

Kindergarten Teacher's Guide

Hawaii State School Readiness Assessments (HSSRA) ***Children Ready for School***

An assessment of key skills and characteristics of
entering kindergarten children

- ◆ Valid results depend on **completing your classroom observations prior** to doing the on-line HSSRA assessment.
- ◆ Please **read this *Guide* prior** to doing the on-line HSSRA *Children Ready for School* assessment.

Due Date: submit on-line (www.hssra.org) by **September 7, 2010.**

“Young children are ready to have successful learning experiences in school when there is a positive interaction among the child’s developmental characteristics, school practices, and family and community support.”

Readiness definition adopted by
the State of Hawaii

How to Complete the HSSRA *Children Ready for School*

You can complete *Children Ready for School* assessment in approximately **15 minutes** if you do some “homework” prior to going on-line. This is what you should have at your fingertips to order to respond accurately to the assessment.

I. Information

A. About you

- ◆ Do you have an Early Childhood Endorsement certificate?

The certificate means that you took extra courses in early childhood education/child development to earn credits beyond those needed for a degree in elementary education.

B. About your school

- ◆ Does the school have a written Transition Plan for kindergarten? Have you read it?
- ◆ Do you know what your responsibilities are in the Transition Plan? Is the plan fully implemented?

C. About your classroom

- ◆ Does your class have: all younger K children (Jr K), all older K children (K), or mixed ages (Mixed)?
- ◆ How many K males?
- ◆ How many K females?
- ◆ How many English Language Learner K children?
- ◆ How many SPED K children?
- ◆ How many K children attended preschool?
- ◆ Are you a team teacher in a K/SPED inclusion class?

If a child attended preschool before kindergarten, count that child as having attended preschool.

II. Direct Observation of Kindergarten Children

A. Observe your children

Accurate and valid results depend on strong observation skills. Observe your kindergarten children during the first three or so

weeks of school. Observe their behavior during regular on-going classroom activities throughout the school day. See *Top 10 Signs of a Good Kindergarten* on page 5.

B. Know what to observe

Accurate and valid results depend on knowing what to look for when you observe. Become familiar with the assessment items and the rating scale described below.

III. Read and Understand the Assessment Items

The 24 items are listed below. Please read them before you begin your observations and before you go on-line to do the assessment. Be clear about what they mean and what to observe.

Proportion of your class that . . .

1. Comes to school well-rested, fed, and alert.
2. Practices personal hygiene such as washes hands after toilet and before eating.
3. Is independent in caring for self and own belongings.
4. Needs minimal support to adjust to new people and new places.
5. Works and plays well with others.
6. Shows satisfaction in accomplishments.
7. Expresses emotions through appropriate actions and words.
8. Is respectful of others.
9. Is able to listen for about 15 minutes to group discussions & stories read aloud.
10. Is able to follow classroom routines
11. Shows eagerness to learn by observing, asking questions and/or exploring new things.
12. Tries hard and persists.
13. Appears interested in the world around him or her (curious).
14. Communicates ideas and describes things using phrases and sentences.
15. Shows familiarity with how books work (e.g., holds book right side up, turns pages front to back, etc.).

16. Shows interest in books and print (e.g., chooses to look at books; asks to be read to, etc.)
17. Knows names & sounds (more than 3) of some letters.
18. Uses symbols, scribbles or letter-like forms to “write” words or ideas.
19. Can count a *set* of 5 objects.
20. Is able to sort and classify objects.
21. Knows names of some (more than 3) numerals (e.g., “2” is called “two”).
22. Recognizes and can duplicate simple patterns.
23. Shows large muscle control (e.g., can walk without stumbling, jumps, hops, etc.)
24. Show small muscle control (e.g., use of pencils and other school tools.)

IV. Know the Survey Rating Scale

The 5 point rating scale deals with the class-as-a-whole. After observing your class, estimate the proportion of your class who has **consistently displayed** the skill or characteristic described in the items. What proportion of the total number of children has **almost always** shown the characteristic or skill?

- 1 = almost **none** of the class
- 2 = about **one fourth** of the class.
- 3 = about **one half** of the class
- 4 = about **three fourths** of the class
- 5 = **almost all** of the class

An example - - if you have a total of 20 children in your class, 18 of them consistently show familiarity with how a book works, you would select a 5 – Almost all.

You would select **Not Observed** if the classroom curriculum and activities did not provide situations for the children to show the skill or characteristic.

V. Use of the Survey Results

Print your responses to the on-line assessment **prior** to exiting the on-line survey.

