

Evaluating Early Childhood Educators Prekindergarten Through Third Grade



Supplement to the *Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Educator Evaluation Systems*

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Evaluating Early Childhood Educators

Prekindergarten Through Third Grade

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Comprehensive Educator Evaluation Systems*

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Overview

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center) has developed two resources, the *Practical Guide for Designing Comprehensive Educator Evaluation Systems* (<http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/docs/practicalGuideEvalSystems.pdf>) and the *Practical Guide for Designing Comprehensive Principal Evaluation Systems* (<http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/PracticalGuidePrincipalEval.pdf>), both of which are designed to facilitate problem solving and decision making in the design and implementation of educator evaluation systems. As states and districts roll out new models of educator evaluation, questions arise about how best to include all personnel within their various systems.

In response to requests from the field, the GTL Center enlisted the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) to develop this supplemental guide for early childhood teachers. This document is one of a series of supplemental guides designed to support regional comprehensive center staff, state policymakers, state education agency staff, and district leaders in designing or revising educator evaluation systems that account for the unique roles and responsibilities of various teacher and leader positions (e.g., early childhood teachers, specialized instructional support personnel (SISP), and assistant principals).

In the future, additional supplemental guides will be developed to address demonstrated needs and technical assistance requests from the field.

Content of This Supplemental Guide

This supplement provides guidance to state and district teams related to the evaluation of early childhood teachers for prekindergarten (PK) through third grade for the following elements:

- **Statutory and Regulatory Requirements** that guide the development of educator evaluation systems and that are used to determine which personnel are subject to evaluation requirements as defined in regulation, statute, and policy.
- **Suitability and Need for Differentiation** within measures of instruction and teacher practice, child development and student growth, and, as appropriate and available, national and state professional educator standards.
- **Professional Learning for Evaluators** designed to guide and assist state and local teams in the evaluation and support of best practices for early childhood teachers.
- **Professional Learning for Teachers** designed to assist all early childhood teachers to improve their practice.

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER DEFINITION

For the purposes of this guide, we have defined “early childhood teachers” to mean teachers licensed by the state department of education to teach children in prekindergarten through third grade (PK–3).

This supplement is organized in sections, each of which begins with a discussion of the relevance of and key considerations for specific elements in the context of early childhood educator evaluation design and implementation. Each section concludes with a series of questions to facilitate decision making during the process of designing systems that account for the unique roles and responsibilities of early childhood teachers.

Audience for This Supplemental Guide

Audiences for this supplement include regional comprehensive centers, state departments of education, and local education agency personnel charged with designing and implementing educator evaluation systems. As states and districts implement evaluation systems, specific considerations for early childhood teachers should inform system design and implementation. To ensure that these viewpoints are heard, policymakers and system designers should convene advisors from in-state PK, kindergarten, and primary

grade teachers along with elementary principals, early childhood center directors, related faculty from institutions of higher education, and other state and national experts to contribute to the decision-making process. Their input is valuable on issues such as child assessment, teacher preparation, and other considerations for teacher evaluation development, design, and implementation.

Purpose of This Supplemental Guide

The guide is intended to facilitate decision making to ensure that state and district evaluation systems consider the unique contexts in which early childhood teachers work. Garnering input from early childhood experts adds credibility as systems are modified. Their input helps ensure that the systems reflect evidence-based practices for

early learning and align with early learning standards or child outcomes frameworks used by the states. Such examination and analysis of educator evaluation policies can lead to fairer and more credible systems for early childhood educators. Early childhood stakeholders may recommend a preliminary or pilot phase of the evaluation system for early childhood teachers, and they also may recommend informed improvements and changes as the pilot is expanded. Stakeholder groups also can be key partners in ensuring that a consistent and strategic communication plan is deployed to apprise all stakeholders of implementation of the new system and any suggested modifications.

This guide offers considerations for developing policies and practices that differentiate the evaluation system so that early childhood teacher performance and impact on student learning can be fairly and accurately captured, supported, and reinforced.

Early Childhood Teachers

Research shows that children who participate in high-quality early childhood classrooms experience improvements in language and literacy, social-emotional and cognitive development, and overall school performance as measured by academic grades and consistent school attendance. At the same time, research has shown that these benefits of early learning are fundamentally dependent on the quality of teaching and adult interactions the children receive in their early learning environments. Enhanced early learning outcomes require that early childhood teachers have the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to promote learning and development starting at birth and extending through the early elementary years (Guernsey, Bornfreund, McCann, & Williams, 2014). A well-designed educator evaluation system for early childhood educators, like one in the later grades, should provide impetus to improve teaching practice and teacher-child interactions, increase child growth and learning, and inform the professional learning opportunities that early childhood educators are provided.

PERSPECTIVE ON DIFFERENTIATING THE EVALUATION PROCESS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

“Early childhood teachers are rightly concerned with implementing a system that was, at least in the initial stages, designed with a different set of teachers in mind—teachers of older students who have standardized achievement data. In most states, policy, practices, and guidance for early childhood teachers are just now being developed or adapted from materials developed for K–12 teachers of core subjects. While much about good teaching is the same for all teachers, it is important that the unique considerations of teaching young children are addressed in educator evaluation systems’ methods and measures.” (Connors-Tadros & Horowitz, 2014, p. 6)

Definition of Early Childhood Teachers

State policies specify the preparation, qualifications, and ongoing development requirements for teachers to attain licensure to teach kindergarten through third-grade, and state statute or regulation defines the educator classifications to be included in the educator evaluation system, typically those licensed by the state. States vary, however, in their definitions for early childhood professionals and providers of services for preschool or PK children.

Increasingly early learning and early childhood education is defined as spanning birth through age eight (National Association for the Education of Young Children & National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education [NAEYC & NAECS-SDE], 2003). Because infant and toddler programs are not regularly in state public education systems, for the purposes of this guide, we have defined early childhood teachers to mean teachers licensed by the state department of education to teach children in PK through third grade (PK–3).

Unique Characteristics of Early Childhood Education

To set the context for this guide and the decisions on performance evaluation that it supports, it is important to note the specific attributes of high-quality teaching and

learning in the early years and how they may differ from those in the later grades.

1. Variations in Early Childhood Settings

The policies and requirements for PK teacher preparation and certification differ widely across and within states. Moreover, PK teachers may practice in publicly funded school-based programs that are housed within public elementary schools, or PK may be offered in community-based programs or PK centers such as childcare centers or Head Start programs, with the school having fiscal responsibility. It is important to note that these varied settings for PK also are charged with implementing an array of standards, including early learning, program, and teacher standards. In addition, teacher preparation requirements, along with the ongoing professional development, compensation, and benefits that PK teachers receive, varies with whether they work in a public school, childcare center, or Head Start program. The challenge is to try to develop common expectations across context, environments, and funding sources. Holding consistent expectations across these varied settings can be problematic. PK teachers should be held to the same professional performance standards as those required of teachers working in kindergarten through third-grade classrooms or to standards similar to them. At the same time, the methods of educator evaluation need to reflect unique

skills and competencies required of early childhood teachers across these various contexts. The evaluation system should allow for the fact that to reflect developmentally appropriate learning for young children, effective teaching might look different in PK, kindergarten, and the primary grades than effective teaching in the later grades.

2. Early Learning Standards

The early childhood field has a long history of developing standards and utilizing them to improve practice. The National Education Goals Panel in 1998 defined the content areas or domains that now are widely agreed as essential in developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education. They are the standards for physical development and motor skills, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language-literacy-communications, and cognitive development. Each major federal funding stream for early childhood education requires meeting a set of standards: the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, Early Childhood Outcomes for the special education early intervention programs Part C and Part B 619 (Pub. L. 101-476), and in the voluntary standards required by the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF). In addition to these learning standards for children in federal programs, virtually all states have standards for children in PK settings. States have undergone various

alignment efforts to ensure that these predecessor early learning standards create a rational trajectory to the new Common Core State Standards (<http://www.corestandards.org/>) in English language arts and mathematics for K–3. Many states, however, are still in the process of aligning these varied and different standards.

The early learning field has long regarded the importance of early childhood program standards: quality measures on the characteristics of classrooms, environments, and curriculum that young children experience, along with the qualifications held by the adults in the classroom. These program and professional standards are distinct from child outcome standards that define expectations for child learning and development. Together, these standards—child outcome standards, program quality standards, and professional competency standards—should complement a well-designed educator evaluation system for early childhood teachers. For instance, the observation rubrics used to evaluate teacher practice should align with the evidence-based approaches outlined in the professional practice standards for early childhood teachers. Likewise, both the student growth measures and the growth targets should be appropriate for young learners as defined in the early learning standards.

