EARLY LEARNING ASSESSMENT

**Ohio's Early Childhood
Comprehensive Assessment System**

ready for
KINDERGARTEN
OHIO

Ohio | **Department of Education
Department of Job and Family Services**

OVERVIEW OF THE EARLY LEARNING ASSESSMENT

◻ INTRODUCTION

The Early Learning Assessment is based on research-supported Learning Progressions that are aligned to early learning standards and based on seven domains of school readiness: Social Foundations, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Well-Being and Motor Development, and Fine Arts. The Learning Progressions define the pathway of skills, knowledge, and behaviors that children develop between the ages of 36 months and 72 months, including children who may be at earlier developmental levels than their typically developing peers. The Early Learning Assessment is designed to be used multiple times throughout the school year and to equip teachers with tools to track individual children's growth, individualize learning opportunities, plan for intervention, engage in real-time curriculum planning, and ensure that all children are on the path for kindergarten readiness and beyond.

Throughout this booklet you will see a filled square in the upper outside corner of each page identifying the 10 required learning progressions for use in the state of Ohio. This has been done to help users easily identify the learning progressions required for the assessment.

◻ FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

The Early Learning Assessment is intended to be a process through which early-childhood teachers collect and use assessment information to tailor instruction to the individual needs of each child. It has been developed on the idea that the formative assessment process is not a single event or measurement. Instead, it is an ongoing, planned, and intentional practice to evaluate learning. Collecting information, over time, from multiple sources (e.g., children's work, teachers' observations of children, interviews with families, and discussions with other educators) and analyzing it based on children's individual learning needs encourages and supports teaching by which all children learn and thrive. Data collection for the Early Learning Assessment should be incorporated into everyday routines and activities. Teachers gather information about what children know and can do, how they deal with problems and process information, and how they interact with other children and adults. The Early Learning Assessment promotes a structure to help teachers document, analyze, and make instructional decisions based on the information they collect.

Understanding what children know and do at different points in time is extremely important for early-childhood educators and families. Data from formative assessment is typically descriptive and based on the collection and documentation of evidence or artifacts as a means to assess children's progress. Each Learning Progression provides a continuum of a specific area of development. The Skills, Knowledge, or Behaviors for all Learning Progressions, taken together, present a snapshot of a child's overall development. Regular use of the Early Learning Assessment allows teachers and families to follow and support children's progress over time.

ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE

The Early Learning Assessment is divided into seven domains:

- **Social Foundations:** The Social Foundations domain focuses on children's personal and social development, including their engagement in learning and interactions with others.

- **Language and Literacy:** The Language and Literacy domain focuses on children's language development and is the foundation for early literacy skills in speaking and listening, reading, and writing.

- **Mathematics:** The Mathematics domain focuses on children's foundational understanding of numeracy, measurement, shapes, and classification.

- **Science:** The Science domain focuses on children's capacity to observe and investigate their surroundings.

- **Social Studies:** The Social Studies domain addresses children's relationships with various people in their communities and the contexts in which different people interact. This domain also includes children's basic understanding of the concepts of past, present, and future in the context of their lives.

- **Physical Well-Being and Motor Development:** The Physical Well-Being and Motor Development domain addresses children's awareness of their coordination and movement and of healthy lifestyles, including personal care and awareness of safety for themselves and others.

- **Fine Arts:** The Fine Arts domain focuses on creativity and expression through song, art, dance, and dramatic play.

Each domain contains one or more Learning Progressions. Each Learning Progression consists of one or more Skills, Knowledge, or Behaviors (SKBs), which are further defined by Level Descriptions. The Early Learning Assessment framework is provided at the end of this guide.

☐ LEARNING PROGRESSIONS

The Learning Progressions define a series of skills, knowledge, or behaviors that children develop between the ages of 36 months and 72 months, including children who may be at earlier developmental levels than their peers. The operational definition of each Learning Progression summarizes its focus.

Each Skill, Knowledge, and Behavior (SKB) is depicted as a row within the Learning Progression and includes level descriptions (i.e., Levels A, B, C, D, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) that represent the milestones of a typical child's development. Levels 1, 4, and 5 represent the milestones at approximately three years of age (Level 1), at entry to kindergarten (Level 4), and at the end of kindergarten (Level 5). Levels A–D represent developmental stages and standards that precede Levels 1–5 and allow teachers to assess children who may be at earlier stages of development, including children with disabilities and children who are English learners.

The table below summarizes the levels for each of the SKBs within the Learning Progressions.

PROGRESSION LEVELS								
A	B	C	D	1	2	3	4	5
Developmental levels preceding Level 1				Approximately three years of age	Progress toward kindergarten entry		Approximately entry to kindergarten	Approximately end of kindergarten

There are some SKBs where a child's growth between each level is not easily measurable or observable. These SKBs have shaded cells in the progressions on the framework. A shaded cell indicates that there is not a clear distinction between level descriptions. A child may still be developing along the learning progression, but his or her progress may not be easy to measure or observe.

