



Information and Resources on Developing State Policy on Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA): UPDATE

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INFORMATION REQUEST

In 2014, CEELO was asked to provide information on how other states are approaching the development and implementation of KEA as part of a comprehensive assessment system. Specifically, the request asked for information about KEA measures used by other states, the processes states have used to develop their KEA state policy, and how states are supporting the training and professional development of practitioners and administrators in various settings. This Fast Fact is an update of the February 2014 [Fast Fact: Information and Resources on Developing State Policy on Kindergarten Entry Assessment \(KEA\)](#).

State's Goal

The state that initially requested the data that was compiled in this Fast Fact had received supplemental Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) funding to develop a policy to implement a kindergarten entry assessment process. As RTT-ELC funding comes to an end, the challenge for the states will be to find funding streams and to continue the KEA work.

What We Learned

The lessons we learned include current ones along with those we first identified in 2014.

- Development and implementation of state policies to support developmentally appropriate, valid and useful kindergarten entry assessment requires a multi-stage long-term process.
- It is important to engage diverse stakeholders, use research, link assessments to goals, and

Methodology

In 2014, CEELO conducted online searches of state education agency websites to find current state policies on the development and implementation of a kindergarten entry assessment (KEA). We also performed secondary analysis of data reported in the 2013 State of Preschool Yearbook and reviewed key documents produced by national organizations and states on the development and implementation of KEAs. Finally, we analyzed the findings to determine if key themes arose regarding the development and implementation of KEAs.

Building upon this work, in 2017, self-reported state data on KEA tools were gathered from the annual NIEER 2016 State of Preschool Yearbook. CEELO also accessed and reviewed the Center for Standards and Assessment Implementation (CSAI)'s interactive map, which provides a snapshot of states' kindergarten entry assessment tools. Additionally, in preparation for the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)'s 2017 *Action Network on Implementing Statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessments*, a scan of state's KEA status was conducted. This scan provided another source of links and data that were reviewed for this Fast Fact.

develop a plan to support training and professional development when developing a KEA.

- Defining and operationalizing the term “school readiness” is critically important to assure the KEA measure accurately assesses key domains of development.
- It is important to determine how data from the KEA will be used and who will be using the data when developing policies and guidance for a new KEA.
- It is important to consider up front whether the state plans to link KEA data with their state’s longitudinal data system.

Recommendations for Stakeholders

- Determine the goals, guiding principles, and purposes for the KEA in relation to the state’s goals for children and in concert with a comprehensive approach to early childhood assessment.
- Review the validity and reliability of existing tools and consider the alignment of existing measures with the state’s definition of school readiness *after* engaging in a process of gaining stakeholder buy-in of key definitions and domains.
- Transparent and frequent communication, with all stakeholders, including teacher unions, parents, legislators, educators and other stakeholders is important to ensure a broad understanding and support for the KEA.
- Assure professional development and supports are in place so that administrators, teachers, and parents can use KEA information to support children’s development.

What is a Kindergarten Entry Assessment?

The U.S. Department of Education defines **Kindergarten Entry Assessment** as an assessment that:

- Is administered to children during the first few months of their admission into kindergarten;
- Covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- Is valid and reliable for its intended purposes and for the target populations and aligned to the Early Learning and Development Standards.

Federal guidance on the purpose of the assessment suggests that “results of the assessment should be used to inform efforts to close the school readiness gap at kindergarten entry, to inform instruction in the early elementary school grades, and to inform parents about their children’s status and involve them in decisions about their children’s education. This assessment should not be used to prevent children’s entry into kindergarten or as a single measure for high-stakes decisions.”

How Many States have Kindergarten Entry Assessments?

Since 2010, a growing number of states have developed, piloted, implemented or revised their kindergarten entry assessments. Much of this work has been spurred by legislation and funding opportunities, (e.g. Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge funding and Enhanced Assessment Grants).

- In 2010, just 7 states (Alaska, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, and Vermont) collected KEA data for the purpose of aggregating data at the state level.
- In 2012, 25 states required assessments during the kindergarten year. Of these, 12 reported assessing children at entry, 10 during the school year, and three at both at entry and during. Some states such as Iowa, Maine, Oklahoma, Vermont, and Wisconsin offer kindergarten for four-year olds but the NIEER Yearbook questions do not ask about these separately from the regular kindergarten.

