



NAECS-SDE: Listserv Summary

KEA Checkpoints for Observing and Assessing Kindergarten Children

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This document summarizes responses provided to a query posted to the [National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education \(NAECS-SDE\)](#) listserv, which is used by members to make announcements, survey states about resources, and gain information on key policy questions. Summaries are not intended for official reports or research, as the information shared is voluntary and not verified as official statements from states. If a member wishes to use summaries for official reports or research, explicit permission must be granted.

Information Request:

A listserv member posted the following questions on Kindergarten Entry Assessments to the NAECS listserv for consideration in July, 2017:

1. *What is your checkpoint date for KEA-e.g. how many weeks after the start of kindergarten do you allow before you “close” the assessment and have the summative point?*
2. *How many of you are using the TSG KEA and what is your checkpoint for that assessment?*

Background & Context

Kindergarten Entry Assessments (KEA) are an essential tool for teachers, parents, administrators and policymakers that can be used for several intentions. KEA's give teachers a better idea of what their incoming students are able to do and what needs improvement during the school year. Child assessments can be used to identify children in need of special services, plan instruction for individuals and groups of children, identify program and staff improvement and needs, and evaluate how well a program is meeting goals for children.¹ They can also inform both the parent and teacher of any possible developmental concerns. Policymakers may use data collected from KEA's to determine trends over time and differences in groups to inform policy and funding decisions.²

States may choose from a [variety](#) of assessments that inform stakeholders on the development of children. Teaching Strategies GOLD is one of the assessments used, an observational assessment which

¹ [CEELO Policy Snapshot – State Early Childhood Assessment Policies](#)

² [Build Initiative- Kindergarten Entry Assessment - KEA](#)

aims to understand children in the context of everyday experiences to better understand learning abilities.³ The tool observes children in five domains: language and literacy, mathematics, cognitive, physical health, and social emotional, to observe developmentally appropriate learning and behaviors.

The tool requires documentation of children’s learning and outcomes based on state-determined checkpoints, when teachers are required to submit kindergarten assessment data. Between checkpoint periods, instructors observe individual children and classrooms and document children’s learning and determine ratings for what is observed. At the end of each checkpoint period, data is reviewed and finalized to determine each child’s current levels on goals and objectives observed. Observation windows are typically set in the fall to gather reliable data on kindergarten entrance skills at the start of the school year.⁴ This also allows children to become familiar with their kindergarten teacher and daily routine. Checkpoints are an important tool to measure learning objectives and progression and set goals throughout the school year.

Responses

Responses to the listserv inquiry were received from 10 states. Key findings include:

- Four states (CO, LA, NJ, WA) reported using TS GOLD as their kindergarten assessment. Five states (KS, MD, NC, PA, WV) reported using state developed tools.
- Three states reported a checkpoint date within the first 60 calendar days of the school year (CO, KS, NC). Other states report checkpoints ranged from seven to eight weeks into the school year (NJ & WA), to five weeks into the school year (MD & WV).

The table on the following page includes responses from states that participated in the listserv and describes their states requirements. Links to specific state resources and tools are included where applicable.

State	Checkpoint Date	Using TSG KEA?
Colorado	Within the first 60 calendar days of the school year. The continued uses of the assessment and additional checkpoints are optional.	Yes: The state has a menu of assessments LEA’s may choose from. The menu includes HighScope Child Observation Record (COR) for Kindergarten, Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP-K 2015), and Teaching Strategies GOLD. The majority of LEA have chosen to use TS GOLD and utilize the KEA Survey within GOLD to complete their first checkpoint.

³ [Authentic Assessment and Early Childhood Education](#)

⁴ [Kindergarten Entry Assessment \(KEA\) – Everything You Need to Know](#)

