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Exploring Options for Kindergarten Entrance Assessment (KEA) for the State of Wisconsin

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Introduction and History

The practice of assessing children before or during entry into kindergarten is nothing new. For decades schools have collected data on children entering the public education system to inform families of their children's developmental status, identify those children not achieving developmental milestones as expected, and/or to assist teachers in planning for instruction. Another purpose of kindergarten screening has been to examine "school readiness" – to determine which children had the skills deemed necessary to be ready to succeed in the kindergarten curriculum. This practice was based all too often on expectations arising from the kindergarten teacher's preferences and not from valid and reliable child development research. This led to a pass/fail sorting process – children who "passed" should enter kindergarten at the state-determined entry age, and children who "failed" should postpone entry another year to allow for maturation to achieve greater "school readiness."

The Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) movement of the 1980s, led by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), challenged this concept of "school readiness" suggesting that the process of sorting kept out those children who needed school entry the most (NAEYC, 1995). Research suggested this "wait another year to enter" practice was a form of retention (Graue & DiPerna, 2000) and revealed potential problems children experience with being a year older than their classmates (Shepard & Smith, 1990; Goosen & Lindeman, 2004). The redefinition of "school readiness" from the 1990 National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) was a vast departure from the pass/fail sorting process that placed the burden of readiness solely on the child. The new definition called for:

- Schools to be ready to serve all children,
- Communities and families to be engaged in supporting children in their development, and
- Children to have opportunities to develop to their fullest potential prior to school entry.

The NEGP also identified five *within-the-child dimensions* significant to school readiness, frequently referred to as *developmental domains* or the *5 Essential Domains of School Readiness*:

1. Physical well-being and motor development
2. Social and emotional development
3. Language development
4. Approaches to learning
5. Cognition and general knowledge

(National Education Goals Panel, 1995)

As a result, the trend of assessing children before or during entry into kindergarten slowly diminished and was replaced with more inclusive policies that relied on age eligibility (and immunizations) as the only criteria for kindergarten entry (Wisconsin discouraged the term "school readiness" as a point in time concept with emphasis on state law of entrance by age).

This led to the challenge of an increasingly wide range of skills and abilities found in any given classroom. NAEYC promoted a "whole child approach" to curriculum, incorporating the five developmental domains, and reminded teachers that DAP requires planning for what's appropriate for the age group, what's appropriate to meet the individual needs of children within the group, and to do so respectful of culture and its impact on

children's learning and development (NAEYC, 2009). To accomplish this, and to address increasing diversity, teachers needed in-depth information about each child that exceeded the old "school readiness" models. Guidance was clear: The five domains of child development are highly interrelated; curriculum and assessment needs to include all areas of child development; and assessment practices need to be child-friendly in order to capture a true picture of the child (NAEYC, 2003; Snow & Van Hemel, 2008). (See Appendix A, *School Readiness in Wisconsin.*)

In the decades since the introduction of DAP and the NEGP school readiness revamp, many variables have impacted the nature of early childhood assessment. With concerns over the growing achievement gap evident as early as kindergarten entry, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), or the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, called for higher accountability, rigorous learning standards, and quality instruction guided by research. (It also required states to establish early learning standards, which Wisconsin did in 2003, building on the NEGP five developmental domains). NCLB also promoted a multi-level system of support for implementing these practices, Response to Intervention (RtI), that *depends* on quality child assessment data to be effective. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) provided guidance to promote implementation of these recommended practices in early childhood to align with the K-12 RtI process and practices (DPI, 2012). With emphasis on assessment and growing concerns over best practices for young children, the National Research Council of the National Academies released its 2008 report, *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How.* The report reaffirmed the NEGP's focus on the five domains of school readiness, stressed the need for assessment to be driven by a clearly defined purpose, and urged a broader comprehensive systems approach.

Kindergarten Entrance Assessment (KEA) Trends

The KEA movement is one response to the need for valid and reliable child assessment data to guide efforts to close the achievement gap. The purpose of KEAs is to identify student needs as they enter kindergarten so that instruction and supports can be varied to address universal and individual student needs. Federal guidance 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"* (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2015).

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

1. Is administered to children during the first few months of their admission into kindergarten

2. Covers the five Essential Domains of School Readiness [i.e., physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development (including emergent literacy), and cognition and general knowledge, including mathematics and science].

3. Is used in conformance with the recommendations of the National Research Council report on early childhood assessment (2008):

    o   Valid and reliable for its intended purposes and for the target populations.

    o   Aligned to the state's early learning standards.

    o   Designed for a specific purpose or purposes, with decisions about the assessment guided by the purpose(s) of the assessment.

    o   Used in a manner consistent with their purpose.

    o   Designed and used in accordance with the highest standards of evidence in psychometric properties.

    o   Appropriate for children from different ethnic, racial, and language backgrounds; developmental levels; and ages.

    o   Holistic in terms of the domains or areas of development and learning that are assessed.

    o   Conducted within a coherent system of services.

