

# Kindergarten Entrance Inventory



## Teacher Handbook

Updated August 2021

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## Introduction

This manual has been developed for kindergarten teachers to explain the over-arching framework of the Fall Kindergarten Entrance Inventory (KEI). The manual is organized into several sections that explain the origin, purpose, organization, and administration process for this instrument.

The Fall KEI is available at the Connecticut Department of Education (CSDE) website. You may download a copy of the Fall KEI and the Teacher Training Module from the [KEI webpage](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/Data-Collection-Help-Sites/KEI-Help-Site) (<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/Data-Collection-Help-Sites/KEI-Help-Site>).

## Overview of the Kindergarten Entrance Inventory

### ORIGIN

The KEI was developed to comply with state legislation that was passed in 2007. Public Act 05-245 requires the Commissioner of Education to develop and implement a statewide developmentally appropriate assessment tool that measures a child's level of preparedness for kindergarten by October 2007. To satisfy this legislation, the Department implemented the Kindergarten Entrance Inventory (KEI) in the fall of 2006. A new version of the inventory was developed for fall of 2007 and has been used since that time.

The KEI was designed to provide a statewide snapshot of the skills students demonstrate, based on teachers' observations, at the beginning of the kindergarten year. The instrument requires each teacher to classify the students in his/her class into three performance levels by domain.

These skills and behaviors are defined by specific indicators in six domains; namely, Language skills, Literacy skills, Numeracy skills, Physical/Motor skills, Creative/Aesthetic skills and Personal/Social skills. The content of the inventory was selected to represent the most important skills that students need to demonstrate at the beginning of kindergarten. The indicators were developed from the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework and State Curriculum Standards for language arts and mathematics, and are based on Connecticut's educational standards.

A group of preschool and kindergarten teachers, representing urban and suburban districts, special education, and English language learners, reviewed the indicators and provided the CSDE with their recommendations on the appropriateness of the indicators. The indicators that were selected for the inventory are a result of the input from this committee.

The results of the administration of the KEI will be reported at the state and district levels, grouping students into three performance levels by domain. The information will be useful to teachers and administrators as they work to improve the quality of their early childhood programs.

### **PURPOSE STATEMENT FOR THE KEI**

The KEI was developed to provide kindergarten teachers, administrators, and policymakers with information about the level of skills and behaviors that students can demonstrate at the beginning of kindergarten.

### **USE OF THE RESULTS OF THE KEI**

KEI results will be aggregated to the district and state level, grouping students into three performance levels by domain. The information will be useful to teachers and administrators as they work to improve the quality of their early childhood programs. These results will be used to inform decisions made by the CSDE, other state agencies, and the State Legislature.

### **ORGANIZATION OF THE KEI**

The KEI was designed to incorporate six domains of early childhood curriculum, as recommended by early childhood experts. These six domains are Language skills, Literacy skills, Numeracy skills, Physical/Motor skills, Creative/Aesthetic skills, and Personal/Social skills. Each domain is defined by a series of indicators. These indicators reflect the state curriculum frameworks and standards for the kindergarten year. However, these are not the only skills to be considered. The teacher should use all available and pertinent information when rating a student.

# Assessment Domains

## ASSESSMENT DOMAINS

### Language Skills

The first domain listed in the inventory is Language skills. There are six indicators under this domain.

- 1) Participates in conversations.
- 2) Retells information from a story read to him/her.
- 3) Follows simple verbal two-step directions.
- 4) Speaks using sentences of at least five words.
- 5) Communicates feelings and needs.
- 6) Listens attentively to a speaker.

### Literacy Skills

The second domain listed in the inventory is Literacy skills. There are seven indicators under this domain:

- 1) Holds a book and turns pages from front to the back.
- 2) Understands that print conveys meaning.
- 3) Explores books independently.
- 4) Recognizes printed letters, especially in his/her name and familiar printed words.
- 5) Matches/connects letters and sounds.
- 6) Identifies some initial sounds.
- 7) Demonstrates emergent writing.

### Numeracy Skills

The third domain listed in the inventory is Numeracy skills. This domain is defined by seven indicators:

- 1) Counts to 10.
- 2) Demonstrates 1-to-1 correspondence while counting (e.g., touches objects as he/she counts).
- 3) Measures objects using a variety of everyday items.

