

Early Childhood

**Program Self-Assessment**

**2022-2023**

# GUIDE



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# Overview

Evaluating the quality of your early childhood programs helps ensure that our youngest learners are receiving the early learning experience necessary to support optimal development and learning in early childhood. The Early Childhood Education Division at the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has developed the Early Childhood Program Self-Assessments for prekindergarten, kindergarten, first grade and second grade to help local education agencies (LEAs) in their continuous improvement efforts.

This guide is aimed at supporting LEAs as they utilize any of the Early Childhood Program Self-Assessments. Included in this guide are suggestions and resources for conducting a program self-assessment and corresponding resources to support quality improvement. The Early Childhood Education Division recognizes that the process for completing a program self-assessment is highly dependent upon the make-up of the LEA. Therefore, the goal of this guide is to provide a variety of resources that support a range of LEA sizes, organizational structures and capacities.

The intended use of the Early Childhood Program Self-Assessment tools is to assist LEAs in evaluating their early childhood programs in order to make program adjustments to meet the needs of all students.

## What It Is

- A means of internal reflection and evaluation of current practices
- A voluntary method to identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth
- A process to measure the extent to which growth has occurred
- A tool to inform continuous improvement

## What It Is Not

- A system of scoring, grading or labeling a program
- A tool used to publicly compare or judge early childhood programs
- A staff evaluation tool
- A means of comparing campuses within a school district/charter

# Program Self-Assessment Guidance



Completing the Early Childhood Program Self-Assessment tools begins with proper planning. This includes convening a program self-assessment committee, choosing a format for completing the self-assessment, establishing a timeline and gathering the necessary evidence to accurately assess the current programs. Each of these components of planning is discussed in greater detail within this section of the self-assessment guide.

# Timeline

Planning for the process of conducting the Early Childhood Program Self Assessment helps to ensure that you have ample time to complete the tool and initiate continuous quality improvement efforts. Below is a suggested timeline for completing the program self-assessment.

When creating a timeline, consider the following:

1. What other meetings, activities, and events will be occurring during the program self-assessment process that might create scheduling conflicts or hinder the self-assessment process?
2. Does your LEA have an approval process for sending out surveys that may require you to start the process earlier?
3. If completing multiple tools, will the committee be the same for each grade level?
4. Does waiting until the end of the school year to compile the report allow enough time for next steps to be implemented in the following school year?

February	Identify who will serve on the program self-assessment committee and conduct member orientation
Early March	Choose a format for completing the program self-assessments
Mid-March - April	Collect evidence necessary for completing the program self-assessments
Early May	Complete the program self-assessment tools using the collected evidence
Mid-May	Review results and decide next steps
Late May	Compile a program self-assessment report and make results available to families

# Sources of Evidence

Accurately completing the program self-assessment tools requires the collection of evidence for the committee's use during the process. The make-up of the committee and the size of the LEA might alter the process for collecting the necessary evidence. Below is a suggested list of evidence needed for each of the components in the program self-assessment. Not all LEAs may have each of the sources of evidence below. This list is not fully inclusive of all the possible sources of evidence an LEA may use. LEAs are encouraged to utilize additional sources of evidence as needed.

## Access/ Enrollment

- Prekindergarten and kindergarten enrollment plan(s)
- District enrollment process(es)
- Number of 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds enrolled in prekindergarten
- Number of 1st grade students who meet prekindergarten eligibility requirements
- Prekindergarten and kindergarten outreach materials/strategies

## Administrative and Teaching Staff

- Coaching/mentoring policy or plan
- Teacher evaluation policy
- Certification records for teachers
- Additional qualification records for prekindergarten teachers
- Certification and qualification records for prekindergarten educational aides
- Teacher and administrator professional development plans/transcripts
- District Improvement Plan (DIP)
- Campus Improvement Plans (CIP)
- District Math Proficiency Plan
- District Literacy Proficiency Plan

## Curriculum

- Curriculum used in prekindergarten through second grade
- Prekindergarten through second grade scope and sequence
- Curricular integration resources/materials
- LEA's grade-level meeting and vertical alignment meeting expectations

## Instruction

- LEA-provided supports and resources for instruction
- LEA special education placement continuum
- LEA-provided teacher resources for students with special needs and English Learners
- Prekindergarten class size/ratio information

## Assessment

- LEA plan for assessment
- Prekindergarten through second grade assessment instrument(s) information
- Family engagement plan
- LEA plan for referrals/intervention

## Learning Environments

- LEA guidance on arrangement of learning environment
- LEA guidance on procedures and routines
- LEA student discipline policy
- Written guidance on age-appropriate behaviors
- LEA guidance on daily schedule
- LEA guidance on classroom displays

## Family Engagement Plan

- Family engagement plan
- LEA policy on teacher communication with families
- LEA interpreter/translation policy
- LEA attendance plan
- LEA-provided family engagement resources for campuses
- Written program expectations for families (e.g., student compact, student handbook, etc.)

## Transitions

- LEA transition plan
- LEA Title I plan
- LEA family engagement plan
- LEA professional development plan/calendar
- Student data sharing agreements with early care and education providers

# Formats for Completing the Program Self-Assessment

The approach and process for completing a program self-assessment can be different for every LEA. The size and makeup of your LEA, along with your LEA's program needs and resources can affect the format in which the program self-assessment is completed. It is recommended that each LEA choose a lead for the program self-assessment. How the evaluation is completed after that will vary depending on several factors.

