Oregon Kindergarten Assessment

Report Overview

January 2015

All children deserve a bright future, and investing in our students early is essential to setting them on the path for success in kindergarten and beyond. We all share in the responsibility of being good stewards of our children's future opportunities, and Oregon is making some fundamental changes to help ensure our students have the strong start they need for school success. We know that every child enters kindergarten at a different stage in learning and development. Some children have mastered letters but have a hard time with numbers. Some are able to communicate ideas and needs, but have difficulty following directions. This is typical and expected.

The Oregon Kindergarten Assessment was created to get a clearer picture of early learning experiences across the state, and to add to the information teachers and schools acquire in order to better understand the needs of their students related to interpersonal skills, self-regulation, and early literacy and math skills. In addition, we know that there remains a great deal of inequity in the types of experiences children have before entering school. The Oregon Kindergarten Assessment is essential to understanding, and ultimately closing, the divide for our most underserved and disadvantaged early learners.

By providing a statewide perspective, the Oregon Kindergarten Assessment allows educators to track trends and measure progress, and helps ensure that we are working together to give every child a great start in school and in life. To this end, the following goals form the foundation of Oregon's Kindergarten Assessment.

1. To provide local and statewide information to state-level policy makers, communities, schools, and families about the literacy, math, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills of entering kindergarteners.
2. To provide essential information on Oregon's entering kindergarteners' strengths and to identify gaps in key developmental and academic skills to inform early learning and K-12 systems decisions and to target instruction, professional development, resources, and supports on the areas of greatest need.
3. To provide a consistent tool to be used across the state to identify opportunity gaps in order to inform schools, districts, early learning hubs, communities, and policy-makers about how to allocate resources to the communities with the greatest need and to measure progress in the years to come.

These Report Interpretation Guidelines describe the Oregon Kindergarten Assessment segments and scoring, how to use the results, and cautions in interpreting the results.

Kindergarten Assessment Segment Descriptions and Scoring

The field of kindergarten assessment nationwide is rapidly developing. Oregon uses a thoughtful, research-based approach to recommend and use assessment measures and continues to engage researchers and stakeholders to refine those measures. The Oregon Kindergarten Assessment is aligned to specified domains of the Head Start Early Learning Framework and assesses entering kindergarten students' selected knowledge and skills in Early Literacy and Early Math within the first three weeks of starting school and their Self-regulation and Interpersonal Skills within the first six weeks of starting school. Research shows that skills in each of these areas are linked to third grade literacy and future academic success.

The Oregon Kindergarten Assessment segments were selected because of strong, research-based evidence of their reliability and validity. The Early Literacy and Early Mathematics segments include the EasyCBM Letter Names and Mathematics measures and an adapted EasyCBM Letter Sounds measure. The Approaches to Learning segment is the Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS). Research has shown that both the EasyCBM and the CBRS can predict later academic performance for students from a wide range of backgrounds. For more information on the research behind Oregon's Kindergarten Assessment, please consult the *Kindergarten Assessment Summary Report* on the Oregon Department of Education's Kindergarten Assessment Resource website at http://www.ode.state.or.us/go/ka.

Early Literacy: The Early Literacy segment of the Kindergarten Assessment is administered within the first three weeks of school. The Early Literacy segment includes direct assessments that are timed to measure fluency, meaning that they provide information about how quickly and accurately entering kindergarten students can produce letter names and letter sounds.

- English Letter Names: The Letter Names assessment measures how quickly students accurately name upper and lowercase letters. Letter Names scores represent the number of specified letters a student is able to correctly identify in one minute.

- English Letter Sounds: The Letter Sounds assessment measures how quickly students accurately produce the sounds of upper and lowercase letters and some letter blends. Letter Sounds scores represent the number of sounds a student is able to correctly identify in one minute.

- Spanish Letter Names: The Spanish Letter Names assessment is for students who have been identified as English Learners and whose language of origin is Spanish. The Spanish Letter Names segment measures students accuracy and speed in naming upper and lowercase letters in Spanish. Spanish Letter Names scores represent the number of specified letters a student is able to correctly identify in one minute.

Early Mathematics: The Early Mathematics segment is administered within the first three weeks of school. The Early Mathematics segment is an untimed direct assessment in numbers and operations including counting, simple addition, simple subtraction, and recognizing number patterns. This segment is also offered in an English/Spanish side-by-side format. Students view and respond to 16 multiple-choice items by pointing at one of three possible answers for each item. Early Mathematics scores range from 0 to 16, which is the number of correct responses on the 16-item assessment.

Approaches to Learning: The Approaches to Learning segment is administered within the first six weeks of school. Teachers observe the student in the classroom during regular classroom activities and routines to complete the 15 item Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS), which measures teacher perceptions of students' Self-Regulation behaviors and Interpersonal Skills.

- Self-Regulation: The Self-Regulation segment measures how often students exhibit self-regulatory behaviors such as persisting at difficult tasks and using organizational skills. The Self-Regulation score for each student is the average of the teachers' ratings for that student on the 10 Self-regulation items. Averages can range from 1.0 to 5.0. Items for which the student was not assessed are excluded from this average.