- 4) Identifies simple shapes (e.g., circles, squares, rectangles and triangles).
- 5) Identifies patterns.
- 6) Sorts and groups objects by size, shape, function (use), or other attributes.
- 7) Understands sequence of events (e.g., before, after, yesterday, today, or tomorrow).

### Physical/Motor Skills

The fourth domain listed in the inventory is Physical/Motor skills. This domain is defined by four indicators:

- 1) Runs, jumps, or balances.
- 2) Kicks or throws a ball, climbs stairs, or dances.
- 3) Writes or draws using writing instruments (e.g., markers, chalk, pencils, etc.).
- 4) Performs tasks, such as completing puzzles, stringing beads, or cutting with scissors.

### Creative/Aesthetic Skills

The fifth domain listed in the inventory is Creative/Aesthetic skills. This domain has been defined by three indicators:

- 1) Draws, paints, sculpts, or builds to represent experiences.
- 2) Participates in pretend play.
- 3) Enjoys or participates in musical experiences (e.g., singing, clapping, drumming, or dancing).

### Personal/Social Skills

The sixth and final domain listed in the inventory is Personal/Social skills. This domain has been defined by five indicators:

- 1) Engages in self-selected activities.
- 2) Interacts with peers to play or work cooperatively.
- 3) Uses words to express own feelings or to identify conflicts.
- 4) Seeks peer or adult help to resolve a conflict.
- 5) Follows classroom routines.

## Performance Level Literals

The following Performance Level Literals describe the characteristics of a typical student in each performance level. These will be used by the teacher to rate each student on each of the six domains.

### Performance Level 1

Students at this level demonstrate **emerging** skills in the specified domain and require a **large degree** of instructional support.

### Performance Level 2

Students at this level **inconsistently** demonstrate the skills in the specified domain and require **some** instructional support.

### Performance Level 3

Students at this level **consistently** demonstrate the skills in the specified domain and require **minimal** instructional support.

Every student in the class will be put into a performance level under each domain; no student is exempt from being rated. The indicators listed for each domain are examples of skills a student should be able to demonstrate at the beginning of the kindergarten year; however, these are not the only skills to be considered. The teacher should use all available and pertinent information when rating a student.

Students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and have been given accommodations should be assessed within their communication mode. Designated communication modes are Braille, sign language, voice recognition technology, etc.

Students should be assessed using their native language whenever possible. Teachers need to make judgments about students who do not speak English based on observing student behaviors.

## Entering the Data

Allow for time to complete assessment rating documentation for students enrolled in the school on October 18, 2021. The primary kindergarten teacher should submit student ratings online at <https://www.ctksurvey.org> between October 18 and December 9, 2021.

Only provide KEI data for students enrolled in your class on the snapshot date of October 18, 2021. The data must be entered even if the student was absent. Data must also be submitted for outplaced students. Refer to the School User Manual for more information.

Teachers should contact their District Coordinator with questions related to accessing the online entry system or for additional guidance on the KEI.

The Kindergarten District Contact person for each district was given the login and password for each school in the district. Instructions for entering data can be found in the **School User Manual** on the [KEI webpage](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/Data-Collection-Help-Sites/KEI-Help-Site) (<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/Data-Collection-Help-Sites/KEI-Help-Site>).

## Deadlines

**Snapshot Date:** October 18, 2021 (kindergarten teachers rate each kindergarten student enrolled in their class on this date across the 6 domains)

**Submission Due Date:** December 9, 2021 (kindergarten teachers submit ratings via <https://www.ctksurvey.org> between October 18 and December 9, 2021)

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## Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the purpose of the KEI?

The purpose of the KEI is to provide kindergarten teachers, administrators, and policymakers with information about the level of skills and behaviors that students can demonstrate at the beginning of kindergarten. These skills and behaviors are defined by specific indicators in six domains; namely, Language skills, Literacy skills, Numeracy skills, Physical/Motor skills, Creative/Aesthetic skills and Personal/Social skills. The content of the inventory was selected to provide examples of the most important skills that students need to demonstrate at the beginning of kindergarten.

### Will all students be assessed using the KEI?

Teachers will assess all of the children in their classroom with no exceptions. Students who have an IEP and have been given accommodations should be assessed within their communication mode.

Designated communication modes are Braille, sign language, voice recognition technology, etc. Students should be assessed using their native language whenever possible. Teachers need to make judgments about students who do not speak English based on observing student behaviors.

