Needs Assessment for Nevada's Kindergarten Entry Assessment Project 2012

A project of the

***Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council,
managed by the Head Start Collaboration and
Early Childhood Systems Office***

Nevada's children will be safe, healthy and thriving during the first eight years of life, and the system will support children and families in achieving their full potential.

-- Vision of the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

Acknowledgments

Report developed by
Social Entrepreneurs Inc. (SEI)

6548 South McCarran Blvd, Reno NV 89509
Tel. 775-324-4567 Web. www.socialent.com

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), managed by Nevada's Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems (HSC&ECS) Office, in collaboration with the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), is leading efforts to build a comprehensive system of early childhood education and care services across the state, so that all children enter school ready to learn.

Beginning in January 2012, a dual-focus needs assessment and planning process began to determine the feasibility and facilitate county-level implementation of a statewide early childhood data system and a universal kindergarten entry assessment (KEA). Both were components of Nevada's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application, which articulated the following goals:

1. Implement effective data practices that link to a statewide early childhood data system and support early childhood educators to understand and utilize child assessment data to improve programs, curriculum and environments.
2. Administer a common, statewide KEA that generates data which educators are trained to use in order to improve program outcomes for children.

Nevada was not selected for the RTT-ELC; however, the goals remain an important focus for the Nevada ECAC. This report summarizes the results of a process to understand existing assets and needs related to goal 2, statewide KEA. It is the intention that this work positions Nevada ECAC and other stakeholders to plan and implement a common statewide KEA.

Kindergarten assessment is important. According to research, up to half of school difficulties and failure is already apparent by the time children start school (Rouse, Brooks-Gunn, & McClanahan, 2004) and gaps in cognitive development are apparent as early as nine months of age (Ille, et al., 2009).

In educational practice, assessing what children "know and can do" is a continuous process that is aligned with curriculum to ensure intended outcomes are addressed and monitored (McLean, 2010) (Snow, 2011). It is vital to clearly identify a purpose for assessments and ensure that they are closely tied to utilization (Snow, 2011).

Many educators and districts may argue that assessment should be locally defined. Schools and districts may have preferences regarding how to assess children. However, the reality is that many children do not remain in the same school; close to half of all students (44%) change schools at least once between kindergarten and the end of third grade (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers - PARCC). In Nevada the average transiency rate is 29.6% (Nevada Department of Education). The issue of transiency was identified in interviews and focus groups across the state. The ability to provide information with a child that was moving, or, receiving information about a child that is new to the school was identified by many as an asset to instruction.

To accomplish the first phase of the project, Needs Assessment, a large, inclusive, and flexible outreach and research process was implemented. Interviews and focus groups have occurred throughout the state, all 17 counties and school districts. Surveys were used to collect information from stakeholders. The needs assessment process also included assets outside of the state-a review of other states' implementation of KEAs so that an earlier understanding can be achieved related to how Nevada's children are progressing in order to improve the early learning environments that prepare them for school entry. Findings and results of this process are presented in this document, and summarized below.

Best Practices

Eight practices considered critical to assessment planning were developed through review of relevant publications.

Best Practice 1: Select a quality assessment with a clearly identified purpose. It is important to identify the purpose of an assessment, which is fundamental to determining how the instrument is designed, which measure is selected, how it is implemented and how results are reported and used (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2010).

Best Practice 2: Use developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments that are inclusive of families. Assess young English language learning children in their home language. Research consistently indicates the importance of using culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments (Snow, 2011) that are tied to children's daily activities, supported by investments in professional development, and inclusive of families (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003). An assessment tool should be designed and validated for use with the ages, cultures, languages, socioeconomic levels, abilities and disabilities and other characteristics of children assessed (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008). Including parents in the assessment process is crucial when consent is necessary (Snow, 2011), and parents may assist with understanding cultural contexts in which children develop (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003).

Best Practice 3: Assessment benefits all children, and kindergarten readiness assessment is not used as a means for screening children into or out of kindergarten. All children, including children with disabilities benefit from in-depth and ongoing assessment, including play-based assessment, to ensure individual needs are met (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003). When using assessments, they should include the following accommodations for children with disabilities (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008). Kindergarten should support all learners that are legally eligible to attend (Graue, 2009). Assessment should not be used to exclude children from kindergarten entry (Snow, 2011).

Best Practice 4: Ensure that assessors are qualified to complete the assessment. Build rapport and adjust to the child when administering an assessment Assessments should be supported by professional development where assessors are well trained in child development, assessment principles and tools being used for conducting assessments. Assessors should also be knowledgeable about culture and capable of assessing children in their primary language (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008).

Best Practice 5: School readiness should include assessment in multiple developmental domains. Assessments should accurately tap children's knowledge, skills and potential. Assessments that don't meet these requirements may underestimate children's true abilities and competences, which may lead to inaccurate conclusions (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008). Early childhood guidelines (ELGs) should be comprehensive and assessment should include all domains of learning, offering a holistic view of child development (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2010) (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008).

Best Practice 6: Assessment is continuous rather than episodic and data reporting is timely. In order to improve instruction, assessment should be practiced throughout the kindergarten year to help teachers target and recalibrate efforts over time.

Best Practice 7: Assessment is aligned with embedded learning opportunities/curriculum to ensure intended outcomes are addressed and monitored. Alignment of evaluation instruments with identified goals of the program and with the curriculum or intervention is essential to a valid assessment system.

Best Practice 8: Child-level data from assessment is only one component of comprehensive system assessment. Comprehensive assessments should include information collected from multiple sources (Bruner, Learning to read: Developing 0-8 information systems to improve third grade reading proficiency, 2010) including families, services, schools and communities. Evidence has shown that focusing attention at a neighborhood as well as an individual child level can contribute to making changes that improve children's school readiness and early elementary success (Bruner & Schor, 2009).

Findings

The needs assessment process focusing on Nevada's existing assets and needs are condensed into overarching findings. The findings below represent analysis of multiple data sources including interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

- � Stakeholders have questions, concerns, and preferences related to KEAs; however overall, there is support for movement toward common kindergarten assessment in Nevada.
- ✖ Districts currently utilize assessment in kindergarten; however, most assess elements of literacy and language, with limited attention to other domains of learning.[1] Districts utilize different instruments and processes for assessment, and there is considerable diversity among purposes, processes and instruments used.
- ✖ Among educators, there is interest in improving and enhancing assessment, although many were cautious not to overload teachers, children, or systems. If the adopted KEA adds value for educators and districts, it is more likely to be successful (as opposed to a common assessment seen as dictated or mandated without input from those that use it).

---

[1] Screening and assessment for special needs typically is inclusive of multiple domains of learning in compliance with IDEA.

- �The state is diverse culturally, racially/ethnically, economically and in other dimensions. Agreement of a common assessment tool will require that it can be used with diverse populations and that districts share common goals and vision. No one tool will be ideal for everyone; consensus on an instrument or process will be necessary to move common KEA forward.
- ✻ A common statewide KEA tool and process should offer an opportunity for more teamwork and linkages between kindergarten and Pre-K cross-county interaction and peer-to-peer learning. There is broad interest to work together to improve education for young children.
- ✻ Educators are interested in instruments that align to the Common Core State Standards; no district currently has a fully aligned assessment system.
- ✻ The needs of all children must be considered, including children with disabilities, children that speak a language other than English, and children from Nevada's tribes.
- ✻ There are opportunities to improve existing statewide assessments; for example, in the case of screening and assessment for special needs, multiple tools are utilized, but agreement around one tool would improve the ability of inter-district and agency coordination.
- ✻ Nationally, there is considerable movement toward statewide KEAs, and lessons learned can be leveraged. However, there are still limited options in terms of assessment availability, cost, and flexibility.

Draft Principles

Based on information from the needs assessment, the following principles were documented to reflect the broadest level of agreement for Nevada:

1) Assessments and data should be used to help (individual) children and families.
2) Assessment should be used to drive system improvements.
3) Existing infrastructure should be leveraged to help contain costs.
4) Families are recognized as the most important people in the child's life and must be involved as a partner in their education.
5) It is essential to consider and mitigate unintended consequences while planning a kindergarten entry and data system.
6) The degree to which a community values ECE and care will directly impact the success of a kindergarten entry and data system.
7) Assessment and information (data) sharing will be sensitive to cultural, linguistic and community needs of the child and the family.
8) Existing assessment and information sharing varies by county and will be leveraged whenever possible.
9) Information sharing will facilitate seamless transition of children throughout Nevada from Pre-K to 12 and from district to district.
10) The data system will serve as a way to formalize sharing and linkages between public and private Pre-K -12 including joint participation in training, technical assistance and professional learning communities.
11) Evaluating and improving the system is as important as assessing the child.

12) Publicly available data will be at the aggregate / community level to protect privacy and prevent the misuse of information.

These principles will be further refined and utilized during planning and implementation.

Recommendations

Implementation of a common KEA by 2014-15 will require unrelenting focus among stakeholders. Broad recommendations for selecting an instrument and completing an implementation plan are provided here.

- Convene a team of kindergarten teachers and ECE professionals to advise and help select the tool for Nevada in 2012. Representation from each district should be invited. There is broad agreement that common kindergarten assessment could help to improve education in Nevada; it is important that the processes and tools are respectful and inclusive of the perspectives and experiences of families, ECE, educators and administrators, and this requires further input from these stakeholders. Throughout the needs assessment the issue of transition to kindergarten was identified as an opportunity for improvement. Both ECE professionals and kindergarten teachers can work together to improve the system statewide through selection of appropriate kindergarten entry and assessment tools. The ideal tool would be supported by research, align to the CCSS, be appropriate for use with children that have developmental delays, offered in both English and Spanish, and, intended to be used as formative or benchmark assessment to improve instruction and transition for young children.
- Using recommendations from the selection team (see previous), seek and secure funding to implement a KEA with support for training. Provide multiple opportunities and modalities for training on the instrument. While the primary focus for the instrument will begin during the kindergarten year, training and materials should be made available to ECE providers.
- Working with a team of experts statewide (teachers, administrators, ECE professionals, and parent representatives) design a system in coordination with the assessment that facilitates transition. Components may include new opportunities for joint training, communication, and goal-setting.
- Link kindergarten assessment data to Nevada's statewide longitudinal data system (Bighorn). Pilot utilization of the assessment and data linkages with Nevada State Pre-K sites, as well as other ECE providers like Head Start programs, nonprofit centers, and private providers.
- Drive comprehensive assessment that includes KEA data as the other critical components of school readiness. Work with stakeholders to define and select appropriate assessments for the other groups that share responsibility for school readiness – they include families, schools, educators, communities, and systems. This data will be valuable for helping to improve educational outcomes and the results of kindergarten assessment at the community levels. (In the case that no instrument meets the needs identified, consider collaboration with other states for development of the ideal assessment.) Tools including teacher assessments, environmental scales, and other evaluations can be useful in making broad-scale improvements to educational outcomes.

- � Support an office of early childhood education and care or a way to promote leadership and provide linkages across the many departments that impact domains of school readiness through systems in the state.
- ✁ Develop accompanying policy statements that limit data use and underscore privacy. The issue of potentially harmful assessment (used to exclude children, exploit them for knowledge, or inappropriately evaluate programs) were stated in multiple research publications and emphasized through the county-level inquiry. Attention to this issue will likely be important in planning, implementation, and maintenance of a KEA.
- ✁ Develop a framework for communication on assessment that is strengths- based, inclusive, and emphasizes the importance of development (rather than achievement) in kindergarten. Consider the need for broad, statewide communication about the purpose and implementation of Nevada's KEA.
- ✁ Evaluate the implementation of assessment in Years 1 and 2, including information from stakeholders like educators, families, and administrators. Review tools and processes and if needed, make adjustments to improve the system. As part of the evaluation families, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders should have the opportunity to provide input toward process improvement.

Information from this report is intended to inform planning and implementation of Nevada's KEA. Additional information on the background, methods, and supporting documentation is provided in the full report. Appendices offer additional resources and information from the Needs Assessment process. Questions about this report should be sent to Sarah Marschall, Social Entrepreneurs Inc. (SEI), 775.324.4567 or smarschall@socialent.com. For progress and status updates, please visit the Nevada ECAC or project website: https://sites.google.com/site/prototypeforkedsnevada/.

Introduction

Purpose and Intended Outcomes

The Nevada ECAC managed by Nevada's Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems (HSC&ECS) Office, in collaboration with the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), is leading efforts to build a comprehensive system of early childhood education and care services across the state, so that all children enter school ready to learn. The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council's vision for this project is that Nevada' statewide data system leads to a shared understanding of school readiness. Everyone who touches children's lives will have a broad awareness of the strengths, needs, and status of Nevada's children; and information that improves children's development and learning.

Beginning in January 2012, a dual-focus needs assessment and planning process began to determine the feasibility and facilitate county-level implementation of a statewide early childhood data system and a universal kindergarten entry assessment (KEA). Both were components of Nevada's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application, which articulated the following goals:

1. Implement effective data practices that link to a statewide early childhood data system and support early childhood educators to understand and utilize child assessment data to improve programs, curriculum and environments.

2. Administer a common, statewide KEA that generates data that educators are trained to use in order to improve program outcomes for children.

Nevada was not selected for Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Funding; however, the goals remain an important focus for the Nevada ECAC. This report summarizes the results of a process to understand existing assets and needs related to goal 2, statewide KEA. It is the intention that this work positions Nevada ECAC and other stakeholders to plan and implement a common statewide KEA.

What is a Needs Assessment?

A needs assessment is a type of evaluation — a systematic approach to understanding the existing community or system assets, and gaps or weaknesses. The needs assessment is a tool for planning, providing information about what is in place, and the preferences of those affected by KEA to guide next steps.

Nevada's Education System for Young Children

In 2010-11, public schools in Nevada's 17 districts served 437,057 students. The student population is racially and ethnically diverse, with 1.2% of students Indian / Alaskan Native, 6% Asian, 38.7% Hispanic, 9.9% Black, 38.8% White, 1.1% Pacific Islander and 4.3% Multi-Race. Statewide 47,195 or 10.8 % of students had an individualized education plan (IEP) for a disability; 87,240 or 20.0% were designated limited in their English proficiency (LEP), and 209,503 or nearly half of all Nevada's students (47.9%) were eligible for free and reduced lunch (FRL) (Nevada Department of Education). Statewide 32,629 children were enrolled in kindergarten in 2010-11, and (Nevada Department of Education, 2011), 4,167 participated in Nevada Pre-K programs.

Private and nonprofit centers, as well as home-based early childhood education and care environments serve children throughout the state. Many offer high quality preschool experiences. However, costs for providing high quality care are difficult for both providers to offer and for families to afford. And while programs exist to help families with the costs of care and preschool, funding is limited. Adding to the issue of access, Nevada has reduced child care funding, resulting in 1,300 children losing child care assistance in 2012 (National Women's Law Center, 2012).

There are several other major programs available in Nevada that help to prepare children for school. Head Start programs (including tribal and migrant Head Start, and Early Head Start) provide education and support for children and their families in counties across the state. Head Start is intended to serve underserved children, including children that are from low income families, children that are homeless, and children with disabilities. Nevada's colleges and universities typically have educational programs for very young children, including quality preschool; most have national accreditation. In Clark County, the Tuition Assistance Preschool Scholarships (TAPS) provided by United Way of Southern Nevada help to provide access to preschool for children. While each of these programs are very important to helping children and their families access preschool, collectively, only a small portion of Nevada's children are able to be served by these programs.

Other agencies and organizations, both governmental and nonprofit serve young children and their families, assisting with access to health and medical care, nutrition, and early intervention, and education and advocacy. These services are central to the overall project purposes of universal school readiness because, in order to be ready to learn in a school environment, children's basic needs must be fulfilled. *According to Findings from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative*, "schools should be accountable to narrowing any readiness gap children experience at school entry, the best way to fully close the gap includes addressing conditions in the early years that impact children's healthy growth and development" (Rhode Island Kids Count, 2005, p. 5).

Research supports that improvements early in the child's education provides the most opportunity to positively shape long-term educational outcomes. However, there are many challenges. Nevada ranks 35th in the nation for access to Pre-K, according to a national report (Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald, & Squires, 2011). This report also shows that per pupil spending for state Pre-K has declined each year since 2007 and was lower than any year since 2002.

Nevada's Pre-K serves about 1% of Nevada's 3 year old children and 3% of Nevada's 4 year old children.   This is an issue because quality is critical to the child-level and system-level gains made through universal Pre-K experiences (Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald, & Squires, 2011), and, a considerable fraction of Nevada's programs lack the supports needed to be considered high-quality experiences for children (Social Entrepreneurs Inc., 2012) (Barnett, Carolan, Fitzgerald, & Squires, 2011).

Long-Range Educational Outcomes

The proportion of Nevada's students that graduate from high school is second to lowest in the nation (America's Health Rankings, 2011). Disparities in achievement among groups are pronounced; people that are from racial or ethnic minorities, people who have disabilities, and people that are from lower socio-economic levels are less likely than others in Nevada to graduate from high school, and, have educational success on the path toward high school (Nevada Department of Education) (Alliance for Excellence in Education, 2012).

The Case and Considerations for KEA

According to research, up to half of school difficulties and failure is already apparent by the time children start school (Rouse, Brooks-Gunn, & McClanahan, 2004) and gaps in cognitive development are apparent as early as nine months of age (Ille, et al., 2009). School readiness and early education success requires appropriate assessments for children that are comprehensive and include families, schools and community support (Bruner, Learning to read: Developing 0-8 information systems to improve third grade reading proficiency, 2010).

The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) considered assessment an important part of system improvement, and required applicants to show that they had an existing or planned KEA that met the following criteria:

- Aligned with the state's early learning standards and covers all "essential domains of school readiness," which include: language and literacy development, early math and science, approaches toward learning, physical development and social and emotional development;
- Valid, reliable and appropriate for the target population of kindergarten students, including English language learners and children with disabilities;
- Administered beginning no later than the start of the 2014-2015 school year;
- Reported to the state's longitudinal data system and to the early learning data system if they are separate; and
- Funded, in significant part, with federal or state resources other than RTT-ELC grant funds (Bornfreund, 2012).

These guidelines have helped to drive the planning process, and align to the nation's thinking about early assessment. The movement toward formative assessment is described by Herman, Ellen Osmundson and Dietel:

> "The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002) has produced an explosion of interest in the use of assessment to measure and improve student learning. Initially focused on annual state tests, educators quickly learned that results came too little and too late to identify students who were falling behind. At the same time, evidence from the other end of the assessment spectrum was clear: teachers' ongoing use of assessment to guide and inform instruction—classroom formative assessment—can lead to statistically significant gains in student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998)."

