NEW HAMPSHIRE KINDERGARTEN READINESS INDICATORS

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New Hampshire Head Start State Collaboration Office and
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Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education
Tel. 603-271-3144

Paul K. Leather
Deputy Commissioner
Tel. 603-271-3801

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, N.H. 03301
FAX 603-271-1953
Citizens Services Line 1-800-339-9900

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Dear Colleagues and Parents of Young Children:

I am delighted to share with you the New Hampshire Kindergarten Readiness Indicators (NH KRI). This tool was designed to provide parents, educators and communities with a common understanding and standard regarding what children should know and be able to do as they enter kindergarten in our state. This is important because research shows that quality early learning experiences, both before and after school entry, set a strong foundation for all the learning and development that follows. By focusing on the knowledge and skills young children need to thrive in school and later in life, we give our children the best possible start on their path to success.

The NH KRI may be used in several ways, including to:

1) Guide preschool programs in selecting content areas and activities for the four-year-old children in their care;

2) Help preschool and kindergarten programs to better align their efforts for children transitioning to kindergarten;

3) Inform parents about the expectations for children entering kindergarten and help them better prepare their children for school; and

4) Assist kindergarten teachers in determining a child's preparedness for school, when used in conjunction with standardized assessment and observation.

The New Hampshire Department of Education, in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, looks forward to working with you to ensure that children entering kindergarten in New Hampshire are on track for school success.

Sincerely,

Virginia M. Barry

Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

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Introduction

What is it that children need to know and be able to do when they enter kindergarten? States throughout the nation have been grappling with this question in recent years, attempting to balance the need for a common understanding and standardization with the desire to focus on a child's natural development (Kagan, et al., 2010). Research tells us that early attention to the range of physical, social, emotional and cognitive skills that young children need to thrive can maximize their potential for success in school and later in life. A common set of indicators that specifies the expectations for children entering kindergarten is one essential tool for increasing the effectiveness of early childhood education, both before and after public school entry.

As early childhood and elementary teachers and parents/caregivers, we celebrate diversity and recognize that all children develop at different rates socially, emotionally and academically. We recommend that teachers differentiate instruction and incorporate developmentally appropriate strategies that will excite, motivate and challenge all children to achieve their greatest potential. We encourage preschool and primary education programs to be supportive and nurturing while exposing children to a wide variety of learning experiences to ensure their success in school and later in life. This work is the first in a series of steps to promote that vision to the benefit of all young children and their families in New Hampshire.

The New Hampshire Kindergarten Readiness Indicators were developed to provide educators, families and communities with a common understanding and standard for ensuring that young children are on the path to school success. As required by the Head Start Act of 2007, these indicators were selected to align Head Start standards, curricula and assessment with those of New Hampshire Department of Education and public schools. For over a year, the New Hampshire Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Task Force worked diligently to identify a set of readiness indicators that was:

- Based on the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (HS CDELF), the New Hampshire Department of Education Kindergarten ½ day Program Common Core State Standards Pacing Guide and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS);
- Measurable using research-based assessment tools;
- Comprehensive and high quality;
- For all learners, including children with disabilities and English Language Learners;
- Compatible with the New Hampshire Early Learning Standards (currently under development, due for release summer, 2013).

The remainder of this document includes the following sections:

- What is Kindergarten Readiness?
- How were the Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Identified?

- The New Hampshire Kindergarten Readiness Indicators;
- Questions and Answers;
- Glossary of Terms;
- Resources; and
- NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Task Force.

What is Kindergarten Readiness?

New Hampshire defines kindergarten readiness as: children possessing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. Kindergarten readiness is a shared collaboration between families, schools, and communities promoting student success.

How were the Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Identified?

A three-step process was employed to arrive at the kindergarten readiness indicators for New Hampshire. First, to align the early childhood and public school a perspective, a crosswalk was completed for the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (HS CDELF), the Department of Education Kindergarten ½ day Program CCSS Pacing Guide and the Common Core Standards (K–5). Consensus was reached that the following six domains best reflected the HS CDELF and public school documents:

1. Language Arts & Literacy;
2. Cognition & General Knowledge: Logic & Reasoning/Mathematics;
3. Cognition & General Knowledge: Science & Social Studies;
4. Approaches to Learning (Including Creative Art Expression & Music);
5. Social & Emotional Development; and
6. Physical Development & Health.

