INDIANA EARLY LEARNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Recommendation to Adopt
Overview of Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Definitions
August 14, 2015

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Background / Process:

By their very nature, outcome assessments for early childhood are complex and multifaceted. Given the various types of assessments that feed into an overall picture of pre-K progress and/or kindergarten readiness, a subcommittee of the Evaluation Workgroup has developed an Assessment Overview document. The document has been designed to be easily understood by all stakeholders regardless of their level of proficiency in this arena.

Recommendation:

The Evaluation of Child Outcomes workgroup recommends that ELAC approve, adopt, and broadly disseminate the Assessment Overview document. This is envisioned as a useful reference document whenever discussions are held about the assessments that will ultimately determine progress in Indiana classrooms and among Indiana children.

Rationale:

By having a simple, easy to understand document for lay audiences, dialogues among legislative, executive, community, academic, business, philanthropic, and provider audiences can have a focal point for clarification and discussion. This document outlines the primary purpose for each component of a best-practice comprehensive assessment system; skills assessed; the primary audience(s) who will use the results, and who administers it. By having this as a reference point, the Workgroup hopes to help forestall misunderstandings on the purpose of various assessments and what they contribute to the overall picture.

Full ELAC Committee Decision:

With the clarification that the processes discussed in this document are focused on the pre-K year and transition to kindergarten, and with the understanding that this document will grow to highlight similar assessment processes from birth through 3 years of age and Kindergarten through 3rd grade, the document was approved.
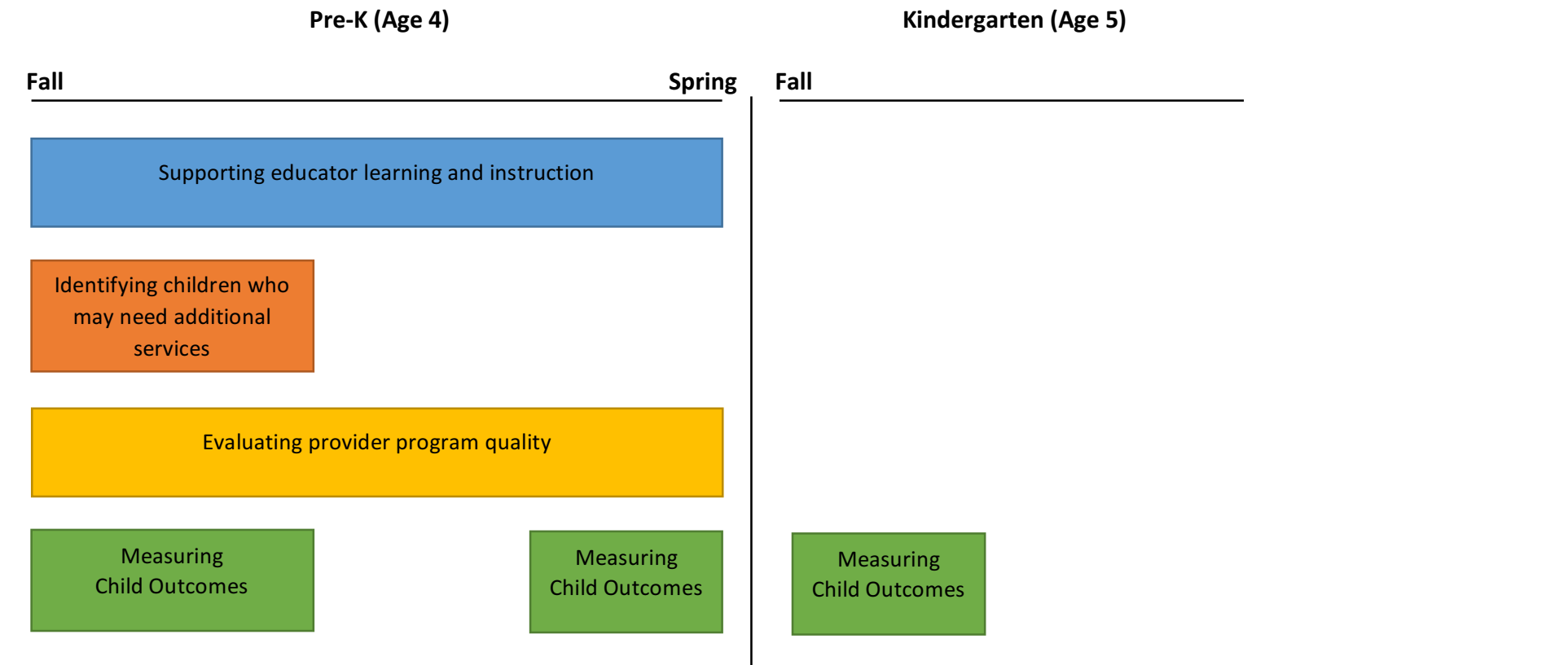
Indiana Early Learning Advisory Committee

With the growing interest and investments in high quality pre-K education for Indiana's four-year-old children, there is also a growing need to understand the impact these investments are having. Currently, no comprehensive assessment system is in place statewide to systematically track child outcomes and the factors which research shows can contribute most directly to those outcomes.