State	Checkpoint Date	Using TSG KEA?
Kansas	No definite window, but anticipated to be within the first 60 days of school.	<p>No:</p> <p>Kansas has piloted an instrument 2016-17, and will have a state-wide roll out 17-18. We are not using an assessment, but a screener (“snapshot”) to be given one time a year for state reporting purposes. Districts may choose to use this tool later in the year if they wish.</p>
Kentucky	LEAs administer the screener no earlier than 15 calendar days prior to the start of school and no later than the 30th instructional day of the academic year. School districts receive an additional 15 instructional days to complete data entry requirements with the final entry day being no later than October 15. In 2017-2018, the screening window will be impacted by Senate Bill 50, requiring LEAs to start school no earlier than the Monday closest to August 26. This will tighten the timelines in Kentucky, especially for data entry.	<p>No:</p> <p>Kentucky uses the Brigance to screen for readiness at kindergarten entry.</p>
Louisiana	LEAs have until September 30 to report their kindergarten entry assessment data to the Department of Education. Most LEAs begin classes around the first two weeks of August. They may continue to use GOLD or DRDP throughout the school year if they desire beyond that point.	<p>Yes:</p> <p>Louisiana piloted the use of GOLD, HighScope Child Observation Record (COR) and the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) for the 2016-2017 school year. GOLD and DRDP were given as options for the next school year, although Local Education Agencies (LEA) (e.g. districts/charter schools) may still use the Developing Skills Checklist (DSC) for one more year which is the state’s current KEA tool.</p>
Maryland	The first day of school to Oct. 10 (about 5 weeks).	<p>No:</p> <p>Maryland is using the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (developed with Ohio Department of Education, WestEd, and Hopkins CTE). We do not use TS Gold.</p>

State	Checkpoint Date	Using TSG KEA?
New Jersey	Typically, the KEA/Fall checkpoint is around 7 weeks long, ending the last week of October/first week of November. Teachers have one week from the close of a checkpoint, to finalize for all students. For example, the KEA/Fall checkpoint for 2016 was on Friday, October 28, 2016. Teachers had until Friday, November 4, 2016 to finalize the checkpoint and provide summative ratings.	Yes: New Jersey utilizes Teaching Strategies Gold for KEA. The KEA/Fall checkpoint is around 7 weeks, ending around the last week of October/first week of November. The Winter checkpoint is around 15 weeks, ending mid-February. The Spring checkpoint is also about 15 weeks, ending mid-June.
North Carolina	Teachers begin collecting evidence at the start of the school year, and complete a status summary (similar to the TS checkpoint) by the 60th instructional day.	No: North Carolina is using the kindergarten portion of its state-developed assessment, the K-3 Formative Assessment Process, to meet its KEA requirements. Teachers are encouraged to continue implementing the formative assessment process and adding evidence to the platform throughout the school year.
Pennsylvania	45 calendar days for evidence collection (this is based on the start of the individual LEAs kindergarten programming).	No: We do not use TSG for KEA is PA, but do use a similar state-developed tool.
Washington	The checkpoint in Washington for the KEA is October 31, which is approximately 7-8 weeks after the start of the school year.	Yes: Washington uses GOLD for the whole-child assessment portion of the KEA.
West Virginia	A statewide deadline for the fall formative assessment window is set. It is approximately five weeks after the beginning of the school year.	No: West Virginia does not use TSG for KEA. For children who attended universal pre-k, the kindergarten transition report serves as the KEA. Teachers utilize the fall formative assessment summary report for the KEA for those children who did not attend pre-k. The formative assessment summary report is a state-developed tool based on WV standards.

This information was collected in June 2017 and, therefore, some resources and links may not be the most up-to-date. Updates can be sent to info@ceelo.org.

Conclusion

Kindergarten entry assessments are used to understand and report on kindergarten readiness, improve kindergarten instruction and practice, and support the transition of children into kindergarten.⁵ Checkpoints usually take place six to eight weeks after the beginning of the school year, one mid-year and a final one at the end of the year. Because kindergarten is such a formative time in a child's education and life, it is imperative for teachers to have a good understanding of where individual children are in their development, as well as the class as a whole. Data can be used not only to improve educational outcomes, but may help to inform practices that ease the stress of transitions into new routines and expectations. As more states pilot, develop and continue to implement KEA's, it is crucial these decisions around the tool and checkpoint dates are made in order to best capture data on how the development of children progresses over time, and in some cases, may be an early indicator of learning challenges that may need further attention.

Resources

[Kindergarten Entry Assessments: Practices and Policies](#). (2013). This report from Hanover Research reviews literature on early childhood school readiness and documents examples of states using KEA's.

[Using Teaching Strategies GOLD Within a Kindergarten Entry Assessment System](#). (2017). This fast fact from CEELO tracks which states are using the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment to measure child outcomes, and how the assessment is used to inform or add to the state's KEA.

[Formative Assessment: Guidance for Early Childhood Policymakers](#). (2014). This policy report provides a guide and framework to early childhood policymakers considering formative assessment. See also CEELO's [resources page](#) on assessment for a range of material on assessment and early learning

⁵ [CEELO FastFact – KEA Implementation](#)

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