Statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessments: Research-to-Policy Resources

Kindergarten entry assessments (KEAs), also referred to as kindergarten readiness assessments or school readiness assessments, are meant to be, according to the Research Connections child care and early education glossary: “assessments developed by states and aligned with states’ early learning and development standards to assess what children know and are able to do as they enter kindergarten.” This definition is consistent with the common features found in other organizations’ and government definitions (Ackerman, 2018). As such, KEAs are informed by the complex, multidimensional concept of kindergarten readiness. Definitions of kindergarten readiness vary across states, with some states defining the term explicitly and others doing so implicitly in their early learning standards (Regenstein, Connors, Romero-Jurado, & Weiner, 2017).

In aiming to measure kindergarten readiness, KEAs are intended to be reliable, valid, multidimensional, and suitable for use with diverse populations. For instance, in their notice of final priorities for the 2011 Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant competition (RTT-ELC), the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services called for applicants to implement a “Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that— (a) Is aligned with the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness; (b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities.” KEA data may be used to improve practice at the school level and analyze system-wide needs at the policy level (Regenstein, Connors, Romero-Jurado, & Weiner, 2017).
KEAs are now required by 39 states, with 30 states mandating the use of a particular measure and nine allowing schools to choose which measure to use (Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation, n.d.). Much of the growth in KEA adoption was spurred by two federal initiatives, the previously mentioned RTT-ELC and the 2013 Enhanced Assessment Grants, which funded three consortia of states to develop KEAs. The measures that states use include “commercially available measures, newly developed assessments, and state-developed instruments” (Ackerman, 2018).

This Research-to-Policy Resource List provides resources in the Research Connections library on statewide KEAs. It does not address local KEA efforts or broader issues related to child assessment more generally. The first section presents publications that discuss issues surrounding the development and use of KEAs. The second offers a list of resources that contain information on multistate scans of KEA practices. The final section is divided by state and includes publications for each state, where available, on the development and selection of its KEA, as well as KEA results.
Papers on the Development and Use of KEAS


Multistate Scans of KEA Practices


U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.


Reports on State KEA Development, Selection, and Results

Alaska

Arizona

California


Connecticut


Delaware


**Hawaii**

Good Beginnings Alliance. (n.d.). *Catching up to school readiness*. Honolulu, HI: Good Beginnings Alliance.


**Illinois**


**Iowa**


**Maryland**

Ackerman, D. J. (2018). *Real world compromises: Policy and practice impacts of kindergarten*


Maryland. State Department of Education. (2009). Children entering school ready to learn:
2009-2010 Maryland model for school readiness. Baltimore: Maryland, State Department of Education.


Ready at Five, & Maryland. State Department of Education. (2015). Readiness matters!: The


Massachusetts


Minnesota


**Mississippi**

October 2014. Jackson: Mississippi, Department of Education.


Nevada


New Mexico

New York

North Carolina


Ohio


Columbus, OH: Ohio State University, Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy.


Oregon


Pennsylvania


**South Carolina**


**Utah**

Vermont


Virginia


Washington

of Public Instruction.


Washington (State). Superintendent of Public Instruction., & Washington (State). Department

Wisconsin


Wyoming

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