



El Paso 8, Fountain - 21040 | **Submission Date:** 06/13/2022

## Early Access Addendum

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THE FOLLOWING SECTION IS REQUIRED IF THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT PERMITS EARLY ACCESS TO KINDERGARTEN OR FIRST GRADE. Refer to ECEA rules 12.08 for describing all sections and provisions required for early access.

**Early Access: Rule Section 10.02(1)(H) and 12.08** Gifted children who qualify for grade level acceleration and are age 4 for kindergarten, or age 5 for first grade, by October 1

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**Directions:**

**Address each section and the provisions of the early access ECEA Rules 12.08.**

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/lawsregs>

**In each section below, describe the methods and/or tools that the administrative unit will implement for early access communication, criteria and process. Type your response in the white boxes referencing the topics.**

## Communication

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Initial communication related to the Early Access process occurs through the district website and district Early Education program. The following are procedures for communication with families who apply for Early Access and the information provided them:

Parent or guardian learns about Early Access through the district website, the district Early Education program, or a district elementary school. Parent or guardian contacts the District Gifted Coordinator to request an Early Access application packet. In accordance with state legislation, Early Access into kindergarten requires a student to be four years old by October 1, and Early Access into 1<sup>st</sup> grade requires a student to be five years old by October 1. A log of all Early Access applicant inquiries and response records is compiled annually.

An Early Access team evaluates all applications. The Early Access application packet contains:

- Completed and signed initial application
- Copy of child's birth certificate
- Proof of residence within District 8 boundaries
- Letter from a parent or guardian stating the reasons why Early Access is appropriate for the student
- District 8 information release form
- Letter of recommendation for Early Access from a previous teacher or familiar adult outside of the family
- Any previous assessment data from a public or private school, if applicable

A portfolio of student work must accompany the application. The student portfolio of work must include artifacts that the child has completed within the past year. Parent(s) or guardian(s) should complete a short description of each artifact and the date created. Parent(s) or guardian(s) are encouraged to submit artifacts that demonstrate the child's abilities in the areas of number sense, alphabet sounds, shapes, colors, writing,



reading, drawing, and any other areas that demonstrate the child's talents or interests. The Early Access team then evaluates the portfolio utilizing a rubric. Complete applications and portfolios must be received by March 15 (or the Friday prior to March 15, in the event that March 15 falls on a weekend).

After the Early Access team does an initial evaluation of the portfolio, the parent and child meet with the Director of Early Education and District Gifted Coordinator for an interview. During the interview, the Director of Early Education and District Gifted Coordinator may ask the child to explain and clarify works in the portfolio and ask the child additional questions. The Ages & Stages questionnaire will also be completed during the interview.

If a child is determined to be an appropriate candidate to move forward in the Early Access process, the parent or guardian is notified to schedule administration of achievement tests in reading, math, and writing. If a child scores below the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile on an achievement test, parent(s) or guardian(s) are notified that the child has been exited from the Early Access process.

Candidates scoring at or above the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile on all three achievement tests are then scheduled to take a cognitive assessment. If a child scores below the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile on the cognitive measure, parent(s) or guardian(s) are notified that the child has been exited from the Early Access process.

Candidates who score at or above the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile on the cognitive measure are referred to the Early Access team for a final determination about placement in the Early Access program. The final determination is made through a consensus process, and the team completes the Fountain-Fort Carson District 8 Early Access Determination Form, which is signed by all team members, the receiving school's principal, the child's future classroom teacher, and parent(s)/legal guardian(s).

An advanced learning plan is developed by August 31 (or the Friday prior to August 31, in the event that August 31 falls on a weekend). The advanced learning plan is developed with the support and input of the classroom teacher, building gifted coordinator, and parent(s) or guardian(s).

No fee is charged for students who request the Early Access process.

Professional development about the Early Access process and requirements for Early Access is delivered to building gifted and talented coordinators and elementary administrators in January. Professional development about the Early Access process and requirements for Early Access is delivered to district preschool staff in January or February prior to parent/teacher conferences. Professional development about the creation of the ALP is provided to Kindergarten teachers, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers, elementary gifted coordinators, and elementary administrators in August.