    (Snow & Van Hemel, 2008; CEELO, 2014; U.S. Dept. of Education, 2015)

> *"… a primary purpose of assessing children or classrooms is to improve the quality of early childhood care and education by identifying where more support, professional development, or funding is needed and by providing classroom personnel tools to track children's growth and adjust instruction."*
> Snow & Van Hemel, 2008, p.10

States Begin to Implement KEAs

The number of states that are in some phase of KEA development has grown rapidly in the past few years. 2013 data indicated that 34 states described plans for a KEA in their Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) and Enhanced Assessment Grant applications; in addition, nine states that did not submit a RTT-ELC application had some type of KEA. For example: AZ, AR, and NY are in the *exploration stage* of engaging stakeholders and conducting research; DC, DE, and NJ are in the *installation phase* of conducting pilots; and MD, VT, WV, CO, and CA are in the *implementation stage*, collecting data to report to state or local stakeholders and implementing professional development systems.

Individual state KEA approaches and requirements fall on a continuum from a list of recommended tools to choose from with voluntary data reporting, to mandated tools and web-based data reporting. While some states establish a KEA as a single point-in-time event, many view the use of a KEA as one checkpoint in a comprehensive system spanning a number of years (birth – 5 years, birth - 3rd grade, or kindergarten – 3rd grade) and including a variety of service providers (early care and education, public schools, medical/mental health services, and home visiting/family services). A comprehensive system of screening and assessment is multi-dimensional. It includes the collection of *child-level data* - collected on each child in all areas of development (i.e., the 5 essential domains of school readiness); *program-level data* – cumulative child data; teacher effectiveness, and environmental and other program quality measures; and *systems-level data* – agencies and institutions that "touch the lives of young children and their families" for the purpose of policy development, resources allocation, and professional development (Snow & Van Hemel, 2008; Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes [CEELO], 2014, 2015).

Listed below are examples of several states' approaches to KEA in different stages of development and/or implementation. For more in-depth information on other states, see Appendix B – *A Summary of KEA*

Approaches Nationwide. (It is noteworthy that in some publications, Wisconsin is credited with having a state-mandated KEA, as a result of the PALS literacy screener requirement.)

K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium

- Working to design a *formative assessment system* that begins with a KEA and continues through 3rd grade.

- North Carolina [lead], Arizona, Delaware, District of Columbia, Iowa, Maine, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, and South Carolina.

California's Desired Results* System

- Administered by the California Department of Education (CDE); applies to child care and development services for children, birth-13 years, and their families.

- Compatible with CDE's accountability system for elementary and secondary education.

- Includes a KEA, Desired Results Developmental Profile – School Readiness (DRDP-SR).

  Desired Results for birth-13 year olds and their families:

  ➢ Children are personally and socially competent.

  ➢ Children are effective learners.

  ➢ Children show physical and motor competence.

  ➢ Children are safe and healthy.

  ➢ Families support their children's learning and development.

  ➢ Families achieve their goals.

Washington's public-private partnership, *Washington's Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS)* Partners: Department of Early Learning (DEL), the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and Thrive by Five Washington

- Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, birth through grade 3 (K-3 jointly with CCSS to include social-emotional domain).

- *Washington's Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS)* considered a **process** for school readiness, transition into 5K.

- Includes families; 5K teachers; and child care, Head Start, and other pre-K service providers.

- The comprehensive criterion-referenced tool published by Teaching Strategies, TS Gold, is required at 5K entrance as KEA; pre-K providers are encouraged to use TS Gold; alignment guide provided for other tools.

- Shared child data across systems to support smooth transitions to 5K and continuous teaching and learning.

New Jersey

- PreK-grade 3 model targeting 31 high poverty districts.

- Requires collaboration plan with preschools, kindergartens, and elementary schools to share individual child data via portfolios; TS Gold used as 'KEA checkpoint'.

Georgia's 'Bright from the Start'

- Birth to age 5 focus (includes universal pre-K).

- Early learning standards aligned with K-3 state standards.

- Online *Work Sampling System* used to share child data as they transition into 5K.

- *Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)* - ongoing, year-long assessment to determine student skills entering and exiting 5K.

Current Early Childhood Screening and Assessment Practices in Wisconsin

Federally-funded Head Start and IDEA require screening and assessment processes in place to identify children in need of further assessment (Child Find), determine eligibility, and/or monitor children's progress while enrolled in a program and upon exit from a program. In 2012, Wis. Stats. 118.016 began a 3-year phase-in period requiring public schools and charter schools to administer the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), to all 4-year-old kindergarten, 5-year-old kindergarten, first grade and second grade students. Intended uses of the data are to determine the literacy skills children already possess, identify students who might be at-risk for reading difficulties, monitor children's progress, and plan for instruction. The state statute also requires schools to report PALS data to DPI. (Changes to this requirement are pending as a result of changes in the state budget.)

Use of valid and reliable screening and assessment tools in programs serving children birth-5 years, however, is not a universal practice. "Little consistency of practice across the sectors of early care and education" was the finding of a study on behalf of the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) that examined assessment practices in a variety of early childhood programs throughout the state (Magnuson, 2011). These findings are consistent with the results of an informal 2014-15 survey exploring RtI and screening and assessment practices in select 4K programs across the state. Less than half of the programs reported use of screening tools (other than PALS) at the start of the school year. While the majority of programs surveyed reported use of some type of assessment tool or tools, only about half of those reported use of a valid and reliable published tool; an equal number of programs reported use of locally developed, common assessments only. The districts in the survey that have developed smooth 4K to 5K transition processes utilizing 4K exit data appear to be a small minority (Tylka, 2015 in process).

