



Position Statement on Kindergarten Entry Date

In response to the changes in our country's expectations of children for kindergarten, Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children (MiAEC) believes that Michigan's kindergarten entry age should be five on or before September 1.

MiAEC believes there is no one right date for determining kindergarten eligibility. Any entry date is arbitrary and will result in a group of children whose birth dates span twelve months, as much as 20% of a five-year-old's lifespan. In addition, young children come to school with diverse abilities, interests, skills and prior experiences. Therefore, it is not possible to set one date for eligibility that will equalize all children's chances for success. Although the choice of a date may be arbitrary, it is the only fair, legal and ethical criterion to use. MiAEC believes it is the responsibility of schools to meet the needs of all children, regardless of age, as they enter kindergarten.

Michigan has adopted the National Common Core Standards which are designed for children who are 5 when they begin kindergarten, and who are in full-day kindergarten programs. Michigan's children, throughout their school years, will be assessed on these standards.

Full-day, compulsory kindergarten programs are the most effective intervention for children who have developmental delays and will best prepare all children for future success in school.¹

A kindergarten entry date of September 1 will not solve teachers' concerns about the range of development in their classrooms. There is always a group of children born in the last three months of any twelve-month period, so there is always a group of children who are the youngest regardless of the entry date. Also, a typical class of kindergarten children exhibits at least a two-year range in skills because children grow and develop at different rates. However, compulsory, full-day attendance reduces the age and developmental span within a classroom and provides the teacher with additional time to address the needs of all children.

To help Michigan's children meet the National Common Core Standards, MiAEC believes that:

- Michigan's kindergarten entry age should be five on or before September 1.
- Michigan's kindergarten programs should be full-day and compulsory.

1. School Readiness, Full-Day Kindergarten, and Student Achievement: An Empirical Investigation, RAND Corporation, 2006

Key Messages

- Age is the only fair criterion.
- Some children will always be the youngest.
- Schools must be ready for all children.
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