

PreK Policy Brief #2

“Assessment”

May 2006

New Mexico

pre

Invest A Little

Get A Lot





State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

May 1, 2006

FROM: Secretary Veronica C. García and Interim Secretary Dorian Dodson

SUBJECT: PreK Assessment Task Force Final Report

In the Fall of 2005, a Task Force of early childhood education experts was convened to research and make recommendations regarding assessment within the New Mexico PreK Program. Based upon an extensive literature review and considerable deliberation, attached is the PreK Assessment Task Force's Final Report. We offer this as a step forward in our quest to close the achievement gap and assure that all children succeed in school.

The work to prepare this report was contracted through the New Mexico PreK Initiative, which is being implemented by the state Children, Youth & Families Department and the Public Education Department. We express thanks and appreciation to the PreK staff within both departments as well as the members of the Task Force for their hard work in producing the report.

The Assessment Task Force's Final Report builds upon the extensive early childhood work already accomplished in New Mexico. It also helps to further align the state early care and education systems. This report begins with an Executive Summary followed by a description of the work done by the Task Force. The final section outlines the recommendations of the Task Force, which include:

1. Child Assessment. Criteria-referenced portfolio documentation should be used for every child in every New Mexico PreK program. Use of the New Mexico PreK Focused Portfolio is strongly recommended. The documentation and assessment tool must look at child growth and development in all major domains. It is used to inform purposeful practice in the PreK classroom, as a measure of each child's progress in meeting New Mexico Early Learning Outcomes, to communicate this progress to families and will be shared with the kindergarten teacher as each child enters kindergarten.
2. Program Assessment. Program evaluation should continue to be conducted by the CYFD and PED State Program Managers to ensure that programs are meeting the goals in the PreK proposals.
3. Statewide Assessment. The State has contracted with a nationally recognized leader in the field, the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER), to assess the New Mexico PreK initiative as a whole using a package of norm-referenced assessments. Their results should be used for state-wide program evaluation by establishing baseline data from which the success of the New Mexico PreK initiative can be measured.