Depending on the size and makeup of your LEA, you may choose to:

- Have one individual complete the program self-assessment tool,
- Have a group of individuals complete the whole tool, or
- Break the program self-assessment committee into subcommittees who then complete specific sections of the tool.

Ultimately, each LEA will need to decide which option works best, as there are advantages and disadvantages to each option. The individual or team chosen to conduct the program self-assessment will influence the usefulness and quality of the evaluation itself. Below is an outline of the different options in which LEAs can complete the program self-assessment.

## Individual

### **Self-assessment is completed by one individual.**

- Recommended for small LEAs
- Requires the individual to have access to all recommended sources of evidence
- May be the most labor-and time-intensive of the three options

## Program Self-Assessment Committee

### **Self-assessment is completed entirely as one committee.**

- Recommended for small-medium LEAs
- Requires several meetings or one meeting for an extended period of time to complete the self-assessment

## Program Self-Assessment Committee with Subcommittees

### **Self-assessment committee is broken into subcommittees. Each subcommittee is assigned specific sections of the tool to complete.**

- Recommended for medium-large LEAs
- May be less labor-and time-intensive for each committee member
- May provide for higher quality and/or more accurate information as committee members can be chosen based on areas of expertise
- Requires a higher level of coordination from program self-assessment lead

# Program Self-Assessment Committee Members

Some LEAs will utilize a committee to complete the program self-assessment. A well-rounded program self-assessment committee is key to accurately assessing the quality of your early childhood programs. When selecting the program self-assessment committee, ensure you have representation from the central office, individual campuses, and families. Below are lists of LEA and campus staff that one might consider as members of the self-assessment committee.

## LEA Staff

- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent
- Director of Curriculum & Instruction
- Early childhood administrator/staff
- Director of Special Education
- Director of English as a Second Language (ESL)/Bilingual education
- Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)/Early Childhood Data System (ECDS) Coordinator
- Family engagement staff

## Campus Staff

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Instructional Coach
- Registrar
- Counselor
- Teachers
- Special education staff
- Educational aides
- Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Facilitator

# Norming Ratings

Accurate ratings are essential. Without accurate ratings it is challenging for LEAs to use the rating to inform quality improvement efforts. To assist LEAs in accurately rating their programs, below is an example scenario along with justifications for the ratings. The scenario is related to the Transition component of the Early Childhood Program Self-Assessment for Kindergarten. Read the scenarios and rating justifications to help norm your ratings to the intended use of the tool.

## Example Scenario:

LEA has several things in place to support successful student transitions from one grade level to the next. LEA finds it helpful to work with the child care centers in their area. They do this by inviting child care providers to participate in professional development activities with LEA teachers two or three times a year. They also meet with child care providers every June and November to align program goals and expectations. During these meetings child care providers work with the LEA to ensure the transition plan includes processes for successfully transitioning students to kindergarten.

Within the LEA, prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers meet at the beginning of the school year to discuss student transitions. The LEA also has a process for kindergarten staff to share student data with 1st grade staff.

Included in the LEA's transition plan are school tours for incoming kindergarten students and their families and a kindergarten camp for families that provides them with activities they can do to support learning at home. The plan also includes processes and procedures for updating records at the end of prekindergarten, deciding class placements, and reviewing student assessment data from the previous year in back to school professional development meetings.

## Rating Justifications

### **Shared Professional Development: Proficient**

The LEA is rated proficient because they invite early care and education providers to participate in more than one professional development activity a year (developing), but not most of their professional development activities (exemplary).

### **Collaborative Meetings with Early Care and Education Providers: Exemplary**

The LEA is rated exemplary because they invite early care and education providers to meet twice a year. These meetings cover alignment of program goals and expectations.

### **Sharing Student Data: Developing**

The LEA is rated developing because the prekindergarten and kindergarten staff meet once a year and student data is shared with 1st grade staff. The LEA does not have a FERPA compliant data-sharing agreement in place with early care and education providers.

### **Family Transition Strategies: Proficient**

The LEA is rated proficient because they provide families with two activities that support student transitions. These include the school tour and the kindergarten camp.

### **Transition Plan: Proficient**

The LEA is rated proficient because their transition plan outlines processes and procedures needed to ensure successful student transitions and includes transitioning children from child care centers.

## Supporting Definitions and Information



In completing the Early Childhood Program Self-Assessment, questions may arise regarding the terms used in the quality indicators and/or how to gather the information accurately to assess your LEA. This section of the Program Self-Assessment Guide aims to clarify terms used throughout the tools and answer frequently asked questions.

# Access/Enrollment

## FAQs

### **1. How do you determine the number of eligible 3-year-old and 4-year-old children that live within the LEA's boundaries?**

LEAs are encouraged to use their district data to determine how many currently enrolled children in first grade meet one of the prekindergarten eligibility requirements (free/reduced lunch, military family, homeless, etc). This is approximately the number of eligible three-year-old and four-year-old children within your boundaries. For example, if you have 300 first grade students that meet one of the eligibility criteria, then there are approximately 300 three-year-old and 300 four-year-old children who are eligible for prekindergarten in your boundaries.