Data on your print-out may be used to:

A. Plan Curriculum and Instruction

Use your classroom results on the print-out to focus and plan your classroom practices for the next month or so – until you get to know each child well.

For example, if almost none (1) of the kindergarten children are able to sit still and listen to a story for 15 minutes, you may want to modify your literacy curriculum. You could start with short, interactive picture books and gradually extend their listening time.

If almost none (1) of the children are able to follow classroom routines, you may want to focus almost exclusively on setting up a consistent, reliable daily routine. Explicitly and clearly reinforce that routine each and every day for the next month. Some “extra hands” in the classroom may help with establishing the daily routine. Use the assessment data to ask for assistance - - such as having your PCNC help you recruit parent and community volunteers. Consider contacting Retired Teachers Association.

Classroom Profile

Share your print-out during Kindergarten Grade Level meetings. Compare your entering kindergarten children’s results with the results of the other kindergarten classrooms. What do you have in common? How are your classroom profiles different? What do the similarities and differences mean in terms of curriculum alignment within your grade level? How can the Primary School Adjustment Program help? How can the counselor, ESL, school psychologist provide assistance?

Domain Profile

Group your item responses into the 5 domains listed below:

Five Domains and Their Item Numbers

- ◆ Approaches to Learning
Items 11,12,13,16
- ◆ Social-Emotional Behaviors
Items 4, 5, 6, 7
- ◆ Physical Well-Being
Items 1, 2, 23, 24
- ◆ School Behavior and Skills
Items 3, 8, 9, 10
- ◆ Academic
Literacy Items 14, 15, 17, 18
Math Items 19, 20, 21, 22

Create a bar graph of the items within each domain to give you a clear picture of your total classroom profile.

An example of a bar graph for the domain “Approaches to Learning” is on page 6.

What domains are strong (i.e., about $\frac{3}{4}$ or more of the class consistently displays the skill or characteristic – 4s & 5s)? Which are the weakest (i.e., almost none or $\frac{1}{4}$ of the class consistently displays the characteristic or skill – 1s or 2s)? Which should you focus your resources and energy on? See **Resources** listed at the end of this document.

B. Track Children’s Readiness Improvement Over Time

The *Children Ready for School* assessment data are summarized using the mean or average score of the items in each domain for school, complex and state reports. These reports show trend results across three years: SY 2008-09, SY 2009-10 and now this year, SY 2010-11.

The HSSRA reports are posted in the fall on Accountability Resource Center Hawaii at: <http://arch.k12.hi.us>

Policy makers and funders of early childhood initiatives look at these data over time: Did the infusion of effort, resources, and funds make a difference in how well our youngest school children are educated?

Resources

Have a Question? Contact:

Good Beginnings Alliance for technical assistance and survey use, call (808) 531-5502 or email dtom@goodbeginnings.org

Student Support Section, Diane Young, for program assistance at (808) 832-3303 or email on Lotus Notes.

System Evaluation and Reporting Section, for survey assistance call (808) 733-4008 or email Cynthia Mew on Lotus Notes.

Other Resources:

- ◆ *Question and Answer Guide to HSSRA* at <http://arch.k12.hi.us>

- ◆ *Leading Early Childhood Learning Communities: What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do* (2005). National Association of Elementary School Principals. Contact www.naesp.org

- ◆ *Steps to Kindergarten Transition: A Guide to a Successful Transition to Kindergarten* (2004). Hawaii School Readiness Task Force, published by Good Beginnings Alliance at <http://www.goodbeginnings.org/index.php/site/Transitions>

- ◆ *Are Younger Children Less Capable? Age and Third Grade Achievement in Hawaii* (2006) Hawaii Educational Policy Center, UH-Manoa. Go to www.hawaii.edu/hepc

