**Tool to Guide Decisions Regarding Kindergarten Entry Assessment Selection and Implementation**

**About the Tool**

The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) developed the Kindergarten Entry Assessment Tool to assist state stakeholders with the process of selecting and implementing the most appropriate Kindergarten Entry Assessment based on a consensus process of engaging key stakeholders.

**Who Should use the Tool?**

Stakeholders considering the selection or refinement of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment can use the tool to guide a consensus decision-making process. CEELO encourages stakeholders to engage an external facilitator to guide a process of garnering stakeholder agreement. In our work, we have found that those responsible for the process of selecting, implementing, or revising a Kindergarten Entry Assessment are challenged when stakeholders are not engaged early in the decision-making process and are not in agreement. Key stakeholders include state policymakers, district leaders, teachers, family members, members of the general public and taxpayers and include early care and education as well as elementary school perspectives.

**Questions to Consider**

The tool includes questions in the following areas related to stakeholder *desires* regarding*:*  A) the purpose and audiences for the assessment, B) the children who will be assessed, C) the supports needed to phase in the assessment, D) training of those administering the assessment and using the results; E) reporting of results, and F) costs.

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| **Area** | **Key questions** |
| **Purpose and Audience** | How does the purpose and intended audience affect the cost, training, or reporting?  How important is it to have consensus on the purposes and intended audiences of the assessment? Who should be included in determining the purpose and audience? |
| **Children to be assessed** | Do all children need to be assessed? When should they be assessed?  When is it appropriate to use a sample of children instead of all children? |
| **Implementation phases** | What order or types of phases should state consider to increase buy-in of teachers, parents, districts, and other stakeholders? |
| **Training** | Do teachers and administrators need to be trained? If so, what needs to be included? Do independent data collectors need to be trained? |
| **Reporting** | What is needed for accurate, timely and appropriate reporting?  What challenges exist? How can the state best address these challenges? |
| **Costs** | What should be considered in determining the costs? Do states pay for all of the costs of the assessment or only some of the costs? What needs to be considered in determining the cost of the assessment? |

| **What is the purpose?**  **Is the purpose to. . .** | **1=**  **Not at all** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5=**  **Very much** | **Not Applicable** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ADDRESS POLICYMAKER AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONS/ISSUES** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Answer questions about the status of school readiness of children in the state? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Answer questions about the status of school readiness of children with specific demographic characteristics? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Answer questions about the status of school readiness of children within different communities? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **Provide information** to better target funding, resources and supports? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Answer questions about the effectiveness of early childhood programs? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Provide information about Kindergarten readiness based on demographic, family and community characteristics? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **Fulfill a requirement** to be eligible for funding from the federal government? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Provide data and information to advocate for program growth. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Provide information to **Kindergarten teachers** to support transition into Kindergarten? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Provide only a snapshot at the beginning of or immediately prior to Kindergarten to present to **policymakers** and the **public**? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **GIVE TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS/DIRECTORS INFORMATION** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Provide formative data for **teachers** to use throughout the academic year to provide information about children’s progress? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Support **teachers**’ developmentally appropriate practice through the design and administration of the assessment? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **Provide teachers** within information to tailor curriculum and instructional practice to individual children’s development? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **Provide families** with information about their child’s learning and development? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **Engage families** to learn about their perspectives on children’s early learning and development |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **Engage families** in a discussion about how to best support child’s strengths and areas that are in need of attention |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Screen **children** for developmental progress and possible in depth assessment |  |  |  |  |  |  |

