

Kindergarten Enrollment

Policy, Research, and Resources



COLORADO
Department of Education

Introduction

Enrollment declines have been observed across the country; however, these declines have been especially marked among the nation's youngest students. In Colorado, statewide student enrollment for kindergarten decreased by 9.1% in 2020. In anticipation of enrollment for the 2021-2022 academic year, this brief discusses key policy and research as a resource for districts in engaging in dialogue with families on enrollment and entry decisions.

Policy Overview

Colorado Revised Statutes currently frame several school readiness enrollment and entry decisions which are summarized in this section:

- School attendance is compulsory for any child who is 6 by August 1 and under the age of 17 (§22-33-104(1(a))).
- The Board of Education maintains the education programming for kindergarten for students prior to the year in which they would be eligible for first grade (§22-32-119(1(a))).
- Age requirements for kindergarten entry are determined locally. Local early admittance policy determines if a child who does not meet that age requirement is admitted into kindergarten. A district may count and receive funding for pupils enrolled in kindergarten who are five years old as of October 1 (§22-54-103).
- Students identified as highly gifted, pursuant to §22-20-204(2), who are not five by Oct 1 may be admitted to kindergarten at the district's discretion per the district/AU [early access](#) plan. Similarly, identified highly gifted students who are not age six by Oct 1, may be admitted to first grade at the district's discretion per their early access plan.
- School readiness assessments are not to be used to deny a student admission or progression to kindergarten or first grade (§22-7-1004(2(b))).

Research and Resources

Key research examining the impact of delaying kindergarten entry on short- and long-term student outcomes are included in this section. Additionally, resources reviewing similar aspects of past disruptions which suggest opportunities for learning are included.

Ackerman, D. & Barnett, W. S. (2005). [Prepared for Kindergarten: What Does "Readiness" Mean?](#). National Institute for Early Education Research.

Bassok, D., & Reardon, S.F. (2013). Academic Redshirting in Kindergarten: Prevalence, Patterns, and Implications. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 35(3), 283–297.

Enrollment Considerations

1) Examine values and beliefs of school readiness, both child ready and school ready.

2) [Review enrollment policies, early enrollment, and access plans through an equity lens.](#)

3) For individual child decisions, partner with families to understand the child and family experience.

4) Prepare ready schools by

- [Strengthening partnerships with families and the community](#)
- [Allocating resources](#) based on available data and information regarding the child's experience
 - Revisiting [key system frameworks](#) and classroom practices to prepare to meet each child's social, emotional, and academic needs.

5) Revisit existing MOUs and partnership agreements to ensure each is reflective of research, policy, and clearly outlined roles and responsibilities.

- Garcia, M. & Weiss, E. (2020). [COVID-19 and student performance, equity, and U.S. education policy: Lessons from pre-pandemic research to inform relief, recovery, and rebuilding](#). Economic Policy Institute.
- Harris, D.N. and Larsen, M.F. (2019). The effects of the New Orleans Post-Katrina Market-Based School Reports on Medium-Term Student Outcomes. Education Research Alliance for New Orleans.
- Hill, P. (2020). [What Post-Katrina New Orleans Can Teach Schools About Addressing COVID Learning Losses](#).
- Huang, F.L., Invernizzi, M.A. (2012). The Association of Kindergarten Entry Age with Early Literacy Outcomes. *Journal of Educational Research*, 105(6), 431-441.
- Lincove, J. A., & Painter, G. (2006). Does the Age That Children Start Kindergarten Matter? Evidence of Long-Term Educational and Social Outcomes. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 28(2), 153–179.
- NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (2007). Age of Entry to Kindergarten and Children's Academic Achievement and Socioemotional Development. *Early education and development*, 18(2), 337–368.
- Stipek, D., & Byler P. (2001). Academic achievement and social behaviors associated with age of entry into kindergarten. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 22(2), 175-189.
- Williams, P.G., & Lerner, M.A. (2019). [School Readiness](#). *Pediatrics*, 144(2).

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

For a full copy of research synthesis and considerations, email Megan Prior Rogers, Kindergarten School Readiness Consultant at rogers_m@cde.state.co.us

For more information, visit the **Preschool-Third Grade Office** webpages at <https://www.cde.state.co.us/early>