

Decision Strategies for Early Entrance to Kindergarten

2014 Minnesota Assessment Conference

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Every child deserves a high-quality public education.

That belief was honored as Governor Dayton and the 2013 Legislature invested \$134 million to help Minnesota school districts provide optional, full-day kindergarten to every student, free of charge.



Kindergarten Entrance Requirements

- **Age five as of September 1** of the current year
 - Minnesota Statutes section 120A.20, Subd. 1
- **Full immunizations**
 - Minnesota Statutes section 121A.15
- **Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening**
 - Minnesota Statutes section 121A.17-121A.19
 - Target age – three-years-old
 - If not screened, within 30 days of kindergarten entry

Full-day Kindergarten

Effective July 1, 2014

A pupil must be enrolled in a **free, all-day program** that is **available to all kindergarten students** at the pupil's school, and the annual calendar for the kindergarten program must include at least **850 hours of instruction.**

Early Entrance into Kindergarten

[Minn. Stat. 124D.02](#)

Effective July 1, 2013

Requires board-adopted policies for early admission to kindergarten be based on a comprehensive evaluation to determine the child's ability to meet kindergarten expectations *and progress* to first grade in subsequent year.

Early Entrance into Kindergarten

[Minn. Stat. 124D.02](#)

Effective July 1, 2013

- **Must be available to parents in an accessible format**
- **Subject to MDE review**
- **Charter schools must post policy on their website**
- **The evaluation is subject to section [127A.41](#)**

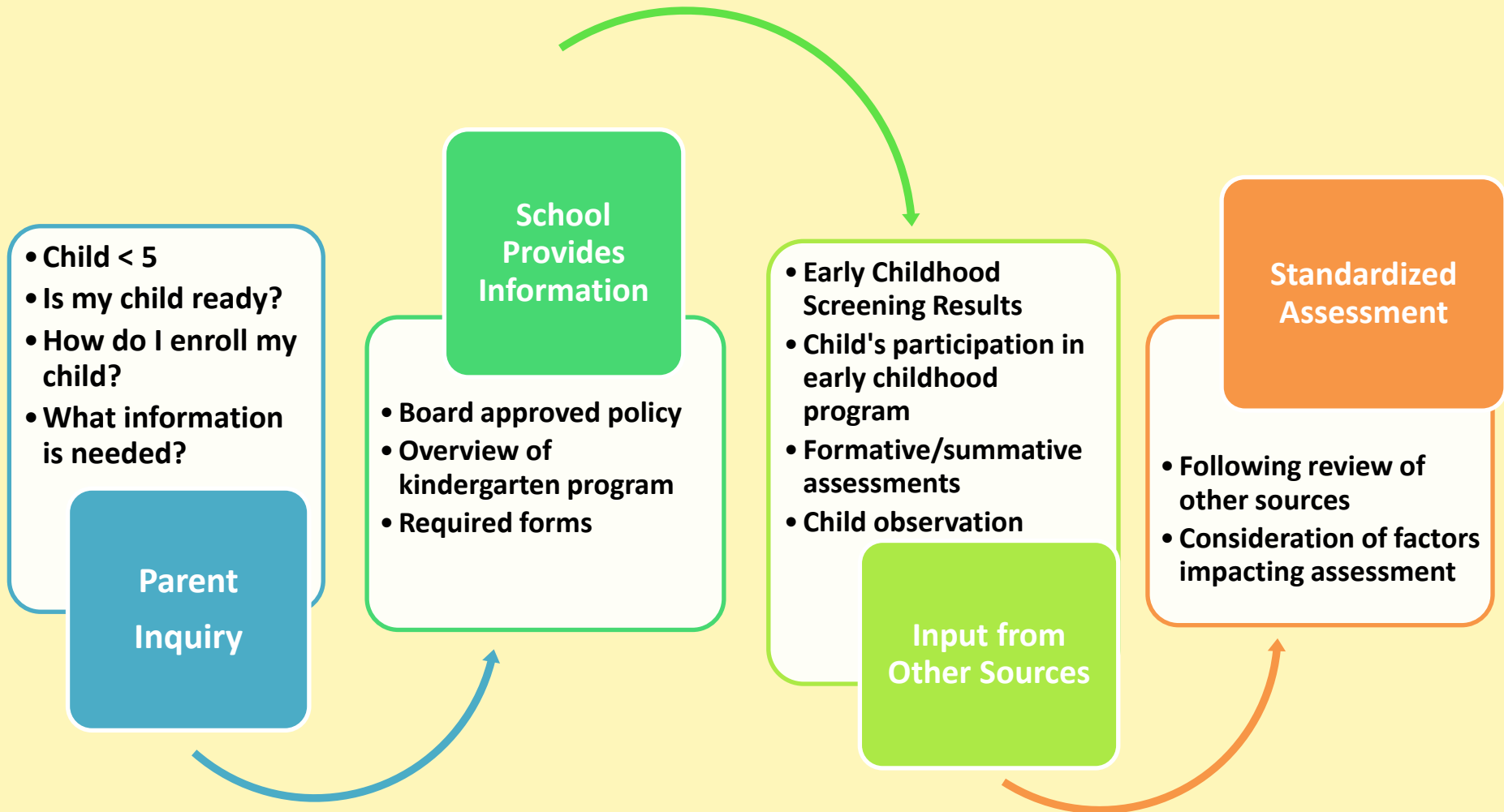
Data Sources about a Child's Knowledge, Skills and Abilities