3. Assessment Considerations

Challenges exist in measuring early childhood student achievement (also called child growth and development) that are distinct from those of measuring the student achievement of older children. Children’s learning and development during the early years is sporadic and variable, and their performance on any particular day is susceptible to environmental influences that can make a reliable assessment of their abilities and knowledge challenging. Though this variability can be true with older students as well, *rapid* changes in social, emotional, and cognitive growth rates are more common in young children and create added complexity for educator evaluation systems.

As early education standards reflect, early learning is multidimensional—in addition to the cognitive domain, we know social and emotional learning and approaches to learning—such as initiative, planning, curiosity, and self-regulation—are critical to student success from PK to third grade. Growth in one domain is often integrated with and dependent on learning in another. These considerations make it particularly important that early childhood educators use multiple measures to assess children’s learning reliably and to assess all domains and competencies. It also is important to use these tools at several intervals throughout the year.

There are still very few standardized measures of learning and development that are valid and reliable for early learning, and that account for the variability we have noted. Those that do exist often are focused on single domains of learning, such as language and literacy, which depend on the child’s access to certain content. More common are informal or formative assessments involving teacher observations of small groups and one-on-one interactions. These assessments are not standardized, are resource-intensive, and may introduce elements of teacher bias, particularly when used for higher stakes purposes like teacher evaluation.

Elements to Consider in Early Childhood Teacher Evaluation Design and Implementation

Despite all these considerations and cautions, the weight of research shows that the quality of instruction is the most crucial variable in ensuring school readiness and success in the ensuing years (Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning [CASTL], 2007). All children benefit from highly effective teachers, but in the critical early years, teacher effectiveness is of utmost importance. These considerations

warrant a measure of caution as the field proceeds. The press for measures of effective teaching for young learners does, however, provide a significant new opportunity for improving the early childhood teaching workforce. Raised expectations for students resulting from the Common Core State Standards and the expanding focus on school readiness and emerging grade-level reading requirements adds impetus to holding higher expectations for teachers as well. Therefore, ensuring that the educator evaluation systems are designed to evaluate and support early childhood educators is essential. The sections that follow provide guidance to state and district leaders on four key elements that should be considered in the context of educator evaluation system design and implementation. Each section begins with a short discussion of the element's relevance. Each section highlights practical examples and concludes with a series of questions to help facilitate decision making for designing systems that account for the unique context and teaching strategies of early childhood educators.

ELEMENT 1

Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

Most states already have developed statutory and regulatory requirements for their educator evaluation systems. Despite this, an opportunity to address early childhood teachers within the evaluation systems may emerge as states develop policy guidance and support materials for the implementation of their systems.

Inclusion of Early Childhood Teachers

State statute or regulation mandates the inclusion of the educator classifications in the educator evaluation system, typically those licensed by the state as teachers. From June 2013 to January 2014, CEELO conducted a scan of state teacher evaluation, collecting data from public documents and interviews with state early childhood specialists and their teacher evaluation peers in state education agencies (SEAs). Our scan revealed the following:

- All states include kindergarten through third-grade teachers who are licensed by the state in the educator evaluation system. In addition, states include preschool special education in both their teacher licensure and their teacher evaluation systems.

- States vary, however, in whether they are including infant and toddler and preschool and PK teachers or other support staff, such as parent educators, or student service personnel, such as school counselors and occupational or physical therapists, in the evaluation system.
- In a few states, although PK teachers are not included in the statewide evaluation system, districts within the state may require their participation. In some states, such as Pennsylvania, state legislation for the educator evaluation system does not include PK teachers serving in community-based settings, but state policy on the state-funded PreK Counts program does require participation of certified early childhood teachers.

As illustrated in Table 1, the CEELO scan revealed that in the 24 states that require the inclusion of state-funded PK programs, 19 states require PK teachers to participate in their state educator evaluation system. In the remaining states, it is up to the district to determine whether preschool and PK teachers will be included within the evaluation system.

Table 1. Early Childhood Teachers Included in the State Educator Evaluation System

State	PK Teachers Included? (Yes/No)	Additional Information Related to Infant and Toddler and Other Early Childhood Staff
AR	No	Arkansas's PK teachers working in the public school system may be required at the local level to participate in the state's educator evaluation system; it is not, however, a statewide requirement.
CO	Yes	Colorado requires that any early childhood educator whose position requires a Colorado Department of Education license be included. If a district requires a license, but the state does not, the district decides. The covered licensed teachers include infant and toddler, preschool, and early childhood coordinators and Head Start and Early Head Start teachers. Districts may require evaluation of other staff members as well.
CT	Yes	Connecticut's birth to Grade 3 teachers in nonpublic schools are not subject to educator evaluation system requirements; those working for a public school, including a Regional Educational Service Center or state-approved private special education facility, will be subject to the new evaluation system requirements but may fall under the guidelines for Student and Educator Support Specialist Evaluation.
DC	Yes	The District of Columbia requires that all public school PK teachers be included in the IMPACT evaluation system.
DE	Yes	Delaware also includes in the evaluation system staff funded by Part B-619, Title I-PK, and the Early Childhood Assistance Program if they work for a school district, birth mandate (autism, deaf, and hard of hearing), K-2, and Child Find coordinators.
HI	No	Hawaii does not have state-funded PK, but PK teachers could be included at the area complex or district level (one statewide school system).
IL	Yes	In Illinois, all teachers who are hired by the district and certified by the state program are required to participate, including early childhood teachers. Teachers in community-based programs and in charter and private schools and school service personnel (e.g., school counselors, school psychologists) are not included in the teacher evaluation process.
KS	Yes	Kansas allows preschool teachers in school-based, state-funded programs and early childhood special education teachers to participate in the teacher evaluation process, but the decision is made at the local level.
KY	Yes, in FY 2015	Kentucky is in the process of creating an educator evaluation system for early childhood teachers aligned with the K-12 Professional Growth and Effectiveness System, using the Danielson model. It will be piloted in spring 2014 and is being implemented statewide during the 2014-15 school year. The preschool teachers are required to be certified by the state teacher certification board (districts were required to hire certified teachers in vacated positions beginning in fall 2004). The Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education certification includes birth to age 5 general and special education certification that also includes certification for teaching kindergarten. The birth to age 2 early interventionists are required to have this early childhood certification. This requirement is recent.
LA	Yes	Louisiana's teachers working in public school systems serving children of ages 3 to 5 (kindergarten) are included in the state's educator evaluation system, including teachers of general and regular education programs as well as those serving children with disabilities.
MA	Yes	Massachusetts includes all licensed educators in the evaluation system. Birth to age 3 educators are not licensed by the department of education and therefore are not required to be evaluated under the new framework.
MD	Yes	Maryland requires that any individual certificated by the Maryland State Department of Education as defined in the Maryland state Code of Regulations (COMAR) as a teacher who delivers instruction and is responsible for a student or group of students academic progress in a PK-12 public school setting, subject to local system interpretation, be included in the evaluation system.

PK Teachers Included? (Yes/No)

Additional Information Related to Infant and Toddler and Other Early Childhood Staff

State	PK Teachers Included? (Yes/No)	Additional Information Related to Infant and Toddler and Other Early Childhood Staff
MI	No	Michigan's legislature is currently considering the recommendations of the Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness, which pertain specifically to K-12. Some recommendations are included for early childhood special education, which can serve children of ages 3-6 through Part B, section 619 of IDEA, but also children from birth to age 3 who qualify for early childhood special education. Michigan has two levels of eligibility for early intervention services under Part C of IDEA; approximately one third of the children are dually eligible for Michigan Mandatory Special Education.
NC	Yes	North Carolina requires all PK teachers to hold a North Carolina Birth-Through-Kindergarten (BK) License (SP I or II), regardless of their teaching assignment—public or private or community-based. BK licensure requires that all teachers be formally evaluated. (The framework includes self-assessment, mentoring and formative/summative evaluation system, and individual professional development plans.)
NE	Yes	The Nebraska model teacher evaluation process was designed for K-12 teachers. Most school districts, however, use the same process for all their staff members. A group of local early childhood coordinators have modified the observational component of the teacher evaluation process to specifically focus on early childhood programs, both classroom-based and home visiting.
NJ	Yes	New Jersey's PK teachers who are employed directly by the school districts are included, but the state-funded collaborative contracting sites may or may not include PK teachers insofar as they are not directly paid by the district and are not union members. It is a district decision how they handle the contracted sites.
NV	No	Nevada's teacher evaluation pilot currently is being conducted in K-12 classrooms. Most school districts, however, use the same process for all their staff members. Therefore, the state is actively pursuing related briefs and guidance to be shared with those who will be conducting the evaluations when and if the pilot will include PK classrooms.
NY	No	New York does not require that PK teachers be included in the mandated Approved Teacher Practice Rubrics evaluation process.
OH	Yes	Ohio Department of Education is responsible to license preschool programs (birth to age 5 not in kindergarten) operated by public schools, educational service centers, boards of developmental disabilities, and chartered nonpublic schools with multiple grades above kindergarten.
PA	Yes	Pennsylvania requires that any teacher who serves children in a local education agency or intermediate unit and who holds an instructional certificate be evaluated. PK Counts community-based settings are not included in the mandate, but program policy has been provided that includes them in the evaluation system. PK Counts community-based settings is transitioning to a new system in 2014-15.
RI	Yes, in FY2015	Rhode Island includes preschool special education teachers (ages 3-5) in the system and plans to expand to all PK teachers in FY2015.
VA	Yes	Virginia requires all licensed teachers in public schools to be included in the evaluation system. Infant and toddler teachers are not included because they do not teach in public schools.
WI	Yes, if hired by the school district	Wisconsin includes teachers of kindergarten for four-year-olds (4K) in the educator evaluation system if they teach in a school-based classroom or if they are hired by the district but are placed in a child care or Head Start program. The teacher is not included if the district contracts with a child care or Head Start program to implement 4K and the community site hires the teacher.
WV	Yes	West Virginia includes all PK teachers licensed and employed by local educational areas (LEAs).

