

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Introduction

### What is the Early Learning Assessment?

Ohio's Early Learning Assessment (ELA) is a tool teachers use with preschool-age children. Teachers use the tool to determine the current level of each child's skills, knowledge and behaviors. The ELA is an ongoing formative assessment that gives teachers information to support the continuous growth of preschool-age children.

**The ELA is not a test.** Teachers **do not** remove children from the classroom to assess. Teachers use the tool to determine a child's current developmental level based on observation. Then, teachers use the information they collect to plan activities for the growth of each individual child.

### What is Formative Assessment?

Formative Assessment is a process. The first step of the process is to gather information. Then, the next step in the process is to reflect on information to plan activities that support quality learning and development. For more about formative assessment, see [ELA for Teachers](#).

### What is the purpose of the ELA?

The ELA promotes structure to help teachers' document, analyze and make instructional decisions. Teachers make instructional decisions based on the information they collect while observing children.

The ELA has multiple purposes, including:

- Monitoring the growth and development of preschool-age children
- Providing teachers with the information to individualize learning
- Reporting data for the Federal Requirements, including IDEA required Early Childhood Outcomes

### What is a Learning Progression?

A Learning Progression defines a series of skills, knowledge or behaviors for children 36 months to 72 months. This series of skills, knowledge or behaviors includes children who may be at earlier developmental levels than their peers. There are 32 Learning Progressions in the ELA.

### What are the benefits of the ELA?

The ELA has many benefits for children, teachers and policymakers.

For children, the ELA uncovers real learning and developmental experiences. Teachers who use the tool get concrete evidence to plan future instruction for their children. And, for policymakers, the ELA provides a common measure of children's learning aligned to the [Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards](#) (OELDS). OELDS is a state framework that support a child's learning growth from pre-k through kindergarten.

## What Ohio programs are required to use the ELA?

As of [fall 2016](#), only programs serving children funded by [Early Childhood Education](#) (ECE) or [Preschool Special Education](#) (PSE) are required to use the ELA. Programs must use the 10-Required Learning Progressions and report on funded children.

Right now, any [Step Up To Quality](#) (SUTQ) 3-5 star rated programs may attend training on the assessment. Programs may begin using the assessment following successful completion of the training.

Beginning fall 2017, [all programs that are participating in SUTQ](#) and are 3-5 star rated are required to use the assessment and report on the 10-Required Learning Progressions.

## How is the ELA implemented?

The assessment of young children is **ongoing**. The purpose of the ELA is to determine the current developmental level of children. As such, results are required to be reported at a minimum of twice per year during the assessment windows.

Assessment Windows	Time Frame	Assessment Requirements
Fall	Aug. 15 – Nov. 14	Required for reporting
Winter	Nov. 15 – Feb. 14	Ongoing for best practice
Spring	Feb. 15 – May 14	Required for reporting
Summer	May 15 – Aug. 14	Ongoing for best practice

## Should the results of the ELA be used as part of the teacher evaluation?

Child specific scores should not be tied to a teacher's performance evaluation. Rather, the focus should be on the *quality of the evidence* that the teacher has produced using the ELA.

## What are the similarities and differences between the ELA and the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)?

The ELA and [KRA](#) are part of Ohio's comprehensive assessment system addressing all essential elements of school readiness.

Both the ELA and KRA are directly aligned to the [Ohio Early Learning and Development Standards \(OELDS\)](#).

ELA	KRA
Serving Preschool-Age Children	Benefiting Kindergarten-Age Children
<b>Ongoing</b> throughout the Year	Administering Runs from the First Day of School through November 1
Evaluating is <b>Entirely Observational</b> using Learning Progressions as a Guide	Evaluating includes Performance Tasks/ Direct Response Items and Observational
Reporting Child Performance Results <b>Twice</b> per Year to the State	Reporting Child Performance Results <b>Once</b> to the State

# System and Technology

## What is the KReady System?

The [Ready for Kindergarten Online](#) system supports the administration of the ELA, including:

- Providing various ways to score students in the system
- Delivering dashboard access to student assessment results for immediate use by teachers
- Ensuring more than one teacher can be assigned to a student within the system to enter data on behalf of that child
- Working so that the last score for each assessment item entered at the close of the assessment window is what counts for reporting
- Making a variety of reports available within the system during and after the administration window

Teachers can learn more in the professional development section of their [KReady account](#). Professional Development includes: important grab-n-go resources, an overview of the online system with tutorials, guides, technology tips and tricks, and information about using the app. Teachers can find reports available through the administration window and use them to inform instruction.

## What is the role of the Data Manager (DM)?

A data manager is the individual who has access to teacher and student demographic information. It is this person's responsibility to add teachers, students, and enrollment data to the Ready for Kindergarten Online system. You have to be registered in the Ready for Kindergarten system as a data manager in order to enter or access any data.

