The Rise of KINDERGARTEN-READINESS TESTING
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Associate editor, Education Week

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The Rise of Kindergarten-Readiness Testing

Expert Presenters:

**Judith Walker**, chief of the Early Learning Branch, Division of Early-Childhood Development, Maryland Department of Education

**Stephanie Feeney**, professor emerita of education, University of Hawaii, Manoa, and adjunct professor, Graduate School of Education, Portland State University

Related Article:
**Kindergarten-Readiness Tests Gain Ground**
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
Maryland’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System

Judith Walker
Early Learning Branch Chief
Maryland State Department of Education
A Partnership to Promote School Readiness

Maryland and Ohio Departments of Education

Dr. Rolf Grafwallner and Ms. Marcella Franczkowski
Maryland State Department of Education

Dr. Stephanie Siddens
Ohio Department of Education

In collaboration with the Johns Hopkins University and WestEd

Dr. Jacqueline Nunn
Johns Hopkins University

Dr. Stanley Rabinowitz
WestEd
R4K: Maryland’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System

- Formative Assessments
- Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
- Online Data Capture and Reporting
- Online Professional Development
- Student Progress Monitoring
- Selected Assessment Items Electronically Delivered to Child
Purpose of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)

To support and advance children’s early learning and academic achievement. The data collected will be used to:

- Assist teachers in data-driven instructional decision making at the child and classroom level
- Identify individual children’s needs and provide necessary supports to children and teachers
- Provide families with information about their children’s learning and development
- Inform prior education and care stakeholders
Early Learning Assessment (ELA):

The Formative Assessments:

Will be based on research supported learning progressions for children ages 36 through 72 months in V.1.0, and will equip caregivers and teachers to:

- Track individual children’s learning trajectories
- Individualize learning opportunities and plan for intervention
- Address Early Child Outcomes for IDEA reporting
- Ensure that children are on the path for kindergarten readiness
## Kindergarten Assessment Design

*Two Types of Assessment Processes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMAINS</th>
<th>36 mo.</th>
<th>42 mo.</th>
<th>48 mo.</th>
<th>54 mo.</th>
<th>60 mo.</th>
<th>63 mo.</th>
<th>72 mo.</th>
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<td>Social-Foundations</td>
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<td>Physical Well-Being and Motor Development</td>
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<td>The Arts</td>
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**Early Learning Assessment**

Formative assessment: *Development represents a continuum of changing behaviors*

Summative assessment: “snapshot” of readiness

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
## Common Language Standards by Domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Standard (yellow rows)</th>
<th>Essential Skill and Knowledge (white rows)</th>
<th>Learning Progression</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Foundations (SF)</td>
<td>Social Emotional (1)</td>
<td>SF.1.1</td>
<td>Recognize and identify emotions of self and others.</td>
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<td>SF.1.1.A</td>
<td>Recognize and identify own emotions and the emotions of others.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SF.1.1.B</td>
<td>Express, understand, and respond to feelings (emotions) of self and others.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SF.1.1.C</td>
<td>Express concern for the needs of others and people in distress.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SF.1.2</td>
<td>Look to adults for emotional support and guidance.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SF.1.2.A</td>
<td>Separate from familiar adults in a familiar setting with minimal distress.</td>
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<td>Expression of Emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SF.1.2.B</td>
<td>Seek security and support from familiar adults in anticipation of challenging situations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SF.1.2.C</td>
<td>Request and accept guidance from familiar adults.</td>
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<td>Relationships with</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SF.1.3</td>
<td>Demonstrate ability to resolve conflicts with others.</td>
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<td>Adults</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SF.1.3.A</td>
<td>Seek adult help when solving interpersonal conflicts.</td>
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<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SF.1.3.B</td>
<td>With modeling and support, negotiate to resolve social conflicts with peers.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SF.2.1</td>
<td>Manage the expression of feelings, thoughts, impulses, and behaviors.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SF.2.1.A</td>
<td>Refrain from demonstrating disruptive or defiant behaviors.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self Control</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>SF.2.1.B</td>
<td>Demonstrate appropriate use of own materials or belongings and those of others.</td>
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<td>SF.2.1.C</td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to delay gratification for short periods of time.</td>
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<td>SF.2.2</td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to persist with a task.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>SF.2.2.A</td>
<td>Carry out tasks, activities, projects, or transitions, even when frustrated or challenged, with minimal distraction.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>SF.2.2.B</td>
<td>Focus on an activity with deliberate concentration despite distractions and/or temptations.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>SF.2.3</td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to retain and apply information.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>SF.2.3.A</td>
<td>Follow routines and multi step directions.</td>
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<td>SF.2.3.B</td>
<td>Remember and use information for a variety of purposes, with modeling and support.</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>SF.2.3.C</td>
<td>Use prior knowledge and information to assess, inform, and plan for future actions and learning.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SF.2.4</td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to solve problems.</td>
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<td>SF.2.4.A</td>
<td>Solve everyday problems based upon past experience.</td>
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<td>SF.2.4.B</td>
<td>Solve problems by planning and carrying out a sequence of actions.</td>
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<td>SF.2.4.C</td>
<td>Seek more than one solution to a question, problem, or task.</td>
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<td>Approaches to Learning/Executive functioning (2)</td>
<td>SF.2.4</td>
<td>Demonstrate the ability to solve problems.</td>
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<td>SF.2.4.A</td>
<td>Solve everyday problems based upon past experience.</td>
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<td>SF.2.4.B</td>
<td>Solve problems by planning and carrying out a sequence of actions.</td>
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<td>SF.2.4.C</td>
<td>Seek more than one solution to a question, problem, or task.</td>
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</table>
Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Design

