



Bethel Public School Waiver Process: Requesting an Assessment for a Child Who Does Not Meet the Connecticut Age Requirement for Entry Into Kindergarten

In accordance with Section I of PA 23-208, which amends Section 10-15c of the Connecticut General Statutes effective July 1, 2024, public schools shall:

...be open to all children five years of age and over who reach age five on or before the first day of September of any school year, and each such child shall have, and shall be so advised by the appropriate school authorities, an equal opportunity to participate in the activities, programs and courses of study offered in such public schools, at such time as the child becomes eligible to participate in such activities, programs and courses of study, without discrimination on account of race, as defined in section 46a-51, color, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability; provided a child who has not reached the age of five on or before the first day of September of the school year may be admitted (1) upon a written request by the parent or guardian of such child to the principal of the school in which such child would be enrolled, and (2) following an assessment of such child, conducted by such principal and an appropriate certified staff member of the school, to ensure that admitting such child is developmentally appropriate.

In PA 23-208, 1(a) the legislature established September 1 as the new cutoff birthdate for children seeking admission to kindergarten beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, and established an assessment process that constitutes the **only** exception to the September 1 cutoff date.

Why did the date change?

The change in the cutoff date was due to a significant amount of research to support the notion that children who enter kindergarten at the age of 5 have higher academic outcomes, are less likely to be retained or drop out of school and have lower incidences of referrals to special education. Connecticut was one of the last few states to change the cut off date from January to September.

What is the Bethel Public Schools waiver and assessment process?

The Bethel Public Schools will assess children whose families are seeking a waiver to have their child enter kindergarten earlier than the legislative date. These assessments will take place between the months of June through August and dates will be communicated to families in advance. We will be implementing a holistic assessment, which includes input from families and Preschool teachers.

Written requests for a waiver should be emailed to:

Michelle Rutledge, Director of Teaching and Learning at rutledgem@bethel.k12.ct.us & Laurel McCollam, Registrar at mccollaml@bethel.k12.ct.us.

The Bethel Public Schools assessment comprises 4 domains which include cognitive, social emotional, physical development/health, and academic. A written determination of whether a child will be able to attend the kindergarten program will be communicated to the parent/guardian as soon as possible, or within one week after the assessment is administered.

The assessment process will reflect the [Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards](#) or the skills we expect students to have when entering Kindergarten. The assessment process is as follows:

Phase 1

Social-Emotional:

- A behavioral and social emotional wellness questionnaire for parent/guardian and preschool teacher with a follow up interview by the Bethel Public School staff if further information is needed.
- Classroom visit to our preschool program (Circle of Friends) for the purpose of observation of school readiness skills.

Physical Development & Health:

- The parent questionnaire and teacher questionnaire (noted above) will also include questions specific to physical development.
- An observation will be conducted during our preschool classroom visit.

Academic:

- A numeracy and literacy screening will be administered by the Bethel Public School staff to assess academic readiness.

If there is a question regarding a child's readiness skills, we would move to phase 2 to gather more information.

Phase II

Cognitive:

The KABC-II NU abbreviated battery (Nonverbal Index and Expressive Vocabulary subtest) will be administered by the Bethel Public Schools staff.

Academic:

The Test of Early Math Ability (TEMA-3) and/or the Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA-4) will be administered by the Bethel Public School staff for further academic information.

Additional Resources:

[CT-DOTS](#)

[Hello Kindergarten-English](#)

[Hello Kindergarten-Spanish](#)

[CT Kindergarten Fall Entrance Inventory](#)

[211 Childcare](#)