

Minnesota's Kindergarten Entry Profile: Frequently Asked Questions for Kindergarten Teachers and Staff



What is the Kindergarten Entry Profile?

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has been working to revise the decade-long *School Readiness Study*, which measures children's status at kindergarten entry. The main purpose of the study is to support school administrators, educational leaders, and kindergarten teachers in measuring what children know and are able to do at the beginning of kindergarten in order to inform their practice and programming. Districts may also use this process to inform other initiatives including World's Best Workforce planning and implementation of pre-K- Grade 3 plans and strategies that support coherence in teaching and learning.

The revised study, now called the Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP), includes a menu of comprehensive assessment tools from which districts can choose based on meeting the learning needs of students. The purpose of the KEP is to provide teachers with a menu of valid, reliable measurement tools that will assist them in observing, documenting and reflecting on the learning progress of their students. *The KEP is not designed for teacher evaluation, developmental screening, or measuring program effectiveness in early learning programs or kindergarten.* All tools on the KEP list provide real-time online data to schools in order to help guide instructional planning and teaching practices based on the learning needs of kindergarten students. *Additionally, all of the measures are aligned to Minnesota's early learning standards called the [Early Childhood Indicators of Progress \(ECIP\)](#) and the [Minnesota Kindergarten Academic Standards](#).*

The following assessment tools are included in the menu of options for the KEP:

- [Desired Results Developmental Profile-Kindergarten](#) (DRDP)
- [Formative Assessment System for Teachers](#) (FAST)
- [Teaching Strategies Gold](#) (TS – GOLD)
- [Work Sampling System-Minnesota Version](#) (WSS)

Why were these tools chosen?

A list of tools was selected based on recommendations from Minnesota teachers and administrators in the field, federal guidance in the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, the National Research Council report, [Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What and How](#), and in consultation with a statewide multi-sector comprehensive assessment system workgroup. Those tools were piloted in kindergarten classes and put through validity studies to ensure the highest quality tools were selected for the KEP menu.

How will teachers benefit from KEP participation?

Kindergarten teachers receive MDE support in implementing a tool that can be used to guide instruction, individualize instruction for students, and inform professional development decisions. Schools or school districts who volunteer to be a part of the *KEP* receive use of the chosen tool's online system for the entirety of the school year at no-charge to the school district or teacher (i.e. DRDP, FAST, Gold, WSS). Participation in the KEP allows teachers and school administrators to have immediate access to their kindergarten class or school-specific data

through the online assessment system. This immediate access helps teachers in the teaching-learning process throughout the kindergarten year to improve student learning outcomes.

Teachers also receive free, in-person training on the chosen tool, use of the online data system for the assessment tool, and assistance on effective use of the assessment tool. Kindergarten teacher and administrator feedback also helps MDE identify possible modifications to the KEP in the future.

Are schools or school districts required to participate in the KEP?

Each year MDE selects a random sample of schools or school districts based on the previous year's kindergarten student demographics. All schools that are selected in the random sample receive an invitation to take part in the KEP opportunity and can accept or decline the invitation. Kindergarten teachers will coordinate their participation in the KEP with their school administrator.

What is the time commitment for training?

The amount of time needed for training on the KEP varies dependent upon the assessment tool selected by the school or school district. All scheduled trainings are listed on the MDE KEP website, listed below. MDE provides regional trainers who are certified on the KEP assessment tool. The network of trainers enables teacher participation in the training in convenient, regional locations. The allotted time for training consists of; TS Gold = 2 days, DRDP = 2 days, FAST = 1 day, WSS = 1 day. All scheduled trainings will be listed on the MDE website.

Teachers are required to attend training unless they have been trained on the selected assessment tool in the last three years. MDE will work with teachers whose schedule does not permit them to attend in-person.

What does the KEP training include?

Generally, trainings include the basics of how to collect data, administer and score the tool, use the online system and explore the reporting features. All trainers are certified in the assessment tool and can answer specific questions on the functionality and features of the assessment tool and online system. Time is built into the training session to answer participant questions.

MDE staff also participate in each training session and provide an overview of the KEP requirements. Participants will have the opportunity discuss planning and administration questions including time lines.

What is the time commitment for implementing the tool?

Each tool's components vary, but all tools require observation and embedded assessment within activities. Within the first 8 weeks of school, teachers are responsible for collecting evidence for scores for their students. MDE will send bi-weekly reminders with updates and tips for teachers to use during this time. Upon completion of the 8 week data collection, teachers will have one to two weeks to finalize all scores in the online system.

When is data collected by teachers?

In the first eight weeks of kindergarten, data is collected according to the administration guidelines given by the publisher of each tool. There are no additional requirements or surveys. Continued use of the tool is up to teachers and administrators.

Once assessment data are finalized, MDE retrieves the data from each of the online assessment systems. There is no other formal reporting or data submission required of teachers. However, teachers must ensure all student scores are entered by the deadline. All

assessment data are aggregated by MDE. Individual teacher or school data will not be shared outside of the MDE data analysis team.

Is it possible to incorporate the tools for ongoing observation an assessment in the classroom once the KEP is completed?

Although MDE requires one-time fall data submission of kindergarten student assessment scores, teachers can use the selected assessment tool throughout the year for their own teaching purposes. Each tool has the capability for three data collection windows per school year. If you would like to learn more about the capabilities for progress monitoring of a specific tool from the menu, please contact mde.kep@state.mn.us.

What is the registration process for training on an assessment tool?

The first step is to register your school or district through the [MDE KEP webpage](#), listed below. Registration may be completed by a principal/administrator or a teacher who has been asked to complete the registration. Available training dates are listed on the KEP assessment tool registration site. MDE will work with staff unable to attend as a team for the available training session(s).

Can school district and/or community-based preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers attend a training together?

While the KEP is designed to collect assessment data on kindergarten students during the fall, MDE recognizes that many schools, communities, and school districts are aligning their prekindergarten to Grade 3 programs and strategies. MDE supports those efforts and encourages preschool/prekindergarten teachers to attend training with kindergarten teachers. To enable access to the kindergarten assessment data, administrators and other district staff are encouraged to attend training with the school or school district team. For schools experiencing staffing transitions or those that rotate teachers on a schedule, MDE will work with schools or school districts on a case-by-case basis to ensure all teachers participating in the 2016 cohort are trained on the KEP assessment tool.

For further inquiries about the KEP, please email MDE.KEP@state.mn.us.

Additional resources for the KEP:

To learn more about the KEP or register to participate in the KEP, visit the MDE KEP webpage: <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/Kindergarten/KEP/index.htm>

In order to sign up for a future KEP Interest Webinar to learn more about the background of the KEP and next steps, visit:

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/EarlyLearn/index.html>

In order to learn more about what assessments may work for your program, visit the MDE Early Learning Tool Finder:

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/EarlyChildRes/ELONA/>

For more information about the menu of tools:

- [Desired Results Developmental Profile](#)
- [Formative Assessment System for Teachers](#)
- [Teaching Strategies Gold](#)
- [Minnesota Work Sampling System](#)