- Interpersonal Skills: The Interpersonal Skills segment measures how often students exhibit interpersonal skills such as sharing with other students and following adult directions. The Interpersonal Skills score for each student is the average of teachers' ratings for that student on the five Interpersonal Skills items. Averages can range from 1.0 to 5.0. Items for which the student was not assessed are excluded from this average.

For each Approaches to Learning item, students are rated on the following scale:

- 1 = the child never exhibits the behavior described by the item
- 2 = the child rarely exhibits the behavior described by the item
- 3 = the child sometimes exhibits the behavior described by the item
- 4 = the child frequently/usually exhibits the behavior described by the item
- 5 = the child always exhibits the behavior described by the item

Total Approaches to Learning scores range from 1.0 to 5.0, which is the average of teachers' ratings on the 15-item assessment. Results display the average ratings on all of the 15 Approaches to Learning items, as well as average ratings for the Self-Regulation and Interpersonal Skills sections. Items for which the student was not assessed are excluded from this average.

For more information about the content and format of Oregon's Kindergarten Assessment, please consult the *Oregon Kindergarten Assessment Specifications* document located on the Oregon Department of Education's Kindergarten Assessment Resource website at http://www.ode.state.or.us/go/ka.

Uses for the Results of the Kindergarten Assessment

The results of the Oregon Kindergarten Assessment provide a snapshot of selected Early Literacy, Early Math, and Approaches to Learning skills that Oregon students can demonstrate at kindergarten entry. Kindergarten Assessment results are presented overall and disaggregated by student subgroups including ethnicity, gender, Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English Proficiency, and Students with Disabilities. This presentation format allows users to view the results overall and by student subgroups.[1]

The following table shows the levels of Kindergarten Assessment reports and the appropriate uses of the results at each level. At all levels, the results of the Kindergarten Assessment can be used to identify opportunity gaps early, determine how to allocate resources in early childhood through third grade, and to communicate with policymakers, families, and communities about the importance of high-quality education from early childhood through grade three.

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[1] Note that the student subgroup data used to create the disaggregation categories is limited to race and ethnicity for the January release. The other subgroup disaggregation categories of Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English Proficiency, and Students with Disabilities are released after districts collect and submit data on the additional student attributes via the third quarter ADM process.

Reporting Level	Uses of the Results
Statewide Statewide reports are posted on the Kindergarten Assessment Resources webpage. These results display the average scores of students statewide and in each district and school, overall and by student subgroup.	Statewide results are used to identify opportunity gaps in order to inform decision-making in allocating resources to the communities with the greatest need and to measure statewide progress in the years to come.
District and School School District and school level results are sent to school districts and hubs, and displayed in the publicly available statewide report. District and school-level results display the average scores of students in each school, overall and by student subgroup. Student-level results display individual students' scores for each segment of the Kindergarten Assessment. In order to protect student confidentiality, student-level results are included in the district and school level results of the students' attending districts and schools, but are not released to the public in the statewide reports.	District and school level results help districts and schools, in partnership with local providers of early learning services, better understand the strengths and gaps in selected domains of development for the population of Oregon's entering kindergarteners overall and by student subgroups. These results can be used to monitor patterns in district- and school-level data over time and identify opportunity gaps among student subgroups. This information can inform instructional decisions and be used to target professional development, resources, and supports on the areas of greatest need. Student-level results provide a snapshot of the skills in early literacy, early math, and approaches to learning each entering kindergartener can demonstrate on the Kindergarten Assessment. These results can be used to initiate outreach to families and inform instructional decisions.
Early Learning Hub[2] Hub-level results are sent to Hubs and display the average scores of students in the districts and schools within each hub, overall and by student subgroup.	The Early Learning Hub results help Hubs better understand the strengths and gaps in selected domains of development of the population of children in the Hub's service area. These results can be used to help Hubs target resources, supports, and cross-sector community-based strategies that support early learning.

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[2] Early Learning Hubs are regional organizations throughout the state that lead the cross-sector collaboration between early learning providers, K-12 education, health care, business, and the non-profit sector to ensure that all children in Oregon ages 0-6 have the learning opportunities, experiences, and access to critical services and supports that lead to school readiness and future academic success.

Cautions in Interpreting the Results of the Kindergarten Assessment

The results of the 2014-15 Oregon Kindergarten Assessment are consistent with the results of the 2013-14 Kindergarten Assessment and with national studies of entering Kindergarteners. Although the results of Oregon's Kindergarten Assessment can be useful for learning about specified knowledge and skills of entering kindergarten students, it is important to consider the limits of the data and the following cautions when interpreting the results.

Not the only measure of skills: The Kindergarten Assessment results describe how well Oregon kindergarten students demonstrate very specific skills. The Kindergarten Assessment measures these selected skills because research demonstrates that they are related to later academic success. However, these scores should not be viewed as the only measure of an individual student's competencies and strengths. Many children will have developed foundational skills that are not reflected in these assessments.

Not to measure individual growth: The publicly released state, Early Learning Hub, district, and school level results do not allow users to monitor the growth of individual students over time. Results provide a snapshot of entering kindergarten students in a given year.

Not to make placement decisions: Children cannot pass or fail Oregon's Kindergarten Assessment: it measures specific skills and provides a snapshot of students upon entering kindergarten. It is not appropriate to use student-level results to make placement or other high-stakes decisions about students. These decisions should be made using all available data sources and information about students' abilities and individual needs.