



Considerations for ‘Rebranding’ Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Diane Schilder, EdD and Melissa Dahlin, MA

June 2014¹

INFORMATION REQUEST

In February 2014, a state department of education contacted CEELO for support in informing the rebranding of their kindergarten readiness assessment instrument.

State’s Goal

This state’s department of education would like to develop a plan for increasing the use of the early childhood assessment system among providers throughout the state. As a first step, the state would like to ‘rebrand’ the kindergarten readiness assessment instrument to assure the name connotes its use across ages and for all students (including special education students.) The state is also interested in knowing how states developed their early childhood assessment systems and the funds that have supported the development and implementation of assessments.

Background and Context

This state’s department of education has developed a Kindergarten assessment that is designed to measure skills in children from infancy to kindergarten. A derivative of the state’s Early Learning Standards, it is also aligned to the state standards for kindergarten in the areas of English/Language Arts and Mathematics and also includes three additional functional areas: physical, personal care, and social-emotional skills.

Data from the assessments are used for state reporting for pre-kindergarten (pre-k) students receiving special education, but is also used for assessing children in general education settings. The assessment can be used for local purposes for grades pre-k through 1 and the state is interested in increasing the statewide use of the assessment. The name of the state’s assessment for students receiving special education is very similar to the Kindergarten assessment and there is concern that educators perceive the assessment as one that is exclusively for use in assessing children with special education needs.

Methodology

CEELO staff reviewed the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) The State of Preschool Yearbook, reviewed selected state websites, and conducted interviews with four early childhood specialists in state departments of education who have worked on the development and implementation of early childhood assessment instruments and systems.

¹ Information was collected in February 2014.

What we know: Names of Existing Assessments

- We found no examples of states using the general education comprehensive assessment system acronym for their early childhood assessments. Thus, it appears that states are using a different term to connote a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate assessment that differs from a standardized pencil and paper test.
- Several states use the terms developing, development or developmental in their early childhood assessments system. This term develop connotes that the assessments take into account children’s learning trajectories and that the results can be used to support children’s ongoing development. Moreover, several states created assessments for infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and school-aged children and used the term develop to suggest that the assessments reflect that the system accounts for developing children.
- We found two states that use the acronym KIDS for their early childhood assessments. For Nevada the acronym is defined as “Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide” and in Washington it is defined as “Inventory of Developing Skills.”
- Several states use a phrase rather than a single term for their assessments. By using a phrase, the name captures the systemic nature of a comprehensive assessment rather than a one-time test. For example, Colorado uses the term “Results Matter,” “Hawaii calls their system “Good Beginnings,” and Georgia’s is “Bright From the Start.”

What we know: Funding/Supporting the Development of Early Childhood Assessments

- State stakeholders reported that they engaged a broad range of stakeholders in a participatory process to develop, ‘brand,’ implement and support the use of the early childhood assessments. They reported that this process of engaging all possible users of the assessments is important to ultimately obtain buy-in.
- Stakeholders began the development of their system by creating a single instrument but they nonetheless considered that ultimately the state would have a battery of developmentally appropriate valid and reliable assessments that would be used to assess infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-aged children.
- States used a range of funding streams to support the development and implementation of their early childhood assessment instruments and supports.
 - Many states used Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) funds; some states were in consortia of states that worked with national contractors on a project that was awarded through a competitive grant process.
 - Other states reported that they were able to use some special education funding when they began their efforts because the first set of instruments focused on special education.
 - Some states have also braided ARRA funds, state general revenue funds, and Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds.

- One state reported that several state agencies that work on early childhood issues have set aside funds for a ‘braided funding pool’ that supports a staff person who works on early childhood assessment issues.
- Another state reported that the legislation that created the pre-kindergarten program included set-aside funding for staff to work on monitoring and assessment.
- States reported that they considered professional development and training of teachers when they created their systems. States are using a range of models: a number reporting that they rely on regional staff, some have created online modules, and a few stated that the state staff are responsible for the training and supports.

Recommendations

- Engage a stakeholder group in the process of ‘rebranding’ and take steps to assure that representatives from all key constituencies are represented.
- Ensure that the name of the system connotes that the assessment is appropriate for infants through third-graders – even if the assessment is not currently spanning that age range.
- Consider a name for the overall early assessment system that can be tailored to particular ages. For example, California has one name overall but then uses a different term for the infant and toddler versus the pre-K assessment. (Note that the example appears in the table below.)
- Compile a list of names and engage a stakeholder group in selecting the name that is most appropriate for Indiana and consider tailoring the name to state. For example, Washington state calls their assessment WAKids and Nevada calls their assessment Silver State Kids.
- Avoid a term that is ‘too cute’ as states that have used such terms have later changed the name.