Sample Learning Progression

☐ DOMAIN | SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS

| STRAND | SOCIAL EMOTIONAL | LEARNING PROGRESSION | AWARENESS AND EXPRESSION OF EMOTION |

SKB Operational Definition | Identifies and labels emotions of self and others and responds with empathy to others' expressions of emotion

Emotion Identification	Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D
	Attends to* emotional expressions of others.	Changes responses in relation to emotional expressions of others.	Uses the emotional expressions of others as a guide for how to act in a situation.	Uses simple words or gestures to describe own and others' feelings (e.g., happy, sad).

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Identifies emotions expressed by self and others (e.g., happiness, sadness, anger, fear).	Identifies common emotion-eliciting* situations and the emotions elicited in each.	Identifies and explains the reasons behind and the consequences of the emotions expressed by self and others.	Identifies emotions expressed by others in a given situation, and compares them to own emotions in similar situations.	Identifies and explains own conflicting feelings in a specific situation (e.g., is excited for trip to the park but is sad that best friend can't come).

*attends to = notices or pays attention to
*emotion-eliciting = emotional

LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS AND SKB EXAMPLES

The Early Learning Assessment contains examples to help teachers document a child's behaviors and/or performance for each learning progression. Examples are intended to aid teachers in documenting observable behaviors during regular daily classroom routines, whenever possible. Each SKB Example contains directions that include important aspects of the SKBs and other information to assist the teacher when observing the children. The level descriptions further clarify which specific aspects of the SKBs the teacher should look for in an observation. Examples of observable behaviors associated with each developmental level are also provided. The examples identify **only one or two** of many behaviors that a child might exhibit as evidence of a particular level of development. *Teachers should not feel restricted by the examples.* Within and across observations, a variety of behaviors could demonstrate what would be expected at each developmental level.

Sample SKB with Examples

SKB ∣ EMOTION IDENTIFICATION
Look for instances when they identify their own and others' (children or characters in stories) emotions.
For each child, ask clarifying questions to understand his/her emotions, if necessary, such as: • How do(es) you/he/she feel? • Why do(es) you/he/she feel that way? • What might happen because you/he/she feel(s) that way? • How would you feel if you were [child/character]? • What two feelings might you have if [situation], and why would you have each feeling?

Level A	
Attends to* emotional expressions of others.	**EXAMPLE** **Daphne** – Daphne looked intently at a child who was crying.

Level B	
Changes responses in relation to emotional expressions of others.	**EXAMPLE** **Cameron** – When I smiled at Cameron, he smiled back. When I frowned at Cameron, he frowned back.

Level C	
Uses the emotional expressions of others as a guide for how to act in a situation.	**EXAMPLE** **Oliver** – While we were outside, we heard a loud motorcycle. It startled me, and I looked fearfully in the direction of the noise. Oliver looked at me and reached for my hand.

Level D	
Uses simple words or gestures to describe own and others' feelings (e.g., happy, sad).	**EXAMPLE** **Mia** – After Mia's parent said goodbye, Mia looked to me, pointed to herself, and said, "Sad."

Level 1	
Identifies emotions expressed by self and others (e.g., happiness, sadness, anger, fear).	**EXAMPLE** **Meredith** – Meredith pointed to Billy and said, "Billy sad." Billy's mother had just left the room, and he was standing by the door and crying.

Level 2	
Identifies common emotion-eliciting* situations and the emotions elicited in each.	**EXAMPLE** **Julia** – Julia pointed to a picture of two figures that she had drawn and said, "Keri's my friend. We are happy to play together."

Level 3	
Identifies and explains the reasons behind and the consequences of the emotions expressed by self and others.	**EXAMPLE** **Holly** – Holly said, "I get mad when my sister messes up my drawings." I asked, "What do you do when you get mad?" Holly said, "I tell my mom, and she tells my sister to play with something else."

Level 4	
Identifies emotions expressed by others in a given situation, and compares them to own emotions in similar situations.	**EXAMPLE** **Frankie** – Frankie said, "Nathan was scared to go on the monkey bars, but I wasn't because I watched my big brother do it before."

Level 5	
Identifies and explains own conflicting feelings in a specific situation (e.g., is excited for trip to the park but is sad that best friend can't come).	**EXAMPLE** **Philip** – Philip said, "I am excited for the field trip to the aquarium, but I am worried about seeing the sharks."

*attends to = notices or pays attention
*emotion-eliciting = emotional

COMPLETING THE ASSESSMENT

☐ READ, PLAN, AND PREPARE

Careful planning and preparation helps to ensure that sufficient documentation and evidence are collected to allow teachers to rate children on the SKBs within each Learning Progression.

