

## Early Entry to Kindergarten Evaluations

Thank you for your interest in Early Entry to Kindergarten evaluations at Potentials. All evaluations are completed by Dr. Christine Hook, Licensed Psychologist. This packet is meant to provide you with information regarding the process and what to expect as part of your child's evaluation.

### **What are the criteria for entering Kindergarten early?**

The North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation allowing early admission to Kindergarten of a child who has reached his/her fourth birthday by April 16th, if the child demonstrates extraordinary academic ability and maturity. The State of North Carolina has created standards for the principal to use in determining if a child is appropriate for early entrance to kindergarten. Once the principal receives the minimum requirements the principal shall confer with a committee of professional educators to consider for each child various standards that will indicate readiness.

Standards established by the state of North Carolina are described as follows:

1. *Student Aptitude*- The child shall score at the 98th percentile on a standard individual test of intelligence such as the *Stanford-Binet*, *The Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence*, *the Kaufman Anderson*, or any other comparable tests, that shall be administered by a licensed psychologist.
2. *Achievement*- The child shall score at the 98th percentile on either Reading or Mathematics on a standard test 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 tests that shall be administered by a licensed psychologist.
3. *Performance*- The child shall be able to perform tasks well above same-age peers as evidenced by behaviors in one or more areas such as independent reading, problem-solving skills, advanced vocabulary, and some writing fluency. The parent shall submit a sample of the child's work that shows outstanding examples of ability in any area including, but not limited to, art, mathematics, writing, dramatic play, creative productions, science, or social interactions.
4. *Observable Student Behavior/Student Interest*- The child shall demonstrate social and developmental maturity sufficient to participate in a structured setting for a full school day. The child shall be capable of following verbal instructions and functioning independently within a group. The parent shall provide two recommendation letters (from non-family members) with specific documentation of physical and social maturity from preschool teachers, child care workers, pediatricians, or others who have direct knowledge of the child.

Useful documentation checklists include The California Preschool Competency Scale, the Harrison Scale or any other comparable scale of early social development.

5. *Motivation/Student Interest*- The principal or principal's designee shall conduct an informal interview with the child and a more structured interview to determine if the child displays a thirst for knowledge and seeks new and challenging learning situations.

The evaluation at Potentials will include testing to cover the requirements for 1 and 2, student aptitude and achievement testing. In addition, observations about student behavior and interest during the activities will be collected. The other components listed above, including work samples and recommendation letters are the responsibility of the parent.

NC guidelines state that the evaluation should occur after April 16 of the year of the child's fourth birthday. They also state that information should be submitted to the principal/ school at least a month before the start of school. Most evaluations are completed between mid-June to early August.

### **Should I pursue this evaluation to determine if my child could start Kindergarten early?**

Parents should realize that obtaining scores at the 98th percentile is a high requirement. This means that a child is well above same aged peers, often one to two years above peers in terms of learning pre-academic concepts. That being said, even if a child does not score at that high level, it is often a valuable experience to learn more information about your child, and where they are in relation to other children developmentally. This information can help with Kindergarten entry, but also with Pre-K decisions, and can highlight areas that may be helpful to focus on before Kindergarten.

Although there is no perfect list of criteria to know whether your child is ready for kindergarten, you want to see that your child:

- Knows his or her ABC's and numbers at least 1-10 (even better if he or she can sound out some simple words or recognize some sight words)
- Can potentially show applied math skills (i.e., he or she has four blocks and can answer a question such as, "If I gave you two more blocks, how many would you have?")
- Has demonstrated the ability to sit for periods of time in a structured setting and attend a "lesson."
- Can handle separations from mom and dad well.
- Is excited and ready to go to "big school."
- Is able to play well with peers. (It's still normal for children to squabble over toys or fight, but you want to see your child playing well much of the time.)
- Has demonstrated the ability to respect adult authority figures (other than you) by following directions and instructions.
- Can handle transitions during the day from one activity to the next.

- Is mature enough to be able to function comfortably with approximately 23 older children throughout a 6-7 hour day.

On [pediatrics.about.com](http://pediatrics.about.com), the following is reported: “According to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics, traditional signs of readiness to start kindergarten include being able to: communicate about things he or she needs and wants, share and take turns, be curious and enthusiastic about trying new activities, pay attention and sit still, use a pencil and paint brushes, count as high as 20, and recognize the letters of the alphabet. Other traditional signs of readiness are that a child can follow one to three step instructions, behave well in the classroom, and can get along well with peers. It is important to note that in the Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) Kindergarten Teacher Survey on Student Readiness, teachers reported that the most important signs of school readiness are being able to communicate needs and wants and being curious and enthusiastic about trying new activities. Counting and recognizing letters and even sitting still were reported to be less important signs.”