CEELO's review of the states found that although requirements within statutes and regulations may include early childhood teachers, explicit requirements for differentiating the evaluation process for early childhood teachers and administrators

are not included. After piloting their educator evaluation systems, however, some states have noted a need to address early childhood within their educator evaluation system state models during full implementation.

State stakeholder groups might consider the following guiding questions as they work to determine educator evaluation system requirements, as well as district flexibility requirements in the evaluation of early childhood teachers:

Guiding Questions

Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

STATUTORY AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

1. Which certified early childhood teachers are subject to the statute and regulations of the educator evaluation system?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Does state evaluation law or its regulations specifically identify early childhood teachers, such as infant and toddler early intervention, preschool special education, and or preschool and PK teachers?
- If the law identifies early childhood teachers, does the statute clearly define which grades and age levels that the teacher is qualified to teach?
- Does the law or statute include PK teachers explicitly in the educator evaluation system, and if so, what is the student age level?
- Are there limits or parameters defining which PK teachers are included? (For example, only licensed teachers or those employed by the state or district?)
- If the law identifies certified or licensed teachers, is more clarity needed to account for those teachers who are certified but teach in nonpublic school settings?
- If the legislation or regulation is not clear on these criteria, how can clarity be embedded in policy or guidance? Who or what group has the authority to make such changes?
- Does the certifying or licensing agency determine those who are to be included under the statute? If not, who does?
- For nonpublic-school-funded early education programs, such as child care or early intervention programs that are administered through a state department of health, are there separate laws or policies covering the evaluation of teachers serving infants through five-year-olds? If so, who has authority over those laws or regulations?
- Does state law include other educators, such as home visitors or Child Find coordinators, in the definition of educators? If so, are what are the adjustments needed for their inclusion?

NOTES

POLICY AND PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS

2. In what ways should policies and practice requirements for PK–3 teachers differ from those for the later grades, and in what ways should they be the same?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Is there any policy that prevents the inclusion of early childhood teachers in the educator evaluation model? If not, should there be?
- In order to include or exclude early childhood teachers in the educator evaluation system, do policies or statutes need to be modified?
- Can the proposed changes be addressed in policy alone, not requiring statute modifications? If not, what is the process?

NOTES

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

3. Does the stakeholder group feel that the inclusion of preschool teachers would be beneficial?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are the risks, if any, of going beyond state requirements with the inclusion of all early childhood teachers?
- What would be the key reasons and benefits for inclusion or exclusion of all early childhood teachers within the system?
- What are the risks, if any, of including specific subgroups of early childhood teachers such as those working in infant and toddler classrooms or those providing early intervention services?
- What would be the key reasons and benefits for including or excluding subgroups of early childhood teachers (e.g., teachers working in child care centers) in the educator evaluation system?

NOTES

Partnership Spotlight

THE NEW JERSEY EARLY CHILDHOOD ACADEMY

“The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University and the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) have partnered with the New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education, to initiate a professional learning community for district teams of principals, teachers and early childhood coordinators. The New Jersey Early Childhood Academy provides a forum for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to work together to build capacity to support schools in implementing the new educator evaluation system, Common Core State Standards, and preschool expansion and quality. District teams have reviewed teacher evaluation requirements and develop tailored resources for early childhood teachers. The academy is committed to understanding these reforms in the *early childhood* classroom; considering how to interpret and support implementation without compromising what makes early childhood different from other elementary grades; and keeping developmentally appropriate practice at the forefront.”—Shannon Ayers, in *Preschool Matters Today*, January 2013, <http://preschoolmatters.org/2014/01/28/implementing-sea-policies-cohesively-with-a-focus-on-early-childhood/>

Read more in: Riley-Ayers, S., & Costanza, V. J. (2014). *Professional learning academy: Supporting district implementation of early childhood policy* (CEELO FastFact). New Brunswick, NJ: Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes. Retrieved from http://ceelo.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ceelo_fast_fact_ec_academy.pdf

DISTRICT AND COMMUNITY FLEXIBILITY

4. What are the state-level requirements that all school districts or jurisdictions are required to meet, and where is flexibility for local decision-making provided?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Are districts allowed flexibility in determining which early childhood teachers are included in their evaluation system on the basis of the ages of the children grade level they teach?
- May districts exclude licensed or certified early childhood teachers from the evaluation system if they teach in nonpublic school settings?
- May districts exclude licensed or certified PK teachers from the evaluation system if they are compensated at rates lower than their K–12 counterparts?
- Does the state offer incentives to districts to use the state model of evaluation for early childhood teachers where not required of districts (for example, evaluator trainings or other resources)?

NOTES

Differentiation of Measures

This section addresses how an evaluation system for early childhood educators needs to reflect differences in the expectations held for teachers of this age and grade span.

- Alignment.** Best practices in early childhood teaching and learning are essential so that expectations for teachers and learners are aligned. Child assessment measures should align with the state's early learning standards, and, in turn, professional competency standards specific to early childhood teachers should guide the assessment of professional practice through observation and performance rubrics.

- Attention to developmental domains.** As previously stated, it is important that the early learning standards and teacher practice measures include all critical domains of learning and development in the early years and that they be balanced in scope.

- Research-based assessment practices.** Student growth measures that are used for early childhood educators should adhere to recommendations for child assessments from national experts and reports (National Research Council, the National Education Goals Panel—Goals 2000, and NAEYC and NAECS-SDE).

- Preservice and in-service professional development.** Training in the evaluation system should be provided for both novice and experienced early education teachers and linked to teacher competency standards from professional organizations for teachers of young children.

Measures of Teaching Practice

Although some indicators of good instructional practice may be applicable across the grade spans, effective teaching often varies with the teaching setting and the ages and stages of development of the children in the classroom. As states and districts face the conundrum of evaluating teachers in classrooms that are not covered by standardized tests, many seek data from other sources or are developing or customizing their own instrumentation at various grade levels.

In many state models used to evaluate teachers, professional practice measures account for 50 percent of the total rating. In Delaware, Hawaii, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island, however, the state model adjusts the weighting of professional practice for early childhood teachers (typically included in the untested category of teachers). Professional practice measures include observation protocols, student and parent surveys, and evaluation of student work or artifacts like portfolios. As most teaching

SOURCES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR CORE COMPETENCIES

- NBTCS Early Childhood Generalist Standards: http://www.nbtcs.org/sites/default/files/documents/certificates/NB-Standards/nbtcs-certificate-ec-gen-standards_09.23.13.pdf
- Council on Professional Recognition CDE Core Competencies: <http://www.cdacoouncil.org/the-cda-credential/about-the-cda/cda-competency-standards>
- INTASC Learning Progressions for Teachers: http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2013/2013_INTASC_Learning_Progressions_for_Teachers.pdf
- Competencies for Early Childhood Educators in the Context of Inclusion: http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/sites/npdci.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/NPDCI-Competencies-2011_0.pdf
- Early Childhood Educator Competencies, A Literature Review of Current Best Practices: http://www.irle.berkeley.edu/cscce/wp-content/uploads/2008/01/competencies_report08.pdf
- Core Knowledge for PK-3 Teaching: Ten Components of Effective Instruction: http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Core_Knowledge.pdf

models have been implemented, they have turned to existing observation instruments that have been piloted, and to a limited extent researched. For example, the Danielson Framework for Teaching is a commonly adapted commercial rubric that includes professional practice items. An overarching challenge in adopting a particular off-the-shelf framework is the fact that there are so few to choose among—Danielson, the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model, and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Of these, only the CLASS has been validated for use in observing teaching practices (or teacher-child interactions) in grades and ages spanning PK through third grade.