Board Approved Entrance Policy

- **Comprehensive evaluation** in cognitive, social, and emotional developmental.
- Meet kindergarten grade expectations and **progress to first grade** in the subsequent year
- Use **valid and reliable** instrumentation, and be aligned with kindergarten expectation.
- **Parent report and teacher observations** of the child's knowledge, skills, and abilities are included .

Sample Early Entrance Process



Comprehensive Evaluation Guidance

- Assessment instrument is fair, reliable and based on current research
- Assessment instrument can be used with children aged three to six
- Assessment occurs in a natural setting
- consideration
- Assessment team is aware of unique circumstances

Lake Woebegone doesn't exist...

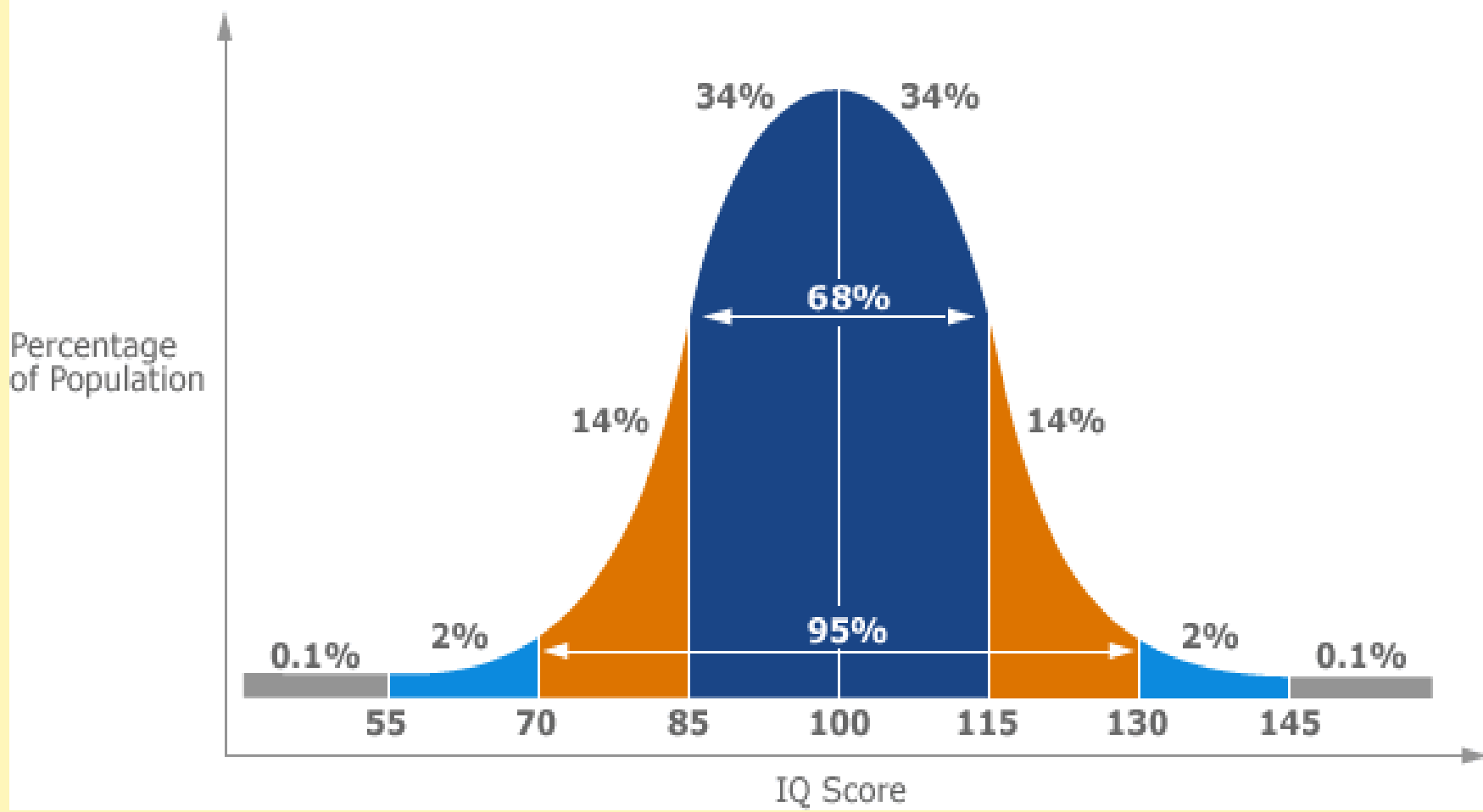
“Where all the women are strong, all the men are good looking, and all the children are above average...”