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## Criteria

### **Aptitude:**

A licensed psychologist will administer the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, Fourth Edition (WPPSI-IV). A child must score at the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher on the Full Scale IQ (FSIQ) or General Ability Index (GAI).

### **Achievement:**

Trained assessment administrators give the Test of Early Mathematics Ability (TEMA) and the Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA). Trained assessment administrators give students who are age 4-0 or older the Test of Early Written Language (TEWL). Students under the age of 4-0 are given a writing performance assessment. A child age 4-0 or older must score at the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher on all three norm-referenced assessments. A child under the age of 4-0 must score at the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher on the reading and math assessments and demonstrate a highly advanced level of performance on the writing performance assessment. The writing performance assessment is scored using a research-based writing rubric.



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**Performance:**

The parent or guardian submits a portfolio of student work by March 15 (or the Friday prior to March 15, in the event that March 15 falls on a weekend). The portfolio should include dated student work samples completed within the last year and demonstrating ability in the following areas:

- Knowledge of number sense
- Knowledge of beginning alphabet sounds
- Knowledge of shapes
- Knowledge of colors
- Examples of writing
- Evidence of reading ability
- Evidence of student interests
- Samples of student drawings/artwork
- Any other items the parent or guardian deems relevant

The Early Access team will review the portfolio using a rubric to determine if a child shows highly advanced capabilities in relation to similar-age peers.

**Readiness, social behavior and motivation:**

Indicated through Teaching Strategies GOLD, Ages & Stages Questionnaires, and observations during the portfolio interview and assessment administration.

**Support system:**

The support team includes parent(s) and guardian(s), the school gifted coordinator, school psychologist, home school principal, classroom teacher, Director of Early Education, and District Gifted Coordinator. Students will be progress monitored at a minimum of every five weeks, and the building support team will provide ongoing support to ensure the child is making adequate progress towards academic and affective advanced learning plan (ALP) goals. Progress monitoring will continue through the student's completion of 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

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## Process

**Timelines:**

Applications and student portfolios are accepted beginning on the District Gifted Coordinator's first work day in January (following Winter Break and typically between January 3 and 10) through March 15th (or the Friday prior to March 15, in the event that March 15 falls on a weekend). If a child has both a completed application and portfolio submitted by the deadline, the child is screened for Early Access by the district Early Access team. The district Early Access team consists of the Director of Early Education, District Gifted Coordinator, an elementary principal, a school psychologist, a school gifted coordinator, and a kindergarten or first grade teacher. The Early Access team reviews the portfolio using a rubric. Following the initial portfolio review, the Director of Early Education and District Gifted Coordinator interview the child and parent(s) or guardian(s). Children who demonstrate highly advanced capabilities through their portfolio will continue with the Early Access process. Determinations for entrance to Early Access are made within 60 calendar days of the AU receiving the child's portfolio. A determination for a student receiving or not receiving Early Access is made before the end of the school year. Letters of qualification are sent to families.

Ongoing portfolio screening is available for military families newly arriving to the area. The final date for military families to submit an initial Early Access application and portfolio of student work is July 15. Determinations for entrance to Early Access for newly arriving military families are made prior to the first day of school.

At the beginning of the school year, an initial advanced learning plan (ALP) is written by August 31 (or the Friday prior to August 31, in the event that August 31 falls on a weekend). Students who are admitted to kindergarten



or first grade through the Early Access process will be progress monitored at a minimum of every five weeks to ensure appropriate academic and social progress.

**Personnel:**

Fountain-Fort Carson School District 8 uses an Early Access Team to make student placement decisions. Both the District Gifted Coordinator and the Director of Early Education are endorsed in gifted education. The Early Access team, which reviews the portfolios and body of evidence (including achievement, aptitude, and behavior data), consists of the District Gifted Coordinator, Director of Early Education, an elementary principal, a school psychologist, a school gifted coordinator, and a kindergarten or first grade teacher. A licensed psychologist administers the WPSI-IV. Teachers or administrators who have training on the administration of the TEMA, TERA, and TEWL administer these assessments. Trained teachers or administrators also administer the writing performance assessment, if needed. The school support team includes parent(s) and guardian(s), the school gifted coordinator, school psychologist, home school principal, classroom teacher, Director of Early Education, and District Gifted Coordinator.

