

# Rhode Island Early Learning Council

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**Kindergarten Assessment:** These recommendations were approved by the Rhode Island Early Learning Council on March 23, 2011 to inform the work of the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Creating a high-quality, comprehensive, statewide kindergarten assessment system will help to improve connections and strengthen alignment between the state's early childhood education system and the K-3 education system. A kindergarten assessment system will help us understand the skills and knowledge of children entering Rhode Island kindergarten classrooms and will help to direct resources to increase young children's access to high-quality, effective early learning programs.

## **Recommendation re: Purpose of a Kindergarten Assessment**

- Rhode Island should prioritize the development of a kindergarten assessment which can be used for the purpose of guiding instruction and can also be used to describe the entry status of children at the population level (state and community).

## **Recommendations re: Process**

- Identify a core team to complete the following tasks:
  - ❖ Review current research and national trends to identify key issues to be considered.
  - ❖ Develop methods for gathering RI stakeholder information based on identified key issues.
- Gather stakeholder information using surveys and focus groups
  - ❖ Stakeholders should include diverse representation from district staff – administrators and teachers; parents; higher education; and community-based early childhood staff.
  - ❖ Information collected should address key issues identified by the core team, as well as, the current state of kindergarten assessment.
- Analyze the information collected and develop guiding principles and recommendations for development and implementation of a kindergarten assessment, and the communication of kindergarten assessment information.

## **Recommendations re: Implementation**

- Assessment tools selected must be valid and reliable for the Rhode Island population.
- Assessment tools should be aligned with standards.
- Adequate training and professional development for teachers needs to be incorporated into the implementation plan.
- Kindergarten assessment needs to align with assessments done in PreK and in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.
- Assessment tools should address *all domains* of learning and development.
- Methodology of assessments chosen will impact many components (e.g. professional development, cost, time).
- Multiple sources of input should be considered (e.g. preschool teachers, family).
- Potential barriers should be considered (e.g. cost, time to implement).
- The timeline for implementation should be thoughtful (pilot, voluntary, then mandatory; phase in over time).