A comprehensive assessment system addresses several purposes and provides usable information to different audiences to:
(1) Support learning and instruction by early childhood educators;
(2) Identify children who may need additional services from community partners;
(3) Rate program quality; and
(4) Measure child outcomes to show individual growth and inform other stakeholders of the impact of early childhood education efforts.

The charts below provide a brief summary of each assessment's primary purpose, along with highlighted characteristics. Although they are presented as standalone assessments, the reality is that they overlap with, and inform, each other. The determination of kindergarten readiness will include data from a variety of tools in multiple categories, and assessment does not always involve testing that is administered TO children.

Pre-K (Age 4)	**Kindergarten (Age 5)**
Fall .... **Spring**	**Fall**

- Supporting educator learning and instruction
- Identifying children who may need additional services
- Evaluating provider program quality
- Measuring Child Outcomes
- Measuring Child Outcomes
- Measuring Child Outcomes

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Definitions Overview Document

Assessment Purpose	Primary Purpose	Commonly Used Example(s)	Skills Assessed	Provides Direction To	Administered When & By Whom	Comments
Supporting learning	• Observation tool • Children are observed to note progress toward key learning benchmarks	• ISTAR-KR	• English/Language Arts • Mathematics • Personal Care • Physical • Social/emotional	• Pre-K teachers • Parents	• Throughout the pre-K year by child's teacher • Continuously by parents	These tools do not have a "cut score" or passing grade. They show children's progress toward benchmarks that are indicative of readiness to start kindergarten.
Supporting instruction	• Instructional environment rating • The learning environment and quantity/quality of teacher-child interactions are assessed to identify potential improvements to instruction and interactions.	• C.L.A.S.S.	• Classroom environment and organization: Is it equipped for learning? • Social/emotional support: Are all children's emotional needs met so they can learn? • Instructional design: Are lessons designed intentionally to increase meaningful interactions and learning outcomes?	• Pre-K teachers; Pre-K directors (as instructional leaders) • Program evaluators • Funders	• Certified raters • Pre- and post-assessments can inform professional development and show growth as practices are adopted/changed.	Ratings do not measure children's or teachers' competency. They assess the learning environment and lesson design to suggest improvements that can be made to create an optimal learning environment.
Identifying children who may need additional services	• Developmental screening and monitoring tool • Children are screened to determine need and/or eligibility for early intervention or early childhood special education services. Progress is routinely monitored.	• Ages and Stages	• Communication • Gross Motor • Fine Motor • Problem Solving • Personal-Social	• Pre-K teachers • Pre-K Special Ed professionals • Parents • Community partners	• Parents • Multiple professionals such as pre-K teachers, medical professionals, or physical therapists determine placement as needed.	A single assessment is not adequate to determine need. Multiple parties are consulted prior to any type of placement.

Note: The examples listed above are not intended to be exhaustive. Most are in use to assess programs and participants in the state pilot.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Definitions Overview Document

Assessment Purpose	Primary Purpose	Commonly Used Example(s)	Skills Assessed	Provides Direction To	Administered When & By Whom	Comments
Evaluating provider program quality	• Program quality rating system • Programs are assessed against pre-determined standards to promote continuous program quality improvement, which ultimately results in improved child outcomes.	• Paths to Quality™	• See PTQ Program Standards https://secure.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/2554.htm#, and Accreditation Standards	• Public/private pre-K programs • Early childhood programs • Early childhood programs with OST classrooms • Head Start • Parents	• Upon PTQ enrollment and ongoing with coaches • Programs request level advancements from raters • Programs evaluated yearly by raters	A longitudinal study is in process to determine whether improved outcomes are aligned with quality ratings.
Measuring child outcomes	• Standardized cognitive assessment • Children are assessed to provide a 'snapshot' of kindergarten readiness.	• Bracken • Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	• Language & Literacy • Mathematics • Science • Physical • Social Studies	• Parents • Pre-K teachers • Kindergarten teachers • Funders	• Upon entry to pre-K classroom • At end of pre-K year • At kindergarten entry • Usually administered by pre-K or Kindergarten teacher	No statewide tool has been adopted. Measurement currently defaults to the local community to determine which tool(s) to use and/or when to administer them.

Note: The examples listed above are not intended to be exhaustive. Most are in use to assess programs and participants in the state pilot.