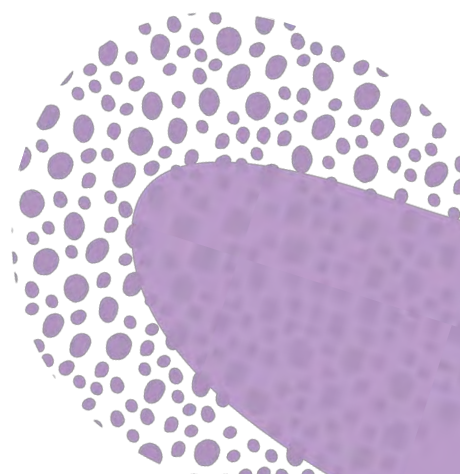


# AlaKiDS

ALABAMA KINDERGARTEN INVENTORY OF DEVELOPING SKILLS

## Handbook 2020



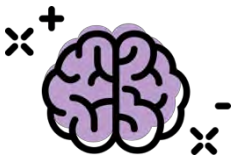
## Why a Kindergarten Entry Assessment



The full extent of achievement gaps is present when children enter Kindergarten. Schools do not significantly increase gaps; in fact, they may reduce them somewhat- only to see the gaps widen again each summer.



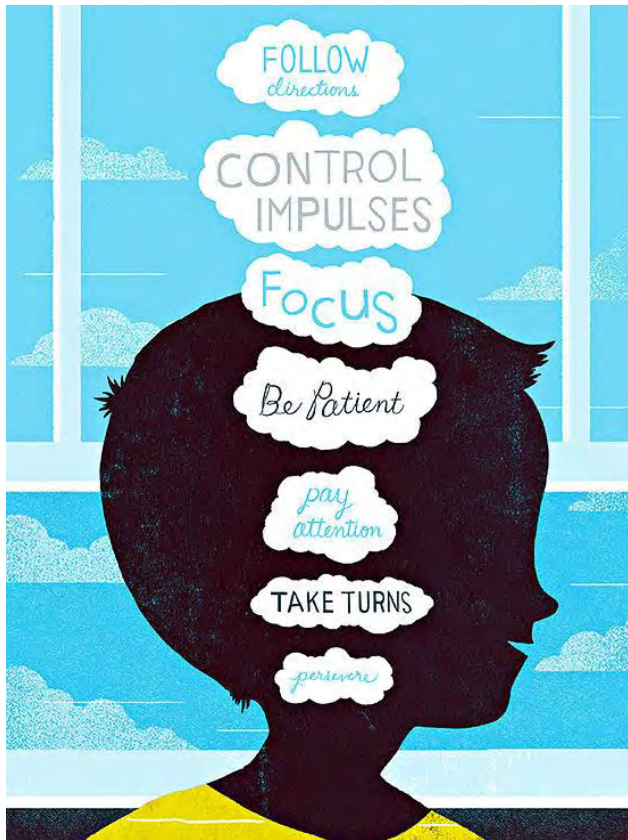
Children often come to Kindergarten up to two years behind. Research shows that even the best teacher and instruction is able to close that gap by 1 to 1 ½ years only to have the summer slide widen the gap once again.



Due to COVID-19, Alabama's early learning programs, childcare centers and livelihoods of families have been disrupted. This disruption has put many of Alabama's children at risk of entering Kindergarten behind the widely held expectation of a typically developing five-year-old student.

Many schools and teachers gather data at the beginning of the year. This data is used by the school and teacher to make decisions for the children in their care. While this is helpful on a local level, the information is not accessible for those in the early years space to make program and/or policy decisions. Additionally, each Local Educational Agency (LEA) uses a different assessment. In order to make the best programming decisions in the 0-5 years for all children in Alabama, the same assessment tool is needed across all LEA's. The use of the same assessment tool, for all children, allows for the best programming and equitable decisions to be made in the early years before a child enters the formal educational system. By code, the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education is to provide a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, accessible to all LEA's. A statewide whole child assessment is needed to provide early learning agencies, families, and teachers with information on what is taking place in the early years before the child transitions into the school environment.