### **2. What options do LEAs have in funding a full-day prekindergarten program?**

Public prekindergarten is funded for half-day services through Foundation School Program. LEAs may fund the second half of a full-day program in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, Early Education Allotment, Title I, Title III, local funds, state, federal or foundation grants, compensatory education funds, etc. LEAs may also partner with Head Start or child care centers to provide a full-day program.

### **3. What are examples of outreach activities?**

There are a variety of outreach activities LEAs can use. Some ideas may include:

- Sending home fliers with current students
- Holding an information event in the evening for families or caregivers
- Posting information on the marquee outside of school sites
- Posting information in schools and around the community
- Posting to social media channels

### **4. What documents are considered necessary for prekindergarten enrollment?**

To register for free public prekindergarten, families must show documents that verify the child's identity and age, proof of residency and compliance with one of the eligibility requirements. Further information regarding these documents can be found in Section 7 of the [Student Attendance Accounting Handbook](#) on the TEA website.

### **5. What documents are considered necessary for kindergarten enrollment?**

To register for public kindergarten, families must show documents that verify the child's identity and age and proof of residency. Further information can be found in Section 3 the [Student Attendance Accounting Handbook](#) on the TEA website.

# Administrative and Teaching Staff

## Definitions

**Supports:** Sufficient assistance given to keep an action manageable and sustainable

**Ensures:** A process to guarantee, confirm and/or verify that something occurred

**Coaching and Mentoring:** The core elements of mentoring/coaching are: 1) a one-to-one relationship between a mentor/coach and the teacher, 2) documented on-the-job support that focuses on the development of specific early childhood knowledge, skills, or practices that can be used in daily work with children and 3) a shared commitment to continuous improvement to ensure positive outcomes for all children

## FAQs

### 1. How does one obtain an Educational Aide certificate?

- One must first be employed by a school district before being eligible to apply for an Educational Aide certificate. Your employing school district will be able to supply you with application instructions.

More information regarding certification of educational aides can be found at [https://tea.texas.gov/Texas\\_Educators/Certification/Initial\\_Certification/Becoming\\_an\\_Educational\\_Aide\\_in\\_Texas/](https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Certification/Initial_Certification/Becoming_an_Educational_Aide_in_Texas/)

### 2. What qualifies as an “additional qualification” for prekindergarten teachers?

A prekindergarten teacher must be appropriately certified to teach prekindergarten and must meet one of the following additional qualifications:

- Has a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)
- Has a Montessori certification
- Has taught for at least 8 years in a nationally accredited child care program
- Has a degree in ECE, Special Education-ECE or a non-ECE degree with 15 units of ECE-specific coursework
- Completion of Texas School Ready – Comprehensive Program
- Has completed 150 hours of professional development in ECE-specific topics; 75 of the 150 hours being in a mentoring/coaching relationship
- Completes 30 hours of ECE-specific professional development annually with 15 of the 30 hours being in a mentoring/coaching relationship until 150 hours are documented

**3. Describe an early childhood specific, research-based tool that could be used to supplement an LEA’s teacher evaluation.**

Examples may include the following:

- Children’s Learning Institute – Classroom Observation Tool (CLI-COT): An observation tool that assesses teaching behaviors that are known to make up high-quality instruction. This tool is specific to prekindergarten.
- Environmental Rating Scale (ERS): An observation tool that assesses learning environments, activities that students participate in, student supervision and teacher interactions with students.
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS): An observation tool that focuses on the interactions between teachers and students.

**4. What is considered an early childhood specific professional development topic?**

A topic is considered early-childhood specific when it directly relates to working with children birth through grade 2.

**5. The indicator for the exemplary level under Teacher Professional Development states that “all teachers receive coaching/mentoring as part of their professional development activities.” How many hours of mentoring/coaching would teachers have to participate in to meet the exemplary level?**

This mentoring/coaching should not be confused with the mentoring/coaching that is listed as an additional qualification for a prekindergarten teacher.

The number of hours of mentoring/coaching that a teacher would participate in is a local decision. The hours should be determined by the following factors:

- The difficulty of the specific teacher skill or behavior being addressed
- Teacher’s ability to implement the specific skill or teaching behavior consistently
- Time frame needed to complete the mentoring/coaching cycle

**6. What structures could an LEA put in place to assist administrators in routinely monitoring the quality of the early childhood program?**

LEAs may determine locally what structures to put in place. Some ideas may include:

- Setting aside time at principal meetings to analyze program quality and child outcome data
- Setting data collection and analysis checkpoints throughout the year
- Providing administrators with monitoring resources specific to early childhood

# Curriculum

## Definitions

**Scope and Sequence:** A document that outlines the sequence of skills and knowledge students are taught over the course of a school year

**Learning Centers:** Areas designed by the teacher in which students participate in hands-on activities to reinforce already introduced concepts and skills using a wide range of open-ended materials through play. The student chooses which learning center to enter and which activity within the learning center to engage in. See page 24 for further guidance.