A seventh domain, Instructional Technology, was unique to the Department of Education and should be integrated as appropriate into each domain. Furthermore, we recommend English Language Learners preparing to enter Kindergarten be assessed by an English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) certified teacher or highest qualified staff. A trained professional is best qualified to ascertain the skills, knowledge and language for these students.

Second, two research-based tools (TS GOLD and Work Sampling System[1]) were cross-referenced with the HS CDELF and the Department of Education Kindergarten ½ day Program CCSS Pacing Guide to identify the items that best measure the skill or concept of focus. The final step was to reach consensus on the specific indicators to be included in each domain and domain element. The result was a list of kindergarten readiness indicators that can be assessed using research-based assessment tools.

[1] TS GOLD is published by Teaching Strategies, LLC; Work Sampling System is published by Pearson Education, Inc.

The New Hampshire Kindergarten Readiness Indicators

1. Language Arts & Literacy

A. Listens to and Understands Increasingly Complex Language

1. Comprehends language
2. Responds appropriately to complex statements, questions, vocabulary, and stories
3. Follows detailed, instructional, multi-step (2-3) directions
4. For English Language Learners, progresses in listening to and understanding English

B. Uses Language to Express Thoughts and Needs

1. Describes and tells the use of many familiar items
2. Speaks clearly enough to be understood without contextual clues (Is understood by most people; may mispronounce new, long, or unusual words)
3. Uses complete, four- to six-word sentences
4. Tells about another time or place
5. For English Language Learners, attempts to speak and use English to communicate

C. Uses Appropriate Conversational and Other Communication Skills

1. Engages in conversations with multiple exchanges
2. Uses acceptable language and social rules while communicating with others; may need reminders

D. Demonstrates Knowledge of Print Concepts and Conventions

1. Uses and appreciates print
2. Has some knowledge of books (top, bottom, front, back, left to right)
3. Shows awareness of various features of print: letters, words, spaces, upper- and lower-case letters, some punctuation

E. Comprehends and Responds to Books & Other Texts

1. During read-alouds and book conversations interacts in a way that relates to the story
2. Begins to identify and recall story-related problems, events, and resolutions with guidance from an adult
3. Pretends to read, reciting language that closely matches the text on each page and using reading-like intonation

4. Retells a familiar story in proper sequence, including major events and characters

F. Demonstrates Phonological Awareness

1. Notices and discriminates rhyme
2. Decides whether two words rhyme
3. Notices and discriminates alliteration
4. Hears and shows awareness of separate syllables in words

G. Demonstrates Knowledge of the Alphabet

1. Names some letters
2. Matches some letters to their sounds
3. Identifies and names letters in own first name
4. Shows understanding that a sequence of letters represents a word

H. Demonstrates Emergent Writing Skills

1. Writes own first name (some letters recognizable)
2. Uses letter-like shapes, symbols, and letters to convey meaning
3. Represents ideas and stories through pictures, dictation and play
4. For English Language Learners, responds to books, storytelling, and songs presented in English

2. Cognition & General Knowledge: Logic & Reasoning/Mathematics

A. Demonstrates Curiosity in Approaches to Learning

1. Attempts trial and error responses
2. Uses technology skills (e.g., click and drag, scrolling, on/off, touch screen)

B. Remembers and Connects Experiences

1. Tells about experiences in sequence, provides details, and evaluates the experience based on applied knowledge from memory

C. Uses Classification Skills

1. Groups objects by one characteristic; then regroups them using a different attribute and indicates the reason

D. Uses Symbols and Images to Represent Something not Present

1. Plans and then uses drawings, constructions, movements, and dramatization to represent ideas
2. Interacts with two or more children during pretend play, assigning and/or assuming roles and discussing actions; sustains play scenario for up to 10 minutes

E. Uses Number Concepts and Operations

1. Verbally counts to 20; counts 10–20 objects accurately; understands the value of a whole number; tells what number (1–10) comes next in order by counting
2. Shows beginning understanding of numbers and quantity; understands which set has more than, less than or equal to; counts to answer how many.
3. Identifies numerals to 10 by name and connects each to counted objects (one to one correspondence)
4. Explores operations to solve mathematical problems