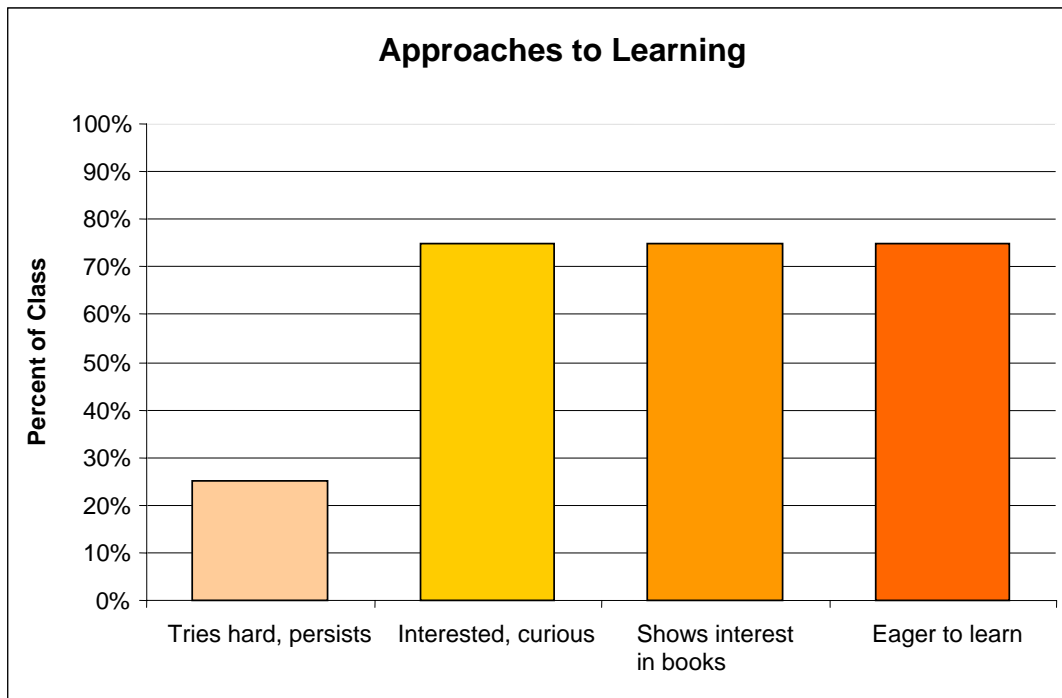
Top 10 Signs of a Good Kindergarten Classroom

Kindergarten is a time for children to expand their love of learning, their general knowledge, their ability to get along with others, and their interest in reaching out to the world. While Kindergarten marks an important transition from preschool to the primary grades, it is important that children still get to be children—getting kindergarteners ready for elementary school does not mean substituting academics for play time, forcing children to master first grade “skills,” or relying on standardized tests to assess children’s success. Kindergarten “curriculum” actually includes such events as snack time, recess, and individual and group activities in addition to those activities we think of as traditionally educational. Developmentally appropriate kindergarten classrooms encourage the growth of children’s self-esteem, their cultural identities, their independence and their individual strengths. Kindergarten children will continue to develop control of their own behavior through the guidance and support of warm, caring adults. At this stage, children are already eager to learn and possess an innate curiosity. Teachers with a strong background in early childhood education and child development can best provide for children what they need to grow physically, emotionally, and intellectually. Here are 10 signs of a good kindergarten classroom:

- 1 Children are playing and working with materials or other children. They are not aimlessly wandering or forced to sit quietly for long periods of time.
- 2 Children have access to various activities throughout the day, such as block building, pretend play, picture books, paints and other art materials, and table toys such as legos, pegboards, and puzzles. Children are not all doing the same things at the same time.
- 3 Teachers work with individual children, small groups, and the whole group at different times during the day. They do not spend time only with the entire group.
- 4 The classroom is decorated with children’s original artwork, their own writing with invented spelling, and dictated stories.
- 5 Children learn numbers and the alphabet in the context of their everyday experiences. Exploring the natural world of plants and animals, cooking, taking attendance, and serving snack are all meaningful activities to children.
- 6 Children work on projects and have long periods of time (at least one hour) to play and explore. Filling out worksheets should not be their primary activity.
- 7 Children have an opportunity to play outside every day that weather permits. This play is never sacrificed for more instructional time.
- 8 Teachers read books to children throughout the day, not just at group story time. Curriculum is adapted for those who are ahead as well as those who need additional help.
- 9 Because children differ in experiences and background, they do not learn the same things at the same time in the same way.
- 10 Children and their parents look forward to school. Parents feel safe sending their child to kindergarten. Children are happy; they are not crying or regularly sick.

Individual kindergarten classrooms will vary, and curriculum will vary according to the interests and backgrounds of the children. But all developmentally appropriate kindergarten classrooms will have one thing in common: the focus will be on the development of the child as a whole.

Sample Bar Graph of a Classroom Profile: Approaches to Learning Domain



- About 75% of the class consistently show interest and curiosity, are eager to learn, and show interest in books. Only 25% stick to and complete a task or activity.
- What shall the K teacher do to sustain curiosity, interest and eagerness to learn while promoting persistence? See Resources – especially NAEYC book on *Developmentally Appropriate Practices* and *K Today: Teaching and Learning in the Kindergarten Year* for suggestions.