



Kindergarten Screening History and Legislative Authority: An Overview

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1997-98 through 1998-99

Section 230.2305(4), Florida Statutes (F.S.), provided for “Each school district to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the prekindergarten early intervention program.” This included the following measures:

- a. Children’s achievement as measured by assessments upon entry into the program and completion of the program; and
- b. Children’s readiness for kindergarten as measured by the instrument the district uses to assess school readiness of children entering kindergarten. The results of the evaluation were to be maintained by the school district and made available to the public upon request.

Each school district was responsible for conducting an evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the prekindergarten early intervention program and measure children’s achievement and readiness for kindergarten. There was no statewide uniform system for measuring kindergarten readiness.

1999-2000

Section 411.01(4)(o), F.S., created “a system for measuring school readiness.” This included a statewide uniform screening that provided “objective data regarding the following expectations for school readiness” for all public school kindergarten students:

1. The child’s immunizations and other health requirements as necessary, including appropriate vision and hearing screening and examinations.
2. The child’s physical development.
3. The child’s compliance with rules, limitations and routines.
4. The child’s ability to perform tasks.
5. The child’s interactions with adults.
6. The child’s interactions with peers.
7. The child’s ability to cope with challenges.
8. The child’s self-help skills.
9. The child’s ability to express his or her needs.
10. The child’s verbal communication skills.
11. The child’s problem-solving skills.
12. The child’s following of verbal directions.
13. The child’s demonstration of curiosity, persistence and exploratory behavior.
14. The child’s interest in books and other printed materials.
15. The child’s paying attention to stories.
16. The child’s participation in art and music activities.
17. The child’s ability to identify colors, geometric shapes, letters of the alphabet, numbers, and spatial and temporal relationships.

These 17 expectations became the basis of a school readiness checklist.

2000-01 through 2001-02

School districts completed a school readiness checklist consisting of the 17 expectations listed in Section 411.01(4)(o), F.S., for each child entering kindergarten, using the results to determine whether or not the child was ready for kindergarten.

2002-03 through 2005-06

Section 1008.21, F.S., created the School Readiness Uniform Screening System (SRUSS) to “provide objective data regarding” the 17 items referenced in s. 411.01(4)(o), F.S. Two assessments were selected through a request for proposal: the Early Screening Inventory – Kindergarten, a developmental screening administered to individual students, and one of two observational instruments—either the Work Sampling System™ (WSS) or the Ready-for-School Behavioral Screener.

In 2004-05, the two observational instruments were discontinued and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills™ (DIBELS) was added.

2006-07 through 2008-09

[Section \(s.\) 1002.69, Florida Statutes \(F.S.\)](#), implementing the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program, was created, repealing Section 1008.21, F.S., and specifying that “The department shall require that each school district administer the statewide kindergarten screening to each kindergarten student in the school district within the first 30 school days of each school year.” The screening gathers information about a child’s overall development and addresses the child’s readiness for kindergarten based on performance standards adopted for use in VPK, currently the *Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011)*.

The screening instruments—the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS)—are selected by the Department of Education through a competitive bid process. The FLKRS included a subset of the Early Childhood Observation System™ (ECHOS) and the first two measures of DIBELS—letter naming fluency and initial sound fluency—which are used to gather information for kindergarten on a child’s development in emergent literacy.

2009-10 through 2013-14

Beginning with the 2009-10 kindergarten screening, FLKRS included a subset of ECHOS as it did in 2008-09, but DIBELS was replaced by the Broad Screen and Broad Diagnostic Inventory, two measures from the Kindergarten Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading (FAIR-K).

The Broad Screen is comprised of a letter naming task and a phonemic awareness task. The Broad Diagnostic Inventory is comprised of a vocabulary task and a listening comprehension task. These measures are used to gather information on a child’s development in emergent reading.

2014-15

For the 2014-15 school year, FLKRS was modified to include a subset of the Work Sampling System, similar to the observational tool used in 2002-06, and FAIR aligned to the Florida Standards (FAIR-FS). In September 2014, FAIR testing was suspended for kindergarten through second grade throughout the state.

2015-16 through 2016-17

Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, FLKRS included an expanded subset of the Work Sampling System with early literacy metrics.

2017-18 through present

Beginning with the 2017-18 school year, the FLKRS began using the Star Early Literacy® assessment, which is an online, adaptive instrument that students complete independently in approximately 15-20 minutes.

Star Early Literacy administers 27 items that assess early literacy, language and number skills from an item bank of over 2,140 questions. The assessment is aligned to the *Standards for Four-Year-Olds* (2011) and aligns with the [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: 4 Years Old to Kindergarten](#) (2017) to be used beginning fall 2018. Star Early Literacy covers the same areas as the VPK Assessment—phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, vocabulary and number sense.

Children take the assessment on a computer or tablet. It is in a game-like format, similar to games or apps children may use. The assessment is adaptive, meaning that questions get harder or easier based on how children respond. The computer “knows” which question to ask next based on a child’s previous response. Star Early Literacy practice questions and a computer mouse tutorial are available so children can become familiar with the format before taking the assessment.