Kindergarten Registration

Options For Parents of Children That Turn Four Years Old After The Start of The School Year But On Or Before December 31 of That Same Academic Year

If your child will not be four years of age by the start of Junior Kindergarten, but will turn four years of age on, or, before December 31 of that same year, you, as the parent, or guardian, have two options: 1) Register your child for Junior Kindergarten if you believe your child is ready, or, 2) If you have any concerns about your child’s preparedness - wait, and register your child the following year into Junior Kindergarten, as is your right, when the child will be four years of age at the start of school. Ultimately, this is a parent or guardian’s decision to make, as it is the parent, or guardian that knows what is in the child’s best interest.

What provides a parent or guardian with the authority to exercise this option is The Education Act itself. Section 19, sub-section 21, sub-sub section 1 speaks to the mandatory age of enrollment into Grade 1, which is six years old at the start of the school year (the Kindergarten program is not captured within the Education Act as it is not mandatory). If the child is not yet six, but will turn six years of age on, or, before December 31 of that same year, then the parent decides whether to enroll the child that year into Grade 1, or, wait, and register the child into Grade 1 the following year, at which point the child will be six years of age at the start of the school year. While the Education Act does not mention the Kindergarten program, the same logic applies to JK admissions in order to harmonize with the mandatory age of admission rules for Grade 1, merely two years earlier.

Early enrollment may have implications over a child’s academic career for teachers, parents, and most importantly the child. Teachers of students that were enrolled into school early may spend more time bringing the child along to meet ministerial expectations, and consequently, other students in the same class, will receive proportionately less of that teacher’s individual time. If teachers are unable to assist the child in meeting ministerial expectations within normal parameters, then additional time and effort will be required by the child, parents, and possibly tutors, to bring the child to expectation. Finally, this can create anxiety within a child, as they sometimes perceive they are not “keeping-up” with their peers, who are by definition substantially older, potentially more mature, and capable of meeting grade level expectations (in the most extreme case, the oldest child in the class, born on January 1, could be 364 days or almost 1 full year older than the youngest, a child born on December 31).

My recommendation is to make this information more widely known to the parents at the outset of kinder registration, and I would ask the Committee to adopt the recommendation to ensure a fully informed parent community.

If you have any issues, or concerns surrounding Kindergarten enrollment contact: TCDSB Admissions at 416-222-8282 EXT 5320, or the regional branch of the Ministry of Education at 416-212-0954.