In educational practice, assessing what children "know and can do" is a continuous process that is aligned with curriculum to ensure intended outcomes are addressed and monitored (McLean, 2010) (Snow, 2011). It is vital to clearly identify a purpose for assessments and ensure that they are closely tied to utilization (Snow, 2011). The key to a comprehensive child assessment is including the five domains of readiness that correlate to one another and interact in affecting future growth and learning (Bruner, Learning to read: Developing 0-8 information systems to improve third grade reading proficiency, 2010).

Many educators and districts may argue that assessment should be locally defined. Schools and districts may have preferences regarding how to assess children. However, the reality is that many children do not remain in the same school; close to half of all students (44%) change schools at least once between kindergarten and the end of third grade (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers - PARCC). In Nevada the average transiency rate is 29.6% (Nevada

Nearly half of all of students (44%) change schools at least once between kindergarten and the end of third grade (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers - PARCC).

Department of Education). The issue of transiency was identified in interviews and focus groups across the state. The ability to provide information with a child that was moving, or, receiving information about a child that is new to the school was identified by many as an asset to instruction.

Important Considerations for KEA

Expectations in kindergarten have increased over the years. In general, kindergarten has become more academically focused, and while there is discussion and debate over the best approach for teaching kindergarten, there is broad agreement that children in kindergarten are developmentally different than their older elementary peers, and, curriculum and approaches should acknowledge these differences (Pappano, 2010). Some of these considerations include:

The role of supportive communities, schools and families readiness and assessment. Resources available in a community, such as health, mental health, family

support and nutrition services and the family context and quality of their early childhood education and care arrangements prior to school entry have an impact on individual kindergarten readiness (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2010). Culture also plays a role: for example, some cultures discourage competition and accomplishment, which can make it difficult to assess young children's skills (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003). At the school and teacher levels, research indicates that there is a gap in assessment knowledge of teachers and lack of preparation for administering assessments in their educational training. This impacts families as they can be misinformed or not provided with information regarding purposes and interpretation of assessments to their children's development and learning.

Child Development. Several studies have shown that tests and assessments that have otherwise very sound psychometric properties (e.g. reliability and validity) do not maintain these properties for children that are very young, including children 5 and 6 years of age. Children's brains are still rapidly developing during these years. Results of assessment may be properly used to differentiate instruction, but, should not be used to make lasting designations or groupings of ability.

Limitations of Assessments. Assessments provide information; some are better than others, but no one tool is able to capture all the information needed or desired. When it is understood, assessment is a tool that can dramatically enhance outcomes; however, misuse of data is always at risk, and precautions are needed to protect against it. Assessment of children in the classroom can provide teachers and families with information to help the child learn and grow. But, individual child-level assessment data should never be used to inform judgments of program effectiveness. Assessment must be systematically tiered to obtain particular information, including screening for children with disabilities, addressing and identifying needs of young English Language Learners (ELL), informing teacher instruction and evaluating programs for high stakes reporting. While comprehensive for a child assessment means that multiple domains are measured, comprehensive for a system may include assessments of classrooms, teachers, schools, surveys of families, and the population-level statistics that are indicators of communities' ability to support educational success of young children.

Other Factors that Affect the Child. Several individual factors can impact children's assessment results such as hunger, anxiety, fatigue, temporary poor health, inability to understand the language of the instruction, culturally learned hesitation in initiating conversations with adults, etc. (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003). Also, younger children are more difficult to assess using methods that rely on verbal ability, focused attention and cooperation, or paper-pencil methods. That is why results of a single assessment are often unreliable because children do not necessarily understand "do your best". Hence, caution must be taken in interpretation of standardized tests, especially in the absence of complimentary evidence in high stakes reporting (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003). Finally, there are a number of issues to take into consideration for conducting effective evaluation of Pre-K and kindergarten readiness programs (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003):

1) Risk of administering an assessment with an ambiguous purpose that is not explicitly communicated;

2) Misuse of assessments for multiple purposes or narrowly focusing assessments on language or math to exclude comprehensive measures;
3) Risk of misusing child outcome data to penalize programs serving most vulnerable children;
4) Misuse of administered, norm-referenced tests with young children as a substitute for and the sole indicator of program effectiveness;
5) Risk of using data from assessments designed for English speaking children to draw conclusions about linguistically and culturally diverse groups of children;
6) Risk of conducting poor quality evaluations with little investment in training, technical assistance and data analysis.
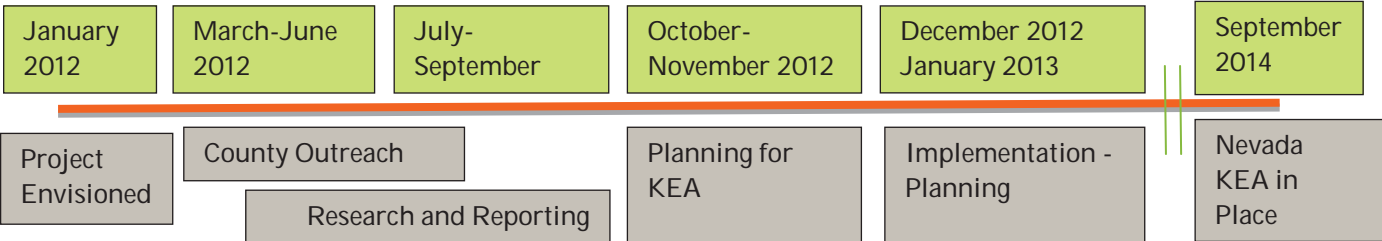
This case for KEA and considerations set the background for local inquiry and the needs assessment process.

Methodology

To understand the existing assets and needs within the state, a large, inclusive, and flexible process was envisioned and implemented for providing input into the needs assessment. Interviews and focus groups have occurred throughout the state, all 17 counties and school districts. Surveys were used to collect information from stakeholders. The needs assessment process also included assets outside of the state-a review of other states' implementation of KEA so that an earlier understanding can be achieved related to how Nevada's children are progressing in order to improve the early learning environments that prepare them for school entry.

Benchmarks and Timeline

Implementation of a common KEA is intended in 2014-15. This report, to be finalized in September 2012, will be used to guide statewide planning during October and November 2012. Implementation planning with individual counties begins in December 2012.

January 2012	March-June 2012	July-September	October-November 2012	December 2012 January 2013	September 2014
Project Envisioned	County Outreach		Planning for KEA	Implementation - Planning	Nevada KEA in Place
		Research and Reporting			

Project Structure and Leadership

The Nevada ECAC provided overall guidance for this needs assessment and strategic planning effort, and identified the goals of creating a coordinated early learning data system and developing a statewide kindergarten assessment process. Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. (SEI), a Reno-based consulting firm, was engaged by the ECAC to develop a plan that positions the State to implement a common statewide KEA no later than the 2014-15 school year, which will evaluate readiness in a manner that covers multiple dimensions of a child's abilities as delineated in Nevada's definition of School Readiness[2].

The Nevada Departments of Education and Health and Human Services are providing primary leadership and support for this needs assessment, which is being managed by the Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office. The Nevada ECAC is providing guidance and oversight for both the needs assessment and implementation planning processes. The Nevada ECAC serves at the Governor's pleasure, having been established by Executive Order in 2009 and renewed again in 2011 expressly for this purpose. The Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office serves as the liaison between local Early Childhood Advisory

---

[2] See Appendix G.

Councils and other critical entities that are stakeholders in this process, including the Nevada Head Start Association. This Office is working closely with NDE and within DHHS to guide the implementation planning of the KEDS project, which operates in accordance with the project management and communication structure depicted below.

Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

HSC and ESC Office – Nevada Department of Health and Human Services

Nevada Department of Education

KEA Workgroup

Early Childhood Data System Workgroup

SEI, Inc. Project Team
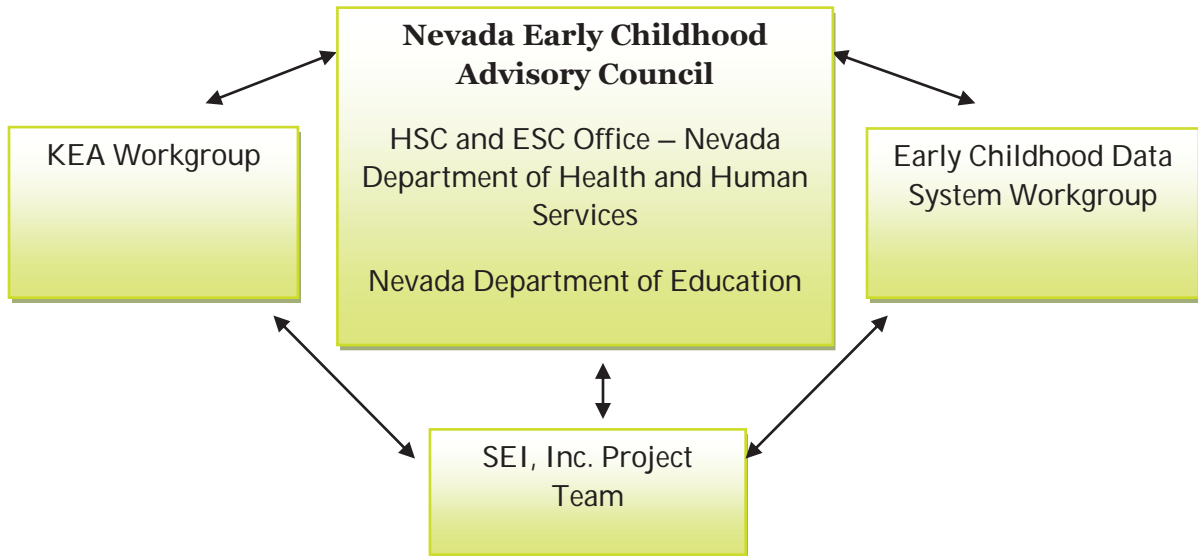
In providing project oversight, the HSC&ECS Office responsibilities include: active participation in planning meetings; providing information and access to data needed to prepare and conduct the needs assessment project; serving as the liaison to facilitate communication between SEI and ECE stakeholders; reviewing final project deliverables; and facilitating final approval of reports and other deliverables with the Nevada ECAC.

Planning and Decision-Making Principles

Good planning requires a methodical process that clearly defines the steps that lead to optimal solutions. The project planning committee determined that the process for this effort should reflect the following principles:

- *Comprehensive* – all significant options and impacts are considered.
- *Efficient* – the process should not waste time or money.
- *Inclusive* – people affected by the plan have opportunities to be involved.
- *Informative* – results are understood by stakeholders (people affected by a decision).
- *Integrated* – individual, short-term decisions should support strategic, long-term goals.
- *Logical* – each step leads to the next.
- *Transparent* – everybody involved understands how the process operates.

Information Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

In order to complete outreach in a timely manner, both formal and informal communication channels were leveraged to systematically contact groups within the state identified during the planning process. Because Nevada counties represent such a wide range of needs, priorities, resources, and values, it was deemed crucial to the project to ensure that, in addition to reviewing state-level information and data, each one of Nevada's 17 counties and school districts were actively engaged and provided with the opportunity to inform the needs assessment.

The needs assessment process included focus groups and site visits in all 17 counties to determine their current data collection efforts, software currently used and the willingness to participate in the effort to collect data statewide. In several of the larger counties, multiple site visits were made to obtain the broadest level of input possible. This input was sought from parents, early childhood educators, local and state program administrators, school teachers and administrators, and other stakeholders to discern the needs regarding early childhood data and the feasibility of designing a coordinated system to collect and manage that data. The objectives of the site visits, interviews, focus groups, and surveys were to:

1. Identify the current status of kindergarten assessment and data systems by county, school district and for the state;
2. Identify the optimal design for Nevada's KEA and issues to resolve in implementing the Assessment statewide; and
3. Identify the optimal design for Nevada's Data System and issues to resolve in implementing the system statewide.

The following table summarizes the categories of ECE stakeholders that were identified as "key" to project success, and how they are expected to benefit from the eventual implementation of a coordinated ECE data system that is linked with NDE's longitudinal K-12 data system.

Stakeholder Need and Use of Data

Stakeholder Type	Use of Assessment Data at Kindergarten Entry
Parents and Caregivers	• Provides information and feedback about their child's optimal physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development, and what they can do beginning at birth to support child development and school readiness
Teachers	• Serves as a communication and engagement tool for teachers to use with parents to educate and motivate them about their child's optimal physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development • Helps teachers understand individual student needs and abilities, plan activities, and design appropriate curriculum • Provides feedback on effectiveness
School and Program Administrators	• Provides aggregate school readiness information for each classroom, for groups of children by demographic characteristics, and for the school overall to determine patterns, identify areas of high need, guide curriculum development, and improve educational programs • Guides decision-making to support progress on accountability measures
Service Providers for	• Assess how well early childhood education and care services perform in raising the

Stakeholder Type	Use of Assessment Data at Kindergarten Entry
young children ages 0 to 5 years and their families	developmental level of young children prior to entry into school • Determine patterns, identify areas of high need, and improve services for young children and families • Help various sectors in health, welfare, social services, and education understand the role they play in helping children be ready for school – fosters joint accountability from diverse service sectors
Policy Makers, Funders and Researchers	• Assess the extent to which the KEDS initiative is contributing to raising the developmental level of young children prior to entry into school • Inform strategic planning, funding initiatives, training and technical assistance activities, and quality improvement efforts at the county, district and state levels • Create stronger data and programmatic linkages between programs for children in the early years and the K-12 educational system
Workforce Development and Higher Education	• Provides data in multiple domains to guide curriculum development and focus training activities • Provides information about what works to improve school readiness for children, so that teacher training content can be tailored accordingly

Outreach and stakeholder/county engagement activities focused on introducing the project, gathering information about existing assets and resources, and soliciting input from stakeholders on the working definition of school readiness, a common KEA and early childhood data system. Communication through outreach was initiated with:

- Every county and school district in Nevada, with a minimum of one meeting held in each county across the state.
- Contacts within State, tribal and local entities that support, monitor, or fund ECE programs.
- Organizations and coalitions involved with education of young children as advised by the Nevada ECAC and other stakeholders, and
- Individual teachers, parents/caregivers, and ECE professionals through conferences and existing meetings.

Individuals and businesses (such as private preschools and child care) have limited access to the information if they are not connected to an existing initiative like the local ECAC. To help address this issue, surveys were sent through several list serves, and two meetings offering Nevada Registry Credits were conducted. In addition to these contacts, the email list of people interested in the project has grown to more than 200 stakeholders and continues to expand. Two public forums to collect additional input from early childhood education and care providers were held in late June in Reno and Las Vegas. An inventory of key informant interviews, focus groups, site visits can be found in Appendix F.

County and School District Participation

As noted above, each county and district participated in the needs assessment via key informant interviews, focus groups and surveys. These methods are each described in more detail below, and a list of participating stakeholders is provided in Appendix F. After concluding the outreach,

research and county meetings as part of the needs assessment process, reports were developed specific to each county which incorporated all county-relevant findings. These reports were made available to participating stakeholders for review and feedback.

Key Informant Interviews

At the outset of the project, a list of key informants was developed to include those at both the state and local level with expertise, background and information deemed critical to successful implementation of the KEDS project. The development of this list was informed by the Nevada ECAC, webinar participants, and key stakeholders. A matrix of questions was then established and vetted by stakeholders to ensure that the right information was solicited. This matrix is provided in Appendix F.

Focus Groups

As noted earlier, focus groups were held in all 17 counties and school districts to determine their current practices, resource needs, specific barriers, and level of interest in participating in this level of systems change so that an earlier understanding can be achieved related to how Nevada's children are progressing in order to improve the early learning environments that prepare them for school entry. The SEI project team developed a set of open-ended questions and a flexible script to interview a broad range of individuals who have a key role in providing and/or administering ECE services and supports in their given jurisdiction. Focus groups lasted between 60 to 90 minutes each. Similar to the process for determining the information needed from key informants, a matrix of questions was established and vetted by stakeholders to ensure that the right information was solicited. The matrix is available in Appendix F.

Surveys

Two surveys were developed and broadly disseminated electronically and in hard copy in English and Spanish to gather information from: a) ECE providers and b) parents and caregivers, regarding the extent to which school readiness assessments are administered, the types of assessment instruments that are used, and the policies in place regarding the development, administration and use of school readiness assessments. Nearly 200 surveys targeting teachers, providers and administrators were submitted. More than 500 parent surveys have been completed. The survey responses are summarized in Appendix A.

Reports and Resources

Many state and district reports, journal articles, and other published sources were utilized in developing this report. A list of resources is cited is in Appendix D.

Findings from Research on National and State Efforts on KEA

Best Practices in Assessment for Preschool and Kindergarten

Best practices for Pre-K and kindergarten assessment were identified through the compilation of published research and reviews including peer-reviewed journals. Best practices are important in shaping KEA processes, reflecting the results of studies and experts' thinking around assessment. Findings are organized into eight major categories.

Best Practice 1: Select a quality assessment with a clearly identified purpose.

It is important to identify the purpose of an assessment, which is fundamental to determining how the instrument is designed, which measure is selected, how it is implemented and how results are reported and used (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2010). Assessment selection may be tied to any one or more of the following specific beneficial purposes (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003):

1) Making sound decisions about teaching, learning and instruction;
2) Identifying significant concerns that may require focused intervention for individual children (i.e., screen for developmental delays);
3) Helping programs improve their educational and developmental interventions;
4) Assessment for program evaluation and monitoring of trends; and,
5) Assessment for high stakes accountability or monitor in aggregate the readiness of kindergarten children statewide to inform state-level decisions about policy and funding (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2010).

Overall, the primary purpose of assessing children or classrooms is to improve the quality of early childhood education and care (Snow, 2011). In regard to selecting an appropriate assessment, Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) may help early care providers select instructional tools and assessment instruments that are appropriate (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2010). For example, ELGs may be used to inform the age for which the assessment is appropriate, and ELGs are not intended for use as a "readiness checklist" or an "assessment tool". Finally, the quality of an assessment must exceed standards for various psychometric qualities such as reliability and validity (Snow, 2011). Assessment methods must be technically sound and validated for purposes for which the process is intended, including provision of norms for children from diverse backgrounds and children with disabilities or other special needs. It is essential to note that many assessment tools, even if validated, are limited in terms of validity and reliability, particularly for children from diverse cultures, English learners, and those with disabilities (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008).

Research indicates that there are not many assessments designed for large scale accountability purposes, so it is important to be aware of an assessment's purpose and design. Furthermore, evaluators must analyze assessment data and results according to the psychometric strength of the assessment. The utility goal of a classroom-level assessment is different from that of an assessment meant to evaluate an entire program (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003). Assessment data

for evaluation or high stakes purposes does not need to be collected from all children (Snow, 2011); whereas, it is important to collect data from all children to inform and guide teaching in the classroom. Results from assessments on an individual child-level are typically used to inform instructional practices and to guide discussions with parents about child's skills and abilities; they are not used to monitor statewide percentages of children "ready for school" (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2010). The overall utility of assessment should benefit children and do no harm. Assessment data is never used to deny children opportunities or services, and instead, results of assessments should identify a child's positive skills and unique strengths (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008).

