

For kindergartners

Private schools stick to admission policy

By BARBARA UNDERWOOD
Several private schools in the area are as stringent in their age policies as the public schools which have an age 5-before-Dec. 1 policy for kindergarten entrance.

Theodore Geheb, principal of Our Shepherd Lutheran School in Birmingham, said he adheres to the Dec. 1 cutoff date for kindergarten admission set by the public schools.

He said no exceptions have been made in the three years he has been at the school.

Geheb sympathized with parents whose children are denied admission when their birthdays are just days past the cutoff date.

run that extra year in social maturity will surpass the mental achievement gains that would come from the year in school," Geheb added.

Kindergarten cost at Our Shepherd is \$290 yearly for families who are non-members of the church. The cost does not include transportation or lunch.

Kindergarten at the Academy of the Sacred Heart is a full-day program and costs \$1,395 per year including lunch but not transportation.

Exceptions can be made to the academy's Dec. 1 cutoff date for admissions but "it hasn't happened yet," according to Valerie Alos, head of the primary school.

John P. Denis, headmaster of Brookside School, Cranbrook, said children are accepted for junior kindergarten who are four years old on or before Sept. 1 and for kindergarten if they are five on or before the same date.

The cutoff date is not inflexible and exceptions are made, Denis said, although they are rare.

"If a child has been in another school and we get a strong recommendation from that school we would talk with the family and interview the child," Denis said.

Children with late fall birthdays would be among the youngest to be considered, however, he added.

Brookside tuition is \$900 for both junior kindergarten and kindergarten and does not include lunch or transportation. Both are half-day programs.

Roemer City and Country School in Bloomfield Hills admits kindergartners three and four years old to nursery school and those from four to six to kindergarten.

EACH CHILD is placed where he "feels comfortable" based on his response during a personal interview, interviews with parents and the child's reaction to a classroom visit.

Both programs are full-day including lunch for \$1,980. Transportation is an additional \$250 if desired.

Echo Park School in Bloomfield Hills will take children in the kindergarten program who will be five years old by Feb. 1.

(Second in a series)

A half-day program costs \$820 per year and does not include lunch or transportation. A full-day program for \$1,800 includes lunch but not transportation.

The children are observed during the year and given readiness tests at the end of the year, according to Nancy Kern, director.

WRITTEN RECOMMENDATIONS are provided for each child regarding his readiness for the next stage of schooling, she said.

None of the 28 public school districts in Oakland County have an early admission program for students who just miss the Dec. 1 cutoff date.

The school districts of Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, West Bloomfield, Troy and Southfield make no exceptions to the age requirement for kindergarten admission but all make an adjustment if a child enters at the prescribed age and proves ready for first grade work.

West Bloomfield kindergartners are re-evaluated within 30 days after school starts if they appear to be of superior ability, according to Dr. Roger Garvelink, assistant superintendent for instruction.

"I am not aware of anyone this year presently under consideration for promotion into first grade under those guidelines," Garvelink said.

EACH CASE is an individual matter for the building principal to decide in the Birmingham School District, Dr. Frank Goetz, director of curriculum, explained.

Children are tested before school starts when possible with decisions based on "what is best for the child," Goetz said.

Children usually are placed in kindergarten briefly to see what the kindergarten teacher recommends, Goetz added.

The Troy Schools follow a procedure established two years ago, according to Lawrence Hamilton, assistant superintendent for elementary education.

At the instigation of either party, the teacher and parents confer after which the reading teacher administers a variety of reading readiness tests to determine intellectual potential and the school psychologist determines the child's emotional and social readiness for first grade.

THEN THE parents, principal and teacher meet and "if all indications are that the child can function at the first grade level we do not hesitate to place him there," Hamilton said.

"We normally prefer a couple month's trial in kindergarten," he added.

Parents in the Bloomfield Hills School District can appeal their request for advancement of a child through a number of administrators with the board of education

acting as the court of last resort. "Ninety-nine percent of cases are taken care of at the building level," according to Dr. Ted Cunio, director of elementary education.

The procedure starts at the building level where parents fill out a form, the principal requires an educational evaluation and the school psychiatrist sees the child.

WITHIN FIVE weeks, the principal must make his recommendation on the child's placement. If the parents object to the recommendation, they can appeal to Cunio who can overrule the building principal.

If Cunio concurs with the principal's recommendation, the parents can appeal to the superintendent who can overrule Cunio.

If the parents object to the superintendent's recommendation they can make a final appeal to the board of education.

Kindergarten attendance is not required by state law and occasionally children enter the public schools who have had no kindergarten experience.

To be eligible for first grade under those circumstances, a child must be six years old on or before Dec. 1 and in most cases they are admitted directly to first grade.

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Story hours begin

The Bloomfield Township Public Library's "Storyhour" Program for preschool youngsters has opened its fall season. The program, held at the library every Tuesday and Thursday at 10:30 a.m., runs through Nov. 14.

"Satellite Storyhours," conducted in cooperation with the Bloomfield Hills Recreation Department, also will be offered at the Traub and Booth elementary schools. Storyhours at the elementary schools will be at 10:45 a.m. every Wednesday from Sept. 25 through Nov. 13.

Parents residing in the library's service area may register their youngsters for this free program at the library. The program is designed for children between the ages of three and five.

The program, which is starting its ninth year, "is one of the most popular activities for youngsters," said Patricia Herrington, head of the library's Youth Room.

"Along with the stories, we have games and songs, including finger plays, which help bring out individual involvement. Then, too, Storyhour provides an excellent opportunity for the youngsters to become familiar with the library and with the librarians," Miss Herrington added.

The storytellers at the library, all staff members, include Caroline Nagegast, Carol Starzmann and A. Michael Deller, coordinator of community relations.

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