Multiple Measures

The assessment features several item types including:

- Guided recorded observation
- Performance tasks
- Selected response items
Validity, Reliability and Fairness

- **Measured Across 3 Stages**
  - Design and Development
  - Implementation
  - Ongoing Evaluation & Research

- **Quantitative and Qualitative**
  - Cognitive Interviews
  - Pilot Testing
  - Field Testing
  - Post-Administration Analyses
KRA Timeline

2012/2013
CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

2013
DEVELOPMENT AND PILOT TESTING

2013/2014
FIELD TESTING (State Baseline OH)

2014/2015
FULL IMPLEMENTATION
Professional Development Content

Audiences: child care providers, trainers, teachers, school and district administrators

Pre-Administration
- Purpose of the assessments
- Data security and integrity
- Communication with parents/stakeholders

Administration
- Use of assessment system for data collection and reporting
- Understanding of supports and accommodations
- Importance of fidelity of implementation

Post-Administration
- Analysis and use of the data for program and instructional decision-making
- Communication of results to stakeholders
- Monitoring student progress (v. 2.0)
Professional Development Delivery

*Evidence-based and technology supported*

- Train the trainer model
- Face to face learning
- PD Quest web-based learning modules
- Online coaching and technical assistance
- Professional community of practice
- Virtual simulator for validation
- Web-based resources and portal
Welcome!

Kindergarten is an exciting time for young children and the educators who teach them. Their developing skills allow them to express themselves and demonstrate an array of emerging skills. Attention to the importance of early education in the lives of children is growing rapidly as we learn more and more about the competencies of young children.
Technology Use

Professional Development

- **Embedded PD recommendations**, including direct links to specific, contextual guidance to support assessment delivery and classroom instruction

- **Comprehensive series of online PD modules & resources**

- **Use of simulation software to familiarize teachers with the protocols & technology**
Technology Use in the Kindergarten Assessment

Components of the Technology System

- An online reporting system provides secure access to teacher dashboards, live data collection, and downloadable resources.

- The Virtual Performance Assessment (VPA) interface provides child-friendly, student access to direct-assessment.

- Data import, export, and reporting tools; linkages to longitudinal data systems.

- Support for attaching portfolio artifacts to student profiles over time.

- Online, just-in-time Professional Development.
Level 3 Item 2 - (Item C)
Step step 2 -- Round 1/2
For More Information:

Please visit:
http://maryland.kready.org/olms/r4k

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Assessing Children’s Readiness for Kindergarten: Issues and Questions

Stephanie Feeney
Professor Emerita of Education
University of Hawaii
Definitions

• **Readiness**: Preparation for what comes next.

• **Kindergarten readiness**: The state of knowledge and skills at the time of school entry that influences how a child functions in kindergarten and beyond.

• **Readiness assessment**: Method for gathering data used to evaluate children’s readiness to meet school expectations.
The term Kindergarten Readiness Assessment can refer to instruments that have very different purposes and methodology. Purposes include:

- Supporting instruction and decision-making,
- Determining if prior experiences have prepared children to be successful in kindergarten,
- Deciding whether a child is ready to enter kindergarten.
Who is interested?

