnaire.

Thank you!

**Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools**  
**Early Entrance to Kindergarten Preschool Questionnaire**  
**Date Due: March 30**

Dear Preschool Provider,

The parent(s)/guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ have requested early entrance to kindergarten for next year. As a part of the process of gathering information to make the decision, the school district is requesting you complete this questionnaire and return it to me no later than March 30. Thank you in advance for providing your observations about this child. Please feel free to call if you have questions at 320-258-1272.

Sincerely,  
Irene Wilcox, Early Entrance Coordinator  
Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools

[irene.wilcox@isd47.org](mailto:irene.wilcox@isd47.org)  
Fax # 320-253-1444

Person completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to the child: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Day Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Preschool: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the self-help tasks this child can perform independently:

\_\_\_\_\_ zip

\_\_\_\_\_ dress in outer clothing

Date this form is completed:

\_\_\_\_\_ button

\_\_\_\_\_ manage toileting

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_ tie

\_\_\_\_\_ wash hands

**Please consider all questions and statements. Be sure each response is as complete as possible.**

1. Describe any behaviors or accomplishments that lead you to believe this child has exceptional and early development.

2. What do you see as possible advantages and disadvantages of acceleration for this child?

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

3. Please provide examples of how this child reasons things out, recognizes relationships, or comprehends abstract meaning.

4. Describe this child's curiosity.

5. Describe this child's interest in books and reading.

6. If this child does read, do you know how this learning occurred? Please describe.

7. What knowledge of numbers and basic arithmetic does this child display in your setting?

8. What are this child's favorite activities in your setting?

9. What is this child's interest and skill level in fine motor activities? (cutting, writing, etc.)

10. Describe the gross motor activities this child enjoys (skipping, swinging, catching, etc.)

11. Describe this child's socialization and ability to play or work with others.

12. Describe this child's persistence or ability to follow through to completion on an activity that excites him/her. Please use examples.

13. Describe how this child deals with conflicts or problems, such as conflicts with others, not getting his/her own way, having to make a choice between three favorite things, taking turns, etc.

14. Describe this child's self-efficacy and ability to take risks. How does this child deal with unfamiliar activities or being away from home?

15. Describe how this child deals with frustration and manages or self-regulates emotions.

16. Describe this child's attention span.

17. Please give any additional information which you feel is significant.

**Please send completed questionnaire to:**

Irene Wilcox, Early Entrance Coordinator  
Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools  
1833 Osauka Road NE  
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

[irene.wilcox@isd47.org](mailto:irene.wilcox@isd47.org)

Phone: 320-258-1272

Fax # 320-253-1444

Thank you for completing.

**DUE DATE: March 30**