**Vertical Alignment:** Ensuring that concepts, skills, and knowledge build upon each other across grade levels

**Horizontal Alignment:** Ensuring consistency across classrooms within the same grade level

## FAQs

### 1. What are the domains in the 2015 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines?

The domains in the 2015 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines include:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Communication
- Emergent Literacy Reading
- Emergent Literacy Writing
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Fine Arts
- Physical Development
- Technology

### 2. What are the foundation curriculum content areas?

The foundation curriculum content areas are defined in TEC 28.002 (a) (1); TAC 74.1(a)(1) and include:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies

### 3. What are the enrichment curriculum content areas?

The enrichment curriculum content areas are defined in TEC 28.002 (a)(2); TAC 74.1(a)(2) and TAC 74.2(a) and include:

- Fine Arts
- Health
- Physical Education
- Career and Technology Applications
- Languages other than English (to the extent possible)
- Religious Literature
- Personal Financial Literacy

### 4. What are examples of resources an LEA can provide teachers to support curricular integration?

Examples of curricular integration resources may include materials for learning centers that facilitate integration across domains or content areas or unit maps that are organized to support integrated

learning. An example of an integrated unit map would be a map that details how teachers can incorporate social studies into another content area.

#### **5. How do you identify highly-effective teachers for placement in K-2?**

The following may provide evidence of highly-effective teachers:

- Evidence of advanced certification
- Evidence of teacher leadership (e.g. mentorship of other teachers, serving in leadership positions at the campus/district level)
- Evidence of teacher professional development
- Family surveys
- Student achievement measures
- Student growth measures
- Student surveys
- Teacher appraisal ratings

#### **6. What are the requirements surrounding a phonics curriculum?**

According to TEC Sec 28.0062(a)(1) Each school district and open-enrollment charter school shall: (1) Provide for the use of a phonics curriculum that uses systematic direct instruction in kindergarten through third grade to ensure all students obtain necessary literacy skills.

Kindergarten through third grade phonics curriculum must include direct and systematic instruction in decoding, encoding, and word study. It may include instruction in phonological awareness, handwriting, and reading fluency. The Texas Education Agency does not endorse any specific curriculum.

# Instruction

## Definitions

**Supports:** Sufficient assistance given to keep an action manageable and sustainable

**Ensures:** A process to guarantee, confirm and/or verify that something occurred

**Small Group Instruction:** A setting in which teachers work with students in a reduced student-teacher ratio to differentiate instruction, reinforce skills learned in a large group setting and provide intervention to struggling students

**Individualized Instruction:** The use of instructional strategies and resources with an individual student to ensure the student receives the specific support needed to achieve academic growth

**Learning Centers:** Areas designed by the teacher in which students participate in hands-on activities to reinforce already introduced concepts and skills using a wide range of open-ended materials through play. The student chooses which learning center to enter and which activity within the learning center to engage in. See page 24 for further guidance.

**Stations:** Learning opportunities designed by the teacher in which students participate in hands-on activities to reinforce already introduced concepts and skills using a wide range of open-ended materials. While students typically have choice in the order they complete station activities, students are held accountable for completing all assigned activities within a specified time frame. See page 24 for further guidance.

**Scaffolding:** Teaching practices that promote a deeper level of learning that is tailored to each student's ability to meet grade-level expectations. Teachers may simplify concepts or skills or build upon them to expand the depth of understanding depending on what the child currently knows or can do.

**Hands-on Activities:** An active learning opportunity in which a student learns by doing

## FAQs

### 1. What does “continuum of services” mean for children with special needs?

LEAs are to ensure that they have a variety of alternative placements and supplementary services that can be used to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education. See <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/b/300.115> for information regarding continuum of alternative placements.

### 2. What are the domains in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines?

The domains in the 2015 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines include:

- Social and Emotional Development, Language and Communication, Emergent Literacy Reading, Emergent Literacy Writing, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Physical Development, Technology

### 3. What is the classroom ratio for prekindergarten classrooms?

Statute requires that school districts attempt to maintain an 11:1 ratio in prekindergarten.

# Assessment

## Definitions

**Guidance:** Official verbal or written information/directions/guidelines given by someone in authority

**Supports:** Sufficient assistance given to keep an action manageable and sustainable

**Ensures:** A process to guarantee, confirm and/or verify that something occurred

**Formative Assessment:** The ongoing collection of evidence of students' learning and development to inform and adjust instruction to better support students' progress towards learning goals and outcomes. Examples of formative assessments include observation notes, checklists, portfolios, etc.

**Summative Assessment:** The collection of evidence of students' learning at the end of an instructional unit.

**Intervention Services:** Targeted supports that are systematically provided to students who are struggling to meet grade level expectations

## FAQs

### 1. What does it mean to be developmentally, linguistically and culturally appropriate?

Assessments are considered developmentally, linguistically and culturally appropriate if they are age-appropriate and respectful and inclusive of all types of diversity, including but not limited to gender, culture, language, ethnicity, ability, race and economic status.

### 2. What are the domains for the 2015 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines?

The domains in the 2015 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines include:

- Social and Emotional Development, Language and Communication, Emergent Literacy Reading, Emergent Literacy Writing, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Physical Development, Technology

### 3. What are the five primary developmental domains?

The five primary developmental domains are referenced on the Commissioner's List of Approved Prekindergarten Assessment Instruments and include the following:

- Emergent Literacy Reading
- Emergent Literacy Writing
- Language and Communication
- Health and Wellness
- Mathematics

### 4. What are the foundation curriculum content areas?

The foundation curriculum content areas are defined in TEC 28.002 (a) (1); TAC 74.1(a)(1) and include:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematic
- Science
- Social Studies

**5. What are the enrichment curriculum content areas?**

The enrichment curriculum content areas are defined in TEC 28.002 (a)(2); TAC 74.1(a)(2) and TAC 74.2(a) and include:

- Fine Arts
- Health
- Physical Education
- Career and Technology Applications
- Languages other than English (to the extent possible)
- Religious Literature
- Personal Financial Literacy

**6. Is there a Commissioner’s List of Mathematics Instruments?**

There is no Commissioner’s List of Mathematics Instruments. Districts are encouraged to choose a mathematics assessment instrument that is valid, reliable, based on scientific research, is user friendly and is aligned to first or second grade TEKS.

