

Guidance to Superintendents on the Common Kindergarten Readiness Screener



Districts will receive data through their District Assessment Coordinator only for students tested in their district and prior settings as reported by parents.

ALL PRIOR SETTINGS DATA WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL – EVEN AFTER THE PUBLIC RELEASE OF THE AGGREGATE DATA.

Although this information may be subject to release under the Open Records Act, there are no plans to publicly release it. **THIS DATA WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL.**

Because the data is confidential, it does not have the same level of suppression as public data in order to provide districts with the most useful information. Districts should be aware in the case of small counts (less than 10) or in the case of 100 percent readiness or non-readiness, individual students could be identified and the data will need to be suppressed before it can be shared with anyone other than the child's teacher.

If a district does receive an Open Records request, it should be directed to the appropriate legal counsel at the district or state level. At KDE, please direct questions regarding Open Records requests to Amy Peabody, amy.peabody@education.ky.gov. Again, data will need to be suppressed before it can be released to prevent identification of individual students. For questions and data suppression requirements, contact Dede Conner, dede.conner@education.ky.gov.

Per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), **no individual student data can be shared with prior setting providers, without parental/guardian consent.**

A sample permission form is attached. The completed form should be kept as part of district records like any other FERPA-protected data release permission. This is required only if discussing individual student performance with providers that are not district-run.

To make the most of the data, superintendents should:

- 1. Review disaggregated readiness data by domain.** Determine:
 - how the district can support children who are not ready and provide the necessary interventions
 - how the district can support students who are ready and provide enrichment opportunities to keep them engaged in learning
- 2. Review prior settings data.** Realize that there are many variables (whether a parent reported the prior setting accurately, how long the child spent in a particular setting, student demographics, etc.). While valid and reliable, the K-Screen is not perfect and is meant to be a tool to support parents, improve programs and strengthen the learning continuum from cradle to career.
- 3. With the assistance of the [Community Early Childhood Council \(CECC\)](#), share **district readiness data with the individual prior settings providers.** In areas with both an independent and a county school district, superintendents will want to coordinate this effort. Provider contact information is available through the local CECC council.**

In larger districts, meetings with multiple providers may be held to review *basic* information with individual prior settings data shared in writing with the individual providers. Again, in the case of small numbers or 100 percent readiness/non-readiness that could reveal an individual student's identity, the data will need to be suppressed before it is shared with the provider or a data release permission form signed by the parent/guardian.

4. Review the Kentucky Early Childhood Data System (KEDS) data with your preschool coordinator to understand the growth made by students exiting the state-funded preschool program.
5. Work with the Community Early Childhood Council to make sure parents, preschool, Head Start and private child care providers know **what resources are available to help them improve early learning opportunities for children in their community**.

[School Readiness Definition](#)
[School Readiness \(adapted by a district\)](#)

[Early Childhood Learning Standards](#)
[Parent Guides](#)

6. Build strong partnerships with the [Community Early Childhood Council](#), early care providers and other community partners to establish a cooperative relationship aimed at continuous improvement.
7. Interact with media, parents, prior setting providers and school board members emphasizing **what the kindergarten screen is and isn't, why and how it is being used, and the benefit of the screener to children**. – SEE TALKING POINTS BELOW.
8. Understand that although the K-Screen is subject to many variables, **KDE and the [Governor's Office of Early Childhood](#) are committed to improving the accuracy and validity of results**.

Prior to the next screening window, KDE plans to:

- Gather input from school districts, the Office of Assessment and Accountability, Early Childhood Advisory Councils, assessment and data policy committees, and other stakeholders
- Examine input, along with training, collection, review and release of data
- Change implementation based on input and best practice

Districts are reminded that while we measure kindergarten readiness of each child, we also measure the school's readiness through the K-3 program review. The early childhood initiative is a major part of the Governor's budget request and is also emphasized with the recent Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant.

K-Screen Talking Points for Superintendents

- The road to college- and career-readiness begins in early childhood before a student even starts school. It's the first step in cradle to career education in Kentucky.
- We want the best opportunities for our children which is why we are conducting K-Screen. It is a snapshot of what each child knows and is able to do upon starting kindergarten for the first time. It is not an exam that determines entrance to school or school accountability.
- The K-Screen can help identify children who need extra help early, so interventions can be put in place to help them catch up, minimizing any achievement gaps and preventing gaps from growing larger in later years. In addition, if students who are advanced are identified early, enrichments can be provided that allow them to accelerate their learning.
- The results of the K-Screen are one data point in a system of measurement. Kindergarten teachers see the readiness results as soon as student answers are entered in to the Brigance Online Management System, so the results are used to make instructional decisions early in the school year.
- Prior settings data is provided by parents and includes many variables. Direct comparisons between prior settings categories are discouraged since they may be skewed by things such as how long a student spent in a particular setting, whether the program was full time or part time and the child's family background. K-Screen data alone should not be used to determine the quality of a preschool program.
- We will use the data to work with parents, public preschools and private child care providers to strengthen programs to ensure our children have the best opportunity to succeed both before and once they start school.
- Resources to support quality early learning experiences are available for parents and for early care providers and preschool programs on the [Kentucky Department of Education](#) and [Governor's Office for Early Childhood](#) websites.