It is interesting to note that, though CLASS is a permitted instrument for district use in some state teacher evaluation models, it is not yet commonly used in statewide educator evaluation systems. The CLASS is the most extensively used teacher observation instrument in preschool and primary school settings for other purposes, such as design of teacher preparation, professional development, and research and evaluation. Georgia is using the CLASS for statewide observation of all PK teachers, as are the city of Chicago and District of Columbia public schools. The CLASS measure is used for preschool teacher observations in more than 500 districts, and communitywide jurisdictions in all regions of the country

(Teachstone, n.d.; a map can be viewed at <http://www.batchgeo.com/map/b380a6b649aa1cc40807934b4d6d8f4d>).

Many states and districts are relying on internally developed observation tools with accompanying domains and subdomains of practice and rating scales that are aligned with their state teacher competency standards. Several states and districts are modifying these home-grown evaluation rubrics to address teaching practices for P–3 teachers, adjusting the domains to account for variations in best practice for the earlier grades and age spans and documenting evidence within the rubrics for the early years.

Professional practice frameworks define the core knowledge and skills demonstrated by effective teachers and guide the qualitative observations of teaching practice, and evaluators use the associated rubrics to align and score evidence collected through classroom observations.

Most professional practice frameworks were developed or validated for teachers in the upper grades and may not have appropriate detail and description to make accurate ratings on specific teaching practices for early childhood (particularly PK and K) teachers. Some states, however, are in the process of augmenting the existing evaluation systems by employing various options in their measures of teacher

CLASS IN HEAD START CLASSROOMS

The broadest application of the CLASS tool is its use for the federal Head Start Program both for professional development planning purposes and application and for higher stakes identification of programs needing improvement and consequently required to re compete for grant funding.

In 2013, 359 Head Start grantees received CLASS reviews. The CLASS tool has 10 dimensions of teacher-child interactions rated on a seven-point scale, from low to high. The 10 CLASS dimensions are organized into three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.

- ▲ **Emotional Support** assesses the degree to which teachers establish and promote a positive climate in their classrooms through their everyday interactions.
- ▲ **Classroom Organization** assesses classroom routines and procedures related to the organization and management of children's behavior, time, and attention in the classroom.
- ▲ **Instructional Support** assesses the ways in which teachers implement the curriculum to effectively promote cognitive and language development.

For the results by dimension, see <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/class-reports/class-data-2013.html>

practice that account for characteristics of teaching and learning in early childhood.

Such examples include:

- Modification of the state-developed rubric to reflect the context of early childhood teachers.

- Evidence documents augmented to include specific teacher practices to look for in early childhood teachers. (Illinois is conducting a validation study of the Danielson Framework for Teaching with early childhood teachers, birth through third grade, in Chicago, since this framework was validated on teachers for fourth-grade children and above.)
- Validating existing rubrics, such as Danielson, to determine whether they are disproportionately categorizing early childhood teachers as ineffective and to gather content validity from early childhood experts. (New Jersey has developed an evidence document using the format of the Danielson Framework, aligned to the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, for PK and kindergarten teachers.)

The components of teacher evaluation measures must be adjusted to address the differences between grade levels and appropriate practice for younger children. There are, however, common or aligned definitions of effective teaching running through existing models that are applicable to early childhood education. For example, the Danielson Framework component 2a, creating an environment of respect and rapport, is applicable across the continuum from PK through Grade 12, as are the CLASS elements of emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. States are differentiating practice rubrics, as they should, to depict best practice based on research, draw on state and national competency standards for early learning practitioners, and engage them in customizing the practice measures for their grade levels.

Such state approaches or modifications are a good first step toward ensuring that the unique contexts of early childhood teachers are taken into consideration. All modifications should be proven by validation studies for the grade and age levels evaluated, particularly if high-stakes decisions will be based on the results.

State stakeholders might consider the following questions for Element 2 relative to measures of teaching practice as they work to determine the need for differentiation or modification within state or district performance rubrics.

Teacher Evaluation Support Document: PK and K from the New Jersey Workgroup on Teacher Evaluation Evidence:
 “The purpose of this document is to guide observers using The Framework for Teaching Danielson rubric (2011 Edition) by ‘tinting the lens’ with a view from an early childhood perspective. Although this evidence document uses the format of the Danielson framework, we anticipate that the document will be useful for districts using other instruments as well since ALL instruments approved by the Department of Education aligned to the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards. The guiding question that directs this effort is: what does evidence of a particular item look like given best practices in early childhood and a district’s curriculum?”
<http://www.nj.gov/education/ece/eval/Evidence.pdf>

Guiding Questions

Teaching Practice

TEACHING PRACTICE

1. Has the state or district determined modifications to the teacher evaluation measures needed for the inclusion of early childhood teachers?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Does the state identify approved teacher practice measures for P–3 teacher evaluation that are aligned with teacher competencies and standards for all grade levels?
- Has a validation process been conducted to determine whether commercial or district-designed measures or models align with the state's core competency standards for teachers of PK through third grade?
- If the state is revising its teacher evaluation rubric, are core competencies for preschool and early elementary teachers a component of the review?
- Have early childhood educators and other stakeholders been engaged in designing and reviewing rubric content to validate for P–3?

NOTES

Measures of Student Learning

Early learning (before children begin formal school) takes place in multiple settings, each of which has its own child assessment policies. For example, Early Head Start and Head Start are required to collect assessment data three times a year, but the tools used are determined by the local grantee. Part B, section 619, and Part C, Special Education Programs, of IDEA require the assessment of children on three functional outcomes at program entry and exit, but the tools used are determined by the states. State policies on child assessment vary within their own PK programs, and a growing number of states are developing or implementing kindergarten entry assessments. Within these diverse program requirements, early childhood teachers do assess children, but as previously noted, there are few standardized measures appropriate for use in educator evaluation systems or that lend themselves to statistical modeling (e.g., value-added model) to attribute changes in student learning to teachers.

In part, the limitation of valid and reliable large-scale instrumentation for assessing student learning in the early years of school has propelled broader support for the use of student learning objectives (SLOs) as measures of teacher contributions to learning and development in PK through the primary grades.

Currently, more than half of states are considering use of SLOs to assess student learning and growth as one component in rating teacher effectiveness in the later grades, and in 11 of the states documented in the CEELO report, SLOs are used for evaluating P–3 teachers where standardized student assessments are not applicable (Connors-Tadros & Horowitz, 2014).

In an SLO process, the teacher establishes learning and development goals for their students, often in collaboration with peers and administrators. SLOs, under some state requirements, can be established for a class, a course (with multiple classes of the same subject), for a subset of children in a class, or for a full grade level.

Table 2 shows some of the issues in the implementation of SLOs, along with possible approaches to respond to those issues. The table is an SLO development process chart developed by CEELO to address a state technical assistance request.

In an SLO process, the teacher establishes learning and development goals for their students, often in collaboration with peers and administrators. SLOs, under some state requirements, can be established for a class, a course (with multiple classes of the same subject), for a subset of children in a class, or for a full grade level.

MEASURES OF STUDENT LEARNING: SELECTED PROCESSES DEFINED

Value Added or Growth Modeling is a statistical approach that uses student test scores to estimate individual educator contributions to student academic growth, taking into account student academic achievement in previous years. This approach is possible only with teachers of students who have readily available test scores from multiple time periods. An alternative use of these measures for early childhood teachers is to use a schoolwide score in individual teacher ratings (sometimes called shared attribution.) For example, a kindergarten teacher's student growth rating could be based on his school's reading value-added scores, with the idea that all teachers in the school contribute to student learning in reading (even if only those in Grades 3 through 8 are assessed with state standardized tests).

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) involve a process through which a teacher or a team of teachers identifies the expected learning outcomes for a group of students (within a school district, a school, a single classroom, or across classrooms) for a period of time and sets a growth target on the basis of expected learning. Once the SLO is approved by an administrator, the teacher is held accountable for the extent to which students meet those growth targets. The use of SLOs requires a process wherein teachers conduct a thorough analysis of students' present and past levels of performance to determine appropriate classroom, school, or skill-based goals to be accomplished within the year. This approach can be used by teachers in any grades or subjects in which they can identify a goal from students' prior and current performance.

(adapted from SISP Supplemental Guide, <http://www.gtcenter.org/sites/default/files/tingSpecializedInstructionalSupportPersonnel.pdf>)

In an SLO process, the teacher establishes learning and development goals for their students, often in collaboration with peers and administrators. SLOs, under some state requirements, can be established for a class, a course (with multiple classes of

the same subject), for a subset of children in a class, or for a full grade level. Table 2 shows some of the issues in the implementation of SLOs, along with possible approaches to respond to those issues. The

table is an SLO development process chart developed by CEELO to address a state technical assistance request.

