

Guidelines on Allowable Supports for the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment



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Section I: Overview

The South Carolina Department of Education is working to improve the way we gather information about kindergarten students at the beginning of the school year. The assessment system is aligned to state and federal guidelines and standards for young children, birth through age 6. The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) is designed for use during the first several weeks of a student's kindergarten school year. **This document addresses the scope of the administration of the KRA.** The guidelines were developed using feedback from teachers, as well as input from state and national experts. The supports and strategies outlined in this document are intended to maximize the participation of all students in the KRA.

Participation Requirements

For participating kindergarten classrooms, all students, including students with disabilities and students who are English learners, are required to participate in the KRA and have their results be part of the state's summary reports.

For the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment:

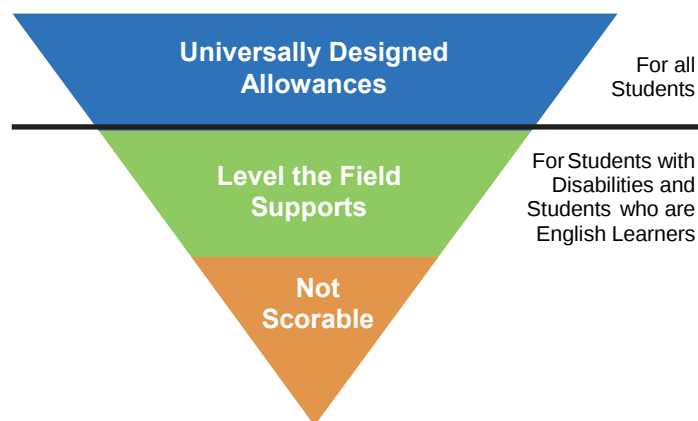
- A **student with a disability** is defined as a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 plan.
- A **student who is an English learner** is defined as a student whose primary or home language is one other than English and who cannot perform some or all classroom activities in English because he or she may have limited or no age appropriate ability to understand or speak in English.

A fully accessible approach to assessment design and implementation is necessary for students with diverse learning characteristics to ensure that they have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. At the same time, states need to be confident in the results obtained from the assessments when conducting analyses and making policy decisions. In addition, school administrators, teachers, and parents need to have a true sense of where their students are developmentally, and subsequently identify focus areas in which they can plan instruction that promotes growth in individual students. To meet all of these needs, a structured decision-making process has been developed for identifying and implementing individualized student supports when administering the KRA.

Differentiating Assessment Administration

Expectations have been established for students participating in the KRA with consideration of their unique developmental needs and levels of school readiness. A tiered decision-making process has been developed for differentiating administration of the assessment (see Figure 1). This process begins with utilizing universally designed allowances (UDAs), which are supports that are appropriate to provide to all students. When further individualization is needed for students with disabilities and students who are English learners, the process outlines additional allowable supports and administration procedures.

Figure 1: Differentiating Administration of the Ready for Kindergarten Assessments



This decision-making process for differentiating administration of the KRA uses the following options:

- **General Administration** – This is the administration of the KRA following General Administration procedures (applicable to the particular assessment) and applying universally designed allowances.
- **Level the Field supports (for students with disabilities and students who are English learners only)** – This involves administering the KRA following general administration procedures, but providing additional allowable individualized supports above and beyond universally designed allowances.
- **Not Scorable (for students with disabilities and students who are English learners only)** – Some assessment activities may not be within a student's abilities given any allowable support. In other words, the skill being assessed may not be appropriate, given the student's disability or level of English language proficiency. Therefore, the skill is considered "Not Scorable."

When administering the KRA, teachers do not need to move sequentially through these three options for students with disabilities and English learners. For example, they can start administration with using the Level the Field option. Teams should, however, avoid assuming that a student with a disability or a student who is an English learner needs to automatically move beyond General Administration.

General Administration with Universally Designed Allowances

Universal design describes a framework for curriculum design, instructional processes, and assessments that provides all students with equal opportunities to learn and to demonstrate what they have learned (CAST, 2013; PARCC, 2014; Ray, Aguinaga, & Bigler, 2010).

In general, the impetus behind universal design is to provide access to the greatest number of students during instruction and assessment. This, in turn, minimizes the need for accommodations or changes. Universal design benefits all learners, as it incorporates flexibility to meet the diverse needs of a wide range of students. It is particularly advantageous when variability—both within a student's developmental profile and in comparison to others—is common.