A shared belief in the importance of a coordinated effort to identify and address children's needs early led the Healthy Children/Screening and Assessment Project Team of the ECAC to develop a visual guide to critical time periods and content areas for screening and assessment processes across a range programs. These recommendations reflect current scientific knowledge and endorsements by many professional organizations and experts within each field, providing a blueprint for a comprehensive and aligned cross-sector system of

screening and assessment (Appendix C - *Critical Time Periods for Early Childhood Screening and Assessment: Visual Chart*).

Options for Consideration for Implementation of a KEA in Wisconsin

There is a wide range of options Wisconsin stakeholders can consider for building supportive and responsive services for young children and their families, based on data-driven decision making models. Listed below are several options available to Wisconsin for consideration:

Option 1: Make no changes in current screening and assessment practices and policies, allowing each early childhood sector to independently support best practice within their own programs/services.

Option 2: Require administration of a specified KEA tool as children enter public 4K and/or 5K and make reporting mandatory. The tool can be designed specifically for Wisconsin or an existing tool can be selected and modified.

Option 3: Provide a list of approved tools to select from as the required KEA, administered as children enter 4K and/or 5K with mandatory reporting.

Option 4: Optional use of a specified KEA tool or select from a list of tools for use at 4K or 5K entry with optional reporting.

Option 5: Develop and implement a comprehensive birth to 5K screening and assessment system that includes a 4KEA and 5KEA as checkpoints for data reporting in an on-going process of data-driven decision making and services delivery.

Option 6: Expand the options in 2, 3, 4, or 5 for a comprehensive birth through *3rd grade* screening and assessment system that includes a 4KEA and 5KEA as checkpoints for data reporting in an on-going process of data-driven decision making and services delivery. This could require specified tools or allow for selection of tools from a menu.

This chart provides a more detailed view of these options:

Option	Description	Advantages and Disadvantages	Anticipated Outcomes
1. Make no changes in current screening and assessment practices and policies.	Early childhood sectors and/or programs unilaterally decide on screening and assessment best practice for the children and families they serve.	Simplistic system; local control; limited need for collaboration; service providers can select practices/tools to meet their individual needs; limited continuity across sectors.	Limited collaboration; risk of children/families falling through the cracks or being subjected to duplicity of screening and assessment procedures.
2. Require administration of a specified KEA tool as children enter public 4K and/or 5K with mandatory reporting.	A tool could be designed specifically for Wisconsin or an existing tool could be selected and modified as a stand-alone KEA; a framework similar to the current PALS requirements in 4K and 5K.	Consistency of data collected at point of entry into public school system (but not connected to services prior to school entry); would require research and/or development of tool(s), statewide training	Schools have point-in-time data, a checkpoint for assessing children's development as they enter the public education system; useful in planning for instruction and addressing the achievement gap; can provide one indicator of quality/effectiveness of programs

		of teachers; system to collect, store, and share data.	and services provided to children and families prior to public school entry.
3. Provide a list of approved tools to select from as the required KEA, administered as children enter 4K and/or 5K with mandatory reporting.	Concept of a KEA is promoted along with a list of valid and reliable tools appropriate for KEA use; professional development/ training options are made available for use of tools, how to use data locally, and how to enter data in a statewide system.	Allows for some local control; provides guidance on selecting valid and reliable tools; provides schools with data on children's development as they enter the public school system; provides statewide stakeholders with data collected at point of entry into public school system; but not directly connected to data/services prior to school entry.	Schools have point-in-time data, a checkpoint for assessing children's development as they enter the public education system; useful in planning for instruction and addressing the achievement gap; can provide one indicator of quality/effectiveness of programs and services provided to children and families prior to public school entry.
4. Optional use of a specified KEA tool or select from a list of tools for use at 4K or 5K entry with optional reporting.	Concept of a KEA is promoted along with a list of valid and reliable tools appropriate for KEA use; professional development/ training options are made available for use of tools; guidance provided on using and reporting KEA data.	Honors local control; provides guidance on selecting valid and reliable tools; provides participating schools with data on children's development as they enter the public school system; some data made available at state level.	A fragmented system; voluntary participation in use of valid and reliable KEA tool(s) to plan for instruction and address the achievement gap; limited data available at the state level on children's development as they enter the public education system.
5. Develop and implement a comprehensive birth to 5K screening and assessment system that includes a 4KEA and a 5KEA as checkpoints for data reporting in an on-going process of data-driven decision making and services delivery.	A collaborative, cross-sector system of data collection and decision-making that begins at birth, includes all services and providers who serve children and their families, and supports children as they transition into the K-12 education system.	A collaborative, data-driven services system in place for children and families prior to entry into K-12 education system; shared child data across sectors to support continuity and efficiency of services delivery; provides formative data to schools to support seamless transitions into K-12 system; requires active engagement of, and commitment from, all stakeholders in order to be successful.	A birth to 5 aligned cross-sector system of early care and education, medical/mental health services, and home visiting/family services that shares a common set of beliefs and practices around screening and assessment; a comprehensive system in which child-specific data follows the child and family across service sectors, significantly reducing the risk of children/ families falling through the cracks or being subjected to duplicity of screening and assessment procedures.
6. Expand the options in 2, 3, 4, or 5 for a comprehensive birth through *3rd grade* screening and assessment system that includes a 4KEA and 5KEA as checkpoints for data reporting in an on-going process of data-driven decision making and services delivery. This could require specified tools or allow for selection of tools from a menu.	A collaborative, cross-sector system that begins at birth and continues through 3rd grade, providing compatible screening and assessment practices linked to data-driven decision-making.	A collaborative, data-driven services system in place for children, birth – 8 years, and their families; shared child data across sectors to support continuity and efficiency in services delivery; reduces local control and requires active engagement of, and commitment from, all stakeholders in order to be successful.	A birth through 3rd grade aligned cross-sector system of early care and education, medical/mental health services, home visiting/ family services, and public education that shares a common set of beliefs and practices around screening and assessment; a comprehensive system in which child-specific data follows the child and family across service sectors, significantly reducing the risk of children/families falling through the cracks or being subjected to duplicity of screening and assessment procedures.