**ODE Programs:** To get access, an individual must be selected by the school or district to serve in this capacity. Each participating program **must assign** the role "Assessment Data Manager-Preschool and Kindergarten" in the [Ohio Educational Directory System](#) (OEDS). It is up to the local organization to determine who will fulfill this role at the local level.

**ODJFS Programs:** To get Data Manager access:

- For 3-5 star SUTQ programs, Ohio Child Licensing and Quality System (OCLQS) will designate a Data Manager. Individuals who are assigned the role of owner or administrator in OCLQS will automatically be uploaded as a Data Manager into Ready for Kindergarten Online. It is important that all information, including a unique email address for each owner and administrator is current in OCLQS.
- For Unrated Programs and SUTQ 1-2 star rated programs, programs must complete a "Data Manager Request for the Early Learning Assessment – Ready for Kindergarten Online System" form (JFS 01162) found at [JFS Forms Central](#) and submit it to the email address listed on the form.

## What supports are there for the role of the Data Manager (DM)?

Data managers can learn more about their role and find resources to support them online. The [Ohio Data Managers ELA Guide](#) is a living document designed for Ohio Data Managers. You can find this guide along with many other important resources at the [ELA Administrators](#) site.

The Ohio K12 Help Desk provides support for the ELA. Go to <http://www.ohio-k12.help> or call 844-K12-OHIO (844-512-6446) to submit a ticket.

The Johns Hopkins University School of Education Center for Technology in Education hosts an electronic learning community for data managers. Go to the [Data Manager Site](#) for how-to presentations, guidelines and templates, webinars, common validation errors, and support information.

### How do I access the KReady System?

Teachers and administrators access the system at <http://ohio.kready.org/login>

- Data Managers will be notified when they have access.
- Data Managers can be trained on how to use the system immediately.
- Teachers will be able to access the system once they have an account from their Data Manager.
- Teachers in participating programs will be able to enter data into the system after they have been properly trained.

*Data Managers should sign up for data manager trainings and teachers should sign up for teacher trainings through the [Ohio Professional Registry](#) (OPR).*

### Is there a difference between the assessment window and the reporting window?

Yes. The *assessment window* is a period of time when teachers collect data. The *reporting window* is a period of time when programs enter the data into the EMIS or EAS reporting system.

Since assessment is ongoing and connected to the teaching and learning process, the state requires reporting assessment data twice each year – once in the fall and once in the spring.

We strongly recommended that teachers collect data throughout the year, even during winter and summer, for a fuller assessment of the child’s progress. There are four assessment windows. Two of these windows are also reporting windows.

Assessment Windows	Reporting Windows
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fall:</b> Aug. 15 – Nov. 14 (required for reporting)</li> <li>• <b>Winter:</b> Nov. 15 – Feb. 14 (ongoing for best practice)</li> <li>• <b>Spring:</b> Feb. 15 – May 14 (required for reporting)</li> <li>• <b>Summer:</b> May 15 – Aug.14 (ongoing for best practice)</li> </ul>	<p>The reporting windows are determined by the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and Enterprise Application System (EAS).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ELA Data Reporting Decision Tree</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">How to enter ELA scores into EAS</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">EMIS Data Collection Calendars</a></li> </ul>

# **Training**

## **Who in my program should attend the ELA training?**

*Before collecting evidence for the ELA, staff must attend and complete the ELA training.*

Keep in mind that the ELA is a process of collecting evidence through observation and documentation that allows the teacher to make scoring decisions on children's learning. This is **not** a performance-based assessment where children engage in a process of questions and answers.

Administrators may choose any of the following staff to attend the ELA training:

- Lead Teachers
- Assistant Teachers
- Classroom Aides
- Intervention Specialists

We highly recommended that Administrators attend the ELA training so they understand the ELA and how it relates to the education of young children.

## **How do teachers obtain a copy of the ELA?**

Most trainers will provide participants with a copy of the ELA.

There are two versions of the ELA.

- There is the Comprehensive version, which includes all *32- Learning Progressions*, a Teacher Guide, Student Observations and Sample Reporting Forms. There is an insert to the Comprehensive version called *Adaptations*, which is recommended for [Universal Design](#).
- There is also the 10-Required Learning Progressions version. The *10-Required Learning Progressions* version contains only the Learning Progressions that are required for reporting.

[Additional copies can be ordered online](#) for staff who have received the ELA training.

## **How does the ELA accommodate all children?**

The ELA is designed to accommodate all children through the [Universal Design for Learning Framework](#). In response, we have created Adaptations for each of the 10-Required Learning Progressions to assist teachers in administering the ELA for all children.