In general, there must be a balance in choosing to use an authentic (employed through observation) and/or a traditional standardized assessment. For example, traditional assessments are not meant to act as the sole indicator of a child's knowledge, skills and abilities (Rushton, Juloa-Rushton, & Larkin, 2010). On the other hand, observational assessments are subject to bias where the assessment may be influenced by factors related to the observer, and observation may violate standardization if completed in different contexts for children (Snow, 2011). Other sources of information are important toward comprehensive assessment (see best practice 8).

Best Practice 2: Use developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments that are inclusive of families. Assess young English language learning (ELL) children in their home language.

Research consistently indicates the importance of using culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments (Snow, 2011) that are tied to children's daily activities, supported by investments in professional development, and inclusive of families (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003). Information from assessments is best collected through naturalistic methods in familiar settings, especially for obtaining valid information about children from diverse cultural and language backgrounds and those children with disabilities. An assessment tool should be designed and validated for use with the ages, cultures, languages, socioeconomic levels, abilities and disabilities and other characteristics of children assessed (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008). Including parents in the assessment process is crucial when consent is necessary (Snow, 2011), and parents may assist with understanding cultural contexts in which children develop (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003).

Demographic trends inform that by the year 2030, 40% of school-age children will have a home language other than English. These trends have implications for decisions about curriculum, assessment practices and evaluations of the effectiveness of early childhood education and care programs. The decision to assess an English language learner in English should be based on whether the child has an appropriate level of English proficiency to provide reasonable estimates of skills (Snow, 2011). It is important to understand the purpose of an assessment to assist in determining the language for which the assessment will be administered. For young children where the home language is not English, assessments conducted in English produce invalid, misleading results (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003). Therefore, when the purpose of assessment is to assess children's understanding of concepts or underlying skills, then assessment in the primary language may be appropriate. On the other hand, if the purpose is to assess children's progress in English, then assessment in English would be more important.

Best practices for assessing English language learner children also suggest matching assessment practices to children's cultures or languages, ages or developmental capacities (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003). Assessors must be knowledgeable about children's cultures and able to assess children in their primary language. Inclusion of parents in the assessment process can provide more accurate information, especially if teachers and assessors do not reflect the child's culture or linguistic background (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008). In addition, instructionally embedded assessment using authentic/observation methods and samples of children's performance can provide a much fuller and more accurate picture of English language learner children's abilities than other methods (McLean, 2010).

Best Practice 3: Assessment benefits all children, and kindergarten readiness assessment is not used as a means for screening children into or out of kindergarten.

All children, including children with disabilities benefit from in-depth and ongoing assessment, including play-based assessment, to ensure individual needs are met (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003). When using assessments, they should include the following accommodations for children with disabilities (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008):

1) Include a variety of adaptations that allow children to demonstrate their skills and competencies in alternative ways (e.g., a child who cannot hear or speak can sign) or with accommodations (e.g., a child with physical limitation can demonstrate verbal understanding using eye gaze;
2) A child may need more time to complete a task; this issue is particularly challenging because few assessment tools include such accommodations;
3) Include parents in the assessment process to gather more accurate information about the full extent of children's skills and knowledge;
4) Collect information through naturalistic methods in familiar settings, which is especially helpful for obtaining valid information about children from diverse cultural and language backgrounds and those with disabilities.

To ensure that students with disabilities are appropriately assessed under educational assessment and accountability systems, the following strategies are recommended (Council for Exceptional Children, 2004):

1) Include in all assessment and accountability systems, assessments with accommodations including off-grade level testing or alternate assessments that reflect valid and reliable performance for them, rather than cultural diversity, linguistic diversity, disability or other exceptionality;
2) Include students in assessments from traditional public schools, those children who change schools, publicly funded educational services in settings such as home schools, private schools, charter schools, and state operated programs juvenile justice systems;
3) Use assessment tools that have been developed and validated on student samples that included students who have exceptionalities;
4) Individual Education Plan (IEP) team determines student participation in assessments as part of the review of the child's IEP based on needs;

5) When assessment scores are publically reported, students with exceptionalities shall be included;
6) The performance on assessments of students with exceptionalities must have the same impact on the final accountability index as performance of other students, whether they participate with accommodations or in an alternate assessment.

Kindergarten should support all learners that are legally eligible to attend (Graue, 2009). Assessment should not be used to exclude children from kindergarten entry (Snow, 2011).

Best Practice 4: Ensure that assessors are qualified to complete the assessment. Build rapport and adjust to the child when administering an assessment.

Assessments should be supported by professional development where assessors are well trained in child development, assessment principles and tools being used for conducting assessments. Assessors should also be knowledgeable about culture and capable of assessing children in their primary language (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008). It is best to build rapport with a child before the assessment begins and the implementation of the assessment should not harm a child's self-esteem by negatively labeling. Using adequate space, minimal noise and distraction, and conducting assessments in the same way for all children within a classroom, program and system is essential.

Best Practice 5: School readiness should include assessment in multiple developmental domains.

A framework for understanding and describing children's well-being encompasses successful development in five domains of learning: physical well-being and motor development, approaches to learning, cognition and general knowledge, social and emotional development and language development (Bruner, Learning to read: Developing 0-8 information systems to improve third grade reading proficiency, 2010). Assessments should accurately tap children's knowledge, skills and potential. Assessments that don't meet these requirements may underestimate children's true abilities and competencies, which may lead to inaccurate conclusions (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008). Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) should be comprehensive and assessment should include all domains of learning, offering a holistic view of child development (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2010) (Golan, Peterson, & Spiker, 2008).

Best Practice 6: Assessment is continuous rather than episodic and data reporting is timely.

In order to improve instruction, assessment should be practiced throughout the kindergarten year to help teachers target and recalibrate efforts over time. Although single point-in-time, standardized assessments provide a snapshot of performance, they cannot examine change in children over time, cannot provide developmental data on individual children, nor can they capture all of the cumulative experiences in programs, in the home, and in the community (Snow, 2011). To describe change over time, assessments of the same children must be completed at multiple time points; otherwise, single-point-in-time data may be used in program

evaluation to examine successive cohorts to estimate changes in the populations of children.

The ideal KEA allows for a the child's brief adjustment to the classroom and school routines but not delayed so far into the school year that results are driven by response to instruction. Children should be assessed at the same time/age or else it will lead to differences in scores (Snow, 2011).When using an assessment to inform instruction or screen for potential delay or disability, the results should be relayed as quickly as possible (Snow, 2011). In addition, assessment results meant to screen developmental problems or guide instruction should heed caution in also determining program effectiveness and accountability.

Best Practice 7: Assessment is aligned with embedded learning opportunities/curriculum to ensure intended outcomes are addressed and monitored.

Alignment of evaluation instruments with identified goals of the program and with the curriculum or intervention is essential to a valid assessment system. When there are mismatches between program goals, evaluation design and instruments, it may lead to unintended consequences and erroneous conclusions about the effectiveness of particular interventions (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003) (Snow, 2011). An "assessment system" should strategically and appropriately connect selection, administration and utilization of instruments, data and planning to ensure that goals of assessment and the education program as a whole are being met (Snow, 2011). Early childhood school readiness indicators (birth through age 8) should align with the early elementary data system and guide state policies, incorporating key educational success measures, such as credentials and experience, class size, curricula, tools and resources (Bruner, Learning to read: Developing 0-8 information systems to improve third grade reading proficiency, 2010).

Best Practice 8: Child-level data from assessment is only one component of comprehensive system assessment.

According to the School Readiness Indicators Initiative (SRII), comprehensive assessments should include information collected from multiple sources (Bruner, Learning to read: Developing 0-8 information systems to improve third grade reading proficiency, 2010):

1) Families (mother's education level, child abuse and neglect, birth to teens and children in foster care);
2) Services – Early childhood education and care (children enrolled in early education programs, accredited child care, access to child care subsidies, teacher credentials, and accredited family child homes);
3) Services – Health (health insurance, access to prenatal care, low birth weight, and immunizations);
4) Schools (class size in kindergarten through first grade);
5) Communities (young children in poverty, family supports for toddlers like early head start, and lead poisoning); and,
6) Children (five domains of learning).

Evidence has shown that focusing attention at a neighborhood as well as an individual child level can contribute to making changes that improve children's school readiness and early elementary success (Bruner & Schor, 2009). When children are young, their world is geographically bound and their development is heavily influenced by what is immediately around them. Assessing kindergarten readiness at a community and neighborhood level allows identification for areas that need attention, coupling assessment with other community level data (Bruner, Learning to read: Developing 0-8 information systems to improve third grade reading proficiency, 2010).

Summary of State Implementation Efforts on KEA

Over the past few years, interest in assessing children as they enter kindergarten has increased. Between 2010 and 2011, the majority of states developed some form of kindergarten readiness. In 2010, the NCLS reported that 25 states had some form of kindergarten assessment; the remaining states had no statewide assessment (21) or were under development or in roll-out phase (4). By October 2011, 35 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico submitted applications for RTT-ELC. This included 16 of the 25 states previously cited by NCLS to have some form of kindergarten assessment; it included 3 of the 4 states that were under development, 14 states that were previously cited with no assessment, D.C. and Puerto Rico. Together, supporting information from NCLS research and RTT-ELC applications indicate that 42 total states have developed or are in process of developing some form of kindergarten assessment. (A summary is provided in Appendix B).

The 9 States awarded RTT-ELC funding (see following table) were recognized and selected in part on the basis of utilizing assessment tools that measure all essential domains of kindergarten readiness (i.e., Literacy, Cognition and General Knowledge, Approaches toward Learning, Physical Well-being and Motor Development, Social and Emotional Development). In assessing domains of learning, all states commonly reported the use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; measures three domains-emotional climate, classroom organization and instructional support). In addition, states funded reported the use or development of a validated Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS), which uses a simple 3-4 or 5 –star rating to evaluate assessment information by varying levels of quality in multiple categories (New America Foundation). All winning applicants have plans to align early learning standards (birth to age 5) with the state's K-3 early literacy and mathematics standards. In adopting the *Common Core State Standards*, RTT-ELC winners plan to align learning standards to early educator competencies, assessment systems and QRIS. Therefore, state reports discuss how early learning standards are promoted across early learning programs (such as Head Start requirements) and other curricula.

Despite these common attributes, development and implementation of KEA systems vary widely. The New America Foundation highlighted the KEA plans of RTT-ELC winners (Bornfreund, The 'Race to the Top Winners': How States Plan to Assess Kindergarten Readiness, 2012). The table below contains a summary of assessment approaches used in the 9 states.

State	Plan for KEA	Type / Purpose	Implementation Plans for KEA
California	1) Desired Results Developmental Profile – School Readiness (DRDP-SR)	Observational assessment designed to inform curriculum planning for individual children and assessment	• The assessment to be finalized this spring 2012 and ready for implementation on a voluntary basis by the 2014-2015 school year • Early adopters using DRDP in 2012-13. • Other KEA instruments are used at the district level. • California plans to develop training materials and web-based tools for teachers on how to use DRDP to support continuous program improvement.
Delaware	1) Teaching Strategies	1) Formative	• Teaching Strategies GOLD is being

State	Plan for KEA	Type / Purpose	Implementation Plans for KEA
	GOLD (Pilot) 2) Family Questionnaire 3) Assessment to validate pilot of formative evaluation	assessment 2) For policy and decision making (if appropriate based on evaluation)	• piloted. Pilot will run for two years to help understand challenges and supports required for kindergarten teachers to utilize a formative, multi-domain assessment. • Other tools may be examined for final selection.
Maryland	1) Develop new KEA building on existing adaptation of the Work Sampling System. Plans to align new instrument to Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) Consortium Assessment (in development).	2) Computer based, online formative assessments for Pre-K and kindergarten teachers, to help them tailor their instruction to individual student needs	• Maryland and Ohio will share the costs for development of the KEA, and once ready, they plan to make it available to other interested states for purchase. • New assessment to be field tested in 2013. • Working with Ohio to create professional development workshops for teachers on how to use the assessments. • Planning to develop online tools and content and create professional learning communities and establish a teacher certification process to ensure educators are able to reliably administer these assessments.
Massachusetts	1) Selected at the local level from an approved list: • COR • Teaching Strategies GOLD • Work Sampling System • Any other approved. 2) Statewide measure of children's school readiness by cross-walking items on the three state approved assessments.	1) Formative assessment 2) Statewide picture of children's readiness for kindergarten	• Participating schools required to use an approved formative assessment tool that covers all essential domains of school readiness. • Also plans to develop its own statewide measure of children's school readiness by cross-walking the items on the three state approved assessments to find similarities. Reports will be developed on this process and outcomes.
Minnesota	1) Currently uses an adapted version of the Work Sampling System as its KEA.	1) Districts are encouraged to use KEA and other data to identify staff development needs and to inform their local literacy plans	• Plans to expand and refine its KEA system, linking KEA scores to the state's longitudinal data system and convening a task force to enhance system. • Planning to implement a new KEA statewide in 2014-2015.
North Carolina	1) Developing New KEA using RTT-ELC; will build on existing KEA.	1) Data to help close the achievement gap and helps	• Plans to broaden its current K-2 assessments to include all essential domains of school readiness and

State	Plan for KEA	Type / Purpose	Implementation Plans for KEA
		improve instruction through 3rd grade	extend to third grade. • North Carolina plans to fully implement the KEA during the 2014-2015 school year, beginning in schools with the largest number of high-need children. Also aligning to new standards. • Plans to use RTT-ELC funds on professional development, teaching educators how to implement the new assessment tool and use the data to guide instruction.
Ohio	1) Developing New KEA with Maryland that also aligns to PARCC. 2) Ohio also has an existing KEA that measures only children's literacy abilities.	1) Computer based, online formative assessments for Pre-K and kindergarten teachers, to help them tailor their instruction to individual student needs	• Intends to link KEA results to children participating in publicly funded preschool programs, as well as programs participating in the state's QRIS. • Sharing costs for development with Maryland
Rhode Island	1) School districts required to screen children prior to school entry to determine how prepared they are in literacy and math. Individual districts can choose their own screening tools.	1) Formative Assessment; Districts develop "personal literacy plans" for children who are reading below grade level	• In December 2010, Rhode Island began planning for a statewide KEA, with an assessment work team as part of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council. • The state plans to pilot its newly developed KEA in select districts during the 2014-15 school year. Additional school districts will be added, beginning with districts with the most high-need children, in the 2015 and 2016 school years. • Costs of implementing this KEA are included in the state's education funding formula • Plans to use grant to develop or identify an appropriate assessment and develop training for teachers around it.
Washington	Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS), 1) Teaching Strategies GOLD 2) Goal setting Teacher – Parent Conference or Small group meetings between kindergarten teachers and	1) Formative assessment 2) Engage families 3) Improve transition	• Washington developed a needs assessment for KEA in 2010. • Prior to full implementation for all kindergarteners (2014-2015) the state will host a series of professional development trainings for districts, schools, teachers, and support staff. • State will introduce the public to the concept of KEAs. • The University of Washington will conduct two validity and reliability evaluations to ensure GOLD results are

State	Plan for KEA	Type / Purpose	Implementation Plans for KEA
	families at or before the beginning of school year to discuss children's strengths and to set goals for the year and 3) support collaboration between early learning providers and kindergarten teachers		accurate. • The state will integrate WaKIDS data into its longitudinal data system and report results to the public.

Findings from State and Local Research

A Snapshot of Nevada's Kindergarten Assessment, By District

In 2008, the State of Nevada Legislature commissioned an inventory of school-based assessments used across the state. Since that time, schools have developed their assessment processes for kindergarten. Today, every school district in Nevada utilizes assessment with children in kindergarten. In general, assessment processes have been selected to meet local needs, and therefore differences exist. Findings from site visits and other research show that:

- Districts use a variety of assessment instruments and processes, including screening tools, formative assessments, adaptive assessments, academic assessments, and benchmark assessments.
- All 17 districts have assessments that provide information on elements of literacy and language.
- No districts currently report data elements on kindergarten assessment to the state of Nevada. Data is used at schools and districts level.
- Most districts utilize tools that are commercially available, but others have developed assessments for use within the district.
- All schools have practices to ensure that children that haven't attended kindergarten are ready for first grade; by statute, schools are required to assess children that have not participated in kindergarten for entry into first grade. The Brigance assessment is used by most for this purpose.
- Nearly all counties utilize the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) in the district; eight currently use the MAP with kindergartners. The MAP is an adaptive assessment, administered through a computer and provides information about the child's language and early literacy. It measures only academic subjects and is not considered a formative assessment.
- Schools referenced the use of several screening tools that are important for compliance with IDEA, including DIAL-3, the DAYC, and the Creative Curriculum Gold (Clark County). By Federal statute (IDEA) (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities), evaluations must be available to identify children that have special needs. Parental consent is required for evaluation.

The following table lists by county the tools used by public kindergartens to assess aspects of readiness or progress. Note that many districts work in conjunction with Pre-Kindergarten sites; assessments in Pre-K are not listed in the table. Information collected is from site visits with district personnel. School district publications were also used.

District	Assessments that Take Place in Kindergarten or as Part of Enrollment
Carson City	• Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) • Success for All (SFA Curriculum; includes assessment tools)
Churchill	• Skills Assessment (District Developed) • Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) • Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)
Clark	• Kindergarten Assessment (District Developed)
Douglas	• Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) • Formative Assessment (District Developed) • Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA-2)
Elko	• Varies depending on school
Eureka	• Bracken Basic Concept Scale (BBCS–R) • Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) • Norm Referenced Tests • Success Maker Program
Esmeralda	• Measures of Academic Progress • Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) • Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
Humboldt	• Formative Assessment (Teacher Developed) • Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) • Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) • Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA-2)
Lander	• Gesell Development Observation-(GDO-R)
Lincoln	• Brigance
Lyon	• Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) • Brigance • Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA-2) • Criterion Referenced Tests (CRTs) • Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)
Mineral	• Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)
Nye	• Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)
Pershing	• Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning DIAL-3) • Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) • CRTs • Classroom teacher observation and assessment throughout the year • Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
Storey	• Formative Assessment (Teacher Developed) • Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning DIAL-3
Washoe	• Kindergarten Portfolio (District Developed; some components norm-referenced) • Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA-2) • Developmental Assessment of Young Children (DAYC; not all elements scored)
White Pine	• Brigance IED-II

Nevada's State and County Initiatives

Stakeholders provided examples of relevant initiatives that affect implementation of KEA.

Parents and Family Engagement. Families currently participate in screenings and assessment processes across the state through consent as well as involvement. They participate in parent-teacher conferences (typical in kindergarten but also in some preschool classrooms) to learn about their child's skills, attributes, and knowledge. The types of assessment and parent's level of involvement vary greatly by district, school, as well as by family. Families also complete surveys, forms, and questionnaires to provide information about their child. Some programs have formal family engagement programs, requiring or inviting parents to contribute volunteer hours in the preschool classroom, take classes, or set family goals. Data is often collected by programs on these initiatives to understand and evaluate the effects of parent engagement.