Garrison Keillor

In the real world...

IQ Score Distribution



Gifted and Talented Students Programs

Minn. Stat. 120B.15

School districts must adopt procedures for the academic acceleration of gifted and talented students. These procedures must include how the district will:

- (1) assess a student's readiness and motivation for acceleration; and
- (2) match the level, complexity, and pace of the curriculum to a student to achieve the best type of academic acceleration for that student.

Gifted And Talented Students Programs

Minn. Stat. 120B.15

- d) School districts must adopt procedures consistent with section [124D.02](#), subdivision 1, for early admission to kindergarten or first grade of gifted and talented learners. The procedures must be sensitive to underrepresented groups.

Effective Policies:

- **Child centered**
- **Equitable**
- **Transparent**
- **Available**



Guidelines for Effective Early Entrance Policy

- **Types of acceleration are specific**
- **Process is clearly defined**
- **Decisions are team based**
- **Child is supported during transition**

Effective policies guide short and long term administrative matters.



Effective policies prepare for unintended consequences.

- **Appeals process available?**
- **Data collection system is in place?**
- **Review and evaluation timeline?**

Parents may be able to provide valuable information.



Parents may observe some of these indicators of ability, achievement, aptitude:

- Child understands and uses words better than other children his/her age.
- Child is curious about many things and asks questions often.
- Child is very good at working puzzles or solving problems.
- Child has a great sense of humor and understands jokes more than other children his/her age.
- Child has a good memory and remembers details of conversations or stories.
- Child is interested in difficult concepts such as time and space.

1 of 5

Parents may observe some of the following:

- Child concentrates on certain activities much longer than other children his/her age.
- Child reads (and understands text) in picture books or chapter books.
- Child figures out math-related problems better than other children his/her age.

2 of 5

Parents may observe some of the following school and academic indicators:

- Child enjoys learning new information or skills;
- Child anticipates in community-sponsored activities such as sports, dance, gymnastics, library and museum programs;
- Child believes he/she is capable of succeeding at new tasks.

3 of 5

Special considerations:

- Child will be accelerated into sibling's grade level
- Excessive pre-school absence due to illness or family issues
- Family support during the transition

4 of 5

Some ethical considerations...

- **Above all, do no harm**
 - **We shall not participate in practices that discriminate against children by denying benefits, giving special advantages, or excluding them from programs...**
 - **We shall involve all those with relevant knowledge of the child...**
 - **We shall use appropriate assessment systems which include multiple sources of information...**

Visit the MDE website:

<http://education.state.mn.us/mde/index.html>

Visit the Prek-Grade 3 Wiki:

<http://mnprek-3.wikidot.com/kindergarten>

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