

<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b>Student Attendance – Early Admission to Grade 1</b>
<b>EFFECTIVE:</b>	<b>September 2002</b>
<b>CROSS-REFERENCE:</b>	
<b>REVISION DATE:</b>	<b>February 2015</b>
<b>RESPONSIBILITY:</b>	<b>Superintendent of Education (School Operations)</b>

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The Education Act requires students who attain six years of age to attend school. The Act allows students who are five to attend a senior kindergarten program, and those who are four to attend a junior kindergarten program. Kindergarten is not a required program, therefore any child who has attained the age of six by December would automatically be eligible for grade one even if s/he has not attended kindergarten.

**INTENDED PURPOSE:**

There are times when principals will be approached by parents requesting consideration for early entry of their child into grade one. While this is generally not recommended due to the important growth, development and maturation that occurs in a child's early years, in some circumstances the request deserves consideration. The following is intended to assist you in this regard:

- placement of a child in the appropriate program is the responsibility of the school principal
- if the child has been in an inspected private school and the family presents a report card certifying that the child has completed the Ontario Kindergarten Program Expectations (including personal/social expectations), the child may be considered for grade one
- if the family submits samples of work and assessment records indicating that the child is personally, socially and cognitively ready for the grade one program, the child may be considered for placement in grade one
- these guidelines may also be used for the placement of a child from out of province whose parents and documentation would suggest placement in grade one although birthdate would make him/her age-appropriate for kindergarten

A decision about advanced grade placement could affect the child in the longer term. Due diligence is required to make the most informed decision possible. It is incumbent on the parent to provide evidence that the child is capable of performing work that would allow him/her to be successful in grade one.

**PROCEDURE:**

Principals who are asked to consider early placement should proceed as follows:

- discuss the process with the parent and outline the considerations that enter into the decision
- if the principal is fully satisfied that the evidence shows, on balance, that the child would be highly likely to succeed in grade one, the principal may place the child in grade one for September

- if there is any question about the child's readiness for grade one
  - place the child in kindergarten and have him/her go through the intake process in order to gather as much information as possible;
  - have the teacher/SERT/principal or vice-principal/parent observe the child as they work within the kindergarten classroom
  - have the parent observe a grade one classroom
  - review all of the available information at the earliest possible opportunity to make a final decision
  - ensure that the final decision is made no later than mid-October
  - document the parental request, steps taken, decision (including rationale) for future reference.

Parents who advocate for early placement will undoubtedly be acting in what they believe to be the interest of the child that they know and love. Principals must use their professional knowledge and judgement in assessing where the child is likely to meet the greatest success.