Private ECE and Care Providers (licensed care, home and center-based operated by individuals or private corporations). The assessment data collected by licensed centers and home-based providers throughout the state vary greatly. New requirements include assessment of children (Nevada Department of Health, 2010). Some centers may have extensive child assessment processes; depending on the school approach different tools are used. For example, some schools develop portfolios for children using a variation of work sampling. Some may use checklists to monitor progress toward identified skills, or rating scales. Others may not actively engage in assessment. In general, private providers lack comprehensive data systems to effectively store, maintain and report assessment data.

State Funded Pre-K. The 2001 Nevada Legislative session allocated $3.5 million per year for the establishment of comprehensive ECE program across Nevada. Through this legislation, the Nevada Department of Education offers competitive grants to school districts and community-based organizations to initiate or expand Pre-K education programs. Many districts participate in state Pre-K, and, also participate in data collection to support mandatory evaluation of the project. Several assessments are used for evaluation, including use of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – 4 (PPVT – 4) and the Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT). Parent involvement is also measured.

Head Start and Early Head Start. Many counties have one or more Head Start site. Head Start, which is granted through federal programs, have completed or developed school readiness goals that are supported by child-level data. Head Start (Including Migrant, Tribal, and Early Head Start) collect a large array of data on participating children and families. Head Start must also assess community needs annually.

Existing Kindergarten Assessment. Each school district in Nevada has processes for kindergarten assessment. Many include some type of assessment, but the tools and processes used vary greatly.

Implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Nevada is one of many states to adopt Common Core State Standards. Implementation of the Common Core State Standards at the kindergarten level is an important milestone that has occurred in Nevada. The state Pre-K standards have also been adopted and widely implemented.

Wide Availability of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3 and ASQ-Social Emotional). Easter Seals *Make the First Five Count* has made available the Ages and Stages Questionnaire online to all Nevada families. This tool helps parents to understand if their child is developing typically. The information from the assessment can be used to understand whether follow-up is needed for a concern or suspected delay. Many private providers are also using the ASQ to screen children for potential needs.

Existing Assessments with Information Reported to Nevada Department of Education. Several assessments are administered at Nevada schools in higher grades, with data reported to Nevada Department of Education. Examples include the third grade Criterion Reference Tests (CRTs) and High School Proficiency Exams (HSPEs). While the type and purpose of these tests are different from what is needed for kindergarten, the infrastructure exists for reporting test data at both a district and statewide level.

Nevada Pre-K Standards. The Nevada Pre-K standards describe appropriate outcomes for children at the end of their preschool experience and entering kindergarten. They describe the child's final learning outcome before entering kindergarten. The standards are guidelines to be used with all children in any early childhood education and care setting such as childcare centers, family childcare homes, Head Start, preschools and school district Pre-K programs, as well as by parents, and have been widely adopted.

Striving Readers: Nevada Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grants. Nevada was selected to receive funding for this competitive, federal grant, and four districts: Clark, Lyon, Douglas, and Washoe were selected for funding within the state based on their applications submitted. Each county designed approaches to improve literacy for students, including very young children. Assessment has been built into the process. Nevada State Literacy Team has established a plan to improve literacy beginning in early childhood. Collaboration is an important part of this initiative with personnel in the Nevada Department of Education, school districts, institutions of higher education, community partners, and Nevada families working toward common goals of enhanced literacy for all children.

Results of Provider/Stakeholder and Parent Surveys
Introduction

As part of the needs assessment process, ECE providers, elementary school teachers, and other stakeholders and parents were asked to consider potential projects related to improving school readiness for Nevada's young children. Two surveys (provider and parent surveys) were distributed both online and in hard copy. Provider/stakeholders were asked to provide their first and last name for accuracy purposes, but they were notified that all information would be analyzed and presented in aggregate form and no information would be attributed to any individual. Parents were not asked for their names but were notified that no information would be attributed to any individual and that their personal information and email would not be shared. Parents had the opportunity to take the survey in Spanish; provider/stakeholders did not.

Profile of Respondents

The survey was taken by 201 provider/stakeholders and 537 parents. The large majority of survey respondents were from Clark and Washoe Counties: 40.8% of provider/stakeholders were from Clark and 30.8% were from Washoe; 57.9% of parents were from Clark and 24.4% were from Washoe. The remaining respondents were from Carson, Churchill, Douglas, Elko, Esmeralda, Lincoln, Lyon, Mineral, Nye, Pershing and Storey counties. There were no respondents from Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, and White Pine counties. More than one in ten (11.4%) of parents took the survey in Spanish. Half of the provider/stakeholders completed their survey during or after a KEDS focus group; only 6.7% of parents participated in a KEDS focus group. More than half of all of provider/stakeholders (60.6%) indicated their field as ECE, and many of them selected their position or job title to be a teacher/instructor (40.3%) or an administrator/director (36.9%). The organization type from which the provider/stakeholders came was nearly split into thirds: 36.8% were from public; 34.7% from non-profit and 27.9% from the private sector. Of responding parents, nearly all 90.3% of parents indicated having children the age 5 or younger; 36.1% indicated having children between the ages of 6-10, and 21.0% indicated having children between the ages of 11-18 (Appendix A, Table 1).

Buy-In

Overall, parents support a statewide KEA; 79.8% of parents agree that a statewide KEA is a good idea; 5.6% of parents do not think it is a good idea, and 14.5% of parents are not sure (Appendix A, Figure 1 & 2, Table 2).

Parent Buy-In for Kindergarten Entry Assessment

32
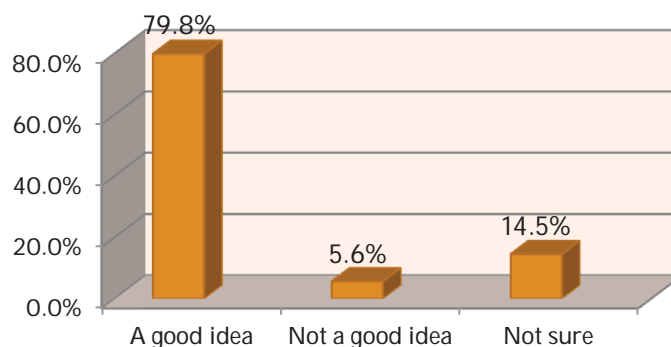
Parents responded whether they are being provided enough information on what is expected for their child to be ready for kindergarten n = 530

Unsure, 23.8%

Yes, 33.8%

No, 42.5%
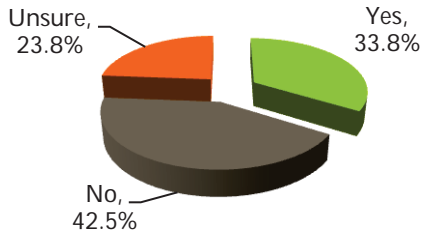
The majority of parents indicated that sharing information about children's progress from preschool through 12th grade is a good idea. However, the parent opinion is split in regard to whether parents have been provided enough information on what to expect for their child to be ready for kindergarten. Nearly half of parents surveyed (42.5%) do not think they are provided enough information on what is expected for kindergarten and about 25% of parents are unsure.

n = 528: 64.8% of parents think it's a good idea for information about children's progress to be shared from preschool through 12th grade; 14.6% of parents do not think it's a good idea and 20.6% of parents are unsure.

Purpose & Goals

Nearly all (97.5%) of provider/stakeholders indicated that screening for potential special needs is the most appropriate and/or important purpose for a statewide KEA process, while 96.7% of parents agreed that informing parents of strengths and areas of growth are most appropriate and/or important (Appendix, Table 3). Overall at least 88% of provider/stakeholders and 91% of parents agreed that the following state purposes are appropriate and/or important for a statewide KEA process:

1. Help guide individual instruction
2. Support transition from ECE to kindergarten
3. Screen for potential special needs
4. Help guide planning for early learning investments
5. Help guide classroom instruction
6. Help families prepare children for kindergarten
7. Inform parents of strengths and areas of growth
8. Help guide district and school planning

Provider/stakeholders indicated that the most important purpose for a statewide kindergarten assessment process is to support transition/alignment between ECE programs and K – 12. 97.0% of parents responded that making sure teachers are aware of special needs and strengths of the child are a very or somewhat important goal in data sharing across different systems (Appendix A, Table 4).

Provider/stakeholders consider the most important purpose for a statewide kindergaten assessment process n = 194

Category	Value
Help guide district and school planning	5.7%
Inform parents of strengths and areas of..	8.8%
Help guide classroom instruction	6.7%
Help guide planning for early learning..	6.7%
Screen for potential special needs	11.9%
Support transition/alignment between ECE..	41.2%
Help guide individual instruction	19.1%
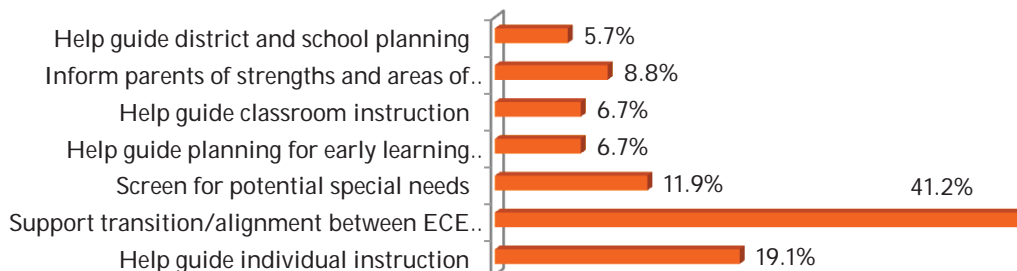
> *Parent Input*
>
> *90.5% of providers/ stakeholders and 86.5% of parents either strongly or somewhat agree that parent input should be included as an information source in kindergarten assessment process.*

Domains

Providers/stakeholders identified the important areas to measure in a statewide kindergarten assessment. Over 90% of provider/stakeholders agreed that the five following domains are very or somewhat important to measure, listed from most highly ranked to least (Appendix A, Table 5):

1. Language and early literacy
2. Social and emotional development
3. Cognition and general knowledge
4. Physical development and health
5. Approaches to learning

Approach

On average, 88.5% of provider/stakeholders and parents strongly or somewhat agree that parent input should be included as an information source in kindergarten assessment (Appendix A, Figure 3). Provider/stakeholders reacted to approaches for implementing a statewide kindergarten assessment process: 68.2% of provider/stakeholders strongly or somewhat agreed that one standard assessment process for all districts would be the best approach for implementation, and an additional one in five (20.3%) of provider/stakeholders somewhat or strongly disagreed that this approach would be the best for implementation. Over 80% of provider/stakeholders strongly or somewhat agreed that 1) direct assessments, 2) checklists,

questionnaires, rating scales and 3) portfolios and work samples are possible approaches for collecting information on what children know and are able to do (Appendix A, Table 6).

Provider/stakeholders indicated how much instructional time they would be willing to invest per child for one year in the assessment process. The largest percent of provider/stakeholders were unsure, 21.9% indicated that they would be willing to invest up to 1 hour and 19.8% indicated that they would be willing to invest more than 4 hours.

Concerns & Challenges

Provider/stakeholders and parents rated their concerns related to a statewide KEA.

- 85.4%% of provider/stakeholders identified that the cost to ECE and care providers is the most significant concern.
- 73.5% of parents identified that the ability of schools and systems to collect and report information accurately is the greatest concern (Appendix A, Table 8). In regard to the overall kindergarten assessment process, parents ranked their top three concerns as 1) the ability of schools/systems to assess children in a meaningful way, 2) misuse of data, and 3) concerns that children will be labeled.
- 28.0% of parents are not very concerned or at all concerned about privacy and security of data, while 53.2% of parents reported that privacy/security of data is very or slightly concerning (Appendix A, Table 7).
- 89.8% of provider/stakeholders anticipate that training teachers or assessors may be the most significant challenge in implementing a statewide kindergarten assessment process. 37.3% of provider/stakeholders anticipate that privacy concerns will be the least significant challenge, while 61.1% think it will be a very or somewhat significant challenge (Appendix A, Table 9).

Open-Ended

Provider/stakeholders indicated how much instructional time per child they would be willing to invest in the assessment process for one year   N = 192

Category	Percent
Unsure	28.6%
More than 4 hours	19.8%
Up to 4 hours	7.8%
Up to 3 hours	6.3%
Up to 2 hours	9.9%
Up to 1 hour	21.9%
Less than 30 minutes	3.6%
None	2.1%

■ Percent
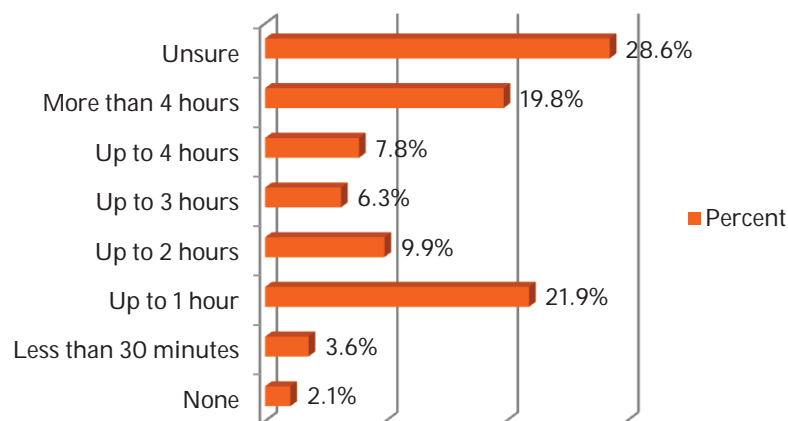
Provider/stakeholders and parents were asked to provide any additional questions, concerns, or positive feedback related to a KEA and an early childhood data system.

Discussion of Outreach Data

Assessment is important to districts, schools, families, and teachers in Nevada. Assessment data is currently used at the district level to understand trends and student populations. Though not uniformly, kindergarten assessment is currently used to improve classroom instruction, to develop a personal record for the child that can be shared with parents, and track progress over time. They may be used to identify unique needs or strengths of individual children. Statewide, each assessment exists for all of these purposes; however, assessment instruments and processes very greatly and there are opportunities to improve existing practices.

While families were not asked to specifically comment about existing kindergarten assessment, most were not aware of assessments in place, and were positive toward the implementation of a common KEA. Just less than half (42.5%) of all parents that answered the survey said that parents did not have enough information about what it takes to be ready for kindergarten. In focus groups, families identified interest and a need for more information about readiness and progress so that they could help the child be successful.

Private providers were also overall favorable to a common KEA, but expressed concerns more frequently than parents, including costs, misuse of data, etc.

The desired purpose of assessment determines in most cases, characteristics of its administration. For example, in one district, student data is used to help understand and measure teacher effectiveness. Assessments are administered by people other than the child's teacher to help provide objectivity. In other cases, assessment is for the purpose of informing instruction. Teachers integrate assessments in teaching practice with individual children, recording important milestones as they are achieved. Still other assessments are completed with the assistance of computers, providing standardized information about the child quickly for the purpose of understanding baseline, curriculum match, and progress. The time per child, as well as training required for administrations, and cost, varies depending on overall purpose and instrument used.

In some districts, there is considerable investment in a specific tool. Investments include all resources – training time, expense of purchasing or developing the tool, and commitment to data systems that support collection, maintenance and reporting of assessment data. This may translate into reluctance to change existing instruments and processes that are working well for their purposes.

Information to describe the degree to which existing assessment practices meet cultural and linguistic needs of students is limited. The number of instruments makes it difficult to analyze in depth their match to the students served. In most cases, teachers, administrators and parents expressed that there was some support for Spanish speaking families, but not enough; resources exist but there is continued need for information, interpretation and translation in Spanish.

Effective use of assessments with children with disabilities is not easily addressed. Many of the instruments are able to be used in specific situations, depending on the child's disability. The

district or schools' ability to administer appropriately is in place, but, often the need for specialized services is higher than what is available within communities. The needs assessment also identified through surveys a strong interest in screening for special needs, and, interviews identified interest among some districts in having uniform assessments across the state; they also identified the importance of instruments that are meaningful and practical. ECE providers identified concerns related to the ability of children to access needed interventions: issues of availability of services and parental concern and consent were identified as barriers to children receiving additional support they need.

Districts have different practices for sharing information about assessment. In most cases, assessment data is maintained by the school, which has a limited capacity to aggregate and report it. Many schools and districts actively share information with parents through parent-student conferences. Report cards are the most common way that schools provide assessment information to parents about kindergartner's progress. Most districts have portals where parents can access information about their child; however, assessment data is not often available through these data systems and parents of kindergartners are less likely than parents of older children to know how to access this information. Schools and districts are typically very protective of children's data, taking privacy laws very seriously. Data is not typically shared with any organization or program outside of the school or district, with the exception of providing access to parents or legal guardians.

Summary of Nevada's Assets

Interest in collaborating. In all counties, interviewees expressed interest in collaborating. In some cases this was expressed as a desire to connect ECE programs to K-12 education, bringing together educators in conversation and trainings toward a common goal of school readiness. It was also expressed as a desire to connect with other districts that are working through similar challenges. Overall, districts were open to sharing what they do, and are interested in learning what others are doing about improving school readiness and positive outcomes for children. Among provider surveys, 69% agreed that one standard assessment process for all districts was important (respondents could select more than one answer for this question, but this was the top choice selected by the most respondents).

Broad support for KEA. In surveys, there was broad approval for a common kindergarten assessment. A majority (83%) of providers and other stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed, and 80% of parents agreed or strongly agreed. In many interviews and focus groups, there was also support. In some cases, people were reluctant to agree or disagree, wanting more information about the process, intentions and how data would be used. Stakeholders representing different groups and geographic areas expressed openness to tools and processes that improve instruction and provide data to improve programs.

Agreement about Priorities to Address. Overall, surveys and focus group participants identified child-centered goals as important to accomplish through KEA, including screening for special needs to ensure children get the services they need; supporting transition and alignment; providing information to parents and families. There was less emphasis on system-level goals among survey participants; however, interviews with district and NDE personnel expressed the importance of data to support decision-making.

Broad support for the working definition of school readiness. There was strong agreement that the Nevada ECAC's working definition of school readiness definition is appropriate. Many commented that they liked that multiple domains were included, and it seemed to include the "whole child." Stakeholders also liked that there was shared responsibility for a ready child among families, schools, educators, communities and systems. The definition was adopted by the Nevada ECAC in June 2012.

Engagement of stakeholders across the state. The needs assessment process was intended to be inclusive, and many people across the state were able to participate and provide input. Continued engagement and input in future phases of planning and implementation will be very important.

Existing kindergarten assessments. Every district in Nevada currently uses some assessments during kindergarten. Most occur early in the year and also at other times throughout the kindergarten year. Several schools provide assessments in the summer before kindergarten. Kindergarten assessment is widely practiced, and many see value in a coordinated, more comprehensive system within the state.