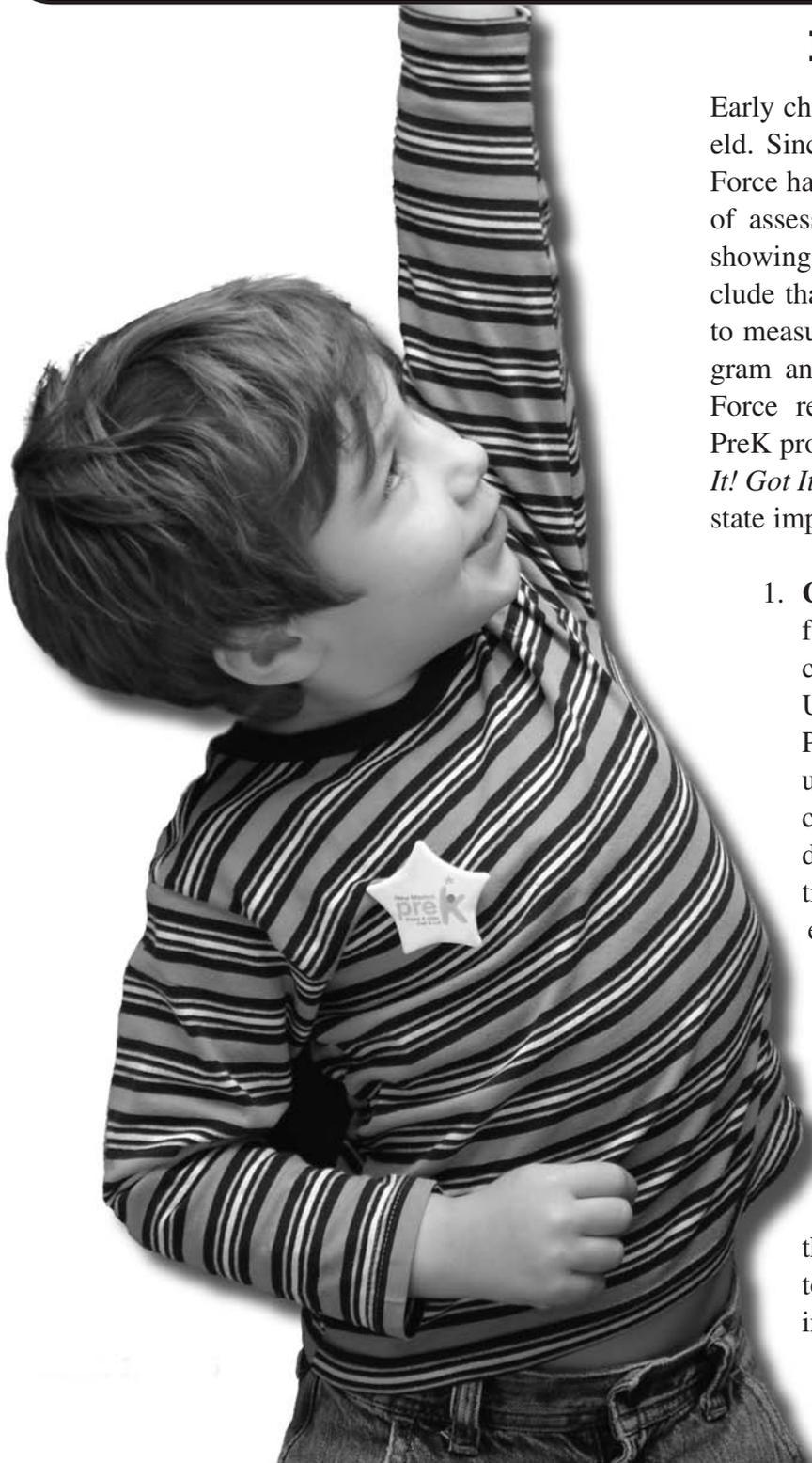
We are pleased to endorse these recommendations and look forward to working with families and early childhood professionals from throughout New Mexico as implementation moves forward. For more information, please contact Richard LaPan at (505) 827-6561 or Judy Paiz at (505) 827-7689.

PreK Assessment Task Force Final Report

Executive Summary

Early childhood assessment is a complex, growing field. Since August 2005, the PreK Assessment Task Force has reviewed best practices, analyzed a variety of assessment instruments and completed a matrix showing their key features. This led the group to conclude that no single assessment would be sufficient to measure success at the level of the child, the program and the State as a whole. As such, the Task Force recommends that statefunded New Mexico PreK programs not be required to continue using *Get It! Got It! Go!* in the second contract year and that the state implement the following assessment array:

1. **CHILD ASSESSMENT.** Criteria-referenced portfolio documentation should be used for every child in every New Mexico PreK program. Use of the New Mexico PreK Focused Portfolio is strongly recommended. The documentation and assessment tool must look at child growth and development in all major domains. It is used to inform purposeful practice in the PreK classroom, as a measure of each child's progress in meeting New Mexico Early Learning Outcomes* to communicate this progress to families and will be shared with the kindergarten teacher as each child enters kindergarten.
2. **PROGRAM ASSESSMENT.** Program evaluation should continue to be conducted by the CYFD and PED State Program Managers to ensure that programs are meeting the goals in the PreK proposals.



3. **STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT.** The State has contracted with a nationally recognized leader in the field, the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER), to assess the New Mexico PreK initiative as a whole. Their results should be used for statewide program evaluation by establishing baseline data (available fall 2006) from which the success of the New Mexico PreK initiative can be measured.

NIEER is using a package of norm-referenced assessments and will use sampling techniques that take into account the diversity of New Mexico's population. These measures will be capable of informing legislators and other policy leaders about the effectiveness of the statewide PreK Program.

The measures captured by these assessments are listed in the table below.

