



Mt. Evans BOCES Early Access to Kindergarten or 1st Grade
Definition and Process for Highly Gifted Children

Early access means early entrance to kindergarten or first grade for highly advanced gifted children under age six. Children for early access are exceptionally precocious and ready for school. Academic achievement, reasoning ability, performance and motivation are keen compared to other gifted children. "Highly advanced gifted child" means a gifted child whose body of evidence demonstrates a profile of exceptional ability or potential compared to same-age gifted children. To meet the needs of highly advanced development, early access to educational services may be considered as a special provision. House Bill 08-1021 created the opportunity for Colorado administrative units (AUs) to accelerate highly advanced gifted children under age 4 for kindergarten and/or under age 5 for first grade pursuant to CRS 22-20-204(2) (Colorado Department of Education, p. 3).

Longitudinal studies report that early access children excel academically, participate in extra-curricular activities, exhibit strong positive concepts; some may require acceleration again later in their educational career. The benefits to students who qualify for early access include: integrating early childhood and gifted educational programming to expand access to curriculum, instruction and assessment aligned to the child's level of challenge. Additionally, early access fosters friendships and social-emotional growth closer to the child's developmental level (Colorado Department of Education p. 4)

Step 1: Inquiry/Information

- Information will be posted on BOCES website to be available year round.
- First Week in January, dates for the Process will be Posted
- Parent/guardian submits a letter requesting consideration for Early Access **January 15th-March 15th** application window.
- All inquiries forwarded to Mt. Evans BOCES Gifted Education office for processing and tracking at Mt. Evans BOCES, 10595 Highway 119, Blackhawk, CO 80422. District gifted education coordinator keeps a copy for building/district files.
- Parent/guardian information packet provided to parent that includes all documents and guidelines for the Early Access process.

Step 2: Application and Submission

- Application, including the Portfolio is completed and submitted by the parent/guardian to the district gifted coordinator by **March 15th**.
- Application/Portfolio to include:
 - *Early Access Application* to Kindergarten or First Grade
 - Brief one page letter from the parent requesting Early Access
 - Permission to evaluate, including classroom observation
 - Developmental history
 - *Kingore Observation Inventory for Parents*
 - Letter from preschool teacher recommending student, if applicable

- Portfolio items supported by *Kingore Portfolio Guidelines*
- Checklist of *My Child's Strengths* from *Teaching Gifted Children in the Regular Classroom*
- *Early Access to Kindergarten or 1st Grade Academic Progress Information* completed by preschool teacher, if applicable and if not in preschool, completed by parent
- Any supporting anecdotal information
- Any available test data (public/private testing, etc.)
- Other Items Parent Deems Appropriate
- Documentation must be included to show that the child will:
Reach the age of four by September 1st or the beginning of the school year, whichever comes first, to be included in kindergarten.
Reach the age of five by September 1st or the beginning of the school year, whichever comes first, to be included in first grade.
- Application/Portfolio is forwarded to Mt. Evans BOCES Gifted Education office.

Step 3: Screening

- By **April 15th**, an Early Access Application/Portfolio Review Team meets to discuss and review the completed portfolio and determine if the student needs further assessment and would benefit academically and socially from Early Access.
- The team reviews the documents and makes one of two decisions:
 - Request an Evaluation;
 - Decline to Evaluate or;
 - Provide suggestions for a strength-based interventions to develop the child's gifts and talents.

The review team includes:

- Mt. Evans BOCES gifted education personnel
- District gifted education coordinator
- Principal or principal's designee
- Preschool director
- Other personnel as determined by need

(At least one member of the team must have a current endorsement in gifted education.)

Step 4: Assessment/Testing

- BOCES Gifted Education personnel schedule individual testing. Areas to be assessed include: cognitive ability, academic achievement, motor skills, and social/emotional skills.
- Testing to be completed by the first full week in May.
- A \$250.00 fee will be assessed, as approved by the BOCES Board and member district Boards to cover the cost of testing Students/families qualifying for free lunch will not be assessed a fee. Students/ families qualifying for reduced lunch will be assessed an adjusted fee.

Step 5: Determination, and Notice of Eligibility

- In order to be placed a student must be formally identified as Gifted & Talented. They must have a Full Scale or Index score at the 98th percentile or higher on a standardized mental ability, 98% percentile or higher on achievement assessment AND the portfolio Body of Evidence should strongly support the child's ability to be successful in the school setting.
- Consensus by all involved parties will need to be confirmed for early access placement to occur. If a consensus cannot be formed, additional data will need to be collected.
- Parents will be contacted with the decision of the placement team by Mt. Evans BOCES Gifted Education personnel or District Gifted Education Coordinator by the **last day of May**.
- The parent notification will occur via an initial phone call. Formal notification of the determination will be mailed to parents.
 - For students who were declined, suggestions will be offered to support and assist parents in next steps for their child.
 - If a student is deemed gifted but not suitable for early access, the principal of the child's home school is contacted by phone and a copy of the child's portfolio is provided to the school.
 - If the child is placed in the program, a copy of this determination will be part of the student's ALP. A conference is scheduled with the parents/guardians and the gifted education coordinator to develop an Advanced Learning Plan (required by state rules for all identified GT students) by September 30th of enrollment year.
- The final decision to accept or not to accept a student is at the discretion of the district.

References

Colorado Department of Education. Early Access for Highly Advanced Gifted Children under the Age of Six. 2016. Denver, CO. Retrieved <https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/earlyaccess2016rev>