Applied to the Ready for Kindergarten assessments, universally designed allowances encompass the range of actions, material presentations, procedures, and settings that are acceptable for use with all students.

Level the Field Supports

Level the Field supports are individualized supports **only for students with disabilities and students who are English learners**. They are provided in addition to universally designed allowances, when needed.

Level the Field supports are designed to provide equal access and opportunity for participation in the KRA without substantially altering what a student is expected to do. These supports are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability or limited English proficiency (Bagnato, Neisworth, & Pretti-Frontczak, 2010). To be effective, these supports must address the unique needs of the student for whom they are provided and should assist the student in overcoming the educational barriers that prevent him or her from demonstrating his or her true knowledge and skills. Providing a student with Level the Field supports yields scores on the KRA that are as valid and reliable as they would be if General Administration (with

universally designed allowances) procedures were used.

Using the “Not Scorable” Option

For students with disabilities and students who are English learners only, an item or skill on the KRA may be marked as “Not Scorable” when the assessment activity is not accessible to the student even with universal designed allowances (UDAs) and Level the Fields supports. In other words, the skill being assessed is not appropriate given the characteristics of the student's disability or level of English proficiency. Students that receive “Not Scorable” will not receive an overall performance profile on the KRA assessment, but will receive a score for each domain that did not have any items marked “Not Scorable.” In addition, the student's results related to the skill are not included in the school, district, or state aggregate data. If a student receives “Not Scorable” for three items (not necessarily three consecutive items), the administration of that domain is paused. In such cases, the test administrator should review the decision-making process. Please refer to the appropriate chart (Figures 2 or 3) in this document or the Quick Guides.

Team-Based Decision-Making

Teachers administering the KRA to students with disabilities and students who are English learners should collaborate with the student's instructional team (e.g., special educator, English for speakers of other languages [ESOL] staff, parents) to identify needed supports. School/program staff members on the instructional team should familiarize themselves with assessment materials ahead of time so they are able to discuss the allowable supports that should be used during administration. Below are questions the team members may want to consider when reviewing the assessment:

- Is the assessment task similar to other classroom tasks and activities in which the student has experience participating, or will the student have the opportunity to practice similar tasks prior to administering the item?
- Do we provide individualized supports, such as those indicated in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan, for a classroom task that is similar to the item?
- Are there barriers to participation in the assessment activities that could be removed by implementing a support that is not already in place for the student in the classroom?

The supplementary aids, services, and other supports provided for students with disabilities and students who are English learners in the classroom and other education-related settings on a regular basis should be used, as appropriate, when administering the KRA. When determining which supports to implement with students with disabilities and students who are English learners during assessment administration, the student's instructional team members should thoroughly familiarize themselves with the student's individual learning characteristics. In selecting appropriate individualized supports to provide, it is important that the instructional team, including parents, be aware of the following considerations:

- Supports should not be assigned broadly across a particular disability category or level of English proficiency.
- Supports should be used to provide access, but not an advantage.
- Teachers and other service providers need opportunities to learn which supports are helpful during day-to-day classroom activities, including other assessment activities, prior to administering the KRA.

Section II: Differentiating Administration of the KRA

This section provides information for teachers about the allowable ways to differentiate administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. First, it describes the universally designed allowances (UDAs) that are to be used, when needed, with all students. Then, it describes the decision-making processes to follow when the UDAs are not sufficient to enable students with disabilities and students who are English learners to participate in the assessment.

Universally Designed Allowances

Table 1 indicates the universally designed allowances to be used, when needed, with all students participating in the KRA. These allowances are aligned to best practices for access to instruction and assessment.

They are distinguished by the following categories: Directions, Item Presentation, Student Response, Setting, and Scheduling.

Table 1: Kindergarten Readiness Assessment—Universally Designed Allowances for All Students