Table 2. SLO Development Process

Issue	Promising Approach	Approaches to Avoid
<p>Process of developing SLOs</p> <p>Engagement of stakeholders in SLO development process</p>	<p>Engage stakeholders who know content, child development, psychometrics, state and district standards, leadership, and teacher credential issues.</p> <p><i>Broad stakeholder engagement in the SLO development process will lead to greater face validity and buy-in of teachers and teacher leaders.</i></p>	<p>Engage a single group (e.g., psychometricians, content experts, policy experts, school leaders, or teachers).</p> <p><i>Limited stakeholder engagement in the SLO development process can lead to reduced face validity and limited buy-in of teachers and teacher leaders.</i></p>
<p>Time allocated to process of developing SLOs</p>	<p>Ensure adequate time is allocated to engage stakeholders in development and review process.</p> <p><i>Sufficient staff time and days for review and development can result in SLOs that have a greater degree of validity than those developed in a rushed process.</i></p>	<p>Allocate insufficient time in terms of both staff hours and calendar days to the development process.</p> <p><i>Insufficient time will lead to a rushed process and poorly designed SLOs.</i></p>
<p>Professional development to support creation of SLOs</p>	<p>Ensure that all individuals involved the process of creating SLOs have sufficient training to understand the purpose as it relates to teacher evaluation, the importance of the research base on objectives, how to assess validity and reliability of the measure, and how to select measures associated with curriculum standards. Professional development is designed to support adult learning styles and engages participants in a process of critiquing existing SLOs, creating sample SLOs, and reflecting on use of data.</p> <p><i>Adequate professional development can be an important step in ensuring valid objectives.</i></p>	<p>Offer inadequate professional development to those designing SLOs. Instead, assume that stakeholders responsible for designing SLOs have adequate understanding of the importance of psychometrics, the high-stakes nature of the teacher and evaluation system, and the ways that the SLOs will be used and incorporated into instruction. Present few examples to stakeholders and provide little opportunity for reflection and refinement.</p> <p><i>Inadequate professional development can lead to objectives that are not valid and can lead to teacher alienation.</i></p>

Issue	Promising Approach	Approaches to Avoid
Selection of SLOs		
Content of SLOs	<p>Ensure that SLOs capture key dimensions of student learning that are developmentally appropriate, research-based, and predictive of desired learning outcomes.</p> <p><i>Including socio-emotional development in SLOs is important because research has shown that this dimension of development is predictive of future learning.</i></p>	<p>Focus narrowly on one strand of learning or only mathematics and English content and omit key dimensions of socio-emotional development.</p> <p><i>Omitting socio-emotional development can lead to objectives that fail to recognize important dimensions of early learning that fail to predict future learning.</i></p>
Alignment of SLOs with state, district, and school curriculum standards	<p>Ensure that SLOs are aligned with state, district, and school curriculum standards and reflect key domains of learning. Within schools, SLOs should include baseline data to demonstrate the need and potential for growth over time.</p>	<p>Develop SLOs without regard for either explicit or implicit alignment with state, district, or school curriculum standards and without consideration of baseline conditions.</p>
Number of SLOs	<p>Ensure the capturing of a robust, limited list of objectives that are predictive of research-based learning outcomes and key dimensions of learning.</p> <p><i>Selecting a reasonable number of predictive objectives can promote a focus on key dimensions of learning without being overwhelming.</i></p>	<p>Develop dozens of indicators or very few indicators that are narrow in scope and not predictive of desired outcomes.</p> <p><i>Too many objectives can result in an overwhelming system that cannot be easily managed or maintained. Too few objectives can lead to a narrow focus that omits important dimensions of learning.</i></p>
Selection of measures (e.g., early childhood assessment tools) articulated in SLOs	<p>Ensure that measures have established psychometric validity and reliability both for the content and the ages.</p>	<p>Use measures that teachers develop on their own that lack psychometric properties or use measures that are used through the formative assessment process.</p> <p><i>Use of teacher-developed measures can lead to unreliable or invalid data.</i></p>
Articulation of targets	<p>Engage stakeholders, including psychometricians who can assist in setting targets that are based in sound measurement practices. If no psychometric basis exists for targets, articulate ranges and establish a phase-in period to ensure that targets are valid. Targets specifically indicate changes within categories and are stated in ways that can easily show growth over time.</p>	<p>Base arbitrary targets on cut-offs articulated by stakeholders who lack understanding of any potential harm that can result. Set targets that do not disaggregate among groups or within categories. State targets in a manner that does not easily allow teachers to see how growth will be achieved.</p>

Use of SLOs in the early grades is accompanied by some of the same limitations as assessment of younger children in general. Measures still must be identified to demonstrate growth against the learning objective, and validated measures are in short supply. The development of learning objectives requires expertise and familiarity with the early learning standards and trajectories that may be absent at the district or school supervisory level. This expertise and familiarity may be limited in early childhood teachers as well. Because

the SLO approach often is highly individualized, by teacher and by individual children or classrooms, a significant amount of time and resources are required for their development and implementation. To assist in the development of SLOs, increasingly states are developing repositories for approved examples of SLOs across the entire continuum of learning, and the number of samples for the early years is increasing.

As states and districts implement educator evaluation systems for teachers of young

learners, the use of SLOs as a measure of student growth is the most common option. Nevertheless, several other approaches to measuring a teacher's contribution to the child's learning and development might be considered. Where appropriate test data are available for a specified length of time, value-added or student growth measures could be developed. Alternatively, existing value-added or growth measures could be attributed to early childhood educators, to the extent that there is a reasonable case to be made that early childhood educators are contributing to those existing value-added or growth measures. Another option is portfolio evaluations or assessments. Portfolio assessments are comprehensive collections of data such as checklists, self-reflection tools, observation forms, and artifacts of student work designed to document student growth in a given area. The portfolio assessment process relies on teacher expertise as a skilled observer of her or his children, the intentional setting aside of times and places to conduct observations (e.g., learning centers, outdoor play time) or collect data, and the existence of a reliable method to score and interpret the collection of data.

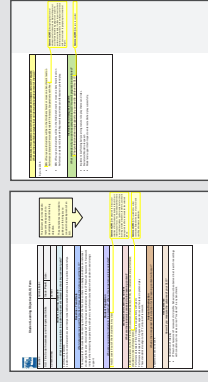
Following is a specific example from Connecticut of an SLO developed in the Social and Emotional Domain for PK children.

It is intended to represent one approach to developing a student learning objective. The annotations are provided to guide your thinking as you consider the development of an SLO:

http://www.connecticutseed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/PreSchool_Social_Awareness_10-4-2013.pdf

SAMPLE OF SLOS FROM SEVERAL STATES AND ACROSS GRADE LEVELS AND LEARNING DOMAINS OR CONTENT AREAS FOR P-3:

- ▶ Connecticut (PK, Social and Emotional): http://www.connecticutseed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/PreSchool_Social_Awareness_10-4-2013.pdf
- ▶ Ohio (PK, English): <http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Academic-Content-Standards/New-Learning-Standards/Student-Learning-Objective-Examples/Student-Learning-Objectives-English-Example/Pre-K-SLO-Revised.pdf.aspx>
- ▶ Maryland (Grade 2, English as a second language): http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/tpc/t/docs/MSDE_SLO_Teacher_ESOL_Sample_Grade2_Rev_4.29.13.pdf
- ▶ Georgia (PK, answers to common questions on SLOs): <http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Teacher-and-Leader-Effectiveness/Documents/2013%20PreK%20SLO%20FAQ.pdf>
- ▶ Reform Support Network Student Learning Objective Library: <https://rtt.grads360.org/#communities/slo/slo-library>
- ▶ GTL Center SLO Resource Library: <http://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/student-learning-objectives>



Stakeholder groups might consider the following guiding questions for Element 2 on the measures of student learning as they work to determine the types of outcome measures to be used in early childhood educator evaluation.

Measures of Student Growth and Assessments

MEASURES OF STUDENT GROWTH AND ASSESSMENTS

1. Are there assessments in place that cover relevant grade levels that could be used for teacher evaluation purposes?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1a. Does the state conduct (or approve for district use) particular large-scale child assessments in the age spans P–3, for example, a kindergarten entry assessment, or a literacy assessment in P–3?
 - What are the measures used for each grade level; how are they similar or different?
 - Are criteria established for determining the quality of the assessment and the quality of its administration?
 - Does the state disaggregate assessment data by grade level for P–3, and by district, school, and classrooms?
- 1b. Are these assessments aligned to the comprehensive sets of child outcomes, program, and professional competency standards for the grades and ages within the educator evaluation system?
 - Do early learning guidelines include all domains of learning and development for P–3?
 - Are the early learning standards aligned to the state’s standards (e.g., Common Core, content-based) and curriculum for K–3?
 - Are program standards in place with consideration given to the impact of different standards of programs operating under different or multiple auspices (e.g., state PK, Head Start, K–3)?
 - Do teacher competency standards for P–3 reflect early learning practices aligned with these standards?