Existing infrastructure. Overall, systems are not connected, and practices are diverse. However, there are examples of statewide systems that can be leveraged. For example, all districts that participate in state-funded Pre-K utilize the same assessment tools and collect similar data. Head Start (and Early Head Start) sites utilize different tools, but, have a common focus on school readiness goals. Many private and non-profit schools are using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ 3 and ASQ SE, Social Emotional) as a developmental screening. Easter Seals has implemented a free, online ASQ for parents in the state of Nevada. Many programs use nationally recognized assessments that have already been linked or aligned to other data systems and assessments.

Summary of Needs and Barriers

Funding. Many districts face budget shortfalls and expressed an uncertainty that any new investment could be made in KEA. Requirements for new processes that require districts to spend would be difficult for many. This is a common issue and concern for stakeholders at all levels, including policy makers, districts, and programs both private and nonprofit that serves young children. This will require that some prioritization takes place, and that purposes for assessment are further defined so that selection of tools and processes can be made with resources allocated and projected.

Accessible high quality preschool for children and kindergarten that meets children's needs. Most districts within Nevada maintain a waiting list for state Pre-K. Waiting lists are also maintained for most Head Start sites. Subsidies for child care have decreased dramatically in recent years. Together, this means that statewide young children from homes with lower income may face considerable barriers accessing high quality preschool experiences. Multiple studies suggest that high quality preschool can improve school readiness among children with risk factors, but, it is available for only a fraction of Nevada's children. Additionally, kindergarten is available in every district but full-day options are limited, with several districts offering no full-day kindergarten or full-day kindergarten for a fee. Because

children come to kindergarten with very different backgrounds and experiences with education, a common tool that addresses all needs may be difficult. Adding to this, attendance in kindergarten is not considered mandatory by statute, so, KEA will still miss a portion of children within the state.[3]

Shared understanding of how data should be used. Many expressed concern that KEAs could be used to keep children from entering (or continuing) in kindergarten. While there was broad agreement that exclusion was inappropriate, and this notion is widely supported by publications on kindergarten assessment, some stakeholders including parents, educators, and administrators noted that KEA could be helpful for determining whether a child was actually ready for kindergarten, inform placement (including encouraging parents to wait another year, until the child is ready). This issue is one that requires further discussion; clearly the goal is school readiness, and children should not be excluded.

Appropriate assessments for children with disabilities. Selection of an appropriate instrument requires attention and investment in the selection process. Currently, screening tools used vary across the state.

Assessment with English Language Learners. Children that speak Spanish or another language at home will benefit from assessments that are in their home language (apart from assessments used to gauge knowledge and fluency in English). Not all commercially available assessments are available in multiple languages. In the case of district or locally developed assessments, translation takes time and testing to ensure reliability and validity across languages. Families that speak Spanish at home make up a considerable portion of Nevada's school age population, but, are not evenly distributed among counties. Some districts have considerably higher needs related to serving their Spanish speaking students and families.

Preferences for kindergarten assessment. There were often strong preferences noted related to assessment, including who should assess, when testing should occur, how information should be used, and whether assessment should be simple and straightforward verses more in-depth and requiring more time. Many of these issues may be resolved depending on decisions made on the primary purpose of assessment; however, this also means that reaching full consensus on an assessment may be difficult.

Differences in Purposes for Assessment Among Groups. Overall, there was the strongest agreement for assessment that supports education of children including screening for special needs and supporting transition between early childhood education and care programs and K-12 education. There was less support from stakeholders to use data for district or statewide planning; however, that is likely a desired result from administrators and policy makers. Attention to this issue will need to be evaluated during the planning process; if data is to be used for reasons other than the assessment is designed, additional study or processes may be needed to insure integrity of the data and process.

---

[3] In Nevada, attendance at school is required for a child between 7 and 18 years of age, and a waiver from attendance available for child 6 years of age. A developmental screening test required to determine placement in first grade for children that do not attend kindergarten. Not all children attend kindergarten.

Diversity of Existing Tools and Processes. The programs and systems that serve very young children and their families in Nevada are difficult to generalize. The services that are available to children vary greatly depending on where they live. The choices that families make around education vary considerably. Schools are also different. The availability of high quality Pre-Kindergarten experiences is limited. In each district, different tools and processes are used to collect information about entering kindergartners and their readiness for school. In many but not all districts, the existing tools used were part of an intentional selection process and have required training and an investment of resources. In some cases, the differences simply reflect different processes; in others, different tools have been selected because of different priority populations. In some cases different tools and processes are a reflection of different approaches and pedagogical philosophies.

Organizational Autonomy. A multitude of programs, services, schools and systems serve very young children and their families in Nevada. At the state level, there are several departments and divisions that serve very young children and their families. Programs that serve very young children utilize different guidelines and comply with different mandates— depending on location, service type, etc. School readiness is comprehensive and addresses many aspects of a child's life. Leadership from a single state agency would be advantageous.

District decision making. Decision making for public schools happens at the district level. Changes that affect each district can be difficult to make quickly. Legislative actions can put into place statewide changes, but, require broad agreement to be passed. While the economic conditions vary among the state's counties, many stakeholders specifically expressed their concern about an unfunded mandate.

Summary of Findings, Recommendations, Draft Principles, and Next Steps

Findings

- � Stakeholders have questions, concerns, and preferences related to KEA; however overall, there is support for movement toward common kindergarten assessment in Nevada.
- ✚ Districts currently utilize assessment in kindergarten; however, most assess elements of literacy and language, with limited attention to other domains of learning.[4] Districts utilize different instruments and processes for assessment, and there is considerable diversity among purposes, processes and instruments used.
- ✚ Among educators, there is interest in improving and enhancing assessment, although many were cautious not to overload teachers, children, or systems. If the adopted KEA

---

[4] Screening and assessment for special needs typically is inclusive of multiple domains of learning in compliance with IDEA.

adds value for educators and districts, it is more likely to be successful (as opposed to a common assessment seen as dictated or mandated without input from those that use it).

✂ The state is diverse culturally, racially/ethnically, economically and in other dimensions. Agreement on a common assessment tool will require that it can be used with diverse populations and that districts share common goals and vision. Not one tool will be ideal for everyone; consensus on an instrument or process will be necessary to move common KEA forward.

✂ A common statewide KEA tool and process should offer an opportunity for more teamwork and linkages between kindergarten and Pre-K cross-county interaction and peer-to-peer learning. There is broad interest to work together to improve education for young children.

✂ Educators are interested in instruments that align to the Common Core State Standards; no district currently has a fully aligned assessment system.

✂ The needs of all children must be considered, including children with disabilities, children that speak a language other than English, and children from Nevada's tribes.

✂ There are opportunities to improve existing statewide assessments; for example, in the case of screening and assessment for special needs, multiple tools are utilized, but agreement around one would improve the ability of inter-district and agency coordination.

✂ Nationally, there is considerable movement toward statewide KEAs, and lessons learned can be leveraged. However, the field is still limited in terms of cost and flexibility.

Draft Principles

Based on information from the needs assessment, the following principles were documented to reflect the broadest level of agreement for Nevada:

1) Assessments and data should be used to help (individual) children and families.
2) Assessment should be used to drive system improvements.
3) Existing infrastructure should be leveraged to help contain costs.
4) Families are recognized as the most important people in the child's life and must be involved as a partner in their education.
5) It is essential to consider and mitigate unintended consequences while planning a kindergarten entry and data system.
6) The degree to which a community values ECE and care will directly impact the success of a kindergarten entry and data system.
7) Assessment and information (data) sharing will be sensitive to cultural, linguistic and community needs of the child and the family.
8) Existing assessment and information sharing varies by county and will be leveraged whenever possible.
9) Information sharing will facilitate seamless transition of children throughout Nevada from Pre-K to 12 and from district to district.
10) The data system will serve as a way to formalize sharing and linkages between public and private Pre-K -12 including joint participation in training, technical assistance and professional learning communities.
11) Evaluating and improving the system is as important as assessing the child.

12) Publicly available data will be at the aggregate / community level to protect privacy and prevent the misuse of information.

These principles will be further refined and utilized during planning and implementation.

Recommendations

The identified timeline (implementation of a common KEA by 2014-15) will require unrelenting focus among stakeholders. Through further refinement of the purposes for assessment, the appropriate and available tools and processes will narrow. While there may be opportunities to leverage data for multiple purposes, caution should be taken in allowing assessment tools to 'multitask'. More than one tool may be necessary to meet the needs, and, decisions will almost certainly be constrained by available resources. Broad recommendations for selecting an instrument and completing an implementation plan are provided here.

- ⚘ Convene a team of kindergarten teachers and ECE professionals to advise and help select the tool for Nevada in 2012. Representation from each district should be invited. There is broad agreement that common kindergarten assessment could help to improve education in Nevada; it is important that the processes and tools are respectful and inclusive of the perspectives and experiences of families, ECE, educators and administrators, and this requires further input from these stakeholders. Throughout the needs assessment the issue of transition to kindergarten was identified as an opportunity for improvement. Both ECE professionals and kindergarten teachers can work together to improve the system statewide through selection of appropriate kindergarten entry and assessment tools. The ideal tool would be supported by research, align to the CCSS, be appropriate for use with children that have developmental delays, offered in both English and Spanish, and, intended to be used as formative or benchmark assessment to improve instruction and transition for young children.
- ⚘ Using recommendations from the selection team (see previous), seek and secure funding to implement a KEA with support for training. Provide multiple opportunities and modalities for training on the instrument. While the primary focus for the instrument will begin during the kindergarten year, training and materials should be made available to providers of early childhood education and care.
- ⚘ Working with a team of experts statewide (teachers, administrators, ECE professionals, and parent representatives) design a system in coordination with the assessment that facilitates transition. Components may include new opportunities for joint training, communication, and goal-setting.
- ⚘ Link kindergarten assessment data to Nevada's statewide longitudinal data system (Bighorn). Pilot utilization of the assessment and data linkages with Nevada State Pre-K sites, as well as other ECE providers like Head Start programs, nonprofit centers, and private providers.
- ⚘ Drive comprehensive assessment that includes KEA data as well as data to inform other critical components of school readiness. Work with stakeholders to define and select appropriate assessments for the other groups that share responsible for school readiness — they include families, schools, educators, communities, and systems. This data will be valuable for helping to improve educational outcomes and the results of kindergarten

assessment at the community levels. (In the case that no instrument meets the needs identified, consider collaboration with other states for development of the ideal assessment.) Tools including teacher assessments, environmental scales, and other evaluations can be useful in making broad-scale improvements to educational outcomes.

✂ Support an office of early childhood education and care or a way to promote leadership and provide linkages across the many departments that impact domains of school readiness through systems in the state.

✂ Develop accompanying policy statements that limit data use and underscore privacy. The issue of potentially harmful assessment (used to exclude children; used to inappropriately evaluate programs) were stated in multiple research publications and emphasized through the county-level inquiry. Attention to this issue will likely be important in planning, implementation, and maintenance of a KEA.

✂ Develop a framework for communication on assessment that is strengths- based, inclusive, and emphasizes the importance of development (rather than achievement) in kindergarten. Consider the need for broad, statewide communication about the purpose and implementation of Nevada's KEA.

✂ Evaluate the implementation of assessment in Years 1 and 2, including information from stakeholders like educators, families, and administrators. Review tools and processes and if needed, make adjustments to improve the system. As part of the evaluation families, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders should have the opportunity to provide input toward process improvement.

Next Steps

During the initial phases of the planning process, the following principles for decision-making related to this project were identified:

- *Assign priorities* – All the things that need to be decided on are not equal in importance.

- *Data-based* – The most current information should be used to establish priorities and make informed decisions.

- *Paint a scenario of desired outcome* – Defining a vision specifically is necessary to understand whether and when the desired outcomes have been achieved.

- *Critical Analysis* – Explore the ramifications for all who will be affected. Understand the impact of decisions on all stakeholders.

- *Define the means for resolving conflict* – Consensus-based decision making is often complicated and sometimes involves some conflicts or dissatisfaction. In the absence of consensus, the ideal is to pick one solution where the benefits of the outcome outweigh the possible risks.

In addition to good planning, good decision-making is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, skillful execution and represents the wise choice of many alternatives. These principles will be adopted for statewide planning of the KEA. A general outline of critical steps are provided as a pathway toward selection of an instrument:

- Meeting 1: Using the information from the Needs Assessment, develop criteria for rating available assessment instruments and processes.
- Meeting 2: Review, discuss and evaluate options. Utilize information on what other states are doing, as well as incorporating innovative ideas from the group. If possible rate all assessment systems.
- Meeting 3: Define resource requirements (money, calendar time, and staff time for training). Systematically compare this to resources available. If no ideal assessment, consider the time and costs of development, and revisit steps of meetings 1-3.
- Meeting 4: Make final selection and write statewide implementation plan. Consider options such as piloting of new assessments and phasing by geography or population.
- After the needs assessment is finalized to include county and public feedback and a draft implementation plan has been developed, counties will receive individualized technical assistance and support as needed to proceed with implementation, based on their readiness and unique needs. The statewide implementation plan will be informed by the county plans so that training and technical assistance to implement tools and systems can be delivered efficiently and effectively. To be successful in implementing in the existing timeline, the following will be needed by a committed workgroup: active participation in planning meetings; providing information and access to data needed to prepare and conduct the needs assessment project; serving as the liaison to facilitate communication between SEI and ECE stakeholders; reviewing final project deliverables; and facilitating final approval of reports and other deliverables with the Nevada ECAC.

Final steps will include publishing an implementation plan for state review and adoption. Individual county implementation includes opportunities for customization based on local needs and preferences.

Appendix

A. Survey Data

	Survey Respondents from Each County	% Survey of Provider/Stakeholders n = 201	% Survey of Parents n = 537
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS	Carson	4.5%	2.0%
	Churchill	2.0%	0.4%
	Clark	**40.8%**	**57.9%**
	Douglas	8.5%	1.2%
	Elko	0.5%	10.9%
	Esmeralda	0.5%	0.0%
	Lincoln	1.0%	0.6%
	Lyon	1.5%	1.8%
	Mineral	3.0%	0.0%
	Nye	5.5%	0.6%
	Pershing	1.0%	0.2%
	Storey	0.5%	0.0%
	Washoe	30.8%	24.4%
	Survey Completed in Spanish	%	%
		0.0%	11.4%
	Participation in KEDS Focus Group	% Completed survey during/after KEDS focus group n = 201	% Participated in KEDS focus group n = 537
		50.2%	6.7%
	Field of Practice n = 180	%	% Parents with children ages: n = 532 − 536
	Special Education	4.4%	**5 or younger** **90.3%**
	Health and Human Services	6.7%	6-10 yrs 36.1%
	Education (K-12)	26.1%	11-18 yrs 21.0%
	Education (Early Childhood)	**60.6%**	
	Advocacy/Policy	2.2%	
	Position/Job Title n = 176	%	
	Administrator/Director	36.9%	
	Early Childhood Education and Care Provider	17.0%	
	Parent	5.7%	
	Teacher/Instructor	**40.3%**	
	Organization Type n = 190	%	
	Public	**36.8%**	

		Private	27.9%	
		Non-profit	34.7%	
		Public/Charter	0.5%	

Table 1

% of providers/stakeholders reaction to the idea of developing a statewide early childhood data system

n = 197

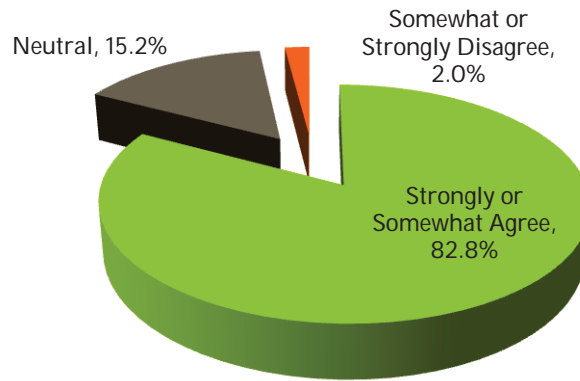Neutral, 15.2%

Somewhat or Strongly Disagree, 2.0%

Strongly or Somewhat Agree, 82.8%

Figure 1

% of parents who think that statewide kindergarten entry assessment is a good idea

n = 531

Not Sure, 14.5%

No, 5.6%

Yes, 79.8%

Figure 2

46
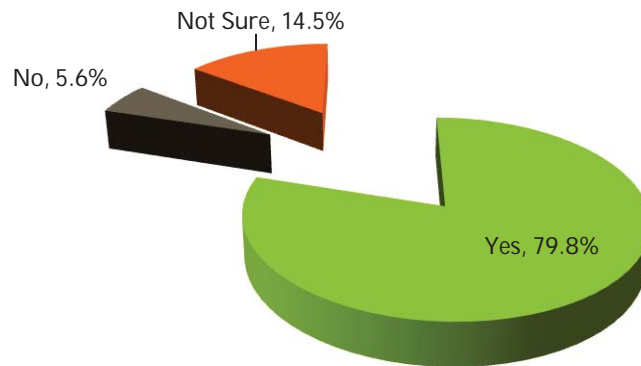
BUY-IN	Providers/Stakeholders		Parents	
	An early childhood data system for Nevada would allow various systems to share information for the purpose of improving outcomes for children. What is your reaction to the idea of developing a statewide early childhood data system? n = 197		A common KEA for Nevada would mean that in every district, readiness for kindergarten would be measured in a similar way. Do you think that statewide KEA is a good idea? N = 531	
	Strongly or Somewhat Agree	**82.8%**	**Yes**	**79.8%**
	Neutral	15.2%	No	5.6%
	Somewhat or Strongly Disagree	2.0%	Not Sure	14.5%

Table 3

PURPOSES	Over 88% of respondents indicate that the following state purposes are appropriate and/or important for a statewide KEA process.		
		Providers/ Stakeholders n = 197	**Parents n = 494**
	Help guide individual instruction	88.7%	93.6%
	Support transition from ECE to kindergarten	94.8%	94.6%
	Screen for potential special needs	**97.5%**	96.3%
	Help guide planning for early learning investments	90.6%	
	Help guide classroom instruction	89.0%	
	Help families prepare children for kindergarten		95.1%
	Inform parents of strengths and areas of growth	95.9%	**96.7%**
	Help guide district and school planning	90.5%	91.6%

Table 4

GOALS	Parents identified which goals are most important in data sharing across different systems n = 468	Very Important	Somewhat Important
	Teachers have information about the child to help guide their instruction	76.9%	17.0%
	Teachers are aware of special needs and strengths of the child	**85.0%**	**12.0%**
	Preschools and childcare have information about how well they have prepared children for kindergarten so that they can make improvements	74.6%	19.6%
	Districts and schools have more information for planning	63.5%	26.3%
	It is easier for children to move among schools or districts	60.4%	24.3%

