



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Office of the Governor

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**Gov. Beshear, First Lady and Education Commissioner Announce
Statewide Screening for Kindergarteners**

All school districts will screen incoming kindergarteners for key learning skills

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug 22, 2013) – Within the first few weeks of school, every Kentucky kindergartener is being screened for school readiness – the results of which will provide a vast amount of valuable information to assist teachers, schools, families, child care providers and preschools in preparing Kentucky’s youngest students for success.

Governor Steve Beshear, First Lady Jane Beshear and Education Commissioner Terry Holliday announced today that every school district will utilize the Brigance Kindergarten Screener, a tool used by many states to gauge a child’s preparedness for school. During last year’s pilot program, 109 school districts voluntarily used the screener, which helps teachers and schools target the best ways to meet the needs of each child in the classroom.

“Kentucky is proud to be implementing a common kindergarten screener that considers the whole child,” said Gov. Beshear. “With the implementation of the screener, we will now have data to inform and build upon the work in early childhood that has taken place in Kentucky for more than 20 years.”

“As a former teacher, I understand how getting to know a student’s needs and abilities early in the school year can make a big difference in helping that child to succeed,” said Mrs. Beshear. “This screener can quickly show teachers each student’s ‘starting point’, and lesson plans and teaching styles can be molded to maximize their effectiveness. This will be a wonderful tool not only for the schools, but for families as well.”

The Governor, First Lady and Commissioner made today’s announcement at Frankfort’s Early Learning Village, which has a full-day kindergarten program. The school is using the screener for the first time this year. Most kindergarteners were screened at a registration day before school began.

How the screener works

The screener is not a test or entrance exam for kindergarten, nor does it determine a child’s placement in a classroom. Age is the only requirement to attend kindergarten in Kentucky. The screener lasts about 20 minutes and provides a snapshot of the child’s current development and abilities.

The student doesn't have to leave the classroom, and the screeners are administered by an adult the child knows, such as a teacher or certified elementary school personnel.

Students will be asked to perform tasks such as drawing a person or identifying body parts like ankles or shoulders. They will be asked if they know their first and last names, their age, and the alphabet. Some may be asked to count as high as they can, or to stand on one foot. Each of these screening questions helps indicate the child's awareness, motor skills, engagement, and other skills. A student cannot "fail" the screener.

Parents will also be asked to fill out a form explaining their child's habits and interests, which can provide a more complete view of the student for the school.

Data collected in the pilot districts last year indicates that a majority of children are socially and emotionally ready to succeed as they enter school. However, many students did not achieve at high levels in the cognitive, language and motor domains.

"Based on last year's data, only about 28 percent of students start kindergarten ready to succeed without additional supports," said Education Commissioner Terry Holliday. "We need to work with parents and early learning providers to better ready students for school and in turn our schools also must be ready to address student learning needs from day one to ensure students are successful and on track throughout school so they graduate college/career-ready."

How screener information will be used

Research shows that exposure to high-quality learning environments and developmentally appropriate experiences from birth to five years old are critical for children to achieve success in kindergarten.

Communities and school districts will utilize the screener data to enhance needed supports and resources for families and early childhood programs in the areas of cognitive, language and motor development for young children.

Later this year, the screener data will be aggregated and reported publicly by district and county. This information will be used to inform decision-making about early childhood systems and to identify state and local challenges in school readiness. Over time, this will allow districts to mobilize communities in targeting goals for families and students, and will also provide opportunities to measure improvements with meaningful data.

Preparing your child for kindergarten

Families can help ensure their child will be ready by doing simple everyday activities such as reading with their children every day, encouraging curiosity, answering questions and having conversations with their child about the world around them, even if the children aren't yet talking. It is never too early to start doing these activities.

"Children who start school ready are more likely to graduate from high school ready for college or a career," said Terry Tolan, executive director of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood. "We are committed to helping every child be ready to succeed when they arrive at kindergarten."

To learn more about the common kindergarten screener or to view an early childhood data profile on your area, visit the KYGOEC's website at <http://kidsnow.ky.gov>.

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