What to Expect on the ECAA ONE-TO-ONE
Candidates for Pre-K to Grade 4

The only authorized guide produced by ERB

https://www.eaatest.org
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Greetings!

Thank you for obtaining a copy of What to Expect on the ECAA one-to-one. You are most likely applying your student to one or more of the independent schools that utilize the ECAA one-to-one as an admission assessment. It is our goal that this guidebook helps to shed some light on what you can expect from the ECAA one-to-one testing experience. We hope that it also provides you with some best practices in terms of preparation for the days that lead up to the assessment.

We share the common goal of ensuring that your child performs his/her very best. Please read the information on the pages that follow and don’t hesitate to contact ERB directly if you have additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Antoinette DeLuca, Psy.D.  
Executive Director, ECAA  
Educational Records Bureau

Dr. David Clune, Ph.D.  
President  
Educational Records Bureau
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Background

ERB is a not-for-profit educational resources membership association of independent, public, faith-based, and boarding schools providing admission, achievement and support services for Pre-K through Grade 12. For over 80 years, and nearly 2,000 member schools and districts, ERB has provided quality services to schools around the world.

In New York City, ERB has served as the testing agency for the Independent Schools Admission Association of Greater New York (ISAAGNY) since 1966. The program allows independent schools in the association to eliminate repetitive admission testing and thus minimize the strain on children and parents. Using assessments from its Early Childhood Admission Assessment program (ECAA) and Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE), ERB meets the testing needs of applicants to ISAAGNY member schools.

Schools participating in the program consider testing to be only one aspect of the admission process; considerable weight is also given to school records and personal interviews. Most parents interested in independent school admission for their son or daughter submit an application to more than one school.

Testing for all ages is conducted year-round by appointment at the ERB office and in other locations throughout New York City, both during the week and on weekends. Testing is also available in more than 70 participating Early Childhood Schools for children attending those schools.
What Is Standardized Testing and Why Use It?

Standardized tests are designed to give objective information to help parents and schools better understand students’ abilities and acquired skills and knowledge. They are administered under controlled conditions. While standardized tests provide insight into a child’s performance, no single test yields infallible information.

Since no single testing can explain fully something as complex as a child’s ability to learn, in interpreting test results, it is therefore essential to make allowance for 1) the test’s limitations and 2) the individual’s variability.

Standardized tests can help in:

- Evaluating academic aptitude and academic achievements of individual pupils
- Assessing class groups, analyzing areas of challenge so that proper individualized educational plans can be applied
- Helping pupils to better understand themselves
- Determining a school’s effectiveness in fostering its students’ academic development
- Measuring the skills of applicants as a partial basis for admission and scholarship consideration
What to Expect on the ECAA One-to-One

Description of the ECAA One-to-One

ERB’s Early Childhood Admission Assessment (ECAA) program offers assessments for students applying to Pre-K through Grade 4. The assessments are designed to measure the abilities of children. Additionally, applicants to Grades 3 and 4 also partake in an assessment that measures Reading Comprehension.

The assessments for Pre-K through Grade 4 are administered individually and yield useful information about a student’s current level of development. The assessments do not predict long-range school success. As mentioned above, for children in Grades 3 and 4, a Reading Comprehension assessment is also administered. The Reading Comprehension assessment is given in a small group setting.

The ECAA (ERB adapted WPPSI-III) for application to grades Pre-K–1 features eight unique subtests. Four of these subtests explore verbal skills and four of these subtests measure non-verbal abilities. Overall, the scores on these subtests may be combined to yield one full scale composite score. The full scale composite score is the sum of the student’s attained scaled scores in both the verbal and non-verbal domains.

The ECAA (ERB adapted WISC-IV) for application to Grade 2 features 10 unique subtests. Five of these subtests explore verbal skills and five of these subtests measure non-verbal abilities. Overall, the scores on these subtests may be combined to yield one full scale composite score.