Table 5

DOMAINS	Over 90% of provider/stakeholders indicated that the following areas are important to measure in a statewide kindergarten assessments process n = 196		
		Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral
	Social and emotional development	83.7%	14.3%	2.0%
	Language and early literacy	**89.1%**	**9.3%**	1.6%
	Physical development and health	72.5%	23.3%	4.1%
	Cognition and general knowledge	79.7%	17.2%	2.6%
	Approaches to Learning	74.5%	18.8%	5.7%

Table 6

APPROACH	Provider/stakeholders reacted to the following potential implementation approaches for a statewide kindergarten assessment process n = 197		
		Strongly or Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat or Strongly Disagree
	One standard assessment process for all districts	**68.2%**	11.5%	20.3%
	Districts choose tools and methods from a specified list	60.5%	20.0%	19.5%
	Districts develop local procedures that meet specified criteria	61.7%	19.1%	19.1%
	All decisions are made by districts with external TA support	47.5%	23.5%	**28.9%**
	Provider/stakeholders indicated their reaction to the following possible approaches for collecting information on what children know and are able to do n = 197		
		Strongly or Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat or Strongly Disagree
	Direct assessments	82.5%	8.7%	8.7%
	Checklists, questionnaires, rating scales	80.9%	12.9%	6.2%
	Portfolios and work samples	**85.8%**	8.4%	5.8%

Table 7

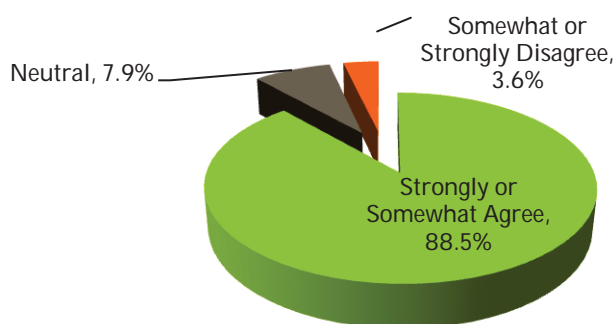## Providers and parents agree that parent input should be part of a kindergarten assessment

Neutral, 7.9%

Somewhat or Strongly Disagree, 3.6%

Strongly or Somewhat Agree, 88.5%

Figure 3

Concerns about the following issues related to an early childhood data system		
	Providers/ Stakeholders n = 189	**Parents n = 516**
	Very or Somewhat Significant	Very or Slightly Concerned
Cost to districts and schools	75.4%	56.1%
Cost to ECE and care providers	**80.1%**	58.9%
Misuse of data	75.1%	68.0%
Data analysis and reporting capacity	77.5%	
Time away from instruction	77.7%	54.7%
Teacher burden	75.1%	50.7%
Pressure on children	70.2%	60.0%
Privacy & security of data concerns	64.4%	66.6%
Concerns that children will be labeled		66.3%
The ability of schools and systems to collect and report accurate information		**73.4%**

Parents have the following concerns about kindergarten assessment process n = 523			
	Very or Slightly Concerned	Neutral	Not Very Concerned or Not Concerned at All
Cost to districts and schools	55.2%	25.2%	17.5%
Misuse of data	62.9%	15.4%	20.9%
The ability of schools/systems to assess children in a meaningful way	**73.5%**	14.5%	11.0%
Time away from instruction	53.5%	23.7%	21.5%
Teacher burden	48.0%	26.6%	23.4%
Pressure on children	53.9%	17.6%	27.3%
Concerns that children will be labeled	61.3%	16.3%	21.9%
Privacy & security of data concerns	53.2%	18.2%	**28.0%**

Table 8

Provider/stakeholders anticipate the following challenges in implementing a statewide kindergarten assessment process n = 200		
	Very or Somewhat Significant	Less Significant or Not Significant at All
Cost to districts and schools	85.4%	11.1%
Training of teachers or assessors	**89.8%**	8.7%
Misuse of data	64.9%	32.0%
Data analysis and reporting capacity	71.8%	23.9%
Time away from instruction	76.7%	20.2%
Teacher burden	77.7%	19.6%
Pressure on children	66.1%	32.3%
Privacy Concerns	61.1%	**37.3%**
Security of Data	64.1%	34.4%

Table 9

OPEN ENDED	Providers/stakeholders provided additional questions, concerns or positive feedback related to the KEA, early childhood data system or both n = 44	
	Theme	Description of Theme
	Other (16)	Some providers/stakeholders asked questions (5), commented on how questions were phrased (2), commented on the conference (1) or not being part of the focus group (1); other respondents left their contact information (2), stated an opinion to separate children of differing performance levels in the classroom (1), and commented on the status of their ECE (1); None & N/A (3).
	Assessments and standards that are developmentally appropriate, authentic, positive (7)	Providers/stakeholders commented that assessments should be authentic and incorporated into daily learning (1), positive environment (1) and should be developmentally appropriate (2); respondents promoted development of the whole child with individual learning styles (2); one respondent commented on the concern of becoming a data driven and outcome school, where children miss out on play and opportunities to learn (1).
	Loss of teaching time for administering assessments (4)	Providers/stakeholders commented that taking teacher time away from instruction for individual assessment is a concern (3) and that teachers need all of the instructional time with the new common core (1).
	Increase support/training and programs (4)	Providers/stakeholders commented that parents and teachers more training (2) and that it is important to plan programs with support from leaders of all sectors (1); another respondent commented for the need to increase ECE programs to provide help for everyone's child (1).
	Data system that is connected, streamlined and whole (4)	Providers/stakeholders support the premise for systematic data collection and same assessments for all children (2) and agree that streamlining ECE and checking for overall success of the program in kindergarten makes sense (1); one comment has interest in monitoring kids as a whole system for the state (1).
	Private ECE (4)	Providers/stakeholders commented that assessments required for public education should not be enforced in private schools (1) because they are already using their own assessments that one respondent commented would like to continue using (1); another respondent reported the need for increased communicate between CCSD and private schools (1); a comment was made that private schools are over-preparing students for kindergarten (1).
	Another assessment not needed (2)	A respondent summarized concerns regarding the necessity and use of standardized tests, especially when qualitative data regarding students' performance is collected through the year by teachers (1) and indicated that another assessment is not necessary (1).
	Promote all day kindergarten (2)	Providers/stakeholders comment in support of all-day kindergarten (2).

Table 10

Parents provided additional questions, concerns or positive feedback related to the KEA, early childhood data system or both n = 88	
Theme	Description of Theme
Other (19)	Some parents asked questions (4); parents commented teacher time spent in education (3); parents requested information on KEDS focus group (1) and commented on teaching more languages in schools (1); None & N/A (10).
Concerns and the negative use of assessment & information sharing (17)	Parents commented about limiting data sharing due to privacy violations (4), even though a parent stated that data sharing may help kids, families and educators (1); parents commented on utilizing information to benefit kids (1) and not to share information that labels them in a negative way (2), especially in regard to minority children (1); parent commented on concern that teachers/administration/district may not use assessment information correctly to help an individual child succeed in kindergarten (1); parents commented that assessments may overwhelm or put stress/pressure on children in kindergarten (3) when their attention would be better on appropriate developmental activities that are fun (1), grow confidence, camaraderie (1), social skills (2).
Promotion of assessment (15)	Parent commented that assessments must be rigorous and also remain true to assessing skills that should be mastered (1), so that all children enter with the same skills (1); parents commented that assessment is a good idea to make sure that children do not fall behind (3) and to measure what they have learned (1); parents wished assessment was already in place for previous children (2); parent commented that KEA is an excellent program (1) to give children a head start (2), but the measure must be impartial where parents can leave additional comments for insight and not bias the assessment (1); parents commented that assessment can benefit children and help teachers/parents (2), and assessment is crucial in seeing developmental and social/emotional delays as well as strengths (1).
Fairness & disadvantage in assessment (10)	Parents commented that assessments are good but not for the purpose of leaving children behind or putting them in lesser ability classes (2); parents stated that Nevada's children are disadvantaged due to larger classrooms in public school (1), lack of expectation for children to attend kindergarten and lack of oversight in day care (1); parent stated that Pre-K assessments are discriminatory because all students do not have the same chance to attend due to financial resources (1); parent stated that a Pre-K assessment by a non-college educated professional seems unfair (1); parent commented that assessments must be fair across the board (1) and standardized so that all children have the same assessment environment (2); parent commented putting kids in kindergarten when they are not ready interrupts other kids from learning (1).
Early entry program & full-day kindergarten (10)	Parents commented that advanced children under age 5 would benefit from starting in an early entry program, not being held out of kindergarten (5); parents commented that kindergarten should be all day (3) because kids are not equally prepared when all day kindergarten is not mandatory (1); parent recommended the use of electronic devices in early education (1).
Budget/ spending issues (9)	Parents commented that a childhood data system is a waste of time, money, and spending should be allocated to under-resourced teachers (2) who have a low staff/child ratio (3) and are being laid off (1); parents commented that too much time and resources are spent on testing and not enough on instruction (2); a respondent suggested to use releases of information to obtain information instead of buying an expensive state system (1).
Parent information sessions (8)	Parent commented that expectations of children entering kindergarten are very unclear and confusing (1), and parents would benefit from schools hosting information sessions for parents to prepare children for kindergarten (3) by the time children are age 3-4 (1); parents commented that information sharing is vital among parents and educators (2) who need more training and classes (1)

Table 10

B. Summary of State Kindergarten Assessment (States not Recipients of RTT-ELC)

Besides the 9 winners of the RTT-ELC, most other states that have some form of kindergarten assessment in place or in a planning stage. To summarize top national efforts and best practice in KEA, key information was extracted from comprehensive research by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCLS), *State Approaches to School Readiness Report* (Stedron & Berger, 2010), and grant applications of all the *Race to the Top* 2012 winners. In the following table, states that did submit a grant for the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge and were not selected as winners are indicated with an asterisk (*). States that did not submit a grant for the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge are marked with two asterisks **. The following states have a newly developed form of kindergarten assessment, post data collected for the NCLS (2010) report and prior to October 2011: District of Columbia*, Illinois*, Kentucky*, Maine*, Michigan*, Mississippi*, Missouri*, Montana**, Nebraska*, Nevada*, New Jersey*, New York*, Oregon*, Puerto Rico, Vermont* & Wisconsin*. The following states were previously considered "in development or roll out phase" in NCLS (2010) report: Pennsylvania*, Utah** & West Virginia*.

State	Domains Assessed	Assessment Instrument	Data Use
Alabama**	Reading	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)	To plan instruction
Alaska**	7 domains: Physical Well-Being, Health and Motor Development, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Cognition and General Knowledge, Communication, Language and Literacy	Revised Alaska Developmental Profile (RADP)	Inform state policy decisions
Arizona*	Reading	Locally determined, but encouraged to select from those approved by the state	Local reporting to monitor students' early learning progress and guide interventions
Arkansas*	6 domains: General knowledge, Oral communication, Written Language, Math Concepts, Work and Habits, and Attentive Behavior	Qualls Early Learning Inventory (QELI)	Local reporting, including to parents, in order to target instruction at the appropriate developmental level
Colorado*	Reading	Tiered QRIS: Districts select from DIBELS; Phonological Awareness Screening (PALS); Dev. Reading Assessment (DRA2)	To plan instruction

State	Domains Assessed	Assessment Instrument	Data Use
Connecticut*	6 domains: Language, Literacy, Numeracy, Physical/ Motor, Creative/ Aesthetic, and Personal/ Social	Fall Kindergarten Entrance Inventory	Included in state's Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework and reported at the district level
Florida*	7 domains: Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Social and Personal Skills, Science, Social Studies, Physical Health and Fitness, and Creative Arts	Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener, consisting of ECHOS and portions of the Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading (FAIR)	To determine statewide readiness rates and Pre-Kindergarten program evaluation
Georgia*	6 domains: English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Students, Personal/ Social Development, and Approaches to Learning	Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)	To plan instruction and help determine first grade readiness
Hawaii*	6 domains: Approaches to Learning, Literacy, Math, School Behaviors and Skills, Social-Emotional Behaviors, and Physical Well-being	Hawaii State School Readiness Assessment (HSSRA), plus a separate individual school readiness assessment beginning in 2010-2011	HSSRA is used locally for school improvement plans, school transition plans, and planning instruction, and to track results statewide, while the individual readiness assessment is used to determine grade placement and advancement.
Idaho**	Reading	Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI)	To guide individual interventions and as part of the state accountability system
Iowa*	Reading	Districts select from: DIBELS, Phonological Awareness Test (PAT), Basic Reading Inventory, Early Literacy Assessments, Observational Survey, Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI), or Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation	To inform state policy decisions and as a "mild accountability measure"
Kansas*	Reading and math	Determined locally	To determine child's level of performance and guide instruction

State	Domains Assessed	Assessment Instrument	Data Use
Louisiana**	Multi-Domain; varies based on instrument selected	Districts may use of: Brigance K-1, Chicago EARLY Assessment, Developing Skills Checklist (DSC), Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning-Third Edition (DIAL-3), DIAL-Revised, Early Screening Inventory – Revised, or Screening Test for Education Prerequisite Skills (STEPS)	Local reporting including to parents, for "placing children within a regular kindergarten classroom setting and planning their instructional programs to meet identified needs"
New Mexico*	Reading	DIBELS	"To determine placement at an instructional level and the effectiveness of" kindergarten programs
North Dakota**	Varies based on the instrument selected	Locally determined	To guide instruction and assess the need for additional intervention
Oklahoma*	Reading	Districts must use one of DIBELS, Berkeley Evaluation and Assessment Research (BEAR) Assessment, or Literacy First	To guide instruction and intervention
Tennessee**	Varies based on the assessment selected	Locally determined; must be "comprehensive"	To guide instruction
Texas**	Reading	Districts can choose the TPRI or one of a number of other approved assessments	To guide individual interventions and to notify parents of a student's reading skills (Also used to evaluate Pre-K programs)
Vermont*	5 domains: Social and Emotional, Development Approaches to Learning, Communication, Cognitive Development and General Knowledge, and Physical Health and Development	Ready Kindergarteners Survey	To track the portion of the students ready for kindergarten
Virginia**	Reading	Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)	To "identify children in need of additional instruction and to provide early intervention services to those

State	Domains Assessed	Assessment Instrument	Data Use
			students with diagnosed needs," and by the governor's office to track kindergarten readiness
Wyoming**	9 domains: Representation, Language, Writing, Reading, Geometry/ Algebra, Number/ Operations, Scientific Thinking, Self-Regulation, Social Problem-solving	Instructional Foundations for Kindergarten (IFK)	To identify "the status of young students and to establish a baseline and trends for data indicators on children entering kindergarten"

C. Glossary

Adaptive Assessment: Online/computerized learning where educational programs adjust the difficulty of test questions in relation to a student's responses (Sawchuk, 2010)

Alignment: A process of grouping distinct information or data (for example, combing information about individual schools or programs into a data set describing an entire school district or state (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003)

Assessment: A systematic procedure for obtaining information from observation, interviews, portfolios, projects, tests and other sources that can be used to make judgments about children's characteristics (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003)

Benchmark Assessments: Assessments administered periodically throughout the school year, at specified times during a curriculum sequence, to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to an explicit set of longer-term learning goals. The design and choice of benchmark assessments is driven by the purpose, intended users, and uses of the instruments. Benchmark assessment can inform policy, instructional planning, and decision-making at the classroom, school and/or district levels (Assessment and Accountabililty Comprehensive Center, 2010)

Common Core State Standards: Released In June 2010, so that state leaders would adopt national career and college readiness standards for math and literacy in K-12; States adopting Common Core Standards have been likely to reassess how the ELGs align with their expectations for young children's learning and development in the early elementary years (Daily, Burkhauser, & Halle, 2010)

Criterion or Performance-Oriented Assessment: Assessment in which the person's performance (i.e., score) is interpreted by comparing it with a pre-specified standard or specific content and/or skills (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003)

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive: Development and implementation of early childhood curriculum, assessment, or program evaluation that is attuned to issues of values, identify, worldview, language and other culture-related variables (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003)

Developmentally Appropriate: NAEYC defines developmentally appropriate practices as those that "result from the process of professionals making decisions about the well-being and education of children based on at least three important kinds of information or knowledge: what is known about child development and learning...; what is known about the strengths, interests, and needs of each individual child in the group...; and knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live" (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003)

Differentiated Instruction: Efforts of teachers to respond to the variances among learners in the classroom. For example, whenever a teacher reaches out to an individual or small group to vary his or her teaching in order to create the best possible learning experience, that teacher is differentiating instruction (Tomlinson, 2004)

Domains of Learning: A child's readiness in school is generally attributed to five domains of learning: Physical well-being (e.g., health, motor development); Social and emotional development (e.g., social skills, emotion regulation); Approaches to learning (e.g., ability and inclination to use skills); Language development (e.g., verbal language, emerging literacy skills); and Cognition and general knowledge (Kagan, 1992)

Early Intervention: Services that are designed to meet the developmental needs of each child and family related to enhancing the child's development (Early Intervention Services [Education] Law & Legal Definition, 2012)

Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs): define the skills and abilities young children should develop for a successful start in kindergarten; focus on factors such as language and literacy, early science and problem solving skills, the creative arts, social studies and technology, social and emotional development, and physical health and development

Formative Assessment: ongoing use of assessment to guide and inform instruction— classroom formative assessment (Assessment and Accountabililty Comprehensive Center, 2010)

Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL): The FRL program refers to the number of children receiving free or reduced-price lunch or/and breakfast from the school-based nutrition programs. To receive a free meal, household income must be below 130% of the Federal poverty threshold, as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. To receive a reduce-price meal, household income must be below 185% of the Federal poverty threshold, as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (Data by State, 2012)

Head Start: Head Start is a comprehensive family strengthening program designed to help low income families and other qualifying families support the health, mental health, dental, socio-emotional, and educational development of their 3 and 4 year old children. The program views parents as the primary educators of their young children.

Matrix Sampling: An approach to large-scale assessment in which only part of the total assessment is administered to each child (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003)

Norm-Referenced: A standardized testing instrument by which the person's performance is interpreted in relation to the performance of a group of peers who have previously taken the same test—a "norming" group (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003)

Observational Assessment: Assessment based on teachers' systematic recordings and analysis of children's behavior in real-life situations (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003)

Program Evaluation: As systematic process of describing the components and outcomes of an intervention or service

Readiness to Learn: A child's preparedness to take advantage of formal school learning upon entering grade one. The Early Development Instrument measures readiness to learn based on developmental milestones, rather than curricular achievement. Children who enter school ready to learn have developed the ability to get along well with others, use basic coping strategies, and are open to new experiences. In short, they are receptive to the learning opportunities school presents. (Kinden, 2010)

Reliability: The consistency of an assessment tool; important for generalizing about children's learning and development (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003)

RTT-ELC: Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge

Standardized: An assessment with clearly specific administration and scoring procedures and normative data (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003)

Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS): a system that uses a simple 3-4 or 5 –star rating to evaluate assessment information by varying levels of quality in multiple categories (Bornfreund, 2012)

Unintended Consequences: The results of a particular intervention or assessment that were not intended by the developers and that may have potential—and sometimes negative— impact (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003)

Validity: The extent to which a measure or assessment tool measures what it was designed to measure (NAEYC & NAECS, 2003)

D. Works Cited

Council for Exceptional Children. (2004). *Policy Manual; Section Three, Park 1, Chapter 3, Para. 15*.