**7. How can assessment data be used by teachers to inform instruction?**

Assessment data should keep teachers aware of the status of their students’ concept development and skills base. This information should be used to plan and implement daily activities used within the school day to increase the students’ ability to meet grade-level expectations. The information can also be used to create large group instruction, small group instruction and individual instruction to better meet the needs of individual students.

**8. What are the designated alternate assessments for Kindergarten?**

mCLASS Texas literacy screener was selected as the alternate beginning-of-year literacy screener. For full details about assessment requirements and tool options, visit TEA’s [Data Driven Instruction web page](#).

# Learning Environments

## Definitions

**Guidance:** Official verbal or written information/direction/guidelines given by someone in authority

**Supports:** Sufficient assistance given to keep an action manageable and sustainable

**Ensures:** A process to guarantee, confirm and/or verify that something occurred

**Learning Centers:** Areas designed by the teacher in which students participate in hands-on activities to reinforce already introduced concepts and skills using a wide range of open-ended materials through play. The student chooses which learning center to enter and which activity within the learning center to engage in. See page 24 for further guidance.

**Stations:** Learning opportunities designed by the teacher in which students participate in hands-on activities to reinforce already introduced concepts and skills using a wide range of open-ended materials. While students typically have choice in the order they complete station activities, students are held accountable for completing all assigned activities within a specified time frame. See page 24 for further guidance.

**Systematically:** A predictable process

**Environmental Print:** Everyday print such as signs, labels, logos, etc.

**Self-Regulation:** The ability to manage one's own behavior and emotions

**Classroom Displays:** A teacher-, student-, or commercially-produced display in the classroom/hallway

**Predominantly:** More than 50%

**Natural Elements:** Naturally occurring materials, such as plants, sand, grass, etc.

## FAQs

### 1. What are examples of resources that can be provided to teachers to create the physical arrangement of the classroom environment?

Examples of resources that can be provided to teachers may include age-appropriate classroom furniture (tables, chairs, shelves, etc.), materials to stock learning centers and stations (paper, paints, props, manipulatives, blocks, etc.), or other materials needed to create a learning environment that is well equipped and accessible.

### 2. What is an example of a procedure or routine that is utilized to maximize instructional time and support the children's independence and self-regulation?

Teachers can use routines during the school day to continue supporting student's learning and development. An example of this would be playing "follow the leader" while walking to the playground. This fun activity facilitates students' ability to listen and follow directions.

### 3. What are examples of realistic and age-appropriate expectations for behavior?

Examples include:

- Young children have limited attention spans and may not be able to engage in a task for an extended period of time
- Young children may need additional time and instruction to complete routine care tasks (e.g. toileting, washing hands, etc.)
- Young children understand directions when limited in number and worded simply

#### **4. What are examples of positive guidance?**

Examples of positive guidance techniques include:

- Stating classroom rules in a positive manner – “Use your walking feet.”
- Validating a student’s feelings – “It is hard to share.”
- Reinforcing appropriate behavior – “You helped Sally finish the puzzle.”
- Offering choices, when possible – “It is time to clean up the blocks. Should we start with the rectangle or triangle blocks?”

#### **5. What would qualify as targeted support for student behavior?**

Any support given by administrators, counselors or mentor/coaches given to teaching staff for a particular challenging behavior is considered targeted support. Examples of supports include:

- Providing targeted teacher observation with feedback
- Live teacher coaching
- Developing a behavior plan and allocating the necessary materials/resources to implement it.

#### **6. What are natural elements that could be present in an outdoor learning environment?**

Examples of natural elements that could be found in an outdoor learning environment include grass, plants, trees, sand, rocks, water, etc.

# Family Engagement

## Definitions

**Guidance:** Official verbal or written information/direction/guidelines given by someone in authority

**Supports:** Sufficient assistance given to keep an action manageable and sustainable

**Ensures:** A process to guarantee, confirm and/or verify that something occurred

## FAQs

### 1. What are the six components of a Family Engagement Plan?

The six components of a prekindergarten Family Engagement Plan are found in TEC 29.168 (a) and 19 TAC 102.1003 (e) and include the following:

- Facilitate family-to-family support
- Establish a network of community resources
- Increasing family participation in decision-making
- Equipping families with tools to enhance and extend learning
- Developing staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in meeting their children's learning benchmarks
- Evaluating family engagement efforts and using evaluation for continuous improvement

### 2. What makes a document inclusive, linguistically and culturally appropriate?

Documents are considered developmentally, linguistically and culturally appropriate if they are age-appropriate and respectful and inclusive of all types of diversity, including but not limited to: gender, culture, language, ethnicity, ability, race and economic status.

### 3. What method should be used to report student progress to families?

Examples of methods of reporting student progress to families may include report cards, assessment reports, conferences/home visits, progress notes, etc.