The ECAA (ERB adapted WISC-IV & CTP – Reading Comprehension) for application to Grades 3-4 features 10 unique subtests from the WISC-IV (as stated above) as well as a Reading Comprehension assessment.
Overview of the ECAA One-to-One

The individually administered ECAA One-to-One is scored on a developmental scale, and standardized using a national population. Each child is compared with children of his or her age in the general population.

Consequently, there is absolutely no advantage to waiting until a child is older inasmuch as the comparison is always with children of the same age. If you wait until your child is a few months older (and presumably wiser) so is any other child who has also made strides during this time. Remember, the older you are, the more that is expected!

Entering Grades Pre-K-1

- Vocabulary
- Similarities
- Word Reasoning
- Comprehension

Verbal

- Block Design
- Matrix Reasoning
- Coding
- Picture Concepts

Non-Verbal

Full Scale
Overview of the ECAA ONE-TO-ONE

Entering Grades 2-4

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| Picture Concepts Block Design Matrix Reasoning Coding Picture Completion |

Entering Grades 3 and 4

Above Subtests (60-90 Minutes) + Reading Comprehension (40 Minutes)
Description of the ECAA one-to-one Subtests (Grades Pre-K–1)

In this section, you will find descriptions of the ECAA one-to-one subtests (adapted WPPSI-III) and item examples.

**Verbal**

**Vocabulary**

Designed to assess a child’s word knowledge and verbal concept formation. Also designed to measure a child’s fund of knowledge, learning ability, long-term memory, and degree of language development.

Other abilities that may be utilized include auditory perception and comprehension, verbal conceptualization, abstract thinking, efficient retrieval processes, and verbal expression.

**Q:** What is a bed?
**A:** Something you sleep on.

**Similarities**

Designed to measure verbal reasoning and concept formation. Also involves auditory comprehension, memory, distinguishing non-essential and essential features, and verbal expression.

Administration allows comparison between abstract conceptual reasoning and the ability to express those abilities verbally. Similarities can be thought of as a verbal analog to Picture Concepts (discussed later in this section).

**Q:** Finish what I say. Flowers and Trees are both ______.
**A:** Plants
Description of the ECAA ONE-TO-ONE Subtests
(Entering Grades Pre-K–1)

Verbal (continued)

Word Reasoning
The child is read an increasingly specific series of one to three clues and identifies the common object or concept being described. This subtest is designed to measure fluid reasoning (inductive reasoning) ability.

Skills that contribute to success include verbal comprehension, analogical and general reasoning ability, the ability to integrate and synthesize different types of information, verbal abstraction, domain knowledge, working memory, retrieval efficiency, expressive language, and ability to generate alternative concepts.

Tell me what I’m thinking of.
Q-I. This is something people wear...
Q-II. And it helps them tell time.
A: A watch.

Comprehension
Designed to assess abstract and concrete verbal reasoning and conceptualization, the ability to evaluate and utilize past experiences, verbal comprehension and expression, and the ability to demonstrate practical information.

Also involves knowledge of conventional standards of behavior, social judgment and maturity, and common sense.

Q: What is money used for?
General Concept: To purchase things or services.
Description of the ECAA ONE-TO-ONE Subtests
(Entering Grades Pre-K–1)

Non-Verbal

**Picture Concepts**
The child is presented with two or three rows of pictures and chooses one picture from each row to form a group with a common organizational concept.

This subtest is designed to measure non-verbal fluid reasoning ability and abstract categorical reasoning with visual stimuli.

**Coding**
Using a key, the child copies symbols into simple geometric shapes. This subtest is designed to measure visual-motor processing speed.

Also involves short-term memory, learning ability, visual perception, visual-motor coordination, visual scanning ability, cognitive flexibility, attention, and visual and sequential processing.
Description of the ECAA One-to-One Subtests
(Entering Grades Pre-K–1)

Non-Verbal (continued)

**Block Design**
In this example, the child is presented with blocks containing two solid white sides, two solid green sides, and two green and white 45 degree triangles per block. The child is presented with an image and asked to construct the image using a combination of blocks. Designed to measure the ability to analyze and synthesize abstract visual stimuli and non-verbal concept formation.