- In 2013, 34 states described plans for a KEA in their RTT-ELC applications; and 9 states that did not submit a RTT-ELC application have some type of KEA.
- In 2013, three Enhancement Assessment Grants were [funded](#) to develop or improve KEAs: Maryland-Ohio Consortium; North Carolina Consortium; and Texas Consortium.

Table 1 provides updated information as of June 2017 on all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Most states are either implementing, developing, or revising a KEA. Some states require a KEA, but it is local decision to determine the tool and others only require a literacy or a diagnostic screening to be conducted. Additional trends include:

- KEA is part of a K-3 assessment system (Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina)
- KEA is only required for some schools
- KEA policy is currently being developed and/or revised

What Assessment Tools Do States Require School Districts to Use?

State kindergarten assessment policy is continuing to evolve as are the tools selected to assess kindergarten readiness. In 2014, we found the most common policy used in selecting a tool was to allow localities to determine the measure (12 states) followed by a policy that required the use of state-developed assessments (7). In 2017, the following was found:

- Most states use a commercially developed tool, typically with modifications. The two most common tools are:
 - Teaching Strategies GOLD® (13 states included TS GOLD® as the KEA or one of the KEA assessment tools)
 - Desired Results Developmental Profile (6 states)
- Seven states provide a list of tools for schools and/or districts to select or that are recommended
- Four states are in the process of changing assessment tools

Conclusion

Similar to 2014, states and D.C. are in varying stages of implementing kindergarten entry assessment policies. In addition, there is variability in the assessment instruments used, how data are used, and areas of children’s learning that are assessed. Since 2014, there have been some changes. More states are using a KEA. In addition, states tend to select a required KEA tool or a provide a list of approved tools to school districts, rather than leave the choice to school districts. Finally, KEA policy is rapidly evolving, as evidenced by the number of states changing assessment tools or currently developing new tools.

Figure 1. KEA Implementation by State

State	Name of State KEA/ Initiative	KEA Instrument(s)	Mandated/ Voluntary	Additional KEA Resources
Alabama	Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Teaching Strategies GOLD®	Voluntary	Information about the GOLD® Pre-K training
Alaska	Alaska Developmental Profile	Alaska Developmental Profile	Mandated	2017 results ; Alaska State Literacy Blueprint
Arizona		Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (under development)		First Things First website
Arkansas	Kindergarten Readiness Program	Qualls Early Learning Inventory	Mandated	Kindergarten Readiness memo ; Kindergarten Readiness Indicator Checklist ; K-2 Assessment website
California		Desired Results Developmental Profile- Kindergarten (DRDP) (last year required 2016-2017)	Voluntary	Kindergarten in CA website ; information about Desired Results
Colorado	Kindergarten School Readiness Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching Strategies GOLD® Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) HighScope Child Observation Record (COR) Riverside Early Assessment of Learning (REAL) (last year 2016-2016) 	Mandated	Resources for Kindergarten Teachers and School Leaders; recorded webinar , and information about assessment choices and school readiness plans ; and Kindergarten School Readiness Initiative Guidance: 2015-2016
Connecticut	Fall Kindergarten Entrance Inventory	Fall Kindergarten Entrance Inventory (CT is part of Maryland-Ohio Consortium developing a new tool)	Voluntary	Types and Purposes of Student Assessment in Education: An FAQ
Delaware	Delaware Early Learning Survey	Teaching Strategies GOLD®	Mandated	DE-ELS Fact Sheet 2016-2017 ; 2016-2017 Updates and Improvements ; DE-ELS implementation webinar
District of Columbia		DC is part of the North Carolina Consortium developing a KEA		North Carolina’s application for the EAG
Florida	Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener	STAR Early Literacy® (starting in 2017)	Mandated	In 2017-2018 , FLKRS will be administered through Star Early Literacy®, which will replace the FLKRS Work Sampling System (FLKRS-WSS).
Georgia	Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)	Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills	Mandated	GKIDS resources ; state wide results 2009-2016 ; components of GKIDS, known as Readiness Check