## What is AlaKiDS



AlaKiDS is a whole child assessment which allows teachers to begin immediately meeting the individual developmental learning needs of each child by informing instructional practices and program development.

Assessing the whole child is inclusive of executive function skills not in isolation from academic learning. Executive functioning skills are mediate prediction of higher literacy scores in third grade.

-Sasser, Bierman, & Heinrichs, 2015;  
Cavanugh et al, 2016

AlaKiDS is a whole child assessment given the first month of Kindergarten that will provide the early learning agencies, families, and teachers with needed information on a child's independent skills and abilities. Young learners do not learn skills in isolation. For example, a Harvard study revealed a strong correlation between alphabet knowledge and social skills, and vocabulary and impulse control. AlaKiDS will give teachers and families a picture of this interdependence of development for children.

“ I used to think that we would not come back to focusing on these things, but now I'm glad it is something we are paying attention to. ”

*A quote from AlaKiDS training*

# Implementation Timeline



*.....utilizing the planning tool will be a great way to provide differentiated, systematic, and engaging activities that can be shared with families, along with teacher support.*



*A quote from a teacher during AlaKiDS training*

AlaKiDS will be administered to all Kindergarten children within the first 3 to 4 weeks of the start of school. System coaches will help assist with teachers assessing and provide support to teachers. Following the first year, system coaches will provide training to new hires.

## July

- Kindergarten and Local Reading Specialist Trained
- Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) Regional Literacy Specialist Trained
- First Shipment of AlaKiDS kit delivered to all schools
- Teachers fill out profile form to receive username/password

## August

- AlaKiDS org will go live the second week of August 10<sup>th</sup>.
- **All teacher must submit AlaKiDS Personnel Profile Form August 10<sup>th</sup>.**
- Teachers begin using AlaKiDS as they form community with the children in their classroom.
- Remaining AlaKiDS Kits delivered
- Teaching Strategies (TS) Check in with ARI Coaches

## September

- Remaining AlaKiDS Kits delivered.
- TS Check in with ARI Coaches
- AlaKiDS completion date: September 30<sup>th</sup>.

## How to Access the AlaKiDS org?

- **No one has access to the org yet. We need AlaKiDS Personnel Profile on all Kindergarten teachers before we can open the org. All teachers must submit AlaKiDS Personnel Profile Form by August 10<sup>th</sup>. If you have not filled out the profile please do so as soon as possible.**

### To log in to AlaKiDS:

- Go to *MyTeachingStrategies®*:
- Enter your username
- Your username follows this format:
  - first name (period) last name (no space)
  - 2-digit month of birth (no space) 2-digit day of birth (no space)
  - Organization ID
  - Example: If your name is Jane Smith, your date of birth is 12/05, and then KEA for example: jane.smith1205kea
- Please be sure to check your spam/junk folder, as the password reset email may be delivered there instead of to your inbox.

Welcome!

**MyTeachingStrategies®**

Username

Password

Log in

[Forgot Password?](#) [Forgot Username?](#)

Language/Lengua: English

### Once you have successfully accessed your account:

- Your classes have been named for you. Please do not change your class name.
- Please do not add a class.
- You only need to add your children.
- **As way of reminder, do not delete children or class from AlaKiDS**
- Contact your ARI Regional Literacy Specialist or an ADECE P3 Coach if there is an error in either the class name or your name.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Will teachers receive PD credit for training?

We are in the process of emailing certificates with contact hours to all participants. The certificate will be sent to the email provided in the registration process for the AlaKiDS training. Participants will take the certificate to their LEA for credit. We hope to have all certificates out by the middle of August.

## What support can teachers expect?

Teachers and School Admin will be provided support through ***ARI Regional Literacy Specialist***. ARI Regional Specialist attended a Deeper Dive session July 21st & July 23<sup>rd</sup>. If a teacher is unable to attend training contact your ARI Literacy Specialist.

## When can a teacher expect their kit?

First shipment of kits has been delivered to schools. There are enough kits for teachers to share. A second shipment of kits will go out the last of August/first of September.