| Has the stakeholder group considered the following? | 1=Not at all | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5=Very much | Not Applicable |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DESIGN PHASE |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Has the state budgeted for a design phase for the KEA? Is the budget and timeframe sufficient for completing all steps of the design phase? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Has the state considered who is paying the salaries of the state and stakeholder salaries and time devoted to overseeing the design? (e.g., If district leaders, teachers, or parents are engaged in the design, who is paying for their time? Who is paying for state agency leader’s time?) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. If the design of the KEA is contracted out, is the scope of the contract sufficient to achieve the desired purpose of the KEA? What is the cost of the state staff person responsible for overseeing the contract? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. In designing the KEA, has a budget been developed for the costs of the creating and/or tailoring an assessment instrument? Conversely, has the state designed a budget for an entire assessment system? When faced with budget constraints, does the state prioritize a robust KEA system over inexpensive data? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the design budget support a KEA that reflects racial, cultural, and linguistic competence? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the design phase include costs associated with engaging districts, teachers, and parents to ensure early buy-in? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the design budget reflect an iterative process of stakeholder engagement that requires an ongoing process of engagement? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the design budget reflect that the KEA system must be adapted to the state context and needs? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PREPARATION PHASE |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Has the state budgeted for a preparation phase for the KEA? Is the budget and timeframe sufficient to address all steps needed for preparation? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Who is paying the salaries of the state and stakeholder salaries and time devoted to overseeing the preparation? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the budget for the KEA reflect the stated purpose and target audiences? If not, what changes should be made in the budget, purpose or both? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. If the KEA is to be contracted out, does the scope of the contract reflect all aspects of a strong KEA system? What is the cost of the state staff person responsible for overseeing the contract? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the budget support a KEA that reflects racial, cultural and language competence? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the preparation phase budget include costs associated with engaging districts, teachers and parents to ensure early buy-in? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the preparation phase budget reflect that stakeholder engagement is an iterative process that requires an ongoing process of engagement? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the budget reflect a level of effort sufficient for buy-in of key stakeholder groups? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PILOT TESTING PHASE |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Has the state budgeted for a pilot testing phase? Is the budget and timeframe sufficient to carry out all steps? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Who is paying the salaries of the state and stakeholder salaries and time devoted to overseeing the pilot test? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the budget for the pilot test reflect the stated purpose and target audiences? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. What is the scope of the pilot test contract? What is the cost of the state staff person responsible for overseeing the pilot test contract? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the budget support a pilot test of a KEA that reflects racial, cultural and language competence? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the pilot test budget support adequate training of all of those engaged in the pilot? If the training being piloted at the same time the KEA, is there a budget for ensuring revisions to the training are made prior to going to scale? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the pilot test budget include costs districts, schools and teachers incur while participating in the pilot? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the pilot test budget reflect collection of stakeholder data that is sufficient to capture perspectives regarding engagement? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the pilot test budget reflect accurate collection, reporting and use of the data? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the pilot test budget reflect costs associated with refining the KEA? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| IMPLEMENTATION PHASE |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Has the state budgeted for all aspects of implementation? Is the budget and timeframe sufficient to carry out all steps? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Who is paying for all aspects of the implementation? What costs are incurred through state salaries and stakeholder volunteer time, by districts, schools and teachers? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the budget for full implementation reflect the stated purpose and target audiences? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. What is the scope of the implementation contract? What is the cost of the state staff person responsible for overseeing the contract? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the budget ensure full implementation reflects racial, cultural and language competence? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the implementation budget include sufficient funding for all aspects of KEA ensure early buy-in? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the budget for full implementation reflect the range of orientations and trainings that are aligned with stated purpose and target audiences? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the pilot test budget reflect a system of reporting that reflects the stated purposes and target audiences? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Has the state budgeted for a robust system of reporting that is tailored to the purpose? Is the budget and timeframe sufficient to meet the desired purpose and target audience needs? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Who is paying for all aspects of reporting? What costs are incurred through state salaries and stakeholder volunteer time, by districts, schools and teachers for reports that are matched to the desired purpose? Has the state selected a “cheap” instrument that requires large costs to produce useful reports or prioritized a system of collection and reporting that supports the stated purposes and uses? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the state contract with vendors or a single to support an online interface or reports that meet the needs of different target audiences? What is the scope of each contract and are they clearly aligned or defined? What is the cost of the state staff person responsible for overseeing the contract? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the budget ensure reports reflect racial, cultural and language competence? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the budget reflect the state’s desire that data will be used for the stated purposes? For example, if the stated purpose is for teachers to use data to inform instruction, does the budget include coaching and supports for teachers to use the data for the stated purpose? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the budget account for reports that will be most useful to schools, districts and parents by aligning timeframes for reporting with district report cards, even if costs are higher? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the reporting budget account for costs associated with revision of report designs and formats? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| REFINEMENT/REVISION PHASE |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the overall budget include costs associated with refinements and enhancements to the overall system? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Does the budget reflect staff time and costs associated with revisions? |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Related Resources**

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**ABOUT CEELO:**

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

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