Also involves visual perception and organization, visual-motor coordination, spatial visualization, learning, motor dexterity, executive coordination of multiple skills, and the ability to separate figure and ground in visual stimuli.

**Matrix Reasoning**
The child looks at an incomplete matrix and selects the missing section from four or five response options. This subtest is designed to assess non-verbal fluid reasoning ability.

Also reflects visual information processing, continuous and discrete pattern completion, classification, analogical reasoning, non-verbal AND/OR verbal abstract and concrete reasoning abilities and concept formation, and serial reasoning.
Description of the ECAA One-to-One Subtests
(Entering Grades 2–4)

Seven of the eight subtest concepts presented for entering Grades Pre-K–1 are also administered to students taking the ECAA One-to-One for entering Grades 2-4. Word Reasoning is not offered in the assessment for Grades 2-4. Instead, the following 3 subtests are included for a total of 10 subtests (all subtests listed on page 10):

**Arithmetic (only administered to children in Grades 2–4)**

The child is presented with a series of arithmetic word problems to be solved mentally, without the use of paper or pencil, and respond verbally within a time limit. This subtest is designed to measure working memory, or the ability to retain, retrieve, and manipulate information in one's mind.

**Q:** If you have three books and give one away, how many books do you have left?

**A:** Two.

**Information (only administered to children in Grades 2–4)**

The child is asked to respond verbally to a series of questions about factual information. This subtest is designed to measure general knowledge about common events, objects, places and people.

**Q:** What is the shape of a ball?

**A:** Round; Circle; Circular; etc.

**Picture Completion (only administered to children in Grades 2–4)**

The child reviews a picture and then points to or names the important parts that is missing from the picture. This subtest is designed to measure visual-spatial reasoning and part vs. whole perceptional abilities.

I am going to show you some pictures in which there is some important part missing. Look at each picture and tell me what is missing.
Description of the Reading Comprehension Assessment (CTP-4)  
(Additional Measure for Entering Grades 3 and 4)

The Comprehensive Testing Program (CTP-4) is a battery of achievement tests, each of which measures what the student has learned in a particular area of instruction. Reading Comprehension, one of the tests comprising the battery, is a multiple choice test that measures students’ ability to understand and interpret written text. The Reading Comprehension assessment asks students to interpret and analyze a range of text, both fiction and non-fiction.

This Reading Comprehension assessment is an additional measure administered to students applying for entry to Grades 3 and 4. Students applying for entry to Grades 3 and 4 also take the one-to-one assessment (ERB adapted WISC-IV).

The following is a list of skills measured by the CTP-4 Reading Comprehension test.

**Vocabulary in Context**
The student will be able to use context clues to determine the meaning of a word or phrase in a text and choose the correct definition or synonym.

**Explicit Information**
The student will be able to:
- Use explicit information to identify the main idea or primary purpose of a text or part of a text
- Identify explicit details from a passage and provide answers to “who,” “what,” “where,” “when,” “why” and “how” questions about the text

**Inference**
The student will be able to:
- Use implicit information from a passage to make inferences about the motives or behaviors of characters
- Use implicit information from a passage to summarize or draw conclusions

**Analysis**
The student will be able to:
- Draw connections between and among various pieces of information in a text
- Synthesize explicit and implicit information to make predictions or draw conclusions about a text
Description of the Reading Comprehension Assessment (CTP-4)

Reading Comprehension Scores

Students’ scores on the Reading Comprehension Assessment (CTP-4) are provided in the form of Percentile Rank and Stanine Classification for both the national and independent school testing population (norms).

