



Gifted and Talented Services

Dear Families,

Thank you for your interest in the Early Access process. In accordance with Colorado House Bill 08-1021, St. Vrain Valley School District has established a process for identifying “Highly Advanced Gifted” students under the age of 6 who demonstrate a need for complete acceleration into kindergarten or first grade. Many families struggle with decisions regarding the best educational placement for their child. Deciding to have your child start school earlier than their peers is one of those decisions. As educators, we share the desire to find the best placement for your child, one that will be challenging, but not frustrating, and exciting, but not overwhelming. Colorado state law makes it possible to accept students for early entry if the child meets the criteria established.

The purpose of the Early Access process is to meet the needs of highly advanced gifted students who require comprehensive academic acceleration. **Only “highly advanced gifted learners”, those in the top 1- 2% of the population, are considered for Early Access to Kindergarten or first grade.** These students exceed their peers in all areas of academic achievement, reasoning ability, performance, and motivation. **Early Access is not recommended for the majority of four and five year old gifted children**, most of whom benefit from differentiated programming for their strengths in their assigned grade level. It is important to also highlight that Early Access is not designed for students whose birthdays miss the cut off date for enrollment, even though the student may show readiness for Kindergarten.

The table below represents skills often observed in highly advanced gifted children:

Early Access to Kindergarten:	Early Access to First Grade:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading words longer than three letters independently, potentially reading sentences or short books• Writing to communicate independently (more than their own name)• Counting to at least 100 or beyond, understands patterns in counting• Solve simple addition and subtraction tasks independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading and comprehending chapter books independently• Independently writing own stories that include multiple sentences or paragraphs• Counting indefinitely and understanding patterns• Able to solve multi-digit addition and subtraction problems. Understands multiplication and division conceptually

Parents know their children best and parental observations are very helpful to this process. If you would like to pursue Early Access, please contact Consuelo Moreno moreno_consuelo@svvsd.org for the application and portfolio. Portfolios will be available to pick up from Gifted and Talented Services at Student Services, 830 S. Lincoln, Longmont on or after **March 2nd**. Please complete the required documents and submit it to the district GT Department by **Tuesday, March 31st**. The screening questions and feedback forms will be reviewed by a team trained in gifted identification. If your child is a possible candidate for Early Access, additional assessments and observations will be gathered before a final decision is made.

Thank you for partnering with us to seek the appropriate educational placement for your child. Please feel free to let us know if you have any questions regarding the process.

Gifted and Talented Services
St. Vrain Valley Schools
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Frequently Asked Questions: Early Access to Kindergarten or First Grade

- **What is Early Access?**

Early Access is a process designed to meet the needs of “highly advanced gifted children” who are academically, socially, and emotionally in need of an acceleration. The process requires a portfolio, cognitive testing, and achievement testing. Students who qualify score in the 97th percentile or above in all areas. **This process is not recommended for the majority of gifted students or students that miss the enrollment cut off.** The process is highly selective and rigorous.

- **What is the definition of a “Highly Advanced Gifted Child”?**

Children identified as highly advanced gifted comprise **the top one to two percent of the student population**. They exhibit exceptional ability or potential when compared to same-age children.

The table below represents skills appropriate for these highly advanced gifted children:

Early Access to Kindergarten:	Early Access to First Grade:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading words longer than three letters independently, potentially reading sentences or short books• Writing to communicate independently (more than their own name)• Counting to at least 100 or beyond, understands patterns in counting• Solve simple addition and subtraction tasks independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading and comprehending simple chapter books independently• Independently writing own stories that include multiple sentences or paragraphs• Counting indefinitely and understanding patterns• Able to solve multi-digit addition and subtraction problems. Understands multiplication and division conceptually

- **What are the age requirements?**

Early Access Kindergarten students need to be 4 by October 1st of the Kindergarten year
Early Access first grade students need to be 5 by October 1st of the first grade year.

- **My child missed the cut off date for Kindergarten. Should we follow the Early Access process?**

This may not be the right fit for your child. The Early Access process is a grade level acceleration protocol. It is designed to support highly advanced gifted children. This process is not designed for students whose birthdays fall after the October 1st date for enrollment even if they show strong school readiness.

- **What is the process?**

Each year, Gifted Services offers an informational meeting in January. Parents are encouraged to attend to determine if Early Access is a good fit for their child. If parents determine that the Early Access process should be followed, they need to contact Gifted Services for an application and portfolio checklist. Portfolios are due by March 31st. Portfolios are reviewed and students who demonstrate indicators of giftedness are scheduled for testing. The testing includes both achievement and cognitive ability tests. Testing takes place over several sessions during April and/or May. Results will be communicated to parents before the end of June.

- **What procedure should I follow for student enrollment if I need to register my child before the results of the Early Access process are available?**

Students accepted for Early Access are guaranteed enrollment into their neighborhood schools. Families who wish to participate in the Open Enrollment (OE) process, may apply for a kindergarten OE slot during the OE application window. If a student is accepted through Early Access into a regular SVVSD school, they will be promoted to the appropriate grade level at the school. Charter schools will follow this process on a space-available basis. It is advisable, when planning to attend a Charter school, to save two spots (grade level by age and Early Access grade level). Once the decision about Early Access eligibility is determined, one of the reserved positions will be eliminated.

- **What curriculum will my child receive if they are admitted through the Early Access process?**

Students who are granted Early Access will be given the same curricular options as other students in their grade and differentiation strategies appropriate to their needs. In addition, Early Access student's progress will be evaluated throughout their first year and an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) will be developed to document curriculum differentiation in the student's areas of strength.

EARLY ACCESS into Kindergarten or First Grade for Young Highly Advanced Gifted Children