### 4. What are the five primary developmental domains?

The five primary developmental domains are referenced on the Commissioner's List of Approved Pre-kindergarten Assessment Instruments and include the following:

- Emergent literacy reading, Emergent literacy writing, Language and communication, Health and wellness, and Mathematics

### 5. What are the foundation curriculum content areas?

The foundation curriculum content areas are defined in TEC 28.002 (a) (1); TAC 74.1(a)(1) and include:

- English language arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies

### 6. What are examples of an on-campus family engagement activity?

Examples of an on-campus family engagement activity may include:

- Volunteering in the classroom or on a field trip
- Participating in a school-based advisory committee
- Participating in a workshop sponsored by the LEA
- Participating in school events such as Open House, etc.

### 7. What are examples of community resources to meet family economic/social service needs?

Community resources that would meet the economic/social service needs of families may include:

- Food banks, Public health services, Low-income housing opportunities, and Job training

# Transitions

## Definitions

**Early Care and Education Providers:** A licensed childcare center or family child care provider that cares for and educates young children

**FERPA Compliant Data-Sharing Agreements:** A written agreement between two parties that facilitates the sharing of student data and complies with the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act

## FAQs

### 1. How can LEAs and early care and education providers align program goals and expectations?

Early care and education providers and LEAs can align curriculum, assessment tools, school calendars, grade-level expectations, etc.

# Additional Guidance: Physical Arrangement

## Prekindergarten

### *Developing*

LEA provides **guidance** to teachers in creating their prekindergarten classroom environment that is well equipped with space and materials (space available for large group, small group and individual activities), includes **at least 7 learning centers** (multiple materials in each) and is accessible to all students regardless of abilities of primary language.

### *Proficient*

LEA provides **guidance, resources and supports** to teachers in creating their prekindergarten classroom environment that is well equipped with space and materials (space available for large group, small group and individual activities), includes **at least 7 learning centers** (multiple materials in each) and is accessible to all students regardless of abilities of primary language.

### *Exemplary*

LEA provides **guidance, resources and supports** to teachers and **systematically ensures** that the prekindergarten classroom environment is well equipped with space and materials (space available for large group, small group and individual activities), includes **at least 7 learning centers** (multiple materials in each) and is accessible to all students regardless of abilities or primary language.

## Kindergarten

### *Developing*

LEA provides **guidance** to teachers in creating their kindergarten classroom environment that is well equipped with space and materials (space available for large group, small group and individual activities), includes a combination of **at least 7 learning centers and stations** (multiple materials in each) and is accessible to all students regardless of abilities of primary language.

### *Proficient*

LEA provides **guidance, resources and supports** to teachers in creating their kindergarten classroom environment that is well equipped with space and materials (space available for large group, small group and individual activities), includes a combination of **at least 7 learning centers and stations** (multiple materials in each) and is accessible to all students regardless of abilities of primary language.

### *Exemplary*

LEA provides **guidance, resources and supports** to teachers and **systematically ensures** that the kindergarten classroom environment is well equipped with space and materials (space available for large group, small group and individual activities), includes a combination of **at least 7 learning centers and stations** (multiple materials in each) and is accessible to all students regardless of abilities or primary language.

## First Grade

### *Developing*

LEA provides **guidance** to teachers in creating their Grade 1 classroom environment that is well equipped with space and materials (space available for large group, small group and individual activities), includes **at least 7 learning centers and/or stations** (multiple materials in each) and is accessible to all students regardless of abilities of primary language.

### *Proficient*

LEA provides **guidance, resources and supports** to teachers in creating their Grade 1 classroom environment that is well equipped with space and materials (space available for large group, small group and individual activities), includes **at least 7 learning centers and/or stations** (multiple materials in each) and is accessible to all students regardless of abilities of primary language.

### *Exemplary*

LEA provides **guidance, resources and supports** to teachers and **systematically ensures** that the Grade 1 classroom environment is well equipped with space and materials (space available for large group, small group and individual activities) includes **at least 7 learning centers and/or stations** (multiple materials in each) and is accessible to all students regardless of abilities or primary language.

## Second Grade

### *Developing*

LEA provides **guidance** to teachers in creating their Grade 2 classroom environment that is well equipped with space and materials (space available for large group, small group and individual activities), includes **at least 7 learning centers and/or stations** (multiple materials in each) and is accessible to all students regardless of abilities of primary language.

### *Proficient*

LEA provides **guidance, resources and supports** to teachers in creating their Grade 2 classroom environment that is well equipped with space and materials (space available for large group, small group and individual activities), includes **at least 7 learning centers and/or stations** (multiple materials in each) and is accessible to all students regardless of abilities of primary language.

### *Exemplary*

LEA provides **guidance, resources and supports** to teachers and **systematically ensures** that the Grade 2 classroom environment is well equipped with space and materials (space available for large group, small group and individual activities), includes **at least 7 learning centers and/or stations** (multiple materials in each) and is accessible to all students regardless of abilities or primary language.

## Program Self-Assessment Resources



Utilizing the results from the Early Childhood Program Self-Assessments is crucial for improving the quality of your programs. This section of the guide provides resources that will help you determine how to use your results and how to communicate results to families.

