MARCH 2024

Early Entry to School for Children who are Gifted Cross Sectoral Guidelines

Department for Education,
Children and Young People

Tasmanian Government

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Version 1.3 – 1/03/2024

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1 Purpose

These Guidelines apply to all Government, Catholic and Independent schools in Tasmania and provide details and contact information for all schools relating to *Ministerial Instruction No. 15 Early Entry to School*.

The Tasmanian Government allows for special consideration of the age at which some gifted children start school. Such children can benefit from starting Kindergarten or Prep early and this is known as 'early entry.'

Parents/carers of a gifted child can apply to an expert committee, known as the *Early Entry to School Cross Sectoral Placement Committee,* to consider their child for early entry to Kindergarten or Prep.

The Committee includes a representative from all school sectors (Government, Catholic and Independent), parents/carers, principals, teachers and a psychologist. Early entry to Kindergarten or Prep is one strategy for meeting the intellectual, social and emotional needs of pre-school children who have been identified as gifted.

2 Guideline

- Children in all Tasmanian schools may begin Kindergarten if they are four years old on, or before, 1 January in the year of enrolment. Children must begin Prep if they are five years old on, or before 1 January in the year of enrolment.
- To be considered for early entry to Kindergarten or Prep in the gifted category a child must:
  - be aged at least 3 years and 6 months of age as at 1 January of the year of commencing Kindergarten; or
  - be aged at least 4 years and 6 months of age as at 1 January of the year of commencing Prep; and
  - be assessed in the top two per cent of the population for cognitive function, through an assessment by a registered psychologist. The recommended testing instrument is the Wechsler Preschool & Primary Scale of Intelligence – Fourth Edition Australian Standardised Edition (WPPSI-IV Australian); or
  - be close to the top two per cent and be considered by the Early Entry to School Cross Sectoral Placement Committee to have special circumstances that justify the early entry. Where early entry for Kindergarten is approved in this circumstance, the approval may be granted as provisional, subject to the condition of a review by the Committee before commencing Prep.
- Parents/carers of prospective early entry students are advised to read the Early Entry to School Frequently Asked Questions document available on the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) website as their first step.
- Parents/carers applying for early entry to Kindergarten or Prep for their child should contact the principal of the school of enrolment early in the year before enrolment is desired. It will help to secure a place for their child, if their application is approved.
- The principal will ask for evidence of birth date (a birth certificate or passport) to check the age requirement and provide parents/carers with a copy of the Early Entry to School Frequently Asked Questions document available on the DECYP website.

- The principal will provide them with a copy of the application form (Early Entry to School for Gifted Students Application Form) available on the DECYP website and advise them how to get an assessment for the child with a registered psychologist.
- Government Schools provide psychological assessments at no cost to parents/carers who are intending to enrol their child in a Government School. These are done by school psychologists during September each year. Costs for psychologist assessments for Catholic and Independent schools will be borne by parents/carers.
- Parents/carers must complete the Early Entry to School for Gifted Students Application Form available on the DECYP website and return it to the school by 31 August the year before possible early entry. Where possible, this information should be provided to the psychologist before the psychologist does the assessment, as it provides useful background information.
- The following documents need to be forwarded to the relevant sector contact person as soon as the psychologist assessment is completed. Late applications may be considered by the committee as requested.
  - A copy of the Psychologist's Assessment Summary; and
  - The completed Early Entry to School for Gifted Students Application Form.
- These documents will be considered by the Early Entry to School Cross Sectoral Placement Committee, which meets in late September each year.
- The Committee is chaired by a nominated senior officer of DECYP. The Committee includes a representative from all school sectors – Government, Catholic and Independent – and a parent/carer representative nominated by the Tasmanian Association for the Gifted (TAG). The Committee also includes a registered psychologist, a principal representative and an early childhood teacher.
- The Committee makes the final decision about whether a child fulfils the requirements and is likely to benefit from early entry to Kindergarten or Prep. If a child is successfully granted early entry to a school, there are no reviews. The committee is able to grant provisional early entry which is subject to a review of progress, before the child commences the next year level.
- Parents/carers and the school principal are advised of the Committee's decision in writing, as soon as possible after the meeting. The letter to the parents of successful applicants advises them to complete the normal enrolment process with their school as soon as possible.
- The Kindergarten or Prep teachers who will be receiving children through early entry must be provided with professional learning support as appropriate.
- Should a parent/carer wish to discuss the outcome of the early entry process, they may contact the Chair of the Committee.
- A parent/carer may apply to the Education Registrar for a review on the basis that the process set out in *Ministerial Instruction No. 15 Early Entry to School*.was not followed by the Committee.

Further information about the process of early entry to school is available from the relevant contact below:

Department for Education, Children and Young People:

Manager Gifted and Highly Able
Phone: 0427 610 338
Email: Gifted.highlyable@decyp.tas.gov.au
Post: Inclusion and Cultural Diversity Services
GPO Box 169 Hobart TAS 7001

Independent Schools Tasmania

Mr Mark Seager
Phone: 0491 200 208
Email: mseager@ist.tas.edu.au
Post: Independent Schools Tasmania
PO Box 616 Sandy Bay TAS 7005

Catholic Education Tasmania

Ms Jacqueline Hardman
Phone: (03) 6210 8888
Email: Jacqueline.hardman@catholic.tas.edu.au
Post: PO Box 102 North Hobart TAS 7002

Parent/carer Support Group

Tasmanian Association for the Gifted Inc (TAG)
Phone: 0419 142 344
Email: tasgifted@gmail.com
Post: GPO Box 1942 Hobart TAS 7001
Website: http://www.tasgifted.com

3 Related policies

- Ministerial Instruction No. 15 Early Entry to School.

4 Related procedures

- Enrolment Procedure
- Acceleration of Gifted Students Procedure

5 Supporting information/tools

- Early Entry to School Cross Sectoral Placement Committee - Terms of Reference
- Early Entry to School Frequently Asked Questions
- Early Entry to School for Gifted Students Application Form
- *Psychologist's Assessment Summary* Form
- Supporting Gifted Children in the Early Years information

6 Definitions

- NIL

Authorised by: Adam Potito, Director Inclusion and Cultural Diversity Services
Contact: Inclusion and Cultural Diversity Services; gifted.highlyable@decyp.tas.gov.au
Last significant review: March 2024
Review due: March 2028
This document replaces: Early Entry to School for Children who are Gifted Cross Sectoral Guidelines (education.tas.gov.au)