F. Explores and Describes Spatial Relationships and Shapes

1. Begins to appropriately use positional words indicating location, direction, and distance
2. Describes basic two- and three-dimensional shapes by using math vocabulary; recognizes basic shapes when they are presented in a new orientation

G. Demonstrates Knowledge of Patterns

1. Extends and creates simple repeating patterns
2. Sorts objects into subgroups that vary by one or two attributes

3. Recognizes and extends simple patterns and duplicates them

H. Compares and Measures

1. Uses multiples of the same unit to measure; makes comparisons among objects
2. Creates pictograph for quantities up to 10
3. Knows the purpose of standard measuring tools
4. Develops a sense of time (yesterday, today, tomorrow, days of the week and seasons)
5. Attempts to make quantifiable predictions

3. COGNITION & GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: SCIENCE & SOCIAL STUDIES

A. Scientific Inquiry

1. Expresses a sense of wonder and curiosity through questioning
2. Uses simple tools, equipment and technology for investigation
3. Observes and explores materials and natural phenomena

B. Conceptual Knowledge of the Natural and Physical World

1. Demonstrates content knowledge of the characteristics of living things
2. Demonstrates content knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
3. Demonstrates content knowledge of Earth's environment

C. Social Studies: Self, Family and Community

1. Demonstrates knowledge about self and others
2. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
3. Shows emergent understanding of family, school and community
4. Describes some peoples' job and what is required to perform them
5. Demonstrates awareness of citizenship (e.g., contributes to a classroom community)

D. Social Studies: Geography, History, Events

1. Describes the location of things in the environment
2. Understand that people can take care of the environment through activities
3. Explores past and present change related to familiar people or places

4. Approaches to Learning

A. Creative Arts Expression and Music

1. Explores and recognizes beat, rhythm, and a variety of musical genres
2. Participates in creative movement and singing
3. Explores principles and elements of art on its most basic level
4. Responds to artistic creations or events
5. Uses a variety of art materials for tactile experience, exploration and expression
6. Engages in dramatic play

B. Approaches to Learning (Initiative, Curiosity, Persistence, Attentiveness, Intentionality)

1. Sustains work on age-appropriate, interesting topic of studies
2. Approaches activities with flexibility and inventiveness
3. Plans and pursues a variety of challenging tasks
4. Seeks guidance to continue learning

C. Cooperative Learning

1. Establishes and sustains positive interactions with peers in small and large groups
2. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations, shares and takes turns

5. Social & Emotional Development

A. Establishes and Sustains Positive Relationships

1. Engages with trusted adults as resources and to share mutual interests
2. Responds to emotional cues; shows empathy
3. Accepts peers in the classroom
4. Initiates, joins and sustains positive interactions with individuals or groups of children
5. Seeks adult help when needed to resolve conflicts

B. Self: Concept, Regulation and Confidence

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
2. Identifies personal characteristics and preferences
3. Demonstrates confidence in approaching new tasks and experiences
4. Solves problems without having to try every possibility
5. Complies with three verbal directions
6. Follows simple classroom rules, routines, and transitions with occasional reminders
7. Cares properly for materials, equipment and facilities

6. Physical Development & Health

A. Health Knowledge

1. Performs self care tasks independently
2. Follows basic health and safety rules
3. Practices healthy personal hygiene habits (washing hands and blowing nose)

B. Balance and Control

1. Demonstrates fundamental motor skills and body and spatial awareness
2. Coordinates movements to perform simple tasks

C. Demonstrates Fine-Motor Strength and Coordination

1. Uses small, precise finger and hand movements
2. Shows beginning control of writing, drawing and art tools

Questions and Answers

Eight common questions regarding the NH Kindergarten Readiness Indicators (NH KRI) are answered in this section.

1) How will we know if children are prepared for kindergarten?

The only way to know if children are ready to begin the work of kindergarten is to assess their skills. The New Hampshire Department of Education recommends that children are assessed for kindergarten readiness by a highly qualified teacher, at the start of the school year, at their local elementary school. Children who demonstrate readiness begin the kindergarten curriculum. Children who need additional help receive support to prepare them for their kindergarten work. All children are welcome in New Hampshire public kindergarten programs.