PREK ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION MEASURES

Focus of Measure	Instruments	Areas Measured	Administered By	Frequency	Results Available
Program Quality	Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale		Program as self-assessment & NIEER	Annually	During first semester of program & October 2006
	Support for Early Literacy Assessment		NIEER	Sampled annually	October 2006
	Preschool Classroom Mathematics Inventory		NIEER	Sampled annually	October 2006
Child Outcomes	<i>Norm-referenced</i>		NIEER	Sampled annually	
	Peabody	Early vocabulary	Local evaluators trained by NIEER	Sampled annually	October 2006
	Pre-CTOPPP	Early literacy	Local evaluators trained by NIEER	Sampled annually	October 2006
	Woodcock-Johnson	Early math	Local evaluators trained by NIEER	Sampled annually	October 2006
	Social Skills Rating System		Classroom teacher	Sampled annually	October 2006
	<i>Criterion-referenced To early learning outcomes</i>		Trained classroom observers	Twice annually Fall and spring of each program year	Portfolio of spring admin. goes to kindergarten teacher
	NM Focused Observation Portfolio System	Health and well-being	Trained classroom observers	42-item checklist completed three times annually Portfolio completed and shared with parents twice a year	Entered in PreK database end of each program semester
		Literacy			
		Numeracy			
		Aesthetic/creativity			
Scientific conceptual understandings					
Self, family and community					
Approaches toward learning					
Contract Compliance		Elements in scope of work and program standards	PED and CYFD program staff	Annually	End of program year
Fiscal Compliance		Appropriate billing	PED and CYFD program staff	Monthly and quarterly	On-going

Background

State-funded New Mexico PreK began last year, as the result of legislation passed in the 2005 session and signed into law by Governor Richardson. Assessment is a critical aspect of the initiative. According to the statute, “The departments [CYFD and PED] shall monitor pre-kindergarten contracts to ensure the effectiveness of child-centered, developmentally appropriate practices and outcomes. The departments shall assign staff to work on the development and implementation of the program and on the monitoring of contract awards.” (32A-23-4. C. NMSA 1978)

Implementation took place within an extremely short time frame and the decision was made to use *Get It, Got It, Go!* to fulfill the immediate need for assessment. In recognition of the need for a more thorough review and selection of appropriate assessments, Lieutenant Governor Diane Denish (based on recommendations from the Secretaries of CYFD and PED) appointed a task force to accomplish these tasks. The responsibilities of this group are detailed in the adjacent charge document. The Task Force included Sophie Bertrand, Gloria Clark, Emily Darnell-Nuñez, Karl Garcia, Julia Rosa Lopez-Emslie, Jolene Maes, Baji Rankin, Nancy Thomas, Heather Vaughn and Robin Wells. The group was staffed by CYFD and PED and met once a month from August 2005 through February 2006:

- Aug. 26, 2005 (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)
- Sept. 20, 2005 (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)
- Oct. 20, 2005 (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)
- Nov. 17, 2005 (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)
- Dec. 16, 2005 (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)
- Jan. 23, 2006 (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)
- Feb. 23, 2006 (10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.)

CHARGE TO PREK ASSESSMENT TASK FORCE

BACKGROUND

Ethical, appropriate, valid and reliable assessment is one part of New Mexico's PreK program. Often people think of assessment as formal testing only, but assessment has many components and many purposes. Assessment methods include observation, documentation of children's work, checklists and rating scales, and portfolios, as well as norm-referenced tests. Assessments are used within the context of communications with families and with recognition of the cultural contexts in which children develop.

CHARGE

The PreK Assessment Task Force is charged to:

1. Review and consider the strengths and weaknesses of early childhood assessments that can inform developmentally appropriate activities (e.g., play-based learning, a discover-oriented program, and guided experience), and provide ongoing systematic, formal and informal information about children's learning and development.
2. Work with and consider recommendations from the team selected to conduct the statewide PreK evaluation.
3. Recommend a single assessment that can be used at every PreK site in New Mexico and can be tied to the New Mexico Early Childhood Learning Outcomes and the Program Standards. The assessment must include applications in languages other than English and must be scientifically based and independently validated.
4. Recommend three to five assessments that are most appropriate for voluntary use as part of the New Mexico PreK program. Programs would be asked to use one of these supplemental assessments.
5. Recommend guidelines so that each New Mexico PreK site will use assessments to review young children's strengths, progress, and needs, use assessment methods that are developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, supported by professional development, inclusive of families, and connected to: (1) making sound decisions about teaching and learning, (2) identifying significant information that may require focused intervention for individual children, and (3) helping programs improve their educational and developmental interventions, provide a smooth transition to Kindergarten and prepare children for success in school.
6. Specify recommended strategies for state collection and reporting.
7. Provide any additional information that the task force finds useful in considering PreK assessment.