Percentile Rank is the percent of students in the norm group that earned scores at or below the examinee’s score. For example, a percentile rank of 63 means that the examinee obtained a score at or above 63% of the students in the norm group; 36% of the norm group obtained a score higher than the examinee’s.

A stanine is a score from 1 to 9, with 5 as the midpoint. Stanines are derived by dividing the entire range of students’ scores into nine segments, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentile Rank</th>
<th>Stanine</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-22</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-39</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>40-59</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>60-76</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-88</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-95</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96-99</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

National Norms reflect scores earned on the assessment by a representative sample of students drawn from public schools. Independent School Norms reflect scores earned by independent students who took the assessment.
Recommended Activities

Both ERB and the participating schools want young children to have a good testing experience. The best approach is to treat the assessment process in a relatively relaxed manner. ERB makes a concerted effort to provide a friendly and comfortable assessment environment.

Ensuring that your child is well-rested on the day of the assessment and that ample time is allowed to arrive on time are good practices to help your child be able to participate in the assessment to the best of his/her ability.

In addition to the above suggestions, we have offered some generally beneficial activities for you to consider to help set your child on a course to becoming a life-long learner.

In General

Both verbal and perceptual skills are the foundation of strong academic performance and your child will benefit from the long-lasting effects of your conscious efforts to create a home environment that encourages and stimulates these skills as they grow and mature.

Providing opportunities for your child to be exposed to a full range of experiences is not only enjoyable for your child and family, but also sets your child on the path to becoming a life-long learner. A trip to a museum (art, science, history,…), for instance, can offer limitless opportunities to stimulate learning processes. Attending an artistic performance with your child introduces him/her to different types of creative expression. In the process, your child will also observe the types of behaviors that are best suited for these settings. By engaging your child in observations and discussions about his/her surroundings, just about any activity, be it a trip to the grocery store, playground, or symphony, can be an opportunity for learning!
Recommended Activities

**Verbal Skills**

Play verbally stimulating guessing games involving everyday activities and concepts. This can include asking your child to explain how two items at the grocery store are alike (Similarities), asking them to tell you what certain words mean (Vocabulary), or even letting them guess what you are thinking about based on clues you provide (Word Reasoning).

Studies have shown that engaging your child in stimulating activities such as these will likely result in improved performance not only on the assessment day, but in educational settings in general. Building verbal skills is an ongoing process that requires continuous stimulation and exposure to new concepts and words to describe them. The more you actively create opportunities for your child to develop these skills throughout his/her daily experiences, the more successful he/she will be when those skills are measured.

**Non-Verbal Skills**

Activities that can provide perceptual skill building include puzzles, games, and visually appealing crafts and projects. Incorporating activities such as these into your child’s everyday experiences will help improve their ability to perceive and manipulate shapes and visual stimuli to solve problems. This can include making images with abstract shapes such as tangrams (Block Design) or discussing concepts such as sequential ordering and identifying patterns using shapes and symbols (Matrix Reasoning). You can also use everyday objects such as sugar packets or napkins at a restaurant to play adding and subtracting games while you wait for your meal to be served.

As with verbal skill building activity, perceptual skill building can have lasting benefits for your child’s educational experience. Improved perceptual abilities can enhance performance in mathematics, science, and creative arts.
Recommended Activities

Cautions Regarding Over-Preparation and the Use of Third Party Test-Prep Materials and Services

Artificially inflating your child’s performance in order to gain admission to your school of choice is a short-term strategy that can result in long-term negative consequences. Ultimately, your child will flourish in a learning environment that is best suited to his/her unique skills and abilities. If children are placed in an educational program that is misaligned with their abilities, they may experience poor academic performance, frustration, reduced self-esteem, and difficulty connecting with their peers.

ERB and our affiliated organizations would like to caution parents considering the use of excessive test preparation activities such as coaching (hiring an individual to “drill” their child in the concepts and skills measured by a specific admission test) or the purchase of third party produced “workbooks” that claim to provide practice items similar to those featured in specific admission assessments. There are a number of potential issues that may cause this activity to be counter-productive in gaining admission to your school of choice.