State	Name of State KEA/ Initiative	KEA Instrument(s)	Mandated/ Voluntary	Additional KEA Resources
Hawaii	Hawaii Individualized Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (HIKIDS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hawaii State School Readiness Assessment (HSSRA) Teaching Strategies GOLD® 	Voluntary	Information about HSSRA ; HIKIDS pilot
Idaho	Idaho Reading Initiative	Idaho Reading Indicator (only assesses literacy)	Mandated	Idaho Reading Indicator and Literacy Intervention FAQ ;
Illinois	Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS)	Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)	Mandated	KIDStech is the data system; resources for teachers and families ; KIDS (2015) User Guide
Indiana	Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting of Kindergarten Readiness (ISTAR-KR)	Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting of Kindergarten Readiness	Mandated	Getting Starting using ISTAR-KR video ; administrator guide ; parent consent form
Iowa	Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST)	Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST)	Mandated (literacy)	FAST Manual ; FAST FAQs ; Early Literacy Implementation website ; technical assistance guidance
Kansas	Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot (fall 2017)	Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3; ASQ-SE)	Mandated	Early Learning Factoids , including kindergarten readiness; parent information letter ; Kindergarten Readiness FAQs for Administrators and Teachers ; Kindergarten Readiness Fact Sheet
Kentucky	Common Kindergarten Entry Screen	BRIGANCE Kindergarten Screen III	Mandated	Kentucky's Common Kindergarten Entry Screen Implementation Guide 2017-18 ; kindergarten school readiness definition
Louisiana		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching Strategies GOLD® Developing Skills Checklist Developing Skills Checklist (2017-2018 last year this will be used as KEA option) 	Mandated	DIBELS guide to administration ; Kindergarten-3rd Grade Assessments Fact Sheet ; classroom supports website
Maine		<p>Maine is part of the North Carolina Consortium developing a KEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching Strategies GOLD® (pilot for PEG sites) 		Kindergarten screening in special education website ; KEA pilot information
Maryland	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment	Mandated	Johns Hopkins Center for Technology and Education provides FAQs and technical support contacts for KRA.

State	Name of State KEA/ Initiative	KEA Instrument(s)	Mandated/ Voluntary	Additional KEA Resources
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching Strategies GOLD® Work Sampling System (WSS) 	Mandated (full-day kindergarten classrooms)	MKEA FAQs ; options for FY2016 implementation; training resources ; student data
Michigan	Kindergarten Entry Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching Strategies GOLD® (last year 2016-2017) Kindergarten Entry Status Observation of Skills (KEOS) (fall 2017) 		KEA FAQs
Minnesota	Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) Teaching Strategies GOLD® Work Sampling System (WSS) 	Mandated	KEP resources for programs; KEP objectives by tool
Mississippi	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) part of the Mississippi K-3 Assessment Support System (MKAS²)	STAR Early Literacy®	Mandated	MKAS ² update presented to BOE
Missouri	School Readiness Tool	Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)	Voluntary	Missouri DRDP guidance ; teacher workshop calendar
Montana		The only required K assessment evaluates English language proficiency		Montana Comprehensive Assessment System website
Nebraska		District choice	Mandated	Kindergarten website
Nevada	Silver State KIDS (Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide)	Brigance	Voluntary	Kindergarten website ; Nevada State and District Assessment Survey
New Hampshire	Kindergarten Readiness Indicators (KRI)	Two tools were cross referenced with KRI and recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching Strategies GOLD® Work Sampling System (WSS) 	Voluntary	Early Childhood Education (birth-3 rd grade) website ; kindergarten readiness presentation

State	Name of State KEA/ Initiative	KEA Instrument(s)	Mandated/ Voluntary	Additional KEA Resources
New Jersey	New Jersey Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NJKEA)	Teaching Strategies GOLD®	Voluntary	Five kindergarten seminars were conducted in 2015-2016; New Jersey Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NJKEA): Information Packet: 2016-2017
New Mexico	Kindergarten Observation Tool (KOT)	Kindergarten Observation Tool	Mandated	There are a series of KOT webinar trainings and FAQs and manuals for administering the KOT.
New York		A KEA is not required however districts must administer diagnostic screening to all new students in Pre-K-2.		
North Carolina	North Carolina Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NC KEA) part of NC's K-3 Formative Assessment Process	North Carolina Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NC KEA)	Mandated	NC KEA pilot wiki website ; Office of Early Learning website
North Dakota		North Dakota is part of the North Carolina Consortium developing a KEA		KEA website
Ohio	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment	Mandated	KRA Fact Sheet ; student data
Oklahoma		Early Literacy Quick Assessments (ELQA)	Mandated reading assessment	Early Childhood and Family Education website ; Reading Sufficiency Act information
Oregon	Oregon Kindergarten Assessment	Oregon Kindergarten Assessment	Mandated	KEA resources ; 2016-2017 KEA FAQs
Pennsylvania	Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI)	Kindergarten Entry Inventory	Mandated (only Title 1 and Priority Schools)	2015 KEI summary report ; KEI landing page ; KEI infographic
Rhode Island		Rhode Island is part of the North Carolina Consortium developing a KEA		Early childhood assessment website
South Carolina	First Steps to School Readiness Initiative	Developmental Reading Assessment 2nd Edition (DRA2) (last year 2016-2017) Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) (fall 2017)	Mandated	SCDE assessment website; pre-K and K readiness assessments website