PREK ASSESSMENT TASK FORCE MEMBERS

- **SOPHIE BERTRAND**, Program Manager, PreSchool Network, Center for Development & Disabilities, University of New Mexico
- **GLORIA CLARK**, Early Childhood, UNM-Gallup
- **EMILY DARNELL-NUÑEZ**, Statewide Coordinator, SPARK, a project of the NM Community Foundation
- **KARL GARCIA**, Educational Coordinator, YDI Head Start
- **JULIA ROSE LOPEZ-EMSLIE**, President-Elect, New Mexico Association of Bilingual Education
- **JOLENE MAES**, Member, NM Child Development Board; Past Division Director, CYFD; Former Child Development Center Director
- **BAJI RANKIN, ED.D.**, Executive Director, NM Association for the Education of Young Children
- **NANCY THOMAS**, Director, A Child's Garden Preschool
- **HEATHER VAUGHN**, District Early Childhood Coordinator, Albuquerque Public Schools, Montgomery Complex
- **ROBIN WELLS, PH.D.**, Faculty, Eastern New Mexico University

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR STAFF: Kurt Steinhaus, Ph.D.

DEPARTMENT STAFF: Dan Harris (CYFD) and Richard LaPan (PED), Co-Facilitators; Dan Haggard (CYFD); Judy Paiz (CYFD)

Process-Description of the Work of the Task Force

According to the New Mexico PreK Early Childhood Program Standards*, “Assessment of individual development and learning is necessary for planning and implementing curriculum. Yet accurate assessment of young children is challenging because their development and learning are rapid, uneven, and embedded within specific cultural and linguistic contexts (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Assessment of young children relies heavily on the results of observations, descriptive data, collection of work by children, and demonstrated performance over time (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE, 1992).” These statements capture the philosophical approach of the Task Force and embody concepts that came up regularly in the group’s deliberations. The task force also supported the use of assessment in the context of developmentally appropriate activities embedded in a child’s daily routines.

The Task Force spent several months conducting a thorough, systematic review of existing materials. Assessments were analyzed by sub-groups and then discussed and evaluated by Task Force as a whole. The results of this work are captured in a matrix, included at the end of this report.

In the course of its meetings, the Task Force had lengthy discussions on culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment that would meet the needs of all children including children with disabilities. This consideration was explicitly



reflected in the review of each assessment and is shown in the matrix.

The group also consistently expressed concern about multiple, pervasive assessments. Many early childhood programs have different assessment requirements from various funding sources and oversight authorities. A program administering six different assessments, for example, might have difficulty finding the time to administer another assessment. These concerns were taken into account and factored into the group’s recommendations.

The Task Force consulted with a variety of experts and key stake-

holders as work progressed. Representatives of the group reported to the New Mexico Child Development Board, Legislative Finance Committee staff, Legislative Education Study Committeestaff, the Office of Educational Accountability and the Cabinet Secretaries of CYFD and PED to inform them of the status of the group’s work. The Task Force heard presentations by (and had long discussions with) Dr. Cindy Lamy of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), a nationally-recognized leader in early childhood assessment, and Gaye Gronlund, an expert on criteria-referenced portfolio documentation.