### Who will complete the KEI?

Every kindergarten teacher will complete the KEI for each student in his/her classroom(s). The inventory can be completed with the assistance of other teachers who provide a supportive role, such as a special education teacher or an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, the art teacher, the physical education teachers, etc., if necessary and appropriate; however the classroom teacher is responsible for the data that is entered.

### When will the KEI be completed?

Based on the kindergarten students enrolled in their class on October 18, 2021, teachers will observe each kindergarten student across the six domains and submit ratings online at <https://www.ctksurvey.org> between October 18 and December 9, 2021. Teachers will have the opportunity to organize their data in advance by downloading a copy of the Data Collection Form from the [KEI webpage](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/Data-Collection-Help-Sites/KEI-Help-Site) (<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/Data-Collection-Help-Sites/KEI-Help-Site>).

**How will the KEI be completed?**

The KEI is completed based on teachers' knowledge of their students' ability to demonstrate specified skills at the beginning of the kindergarten year. Teachers will classify their students into one of three performance levels on each of the six domains.

**How are the results of the KEI collected?**

Individual student data must be entered online by December 9, 2021. The Kindergarten District Contact person for each district will be given the login and password for each school in the district. Instructions for entering data can be found in the School User Manual located on the [KEI webpage](https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/Data-Collection-Help-Sites/KEI-Help-Site) (<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/Data-Collection-Help-Sites/KEI-Help-Site>).

**How are the Performance Levels defined?**

There are three Performance Level Literals that describe the characteristics of a typical student for each performance level for the purposes of the KEI. These will be used to rate each student on each of the six domains. Students cannot be placed in more than one category. Teachers must use their best judgment when classifying students into performance levels. Teachers should use all available and pertinent information when rating a student.

The three performance levels are defined as follows:

Performance Level 1 – Students at this level demonstrate emerging skills in the specified domain and require a large degree of instructional support.

Performance Level 2 – Students at this level inconsistently demonstrate the skills in the specified domain and require some instructional support.

Performance Level 3 – Students at this level consistently demonstrate the skills in the specified domain and require minimal instructional support.

## Appendix B: Kindergarten Entrance Inventory Supports and Professional Learning

**Kindergarten Entrance Inventory website** <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/Data-Collection-Help-Sites/KEI-Help-Site>. This website provides information on the KEI along with access to the Kindergarten Entrance Inventory, Teacher Handbook, training, user manuals, and tips worksheet.

### **Early Childhood/Kindergarten Readiness** (includes the publications listed below)

- **The Predictive Validity of Kindergarten Readiness Judgments: Lessons from One State** This resource examines the association between teachers' perceptions of their students at the start of kindergarten and achievement in Grade 3.
- **Can Teacher Ratings of Students' Skills at Kindergarten Entry Predict Kindergarten Retention?** This resource examines teacher judgments of students at the start of kindergarten as a predictor of retention in kindergarten the following year.
- **Assessing Kindergarten Entry Skills in Connecticut** The Kindergarten Entrance Inventory (KEI), 2010-2013 (2018). This study analyzed KEI data collected across four school years, from 2010-11 to 2013-14 (approximately 141,000 students) to understand the kindergarten readiness of children across Connecticut. Partner: Partnership for Early Education Research (PEER).
- **Early Childhood Regression Discontinuity Study (2016)** The Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering (CASE) conducted this evaluation study at the request of the Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA). The purpose of this study is to investigate the immediate effects associated with children who attend Connecticut's state-funded School Readiness full-day or school day prekindergarten program. Partners: University of Connecticut, The Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering.
- **Kindergarten Inventory Study (2013)** How do kindergarteners who were enrolled in publicly funded pre-K compare, on the Kindergarten Entrance Inventory, to those who were not enrolled in publicly funded pre-K?

**Early Indication Tool (includes the publication listed below)**

- **[Early Indication Tool: Rationale, Method, Process \(2019\)](#)** This paper describes the rationale, methods, and results that undergird Connecticut's Early Indication Tool.

**Training**

- **[Fall Kindergarten Inventory Training Session Training \(2017\)](#)**  
<https://authoring.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/Data-Collection/Help-Sites/KEI//-/media/SDE/Performance/Data-Collection/Help-Sites/KEI/Training.pdf>. This training provides an overview of the Kindergarten Inventory, which is a paper-based instrument used by teachers to capture a snapshot of skills and behaviors (across six specific domains) observed by Kindergarten learners in the fall of the year. This training provides details about the administration and data submission process.