- **Parents and teachers** want to know the strengths and needs of individual children in order to provide effective learning experiences.
- **Administrators** want to know the status of children’s learning to plan programs and services.
- **Policy makers** want to track progress over time and determine if public expenditures are effective.
National Educational Goals Panel: Components of readiness

- Readiness in the child,
- Schools’ readiness for children,
- Family supports that contribute to children’s readiness.
- Community supports that contribute to children’s readiness.
National Education Goals Panel: Domains of child readiness

- Physical well-being and motor development
- Social and emotional development
- Approaches to learning
- Language development
- Cognition and general knowledge
Methods used to assess child readiness

- Direct assessment of individual children (tests)
- Guided observation
- Performance tasks
- Checklists
- Combinations of the above
State policy regarding readiness

There is no consensus today about how kindergarten readiness should be defined or evaluated. States are working to identify significant components of readiness, to determine how they will be assessed, and to decide how data will be used.
State assessments vary in:

- The way readiness is defined,
- Their purpose,
- Focus (child, school, family, community),
- The domains of development addressed,
- The methods employed,
- When the assessment is administered,
- The length of time it takes to administer the assessment.
Examples

- Hawaii: HSSRA. Two assessments. Children Ready for School (all domains) and Schools Ready for Children survey of principals. Aggregate data. Purpose: track changes
Examples

• Washington: WA Kids. Portfolio based assessment (all domains) used to help teachers understand children and inform instruction. Assessment includes parent survey. Data also aggregated to track changes over time.
Issues related to kindergarten assessment

• Tests used for purposes for which they were not intended.
• Data collected not used in ways that are beneficial to children.
• Potential negative impact on children’s developing sense of themselves as learners and belief that school is a safe and nurturing place
• Potential negative impact on adult attitudes about children who do poorly on assessments
Issues (2)

- Test results that are not valid because it is difficult to administer tests to young children.
- Tests that focus on isolated skills that have little relationship to the development of comprehension, problem solving and other predictors of school success.
Issues (3)

• Cultural bias—assessment not appropriate for children who do not speak English as a first language, or those from minority groups.
• Teachers who introduce skills too early or alter their curriculum and “teach to the test,” resulting in inappropriate teaching methods and content.
• Emphasis on academic skills that puts pressure on families and preschools to teach content that is not appropriate for young children.
Some questions about readiness assessment

- Do readiness assessments improve developmental outcomes for young children?
- Do readiness assessments contribute to the provision of worthwhile curriculum?
- Do readiness assessments have negative impact on children, teachers and the quality of early education?
- Are readiness assessments the best possible use of limited resources?
Should we assess readiness?

• Some early childhood educators believe that dollars spent on assessment could be used for rich and meaningful curriculum and learning materials.

• Academic instruction in preschool and kindergarten is not related to long-term success in school, and deprives children of other important kinds of learning.
But readiness IS being assessed

Until the paradigm of education moves from a focus on accountability to a focus on meaningful learning based on what we know about child development, we will continue to assess readiness.
So let’s do it right

Readiness assessments should:
• Have clearly stated purposes.
• Be developmentally and educationally significant—have worthwhile goals aligned with developmentally appropriate early learning standards.
• Address all five domains of child development identified by the NEGP.
• Use results to improve educational outcomes for children.
Let’s do it right (2)

• Lead to improved knowledge about children.
• Translate into appropriate and effective curriculum and teaching practices.
• Be guided by ethical principles (be beneficial, do no harm, maintain confidentiality)
• Be research based, valid and reliable.
• Be appropriate for the children being assessed.
• Be easily interpreted and used by classroom teachers.
Let’s do it right (3)

- Be research based, valid and reliable.
- Be appropriate for ages, cultural backgrounds and individual differences of children being assessed.
- Be easily interpreted and used by classroom teachers.
- Involve families and inform them about their child’s progress.
- Be responsive to diverse voices.
Future directions

Nine states (led by North Carolina) have formed a consortium to design a “state of the art system for assessing young children’s learning” that involves a cumulative K-3 assessment that begins with a kindergarten readiness assessment. Results will be used to inform teaching and learning.

--K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium
The bottom line

• Do your research and choose carefully
• Be clear on your purpose
• Be sure assessments are beneficial to children
• Let kindergartners be children—provide meaningful, hands on learning experiences and let them play!!
Resources

Assessing Children’s Readiness for Kindergarten: Issues and Questions

PDF available with this webinar
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
The Rise of Kindergarten-Readiness Testing

Required Reading From *Education Week*:

Free download!

**Spotlight on Using Assessment to Support Teaching and Learning**

Educators are relying more on resources and training when it comes to assessments inside the classroom. In this Spotlight, see how teachers are sizing up formative-assessment tools in the digital age, learn from “teacher-researchers,” who are making daily observations in the classroom, and see how schools are developing students who can self-assess their work.