DIRECTIONS	• Read directions aloud and repeat as many times as needed, either by request of the student or as determined by the teacher. Important: When repeating directions, teachers should not deviate from the item's script. • Pause while reading directions to ensure the student is attending. • Redirect the student's attention to an item or a direction.
ITEM PRESENTATION	• Provide magnification or enlargement of the test items (as many as needed). • Change the position or orientation of materials to maximize the student's visual engagement (e.g., hold the stimulus booklet at a vertical angle instead of placing it flat on a table). • Provide audio amplification for verbal directions. • Provide physical support that maintains all possible answer choices for a given item to improve visual acuity. For example, use color contrast overlay. • Allow the student to retake an item, as determined by the teacher, at any point within the test window if the teacher determines that the student's performance was not indicative of his or her typical level of functioning (e.g., due to illness).
STUDENT RESPONSE	• Allow the student to point to or verbally indicate a response for an item that asks the student to touch the correct response. • Allow the student to indicate a corrected or changed response. • Encourage a response from the student as long as the encouragement is not used as a cue.
SETTING	• Assess the student in a familiar, comfortable location in the classroom or school. • Allow the student to move and change locations during a test session. • Change the lighting. • Change the arrangement of the furniture, including allowing the student to stand during a direct assessment activity. • Provide noise buffers. • Assess in a setting with minimal visual distractions.
SCHEDULING	• Use teacher discretion for starting and stopping item and/or section administration. • Allow the student to initiate starting and stopping item and/or section administration. • Give as much time as needed to complete an item, unless otherwise indicated in the item directions. • Provide breaks as needed.

The following supports are not considered universally designed allowances and should not be used when administering the KRA:

- Simplifying language/words of the script
- Rephrasing, paraphrasing, or changing the semantics of the script
- Using more familiar terms or words than those provided in the script
- Providing visual or auditory cues not indicated in the script (e.g., claps, holding up fingers)
- Substituting or omitting words from the script (e.g., skipping over words or phrases);
- Providing clues and cues
- Asking guiding questions not contained in the script
- Covering or hiding some of the item images to eliminate answer choices
- Changing test materials in any way
- Providing information or prompts about an

item beyond what is provided in the item’s script

Additional Supports for Students with Disabilities

Even with the use of universally designed allowances, teachers may find it necessary to provide additional individualized supports to students with disabilities when administering the kindergarten readiness assessment. Teachers should use the decision-making process presented in Figure 2 to identify the allowable supports that may be used for a student with a disability to promote access to and participation in the assessment. The supports differ depending on whether an item is a selected response/performance task or observational rubric item.

Figure 2: Decision-Making Process for Administering the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to Students with Disabilities

OPTION 1: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION		
Instructions for Assessment Administration	Was the student able to participate using the option?	Recording Performance Data
Administer the item following general administration procedures and utilizing KRA universally designed allowances (see Table 1).	 See “Recording Performance Data”  Go to Option 2: Level the Field Supports	1. Record the student’s score in Ready for Kindergarten Online. 2. Continue to the next item. Note: Repeated use of a particular universally designed allowance across multiple items could indicate an instructionally-relevant pattern of support needs. Record this information on the Student Details page in Ready for Kindergarten Online by clicking the Comment button within the Individualized Supports box to note any allowances that were repeatedly used.

OPTION 2: LEVEL THE FIELD SUPPORTS		
Instructions for Assessment Administration	Was the student able to participate using the option?	Recording Performance Data
Administer the item following general administration procedures, but also provide one or more of the allowable Level the Field Supports listed below (beyond universally designed allowances). Selected Response / Performance Task Item • Use braille to present item content, when appropriate. • Use sign language to administer the item to a student who is deaf or hard of hearing and uses sign language as his or her mode of communication. • Allow the student to gesture toward, touch, use eye gaze, or otherwise indicate a response through whatever dominant communication mode/language he or she utilizes, including sign language, sign language approximations, and digital language (e.g., use of augmentative communication device, allowing the student to “show” versus “tell”). Observational Rubric Item • Do not penalize the student for the use of varied materials that allow the student to demonstrate the skill independently as stated in the item (e.g., adapted writing utensils). • The student can use any of the following modes of communication to demonstrate skills and behaviors that imply verbal or spoken language, such as items that use the words express, suggest, communicate, ask, or tell: - Sign language (including approximations). - Digital language (e.g., use of an augmentative communication device). - Gestural language (e.g., head nod, eye gaze).	 YES See “Recording Performance Data”  NO Go to Option 3: Not Scorable	1. On the Individual Student Details page in Ready for Kindergarten Online, click the View Supports button within the Level the Field Supports box and select the support(s) used under Student with a Disability. Note: The same Level the Field support may be used for multiple items, but it only needs to be recorded once within the Level the Field Supports box. 2. Record the student’s score for the item. 3. Continue to the next item.

OPTION 3: NOT SCORABLE

Recording Performance Data

1. Record “Not Scorable” for the item in Ready for Kindergarten Online.
2. Use the item’s comment box to explain why the item was “Not Scorable.” Also, look for the skill in naturally-occurring routines and activities and record information/observations useful for instructional decision-making.
3. Continue to the next item.