2) Whose responsibility is it to prepare children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond?

The responsibility to prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond belongs to all of us. Children benefit when parents/caregivers, early learning programs, schools and communities work together toward this goal. Communities can ensure that families of young children have the necessary support and opportunities to provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment in which their children can thrive. Additionally, community members, leaders and organizations can partner with early learning programs and school districts to help ensure that quality early learning experiences are available to all of the children in the community.

3) What about technology?

Media and technology are essential to children's success in 21st century schools and beyond. For purposes of this document, however, technology was largely considered a tool for learning that should be included in all aspects of the preschool and kindergarten curriculum. Therefore, only one indicator relative to technology was included (page 4, A2, "uses technology skills") in an area that crosses domains: "Demonstrates curiosity in approaches to learning."

4) Are the NH KRI intended to be a progression of skills and knowledge?

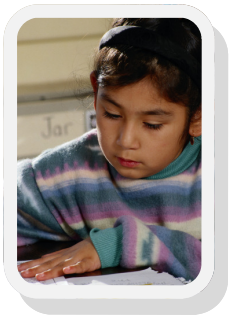
No, the NH KRI were designed to provide a snapshot of knowledge, skills and abilities for 4- and 5-year-old children preparing to enter kindergarten. Preschool teachers may use the NH KRI specifically to inform instruction for children preparing for kindergarten, or in a more general way, such as to guide the development of program-wide school readiness goals. Kindergarten teachers may use these indicators to gain an understanding of a child's knowledge, skills and work traits, which may be helpful in assessing a starting point for instruction and in individualizing instruction to enhance the child's learning.

5) How do the KRI fit into Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)?

The New Hampshire Kindergarten Readiness Indicators support a developmentally appropriate approach by acknowledging learning in multiple domains, recommending differentiated teaching approaches, and in considering the collaborative role of families, schools and communities to ensure children's success in school and in life. Children's development and learning occurs at different rates in multiple developmental areas and their skills and knowledge advance as they have the opportunity to play and practice new skills. For a definition of DAP, please see the "Glossary of Terms."

6) What standardized assessment tools are recommended to measure the NH KRI?

Developmentally appropriate, standardized assessments that include the six domains for the NH KRI may be utilized to help measure a child's preparedness for kindergarten relative to the indicators. The two standardized assessment tools reviewed in the development of the NH KRI that meet these criteria were TS GOLD from Teaching Strategies, LLC and Work Sampling System from Pearson Education, Inc.

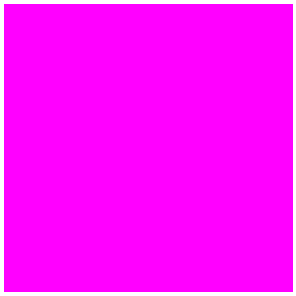


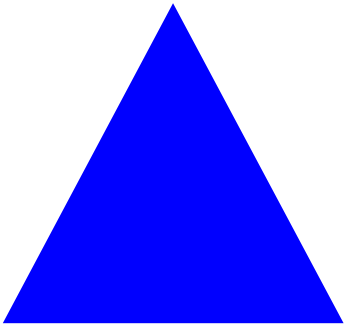
7) What happens when a child is working above or below the level of the Kindergarten Readiness Indicators?

All children at all ability levels are welcome in public kindergarten. For further information about how schools support children at differing ability levels, contact your local public school.

8) Why does the NH KRI document include the term "English Language Learners" vs. "Dual Language Learners"?

The term "English Language Learners" (ELL) is utilized by public schools. "Dual Language Learners" is utilized by early learning programs (such as Head Start) prior to kindergarten entry. The term "ELL" was included in this document to conform to the language of public schools. For more information on these terms, please see the "Glossary of Terms."





Glossary of Terms

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)(2009) defines developmentally appropriate practice as follows:

- Developmentally appropriate practice, often shortened to DAP, is an approach to teaching grounded both in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about effective early education. Its framework is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development.
- DAP involves teachers meeting young children where they are (by stage of development), both as individuals and as part of a group; and helping each child meet challenging and achievable learning goals.

