Kindergarten Readiness FAQs for Administrators and Teachers

Why the new emphasis on Kindergarten Readiness?

The vision set by the Kansas State Board of Education states that, “Kansas leads the world in the success of each student,” and a successful Kansas High School Graduate has the academic preparation, cognitive preparation, technical skills, employability skills and civic engagement to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

In order to achieve this for every student, there have been five outcomes identified for measuring progress:

- Kindergarten readiness
- Individual Plans of Study focused on career interest
- High school graduation rates
- Postsecondary completion/attendance
- Social/emotional growth measured locally

For most districts, Kindergarten is the youngest level to which students enter school, and the gap, both academically and socially, is already very evident.

For more on this question, please view the webinar from Dr. Randy Watson, Commissioner of Education: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rd5kJ3bnPM

What is the definition of Kindergarten Readiness?

Early childhood experiences, birth to kindergarten entry, that ensure health and physical well-being and the development of cognitive, communication and social-emotional skills necessary for school success and have a direct influence on future success. School readiness occurs within a broad context that includes the four components of community, educational environment, family and the individual child. These four components function as interdependent systems of supports that have multi-directional influences. An effective foundation for school readiness involves policy, funding and systems for children that support their ability to thrive and their success in learning environments through their lifespan. (Kansas School Readiness Framework, 2012. School Readiness Data Taskforce, Kansas State Department of Education, and Early Childhood Advisory Council.)

You can find more information about the Kansas School Readiness Framework at the link below. http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/Early%20Childhood/Birth%20to%20Five%20Collaboration/KSSchoolReadinessBrochure.pdf

What is a Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot?

A developmental snapshot reviews developmental areas of language and literacy, cognitive and problem solving, physical wellbeing and motor development, and social-emotional development. It is based on families or teachers observations of children’s skills and abilities and aligns with Kansas standards and tools already used in Kindergarten settings.

A Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot is like a hinge:

- Swings back to highlight a child’s prior experiences and interventions
- Swings forward to inform most effective practice for a child in elementary years
What data will be collected through this process and how will it be used?

Data collected at the state level will be the number of children who entered kindergarten developmentally ready. This data will be used measure the kindergarten readiness of children statewide and inform policy decisions about early learning resources and systems.

However, the preferred snapshot tool will provide rich data that can be used locally to help schools:

- Design environment and instruction to meet the needs of their incoming kindergartners;
- Support aligned teaching practice and program planning;
- Support individualized instruction;
- Support teacher-parent partnerships;
- Screen for potential learning difficulties.

What snapshot was piloted and how was it selected?

A workgroup of members from the Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund, Head Start Collaboration Office, Department of Children and Families, Parents as Teachers, Kansas MTSS, Early Childhood, Special Education and Title Services, Kansas City Public Schools, Canton-Galva Public Schools, and educational service centers collaborated to examine many options for a Kindergarten Readiness snapshot. The group considered what districts are currently using, what other states are using, whether or not we (Kansas) want to build our own, and many other factors. The group came up with three key ideas for Kindergarten Readiness:

- Measuring Kindergarten readiness should provide a snapshot of where children are upon entry to Kindergarten
- Screening should include communication, language & literacy, problem solving, motor and social emotional areas of development.
- Families and caregivers should be engaged in gathering information about their child’s development and early childhood experiences prior to Kindergarten.

Once these key ideas were established, it was determined that Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ:3) and Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE-2) are tools that meet those key ideas.

More about the ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2

What are ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2?

ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 are low-cost, reliable tools for screening infants and young children for developmental delays during the crucial first 6 years of life.

How long do they take to administer?

Questionnaires take 15-20 minutes for parents or caregivers to complete. Scoring takes about 2–3 minutes and can be conducted by professionals, paraprofessionals, or program staff. Use of the online Family Access platform eliminates the need for scoring or data entry.

What developmental areas does ASQ-3 address?

ASQ-3 addresses five developmental areas: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social.
What social-emotional areas does ASQ:SE-2 address?

ASQ:SE-2 addresses seven social-emotional areas: self-regulation, compliance, communication, adaptive behaviors, autonomy, affect, and interaction with people.

Who completes the questionnaires?

Parents or caregivers complete the questionnaires independently, or, if necessary, with the assistance of a staff member. Caregivers and teachers who spend 15-20 hours per week with a child may also complete the questionnaires.

In what setting can questionnaires be completed?