**Evaluation:**

Step 1. The Early Access application packet materials are available beginning on the District Gifted Coordinator's first work day in January (following Winter Break and typically between January 3 and 10). The district website will have information on Early Access and the district office, elementary schools, and preschools will have literature available for families on the Early Access process.

Step 2. Professional development is provided for building gifted and talented coordinators and school administrators.

Step 3. Parent(s) or guardian(s) contact the District Gifted Coordinator to learn more about Early Access and to request an application packet.

Step 4. Parent(s) or guardian(s) submit a complete application packet, including a portfolio of student work samples. The student portfolio of work must include artifacts completed by the child within the past year. Parent(s) or guardian(s) are encouraged to submit artifacts that demonstrate the child's abilities in the areas of number sense, alphabet sounds, shapes, colors, writing, reading, and drawing; however, parent(s) or guardian(s) may submit any artifact they deem relevant towards demonstrating the child's talents and abilities. Parent(s) or guardian(s) should also complete a short description of each artifact and the date the artifact was created.

Step 5. The Early Access Team reviews the application materials and scores the student portfolio using the Early Access portfolio rubric. The District Gifted Coordinator and Director of Early Education also interview the parent and child following the initial portfolio review to ask additional questions related to the child's work samples. The District Gifted Coordinator and Director of Early Education make a decision about whether the student portfolio and interview indicates the need to do achievement testing. Parent(s) or guardian(s) are notified about whether achievement testing should be scheduled.

Step 6. Achievement testing is scheduled and administered in the order of reading, math, and then writing. A child must score at the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile on each achievement test to continue with the subsequent assessment. Students under the age of 4-0 must demonstrate a highly advanced level of performance on the writing performance assessment. All achievement tests are administered by a trained teacher or administrator.

Step 7. A child age 4-0 or older who scores at the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile on all three achievement tests will then take a cognitive ability test. A child under age 4-0 who scores at the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile on the reading and math achievement tests and demonstrates a highly advanced level of performance on the writing performance assessment will then take a cognitive ability test. A licensed school psychologist administers the cognitive assessment.

Step 8. The Early Access team will then review the full body of testing evidence, school readiness data, observational notes, and student portfolio to make a determination of acceptance to the Early Access program



or a determination to exit the student from the evaluation process. If the Early Access team is unable to reach consensus, then the District Gifted Coordinator and Director of Early Education will make the determination.

Step 9. Formal letters of qualification are sent to the family. Copies of the score reports for achievement and ability tests are provided to the family. The District Gifted Coordinator retains achievement and ability test score reports for all tested children for one year. Elementary schools are informed of all Early Access acceptances. Families of Early Access students are guaranteed enrollment at their elementary school of residence, and families wishing to choose their student into a different elementary school in Fountain-Fort Carson District 8 must follow the district out of zone guidelines. Upon out of zone approval, placement will be determined based on availability.

Step 10. The child's classroom teacher and building gifted coordinator collaborate to write an ALP for the student by August 31. Progress monitoring of the ALP occurs at a minimum of every 5 weeks throughout the school year.

Step 11. For a child who qualified as gifted, but does not satisfy the requirements for Early Access, parent(s) or guardian(s) will receive a letter indicating the child's gifted identification. The child's school is notified of the gifted identification, and the building gifted coordinator collaborates with the child's classroom teacher to develop an advanced learning plan (ALP) and determine appropriate programming.

**Monitoring:**

The school gifted coordinator, classroom teacher, parent(s) or guardian(s), and school gifted administrator will work together to develop the ALP. The ALP will be written by August 31 for both kindergarten and first grade. Students will be progress monitored by the classroom teacher at a minimum of every five weeks. Progress towards grade level academic standards and social and emotional well-being will be communicated with parent(s) or guardian(s) every five weeks in first semester and at the end of each quarter in second semester.

**Dispute Resolution: Will the AU be using the same procedure for disagreements process as in the main Program Plan? Yes**

**The administrative unit's program plan is due with the Comprehensive Program Plan or no later than January 1 prior to early access implementation.**