- Excessive test-prep activities can cause unnecessary anxiety on test day, yielding poor test performance as a result.

- Test-prep materials received from third parties should be critically considered as to the source of supposed expertise regarding test content. What training or background do the individuals providing information or services have regarding test administration, development, and/or interpretation?

- Incorrectly advised test-preparation received from questionable sources may result in lowering overall performance based on preparing for a specific concept or skill incorrectly.
The Assessment Day

Setting the Stage
ECAA administration is the same whether the assessment is administered at the ERB office or at a participating school.

You can begin to set the stage by explaining that he or she will do “special work” with someone like a teacher who is eager to see what students his or her age are able to do. Don’t promise “games,” because this will create unrealistic expectations. Let your child know that you will be in the waiting room with other parents.

If the test is administered in a participating school, a teacher or director will also present the test as enjoyable “special work.” You might reinforce this gently beforehand, if your child raises questions, but be light and casual.

Day of the Assessment
Your child will be greeted and invited to accompany the examiner to a private room while you remain in the waiting room.

The individualized test session is usually about 60 minutes long for Grades Pre-K–1 and approximately 90 minutes for Grades 2–4. Students applying to Grades 3 and 4 also participate in a 40 minute Reading Comprehension assessment. The time varies in the one-to-one session; some children proceed slowly and like to chat, while others need a faster pace to sustain their interest.

The Session
Your child sits with the examiner at a small work table in a quiet room. After a brief, friendly chat on the way to the room and some introductory comments to break the ice, a series of activities is presented. Some of these are questions; some are hands-on tasks.

Children are assured that they are not expected to know everything, though they are encouraged to do their best and are praised for effort. The test activities are brief, varied and appealing. While some children take time to warm-up, most children quickly settle in, picking up the cue from the examiner that this will be a positive experience.
Registration

**ECAA In-School**
If your child attends one of the participating Early Childhood Schools, the ECAA may be offered onsite at the school.

The school director will either advise you to register online at https://www.ecaat.test.org or give you an application form to complete, sign, and mail to ERB with the testing fee.

A child can be tested once an application has been received, so be sure to register your child as early as possible. The child’s school, in coordination with ERB, will choose a suitable day for testing.

**ECAA at the ERB office**
The ECAA is available year-round at the ERB office. You may register online at https://www.ecaat.test.org or you can download the application form.

ECAA testing at the ERB office is by appointment. To obtain a date convenient for your family, we recommend that you schedule your appointment as soon as you are able.
Reports and Services

**Reporting**
Each report is individually written, carefully reviewed and mailed in the order of the date tested (if you register online, the report will be available online).

On average, test reports are sent approximately 3-4 weeks from the date of the test. Remember to schedule your appointment as soon as possible, so that the test report may be received well in advance of school deadlines.

**Services**
If you have any questions about your test report, you may call and get answers over the phone at no fee. An in-person test report interpretation can be set-up at ERB by appointment for a fee of $300.

**Sending Additional Reports**
Requests for additional reports can be made by logging into your account at https://www.ecaatest.org. If you registered by phone or mail, requests for additional reports may be sent to records@erblearn.org. There is a fee for each additional report above the allotted amount.
Frequently Asked Questions

How do I make an appointment for my child to be tested?
If your child attends one of the participating Early Childhood Schools, the test is administered in their current school. Your child’s school will explain the details of the process for his or her school, as procedures may vary from school to school.

You may register online at https://www.ecaatest.org or download an in-school application form to complete, sign, and mail to ERB with the testing fee. A child can only be scheduled for testing once an application has been received, so be sure to mail your child’s registration form as early as possible. The child’s school, in coordination with ERB, will choose a suitable day for testing.

For testing in the ERB office or satellite location, you can register online at https://www.ecaatest.org, or you can download the application form for ERB office testing.

