Before School Starts

- **Visit the WaKIDS website:** [www.k12.wa.us/wakids](http://www.k12.wa.us/wakids). Learn about WaKIDS requirements and opportunities. Arrange a meeting with WaKIDS teachers, your district assessment coordinator and other team members to create a strategy for accomplishing those requirements.

- **Plan ahead for the family connection.** Decide how your school will provide time for teachers to meet with individual families and how these meetings will be arranged. State law allows up to three school days at the beginning of the school year for these meetings. No 180-day waiver is needed (see Principal Series #2).

- **Make sure all of your new WaKIDS teachers attend WaKIDS 101 summer training.** The state will provide funds to train all kindergarten teachers on the whole-child assessment, GOLD™ by Teaching Strategies®. (See [www.k12.wa.us/wakids/events](http://www.k12.wa.us/wakids/events) for dates.) For reliability purposes, only GOLD™-trained staff may evaluate children’s developmental levels. You may consider using local resources to train PE teachers, paraeducators, early learning coordinators, speech therapists, or others who could help with the evaluations.

WaKIDS 101 two-day training is required for teachers implementing WaKIDS for the first time. The state reimburses districts for teachers to attend.

- **Ask your district CEDARS administrator to do a bulk SSID upload in August of all kindergartners.** Teachers need their class lists to be uploaded to GOLD™. Students cannot be uploaded without SSIDs.

- **Ask your district assessment coordinator to upload teachers’ class lists to GOLD™ no later than September 15.** OSPI will provide instructions. Teachers may begin assessing students as early as the first week of school.

- **Consider delaying other assessments until after October 31.** Or think of ways that other assessments can be used to gather information for GOLD™.

- **Plan ways to help your teachers implement GOLD™.** Kindergarten teachers are expected to assess all students in their own classrooms. Feedback from the 2014 feedback survey indicated that teachers’ preferred means of support (in priority order) were:

  1. **Compensation for time required to enter data outside the contracted school.**
  2. **District uploading of class lists to initiate the assessment process.**
  3. **Substitutes, so teachers can plan or enter data.**
  4. **Paraprofessional support.**

During the First Few Weeks of School

- **Provide opportunities for your kindergarten teachers to meet as a team.** WaKIDS is implemented in the early weeks of the school year, before October 31. Time together will help your teachers develop strategies to observe children’s skills, behavior and knowledge.

- **Check in with your WaKIDS teachers.** Talk with your teachers and monitor their progress by signing in to GOLD™ with your assigned user name, sent by e-mail from implementation@teachingstrategies.com. Offer support to teachers who are struggling.

- **Reach out to your WaKIDS regional coordinator and trainers at the ESD.** OSPI has collaborated with the ESDs to establish a regional network of support. ESDs can help teachers set up other support systems.
their classrooms to support observations, or identify strategies and activities for a particular area of learning. They can also help you or other administrators create and analyze reports, transfer or archive students, or update teachers’ profiles.

**After the Whole-Child Assessment**

- **Review and analyze final data with your teachers and district assessment coordinator.** WaKIDS data provide insight into children’s areas of strength and challenge to make teaching more effective. **GOLD™** provides several valuable reports (Classroom Profile, Snapshot, Comparative) to administrators and teachers to help them understand students’ skills, knowledge, and behavior at kindergarten entry. These reports are available immediately with preliminary or final data — there is no waiting period.

- **Share the data.** Ask your district assessment coordinator to facilitate district-wide conversations about the data with teachers and staff. Your school’s WaKIDS data will be available on the Washington State Report Card (bit.ly/11UJtA6) in January.

- **Support collaboration between K–12 and early learning professionals.** An important part of WaKIDS is early learning collaboration (see Principal Series #5). Watch for meetings scheduled by your ESD, or work within your building/district to meet with your local early learning providers, and encourage your teachers to attend.

We look forward to hearing your challenges and success stories, and hope you will share them with your colleagues!

**Note:** This document is one of several support materials available to deepen principals’ understanding of WaKIDS and support best practices. Additional materials are available at [www.k12.wa.us/wakids](http://www.k12.wa.us/wakids).

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[www.k12.wa.us/wakids/ESD-Coordinators.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/wakids/ESD-Coordinators.aspx)

— Stephen Merz, Principal,  
East Valley Elementary School,  
Yakima School District

Go eagerly into WaKIDS with your eyes wide open. Give yourself license to think unconventionally! Listen carefully to your kindergarten teachers in the trenches. They have incredible insight and perspective on how we can best serve our students and support their families using this model.

Be open to adjusting your schedule to allow for family connection conferences at the outset of the school year. These meetings are so very inviting and they welcome families into our K–12 system as valued partners. Families will tell you how much they appreciate the focused time and interest we take in establishing this critical partnership.

As the school year gets going, consider other adjustments, like prioritizing the kindergarten reading block to maximize available paraprofessional support. The extra hands allow additional opportunities for teachers to pursue the whole-child (in the moment) assessment.

Finally, enjoy the developmentally appropriate nature of your classrooms and comfortable learning pace. Matching learning targets to developmentally appropriate pacing that recognizes readiness over schedules creates a sense of calm. As one kindergarten boy told me recently, “Learning is what we do.”