### **What is the evaluation at Potentials like? How long does it last?**

We set aside three hours for the evaluation (typically from 9:00 am until noon), although it may not take the entire three hours to complete. We allow plenty of time to establish rapport and answer any questions you may have. Time is spent meeting you and your child, and meeting Dr. Hook, so that your child is comfortable working one on one. Then, your child will complete aptitude testing, which consists of “brain game” activities such as puzzles, blocks, and answering questions, following by achievement testing, which assesses pre-reading and pre-math concepts.

While we recognize that this process can be stressful to you as a parent, we want to reassure you that every effort is made to ensure that your child is not stressed by the experience. Children often enjoy working one on one with an adult. Your child will be given breaks when needed, and will be able to check in with you periodically, and have a snack if they would like. (Please feel free to bring a favorite snack or drink with you.) You will be waiting in our waiting room for much of the morning, so please bring something to pass the time. Consider leaving younger siblings at home if you think they may have difficulty waiting for their older sibling during the evaluation.

### **Can I observe the evaluation?**

Although sometimes parents sit in for part of the evaluation, you should be aware that children often perform at a higher level when their parents are not present. If your child is attending preschool, they should be fine working without you for short periods of time. Unfortunately, we do not have a room with a one-way mirror for a parent to observe without being in the room. If your child has difficulty separating from you, that may be an indication that they are not quite ready for Kindergarten.

### **What is the cost of the evaluation?**

The total cost of the evaluation is **\$550**, which is due on the day of assessment. This cost includes a formal written report, that you can submit to a school for consideration of early entry. This service is not billable to insurance, as insurance only covers medically necessary testing. This evaluation is similar to a gifted evaluation, which is typically not covered.

### **What happens after the evaluation? When do I find out the results?**

After testing is completed, Dr. Hook will ask you to wait in the waiting room for a short time (10-15 minutes) so that results can be quickly scored. You will be given information on scores before you leave, so you will know results that same day. The written report will be prepared after you are finished, and will be completed within three days after the evaluation. This report can be picked up or emailed to you, whichever you prefer.

After you turn in information to the school, guidelines state that the head of school shall decide whether to grant the parents' request for enrollment within three weeks of receiving this information. The head of school may conditionally enroll the child for up to ninety days in order to observe whether the child is able to adjust to the school setting. If the head of school determines that the child has not adjusted to the school setting, the head of school shall deny the request for enrollment. However, before the child is exited from school, the head of school shall invite the parent to assist in the development of intervention strategies for the child. If those strategies are not successful, the head of school shall provide the parents at least 10 days' notice before exiting the child from school so the parent may arrange child care, if needed.

**Thank you for your interest in Early Entry evaluations! If you have any questions about the information in this packet, please feel free to call us at (910) 254-4545, or email Dr. Hook at [christinehook@me.com](mailto:christinehook@me.com).**

***In preparation for your appointment, please print the following two pages and bring with you to the assessment.***

**Christine L. Hook, Ph.D.**  
**Licensed Psychologist**  
**Hook Psychological Services, PLLC**

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**EARLY KINDERGARTEN ENTRY EVALUATION**

Child's Name:	
Date of Birth:	Age:
Parents (with legal custody):	
Address:	
Home Phone:	Mobile Phone:
Email Address:	
Who referred you to Dr. Hook?	
Current Preschool (if any):	
Does your child have any significant health issues?	
What are your child's interests or hobbies?	
Please name three of your child's strengths:	
Please name any weaknesses or concerns that you have:	

*I consent to having my child participate in the Early Entry to Kindergarten Evaluation. I have read through the information packet, and understand that the total cost of the evaluation is \$550.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate your child on the following skills by placing a checkmark under “Above Average,” “Average,” or “Below Average.” You may write any comments that you have as well, either below or on the back of this sheet. *(Please note: These are not necessarily skills that are required for kindergarten):*

	Above Average	Average	Below Average
Listens to information or instructions			
Follows 2 to 3 step directions			
Follows routines			
Talks in sentences			
Says ABC's			
Counts to 10			
Identifies shapes and colors			
Likes to look at books			
Likes to be read to			
Holds a pencil			
Cuts with scissors			
Shares and takes turns			
Wants to learn new things			
Greets other people appropriately			
Makes new friends			
Dresses self			
Goes to bathroom by self			
Recognizes signs around town (McDonald's, etc)			
Runs, skips, and jumps			