State	Name of State KEA/ Initiative	KEA Instrument(s)	Mandated/ Voluntary	Additional KEA Resources
South Dakota		South Dakota does not publicly report the use of a KEA.		
Tennessee	Kindergarten Entry Inventory (starting in fall 2017)	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (field test 2016-2017) Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) (fall 2017, only PDG and a few volunteer districts)	Mandated (only PDG)	2016-2017 required student assessments; assessment website
Texas	Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Pilot	TX-KEA FAQs ; TEA assessment website
Utah	Kindergarten Entry and Exit Profile (KEEP)	Kindergarten Entry and Exit Profile (KEEP)	Mandated	KEEP administration manual
<u>Vermont</u>	Ready for Kindergarten! Survey (R4K!S)	Teaching Strategies GOLD®	Mandated	2015-2016 data ; R4K!S fast facts
Virginia	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment	Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Kindergarten (PALS-K) Work Sampling System (WSS) (optional)	Mandated	School Readiness website ; University of Virginia’s PALS-K website
Washington	Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS)	Teaching Strategies GOLD®	Mandated	There are a variety of state support and resources for WaKIDS, including teacher checklists and guidance; recorded webinars; and information flyers directed at principals.
West Virginia	Early Learning Reporting System	A KEA is not required, but a formative assessment process		Office of Early Learning K-2 resources ; pre-K and K online resources
Wisconsin		Districts chose own assessment to meet state mandate of measuring “fundamental literacy skills”	Mandated	Assessments of reading readiness FAQs ; Comprehensive and Aligned System for Early Childhood Screening and Assessment: Wisconsin’s Blueprint, 3rd Edition (2016) ; Early Childhood Advisory Council website ; kindergarten admission FAQs
Wyoming		Wyoming does not publicly report the use of a KEA.		

Resources and Links

[Case Studies of the Early Implementation of Kindergarten Entry Assessments](#). (2016). This is a case study on MD, OR, PA, and WA's KEA

[Considerations for 'Rebranding' Kindergarten Readiness Assessment](#). (2014) This Fast Fact explores the branding of kindergarten readiness assessments in different states. It examines how states developed their early childhood assessment systems and the funds that have supported the development and implementation of assessments. Also included is the name and description of the instrument or system used for kindergarten readiness assessment in six states.

[Fast Fact: Assessment Tools Used in Kindergarten Entry Assessments \(KEAs\) STATE SCAN](#). (2017). This State Scan identifies the 16 states that are implementing a Kindergarten entry assessment (KEA) that are using a commercially developed tool as part of their KEA system; the three state consortia funded through the EAG are developing a Kindergarten measure; and the 13 states that have created their own KEA, sometimes in conjunction with a commercially made tool.

[Fast Fact: Information and Resources on Developing State Policy on Kindergarten Entry Assessment \(KEA\)](#). (2014). This Fast Fact provides information on how states are approaching the development and implementation of KEA as part of a comprehensive assessment system. Includes links to states' KEA policies and resources.

[How Kindergarten Entry Assessments are Used in Public Schools and How They Correlate with Spring Assessments](#). (2016). This study examined how public schools used Kindergarten entry assessments, what types of public schools used Kindergarten entry assessments, and whether the use of Kindergarten entry assessments was correlated with student early learning assessment scores in reading and math in spring of the Kindergarten year. This [brief](#) summarizes the study's findings.

[Using Teaching Strategies GOLD® within a Kindergarten Entry Assessment System](#). (2016). This Fast Facts describes how states are using GOLD® as part of their KEA.

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