

## Topic

### Age of Beginners

#### Questions often received:

1. What is the age of beginners in PA?

According to 22 PA Code § 11.15 Admission of beginners: the board of school directors shall establish the district's minimum entry age for beginners, which may not be less than a chronological age of 5 years and 7 months before September 1, nor more than 6 years, no months, before the first day of the school term of the district.

2. Is the LEA required to enroll children in kindergarten after a certain period of time from the start of school date?

The LEA must have a policy (board approved) that stipulates the age in which a child is eligible to enroll in kindergarten. This policy must also include a date for enrollment cutoff. (e.g. age of five by September 25).

3. May a beginner be refused acceptance or be retained in a public school?

According to 24 PS 13-1304 (b): the board of school directors may refuse to accept or retain beginners who have not attained a mental age of five years, as determined by the supervisor of special education or a properly certificated public school psychologist in accordance with standards prescribed by the State Board of Education.

4. Is there a difference between the age of beginners and admission to kindergarten?

According to 24 PS § 13-1304 (c) the term "beginners," as used in this section, shall mean any child that should enter the lowest grade of the primary school or the lowest primary class above the kindergarten level. Admission to kindergarten according to 22 PA Code § 11.14, when kindergarten is provided, the board of school directors shall establish the district's minimum entry age to kindergarten. The minimum entry age to kindergarten may not be less than 4 years, no months, before the first day of the school term. The district's maximum entry age to kindergarten must be less than the district's entry age for beginners.

## Statutes, Regulations, and Code References

### 24 PS § 13-1304. Admission of beginners

(a) School districts shall admit beginners to the public schools during at least the first two weeks of the annual school term in districts operating on an annual promotion basis and during the first two weeks of either the first or the second semester of the school term in districts operating on a semi-annual promotion basis; thereafter, the admission of beginners shall be at the discretion of each school district.

(b) Admission shall be limited to beginners who have attained the age of five years and seven months before the first day of September if they are to be admitted in the fall, and to those who have attained the age of five years and seven months before the first day of February if they are to be admitted at the beginning of the second semester. The board of school directors of any school district may admit beginners who are less than five years and seven months of age, in accordance with standards prescribed by the State Board of Education. The board of school directors may refuse to accept or retain beginners who have not attained a mental age of five years, as determined by the supervisor of special education or a properly certificated public school psychologist in accordance with standards prescribed by the State Board of Education.

(c) The term “beginners,” as used in this section, shall mean any child that should enter the lowest grade of the primary school or the lowest primary class above the kindergarten level.

### 22 PA Code § 11.14. Admission to kindergarten when provided.

When kindergarten is provided, the board of school directors shall establish the district’s minimum entry age to kindergarten. The minimum entry age to kindergarten may not be less than 4 years, no months, before the first day of the school term. The district’s maximum entry age to kindergarten must be less than the district’s entry age for beginners.

22 PA Code § 11.15. Admission of beginners. The board of school directors shall establish the district’s minimum entry age for beginners, which may not be less than a chronological age of 5 years and 7 months before September 1, nor more than 6 years, no months, before the first day of the school term of the district. The board of school directors shall permit a child of beginners’ age to attend the district’s first grade and may not require the child to attend kindergarten, pre-first grade, transitional class or other grade or class that is not regular first grade without parental consent.

22 PA Code § 11.16. Early admission of beginners. The board of school directors of a school district may, upon parental request and when recommended by a public school psychologist and approved by the district superintendent of schools, admit as a beginner a child with a chronological age of 5 years and who has demonstrated readiness for entry as of the first day of the district’s school term. A board of school directors is not required to admit a child as a beginner whose chronological age is less than the district’s established admission age for beginners.