NOTES

DETERMINING APPROPRIATE MEASURES

2. What types of assessments are available or desirable for development in the early learning age-span?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Given the available assessments, what types of measures (value-added or growth measures, SLOs, or portfolios) are feasible?
- What types of measures are most desirable, as determined from policy or legislative requirements, stakeholder input, and technical and reliability considerations?

NOTES

IMPLEMENTING STUDENT LEARNING OR GROWTH OBJECTIVES

- How are states using student learning or child growth objectives within their teacher evaluation systems for teachers of younger children?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Are SLOs to be required in developmental domain areas beyond the typical subject and content areas, and have quality criteria for SLOs been developed that incorporate early learning standards in the developmental domains?
- Will SLO requirements strike a balance of depth and breadth; for example, are they reasonable in number while paying attention to multiple domains of early learning?
- Will the state differentiate or customize SLO guidance materials for P–3?
- Will the state collect sample SLOs for each grade, PK through 3, for all domains of early learning?
- Are early educators engaged in the development and application of SLOs?
- Do districts and teachers have access to valid, reliable, and affordable measures to assess student growth for use within SLOs?
- Does the state allow districts and teachers to set SLO targets? If so, do districts and teachers have access to trend data and the knowledge and skill to set appropriate targets?
- What type of training will teachers and district staff members receive to ensure that they can appropriately develop and implement SLOs (including training related to assessments)?

NOTES

Allocating Weights

After measures of practice and student learning have been developed, identified, and selected, policymakers must determine how much weight each measure will carry in an educator's overall rating. One approach is to use the same weights for all teachers. Adjustments to the allocation of weights also

may be appropriate, particularly in the early grades. It may be more difficult, for example, to attribute student growth directly to early childhood teachers because of the variable nature of learning in the early years. In such scenarios, it may be more appropriate to allocate a higher weight to measures of practice for the summative rating. Another approach is to use multiple measures—for

example, schoolwide SLOs, for the student outcomes portion of the summative rating. In addition, they may depend on the stage of implementation of the evaluation system for the later grades. As Table 3 demonstrates, a number of states are adjusting the weight of student learning measures for early childhood teachers.

Table 3. Components of Teacher Ratings for Early Childhood Teachers

State	Professional Practice	Student Learning/ Growth	Parent/Peer/Student Feedback (Survey)	Schoolwide Measure
Colorado	50%	50% (growth)		
Connecticut	50%	45% (5% of 45 is shared attribution with a school-wide measure)	10 or 5%	
Delaware	80%	20% (growth)		
Hawaii	50%	45%		5%
Illinois	Determined by the district	25% of the rating in the first two years of implementation, and then increases to 30%, in subsequent years. 50% if joint committee cannot agree and defaults to the state model		
Maryland	50%	50% ¹		
Massachusetts	MA does not assign predetermined weights to components of the ratings. The state sets parameters for districts to determine a summative performance rating.		X ²	
New Jersey	85%	15%		
Ohio	50%	50%		Schoolwide measures are an option (determined locally) and can contribute to the 50% weight for student growth.
Pennsylvania	50%	35%		15% ³
Rhode Island	RI does not assign percentages to specific components of the rating and uses a series of matrices to determine a final effectiveness rating based on multiple measures.			

(Connors-Tadros, 2014, p. 11)

¹ In Maryland, for non-tested grades, 20 percent of the SLO is based on a school progress indicator, 15 percent on a district or school SLO, and 15 percent of the SLO at the classroom level. An LEA can propose a model, to be approved by the state, that attributes 35 percent of the teacher rating to SLOs linked to state or local goals.

² The Massachusetts framework will incorporate the use of student feedback in educator ratings and staff feedback in administrator evaluation beginning in FY2014–15. This feedback will be a source of evidence in determining educators' Summative Performance Rating.

³ If school-level data are not available for a teacher based on circumstances, then 50 percent of the rating is based on professional practice and 50 percent on student growth.

Stakeholder groups might consider the following guiding questions when as they work to determine the types of outcome measures and their appropriate weights for use in evaluating teachers of young children.

Guiding Questions

Allocating Weights

1. Will measures be weighted differently for early childhood educators?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Does legislation, regulation, or policies prescribe specific requirements on weighting of measures for early childhood teachers?
- Do states and districts allow flexible weighting of measures to account for differences among PK and K–3 teachers?
- Do research data provide valid information for the weighting of measures for teachers of younger children?
- If weights have not been assigned, can early childhood stakeholders be engaged in setting them?

NOTES

ELEMENT 3

Professional Learning for Evaluators

The nature of early childhood education requires evaluators who are observing early childhood teachers to have specialized knowledge of early learning and to recognize the characteristics of high-quality teaching for this age span. In fact, very few principals have specific preparation or expertise in early childhood teaching. Initial findings from a recent study by CEELo on principal preparation for the early grades indicate that very few states have any formal requirement for early childhood content in licensure for principals responsible for early education programs. Some states have developed policies and programs that acknowledge a need for integrating early childhood content in professional development for principals, but very few have progressed beyond initial stages of providing training or outlining policies (Brown, Squires, Connors-Tadros, & Horowitz, 2014; Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes [CEELO], 2014). Evaluators working with new observation instruments developed for K–12 teachers may need specialized preparation, professional learning opportunities, and additional resources and supports. Professional learning opportunities for evaluators should ensure

that the observation evidence that evaluators collect and analyze accurately reflect effective instructional strategies in early childhood classrooms and settings.

The expansion of requirements for teacher evaluation in P–3 presents an opportunity to develop capacity among building administrators, school principals, and other evaluators in early childhood pedagogy and developmentally appropriate best practices. Principals and administrators play a critical role in supporting good teaching practice. Recognition of distinct criteria of quality teaching in the early grades is essential to both evaluate and support the professional development of early childhood teachers. Principal evaluators must be attuned to good practice in the early grades and be able to provide accurate feedback to teachers in order to help them improve their teaching. As states are extending their educator evaluation systems to the lower grades, they are recognizing the need

for professional learning specific to early childhood for evaluators and are expanding guidance and resources to address that need. Professional learning for evaluators should comprehensively address the multiple learning standards across the multiple domains of learning, as well as indicators of quality classroom and environmental settings for the early ages. In addition, principals and evaluators should be well versed in the modified or augmented teacher practice rubrics that show them what to look for as evidence of learning and sound practice in the early grades. North Carolina provides an example of how the teacher evaluation development process became a mechanism to enhance principals' understanding of early childhood education in the state through the provision of resource documents and professional learning.

“Despite the potential for early learning to support student success and the expansion of state pre-K programs, few elementary school leaders have professional backgrounds or training in early education. As a result, principals often are not well equipped to evaluate P–3 teachers, support improvements in teaching and learning, or guide teachers in using curricula and assessment in the earliest grades. Because the long-term effect of early education depends on high-quality teaching, it is critical that elementary school principals have the capacity to boost P–3 teacher effectiveness.” (National Governors Association, 2013, p. 3).

Some states are coordinating regional education networks and private technical assistance intermediaries to develop professional learning material, utilize coaches, and provide resources to districts. A few examples are the following:

- Pennsylvania's Regional Keys (regional service areas) provide training on early childhood policies throughout the state to teachers and administrators.
- Hawaii funds six educational support staff members (many former principals) to work with regional superintendents to support implementing all policy reforms, including teacher evaluation with early childhood teachers.
- Hawaii, Illinois, Ohio, and Rhode Island have developed online professional development modules, including videos, to support the educator evaluation system implementation, although they are not specific to early childhood.
- In Massachusetts, a series of four workshops with detailed facilitation guides was designed by the state for districts to adapt for training with their teachers. The state is providing training subsidies to allow districts to use approved vendors to deliver evaluator-training modules.
- Colorado has developed an implementation toolkit to guide districts through a process of identifying readiness, implementation, and transformation of the system.

State stakeholders might consider the following questions as they develop supports for teacher evaluators:

NORTH CAROLINA.

In collaboration with the University of North Carolina–Charlotte, North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction (DPI) developed a PK–K version of their initial statewide performance evaluation system in 2008; when the new statewide evaluation system, the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process (NCTEP), was adopted in 2010, the DPI developed the *Resource Manual for Administrators and Principals Supervising and Evaluating Teachers of Young Children* as a support to the NCTEP system. The resource manual serves as a valuable tool for important early childhood concepts, practices, and resources.