Recommendations

In addition to the recommendations outlined in the Executive Summary, the Task Force also urges the State to pursue the following:

1. Ensuring the provision of ongoing professional development and technical assistance (including program support) for state-funded New Mexico PreK programs on the use of assessments and the interpretation of their results (to inform instruction/curriculum).
2. Reporting to policy-makers and to the public.
3. Carefully considering the difference between appropriate and inappropriate assessments and the appropriate and inappropriate use of assessments. The Task Force feels strongly that successes should be evaluated and reported by program characteristics, but not program-by-program. The group is supportive of the NIEER approach, using sampling and focusing on statewide evaluation.
4. Reconvening the Task Force in October or November 2006, once NIEER's results for New Mexico and the national study are available.
5. Expanding the Task Force to include other experts and continuing to work to provide guidance regarding linking assessment and curriculum.

REFERENCES

- BREDEKAMP, S., & ROSENGRANT, T., EDITORS (1992).** *Reaching Potentials: Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment for Young Children.* Vol. 1. Washington, DC: NAEYC.
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- KORALEK, D., EDITOR (2004).** *Spotlight on Young Children and Assessment.* Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- HORTON, C., & BOWMAN, BARBARA T. (2001).** *Child Assessment at the Preprimary Level: Expert Opinion and State Trends. Executive Summary.* Chicago, IL: Erikson Institute.
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- MCAFEE, O., LEONG, D., BODROVA, E. (2004).** *Basics of Assessment: A Primer for Early Childhood Professionals.* Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- NAEYC & NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIALISTS IN STATE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION (2003).** *Joint Position Statement. Early Childhood Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation: Building an Effective, Accountable System in Programs for Children Birth through Age 8.*

ASSESSMENT TOOL MATRIX

How is the assessment used?

Name of Tool	Instructional Planning and/or Program Assessment	Educational Guidance	Age Range
Get It, Got It, Go!	■		3-5
Focused Portfolio	■	■	B-6
Assessment Evaluation Programming System	■	■	B-6
Brigance Inventory of Early Development	■	■	B-6
Creative Curriculum	■	■	3-5
Learning Accomplishment Profile 3	■	■	3-6
Work Sampling System	■	■	3-6
Standards Alignment	■	■	4-5
Portage Child Development Tool for Observation and Planning	■	■	B-6
Child Observation Record	■	■	2.5-6
Core Knowledge		(not enough information)	
Class Circle		(not enough information)	
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening		(not enough information)	
Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy	literacy only	■	3-5
Qualls Early Learning Inventory			4+
Early Screening Inventory - Revised (Screening for WSS)			3-4.5
Early Learning Outcomes Observation Tool	■	■	4-5
C-PALLS: Circle Phonological Awareness, Lang. & Lit. Sys.		■	5-Apr

How is the assessment administered?

Name of Tool	Parent	Teacher	Trained Teacher	Professional/Paraprofessional	Checklist	Rating Scale	Observation	Interview	Work Sample	Oral Presentation	Visual/Written Presentation
Get It, Got It, Go!			■							■	■
Focused Portfolio			■	■			■		■		
Assessment Evaluation Programming System			■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■
Brigance Inventory of Early Development		■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■
Creative Curriculum		■	■		■		■		■	■	■
Learning Accomplishment Profile 3	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■		
Work Sampling System		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Standards Alignment		■	■	?	■	■	■	■	■		
Portage Child Development Tool for Observation and Planning		■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■
Child Observation Record		■	■		■		■		■	■	■
Core Knowledge											
Class Circle											
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening											
Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Qualls Early Learning Inventory		■	■	■		■	■				
Early Screening Inventory - Revised (Screening for WSS)			■	■		■	■	■		■	■
Early Learning Outcomes Observation Tool			■	■	■		■		■		
C-PALLS: Circle Phonological Awareness, Lang. & Lit. Sys.		■	■	■	■		■			■	■

How is the assessment administered? (continued)

