



WaKIDS Implementation of *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® Assessment System

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a teacher required to do to complete the *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® assessment?

Teachers will make focused observations of children, using the *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® observation protocol. Teachers will also collect documentation of their observations, and enter data to evaluate students' skills, knowledge and behaviors. Teachers are encouraged to generate individual student and classroom reports to inform their instruction and to share with families.

What is the timeline for completing the assessment for each student?

Assessment data should be completed and entered into *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® online for all students by the end of the 7th week of school.

How many times during the year must the assessment be completed?

The state is requiring the assessment to be completed **once**, within the first seven weeks of school. Teachers, schools or districts may **elect** to complete the assessment more than once. For this reason, the state has contracted with Teaching Strategies to provide access to the online system throughout the school year.

What is the benefit of completing the assessment only once?

Teachers can learn the strengths their students bring in their first few weeks of school. Once teachers enter all of their data, they have immediate access to the individual student and class reports that the system will generate. Teachers can use the reports to inform their instruction, and to share students' strengths with parents and families.

What is the benefit of completing the assessment more than once?

When the assessment is completed more than once, teachers can measure students' progress and growth. This allows teachers to see if their instruction achieved their intended results or if modifications are needed.

If this is an entry assessment, what should a teacher do if a student can't demonstrate a skill in the first few weeks but can demonstrate it before the end of the 7th week of school?

WaKIDS considers "entry" to be the first 7 weeks of school because some students will need time to become accustomed to the classroom. If a student is observed demonstrating a knowledge, skill, or behavior anytime in that period, it should be recorded.

Do teachers have to wait until the 7th week after school begins or can they enter the data sooner?

Teachers do not have to wait until Week 7 to enter data. Because *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® is an observation-based assessment system, teachers need time to observe and collect documentation on students' knowledge, skills and abilities in relation to each of 19 WaKIDS objectives.

What is the difference between data entry and documentation?

Data entry is the process of making judgments about students' skills, knowledge and abilities. Documentation is the evidence teachers gather to support their judgments.

When can teachers begin gathering documentation?

Some teachers may begin gathering documentation before school starts for the year as they meet with the children and families prior to the first day. Other teachers may not have the opportunity to begin gathering documentation until children start attending school. Once teachers have ample information collected to assess a student's knowledge, skills and behaviors, they can begin entering the progress checkpoint data into *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® online.

Can paraprofessionals help observe and enter data?

In order to assure that the data is reliable and of high quality, only people trained on the *GOLD*® observation protocol may observe and enter data. Data entry is more than a technical task; it requires judgment about the student's level of skill.

Teachers learn how to use the *GOLD*® system to judge students' skill levels during the training provided by the state.

Are there other ways that paraprofessionals can help with WaKIDS?

Yes! Paraprofessionals or other support people in the classrooms can, under the teacher's direction, help gather documentation in the forms of photos, videos, or work samples for the teacher to review and evaluate. But because paraprofessionals have not been trained in the observation protocols of *GOLD*®, they should not take notes, make observations, or enter data.

Can physical education teachers observe and enter data for the objectives related to students' physical development?

In order to assure that the data is reliable and of high quality, only people trained on the *GOLD*® observation protocol may observe and enter data. However, kindergarten teachers may consult their physical education teacher colleagues to help set up activities so that the kindergarten teacher can observe students' physical development.

We heard that entering data into GOLD online was a time consuming process. Have any efforts been made to reduce the amount of time it takes?

Teaching Strategies has made several updates to the online system to increase efficiency and decrease the amount of time it takes to enter data. First, teachers will no longer need to enter extensive demographic information for their students – only each student's name, date of birth and district student ID number. Teachers also now have the option of entering assessment data on a particular objective or dimension for an entire classroom at one time. Additionally, the online screens now only show the WaKIDS required items, not the optional items. This saves time for teachers as it minimizes the amount of scrolling, clicking and system navigation needed to complete an assessment for each child.

How many pieces of documentation are needed for each objective and dimension?

For some objectives, seeing a child perform a skill once is sufficient to make an informed decision. Other objectives need more evidence and documentation. There is no set number of observations or amount of documentation that must be collected in relation to each objective.

Are teachers required to enter documentation online?

Teachers are not required to enter documentation such as observation notes, photographs, or video clips into *GOLD*® online. Teachers are required to have evidence that supports the rating they have given a student for each dimension. Hard copies of the documentation can be kept in the teacher's current filing or organizational system and do not have to be entered online.

How long must teachers retain the documentation?

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) recommends that districts retain assessment-related records for one year, but teachers should consult their District Assessment Coordinator for the district's records retention policy.

What if teachers already gather similar data using other district assessments?

Teachers can utilize assessment tools currently implemented in their district to inform the ratings they give a student on the *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® objectives and dimensions and enter those into the online system.

What if a child starts school four or five weeks after the first day? Does the teacher still need to do the assessment?

Yes. The teacher would observe the child and collect as much documentation on the child's knowledge, skills and behavior as possible and enter the assessment data into *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® online.

There are some items such as "measurement" that our curriculum doesn't cover until later in the year. How can we gather data on that?

Teaching Strategies GOLD® online includes an activity library with over 500 activities to target specific learning objectives. Teachers can search for activities related to the identified objective and then gather data on students' knowledge and skills as they observe the children engaged in that activity in the classroom. Remember, Gold is an assessment of what students bring to kindergarten, not what has been taught.

Are teachers required to access and use the family components of GOLD such as inviting families to participate, newsletters, etc.?

No. Those are optional resources teachers can use to support family engagement, but they are not required.

How can the state assure that the data is reliable and of high quality?

The state, with the assistance of private funders and the Department of Early Learning's federal Race to the Top grant, is investing in the professional development teachers will need to learn how to use the Teaching Strategies *GOLD*® observation protocol. The state has also collaborated with the nine Educational Service Districts to establish a regional network of support to provide technical assistance for the implementation of WaKIDS.

Teachers are strongly encouraged to complete *GOLD*®'s inter-rater reliability certification online prior to making their observations. This will assist teachers in feeling confident in their observations for individual students and will assist others in feeling confident about aggregated results. OSPI is working with the University of Washington to conduct a reliability study in the coming year.