

Washington WaKIDS

Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills

What is WaKIDS?

After a successful pilot year in 2010-11, the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills, or WaKIDS, is now a fully funded program that brings families, teachers and early learning providers together to support each child's learning and transition into public schools. WaKIDS was developed in collaboration with a diverse group of stakeholders, including elementary teachers and principals, special education specialists, early care and education providers, parents, and representatives from Washington's Tribal communities.

Who is participating in WaKIDS?

In the 2011-12 school year, WaKIDS will be used in nearly 500 classrooms around the state, with 11,000 incoming kindergarteners – an increase of nearly four times from the pilot year. This school year, WaKIDS is optional for state-funded full-day kindergarten classrooms, but will be mandatory next year. Other schools may choose to participate.

How does WaKIDS work?

Before school starts, kindergarten teachers meet with families and early learning providers to talk about each child's strengths and needs. In the fall, kindergarten teachers will complete a more formal assessment of each child's skills (social and emotional, physical, cognitive and linguistic skills). Early learning providers and kindergarten teachers will continue to meet to develop new ways to collaborate and share information.

How will the WaKIDS program help teachers and children?

Kindergarten teachers will use the information from WaKIDS to improve classroom teaching and tailor their instruction to the individual needs of each child. In addition, WaKIDS will help determine best practices for engaging with families and inform decisions at the community, district and state levels for future investments in early learning.

Will kindergarten entry for students still be the same?

Yes. All children who have had their 5th birthday by Aug. 31 may enter kindergarten. The purpose of WaKIDS is to provide families, early learning providers and kindergarten teachers a more formal process for sharing information, so that children receive the support they need to be successful in school. It is not a tool to determine whether a child should enter kindergarten.

Why is our state doing this this program?

Each year, 70,000 children enter kindergarten with a varying degree of skills. We want to know what works best in supporting successful transitions from early learning into the K-12 school system.

Who is leading the WaKIDS pilot?

WaKIDS is a partnership paid for with state, federal and private funding. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Department of Early Learning are working together to oversee WaKIDS. Private partners include Thrive by Five Washington and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.



Need more information?

Please visit WaKIDS at www.k12.wa.us/WaKIDS or email WaKIDS@k12.wa.us.