

Guidance for Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten Teachers Supporting Students with Disabilities

WaKIDS strives to provide smooth transitions and yield reliable information for all of Washington State's kindergarten students, which includes students with disabilities.

The WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment

- *GOLD*®, the tool used for the Whole-child Assessment component of WaKIDS, can be used to gather current developmental information in a variety of settings. In addition to being used statewide for kindergarten, it is currently being implemented in many community-based organizations, Transitional Kindergartens, and developmental preschool classrooms.
- *GOLD*® *Objectives for Development and Learning for WaKIDS*, includes continuum of development that range from birth through third grade.
- Observation-based assessment compliments gathering information about students at varying stages of development.
- Individual students may be at different developmental milestones along the continuum.
- All students have peaks and valleys in their development and may not be developing in one or more areas along with their typically developing peers and may show their strengths and abilities in ways which can be assessed with this observational assessment.

Important Considerations for Supporting Students with Disabilities in Your Classroom

- The Individual with Disabilities Education Act 2004 asserts that “a state must ensure that all children with disabilities are included in all general state and district-wide assessment programs...with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments, if necessary...”
- Because the *GOLD*® encompasses the developmental stages of children from birth through third grade, with the ability to accommodate individual students who may be at different milestones, an alternate assessment is not necessary for students with disabilities, regardless of the type of disability.
- Children come to our classrooms with a variety of experiences. Be sure to create an environment that makes children feel safe, welcome, and accepted.
- All students, regardless of placement for core instruction (special or general education setting), are required to be assessed with the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment.
- Many of *GOLD*® *Objectives for Development and Learning for WaKIDS* are aligned to

the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which lends the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment to Individualized Education Program (IEP) goal setting and progress monitoring.

Ways That WaKIDS Can Support Transition from Developmental Preschool into Kindergarten

- WaKIDS information is an early learning collaboration and alignment tool.
- Sharing information can provide a common language and be an excellent opportunity for early learning collaboration within your school or community.
- Develop and share kindergarten transition plans and practices that include this type of sharing between families, early learning partners and kindergarten teachers.
- Developmental and school readiness information such as *The Characteristics of Entering Kindergartners*, shared with early learning providers and families promotes understanding and supports transition to kindergarten for all children.
- Utilize the Family Connection Meeting to gather information, discuss strategies and share information about the advantages of observation-based assessment.

Observational Strategies for Assessing Students with Disabilities

- Set up developmentally appropriate activities and create intentional teaching moments with the *GOLD® Objectives for Development and Learning* in mind.
- Use observation and receptive activities as much as possible if child has a communication delay; for example, “touch the red block.”
- As *GOLD®* is a strengths-based tool, please note the intentionality of the assessment indicators. For instance, “traveling” skills rather than walking skills. Strengths-based language clearly supports teachers in communicating children’s growth and opportunities in ways that are both accurate and actionable.
- *GOLD® Objectives for Development and Learning* can and should be observed during classroom activities and embedded into learning opportunities.
- Use a pacing guide to choose objectives to observe. Samples are available on the [OSPI WaKIDS website](#).
- Provide opportunities for explorative and active learning to ensure multiple ways for children to demonstrate their learning.
- Create opportunities for all children to respond and participate in conversations.
- Promote peer interactions.
- When co-teaching and partner teaching with a special education provider, which parts might be appropriate for each person to assess? How will you share information?
- Ensure your environment is adaptive:
 - Are all areas of the classroom accessible by all children?
 - Is information delivered and gathered through a variety of formats?
 - Is language modified to meet individual developmental needs?
 - Are activities set up for a variety of developmental needs so that all

- students can access at their own level?
- Are sensory issues noted and addressed that may impact special needs?

Sharing Whole-child Assessment Information with Families of Students with Disabilities

- Regardless of a child's placement location (self-contained, Transitional Kindergarten, or kindergarten), engage families with the Family Connection Meeting, prior to the WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment.
- Families are integral members of the student's educational support team, and parents are required members of the child's IEP team. Sharing WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment information promotes opportunities for team-support of student growth and learning.
- The WaKIDS Whole-child Assessment uses strength-based, developmental language that can be shared openly and honestly with families in a sensitive and respectful manner.
- Consider sharing one of the many reports from *MyTeachingStrategies*® that can be individualized and focuses on areas of strength, next steps, and goal setting.