DPI and the university also support additional professional learning opportunities through a two-phase training provided to every school system in the state.

- ▶ Phase one involves a full-day training during the workweek to introduce the manual and indicators of quality practices.
- ▶ Phase two involves participants taking what was learned back to their districts and programs and applying it through program and educator observations. After a period of a month or so, the final phase of the program assembles participants to share their findings, address questions and concerns, and provide additional resources.

When administration of the More at Four Program shifted from DPI to the Division of Child Development and Early Education in the state's Department of Health and Human Services, training also shifted to the new agency. Although the program is open to principals, most participants are from Head Start and Child Care, possibly as a result of this shift in agency. Also, North Carolina has dedicated funds from its Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge award to develop a Directors' Leadership Academy, but the target audience is directors of PK and child care programs, rather than elementary principals (Brown et al., 2014).

Professional Learning for Evaluators

STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR EVALUATORS

1. Has the state established requirements for professional learning for evaluators of early childhood teachers?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Do the certification requirements for evaluators include content that is specific to early childhood education and teachers?
- Are the state and district personnel who are leading professional learning for evaluators skilled at preparing them to recognize and address grade-level differences and nuances of best practice across the developmental continuum? (For example, can train-the-trainer sessions also address P–3?)
- Does the state require and provide professional learning for administrators and teachers on the educator evaluation system for early education?

NOTES

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR EVALUATORS

2. Are statewide or districtwide professional learning sessions conducted for teacher evaluators?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Do the sessions assess the levels of rater agreement and reliability for evaluators of P–3 teachers?
- Can existing and ongoing professional learning for evaluators be modified to include specific guidance on early education best practices and any modifications to teacher practice rubrics for the early grades?
- Do professional learning opportunities for evaluators provide exemplars or evidence of quality teaching specific to the P–3 continuum and developmental standards?
- If peer evaluators are allowed, can grade-level teacher leaders (that is, trained early childhood specialists) be enlisted in the evaluation process?

NOTES

ELEMENT 4

Professional Learning for Teachers

At the same time that states are launching training to implement educator evaluation systems, they also are providing professional learning to teachers on implementing the new early childhood and K–3 standards to effectively align standards to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. To effectively implement the educator evaluation system, teachers and evaluators (often school administrators) both need professional learning opportunities focused on how to support early childhood teachers in developing sound SLOs based on standards. Some state leaders acknowledge that implementing SLOs sheds further light on the need for an increase in professional learning and support to teachers on setting

goals that are based on standards and on aligning standards to curriculum and instruction. Further, whether teachers are using observational measures to assess young children’s learning or standardized measures, significant training and guidance is needed to ensure that scoring and interpretation are consistent and reliable across teachers and time (Connors-Tadros, Horowitz, 2014).

Although authorities and experts wrestle with the complexities of applying teacher evaluation policies to the early learning continuum, most agree that the overarching purpose of the systems should be to improve the quality of teaching. If well designed and implemented, the educator evaluation system should point to both strengths and areas for improvement in teaching among early childhood educators. The systems should provide information and guidance on the supports and professional development needed to improve educator practice. Well-designed teacher evaluation can provide useful information for targeting professional development opportunities on the teacher’s individual needs as identified by the evaluation process. Professional learning that engages teachers in reflecting on their own practice, is job-embedded and sustained, and involves coaching, mentoring, or observation of exemplary and gifted

colleagues is a proven model that is more likely to result in improvements in practice (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2009a).

Professional development should be a top priority for all states. The purpose of professional development is to improve

“Common among all these models of teacher professional development is a highly focused target for teacher behavior or knowledge that has a demonstrable link to student achievement. This behavior and knowledge can then be the target of professional development activities for teachers and can be directly assessed for its impact on these very behaviors or knowledge. In this way, effective professional development, whether knowledge-, skill-, or curriculum-focused, reflects a very tight coupling, or alignment, between the activities in which teachers engage to improve their knowledge and skill and the actual student achievement and social behaviors that are the ultimate goals of professional development.

States and federal agencies should direct that:

- ▶ Valid assessments of teacher performance be included as part of teacher preparation and certification systems
- ▶ Direct assessments actually sample real teaching behaviors as they are experienced by students (observations or student surveys)
- ▶ Valid assessments have demonstrable links to student achievement and other outcomes.”

(CASTL, 2007, p. 3)

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut’s 3 to 3 Institute is a collaborative effort between the state’s new Office of Early Childhood and the Connecticut Association of Schools, the state principals’ association, which has taken an active interest in supporting professional development for career principals, and other school leaders in jointly sponsored Getting PK to Grade Three Right symposia. http://www.casciac.org/scripts/show_picswp.cgi?PREKTHURGRADE3RIGHT2011

teaching, but it also provides an opportunity to ensure that all teachers and administrators understand the requirements of the educator evaluation system and know how to use the measures, tools, and other resources to ensure quality control and equity across schools and districts. Though most evaluator trainings are not focused on early childhood, Delaware and Illinois are developing training specific to early childhood for evaluators in the coming year.

To advance professional learning, states typically develop websites, webinars, and workshops to share information and resources with teachers, administrators, and the public. Examples of professional development strategies from selected states include the following:

- In Maryland, the state staff delivered more than 200 workshops to superintendents, principals, and teachers on the implementation of the educator evaluation system in the past year.
- Connecticut, Delaware, and Illinois are supporting online platforms for teachers and administrators to access professional development, track certifications for required training, and engage with other teachers on strategies to set and achieve student learning goals. These online professional networks are customized by states, and so states can develop resources specific to early childhood focused for the platform.

- The Pennsylvania Keys (regional service areas) are planning stakeholder meetings, producing training and guidance, and developing other trainings to ensure that early childhood teachers and their administrators have the tools for fair and valid evaluation of early childhood teachers.

States also are enlisting a variety of stakeholder groups, including teachers and administrators, to inform the development of resources to support implementing the educator evaluation system with early childhood teachers.

State stakeholders might consider the following questions as they consider the provision of professional learning supports as they design educator evaluation systems for teachers of young children:

SELECTION OF WEBSITES FOR STATE EDUCATOR EVALUATION SYSTEMS WITH PROFESSIONAL TRAININGS AND SUPPORTS

- ▶ Connecticut's System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) <http://www.connecticutseed.org/>
- ▶ Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS) <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/csa/dpasii/>
- ▶ Colorado State Model Evaluation System for Teachers (SMES) <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/smes-teacher>
- ▶ Illinois Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) <http://www.isbe.net/peac/>
- ▶ Maryland Teacher and Principal Evaluation <http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/tpe/>

Guiding Questions

Professional Learning for Teachers

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR TEACHERS

1. How do evaluators help teachers use data from child measures to identify areas of professional learning?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do administrators ensure that funds exist for substitute teachers for educators to attend professional development?
- How are the ratings on specific components of the teacher professional practice measures used to set targets for best teaching practices in the P–3 continuum?
- Do evaluators base the identification of strengths and weaknesses on best practices in teaching young learners that conform with state and national standards?
- Do the multiple measures and elements used for teacher evaluation provide specific feedback to the teacher that is critical for individualizing improvement strategies?
- Does the state or district provide sufficient resources and flexibility to individualize professional development and supports on the basis of teacher evaluation data?
- Does the state or district require basing the development of individual professional development goals on the evaluation assessments?
- Is aggregated teacher evaluation information used for identifying professional development needs across the school, district, or state?

NOTES

Conclusion

If designed and implemented well, teacher evaluation can effect systemic improvements in early childhood programs and systems. At the foundation, implementation of new educator evaluation systems in P–3 could catalyze the development and adoption of

more comprehensive system of aligned standards addressing the developmental trajectories of early learning. Beyond the individual professional learning implications discussed in this supplemental guide, aggregated state and district P–3 evaluation data (if validated) should and could affect planning and decision making for

professional preparation and development on a wider scale, both districtwide and statewide. They also could have consequences on the development of new credential and certification progressions that reflect both learning, core knowledge, and competency standards in the P–3 continuum.

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Appendix

Practical Example

Overview of Rhode Island's Evaluation System		Link to Citation
Question	Answer	Comments
System Name The Rhode Island Model Teacher Evaluation and Support System		http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation.aspx
Implementation Status of TE System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Development ■ Pilot of field test ■ Partial implementation ■ Full implementation 	Full Implementation	5 approved educator evaluation systems
Implementation Schedule	Field tested in 5 classrooms in 2011; full implementation in 2012-2013	State funded PK will participate FY2015
Which Early Grades Are Included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Birth-age 3 ■ Preschool/PK ■ Kindergarten through 3rd Grade ■ Other 	Kindergarten through 3rd Grade	Preschool special education teachers (ages 3-5) are currently included in system; plans to expand PK teachers in FY2015.
Overview of Process		
Policy Mandated By <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Legislation in statute or regulation ■ Race to the Top (K-12) ■ ESEA/NCLB Flexibility Waiver ■ Other (Explain) 	Legislation in statute or regulation	Legislation: in regulations, 2009 Board of Regents. RI will be linking their RTT assessment project to TE at a later date.