Data by State. (2012). Retrieved from Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Data Center Kids Count: http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/Rankings.aspx?state=AR&ind=256

Early Intervention Services [Education] Law & Legal Definition. (2012). Retrieved from US Legal, Inc.: http://definitions.uslegal.com/e/early-intervention-services-education/

Alliance for Excellence in Education. (2012, 1 31). *Graduation and Dropout Rates*. Retrieved 7 30, 2012, from State Report Cards: http://www.all4ed.org/publication_material/GradDropout_Rates

America's Health Rankings. (2011). *Nevada*. Retrieved 7 2012, 7, from http://www.americashealthrankings.org/NV/Graduation/2011

Assessment and Accountabililty Comprehensive Center. (2010). *Benchmark Assessment for Improved Learning*. Assessment and Accountabililty Comprehensive Center. The Regents of the University of California.

Barnett, W. S., Carolan, M. E., Fitzgerald, J., & Squires. (2011). *The State of Child Care*. New Brunswick: National Institute for Early Education Research.

Bornfreund, L. (2012, 3 31). *The 'Race to the Top Winners': How States Plan to Assess Kindergarten Readiness*. Retrieved from Early Education Watch: http://earlyed.newamerica.net/node/65242

Bornfreund, L. (2012, February 17). *The 'Race to the Top' Winners: How States Plan to Improve Early Leanring Standards*. Retrieved July 9, 2012, from New America Foundation: http://earlyed.newamerica.net/node/64111

Bruner, C. (2010). *Learning to read: Developing 0-8 information systems to improve third grade reading proficiency*. Annie E. Casey Foundation, Child and Family Policy Center.

Bruner, C., & Coperman, A. (2003). *Measuring children's school readiness: options for developing state baselines and benchmarks*. State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network.

Bruner, C., & Schor, E. (2009). *Clinical health care practice and community building: Addressing racial disparities in health child development*. Des Moines, IA: National Center for Servicve Integration.

Children's Cabinet . (2009). *Child Care in the State of Nevada: Demographics Report* . Reno.

Daily, S., Burkhauser, M., & Halle, T. (2010). A review of school readiness practices in the states: Early learning guidelines and assessments. *Early Childhood Highlights*.

Golan, S., Peterson, D., & Spiker, D. (2008). *Kindergarten assessment process planning report.* Menlo Park: SRI International.

Graue, E. (2009, November). School Administrator. *Reimagining Kindergarten: Restoring a developmental approach when accountability demands are pushing formal instruction on the youngest learners , 10*(66).

Ille, T., Forry, N., Hair, E., Perper, K., Wandner, L., Wessel, J., et al. (2009). *Disparities in early learning and development: Lessons from the early childhood longitudinal study - birth cohort (ECSL-B).* Washington, DC.: Council of Chief State School Officers and Child Trends.

Insight, t. C. (2011). *The Economic Impact of Early Care.* The Children's Cabinet.

Kagan, S. (1992). Readiness past, present, future: Shaping the agenda. *Young Children*, 48-53.

Kinden, A. (2010). *Early Development Instrument (EDI) Report.* Understanding the Early Years (UEY) Selkirk-Interlake.

McLean, M. (2010, September 9). *Effective practices in Pre-K assessment.* Retrieved July 23, 2012, from Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS) - for programs serving prekindergarten children with disabilities: http://www.tats.ucf.edu/docs/McLean_PowerPoint.pdf

NAEYC, & NAECS. (2003). *Early childhood curriculum, assessment and program evaluation: Building effective, accountable systems in programs for children birth through age 8.* National Association for the Education of Young Children.

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities. (n.d.). *Subpart D: Evaluations, Eligibility, IEPs, and Placement.* Retrieved 7 26, 2012, from http://nichcy.org/laws/idea/partb/subpartd#300.301

National Women's Law Center. (2012, 7 12). *Additional Child Care Funding is Essential to Stop State Cuts.* Retrieved 7 30, 2012, from http://www.nwlc.org/resource/additional-child-care-funding-essential-stop-state-cuts

Nevada Department of Education. (2011). *Research Bulletin.*

Nevada Department of Education. (n.d.). *Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability.* Retrieved 6 22, 2012, from Nevada Report Card: http://www.nevadareportcard.com/

Nevada Department of Health. (2010). Child Care Licensing.

Pappano, L. (2010, September/October). Kids Haven't Changed; Kindergarten Has. *Harvard Education Letter, 26*(5).

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers - PARCC. (n.d.). *Building Foundations.* Retrieved 7 30, 2012, from http://www.parcconline.org/building-foundations

Rhode Island Kids Count. (2005). *Getting Ready: Findings from the National School Readiness Initiative, a 17 State Partnership.* David and Lucille Packard Foundation, Kauffman Foundation and Ford Foundation.

Rouse, C., Brooks-Gunn, J., & McClanahan, S. (2004). Introducing the issue: School readiness: Closing racial and ethnic gaps. *The future of children*, 5-14.

Rushton, S., Juloa-Rushton, A., & Larkin, E. (2010). Neuroscience, play and early childhood education: Connections, implications and assessment. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 351-361.

Sawchuk, S. (2010, June 24). *Three Groups Apply for Race to the Top Test Grants.* Retrieved 2012, from Education Week: http://budgetrealities.lausd.net/sites/default/files/http___www.edweek.org_ew_articl es_2010_06_23_36assessment.h29.pdf

Snow, K. (2011). *Developing kindergarten readiness and other large-scale assessmen systems: Necessary considerations in the assessment of young children.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Social Entrepreneurs Inc. (2012). *The Assessment of Center-Based Quality in Nevada.*

Stedron, M., & Berger, A. (2010). *State Approaches to School Readiness Report.* National Conference of State Legislatures.

Tomlinson, C. (2004). Differentiation of instruction in elementary grades. *Eric Digest.*

E. Outreach Tools

Targeted Stakeholder Matrix: Key Informants

FORUM	STAKEHOLDERS	
	Kindergarten Entry Assessment	**ECE Data Systems**
Key Informants	• State/district agency leadership involved in implementing a kindergarten assessment tool • Experts in implementing high quality ECE programs • State/local funders and licensing entities • Maternal and child health experts • Policy experts (e.g. NICRP, NAEYC) • Childcare Resource and Referral • United Way of Southern Nevada	• State/district agency leadership involved in data systems • State/local funders for ECE and school data systems • ECE program experts – local and state information system experts and IT staff (state/county/local – as relevant) • UNR Early Head Start Center for Excellence
Key Informants: Sample Questions	• What national trends, discussions, and/or partnerships are in play? • What are the challenges with implementing a kindergarten assessment? • What information does the Department want/need about their students' readiness for school? • What is important to be considered during the planning process? • What best practices do you recommend for Nevada's implementation of KEDS? • What tool should be used? • What should the assessment include? • How often should assessment occur?	• What is the State/District vision for a coordinated ECE data system? • What data systems are already in place? • What are the challenges with implementing a data system? • What resource sharing opportunities have been identified? • To what extent to the various ECE systems exchange data currently? • What challenges are unresolved related to privacy issues, data exchange across systems, system collaboration, unique identifiers, system capacity issues, provider capacity issues, county-to-county and provider-to-provider variance in what is collected?
Key Informants: Questions	• What policy challenges exist at the district level? (e.g. union, workforce, regs) • What information would be envisioned for Kindergarten Assessment? • Are there tools or instruments that would meet these needs best? • Do any of Nevada's counties have a preferred model already in operation?	• What resources (training, funding, hardware/software, upgrades, staffing) are needed to implement the necessary improvements in order to have the ideal system in place? • What data is currently being collected through the United Way TAPS program? • How is ECE data linked to school data?

Targeted Stakeholder Matrix: Focus Groups

FORUM	STAKEHOLDERS	
	Kindergarten Entry Assessment	**ECE Data Systems**
County Site Visits & Focus Groups	• Relevant School district personnel • Publicly funded ECE providers – including Head Start and Early Head Start, State-Pre-K, Title I and Even Start programs • Child care centers • County social services • County/regional collaborative • Local ECACs • Local MCH/EIS staff • PTA, PEP, parents, caregivers • Cultural/inclusion- representative groups (e.g. tribes, English language learners, etc.) • reps from Higher Ed • Representatives from Advocacy groups	• Relevant school district personnel • information system experts and IT staff (state/county/local – as relevant) • evaluators and program monitors • health care providers • End users of data (Administrators, Teachers, parents, providers, etc) • Data system administrators • Funding agency representatives • Childcare resource and referral • Local ECACs • Higher Education representatives • Child care licensing personnel

County Site Visits and Focus Groups: Sample Questions

- What information do parents want/need about their child's readiness for school?
- What information do teachers want/need about their students' readiness for school?
- What information do schools want/need about their students' readiness for school?
- What tool should be used?
- What should the assessment include?
- What concerns, if any, do you have about Kindergarten Assessment / data systems?
- What children should be assessed?
- When should assessment occur?
- How often should assessment occur?
- What are the challenges with implementing a kindergarten assessment?
- What is the best ways for parents to get information from schools about their child?
- What resources are currently used for kindergarten assessment?
- What questions or concerns do families have about Kindergarten and a statewide data system?
- What cultural/environmental barriers exist for the families you serve, related to assessment and data collection?
- What are child care providers most concerned with related to helping children get ready for school?
- What would the community level impact be (funders, parents, providers, etc) related to implementing KEDS?

- What resources are used for data collection and reporting?
- What data systems are already in place?
- What data is currently being collected?
- How is data currently collected/what tools are in place?
- How is data currently used and by whom?
- What are the challenges with implementing a data system?
- How should data be used?
- What burdens currently exist for providers related to data collection and reporting?
- What data do you wish was available?
- What privacy concerns exist for the families you serve?
- What cultural/environmental barriers exist for the families you serve, related to assessment and data collection?
- What data is currently being collected related to programs, teachers and environments?

F. Summary of Contacts and Information Sources by State of Nevada and Each County

Including surveys, there are more than 830 contacts and information sources from the State of Nevada. The table at the end of this section summarizes contact and information sources for the State of Nevada by each county. It is important to note that the total number takes into account that some numbers listed in the table are not unique for surveys and focus groups. In addition, two counties have several other contacts that were not quantifiable: Nye county kept the number and names of people who participated in the focus group confidential and Washoe County had "many parents" participate in outreach. These participants are gratefully acknowledged in addition to those who participated in the State of Nevada as other stakeholder groups.

Inventory of Interviews, Focus Groups, and Conferences / Meetings

State of Nevada

Nevada School Readiness Summit

Monthly Webinars with stakeholders (April, May, June, and planned for July)

Presentations to Nevada ECAC (April, June)

Interview with Glen Meyer, Director of IT, NDE

Interview with Sonya Horsford and Fatma Nasoz – Lincy Institute (UNLV)

Interview with Anna Severens, Education Programs Professional, Early Childhood School Improvement Programs Office of Special Education, Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs

Nevada Association of Superintendents

NAEYC Conference – Focus Groups

Head Start Partnership Meeting

Mega-Conference (provided materials and information at boot)

PTA Conference Las Vegas – Hosted booth

Interview with Dave Leitner, Evaluator for NV Pre-K Programs across the state

Nevada PEP – Focus Group (Northern Nevada video-conferenced with Southern Nevada)

TECAC focus group and Indian Education Summit

Interview with Sherry Rupert, Tribal ECAC Coordinator

Questionnaire sent to all Tribal Head Start sites in Nevada

Title I Coordinators

Carson City

Site visit with superintendent and key staff

Focus group with parents and staff of Western Nevada College Child Development Center

Tri-County ECAC

Churchill County

Site visit and interview with school principal of Northside

Observations of Pre-K assessments at Northside

Brief Interview with CSA Northside Head Start

Interview with CSA Head Start Director

In Process: Provide information to Churchill ECAC

Clark County

Interview and focus group with Little Scholars staff

Interview with UWSN staff, contractors and evaluators

Interview with Nykki Mead, Bright Horizons

Focus group with Early Childhood Program Staff, Clark County School District

Phone interview Lisa Pitch

Focus group Family Day Home Care Providers

Phone interview with Clark County School District superintendent designees

Focus Group targeting ECE Providers in Southern Nevada

Douglas County

Focus group with assistant superintendent and administrators

Focus group with all district kindergarten teachers

Focus group with Tri-County Early Childhood Advisory Council

Elko County

Focus Group with Great Basin College, Head Start, School Board members

Site visit Elko County School District (Assistant Superintendent and NEIS)

Conference call with PACE Coalition and Head Start Director

Esmeralda County

Focus group with teachers and administrators

Interviewed superintendent

Eureka County
Interview with superintendent and Pre-K teacher
Humboldt County
Focus group with superintendent, elementary school principal, and technology administrator
Lander County
Focus group with superintendent, elementary school principal and kindergarten teachers
Lincoln County
Site visit and interview with superintendent
Lyon County
Focus group with superintendent and staff
Focus group with kindergarten teachers
Met with Tri-County ECAC
Mineral County
Focus group with elementary school teachers and administrators including Pre-K
Interviewed superintendent
Nye County
Site visit with ECE Providers and elementary school teachers
Provided multiple contacts to school district (declined participation at this time)
Pershing County
Focus group with elementary school principal and Pre-K teachers
Storey County
Site visit at elementary school with kindergarten teacher and early childhood education and care teacher
White Pine County
Interview with superintendent
Focus group with Head Start and kindergarten teachers
Conference call with kindergarten coordinator and private childcare provider
Washoe County
Focus group with diverse group of stakeholders representing ECE, higher education, resource and referral, Head Start, K-12 education, etc.
Focus group with ECE providers (private)
Interview with kindergarten coordinator and federal/state programs administrator WCSD
Interview CSA Head Start
Focus group CSA Head Start parents
Interview with Early Childhood Program Early Childhood/Kindergarten Special Ed. Consultant
Focus Group targeting ECE Providers in Northern Nevada

State of Nevada
Surveys

Questionnaire sent to all Tribal Head Start sites in Nevada

Interviews

Glen Meyer, Director of IT, NDE
Sonya Horsford and Fatma Nasoz – Lincy Institute (UNLV)
Anna Severens, Education Programs Professional, Early Childhood
Dave Leitner, Evaluator for NV Pre-K Programs across the state
Sherry Rupert, Tribal ECAC Coordinator

Focus Group
NAEYC Conference – Focus Groups
Nevada PEP – Focus Group (Northern Nevada video-conferenced with Southern Nevada)
TECAC focus group and Indian Education Summit
Other Stakeholder Groups
School Improvement Programs Office of Special Education, Secondary Education,
and School Improvement Programs
Nevada School Readiness Summit
Monthly Webinars with stakeholders (April, May, June, and planned for July)
Presentations to Nevada ECAC (April, June)
Nevada Association of Superintendents
Head Start Partnership Meeting
Mega-Conference (provided materials and information at boot)
PTA Conference Las Vegas – Hosted booth
Title I Coordinators

Carson City
Surveys

As of June 30 2012, 9 providers and 10 parents from Carson City had answered the parent
survey.

Group Interview/Focus Group Participants

Susan Keema, Associate Superintendent, Carson City School District
Richard Stokes, Superintendent, Carson City School District

Focus Group Participants

Andrea Doran, Western Nevada College, Child Development Center
Erik Hess, Western Nevada College, Child Development Center Parent Board
Casandra Blankenship, Western Nevada College, Child Development Center
Sally Morgan, Western Nevada College, Child Development Center
Frances Sullivan, Head Start, Tri-County ECAC
Vicki Chandler, Carson City Health and Human Services, Tri-County ECAC
John Childress, United Latino Committee, Tri-County ECAC

Churchill County
Surveys

Four provider surveys were completed from Churchill County. Of these none participated in a
focus group. Two parent surveys were completed. These parents also did not attend a focus
group.

Outreach

Superintendent Dr. Carolyn Ross
Joanne Everts

Principal Greg Malcovich – Northside Elementary School
Renee Bybee – CSA Head Start Northside Early Learning Center (via phone)
Leanna Hale and Lynn Houghton, CSA Head Start

Observation

Kindergarten Entry Assessment (May 2012)

Clark County
Surveys

As of June 30 2012, 82 providers from Clark County had answered the survey. Description of those who answered survey. More than two-thirds (60 or 68.5%) identified their background or field as ECE. The remainder of respondents represented special education (4.1%), K-12 (15.1%) and advocacy/policy (2.7%). More than half (56.2%) were administrators or directors, 17 identified themselves as teachers/instructors (23.3%), and the remaining three stated they were parents.
As of June 30 2012, 292 parents from Clark County had answered the parent survey. Nine of the surveys were completed in Spanish. Nine out of ten parents (261) participating in the survey had at least one child age 5 or younger. Ninety –five respondents (32.57%) had a child between the ages of 6 and 10; and, 66 respondents (22.6%) had a child between the ages of 11 and 18. Only 20 individuals (7%) completing a parent survey also participated in a KEDS focus group.

Group Interview/Focus Group

CCSD
Kathlene Banak, Early Childhood Program
LeNora Bredsguard-Brown, Project Facilitator, Literacy, K-12
Sue Daellenbach, Assistant Superintendent, Assessment, Accountability, Research and School Improvement
Jeff Halsell, IDS-Instructional Data Services/Testing
Deena Holloway, Coordinator, Literacy Innovative Programs
Eric Johnson, Director, Math and Instructional Technology
Julie Rae Kasper, Early Childhood Program
Lisa Pitch, Coordinator, Department of Research, Assessment, Accountability, Research, and School Improvement
Karen Schiemer, Coordinator, Mathematics, K-5
Karen Stanley, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Professional Development

Early Childhood Educators
D'Ann Blatt, Manager/Director Little Scholars School
Carol Levins, Director, Creative Kids Learning Center
Nikki Mead, Regional Director Bright Horizons
Michael Thompson, via written submission for Child Care Association of Nevada
Gary Vause, Owner, Litl Scholars School

UWSN
Margot Chappel, Director, Head Start State Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office
Dolores Hauck, Director, Community Development
Angela Simmons
Clara Westfall
Focus Group Participants

Please note that names are from sign in sheets. In some cases, the spelling of the name was difficult to read, and therefore, there may be errors among some names.