Dual Language Learner

The Office of Head Start (2008, February) defines "Dual Language Learner" as follows:

> Children who are Dual Language Learners acquire two or more languages simultaneously, and learn a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language. The term "dual language learners" encompasses other terms frequently used, such as Limited English Proficient (LEP), bilingual, English language learners (ELL), English learners, and children who speak a Language Other Than English (LOTE).

All young children are learning their primary (home language) during early childhood development. Dual Language Learners may move between two languages randomly to use the appropriate word or sounds to convey meaning. This is an indication they are learning a second language while building the skills in their first language and should be encouraged. Young children need opportunities to continue primary language development, as well as opportunities to transfer knowledge between the first and second language, to build vocabulary and the meaning of concepts in both languages. In New Hampshire there are approximately 100 different languages spoken by Dual Language Learners.

English Language Learner

English Language Learners is the term used by the New Hampshire Department of Education to identify students enrolled in the English Speakers of Other Languages Programs (ESOL). The

mission of ESOL programs is to ensure that all English Language Learners in New Hampshire are given an equitable, appropriate, and academically challenging education. The New Hampshire Department of Education ESOL Office assists schools in providing the best possible education for these children K-12.

Indicator

The term "indicator" is used to describe skills and knowledge expected of children. In the NH KRI, "indicator" refers to skills and knowledge expected of children as they prepare to enter kindergarten.

References and Resources

Common Core State Standards:
http://www.education.nh.gov/spotlight/ccss/index.htm

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP):
http://www.naeyc.org/DAP

DAP with Kindergartners:
http://www.naeyc.org/dap/kindergarteners

Dual Language Learner - Office of Head Start:
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/Dual%20Language%20Learners/dll_%20resources/ohsdefinitionof.htm>.

Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (2010)(PDF):
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/eecd/Assessment/Child%20Outcomes/HS_Revised_Child_Outcomes_Framework(rev-Sept2011).pdf

Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework Wheel (PDF):
http://www.capwn.org/files/OHSApproach-to-School-Readiness-Preschool%20Early-Learning-Framework.pdf

Head Start Approach to School Readiness (PDF):
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/sr/approach/pdf/OHSApproach-to-School-Readiness_complete.pdf

Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center:
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc

Kagan, S.L., Scott-Little, C., Reid, J.L., Gomez, R., & Friedlander, J. (2011, July). ***Georgia's early learning standards alignment studies: Executive summary.*** **Georgia Department of Education. Retrieved from** http://gelds.decal.ga.gov/Documents/Executive_Summary.pdf

NH Department of Education Kindergarten ½ day program CCSS Pacing Guide: Grade Level Expectations to transition with the CCSS:
http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/curriculum/documents/kindergarten-expectations.pdf

NH Department of Education: Early Childhood Education:
http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/curriculum/early_learning.htm

NH Department of Education: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) K-12 Program
http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/integrated/esol/index.htm

NH Department of Education: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (Adults)
http://www.education.nh.gov/career/adult/esol.htm

NH Head Start
http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/headstart/index.htm

Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Task Force

Melissa Adams, Child & Family Services Director,
Community Action Partnership of Strafford County
PO Box 160
Dover, NH 03821

Jeanne Agri, Director,
NH Head Start Association President
Southern New Hampshire Services Head Start
40 Pine Street
Manchester, NH 03108-5040

Bagdat Caglar, Director,
Southwestern Community Services Head Start
63 Community Way
Keene, NH 03431

Patricia Bradley Ewen, Early Childhood Consultant,
New Hampshire Department of Education
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

Maureen Hickey, NH Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Office Manager,
Early Childhood Education/Infant Toddler Specialist
UMASS Donahue Institute

Alison Morgan, Director,
Tri-County Head Start
610 Sullivan St.
Berlin, NH 03570

Debra Nelson, Administrator,
NH DHHS/DCYF Head Start State Collaboration Office
129 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

Julie Sackett, Director,
Belknap-Merrimack Head Start
2 Industrial Park Drive
Concord, NH 03301

Patricia Tripp, Early Childhood Education Specialist,
NH Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Center
UMASS Donahue Institute

Ellen Wheatley, Ph.D., Administrator,
NHKRI Peer Reviewer
NH DHHS/DCYF Child Development Bureau
129 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

“The kindergarten children are confident in spirit,
infinite in resources, and eager to learn. Everything is still possible.”

Robert Fulghum