

WaKIDS

Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills

What is WaKIDS?

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

- Welcoming students and their families to kindergarten.
- Assessing students' strengths.
- Discussing the characteristics of children's development and learning that will enable them to be successful in school.

Who participates?

In the 2015–16 school year, WaKIDS will reach approximately 59,000 kindergartners. Most of these students are in state-funded, full-day kindergartens, which are now required to implement WaKIDS. This number will continue to grow as our state increases funding for full-day kindergarten.

How does it work?

WaKIDS has three parts:

1. **Family connection.** Before school starts, or shortly thereafter, kindergarten

teachers meet with families and early learning professionals to welcome families and students to school, and talk about each child's strengths and needs.

2. **Whole-child assessment.**

By October 31, teachers observe and record each child's developing skills in six areas: social-emotional, physical, cognitive, language, literacy, and mathematics.

3. **Early learning collaboration.**

As the school year continues, early learning professionals, community groups, and elementary school staff meet to talk about ideas for improving student learning.

How does it help?

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

Kindergarten teachers use the observations they record to improve classroom teaching and tailor their instruction to the needs of each child. WaKIDS also helps discover ways to engage effectively with families and inform decisions at the community, district, and state levels.

Will kindergarten entry requirements change?

No. All children who are 5 years old by August 31 may enter kindergarten. The purpose of WaKIDS is to provide families, early learning professionals, and kindergarten teachers a more formal process for sharing information, so children receive the support they need to be successful in school. It is *not* a tool to determine whether a child should enter kindergarten.

Who leads WaKIDS?

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction is responsible for implementing WaKIDS, in collaboration with Department of Early Learning, and Thrive Washington.