Adoption of any option described above, with the exception of #1, would require extensive planning and education over time in order to be successful. Based on "lessons learned" from other states, Wisconsin would need to:

- Engage stakeholders early in the process – including families – at local, regional, and state levels, working together to explore options and make recommendations that reflect their values and priorities.
- Develop resources and guidance documents and provide personnel/coaches to support local, regional, and state level efforts to insure informed decision-making.
- Design and implement a cross-sector system of training and professional development, available to all service providers, to insure appropriate selection of screening and assessment tools; consistent data collection practices; effective and appropriate use of data; and accurate reporting (if required).
- Adopt a state statute and/or DPI policies to guide development, implementation, and evaluation of the KEA process and practices.
- Generate funds to support this initiative for professional development, resources, and personnel/leadership.
- Provide a data system to support state and local data collection, reporting, analysis, and applications.

Summary

Early childhood assessment will continue to be a topic for discussion, dissention, and continued research well into the future. The field is fortunate, however, that it has been provided with research-based guidance on why, when, and how to appropriately assess young children, and on how to use data effectively to design and offer high quality services. The evidence clearly supports the development of data-driven comprehensive and coordinated systems for service delivery to reduce duplicity and insure services reach every child and family early, so that "the achievement gap" can become a thing of the past.

Comprehensive screening and assessment, however, requires a systematic approach. To create a system with the intended outcome being improved student outcomes, Steven Tozer, director of the Center for Urban Education Leadership at the University of Illinois at Chicago, reminds us that strong visionary leadership is needed for schools and centers to become "good places for adult learning" and to connect and align the separate worlds of early childhood and K-12 educational systems (National Institute for Early Education Research, 2015).

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Definition of Terms

Assessment

The *Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards: Birth to First Grade* (4th edition)[1] defines assessment as "gathering information to determine the current developmental level of the child" and states that assessment includes data collection and data analysis.

Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards lists four considerations for the appropriate assessment of young children:

1. Young children learn in ways and at rates different from older children.
2. Young children come to know things through doing as well as through listening and often represent their knowledge better by showing than by telling.
3. Young children's development and learning is rapid, uneven, and episodic, so that point-in-time assessments do not give a complete picture of their learning.
4. Young children's achievements are the result of a complex mix of their ability to learn and their past learning opportunities.

Balanced Assessment

According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction,[2] a balanced assessment system is the foundation of Wisconsin's approach to assessment. A balanced system offers a continuous series of different assessments designed to inform and evaluate the teaching and learning cycle. The series includes formative, interim (benchmark), and summative assessments.

The differences between summative, interim/benchmark, and formative assessment are as follows:

Formative assessment:

- Designed to "answer the *'what's next'* question in terms of day-to-day...instruction,"[2] by providing "[a]ssessment questions, tools, and processes that are embedded in instruction and are used...to provide timely feedback for purposes of *adjusting instruction* to improve learning."[3]
- Can be thought of as "*Assessment FOR Learning*," which, in the words of Rick Stiggins,[3] "turns assessment into a teaching and learning process that *enhances* (instead of merely monitoring) student *learning*."

Benchmark (or interim) assessment:

- Periodic assessments designed to benchmark and monitor student learning at key intervals, such as at the end of a lesson or unit of study.

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[1] http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/documents/WMELS4thEdition_web_edit2.pdf
[2] http://dpi.wi.gov/assessment
[3] http://www.ctb.com/ctb.com/control/assessmentGlossaryTabAction?startLimit=A&endLimit=B&p=underAssess

Summative assessment:

- Designed to "provide *aggregate* information *summarizing learning* over the course of [months or a] year."[2]
- Can be thought of as "*Assessment OF Learning*," which is used for *monitoring* children's learning and can be used for *accountability* purposes.[4]

Screening

The Wisconsin Response to Intervention (RtI) Center[5] defines *universal screening* as "a process in which data from multiple measures [are] analyzed to determine whether each [child] is likely to meet, exceed, or fall below benchmarks. It can be constructed for both academic and behavioral purposes." The Wisconsin RtI Center goes on to say that:

> A *screener* is an *assessment* given as one part of the *screening process* to establish a baseline from which [children] are beginning and to align the instructional starting point to [child] need. Screeners are typically a form of data collection designed to be easy, quick, and repeatable. Again, no single piece of data should determine a [child's] experience...; multiple types of data should be collected to assist in a complete universal screening process.

> Data from the universal screening process is used to make decisions about interventions, additional challenges, and to determine if a change in universal curriculum and instruction is needed.

