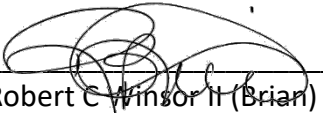


Paideia Academies Kindergarten Admission Age Requirements and Early Entry

Approved by the Paideia Academies Inc Corporate Board at its public meeting held on February 2, 2026.



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Paideia Academies Inc Chairperson

Policy Area: Student Enrollment

Applies To: All Paideia Academies K–12 campuses offering Kindergarten

Effective: Upon Corporate Board approval (replace prior September 30 cutoff language)

1. Purpose

To establish clear, lawful, and family-friendly Kindergarten age requirements and a competitive **Early Entry** pathway for children with later birthdays, while ensuring placement decisions are developmentally appropriate and in the student's best interest.

2. Authority

- **A.R.S. § 15-821(C)** (Admission of children; required age).
- Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Kindergarten enrollment guidance.

3. Definitions

- **School Year:** The academic year for which a student seeks enrollment.
- **Standard Age-Eligible Kindergarten Student:** A child who reaches age five (5) **before September 1** of the current school year.
- **Early Entry Kindergarten Applicant (Age Exception):** A child who does not meet the standard cutoff but may be considered for admission if the child will reach age five (5) **by January 1** of the current school year and admission is determined to be in the child's best interest.
- **Readiness Screening:** A structured evaluation of developmental readiness (academic and social-emotional/behavioral) used to inform early entry decisions.

4. Policy

4.1 Standard Kindergarten Admission (Automatic Age Eligibility)

Paideia Academies will enroll students in Kindergarten who turn five (5) years of age **before September 1** of the current school year, provided the student meets all other enrollment requirements and a seat is available through the school's open enrollment process.

4.2 Early Entry Kindergarten (Age Exception; Not Automatic)

A child who turns five (5) years of age **on or after September 1** but **on or before January 1** of the current school year may be **considered** for Early Entry Kindergarten if:

1. the family completes the Early Entry application process,
2. the child participates in Paideia's readiness screening, and
3. Paideia determines admission is in the child's best interest.

Early Entry decisions are **individualized** and are not guaranteed.

4.3 Not Eligible

A child whose 5th birthday occurs **after January 1** of the current school year is not eligible for Kindergarten enrollment that school year.

4.4 Open Enrollment and Seat Availability

Early Entry approval establishes **age eligibility only**. Enrollment remains subject to:

- open enrollment/lottery (if applicable),
- seat availability,
- completion of enrollment documentation by required deadlines.

5. Procedures

5.1 Standard Admission Process

1. Family submits enrollment application.
2. School verifies age eligibility (birth certificate or other acceptable proof).
3. Enrollment proceeds based on seat availability and completion of required documents.

5.2 Early Entry Kindergarten Process (Recommended Annual Timeline: Spring–Summer)

Step 1: Application

- Parent/guardian submits an **Early Entry Kindergarten Application** by the published deadline.
- Parent/guardian signs **Consent for Screening** and **Information Release** (if records are requested from preschool/childcare).

Step 2: Screening

A designated Early Entry Screening Team conducts screening that includes, at minimum:

- early literacy/communication,

- early numeracy/problem solving,
- fine/gross motor and self-care independence,
- attention, self-regulation, classroom stamina,
- social interaction and behavior readiness.

Step 3: Best-Interest Determination

The Principal (or designee) reviews:

- screening results,
- parent/guardian input,
- prior early learning experience (if any),
- any relevant support needs and the school's capacity to meet them.

Step 4: Decision and Notification

- Families receive written notification: **Approved**, **Not Approved**, or **Approved with Conditions** (e.g., support plan).
- If not approved, the school provides recommended next steps (e.g., Pre-K options if available, readiness supports, re-application the following year).

Step 5: Enrollment and Placement Agreement

If approved and a seat is available, the family completes enrollment and signs an **Early Entry Placement Agreement** acknowledging:

- Early Entry is based on current readiness indicators,
- ongoing monitoring will occur,
- the school will partner with the family if concerns arise.

5.3 Initial Placement Monitoring and Support

For Early Entry students, the school will conduct a structured review no later than the end of the **first grading period** (or comparable checkpoint) to review:

- attendance and adjustment,
- academic engagement,
- behavioral and social-emotional functioning.

If concerns arise, the school may implement interventions consistent with MTSS/RTI practices and may schedule a parent conference to adjust supports.

6. Decision Authority and Responsibilities

Governing Board

- Holds the legal authority to admit underage students when in the child's best interest and may delegate operational decision-making consistent with this policy.

Executive Director (or Designee)

- Ensures implementation consistency across campuses and annual publication of timelines, forms, and screening dates.

Principal (or Designee)

- Serves as the decision-maker for Early Entry determinations (unless otherwise directed by the Governing Board).
- Appoints and oversees the Early Entry Screening Team.
- Ensures documentation is complete and retained in the student's cumulative file.

Registrar/Enrollment Team

- Verifies age documentation and maintains application timelines and records.
- Communicates deadlines and required documents to families.

Parent/Guardian

- Submits required application materials, participates in conferences as needed, and provides accurate documentation.

7. Appeals

A parent/guardian may appeal an Early Entry denial within **10 school days** of the written decision by submitting an **Early Entry Appeal Request** stating the basis for appeal and any additional supporting information. Appeals are reviewed by the Governing Board (or designee). The appeal decision is final for the current school year.

8. Records and Documentation

For Early Entry applicants, the school retains in the student record (or applicant file if not enrolled):

- application and consent forms,
- screening results and rubric,

- written best-interest determination,
- parent communications and placement agreement (if enrolled),
- appeal documentation (if applicable).

9. Non-Discrimination

Paideia Academies applies this policy without discrimination and in alignment with applicable state and federal law. Age eligibility requirements remain applicable to all students; however, documentation barriers for special populations (e.g., students in transition) will be handled consistent with Paideia's broader enrollment and student records procedures.