Determining when to pause administration of a domain

When three items (not necessarily consecutive) are marked as “Not Scorable,” the teacher is advised to pause administration pending a review of the remaining items in the domain by the student’s instructional team. Note the difference between “Not Scorable” and a score of “0” on an item. “Not Scorable” means the teacher was not able to score the item because the child could not access it given allowable supports. A score of “0” means the child was able to access the item but did not demonstrate the skill according to the scoring criteria.

If it is determined that the student should not continue to be assessed in that domain, the remaining unanswered items should be marked as “Not Scorable” (DO NOT leave as “Needs to be Administered”) in that domain.

Additional Supports for Students who are English Learners

As students who are English learners become more proficient in English, their need for supports beyond universally designed allowances will decrease.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) staff and teachers should use the state determinations and the information provided below to identify which students who are English learners are considered eligible to receive additional supports beyond universally designed allowances for the kindergarten readiness assessment.

Students with Beginning English Language Proficiency (Eligible for Additional Supports Beyond Universally Designed Allowances) – Students at the beginning level of English language proficiency tend to have the greatest need for supports. These students may be able to respond with gestures, words, or phrases to songs, chants, or stories modeled by teachers but are able, at most, to answer questions in their native language or with only one or two words or short phrases in English.

Students with Intermediate English Language Proficiency (Eligible for Additional Supports Beyond Universally Designed Allowances) – Students at the intermediate level typically have developed some

proficiency in English (e.g., they are able to act out songs and stories using gestures and possibly retell short narrative stories through pictures, and they can repeat sentences from rhymes and patterned stories). If they have learned the activity in English, they may be able to access the assessment item if it is delivered in English.

Students with Advanced English Language Proficiency (Not Eligible for Additional Supports Beyond Universally Designed Allowances) – Students at the advanced English language proficiency level are expected to have a decreased need for support. For example, these students are able to order pictures of events according to sequential language, arrange objects or pictures according to descriptive oral discourse, and tell original stories with emerging detail.

Please note that the results of the KRA do not identify the English learner’s level of development. In order to do so, an assessment would need to be made using the student’s home language. The KWAPT® created by the WIDA® Consortium is often used by ESOL teachers to assess a student’s English proficiency.

Teachers should use the process presented in Figure 3 to identify the allowable supports that may be used for an eligible student who is an English learner to promote access to and participation in the assessment.

Figure 3: Decision-Making Process for Administering the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to Students who are English Learners

OPTION 1: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION		
Instructions for Assessment Administration	Was the student able to participate using the option?	Recording Performance Data
Administer the item following general administration procedures and utilizing KRA universally designed allowances (see Table 1).	 YES See “Recording Performance Data”  NO Go to Option 2: Level the Field Supports	1. Record the student’s score in Ready for Kindergarten Online. 2. Continue to the next item. <i>Note: Repeated use of a particular universally designed allowance across multiple items could indicate an instructionally-relevant pattern of support needs. Record this information on the Student Details page in Ready for Kindergarten Online by clicking the Comment button within the Individualized Supports box to note any allowances that were repeatedly used.</i>
OPTION 2: LEVEL THE FIELD SUPPORTS		
Instructions for Assessment Administration	Was the student able to participate using the option?	Recording Performance Data
Administer the item following general administration procedures, but also provide one or more of the allowable Level the Field Supports listed below (beyond universally designed allowances). • Consider multiple modes for demonstrating skills and behaviors if the item implies verbal or spoken language, such as observational rubric items that use the words express, suggest, communicate, ask, or tell. • Accept multiple means of expression by allowing the student to point to, gesture toward, or touch a response instead of or in addition to providing a verbalized response.	 YES See “Recording Performance Data”  NO Go to Option 3: Not Scorable	1. On the Individual Student Details page in Ready for Kindergarten Online, click the View Supports button within the Level the Field Supports box and select the support(s) used under English Learner. Note: The same Level the Field support may be used for multiple items, but it only needs to be recorded once within the Level the Field Supports box. 2. Record the student’s score for the item. 3. Continue to the next item.

OPTION 3: NOT SCORABLE

Recording Performance Data

1. Record “Not Scorable” for the item in Ready for Kindergarten Online.
2. Use the item’s comment box to explain why the item was “Not Scorable.” Also, look for the skill in naturally-occurring routines and activities and record information/observations useful for instructional decision-making.
3. Continue to the next item.