The Wisconsin RtI Center's definition of RtI:[6]

RtI is for ALL children and ALL educators. It is a process for achieving higher levels of academic and behavioral success for all students. The three essential elements of high quality instruction, balanced assessment, and collaboration interact within a multi-level system of support to provide structures that increase the potential for achievement.

Success for RtI lies within the classroom through collaboration. Implementation of a multi-level system of support includes meaningful family involvement, data-based decision making, and effective leadership. Comprehensive RtI implementation will contribute to increased instructional quality, equitable access to high-quality and effective programming and will assist with the identification and support of learners with varied abilities and needs.

Culturally responsive practices are central to an effective RtI system and are evident within each of the essential elements. In a multi-level system of support, schools employ these elements of RtI at varying levels of intensity, based upon student responsiveness to instruction and intervention.

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[4] http://www.rickstiggins.com/2014/03/09/the-emotional-dynamic-of-student-assessment-for-learning/
[5] http://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/administrators/understanding-rti/balanced-assessment.html
[6] http://wisconsinrticenter.org/educators.html

Wisconsin's *Blueprint for a Comprehensive and Aligned System for Screening and Assessment of Young Children*[7] states on pages 3 – 4:

> **Specific aspects of screening and assessment differ across types of settings and goals, but it can by summarized by broad definitions and purposes.**
>
> *Screening is a type of assessment.* Screening is an intentional *process* that provides information about how a child is developing; it sometimes also provides information about how the family is functioning. A concerning screening result suggests that more in depth information be gathered to determine whether an intervention is warranted to address it.
>
> *Assessment* often follows a screening, although it may occur in instances in which screening does not. It is a *process* in which more detailed or specific information is collected to answer the question "what should come next." Assessment can serve multiple purposes depending on the context. It can determine service eligibility. It can serve as a way to plan interventions and instruction, and provide ongoing support in these processes once an intervention or program is underway. It can serve as a way to monitor ongoing progress during and following interventions, treatments, or instruction.
>
> Screening and assessment processes are universal when they are provided to all children and families. These processes are targeted when they are only provided to children who are deemed to be at risk based on a priori criteria.

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[7] http://dcf.wi.gov/ecac/pdf/22112_blueprint.pdf

Appendix A - *School Readiness in Wisconsin*

School Readiness Definition – ADOPTED BY THE
GOVERNOR'S EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2009
FROM THE WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, INC.
THE WISCONSIN SCHOOL READINESS INDICATORS INITIATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE 2003

Described as … an important first step in building a statewide infrastructure to monitor and improve the readiness of Wisconsin children to succeed in school.

Wisconsin is one of seventeen states participating in *the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative*, 2002-2004.

While all children are ready for school by virtue of having attained the chronological age for school entry established by the state, school readiness refers to the conditions that promote their readiness to succeed in school.

Three conditions were identified as most relevant to promoting school readiness:

- *Responsive* families and communities;
- *Receptive* schools; and
- *Ready children*.

The conditions that promote school readiness include:

- The *responsiveness* of families and communities to children – this includes access for all young children to quality early care and education, parent support, and availability of adequate nutrition and health care for all young children.

- The *receptiveness* of schools as they serve children – this includes the presence of transition policies from home to the formal school environment, continuity between early care and education settings and schools, schools' commitment to the success of all children and teachers, and partnerships with communities.

- *Ready* children – this includes children's proficiency in developmentally appropriate competencies and skills across the five dimensions of early development and learning (health and physical development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language and literacy development, and cognitive skills and general knowledge).

Indicators:

Health and Physical Development

Outcome: Children are physically active, physically healthy, and effectively care for their physical well-being.

Indicators: Motor skills development, general health and development (rate of identified developmental delays/disabilities), vision and hearing, knowledge of self-care, and healthy lifestyle practices.

Social and Emotional Development

Outcome: Children have the social and emotional competencies needed to succeed in school.

Indicators: Emotional development, self-concept, and social competence. Measures of social competence include pro-social behaviors – such as being able to easily join others in play, ability to make and keep friends, and comforting and helping behaviors – and problem behaviors, such as arguing with others, fighting with others. and getting angry easily.

Measures of emotional development include the ability to express emotions, self-control, ability to make needs known, and to seek adult assistance when needed.

Approaches to Learning

Outcome: Children use approaches to learning that prepare them to succeed in school.

Indicators: Ability to sustain attention, task persistence, ability to follow directions, eagerness to learn new things, creativity, and ability to focus attention.

Language Development and Communication

Outcome: Children have the language and communication skills needed to succeed in school.

Indicators: Basic literacy skills included in the *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Class of 1998-99* (ECLS-K) assessment at kindergarten entry include recognizing the printed word, identifying sounds, word reading, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.[8] The ECLS-K assessment also includes emergent literacy, phonemic knowledge, and language development. Indicators that reflect challenges in skill acquisition include the rate of children with speech impairments and performance on the third grade reading assessment (in Wisconsin, this is the Wisconsin Reading and Comprehension Test, or WRCT).

Cognition and General Knowledge

Outcome: Children have the cognitive skills needed to succeed in school.

Indicators: Skills and knowledge of mathematical thinking, such as conceptual understanding of numbers, shapes, mathematical operations, and processes for problem solving; and general knowledge, including the ability to establish relationships between and among objects, events or people, and to make inferences and to comprehend the implications of verbal and pictorial concepts.