When is the best time for my child to take the test?
The test is a developmental scale, standardized on a national population. Each child is compared with a child his or her age in the general population. There is absolutely no advantage in waiting until your child is older inasmuch as the comparison is always with a child of the same age. If you wait until your child is a few months older (and presumably wiser) so is any other child. Remember, the older you are, the higher the standard.

For Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2 applicants, the spring and summer months offer a relaxed, unhurried atmosphere, when children have been in school for the major part of the school year, are secure and in good health. Many parents are discovering that testing during the spring and summer months works well, when there are not as many school and career commitments. Remember, there is no advantage to waiting.
Frequently Asked Questions

How often may my child take the test?
Testing is for admission to participating schools. Students may take the test only once during a given admission season. Students may not be tested for practice or simply for parents’ information.

What if my child is shy and won’t separate from the parent to work with an examiner?
ERB examiners are skilled at building rapport with young children. If your child is unable to separate for testing at your scheduled appointment time, our staff will be happy to arrange for another appointment for your child.

If the student is testing in their Early Childhood School, the examiner will try again on another day.

What if my child takes a long time in the testing session?
The one-to-one assessment generally runs for approximately 1 hour for entry to Grades Pre-K–1 and 1.5 hours for entry to Grades 2–4, depending on the child’s approach to the tasks. Some children are more thoughtful and offer personal anecdotes throughout the testing session, while others are more task-oriented.

Who are ERB examiners?
ERB examiners participate in an extensive interview and training process. They have received formal training in assessment from a graduate school program.

Should my child have a snack?
Bringing a snack may serve as a distraction. It is recommended that the student has any needed snacks in advance of them separating to work with the ERB examiner.
Glossary

**Academic Aptitude** - The type of learning ability that is needed for school work.

**Achievement Test** - A test of acquired information, abilities, or skills.

**Aptitude Test** - A test used for estimating ability to learn or acquire skills in one or more areas.

**Group Test** - A test that can be administered to a number of pupils simultaneously by a single examiner.

**Individual Test** - A test that can be administered to only one individual at a time.

**Mean** - The average score of a group.

**Median** - The middle score obtained by a group of pupils. It corresponds to the 50th percentile and divides the top half of the class from the bottom half.

**Multiple-choice Items** - A type of objective test item that requires the tester to choose the correct or best answer from three or more choices offered.

**Norm** - A single value (or score) or range of values (or scores) constituting the usual performance of a given group that serves as a reference by which to gauge the performance of other individuals who take the test.

**Norm Group** - A group used as the criterion for gauging test scores. One norm group for the ERB tests is a large-scale nationally representative sample of public schools. A second ERB norm group is based on member suburban public schools, and a third ERB norm group is based on member independent schools.

**Objective Tests** - A test that can be scored objectively with a scoring key in contrast to a free-response or essay type of examination that requires the grader to use subjective judgment.

**Percentile or Percentile Rank** - A rating with a possible range of 1 to 99 that indicates the percent of individuals in the norm group that fall below a given score. It does not represent the number of items answered correctly.

**Raw Score** - The initial score obtained before conversion to a scaled score. It may be the number of right responses, the number of right responses reduced by a proportion of the wrong responses, or the number of responses in a given category.

**Reliability** - The degree of consistency, stability, or dependability of a test.

**Scaled Score** - A uniform score range, derived by formula, indicating how far a raw score is from the mean in terms of standard deviation units. Used to compare similar but different tests.

**Standard Deviation** - A basic measure of variability of a distribution in both directions from the average score.

**Standardized Tests** - An objective test administered under carefully prescribed conditions, scored according to definite rules, yielding results that can be evaluated in terms of established norms.

**Stanine (Standard Nine)** - A stanine is a score from 1 to 9, with 5 as the midpoint. Stanines are derived by dividing the entire range of students’ scores into nine segments (see page 17).

**Validity** - The extent to which a test measures what it is designed to measure.