- Read and become familiar with the Learning Progressions. Pay close attention to how the SKBs change across the levels.
- Think about the SKBs that can be observed during classroom activities, and determine other sources of evidence that may be useful.
- Determine which teachers and family members can contribute evidence through interviews or conversations. This is especially important for children who come from homes where English is not the primary language or students with disabilities served by an itinerant teacher. Interviewing others who speak the child's native language will provide additional evidence that may not be available in another way.
- Prepare materials (e.g., sticky notes, note cards, manipulatives, recording forms, digital cameras, audio or video recorders) to enable quick and easy note-taking while interacting with or observing the children.
- Create a plan to organize and store the documentation collected for each child (e.g., child folders, portfolios). You may choose to use the recording forms provided or another system that you prefer.

☐ OBSERVE AND COLLECT

Observing on a regular basis, taking objective and accurate notes, and incorporating multiple sources of information are critical practices for accurately rating children on the SKBs of each Learning Progression.

- Whenever possible, look for authentic opportunities to observe children during their daily routines.
- You may also consider ways to create opportunities that allow children to participate in activities and interactions that will allow you to directly observe the SKBs.
- Use a variety of documentation methods. In addition to the traditional observations, interviews, and child work typically collected, visual documentation can be collected using digital and video cameras,

smartphones, and audio recorders (parent/guardian permission may be required).
- Observe often, so that children become accustomed to being observed and to seeing that notes are being recorded. Interview family members, and collaborate with other teachers and school/program personnel, to gain a more complete picture of each child's development.
- Collect and retain examples and evidence of children's work (e.g., drawings, writings, artwork, photos, video or audio recordings; parent/guardian permission may be required).
- Take notes that describe exactly what children do or say in sequence, rather than what you assumed that they did, intended to do, or meant to say. Avoid using words and phrases that are judgmental or interpretive.
- Record your observations as soon as possible to ensure that important details are documented. Date all notes to assist with accurate recording of information in the sequence in which the information is observed.
- Observe children over time and in as many different settings as possible (e.g., in the classroom, on the playground, at drop-off or pick-up times) to ensure variety and consistency. Remember that it is possible to gather evidence for multiple children at the same time. It is also possible to gather evidence for several SKBs at one time.

☐ ORGANIZE AND REVIEW

Establishing a regular time for organizing documentation and evidence is critical. Reviewing and verifying information regularly is necessary to ensure that there is sufficient evidence to determine a child's developmental level.

- Consider using folders or portfolios to organize and store documentation and evidence.
- Maintain confidentiality of the information recorded for each child.
- Review documentation on a regular basis. Check for SKBs that have not been observed for each child, and plan activities to fill in any gaps.
- Verify that information collected and documented is complete and accurate.

☐ REFLECT, RATE, AND RECORD

When it appears that sufficient evidence has been collected to rate a child on a specific SKB, carefully follow the steps below to rate and record the child's progress.

- Review notes from all documentation (e.g., interviews/conversations with other teachers and members of the child's family; photographs; audio and/or video recordings; child work samples) to help you describe the child's performance on the SKB.

- Identify the description at each level within the SKB that is most consistent with the documentation and evidence collected.

- Rate the child at the level that describes the most typical behavior/performance supported by the documentation and evidence. Even though the child might have occasionally exhibited the behavior/performance of a lower or higher level, the child's rating should be based on the behavior or performance most often observed and documented. Remember that each child's development will vary across domains.

- Reflect on the rating and the information gathered in order to determine where additional instructional support or intervention may be needed for the child, and plan accordingly.

- Continue observations and collection of evidence and documentation toward the next developmental level.

If the documentation and evidence do not clearly support the determination of a level, continue to gather information and evidence until a rating can be determined. If it is clear from the documentation and evidence that the child has not yet consistently shown the behavior/performance of the earliest level description, enter a rating of "Not Yet Evident." At least one piece of evidence is required for each SKB rated. Evidence may include anecdotal notes, photos, videos, or audio recordings.

☐ ASSESSORS

In addition to classroom teachers, teaching assistants and related service providers who work regularly with a child can complete the required training and administer the assessment. Individuals who are part of a student's instructional team who have not completed the required training can still participate in the assessment process by gathering evidence for the test administrator who did complete the training. Only individuals who complete the required training can rate assessment evidence and determine a student's score.

☐ ALLOWABLE SUPPORTS FOR ADMINISTRATION

In order to be responsive to the specific developmental needs of the targeted age group for the Early Learning Assessment, children should have access to any supports that are typical of daily classroom practices.

☐ SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

The Early Learning Assessment materials, including this manual, are intended solely for use by authorized programs and their staff. These materials should be available only to teachers who work at authorized centers and who complete the required training.