Source: Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes. (2014). *Fast fact: Information and resources on developing state policy on kindergarten entry assessment (KEA)*. Retrieved from <http://ceelo.org/ceelo-products/>

Overview of Rhode Island's Evaluation System

Question

State approach-

- Single Statewide Model
- State Gives District Several Models to Choose From (with SEA Approval)
- District Developed with Some Requirements/Approval From State

Answer

State Model but districts could develop their own model with some requirements/ approval by state

A district-developed system must include assurances of compliance with statewide requirements for evaluation systems, descriptions of any variations by role categories (teachers, administrators, support professionals), and detailed documentation of evaluation instruments. The state must approve a district-developed model.

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Evaluation-District-Designed-Models/District-Guidelines-for-DDES-March-2012-final.pdf>

Link to Citation

Purpose/Goals of Educator evaluation system

- Compensation
- Promotion/Tenure Decisions
- Professional Development
- Termination
- Other

- Compensation
- Professional Development
- Other

At the state level, results are used to primarily inform the certification renewal process. At the district level, data should inform the full range of human capital decisions.
Other: change district needs based on feedback, personnel decisions made at local level, only one or two districts use for compensation, mostly for certification purposes, if receives ineffective rating for entire term, cannot renew certification

Components of Teacher Evaluation for Early Childhood Education Staff. Enter percentage for those that apply.

- Assessment of Teacher Practice
- Student Growth/Value Added Model
- Student Achievement
- Survey (Parent/Student)
- Schoolwide measure
- Other

- Assessment of Teacher Practice
- Student Growth/value Added Model
- Student Achievement

Assessment of teacher practice: Professional practice and responsibilities, modified Danielson
Student growth: Using RI Growth Model for tested grades 3-7 in ELA and Math
Student Achievement: "Contributions to student achievement and progress toward academic goals and learning standards" Professional Practice and Foundations, Student Learning, sole way of evaluating impact of student learning, tested and nontested

<http://legisweb.state.wy.us/InterimCommittee/2012/RIModel.pdf>

Overview of Rhode Island's Evaluation System		
Question	Answer	Comments
<p>Are K-12 and ECE teachers weighted the same?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Locally determined 	No	Because of local decision-making, it seems they would not be weighted same.
<p>What type of Early Childhood Staff are licensed by the State and Employed by the School District.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Birth to Age Three <input type="checkbox"/> State Preschool/PK <input type="checkbox"/> IDEA Part B <input type="checkbox"/> IDEA Part C <input type="checkbox"/> Other (parent educators, Title I, Child Find, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Preschool/PK 	Other ECE providers not part of state PK system; Head Start, child care
Measures and Methods		
<p>How are teachers rated in the TE System?</p>	<p>“Highly Effective”, “Effective”, “Developing”, “Ineffective”</p>	
<p>Is professional development provided to teachers based on their rating on TE system?</p>	Yes	<p>All teachers develop a Professional Growth Plan at beginning of year. A Performance Improvement Plan provides intensive support for teachers who are not meeting expectations; may be utilized at any time during the school year, but must be put in place if a teacher receives a final effectiveness rating of Developing or Ineffective. Additionally, feedback with conferences with evaluators serves as another form of PD.</p>
		<p>http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Evaluation-Education-Eval-Main-Page/Teacher-Model-GB-Edition-II-FINAL.pdf</p>

Overview of Rhode Island's Evaluation System

Link to Citation

Comments

Answer

Question

Student Learning/ Achievement

- State mandates/approves/provides options of 1 or more standardized measure of student learning (note domains & give instrument name)
- State allows formative assessments of other observation measures of children's learning performed by teachers (note domains & give instrument name)
- Student Learning Objectives

- State allows formative assessments of other observation measures of children's learning performed by teachers (note domains & give instrument name)
- Student Learning Objectives

Formative Assessments: Third party, district, or regional "common" assessments, or assessments created by the individual teacher if appropriate.

Student Learning Outcomes: For nontested grades, grade-level teams set SLOs aligned to district and school priorities. Teachers are responsible for two to four SLOs. There are both school- and classroom-level goals. Provides some examples online on SLOs for grades 1-2, and special education. Must be able to be measured for summative assessment.

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/StudentLearningOutcomeObjectives.aspx>

Student Growth

- Value added or growth models
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Other methods allowed (portfolios, work sampling, etc.)
- Assessment tools used

- Value added or growth models
- Other methods allowed (portfolios, work sampling, etc.)

If using SLOs, what are they based on/ anchored to?

- Standards
- Assessment
- Item Bank

Guide for Teachers Writing Student Learning Objectives & Indicators of a Strong SLO, tied to curriculum, embedded measures/assessments

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/StudentLearningOutcomeObjectives.aspx>

Overview of Rhode Island's Evaluation System

Question	Answer	Comments	Link to Citation
<p>Observation of Teacher Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of observations: How many observations annually? How many for tenured vs. nontenured? ■ Announced: How many of these observations are announced ■ Unannounced: How many of the observations are unannounced ■ Who conducts observations: Who is the evaluator? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At least 4 ■ At least 1 ■ 4-6 ■ Local decision, varies by district 	<p>Evaluators selected based on knowledge and expertise and are assigned based on subject matter knowledge and grade-level experience required to use specific evaluation instruments. Evaluators are trained on implementation of district's instruments and are reviewed for accuracy on regular basis. Evaluator decided at local level.</p> <p>For the RIDE-led model, all teachers are required to be observed annually, but the minimum requirement is determined by the differentiated evaluation process for teachers.</p>	<p>http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Evaluation/Ed-Eval-Standards/EdEvalStandards.pdf</p>
<p>Measure of Teacher Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Charlotte Danielson, <i>Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching</i> ■ State teacher standards ■ National professional standards (NAEYC, etc.) ■ CLASS ■ Marzano ■ State developed (if so, name) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Charlotte Danielson, <i>Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching</i> ■ State developed 	<p>Rhode Island uses a modified Danielson Model, as well as the state-developed Rhode Island Professional Practices and Foundations. The RI Model uses Domains 2 and 3 from Danielson for the Professional Practice rubric. A separate rubric was developed locally to assess a teacher's professional responsibilities/foundations.</p>	
<p>Training</p> <p>Is training provided for those who will be evaluating/assessing teacher practice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How to administer child assessments (or other measures of student learning), note frequency of reliability training ■ How to use assessments and observation data to improve practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How to administer child assessments (or other measures of student learning), note frequency of reliability training ■ How to use assessments and observation data to improve practice 	<p>RIDE expects all evaluators to complete all ongoing training. We report training completion/attendance data back to districts</p> <p>Training materials are detailed online</p>	<p>http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation/In-PersonTraining.aspx</p>

Overview of Rhode Island's Evaluation System

Link to Citation

Comments

Answer

Question

If training is provided, is a certification required? If so, provide details.

Local Decision

Professional Development on TE System Funded/Provided By

Many districts have additional training requirements at the local level.

- State
- District
- Other

- State
- Other

Other Information

Does the State Have a Data System To Link Student Outcomes to Individual Teachers?

Yes

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/state-rules-for-linking-student-and-teacher.pdf>

Is there a formal advisory group, and does it include ECE professionals?

Yes, RI Model Advisory Groups. Includes elementary teachers/principals, but whether early grades represented is unclear.

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/EducatorEvaluation.aspx>

Stakeholder Involvement

Not Applicable

Independent Evaluation/Validation

Technical advisory committee worked closely with the Center for Assessment to develop system, but no formal validation is anticipated.

Additional Information

Rhode Island's Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) provides further guidance on the selection of assessment tools

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Assessment/ComprehensiveAssessmentSystemCAS.aspx>

Overview of Rhode Island's Evaluation System

Link to Citation

Question

Answer

Comments

Modifications to Process For

- Special Education
- English language Learners
- Special subject (art, physical end)
- Co-teachers and other support staff
- Sampling some or all children, schools, districts

- Special Education
- English language Learners

In some cases, evidence may need to be differentiated for English Language Learners to account for how they currently demonstrate content skills and knowledge (this can be found in the WIDA CAN-DO Descriptors by domain and grade level cluster). All educators should ensure their content targets for English Language Learners are informed by students' language comprehension and communication skills.

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