## Continuous Improvement Plan

Once you have completed the Early Childhood Program Self-Assessment for your early childhood program, use the results page from each tool to then identify strengths, opportunities to grow, and next steps for continuous improvement. Using the Continuous Improvement Worksheet from the Program Self-Assessment, create a continuous improvement plan for your program.

A written plan will serve as a blueprint for how your district will address the needs identified during the self-assessment process. An effective plan will bring focus and coherence to improvement activities and help ensure unity of purpose, alignment, and clear accountability. It is recommended that you create a plan for 3-5 strategies that you have identified for improvement.

## Reporting Results to Families

Reporting results from the program self-assessment to families demonstrates the commitment you have to ensuring their children receive a high-quality early childhood education. There are several different ways in which you can report results to families. They include:

- Disseminating a written summary to families
- Hosting a family event at which results are shared through a presentation
- Posting a summary of results on the LEA website

When reporting results to families, it is recommended that you provide a high-level summary of the program self-assessment results. Make sure to include areas of strength, opportunities for growth, and steps the LEA will take to improve the quality of your early childhood programs.

# Quality Improvement Resources



Improving the quality of early childhood programs is an ongoing effort. Utilize the results from the Early Childhood Program Self-Assessments to guide your improvement efforts. This section of the guide provides a list of resources from both TEA and other organizations that can be used to help improve the quality of your programs. The title of each resource is a hyperlink.

# Access/Enrollment

## [The Benefits of High-Quality Pre-K](#)

This resource from the American Academy of Pediatrics covers some of the main benefits of high-quality prekindergarten.

## [Impacts of Early Childhood Programs](#)

This brief from the Brookings Institute covers some of the impacts of early childhood programs on both children and families.

## [Prekindergarten Enrollment Toolkit](#)

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) developed a Prekindergarten Enrollment Toolkit to help programs increase enrollment and increase the quality of their enrollment practices.

## [Developing Effective Recruitment Services](#)

The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) provides a list of questions to consider when developing effective recruitment services.

## [Public-Private Partnerships](#)

The Children's Learning Institute (CLI) provides a range of resources for establishing public-private partnerships between LEAs and childcare centers. Resources include sample contracts, models and examples of existing partnerships.

# Administrative and Teaching Staff

## [Being an Effective Mentor-Coach](#)

This resource from The Office of Head Start provides information on being an effective mentor/coach and supporting protégés.

## [Texas Rising Star \(TRS\) Preschool Classroom Assessment Record Form](#)

The TRS Preschool Classroom Assessment Record can be used in part to supplement the LEA's teacher evaluation tool in order to focus on the competencies and skills needed to be an effective early childhood educator.

## [eCIRCLE Professional Development](#)

The Children's Learning Institute (CLI) provides free online professional development on topics specific to prekindergarten and kindergarten through its eCIRCLE platform.

## [CIRCLE CDA Training Program](#)

CLI provides free online professional development that can be used to fulfill the training hours needed to apply for the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential.

## [CLI Classroom Observation Tool](#)

The Classroom Observation Tool (COT) from CLI is a formative prekindergarten teacher evaluation tool that can be used to identify teaching behaviors needing coaching support.

## [HB 3 Implementation: Early Childhood and CCMR Board-Adopted Plans and Goals](#)

This To The Administrator Addressed (TAA) correspondence provides guidance on the required literacy and math proficiency plans.

## [HB 3 in 30 Video Series - Board and District Goal Setting](#)

This recorded webinar provides guidance on the required literacy and math proficiency plans.

# Curriculum

## [English Language Proficiency Standards \(ELPS\)](#)

The English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) outline English language proficiency level descriptors and student expectations for English Language Learners (ELLs) and are to be implemented as part of each subject in the required curriculum.

## [Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills \(TEKS\)](#)

The Texas State Board of Education is responsible for adopting standards for each subject area that detail out what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level.

## [2015 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines](#)

Detailed descriptions of expected behaviors across ten domains for children in prekindergarten and guidance on best practices for prekindergarten developed by the Texas Education Agency.

## [Early Childhood Vertical Alignment Documents](#)

The Early Childhood Education Division at TEA created vertical alignment documents that show alignment across the Texas Early Learning Guidelines, the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, and the TEKS for kindergarten - grade 2.

## [NAEYC Position Statement on Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation](#)

NAEYC provides guidance, recommendations, research and indicators of effectiveness for curriculum, assessment, and program evaluation for early childhood education.

## [NAEYC Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice](#)

Developmentally Appropriate Practice is a framework designed to promote young children's learning and development. The framework helps educators and administrators make decisions that reflect on how young children develop.

## [CLI Classroom Observation Tool](#)

The Classroom Observation Tool (COT) from the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) is a formative pre-kindergarten teacher evaluation tool that can be used to identify teaching behaviors needing coaching support.

## [Texas Rising Star \(TRS\) Preschool Classroom Assessment Record Form](#)

The TRS Preschool Classroom Assessment Record can be used in part to supplement the LEA's teacher evaluation tool in order to focus on the competencies and skills needed to be an effective early childhood educator.

## [Instructional Materials Current Adoption Bulletin](#)

The Bulletin provides a comprehensive list of the approved instruction materials by the Texas State Board of Education.

## [DAP in the Early Primary Grades, Ages 6-8](#)

This webpage produced by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) focuses on developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) in curriculum in the primary grades.