Name of Tool	Examiner records response	Child responds in writing	Child responds verbally	Child responds non-verbally	Group administration	Individual administration	Other means to collect data	Consideration for disabilities	Consideration for non-English speaking	Spanish version available	Multi-cultural content
Get It, Got It, Go!	■		■			■					
Focused Portfolio	■	■	■	■		■		■	■	■	?
Assessment Evaluation Programming System	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■		
Brigance Inventory of Early Development	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
Creative Curriculum	■	■	■	■	■	■		?	?	■	?
Learning Accomplishment Profile 3	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	
Work Sampling System	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	
Standards Alignment	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
Portage Child Development Tool for Observation and Planning	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
Child Observation Record	■	■	■	■	■	■		■		?	?
Core Knowledge											
Class Circle											
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening											
Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy	■	■	■	■	■	■					■
Qualls Early Learning Inventory	■	■	■	■		■		■	■	?	
Early Screening Inventory - Revised (Screening for WSS)	■	■	■	■		■			■		
Early Learning Outcomes Observation Tool	■					■		■			?
C-PALLS: Circle Phonological Awareness, Lang. & Lit. Sys.	■		■	■		■	PDA		■	■	

What does the instrument assess? (Early Learning Outcomes)

Name of Tool	Health & well-being	Literacy	Numeracy	Aesthetic/creativity	Scientific conceptual understanding	Self, family, community	Approaches toward learning
Get It, Got It, Go!							
Focused Portfolio		■	■		■	■	■
Assessment Evaluation Programming System		■	■			■	■
Brigance Inventory of Early Development		■	■			■	■
Creative Curriculum		■	■	■	■	■	■
Learning Accomplishment Profile 3		■	■	■	■	■	
Work Sampling System		■	■	■	■	■	■
Standards Alignment		■	■	■	■	■	■
Portage Child Development Tool for Observation and Planning		■	■	■	■	■	■
Child Observation Record	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Core Knowledge							
Class Circle							
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening							
Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy		■					■
Qualls Early Learning Inventory		■	■				
Early Screening Inventory - Revised (Screening for WSS)							
Early Learning Outcomes Observation Tool	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
C-PALLS: Circle Phonological Awareness, Lang. & Lit. Sys.		■					

Which elements of language and literacy does the assessment measure?

Name of Tool	Speaking	Emergent Reading	Emergent Writing	Listening	Alliteration	Initial Sounds	Segmentation	Rhyming
Get It, Got It, Go!	■				■			
Focused Portfolio	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Assessment Evaluation Programming System	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Brigance Inventory of Early Development	■	■	■	■				
Creative Curriculum	■	■	■	■	■	■	?	
Learning Accomplishment Profile 3	■	■	■	■	■	■	?	
Work Sampling System	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Standards Alignment	■	■	■	■	■	■	?	
Portage Child Development Tool for Observation and Planning	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Child Observation Record	■	■	■	■	■	■	?	
Core Knowledge								
Class Circle								
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening								
Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Qualls Early Learning Inventory	■	■	■	■				
Early Screening Inventory - Revised (Screening for WSS)	■			■				
Early Learning Outcomes Observation Tool	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
C-PALLS: Circle Phonological Awareness, Lang. & Lit. Sys.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Other elements of the assessment

Name of Tool	Norm referenced	Criterion referenced	Dynamic assessment	Standardized information	Reliability data	Validity data	Cost of materials	Cost of training
Get It, Got It, Go!				■			minimal	?
Focused Portfolio		■	■		■	■	minimal	moderate
Assessment Evaluation Programming System		■	■		■	■	minimal	minimal
Brigance Inventory of Early Development	■	■	■	■		■	minimal	minimal
Creative Curriculum		■	■		■	■	minimal	moderate
Learning Accomplishment Profile 3		■	■		■	■	500-4500	free?
Work Sampling System		■	■	■	■	■	negotiable	
Standards Alignment	●		■	■			150	moderate
Portage Child Development Tool for Observation and Planning			■				minimal	minimal
Child Observation Record		■	■		■	■	125	significant
Core Knowledge								
Class Circle								
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening								
Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy	■		■	?	?	?	50	minimal
Qualls Early Learning Inventory	?	?	?	?	?	?	minimal	minimal
Early Screening Inventory - Revised (Screening for WSS)	■			■	■	■	?	?
Early Learning Outcomes Observation Tool		■	■		?	■	minimal	moderate
C-PALLS: Circle Phonological Awareness, Lang. & Lit. Sys.		■			?	?	moderate	moderate

● *unique to the population*