## **How will trainings for early learning professionals address the differences in education and experience levels?**

All ELA trainers are well versed in the assessment. Trainers meet the needs of all adult learners.

## ELA Resources

There are many support resources available to help users with understanding the Ready for Kindergarten (KReady) online system, reporting requirements, and trainings.

**Data Manager Resources:** The [Ohio Data Managers ELA Guide](#) is a living document to support Ohio Data Managers. You can find this guide along with many other important [ELA resources online](#).

The Johns Hopkins University School of Education Center for Technology in Education hosts an online learning community for data managers. Go to the [Data Manager Site](#) for how-to presentations, guidelines and templates, webinars, common validation errors, and support information.

The [Ohio K12 Help Desk](#) provides support for statewide K12 education programs, including the ELA. Go to [www.ohio-k12.help](http://www.ohio-k12.help) or call 844-K12-OHIO (844-512-6446) to submit a ticket for technical assistance.

**Reporting Resources:** The Bridge Document links the [paper and pencil administration](#) of the ELA and the online submission of data to EMIS and EAS. Programs will use the Bridge Document until KReady is fully operational.

The [Bridge Document is a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet](#) that is a transitional process for collecting and reporting scores. The spreadsheet is programmed to calculate the 10-Required Learning Progression scores that need to be reported to EMIS or EAS for those children funded by [ECE](#) or [PSE](#) dollars. For questions regarding reporting data for the ELA, consult the [Data Reporting Decision Tree](#).

[The Bridge Document](#) is designed to move teachers closer to submitting ELA data in an electronic format. The Bridge form empowers teachers to use this data to improve student-learning opportunities. For guidance on administering the ELA, see the [ELA Guide and Sample Reporting Forms](#). Sample forms are for programs that administer the ELA in a paper/pencil environment then move that data to the Bridge form to generate the 10-Learning Progression scores necessary for reporting. There are additional sample forms available on the [ELA for Teachers](#) website in Microsoft Word so that teachers may customize them as needed. Downloads are available in the grey Resource box on the right.

We want to support all programs administering the ELA. Here are several technical assistance resources:

- [Bridge - Quick Start Guide](#) – a one-page step-by-step
- [Bridge - Quick Start Video](#) – a short video demonstrating how teachers use this form
- [ELA Help Desk](#) – Visit Ohio K12 Help to access:
  - ELA Knowledge Base
  - ELA Resources
  - ELA News/Announcements
  - Request a Teacher Account
  - Request Support – If there is an easy fix, it will be sent to you by email. If the Help Desk needs to talk to you to resolve the issue, you will get a phone call.
- Finally, there are instances where individuals may not be able to make a scoreable decision from the evidence collected. In this case, it is important to remember to indicate an “N” for those particular items and chose the [appropriate reason code](#). Programs then need to be sure to have a communication plan in place to share the non-scoreable reason codes with those entering the data within the EAS or EMIS systems.

**Training Resources:** *Prior to initial use, teachers who will be making scoring decisions must successfully complete the required ELA training. The training is required for those teachers making scoring decisions and that others may collect evidence but only those trained staff can make scoring decisions.*

Teachers must complete the training that includes demonstrating reliability on a video simulator and passing a content knowledge test. *Administrators and other individuals (co-teachers, assistant teachers, itinerant teachers, etc.) are strongly encouraged to complete the training.*

The State Support Teams and the Resource and Referral Agencies will be offering the ELA trainings. The two-day new teacher training and one-day optional update training are currently being offered through the [Ohio Professional Registry](#) (OPR).

A general training on Formative Assessment is available and recommended **prior** to attending ELA training. The Formative Assessment training provides:

- an introduction to at the 10-Required Learning Progressions,
- the formative assessment process, and
- how teacher use the results of the instruction to plan and direct instruction.

These formative assessment modules are offered through the State Support Teams and Resource and Referral Agencies. There are three modules available:

- *Overview:* This is an introduction to formative assessment. This includes formative assessment purposes and how to use it to enhance early learning. The overview module is a prerequisite to completing one of the other two modules.
- *Formative Assessment with Children Birth – 36 Months:* This reviews the use of formative assessment including tools and methods to assist the early childhood professional in identifying ways to recognize and collect evidence of developmental progress. The formative assessment modules are not a requirement for administrators using the ELA, but are strongly recommended, as they provide a foundational understanding of the purpose and use of formative assessment.
- *Formative Assessment with Children 3 – Kindergarten:* This reviews the use of formative assessment including tools and methods to assist the early childhood professional in identifying ways to recognize and collect evidence of developmental progress.

Individuals interested in registering for these trainings should do so through the Ohio Professional Registry (OPR) at [www.registry.occrra.org](http://www.registry.occrra.org).