The teacher must ensure the security of the materials before, during and after administration. It is unethical and shall be viewed as a violation of security for any person to:

- Distribute any part of the Early Learning Assessment materials to individuals outside of your program;

- Allow to be disclosed the content of any portion of the Early Learning Assessment to unauthorized programs; or

- Participate in or fail to report any violations of these security requirements.

It is permissible to photocopy the Early Learning Assessment materials *for your own use within your authorized program*. Should a teacher or administrator become separated from employment for any reason from the program, the Early Learning Assessment materials are the property of that program and must remain with the program.
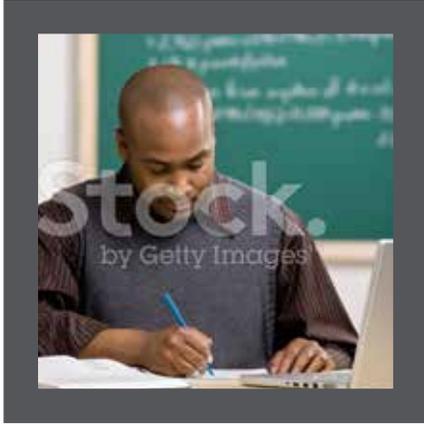
Early Learning Assessment

RECORDING FORMS

PLEASE NOTE

The sample forms found in this appendix have been provided to assist teachers in collecting and recording child information. These forms are not required to be used, but provide examples of ways teachers can record, collect and organize assessment information. A complete version of these forms for both the 10 required Learning Progressions and the full 32 Learning Progressions can be found at education.ohio.gov.

EARLY LEARNING ASSESSMENT
TEACHER SCORE SHEET

10 REQUIRED LEARNING PROGRESSIONS

TEACHER NAME: _____

CLASS: _____

DATE RANGE: _____

Student
Social Foundations
Awareness and Expression of Emotion
Emotion Identification
Response to Distressed Peer
Relationships with Adults
Separation from Familiar Adults
Seeking Emotional Support
Cooperation with Peers
Play/Work with Peers
Social Behaviors
Language and Literacy
Phonological Awareness
Rhyming Words
Syllables/Onsets and Rimes/Phonemes
Initial/Final/Medial Sounds
Adding/Deleting/ Substituting Sounds
Communication
Purposes and Situations
Vocabulary
Word Meanings
Word Relationships

Student										
Mathematics										
Number Sense										
Number Words										
Object Counting										
Number Concepts										
Subitizing										
Numeral Identification/Writing										
Physical Well Being and Motor Development										
Coordination – Small Motor										
Tool and Object Manipulation										
Writing Tool Grasp										
Safety & Injury Prevention										
Safe and Unsafe Behaviors										
Safety Rules										
Ways Adults Help Keep Children Safe										
Personal Care Tasks										
Personal Care and Basic Health										

EARLY LEARNING ASSESSMENT

10 REQUIRED LEARNING PROGRESSIONS

CHILD: _____

DATE RANGE: _____

Social Foundations

Strand: Social Emotional		Evidence:
Awareness and Expression of Emotion	Emotion Identification	
	Response to Distressed Peer	
Relationships with Adults	Separation from Familiar Adults	
	Seeking Emotional Support	

Strand: Approaches Toward Learning		Evidence:
Cooperation with Peers	Play/Work with Peers	
	Social Behaviors	

Language and Literacy

Strand: Reading		Evidence:
Phonological Awareness	Rhyming Words	
	Syllables/Onsets/Rimes Phonemes	
	Initial/Final/Medial Sounds	
	Adding/Deleting/ Substituting Sounds	

Strand: Speaking & Listening		Evidence:
Communication	Purposes and Situations	

Strand: Language		Evidence:
Vocabulary	Word Meanings	
	Word Relationships	

FIND FULL SET AT EDUCATION.OHIO.GOV

Mathematics

Strand: Counting & Cardinality		Evidence:
Number Sense	Number Words	
	Object Counting	
	Number Concepts	
	Subitizing	
	Numeral Identification/ Writing	

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

Strand: Physical Education		Evidence:
Coordination – Small Motor	Tool/Object Manipulation	
	Writing Tool Grasp	

Strand: Health		Evidence:
Safety and Injury Prevention	Safe and Unsafe Behaviors	
	Safety Rules	
	Ways Adults Help Keep Children Safe	
Personal Care Tasks	Personal Care and Basic Health	

MATHEMATICS: NUMBER SENSE LEARNING PROGRESSION

Object Counting	Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D
	Responds to vocalizations, sounds, or gestures.			Demonstrates understanding that "one" refers to a single object.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Counts two objects using one-to-one correspondence.	Counts five objects using one-to-one correspondence.	Counts 10 objects using one-to-one correspondence.	Counts 15 objects using one-to-one correspondence.	Counts 20 objects using one-to-one correspondence.

Level	Student's Name	Date	Evidence