## How will the assessment be given?

- Teachers will administer the assessment during the first 3-4 weeks of school to obtain the most accurate results. Assessment is administered in small group settings and/or with individual child. AlaKiDS is an online portfolio with a paper version included for data collection purposes.
- A materials kit will be provided. Teachers will have 3-4 weeks from the beginning of school to give the assessment. It does not have to be administered in a particular time frame if all children are completed by the September completion date.
- **Adjustments may be needed when teaching virtually. Teachers are to use their best judgement with guidance and support from ARI Regional Literacy Specialist when planning for virtual learning and assessment.**



*...peace that will overcome my teachers when  
they learn how easy this will be...*

*A quote from AlaKiDS training*



## Resources & Supports

### Webinar:

Join us as we walk through strategies to help teachers using GOLD® for their kindergarten entry assessment this fall.

- Using GOLD® for Kindergarten Entry Assessment in the Time of COVID-19  
August 14, 2020 – 2:00pm
- Presenters: Laura Bilbrey & Tim Reed

### Administrator/Principal Support:

The support for administrators, with a focus on those who might be considering using a reduced number of GOLD® items within their program (provides specifics about area-level reporting and the 70% rule).



# Letter of Support from Teaching Strategies

Summer 2020

Dear Kindergarten Teachers and Administrators,

We all realize that the 2020–2021 school year promises to be one that will both begin and unfold unlike any other and that your preparations for it are likely to be far more complex than ever before. Please know that here at Teaching Strategies, we remain committed to helping you nurture the development and learning of all the children in your care and, like you, are taking new and ongoing steps to ensure you can continue the essential work of building relationships, teaching, and assessing development and learning.

In service of this shared mission, we want you to be aware of some of our newly expanded resources that we believe will help you make essential connections between teaching and assessment, regardless of your back-to-school model. We are now making available to you as a subscriber to *GOLD*® KEA (Kindergarten Entry Assessment), at no additional cost, the following digital resources:

- 100 **Mighty Minutes**® for Kindergarten
- all 201 **Intentional Teaching Experiences** for Kindergarten\*
- our all-new **Guided Learning Experiences** (family-facing versions of *Intentional Teaching Experiences*) and **family Mighty Minutes**®—all of which are easily implemented by family members using resources typically found at home
- a two-way-communication instant messaging tool for keeping in touch with families and providing an easier-than-ever platform for turning the notes, photos, and videos they share with you into *GOLD*® documentation

Additionally, attached to this communication you'll find links to some resources we believe will provide you with some additional support at this time. You will find a sample letter to families that introduces them to formative assessment and explains how they can help you individualize their child's instruction and learning by sharing documentation of their children's development with you. We are also providing a set of family-facing observation prompts that can be used in a variety of ways. For example, you may want to do one or more of the following:

- use the prompts at the beginning of the year to help you get to know children and families initially
- discuss a prompt or two at a time to facilitate weekly communication
- provide the prompts along with some suggested family-facing activities available within *MyTeachingStrategies*® to encourage families to actively observe their children's learning and gather evidence to share with you

We'll be posting an announcement soon to register for a webinar that will take a closer look at these new resources and additional functionality. We look forward to connecting with you soon.

Best regards,

Your Customer Success Team at Teaching Strategies

\* 86 experiences in language development and literacy learning, 34 in social-emotional development, 20 in physical development, and 61 in mathematics learning comprise the entire set of 201 Kindergarten *Intentional Teaching Experiences*.

---

## RESOURCES

- Teaching Strategies white paper on *Formative Assessment in the Time of COVID-19*
- A sample letter to families about formative assessment
- Family-facing prompts for KEA

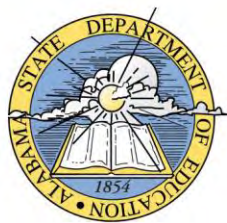


TeachingStrategies®



# AlaKiDS

ALABAMA KINDERGARTEN INVENTORY OF DEVELOPING SKILLS



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF  
Early Childhood  
Education

AlaKiDS is in partnership with Alabama State Department of Education, State Department of Human Resources and the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education.