
New Jersey Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NJKEA)

Information Packet
2016-2017

New Jersey Department of
Education

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BACKGROUND:

In January 2014, New Jersey was awarded \$44.3 million to implement the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant to help improve access to high-quality early learning and development programs for thousands of high needs children throughout the state. The RTT-ELC grant incorporates a prenatal to age eight approach and reflects the shared leadership, collaboration, input, and long-term commitment of various stakeholders throughout the state. Additional information on the RTT-ELC projects, including information on the newly developed *Guidelines for Teaching and Learning First through Third Grade*, can be accessed here <http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/rttt/>.

As part of the RTT-ELC grant, The New Jersey Department of Education is implementing a proven observation-based assessment system, *Teaching Strategies GOLD*[®], to assess children's **academic and social development** as they enter kindergarten. Teachers are encouraged to continue using *Teaching Strategies GOLD*[®] beyond kindergarten entry to measure progress; guide individualized instruction; and assist in curriculum planning, professional development, and interactions with parents.

Teaching Strategies GOLD[®] is an authentic assessment system for children from birth through third grade that will assist New Jersey kindergarten teachers with individualizing instruction in a manner that is both developmentally appropriate and academically rigorous. The instrument covers all essential domains of school readiness and can be used with any developmentally appropriate curriculum. It is based on 38 research-based objectives that include predictors of school success and are aligned with New Jersey's early learning standards and the *Common Core State Standards* for kindergarten. The tool helps teachers document children's development and learning at kindergarten entry and throughout the year, use that information to inform instruction, and communicate findings to families and other stakeholders through easily understood reports for various audiences. The tool can be used with all children, including English- and dual-language learners and children with disabilities. Extensive research conducted by the Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation at UNC Charlotte shows that *Teaching Strategies GOLD*[®] is highly valid and reliable¹.

The New Jersey Department of Education is collaborating with Teaching Strategies to customize *Teaching Strategies GOLD*[®] and its implementation to best meet the unique needs of teachers and children throughout our diverse state. A detailed plan has been developed for training kindergarten teachers and other appropriate personnel to use the assessment tool, enter data, assign and access scores, interpret the results, and use that information to inform planning and instruction. New Jersey plans to employ a phased implementation strategy and use the KEA instrument statewide by 2019.

¹ Lambert, R. G., Kim, D., & Burts, D.C. (2014). Using teacher ratings to track the growth and development of young children using the Teaching Strategies GOLD[®] assessment system. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 32(1), 27-39

Participation Requirements: NJKEA and Kindergarten Seminars

Teacher participation in NJKEA consists of three consecutive training days on the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment tool. Administrators will attend the first day with teachers, and two additional dates in the fall.

Teaching Strategies and the DOE will schedule technical assistance visits at each district's convenience to support teacher and administrator implementation as well as best practices in the kindergarten year. The TA visits will include a mix of in-person and web-based supports.

In an effort to support the implementation of NJKEA and the Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines <http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/guide/KindergartenGuidelines.pdf>, we are asking that teachers also participate in the Kindergarten Seminar, which is designed to support best practices in the Kindergarten year. Information on the Kindergarten Guidelines as well as supports for Kindergarten can be accessed here <http://www.state.nj.us/education/ece/k/>. While these dates have not yet been determined, the four-day training series will be offered to teachers in October, January, March, and May. Specific dates and locations will be available to districts in June of 2016. The series will be offered regionally throughout the state.

Please Note: A Kindergarten teacher who is participating in the NJKEA initiative must also attend the Kindergarten Seminar throughout the 2016-2017 school year, unless the participant previously attended the seminar. There is no fee associated with either of these initiatives

Registration Instructions:

Please access the following link to register to participate in NJKEA for the 2016-2017 school year. <http://teachingstrategies.com/njkea-registration/>

Specific information regarding location/directions within a region will be sent to participants in May. The training dates for each of the regional summer cohorts are as follows:

Northern Cohorts

Cohort	Month	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
1	June	6	7	8
2	June	13	14	15
3	June	20	21	22
4	June	27	28	29

Central Cohorts

Cohort	Month	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
1	June	7	8	9
2	June	14	15	16
3	June	21	22	23
4	June	28	29	30

Southern Cohorts

Cohort	Month	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
1	June	8	9	10
2	June	15	16	17
3	June	22	23	24

Contact Information:

Should you have any question regarding the NJ KEA initiative, please contact Kathleen Spadola, Kindergarten Entry Assessment Manager, via email Kathleen.spadola@doe.state.nj.us.