Figure 1. Snapshot of KEAs in Selected States (as of February 2014)

State	Name of Instrument/ Measurement System	Description	Additional Information
California	<i>California Desired Results Developmental Profile- School Readiness (DRDP-SR)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The primary purpose of the DRDP-SR is to provide transitional and traditional kindergarten teachers with a valid, reliable measurement tool that will assist them to observe, document and reflect on the learning, development and progress of their students.”² • Aligned to the California Preschool Learning Foundations and CA Kindergarten Content Standards • Covers five domains 	<p>This instrument was developed by the CA Department of Education, in collaboration with the WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies and UC Berkeley-BEAR Center.</p> <p>Desired Results Developmental Profile - School readiness (K) is the kindergarten and transitional kindergarten level of the DRDP. There are specific DRDPs for other age groups :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desired Results Developmental Profile – Infant/Toddler (DRDP-IT©) – children under age three. • Desired Results Developmental Profile– Preschool (DRDP-PS©) - children ages three to kindergarten enrollment or for children who are at least two years and seven months entering a preschool classroom who will turn three on or before December 2. • Desired Results Developmental Profile– School Age (DRDP-SA©) – children from K entry to age 12.
Colorado	<i>Colorado’s Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) - School Readiness Assessment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is not a specific instrument, districts choose from a menu of instruments. First approved assessment - Teaching Strategies GOLD • Informs individual school readiness plan • Must be aligned with description of school readiness (S.B. 08-212). 	<p>“SB 08-212, Colorado’s Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) indicates that local education providers are required to ensure all children in publicly-funded preschool or kindergarten receive an individual school readiness plan. The legislation does not specify the contents of school readiness plans except that the plans need to be informed by the school readiness assessment.”³</p> <p>“In adopting assessments of students’ school readiness, the state board shall consider assessments that are research-based; recognized nationwide as reliable instruments for measuring school readiness; and suitable for determining the instruction and interventions students need to improve their readiness to succeed in school. School readiness</p>

² <http://drdpsr.org/>

³ <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/SchoolReadinessFAQs%2011-13.pdf>

			assessments shall not be used to deny a student admission or progression to kindergarten or first grade.” ⁴
Maryland	Maryland Model for School readiness (MMSR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School readiness framework (statewide) • “... an assessment and instructional system designed to provide parents, teachers, and early childhood providers with a common understanding of what children know and are able to do upon entering school.”⁵ • Multiple domains • Aligned to State Curriculum content standards, indicators and objectives. • MMSR Fall/Entry Exemplars provide assessment criteria or guidelines for the kindergarten, prekindergarten, and preschool-3 MMSR standards⁶ 	
Nevada	Silver State KIDS (Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In development, 2014 goal for developed KEA⁷ • Aligned to the Common Core State Standards and Nevada Pre-K Standards • Silver State KIDS is objective is to “implement a statewide kindergarten assessment that measures what a child knows and can do upon kindergarten entry, and establish a plan for building a coordinated early childhood data system that links Pre-K data with K-12 data.”⁸ 	Effort being led by the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, managed by Nevada’s Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems (HSC&ECS) Office, in collaboration with the Nevada Department of Education (NDE)
Ohio	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment – Literacy (KRA-L)- last year of use 2013-2014 school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ohio is currently using KRA-L, but will switch to Start Strong beginning fall 2014 • Measures literacy 	

⁴ <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/SchoolReadinessFAQs%2011-13.pdf>

⁵ http://mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/MMSR/MMSR_FP.html

⁶ http://mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/MMSR/MMSR_FP.html

⁷ <http://www.nevadaecac.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Silver-State-KIDS-Implementation-Plan-Final-July-2013.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.nevadaecac.com/?p=338>

	year		
	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment -starting 2014-2015 school year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More comprehensive than KRA-L • Measures six domains: physical well-being & motor development, language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and social foundations⁹ 	Items types include: observation rubrics, performance tasks, and selected response times.
Washington	WaKIDS (Washington Inventory of Developing Skills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process, of which the assessment is one piece. • The process has three components: building family connections, assessing students’ developmental levels, and collaborating with early learning providers 	The language and literacy portion of the new Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will meet the reading diagnostic assessment requirement of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee.

⁹ <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Guidance-About-Kindergarten/Ohios-New-Kindergarten-Readiness-Assessment>

ABOUT CEELO:

One of 22 Comprehensive Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) will strengthen the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs) to lead sustained improvements in early learning opportunities and outcomes. CEELO will work in partnership with SEAs, state and local early childhood leaders, and other federal and national technical assistance (TA) providers to promote innovation and accountability.

Permission is granted to reprint this material if you acknowledge CEELO and the authors of the item. For more information, call the Communications contact at (732) 993-8051, or visit CEELO at CEELO.org.

For other CEELO Policy Reports, Policy Briefs, and FastFacts, go to www.ceelo.org/products.

Suggested citation:

Schilder, D., & Dahlin, M. (2014). *Considerations for ‘Rebranding’ Kindergarten Readiness Assessment* (CEELOFastFact). New Brunswick, NJ: Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes.

This FastFact was originally produced in whole or in part by the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes, with funds from the U.S. Department of Education under cooperative agreement number S283B120054. The content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Education, nor does mention or visual representation of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the federal government.

The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) is a partnership of the following organizations:

