Through funding from the Preschool Development Grant, the Kentucky All STARS for state-funded preschool programs will be reintroduced for the 2024–2025 school year. Preschool sites are required to participate in the Kentucky All STARS Rating System per the Kentucky Administrative Regulation (KAR) 704 KAR 3:015. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Office of Special Education and Early Learning (OSEEL) Early Learning Unit (ELU) has made changes to the process for the Kentucky All STARS for state-funded preschool programs. These changes include the use of the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) as the required environmental assessment.

This non-regulatory guidance is intended to provide frequently asked questions and answers related to the changes to the Kentucky All STARS process for state-funded preschool programs.

Questions and Answers Related to Changes to the Kentucky All STARS for State-Funded Preschool Programs

1. **What is Kentucky All STARS?**
    "'Kentucky All STARS Rating System' or 'STARS' means the quality based-graduated early childhood rating system established in KRS 199.8943 and the Kentucky All STARS Quality Rating Level requirements established in 922 KAR 2:270." [704 KAR 3:015, Section 1 (7)]

    The All STARS is Kentucky's expanded five-star quality rating and improvement system for early care and education programs. This accountability system provides an overall rating for every state-funded preschool site in Kentucky.

2. **Who is required to participate in the Kentucky All STARS for State-Funded Preschool Programs?**
    "A preschool site providing services pursuant to 704 KAR 3:410 and this administrative regulation shall participate in Kentucky All STARS Rating System:
    (1) At STARS Level 3;
    (2) At STARS Level 4; or
    (3) At STARS Level 5." [704 KAR 3:015, Section 2]

3. **What is the TPOT?**
    The Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) "is an instrument designed to measure practitioners' implementation of teaching and behavior support practices associated with the *Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children* (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003; Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2006)" [Hemmeter, M. L., Fox, L., & Snyder, P. (2014). *Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT): For Preschool Classrooms Manual, Research Edition*. Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company. P 1]. The TPOT for preschool classrooms is used to

reinforce high-quality practices that support children's social-emotional development and behavior. The TPOT is completed based on an observation of a preschool classroom and an interview with the teacher.

4. **Who is responsible for completing TPOT observations?**
"The TPOT should be administered by a trained administrator. We recommend that those who use the TPOT have foundational knowledge in early childhood and be able to identify factors that define quality in early childhood education settings. Users should also have knowledge about the Pyramid Model and associated practices. Training consists of attending a training workshop, achieving 80% agreement with the master coder by scoring a TPOT video, and achieving recommended interrater agreement criteria when using the TPOT in the field on three occasions" [Hemmeter, M. L., Fox, L., & Snyder, P. (2014). *Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT): For Preschool Classrooms Manual, Research Edition*. Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company. P 115].

The trained administrators responsible for completing TPOT observations may be the district's preschool coordinator or a designee of the coordinator's choosing.

5. **How do district staff complete the required trainings for the Kentucky All STARS program?**
Districts should contact the Early Childhood Regional Training Center (RTC) for information on completing the required trainings. Contact information for Early Childhood RTCs is provided on the Technical Assistance Network page.

6. **What does it mean to be TPOT reliable?**

Individuals who are TPOT reliable have participated and successfully passed the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) Reliability training with 80% or higher on the final assessment. Once individuals pass the TPOT reliability training, they receive a certificate that is good for three years. Achieving TPOT reliability means individuals can complete TPOT classroom observations for Pyramid Implementation. Being a reliable TPOT observer is the only way that individuals can complete TPOT observations to meet the All-Stars quality component.

7. **What if the district does not have a TPOT reliable person to complete observations?**
If districts do not have a TPOT reliable person, the district's preschool coordinator or designee is responsible for contacting the Early Childhood RTC staff for support.

8. **Which classrooms will be required to have a TPOT observation?**
   To meet the requirements outlined in [704 KAR 3:015](#), a TPOT observation must be completed for at least one-third (1/3) of the total number of classrooms at each site. The ELU will use an online randomization tool to select one-third of the classrooms at each site.

9. **Where can districts acquire official TPOT score sheets for each classroom?**
   Contact the Early Childhood RTC to request score sheets.

10. **How long does it take to administer the TPOT?**
    "Administering the TPOT includes a 2-hour classroom observation and a 15-to-20-minute interview with the lead teacher in the classroom. Scoring, which occurs after administration, takes an additional 30 to 45 minutes." [Hemmeter, M. L., Fox, L., & Snyder, P. (2014). *Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT): For Preschool Classrooms Manual, Research Edition*. Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company. P 115]

11. **Can the district conduct the observation portion of the TPOT over several days?**
    "The TPOT is designed to be scored based on an observation that occurs on one occasion. To score some indicators, observers must assess whether the practice associated with the indicator is used during various activities (e.g., large group, center time) occurring during a classroom day. Therefore, we recommend the TPOT observation to be completed on one occasion." [Hemmeter, M. L., Fox, L., & Snyder, P. (2014). *Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT): For Preschool Classrooms Manual, Research Edition*. Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company. P 115]

12. **What are red flags within the scoring criteria?**
    Red flags are observable practices that are "indicators of poor structural and interactional quality in the classroom environment that conflict with or impeded the implementation of Pyramid Model practices" [Hemmeter, M. L., Fox, L., & Snyder, P. (2014). *Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT): For Preschool Classrooms Manual, Research Edition*. Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company. P 3]. These practices may be either counterproductive or not supportive of young children's social-emotional skills or are not appropriate prevention or intervention practices for addressing challenging behavior.

    "Red flags are designed to be clear indicators of poor structural or process quality in the classroom environment or something that conflicts with or impedes the implementation of Pyramid Model practices. Thus, it should be an obvious example for it to be scored as a red flag." [Hemmeter, M. L., Fox, L., & Snyder, P. (2014). *Teaching Pyramid*

Observation Tool (TPOT): For Preschool Classrooms Manual, Research Edition. Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company. P 116]

13. **If the district has state-funded students in a blended classroom does that classroom count as part of the one-third?**
Yes, any classrooms with state-funded students could be selected as part of the one-third. Blended classrooms include any preschool or Head Start classes containing at least one state-funded preschooler.

14. **If a district has new preschool staff hired mid-school year, will their classroom be included in the one-third?**
No. New district hires, hired after Oct. 1 of the current school year, are exempt from a TPOT observation for the district's current cohort.

15. **How does a district know which cohort they are included in?**
Contact the Early Childhood RTC to request assistance with identifying which cohort the district is included in.

16. **How long is the district's All STARS rating valid?**
All STARS ratings are valid for three years from the date they are issued. [704 KAR 3:015, Section 3 (4)]

17. **What is the Basic Care Checklist?**
As part of the Grant Management Application and Planning (GMAP) system Quality Supplement, the Basic Care Checklist is a list of criteria not included in the TPOT but is included as part of the overall All STARS. The Basic Care Checklist must be completed during the cohort year in each observed classroom, at each site, by the district's preschool coordinator or the designee.

Additional Resources

- National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) Provides training materials and resources related to the Pyramid Model.
- The Pyramid Model Consortium - Supporting Early Childhood PBIS Provides training materials, videos and print resources to help implement the Pyramid Model.