UWSN TAPS Directors Meeting
Andriana Leon, Hill & Dale
Jeri Seidman, Hill & Dale
Suzanne Cordero, Kinder Cottage
Sarah Wright, Kinder Cottage
David Wary, NCA Learning Center
Kristy Kao, NCA Learning Center
Rhonda Clausen, UWSN
Ruby Collins, VELC
Stacy Burrell-Turner, UWSN
Brandi Heiseler, WMG
Denice Feldman, Kids Corner
Kim Crandall, Creative Beginnings
Clara Westfall, UWSN
Tammy Gates, Hill and Dale

Family Care Home Providers Network
Tiffany Orbon, Tiffany's Tots
Gayle Thomsen, Ms. Gayle's Little School
Nicole Gardner, Gardner Family Daycare
Sheryl Howard, Tiny Tots
Kristine Miller-Anderson, Vineyards Family Child Care
Marie Nisou, Marie's Home Daycare
Yvonne Montenegro, Here We Grow
Laurie Ciardullo, Roots & Wings Daycare

Stuckey Elementary School Teachers
Debra Bingaman
Yve Eiholzev-Abbey
Beth Charbonneau
Jennifer Forbes
Jennifer Anderson
Susan Gary
Jennifer Sanchez
Sennita Schultz
Rose Orth
Linda Lamb
Lynn Gahr
Janelle Maul
Grayce Nordberg – Gilman
Adel Connor – Smith

Analeigh Schweilh
Kylie Bakle
Deborah Rasmussen
Deborah Messer
Cassandra Jones
Erica Yanez
Caren Diane
Elizabeth Allen

Nevada Registry KEDS Focus Group
Christina Herrera, Acelero
Diane L. Piper, Acelero
Julie Rae Kasper, Clark County School District
Terry Mapson, Child Care Provider Training Consultant
Dawn Fritz, Family Care Home
Guadalupe Magallanes, Kidz Kidz Kidz
Brooke Montrond, Kidz Kidz Kidz
Nilanthi Panikkar, My Little Margies Pre-school
Rebecca Parsons, My Little Margies Pre-school
Angela Woywod, Centennial CC
Donita Murphy, Faith Lutheran Preschool
Cheresa Barefield, The Little Bare's In the Field Child Care
Lonnie Kritzler, Congregation Ner Tamid
Mary Riding, In Home
Rebecca Weaver, Calvary Chapel Preschool Spring Valley
Jaleece Barnum, Junior Junction
Jolynne Barnum, Junior Junction
Susan Whitney, Junior Junction
David Walton, Challenge School
Lisa McIntyre, Bright Beginnings
Meagan Andrade, KinderCare
Claire Tudiell, UNLV
Mardee Wright, UNLV
Shawnee Liefer, Christ Lutheran Children's Center
Barbie Blakeley, CDE, Lake Mead Christian Academy
Kayla Boykin, Kidz Kidz Kidz
Loretta Pilafas, KinderCare
Nancy Breneman, KinderCare
Sheryl Howard, Tiny Dots

Douglas County
Surveys

As of June 30 2012, 17 providers from Douglas County answered the survey. All 17
represented either K-12 or ECE teachers with 13 representing the kindergarten teachers in
Douglas County.
As of June 30 2012, 6 parents from Douglas County had answered the parent survey. All six
were parents of children ages 0 to 5 and none of them had attended a KEDS focus group.

Group Interview/Focus Group

Interviews

Kerry Pope, DCSD Director of Curriculum
Brian Frazier, DCSD Director of Assessment and Grants
Jan Visger, DCSD Director of Special Services
Susan Moore, Professional Development Trainer
Lyn Gorrindo, DCSD Assistant Superintendent

Focus Group Participants

Karen Backenbacker, Douglas County Social Services, Tri-County ECAC
Laura Williams, Jacks Valley Elementary School
J. Michelle Norris, Pinon Hills Elementary School
Brooke Wood, Jacks Valley Elementary School
Kay Kocian, C. C. Meneley Elementary School
Kathryn Oxoby, C. C. Meneley Elementary School
Melinda Neilander, Minden Elementary School
Mary Kay Dale, Jacks Valley Elementary School
Konnie Susich, Zephyr Cove Elementary School
Leslie Flynn, Gardnerville Elementary School
Kathy, Great, Scarselli Elementary School
Valerie Wilkinsin, Scarselli Elementary School

Elko County
Surveys

As of June 30 2012, 55 parents from Elko County had answered the parent survey. (Of these, 92.7% report being the parent of children age 5 or younger.)

Group Interviews/Focus Groups

Kerry Ann Aguirre, Northeastern Nevada Regional Hospital
Melissa Aguirre, Communities in Schools of Northeastern Nevada
Carol Banghart, Elko County School District
Jan Brizee, State of Nevada Office of Consumer Health Assistance
Jack French, Elko County School District
Corrie Herrera, Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living
Brenna Malone, Head Start of Northeastern Nevada
Lynette McFarlan – Great Basin College Early Education Program
Ron Pavelko, Friends of the Elko County Library
Michele Oke, PACE Coalition
Cathy McAdoo, PACE Coalition
Chris Pacini, Family Resource Center of Northeastern Nevada
Martha Schott-Bernius, Nevada Early Intervention Services
Tammy Wright, Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living
Connie Zeller, Great Basin College Preschool

Esmeralda County
Surveys

As of June 30, 2012, 1 provider from Esmeralda County had answered the survey.
As of June 30, 2012, no parents from Esmeralda County had answered the parent survey.

Individual Interview

Gary Gazaway, Superintendent of Esmeralda County

Eureka County
Interviews

Ben Zunino, Superintendent, Eureka County School District
Margaret "Maggie" Dyer, Kindergarten Teacher, Eureka Elementary School

Humboldt County
Group Interview/Focus Group

David Jensen, Assistant Superintendent (incoming Superintendent), Humboldt County School District
Tim Connors, Principal, Grass Valley Elementary School
Kelly Novi, Director of Curriculum and Technology, Humboldt County School District

Lander County
Interviews

Jim Squibb, Lander County School District Superintendent

Focus Groups

Lorrie Sparks, Principal, District Homeless Liaison, Battle Mountain Elementary School
Cindy Obieta, Pre-K Coordinator, Battle Mountain Elementary School
Valerie Lane, Kindergarten Teacher, Battle Mountain Elementary School
Barbara McIntosh, Kindergarten Teacher (retiring), Battle Mountain Elementary School

Participant in KEDS Information Meeting - Statewide Conferences

Doug Staton, PTA, Battle Mountain

Lincoln County
Surveys

As of June 30, 2012, two providers from Lincoln County had answered the survey.
As of June 30, 2012, three parents from Lincoln County had answered the parent survey.

Key Informant Interview

Nykki Holton, Lincoln County School District Superintendent

Lyon County

Surveys

As of June 30 2012, 3 providers from Lyon County answered the survey. All 3 represented either ECE teachers with in Lyon County.
As of June 30 2012, 9 parents from Lyon County had answered the parent survey. All nine were parents of children ages 0 to 5 and none of them had attended a KEDS focus group.

Interview/Focus Group

Interviews

Scott Lommori, Director of Testing and Educational Technology
Claudia Fadness , Director of Curriculum and Accountability
Kathy Griffin, Grants Coordinator
Pam Tognoli, Special Education Data Manager
Nadine Boschert, Student Information Systems Administrator

Focus Groups

Tami McDonald, Lyon County Human Services, Tri-County ECAC
Leanna Hale, CSA Head Start (Washoe, Churchill, Lyon)
Jennifer Chico, Kindergarten Teacher, Lyon County School District
Lucella Glazier, Lyon County School District, Tribal ECAC
G. L. Roy, Tribal ECAC, YPT
Kerry Stevens, Kindergarten Teacher, Lyon County School District
Bonnie Bobrick, Kindergarten Teacher, Lyon County School District
C. Champagne, Kindergarten Teacher, Lyon County School District
Kim Swanson, FIS, PTA Conference Attendee
Linda Barba, FIS, PTA Conference Attendee

Mineral County

Surveys

As of June 30, 2012, 6 providers from Mineral had answered the survey.
As of June 30, 2012, no parents from Mineral County had answered the parent survey.

Group Interview/Focus Group

Teri White, MCSD Superintendent
Stephanie Kheuy, Principal Hawthorne Elementary School
Teri Arrends, Teacher Hawthorne Elementary School
Tara Musselman, Teacher Hawthorne Elementary School
Stacy Madrid, Teacher Hawthorne Elementary School
Valorie Fletcher, Special Ed./ Early Childcare Specialist Hawthorne Elementary School

Holly Qualls, Speech Pathologist Hawthorne Elementary School

Nye County

Surveys

As of June 30, 2012, 11 providers from Nye County had answered the survey. Most of those who answered the survey were teachers (62.5%), but some respondents were early childhood education and care providers (25%) or an administrator (12.5%).
As of June 30, 2012, three parents from Nye County had answered the parent survey.

Group Interview/Focus Group

Interviews
Natasha Wickenden, ECE provider
Sarai Gromis, ECE provider
Focus Groups
A focus group was conducted on April 16th, 2012 in Beatty. Focus group participants from Nye County included teachers, early childhood education and care providers, English language learner professionals, a NCSD counselor, and other professionals from relevant fields. In the interest of confidentiality the names of the participants have not been included in this report.

Pershing County
Interviews

Shea Murphy, Principal, Lovelock Elementary School

Focus Groups

Alyson Collins, Special Education Teacher, Lovelock Elementary School
Brooke Wagner, State Pre-K Teacher, Lovelock Elementary School

Storey County
Outreach

Superintendent Dr. Robert Slaby
Principal Todd Hess
Presentation to the Nevada Department of Education Title I Coordinators meeting

Interviews

Sonja Hicks, Kindergarten Teacher Hugh Gallagher Elementary
Lisa Sinnot, Special Education Teacher Hugh Gallagher Elementary

Washoe County

As of June 30, 2012 62 providers from Washoe County had answered the survey. Most (73%) represented early childhood education and care, 15% represented K-12 education, 6% special education, 6% Health and Human Services and 1 (2%) representing advocacy / policy. 40% of these providers also participated in a focus group.

As of June 30, 2012 122 parents from Washoe County had answered the parent survey. Of respondents, 91% (111) have a child age 5 or younger, 42 have a child between the ages of 6 and 10, and 15 have a child between the ages of 11 and 18. Less than 3% (3 participants) had attended a KEDS focus group where they had learned more about the project.

Group Interview/Focus Group

WCSD
Dawna Ogden, Kindergarten Coordinator WCSD
Kristin McNeill, WCSD Chief Strategies Officer Office of State and Federal Programs
Lindsay Anderson, WCSD Director of Government Affairs
Cindy Roller, WCSD E.C./Kinder Special Ed. Consultant

CSA Head Start
Leanna Hale, CSA Head Start Program Director
Lynn Houghton, CSA Head Start Program

Focus Group Participants

Please note that names are from sign in sheets. In some cases, the spelling of the name was difficult to read, and therefore, there may be errors among some names.

Tribal ECAC, Indian Education Summit
Deserea Quintana
Amanda Bob
Gloria Smith
Maria War
Jessica McCloud
Rhonda Laughlin
Naomi Hanczrik
Connie Melendez
Sandy Emm
Mike Tinsley
Sherry Meedes
San San Tin

Washoe County Providers – Focus Group 1
Margaret Oberg, Home Care Provider
Virginia Saiz, Kindergarten teacher
Allena Dills, Teacher/ Instructor

NAYEC Conference
Virginia Saiz

Rebecca S Viziny

CSA Partner Meeting
Leanna Hale
Lynn Houghton
Crystal Swank
Washoe County Stakeholder Focus Group
Melissa Burnham
Dawna Ogden
Sherry Waugh
Dianne Nicolet
Christy Fernandez
Cindy Johnson
Marty Elquist
Lynn Houghton
Leanna Hale

CSA Head Start Policy Council – Parents
Rosa Acosta
Maricela Trujillo
Theresa BelloAnn Maria Corona
Minerva Gaytar
Lora Carnes (Family Engagement & Community Partnership Manager)
Maria Fernandez (WCSD Parent University Representative)

Washoe County Providers – Focus Group 2
Julie Hitchcock
Trisha Madrigal
Julie O'Leary
Rosie Marie Vernciccio
Melissa Fallon
Angel Brown
Erin Higgs
Danielle Lewis
Jennifer Parker
Annie Stevens
Kamika Green
Bernadette Such Mabrook
Molly Bunkew
Stephanie Black
Denise Cross
Sandy Kromydas
Marianna Ashley
Ashly Smith
Susana Harris
Samantha Russell
Tanner Kester
Tachrista Sires
Erin Mesa
Michelle MacKay

Belinda Martinez
Brittina Kujon Hill
Kim Stevens
Carolina Pino
Rhonda Laughlin
Danielle Patrick

Other Outreach
Many parents from Washoe County were provided information at the PTA Conference held in Southern Nevada.

White Pine County
Individual Interview

Bob Dolezal, Superintendent, White Pine County School District

Group Interviews/Focus Groups

Jenny Ahlvers, Early Childhood Teacher, David E. Norman Elementary School
Laura Dennis, Director, Magic Carpet Preschool
Mary Eldridge, Director, Little People's Head Start
Mary Flanagan, Teacher, McGill Elementary School
Julie Krch, Director, Learning Bridge Center
Shawna Wooldridge, Kindergarten Teacher, Lund Elementary School

	*Surveys	Interview	*Focus Group	Outreach	Observ.	Group Interview/ *Focus Group	Info Meeting	Total Number of Contacts for Each County
**State of Nevada		6						6
Carson City	19	2	7					28
Churchill County	6			2	1	3		12
Clark County	374		73			19		466
Douglas County	23	5	12					40
Elko County	55					15		70
Esmeralda County	1	1						2
Eureka County		2						2
Humboldt County						3		3
Lander County		1	4				1	6
Lincoln County	5	1						6
Lyon County	12	5	10					27
Mineral County	6					7		13

Summary of Contacts & Information Sources by the State of Nevada and each County

	*Surveys	Interview	*Focus Group	Outreach	Observ.	Group Interview/ *Focus Group	Info Meeting	Total Number of Contacts for Each County
Summary of Contacts & Information Sources by the State of Nevada and each County								
**Nye County	14	2	No Data					16
Pershing County		1	2					3
Storey County		2		3				5
**Washoe County	184		65	Many parents		6		255
White Pine County		1				6		7
Subtracting non-unique cases where a provider/parent completed a survey and also participated in a focus group								-137
Total Number of Contacts for the State of Nevada								830

*Numbers in these categories may not be unique

**Numbers in these categories may not include all contacts and information sources

G. Definition of School Readiness

An important goal of the county-level needs assessment for this project was to solicit feedback from stakeholders at the local level in order to support adoption of a Nevada-specific definition of school readiness. A working definition was developed and shaped at a statewide School Readiness Summit held in February 2012, and subsequently reviewed by hundreds of ECE stakeholders, including parents and providers, who were asked to provide input on the working definition as well as to validate the need for a common statewide KEA and coordinated early childhood data system. Feedback from stakeholders indicated support of the working Nevada definition of school readiness, which was formally adopted in June 2012 by the Nevada ECAC.

There is consensus, based upon a wealth of research, that a child's readiness for school should be measured and addressed across five distinct but connected domains [5]:

Physical Development and Health--This domain covers such factors as health status, growth, and disabilities; physical abilities, such as gross and fine motor skills; and conditions before, at, and after birth.

Social and Emotional Development--This domain combines two interrelated components affecting children's behavioral health and learning. Social development refers to children's ability to interact with others and their capacity for self-regulation. Emotional development includes children's perceptions of themselves, their abilities to understand the feelings of other people, and their ability to interpret and express their own feelings.

Approaches to Learning--This domain refers to children's inclination to use skills and knowledge. Key components include enthusiasm, curiosity, and persistence on tasks.

Language and Early Literacy Development-- This domain includes communication and emergent literacy. Communication includes listening, speaking, and vocabulary. Emergent literacy includes print awareness, story sense, early writing, and the connection of letters to sounds.

Cognition and General Knowledge--This domain refers to thinking and problem-solving as well as knowledge about particular objects and the way the world works. Mathematical knowledge, abstract thought, and imagination are included.

---

[5] Based on findings from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative: A 17-State Partnership and reviewed and revised at the Nevada School Readiness Summit, 2012.

As the graphic on the previous page indicates, Nevada's definition of school readiness incorporates these five domains into the following equation: **READY FAMILIES + READY EDUCATORS + READY SCHOOLS + READY COMMUNITIES + READY SYSTEMS = CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SCHOOL.** Each factor necessary for the outcome that "Children are Ready for School" is further defined below:

"Ready Families" have adults who understand they are the most important people in the child's life, understand age appropriate development, and support the child's school readiness. Adults recognize their role as the child's first and most important teacher, providing steady and supportive relationships, ensuring safe and consistent environments, promoting good health, and fostering curiosity, excitement about learning.

"Ready Educators" are skilled teachers, who understand age appropriate development, possess the skills to develop appropriate curriculum based on children's development, recognize, reinforce, and extend children's strengths and who are sensitive to cultural values and individual differences, including children with special needs.

"Ready Schools" accept all children and provide a seamless transition to a high-quality developmentally appropriate learning environment by engaging families and the whole community. A ready school welcomes all children and their families with opportunities to enhance and build confidence in their skills, knowledge, and abilities. Children in ready schools are led by skilled teachers as defined above.

"Ready Communities" play a crucial part in supporting families in their role as primary stewards of children's readiness. Ready communities, including businesses, faith-based organizations, early childhood education and care service providers, community groups and local governments, work together to support children's school and long term success by providing families affordable access to information, services, high-quality child care, and early learning opportunities.

"Ready Systems" describes the availability, quality, and affordability of proven programs that influence child development and school readiness. It also includes the degree to which public and private agencies promote policies and practices including data collection that enhance access to needed supports, information and tools that help all other components (family, educators, schools and children) be ready for children to be ready for school (Bruner & Coperman, Measuring children's school readiness: options for developing state baselines and benchmarks., 2003).

Children's readiness for school is made up of multiple components and shaped by numerous factors. Improving school readiness, therefore, must address children's development of skills and behaviors as well as the environments in which they spend their time. Early childhood education and care leaders at the state and national level agree that efforts to improve school readiness must address three interrelated components:
- Children's readiness for school.
- School's readiness for children.

- The capacity of families and communities to provide developmental opportunities for young children.

Ultimately the goal is that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. School readiness is an ongoing process from the moment of birth, to Pre-K, and through the transition into elementary school and beyond. It is the foundation defined by the intersection of two critical components:

1) Children's condition to learn based on the five identified domains of learning, and

2) The school's capacity to meet the needs of all children to prepare them for future school success and the 21st century.

This includes, but not limited to providing access to high quality services for all children including aligned standards and curriculum, supportive relationships, engaging environment, smooth transitions and strong family and community connections.[6]

---

[6] Nevada working definition from bill draft request