Additional Talking Points regarding 2014 K-Screen results for Superintendents to use with internal district staff:

- Overall, district results were sporadic:

Readiness Scores Increased

101 districts

Readiness Scores Decreased

71 districts

Readiness Scores Stayed the Same

1 district

- The minimal increase in readiness scores statewide suggests that improving school readiness involves a systemic, cultural shift, which is not immediate.
- Incoming kindergartners' needs will fluctuate. How can our district use the results to make proactive decisions to reach as many children as possible before they arrive in kindergarten? One idea is collaboration with Family Resource/Youth Services Center staff to determine possible needs, as they are often familiar with families in the school community and younger siblings of current students. Do you have other ideas?
- Prior settings data is more complete this year, with only 2,171 "unknowns" statewide. How can our district use this data? Where are the students who need to be reached?
- Though small, there was a statewide gain for LEP and Free/Reduced lunch students, part of the gap population. However, there was a drop for students with disabilities. Many of these are the students served in state funded preschool. What is our district doing to accelerate learning for these students and close the achievement gap early?

Background information for Superintendents on the K-Screen

- High quality early childhood programs provide environments that keep children healthy and safe, provide opportunities for indoor and outdoor activities and offer meals that are nutritious and healthy. Such programs are characterized by early teaching and learning that is developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate for young children and provided by qualified teachers who have a Child Development Associate (CDA), Associate, Bachelor degree or higher. Early childhood teachers in quality early childhood programs use assessment to design learning opportunities for children and improve teaching practices. Most of all, high quality early childhood programs support and strengthen families and communities, knowing that parents are their child's first teacher.
- The benefits of high quality early childhood programs are well researched and documented. Here in Kentucky, a study by the University of Kentucky's Center for Business and Economic Research estimates that every dollar invested in expanding quality preschool yields a \$5 return on Kentucky's investment. High quality early childhood programs have been shown to lower the incidence of crime, lower the incidence of child abuse and neglect, reduce the need for welfare, reduce the need for special education, and lead to higher lifetime income earnings. And the study finds that high quality preschool increases high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates, especially for low-income students.
- In 2010, the Governor's Early Childhood Task Force recommended the use of a common readiness screener for kindergarten. Kentucky selected the BRIGANCE Kindergarten Screen for this purpose because it is aligned to Kentucky's School Readiness definition and Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards. The BRIGANCE is easy to administer and provides a snapshot of each child's development when they enter kindergarten (in the areas of cognitive, motor, language, self-help and social emotional development). These results are important because they help ensure all children receive educational instruction to meet individual learning needs. The kindergarten readiness screener isn't used in isolation, but is an important step in an ongoing assessment process.
- Kentucky's definition of readiness is that each child enters school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the child's success.
- The BRIGANCE provides us with valuable insight about the number and percentage of students who score ready and not ready by gender, race, free/reduced-price meal, English Learner, disabilities and overall readiness. We also have information about the percentage of children who score ready and not ready by prior learning settings, such as child care, preschool or Head Start.
- This data helps our schools identify children who may need additional supports, such as Response to Intervention, early in the school year. It provides rich information for kindergarten teachers to meet each child "where they are" when they arrive and help them master the kindergarten content to establish a foundation for continued success in elementary school and prevent achievement gaps.
- This data will support teachers in the development of appropriate learning opportunities for students, including children with disabilities, English Learners, and potentially gifted and talented children. This data will help us close achievement gaps, support K-3 Program Review work, establish goals for program improvement, and inform policy decisions in support of early learning experiences prior to the beginning of kindergarten.
- This data will not be used to determine eligibility for kindergarten. All children who meet the legal age requirement are entitled to enter public school.
- This data will help us strengthen early learning programs and develop strategies to ensure every child enters school ready to learn and every school is ready for children when they arrive. Working with the Community Early Childhood Council, this is an opportunity for each community to closely examine what it's doing to prepare young children, so they have the foundation necessary to be successful in school and beyond.
- Together we can encourage and increase community and family engagement in preparing children for kindergarten. (See [Promising Practices](#) on Governor's Office Website for examples; these can be selected based on individual district.)
- Many resources are available to help us do this and we will see many more developed as part of the state's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant.
- When done well, investments such as the common kindergarten screener result in a significant return to our state through higher levels of education, less need for remediation and a stronger workforce.

**Sample parent/guardian permission form
for sharing individual student K-screen data with prior setting provider**

To: _____ School District

RE: _____

Student's First Name Middle Initial Last Name

Permanent Street Address City State Zip Code

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), I, _____, parent/guardian of
_____ (student) grant the _____ (school district) permission to disclose the following
information from my student's education records to _____, the preschool/daycare my student formerly
attended:

(list of information from student's education records to be disclosed by district to preschool)

Parent/Guardian Name(s) (print) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____