

W a s h i n g t o n
WaKIDS
Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills

What is WaKIDS?

The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) is a process for:

Welcoming students and their families to kindergarten.

...

Assessing students' strengths.

...

Engaging the state in a conversation about the characteristics of children's development and learning that will enable them to be successful in school.

WaKIDS has three components:

FAMILY CONNECTION

Teachers welcome families and students to school individually as partners in their children's education.

"WHOLE CHILD" ASSESSMENT

Teaching Strategies GOLD measures six areas of development and learning.

EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATION

Kindergarten teachers and early learning professionals share information and expertise.





Who is participating in WaKIDS?

In the 2012–13 school year, WaKIDS will reach almost 23,000 kindergartners—more than three times the number reached when WaKIDS was voluntarily implemented in 2011–12. Most of these students are in state-funded, full-day kindergartens (SF FDK), which are required to implement WaKIDS in 2012–13. (Only five districts received waivers from implementation.) The Legislature has provided full-day kindergarten funding for 22 percent of kindergarten students in the 2012–13 school year. Between SF FDK and volunteer districts, approximately 105 districts and 307 schools will participate in the 2012–13 implementation of WaKIDS.

How does WaKIDS work?

- **FAMILY CONNECTION**
Before school starts, or shortly thereafter, kindergarten teachers meet with families and early learning professionals to welcome families and students to school, and talk about each child's strengths and needs.
- **"WHOLE CHILD" ASSESSMENT**
Within the first seven weeks of the school year, kindergarten teachers will complete a more formal assessment of each child's developing skills in six areas: social-emotional, physical, cognitive, language, literacy, and mathematics.
- **EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATION**
As the school year continues, early learning professionals and kindergarten teachers will meet to develop ways to collaborate and share information.

How will the WaKIDS program help educators and families?

Each year, 80,000 children enter kindergarten with a varying degree of skills. We want to know *what works best* in supporting a successful transition from early learning into kindergarten. This transitional period is the perfect opportunity to welcome families into the K–12 system and acknowledge the crucial role they play as partners in their child's education.

As they are assessing their students, kindergarten teachers will use the information they gather to improve classroom teaching and tailor their instruction to the individual needs of each child. In addition, WaKIDS will help determine best practices for engaging with families and inform decisions at the community, district and state levels.

Will kindergarten entry for students still be the same?

Yes. All children who have had their 5th birthday by Aug. 31 may enter kindergarten. The purpose of WaKIDS is to provide families, early learning professionals and kindergarten teachers a more formal process for sharing information, so that children receive the support they need to be successful in school. It is not a tool to determine whether a child should enter kindergarten.

Who is providing financial support for WaKIDS?

WaKIDS is a partnership paid for with state, federal and private funding. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Department of Early Learning are working together to oversee WaKIDS. Private partners include Thrive by Five Washington and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.