Determining when to pause administration of a domain

When three items (not necessarily consecutive) are marked as “Not Scorable,” the teacher is advised to pause administration pending a review of the remaining items in the domain by the student’s instructional team. Note the difference between “No Score” and a score of “0” on an item. “Not Scorable” means the teacher was not able to score the item because the child could not access it given allowable supports. A score of “0” means the child was able to access the item but did not demonstrate the skill according to the scoring criteria.

If it is determined that the student should not continue to be assessed in that domain, the remaining unanswered items should be marked as “Not Scorable” (DO NOT leave as “Needs to be Administered”) in that domain.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Administration Protocol

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment has features in printed English and in cases where young deaf/hard of hearing children are not yet reading, American Sign Language (ASL) accommodation by a human signer for KRA is provided. Human signers who provide the ASL accommodation must follow these procedures during KRA testing to ensure the standardization of the ASL presentation of the assessments.

Procedures for ASL Human Signers Providing the Human Signer Accommodation for Kindergarten Readiness Assessment:

1. Human ASL signers must be trained in the KRA administration, pass the content assessment, simulator, and then sign the Test Security Agreement provided by the LEA.
2. Human ASL signers should use conceptually accurate signs, with or without simultaneous voicing, signing only what is printed in the test book or on the computer screen without changing, emphasizing, or adding words.
3. Human ASL signers may not clarify (except for test directions), provide additional information, assist, or influence the student’s selection of a response in any way.
4. Human ASL signers must use the same signs if the student requests a portion repeated.
5. Human ASL signers should be provided a copy of the test, DVD of conceptually accurate sign language vocabulary of all items in KRA, and the examiner’s directions two schools days prior to the start of testing, in order to become familiar with the words, terms, symbols, signs, and/or graphics that will be read aloud to the student.
6. Human ASL signers may repeat passages, test items, and response options, as requested, according to the needs of the student. Signers should not rush through the test and should ask the student if he or she is ready to move to the next item.
7. Human ASL signers may not attempt to solve or answer any of the KRA problems, or determine the correct answer to a test item while signing.

8. Human ASL signers must use facial expressions consistent with sign language delivery and must not use expressions which may be interpreted by the student as approval or disapproval of the student's answers.
9. Human ASL signers must pause for few seconds before signing the answer options.
10. If a human ASL signer is unsure how to sign and/or pronounce an unfamiliar word, advise the student of the uncertainty and spell the word.
11. When using a sign that can represent more than one word, the human ASL signer may spell the word after signing it, if there is any doubt about which word is intended.
12. Human ASL signers must spell any words requested by the student.
14. When test items refer to a particular iPad or technology related movement, or directions of a passage, human ASL signers must note the lines or directions before signing the question and answer choices.
15. When signing selected response items, human ASL signers must be careful to give equal stress to each response option and to sign all of them before waiting for a response.
19. Human ASL signers should refer to the KRA/ELA ASL Glossary for KRA words and technical vocabulary for consistency in providing the accommodation.
20. Human ASL signer must be familiar with the student's IEP or 504 plan, and should know in advance which accommodations are required by the student.

GLOSSARY

Assessment: A systematic procedure/process for obtaining information from observation, interviews, portfolios, projects, tests, and other sources that can be used to make judgments about children's characteristics.

English learners: These are children whose primary or home language is one other than English and who cannot perform ordinary classroom activities in English, because they may have limited or no age-appropriate ability to understand or speak in English. Children who are English learners have traditionally been called limited English proficient (LEP) children. In the Early Childhood/ Early Learner field, the term dual language learner (DLL) is also used.

Guidelines: A description of suggested elements intended to accomplish a defined activity.

Performance: Describes behaviors exhibited while putting specific skills into action.

Reliability: The consistency of the results obtained from using an assessment tool (being free of error) is important for generalizing about children's learning and development. Reliability is represented by a figure between 0 and 1, such that values closer to 1.0 indicate better reliability.

Skill: This describes the ability of a child to use knowledge effectively and readily in performance (i.e., the ability to transform knowledge into action).

Student with a disability: This is a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 plan.

Validity: This describes the extent to which a measure or assessment tool evaluates what it was designed to evaluate. This is represented by a figure between .00 and 1.0, such that values closer to 1.0 indicate better validity.

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