With online questionnaire completion through ASQ Family Access, parents are able to complete questionnaires anytime, anywhere. The questionnaires can also be completed on paper at home; during home visits by teachers; in waiting areas; or at school.

Are questionnaires easy to use?

ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 questionnaires are written at a 4th- to 6th-grade reading level and illustrated for ease of understanding. Each questionnaire comes with:

- easy instructions
- an information sheet for identification
- simply worded activities—6 for each of the 5 developmental areas
- an information summary sheet for scoring and general comments

How can questionnaires be used as a parent education tool?

Each questionnaire discusses developmental activities tied to the age of the child being screened. In completing and reviewing the questionnaire, parents learn about general developmental milestones as well as their own child’s strengths. Parents find it helpful to receive suggested learning activities they can work on with their child. (Learning activity sheets can be photocopied from ASQ-3 User’s Guide, and more are available in the ASQ-3 Learning Activities.)

How does ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 involve parents?

ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 relies on parents to observe their child and to complete the simple questionnaires about their child’s abilities. Having parents complete the developmental questionnaires is not only cost effective, but also enhances the accuracy of screening by tapping into parents’ in-depth knowledge about their children. Using parent-completed tools also fulfills the spirit of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) amendments, which call for parents to be partners in their child’s assessment and intervention activities.

Are ASQs parent-friendly?

ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 questionnaires have been carefully designed to ensure clarity and ease of implementation for parents. Each questionnaire item is written in simple, straightforward language (at a 4th- to 6th-grade reading level), illustrations are provided when possible, and concrete examples are included. To further enhance parents’ involvement, the User’s Guides provide reproducible sheets of intervention activities for parents to try at home with their children.
Are children comfortable completing questionnaire activities?

ASQs are versatile, flexible, culturally sensitive, and designed to be administered at home. This means children can be tested in their usual environment and at the parents’ convenience. Activities allow children to play, move about, and practice daily living skills. They often involve home items like cereal boxes and mirrors or basic toys like balls, blocks, or crayons.

Are ASQs technically sound?

Yes, ASQs reliability, validity, sensitivity, and specificity are all excellent. More information regarding the technical reliability and validity can be found at:

http://agesandstages.com/resource/asq-3-technical-report/

More information regarding Frequently Asked Questions can be found at http://agesandstages.com/about-asq/faqs/#asq.

What does the timeline look like for implementing a Kindergarten Readiness snapshot in all districts in Kansas?

Much is yet to be determined based on the results of the pilot and upcoming decisions to be made by the Kansas State Board of Education. Below is a tentative timeline.

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<th>Spring 2017</th>
<th>Present recommendation to the Kansas State Board of Education</th>
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<td>*</td>
<td>KSDE engages in a Request for Proposal Process</td>
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<td>A vendor is selected</td>
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<td>Contract negotiations</td>
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| *Fall 2017  | Phase 1 Training for kindergarten teachers                          |

*Items subject to approval by the Kansas State Board of Education

Who participated in the pilot?

Schools in districts of all sizes, rural and urban participated in the pilot in the fall of 2016. It included 189 teachers, 62 schools, 2631 parents or caregivers and 2222 questionnaires were completed.

Other Administration Questions

What should we do if the Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot indicates a child may not be “ready” for Kindergarten?

This data is not a gatekeeping tool. All children who are five years old by the cutoff date (by September 1) have a right to attend Kindergarten.

Each district has policies and procedures in place for determining tiered interventions and referral to special education. Teachers and teams should continue to follow those processes for all students. The ASQ is one piece of information that may be included in the data collected for a special education evaluation, but by itself is not enough to move forward with an evaluation.
If the parent completes the questionnaire and the teacher disagrees, what should the teacher do?
For data purpose, for the pilot, record the parent responses. In the future, protocols will be established to address this question.

What happens if the return rate is low for my school?
Consider alternative methods for connecting with parents and ways to support them in completing the questionnaires.

How should results be shared with parents?
This is a local decision, however parents who have completed similar forms in early childhood programs will expect to hear about results. More training and information will be provided with a statewide rollout.

If the child completed the ASQ in the spring of their preschool year, should another one be completed?
Yes

Should a child with an IEP be screened?
Ideally, all children should be screened upon Kindergarten entry. If you believe completing the ASQs would be inappropriate or not a positive, relationship building experience for the parent, collaborate with your Special Education team and document as a team your rationale for exempting this child/family from the screening process.