# Instruction

## [\*\*Scaffolding: Approaches and Practices\*\*](#)

This article from Penn State University provides the definition of scaffolding and an overview of the Zone of Proximal Development.

## [\*\*2015 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines\*\*](#)

See pages 3-10 and 21-27 for guidance on how the Prekindergarten Guidelines support instruction for English Language Learners and instructional practices for promoting school readiness.

## [\*\*NAEYC Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice\*\*](#)

Developmentally Appropriate Practice is a framework designed to promote young children's learning and development. The framework helps educators and administrators make decisions that reflect how young children develop.

## [\*\*CLI Classroom Observation Tool\*\*](#)

The Classroom Observation Tool (COT) from the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) is a formative pre-kindergarten teacher evaluation tool that can be used to identify teaching behaviors needing coaching support.

## [\*\*CLI Classroom Environment Checklist \(CEC\)\*\*](#)

An assessment tool from the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) that focuses on the overall design and management of the prekindergarten classroom, individual learning centers and the quality of instructional planning tools.

## [\*\*Playing to Learn: Benefits of Play in Early Childhood\*\*](#)

This resource from the Office of Head Start explains the correlation between play and learning in young students.

## [\*\*Play and Exploration in Grade One: Extending the Principles of Early Learning\*\*](#)

This article from the Journal of Childhood Studies highlights the importance of play in first grade.

# Assessment

## [Commissioner's List of Approved Prekindergarten Assessment Instruments](#)

Provides a list of the approved prekindergarten assessment instruments for 2017-2021.

## [Family Engagement and Ongoing Child Assessment](#)

This resource guide from The Office of Head Start provides strategies for sharing child assessment information with parents in early childhood education programs.

## [Including Families in the Assessment Process](#)

This article from the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center provides resources and best practices related to talking with families about child and family outcomes.

## [2015 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines](#)

See pages 18-20 for guidance on monitoring learning and development.

## [CLI Classroom Observation Tool](#)

The Classroom Observation Tool (COT) from the Children's Learning Institute is a formative prekindergarten teacher evaluation tool that can be used to identify teaching behaviors needing coaching support.

## [Texas Rising Star \(TRS\) Preschool Classroom Assessment Record Form](#)

The TRS Preschool Classroom Assessment Record can be used in part to supplement the LEA's teacher evaluation tool in order to focus on the competencies and skills needed to be an effective early childhood educator.

## [NAEYC Position Statement on Curriculum, Assessment, and Program Evaluation](#)

NAEYC provides guidance, recommendations, research and indicators of effectiveness for curriculum, assessment, and program evaluation for early childhood education.

## [NAEYC Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice](#)

Developmentally Appropriate Practice is a framework designed to promote young children's learning and development. The framework helps educators and administrators make decisions that reflect how young children develop.

# Learning Environments

## [Child Mind Institute: Helping Kids with Self-Regulation](#)

This article from the Child Mind Institute provides information on self-regulation, emotional dysregulation, and how to teach self-regulation skills.

## [2015 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines](#)

Detailed descriptions of expected behaviors across ten domains for children in prekindergarten and guidance on best practices for prekindergarten developed by the Texas Education Agency. See pages 11-17 for information related to physical arrangement, daily schedule, and outdoor time.

## [CLI Classroom Observation Tool](#)

The Classroom Observation Tool (COT) from the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) is a formative pre-kindergarten teacher evaluation tool that can be used to identify teaching behaviors needing coaching support.

## [CLI Classroom Environment Checklist \(CEC\)](#)

An assessment tool from the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) that focuses on the overall design and management of the prekindergarten classroom, individual learning centers and the quality of instructional planning tools.

## [Texas Rising Star \(TRS\) Preschool Classroom Assessment Record Form](#)

The TRS Preschool Classroom Assessment Record can be used in part to supplement the LEA's teacher evaluation tool in order to focus on the competencies and skills needed to be an effective early childhood educator.

## [Guidance and Challenging Behaviors](#)

This resource page from the National Association for the Education of Young Children provides blogs and articles for teachers and families regarding guiding young children's behavior.

## [Breaking the Behavior Code](#)

This article from the Child Mind Institute helps guide educators to understand the underlying cause of challenging behaviors.

## [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning - Teacher Modules](#)

The webpage contains training modules that can be used to train teachers on understanding and guiding their students' behavior.

## [Helping Early Childhood Educators Deal with Challenging Behavior](#)

This article from WestEd focuses on the art of reflection as a strategy for teachers in understanding and guiding student behavior.

# Family Engagement

## [Pre-K Attendance: Why It's Important and How to Support It](#)

This article from the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes provides information and resources on potential causes of absenteeism, strategies to address absenteeism and specific examples of solutions from other states.

## [CIRCLE Activity Collection: Family](#)

The Children's Learning Institute has a library of free activities that families can do with their child at home.

# Transitions

## [Privacy and Data Sharing](#)

This website created by the Department of Education provides resources surrounding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

## [Erasing the Transition from PreK to Kindergarten: What Schools and Families Can Do to Address Child Readiness](#)

This article from the National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools provides research, strategies and examples of success on creating seamless transitions from prekindergarten to kindergarten.

## [Transition to Kindergarten](#)

The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) provides videos, toolkits, and other resources for school administrators, teachers, and families on planning successful prekindergarten to kindergarten transitions.

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