… much work needs to be done to improve data collection on indicators relevant to receptive schools and ready children.

This framework presents a comprehensive approach to assessing and monitoring school readiness. And calls for "development of a comprehensive data infrastructure across departments that would provide an evidence-based approach to problem solving, policy development, and program improvement in areas related to school readiness."

> ***The work of the National Education Goals Panel significantly advanced the concept of school***

Historically, the concept of "school readiness" has been used to refer to two distinct concepts, ready to learn and ready for school.[9] *Ready to learn* referred to the developmental level at which "an individual has the capacity to undertake learning of specific material." *Ready for school* referred to a fixed standard of physical, intellectual, and social development that enabled children to meet school requirements and achieve curriculum standards. Both of these approaches focused on a child, or student, readiness. They evolved into the concept of *maturational readiness*, which holds that children should be expected to achieve a specified standard prior to school entry. The concept of maturational readiness suggested that, since school content is fixed but children do not develop at the same rate, not all children are ready for school at the same chronological age. This view gave rise to the perceived need to assess children to determine their "readiness" for school.

Nat'l Ed Goals Panel 1989

Appendix B – *A Summary of KEA Approaches Nationwide* (updated January, 2016)

State/Website	Assessment/KEA Status	More Information
Alabama	**Teaching Strategies GOLD** KEA pilot for 2015-16 school year	KEA Pilot Program Memo
Alaska https://education.alaska.gov/tls/Assessments/developmental.html	**Alaska Developmental Profile (ADP)** developed by state stakeholders and implemented statewide in 2009.	ADP Implementation Guide
Arizona http://www.azed.gov/early-childhood/	AZ KEA Task Force Report, 2013; working with the 10-state consortium (North Carolina Lead) to build a K-3 system that begins with a KEA.	K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium
Arkansas http://www.arkansased.org/	**Qualls Early Learning Inventory** (QELI) assesses the child in 6 behavioral characteristics related to school learning, administered at the beginning of the school year to all kindergarten students (and first grade students who didn't attend kindergarten).	Kindergarten Readiness Program
California http://drdpsr.org/index.html	**Desired Results Developmental Profile – School Readiness (DRDP- SR)** is part of the state's elementary and secondary education accountability system; 30 items, across 5 developmental domains aligned with the state's early learning standards (ELS) Desired Results Developmental Profile – School Readiness.	Desired Results Assessment System (Birth-13 years)
Colorado http://www.cde.state.co.us/early	Commitment to KEA beginning in 2013. Approved options: **Teaching Strategies GOLD, Riverside Early Assessments of Learning (REAL), California's DRDP-SR, (DRDP-K added in 2015), TS GOLD Survey**	CO Dept. of Education School Readiness
Connecticut http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&q=320780	Fall and Spring **Kindergarten Entrance Inventory** includes six domains: Language skills, Literacy skills, Numeracy skills, Physical/Motor skills, Creative/Aesthetic skills, and Personal/Social skills. Developed by state stakeholders and aligned with the Preschool and Connecticut Curriculum Frameworks, and Connecticut's educational standards.	Kindergarten Entrance Inventory
District of Columbia http://osse.dc.gov/service/early-learning	Piloted **Teaching Strategies GOLD** as KEA in 2013-2014; working with the 10-state consortium (North Carolina Lead) to build a K-3 system that begins with KEA.	K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium
Delaware http://dedoe.schoolwires.net/Domain/36	**Delaware Early Learner Survey (DE-ELS), a Teaching Strategies GOLD adaptation** aligned with state ELS and legislated as KEA in 2012; working with the 10-state consortium (North Carolina Lead) to build a K-3 system that begins with a KEA	KEA Homepage
Florida http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/home.aspx	**Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS),** based on state ELS; long history of K screening in state; uses additional tool to assess preK program provider's quality.	FLKRS Homepage
Georgia http://decal.ga.gov/	**Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)** is an ongoing, year-long assessment to determine student skills entering and exiting kindergarten. Flexible administration, domains assessed, and reporting guidelines; modified from the Work Sampling System.	GKIDS Homepage
Hawaii http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ParentsAndStudents/GradeLevelOverview/EarlyLearning/Pages/home.aspx	**Hawaii State School Readiness Assessment (HSSRA)** Developmental domains plus literacy and math; classroom/child profile, and school profile focused on transitions to K; required statewide in 2010-11 after phase-in period.	Hawaii State School Readiness Assessment
Idaho http://sde.idaho.gov/	No statute requirement; all students entering kindergarten participate in the state reading inventories for K-2 and K-3.	
Illinois	Called **Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) is the Desired Results Developmental Profile – School Readiness (DRDP- SR)** adopted from CA. Will require 100% participation in 2015-16.	Illinois Kids
Indiana	**Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting of Kindergarten Readiness (ISTAR-KR)** – aligned with state's early learning standards for children infancy to kindergarten. State statute requires the DOE to develop a plan to offer entrance tests to students in K, 1, and 2.	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment page
Iowa http://www.earlychildhoodiowa.org/ Getting School Ready in Iowa	Has KEA for 4K program; allows for tool(s) to be locally determined, state provides **Teaching Strategies GOLD online**, and about 85% of districts use TS GOLD; working with the 10-state consortium (North Carolina Lead) to build a K-3 system that begins with a KEA.	K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium

Kansas http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=326	Kansas Early Learning Inventory for Fours (KELI-4) required of all state-funded preK programs with fall and spring data submission required. Optional assessments at K entry; 2016 – new statute passed to implement a statewide KEA.	School Readiness Data Initiative
Kentucky http://education.ky.gov/	**BRIGANCE Early Childhood Kindergarten Screen III**, (assesses five areas: Academic/Cognitive, Language, Development, Physical Development, Self-Help, and Social-Emotional Development) is *Common Kindergarten Entry Screener.* In addition, *s*tate law requires diagnostic assessment of reading and math for all children entering the school system; schools select their own tool in compliance with state guidelines.	Kentucky School Readiness Page
Louisiana http://www.louisianabelieves.com/	KEA - **Developing Skills Checklist (DSC)**; implementation 2014-2015 for preK and K; DIBELS for K; Red-E Set Grow provides legislation for data sharing in early childhood.	http://www.louisianabelieves.com/early-childhood
Maine http://maine.gov/doe/	Working with the 10-state consortium (North Carolina Lead) to build a K-3 system that begins with a KEA; pilot with 15 schools for 2015-16 school year; state-developed KEA as authentic formative data; whole child focus - social-emotional, physical, approaches to learning, language/ literacy and cognitive development.	K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium
Maryland http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/early_learning/MMSR.htm	**Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR)** aligned with the Work Sampling System. Provides assessment criteria for K, preK, and preschool-3 MMSR standards.	
Massachusetts	**Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA)** Schools can choose Teaching Strategies GOLD or Work Sampling System, beginning fall 2014.	Massachusetts KEA Homepage
Michigan http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-63533_50451---,00.html	**Michigan's Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA)** is provided by **Teaching Strategies GOLD**; completed during the first 60 days of kindergarten; field tested in 2014.	Michigan KEA Homepage
Minnesota	Will release School Readiness Study Jan. 2016; menu of 4 tools to choose from, aligned to the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPS) and K Academic Standards: **Teaching Strategies GOLD, Desired Results Developmental Profile, MN Work Sampling System, or Formative Assessment System for Teachers.** Participation in KEA is voluntary.	School Readiness/ Kindergarten
Mississippi http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/OSA/KRA	The DOE required to select early literacy and numeracy screening assessment instruments for all grades; chosen for K in 2014 - Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Instrument, Star Early Literacy and Numeracy; Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will also be used to measure how well Pre-K programs prepare four-year-olds for K.	Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children
Missouri http://dese.mo.gov/quality-schools/early-learning/school-readiness-tool	2016 - Adopting California's **DRDP-SR;** goal - by 2020, data representing at least 50% of the children entering kindergarten will be included in the state comprehensive data system.	
Montana http://opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/EarlyChildhood/Index.html	No statute requiring a KEA; public preK limited to families below the poverty level.	2014 Early Learning Standards
Nebraska http://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/kgn.html http://www.education.ne.gov/oec/school_readiness.html	Some type of KEA required but tool is local decision - Teaching Strategies GOLD, High/Scope Online COR, or AEPSi.	GOLD Technical Assistance Guide
Nevada http://www.doe.nv.gov/	Silver State KIDS (Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide) 2013 piloted a pre-kindergarten and kindergarten school readiness assessment program.	KEA Pilot Study
New Hampshire http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/curriculum/kindergarten-toolkit.htm	No statute requiring a KEA.	http://education.nh.gov/nhresponds/early_child_tools.htm
New Jersey http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/	PreK-grade 3 model targeting 31 high poverty districts; collaboration plan with preschools, kindergartens, and elementary schools to share individual child data via portfolios as they transition; **TS GOLD** used as KEA.	

