



Kindergarten is an important next step for all young children who attend preschool as well as for children who have not had a formal school experience. Families often have questions about where and when to send their child to school and often have many questions as they make this decision.

The purpose of this document is to help preschool teams which include families, understand some of the factors involved in decision making about a child's enrollment in kindergarten and whether the child should be held out of kindergarten for an additional year of preschool. Please consider each of the following questions as part of the discussion about what is best for the young student:

### **Guiding Questions:**

- Is there a decision making team in place which includes the family?
- Has the team considered what the research says about delaying kindergarten entry?
- Will one more year of preschool positively affect the child later in schooling?
- What supports will be in place in Kindergarten for the child who may be on an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?
- Will the child benefit from the same academic content, delivered in the same way as the year before?
- Will one more year of preschool close an achievement gap, if there is one? How is this determined?
- Will a child receive a full day in kindergarten versus a half day in preschool?
- When is the cut-off date in the school district?

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### **What ages does the licensed preschool program serve?**

If the preschool is not licensed to serve children aged six and over, then children older than age five, or turning age five during the course of the placement, cannot be placed in this preschool setting.

### **What are the requirements for children to enter kindergarten?**

The only requirement in Colorado for kindergarten entry is that the child is five years old by the school district cut-off date, which varies across the state. Preschool is not a prerequisite for kindergarten entry. Across Colorado, only 51% of 3 and 4 year olds are enrolled in a preschool program. Kindergarten programs must serve any age-eligible child who enrolls in school.

### **Is the child an English Language Learner?**

Title III of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) ensures success for all students. The law requires that ELL students be placed with their peers, in grade level appropriate settings.<sup>1</sup>

### **Is there funding for children held out of kindergarten and staying in preschool for an extra year?**

Children are not eligible for CPP funding, if they are kindergarten age eligible. The Colorado Preschool Program at CDE recommends that children start kindergarten when they are age eligible. If the child has an Individual Education Program (IEP), then the IEP team determines if preschool is the most appropriate placement. Special education funding and services can be provided in preschool when it is documented in the IEP.

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<sup>1</sup> Every Student Succeeds Act | U.S. Department of Education. (2015). Retrieved March 21, 2016, from <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-114s1177enr/pdf/BILLS-114s1177enr.pdf>.



### **What is considered if the child has an IEP?**

- IEP teams are required to consider the child’s needs while planning transition to kindergarten. Supports should be put in place in any classroom or placement for the child to be successful.
- Section 300.101(c) of the IDEA regulations addresses services and supports at each grade level and expects that a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is “available to any individual child with a disability who needs special education and related services” *as they advance from grade to grade.*<sup>2</sup> This means that children with disabilities should access grade level curricula with their peers.
- Section 300.116(e) of the IDEA regulations discusses placements in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Age-appropriate regular classrooms that have accommodations and modifications in place enable children to participate and access learning.<sup>3</sup>
- Children with disabilities and who have an IEP may be eligible to receive services through the public education system until they turn 21. The period of time for transition planning to community programs is shortened when a student has delayed kindergarten entry.<sup>4</sup>

### **What is “academic redshirting” in preschool?**

- Academic redshirting is the practice of holding a child out of kindergarten for an extra year even though he or she is eligible to enroll in Kindergarten.<sup>5,6</sup>
- Parents sometimes want an academic advantage and to give time for the child to mature.<sup>7</sup>
- Research shows that white boys from high socioeconomic status and boys with social/emotional immaturities and birthdays close to the kindergarten cutoff dates are most often held out of kindergarten.<sup>8</sup>
- In certain communities where there may be a higher incidence, the practice of “holding out” can create kindergartens that have a class which ranges in age from not yet 5 years old to older than age 6, having an even wider range of skills and experiences.<sup>9</sup>

### **What is “school readiness”?**

- CDE definition: Both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences and *the ability of a school to meet the needs of all students* enrolled in publicly funded preschool or kindergarten. School readiness is enhanced when schools, families and community services providers work collaboratively to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content.<sup>10</sup>
- Voluntarily holding children out of kindergarten will not mean that more children are ready for kindergarten. Older children are not always more successful in kindergarten. Hoping to promote kindergarten readiness,

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<sup>2</sup> Sec. 300.101 IDEA | U.S. Department of Education. (2006). Retrieved from <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/,root,regs,300,B,300%252E101,>

<sup>3</sup> Sec. 300.116 IDEA | U.S. Department of Education. (2006). Retrieved from <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/,root,regs,300,B,300%252E116,>

<sup>4</sup> Secondary Transition | CDE - Colorado Department of Education (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/transition>.

<sup>5</sup> Kelmon, J. (2015). When should kids start kindergarten?. Retrieved from <http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/redshirting-kindergarten/>.

<sup>6</sup> Marshall, H. (2003) Opportunity Deferred or Opportunity Taken? Retrieved from <http://oldweb.naeyc.org/journal/btj/200309/DelayingKEntry.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Wong, A. (2015, August 13) Beyond the Pros and Cons of Redshirting. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/08/beyond-the-pros-and-cons-of-redshirting/401159/>.

<sup>8</sup> David, J. (2008, March). What Research Says About.../ Grade Retention. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar08/vol65/num06/Grade-Retention.aspx>.

<sup>9</sup> Ackerman, D. (2005). Prepared for Kindergarten: What Does “Readiness” Mean?. Retrieved from <http://nieer.org/policy-issue/policy-report-prepared-for-kindergarten-what-does-readiness-mean>.

<sup>10</sup> School Readiness | CDE - Colorado Department of Education. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness>.



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families may decide to hold a child out of school for a year, but holding children out of school has not been found to predict better social or academic success.<sup>11,12</sup>

The CDE Preschool Team encourages teams to review the guiding questions prior to making decisions about holding children out from kindergarten.

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### **Additional Resources:**

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

Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2013). Research to Policy: Transition to School Position Statement. *Transitions to School - International Research, Policy and Practice*, 277-294.

Frey, N. (2005). Retention, Social Promotion, and Academic Redshirting: What Do We Know and Need to Know?. *Remedial & Special Education*, 26(6), 332-346.

Range, B., Dougan, K., & Pijanowski, J. (2011) Rethinking Grade Retention and Academic Redshirting: Helping School Administrators Make Sense of What Works. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 6(2), n2.

*This CDE guidance document is meant for clarification, is not legally binding, and is not to be confused with legal advice. This guidance reflects CDE's recommendations, but Administrative Units (AUs) may have developed their own policies or procedures that differ from those described herein. Be sure to refer to your local AU's policies and procedures through the Director of Special Education. If you are seeking legal advice, please contact your legal counsel.*

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Colorado Department of Education, Office of Special Education

(303) 866-6694 / <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped>

Colorado Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, Colorado Preschool Program

(303) 866-6783 <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cpp>

For more information, contact Marcia Blum: [blum\\_m@cde.state.co.us](mailto:blum_m@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6319

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<sup>11</sup> NAEYC | Where We Stand on School Readiness. (2009). Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/Readiness.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> #10 K-Power - Kindergarten Redshirting. (2013). Retrieved from [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/6a47e3\\_0749dd374c6f468587d8ef0012cd12fd.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/6a47e3_0749dd374c6f468587d8ef0012cd12fd.pdf).