State	Description	Resource
New Mexico http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/LiteracyEarlyChildhoodEd_KOT_index.html	Schools with full-day K required to conduct age-appropriate assessments. Kindergarten Observation Tool (KOT) - comprehensive observation-based assessment used at K entry. Physical Development, Health, Well-Being; Literacy; Numeracy; Scientific Conceptual Understanding; Self, Family, and Community; Approaches to Learning. PreK teachers use the New Mexico PreK Observational Assessment.	Birth through K Learning Standards
New York	Developing a comprehensive assessment and data system for preK-grade 3.	http://www.p12.nysed.gov/earlylearning/
North Carolina Kindergarten Entry Assessment Process	Leading the 10-state consortium to build a K-3 system that begins with a KEA. Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, all students entering kindergarten must be administered a developmental screening of early language, literacy, and math skills within 30 days of enrollment, and a kindergarten entry assessment within 60 days of enrollment. The KEA must address the five essential domains of school readiness.	K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium
North Dakota https://www.nd.gov/dpi/uploads/155/kindergartenentryinfo.pdf	Working with a 10-state consortium (North Carolina Lead) to build a K-3 system that begins with a KEA; current law allows districts to assess incoming kindergarten students, but the assessment is optional.	K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium
Ohio http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Guidance-About-Kindergarten/	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-starting with the 2014-2015 school year; Start Strong. PreK assessment included in the Ready for Kindergarten Assessment System.	Ohio Kindergarten Readiness Assessment page
Oklahoma http://sde.ok.gov/sde/early-childhood-and-family-education#Top	K students must be assessed at the beginning of each school year using an early literacy screening instrument approved by the state; also has comprehensive preK and K checklists.	Kindergarten Developmental Checklist
Oregon http://oregonearlylearning.com/kindergarten-assessment/	Working with the 10-state consortium (North Carolina Lead) to build a K-3 system that begins with a KEA. Law now passed for DOE and Early Learning Council to develop and implement a KEA and provide training/technical assistance to schools.	K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium
Pennsylvania http://www.education.pa.gov/	2012-13 began 3-year **Kindergarten Entry Inventory** pilot; data collected in the first 45 days from the start of school, includes all areas of school readiness/development	KEI Reports
Rhode Island http://www.ride.ri.gov/InstructionAssessment/Assessment/EarlyChildhoodAssessment.aspx	Working with the 10-state consortium (North Carolina Lead) to build a K-3 system that begins with a KEA; selected TS GOLD, as part of its ongoing progress assessments; required administration 3x annually. State DOE offered opportunity to purchase child subscriptions at state rate.	K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium
South Carolina http://ed.sc.gov/tests/elementary/pre-k-and-kindergarten-readiness-assessments/	**Developmental Reading Assessment 2nd Ed. PLUS** required within 45 days of K entry. PALS, IGDIs, or TS Gold required in public preK programs.	
South Dakota http://doe.sd.gov/	No universal preK or KEA; AIMSweb screening used in K.	
Tennessee https://www.tn.gov/education/section/early-learning	Has preK, children at-risk served first; Districts must develop a comprehensive developmental assessment program for kindergarten children, to be used in developing instructional programs.	
Texas	**Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment System,** based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). RTTT-ELC grant to revise the current reading assessment required at K entry to a comprehensive KEA.	Kindergarten Readiness System
Utah http://www.schools.utah.gov/assessment/Kindergarten.aspx	Required math and literacy assessment upon K entry, not comprehensive KEA.	PreK-K Transition
Vermont http://education.vermont.gov/early-education/kindergarten-readiness	KEA begins in 4K; **Work Sampling System or TS GOLD** is used by most 4K programs.	
Virginia http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/early_childhood/	**2015 Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program Pilot** focuses on assessing K students at entry - mathematics, social skills, and self-regulation; **considering TS Gold; continues to require PALS.**	
Washington	Birth-grade 3 Early Learning and Development Guidelines; Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS), a process for school readiness; engages preK providers; TS GOLD required at 5K entrance.	WaKIDS Homepage
West Virginia https://wvde.state.wv.us/oel/kindergarten.php	PreK Child Assessment System uses the **Early Learning Scale** (developed by NIEER); data from this system used for K entry formative assessment; developing a KEA.	School Readiness Profile 2012

Wisconsin http://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/kind	No statute requiring KEA; legislation requiring districts to administer and report reading assessment (PALS) data for 4K through 2nd grade revised; 2016-17 assessment/screening tool to assess literacy a local decision with no data reporting; KEA exploration included in the Race to the Top ELC grant work plan.	Blueprint for a Comprehensive System for Screening and Assessment of Young Children
Wyoming http://edu.wyoming.gov/beyond-the-classroom/school-programs/preschool/	No state statute for KEA; no universal preK.	

Appendix B References

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Appendix C – Critical Time Periods for Early Childhood Screening and Assessment: Visual Chart and Narrative
A Model for a Comprehensive and Aligned Screening and Assessment (Birth to 3rd Grade)

Universal screening recommended during infancy and early childhood for the purpose of determining if further assessment is needed.

Purpose	Birth	2 Months	6 Months	9 Months	12 Months	18 Months	24 or 30 Months	36 Months	4 Years 4K	5 Years 5K	8 Years 3rd Grade
Newborn Blood Screening of Inherited Conditions	•										
Critical Congenital Heart Disease Screening	•										
Hearing	•								•	•	•
Maternal Depression	•	One Between 2-6 months									
Risk Assessment for Obesity	H/W	H/W	H/W	H/W	H/W		BMI	BMI	BMI	BMI	
Oral Health			•	•	Dental examinations should be performed every six months or as indicated by the child's risk status/susceptibility to disease.						
General Development				•		•	•		•	•	
Blood Lead Level					•		•	High risk children who have not been tested prior to their 3rd birthday should receive a test once between age 3 and 5 years.			
Autism Spectrum Disorders						•	•				
Vision									•	•	•
Early Literacy									•	•	•

Ongoing comprehensive assessment of development during enrollment in a program for the purpose of planning, supporting, and monitoring progress of intervention or to verify developmental outcomes.

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Screening and assessment may occur upon enrollment into a specific program based on program standards and guidance (e.g., Head Start, Child Care/YoungStar, home visiting, 4K, 5K). Assessment may include one or more of the *Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standard Domains,* including physical health, socio-emotional, language, communication, approaches to learning, cognition/general knowledge.

Caveats:
➤ Each screening date is on this chart because it is supported by research or a policy statement. The primary source supporting recommendations is Bright Futures (http://brightfutures.aap.org). Refer to Fact Sheets for further details and sources related to each area of screening and assessment.
➤ The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires states have a comprehensive and continuous Child Find System that ensures all children age birth to 21 in need of special education and related services are identified, located and evaluated.
➤ In addition to time periods listed, a response (screening, rescreening, or referral for evaluation, a service or program) is recommended whenever a concern is identified.