

OEL Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 2

March 2016

New York State English Language Learner (ELL) Screening and Identification During Kindergarten Registration and Enrollment

Per [Section 154-2.3\(a\) \(7\) of CR Part 154](#), the [Home Language Questionnaire \(HLQ\)](#) (updated October 2015) is a required document in every new school district enrollee’s registration documentation, including all New York State students entering Kindergarten. In a parent’s or person in parental relation’s [preferred language](#), this HLQ is required to be completed and must be kept in each student’s cumulative record. During the Kindergarten registration process, the HLQ and subsequent individual interview determine if administering the [New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners \(NYSITELL\)](#) to the incoming Kindergartener is warranted. For students enrolling in Kindergarten for the start of classes in September, the statewide English language proficiency identification assessment may not be administered before June 1, 2016 [154-2.3(a)(7)]. The decision to administer the NYSITELL does not necessarily mean that the incoming Kindergartener is an ELL. Only after the assessment is administered do the NYSITELL results determine if the incoming Kindergartener is an ELL. Original or copies of NYSITELL score sheets and results for all students must be maintained in each student’s cumulative record.

Questions about screening and identifying ELLs during Kindergarten registration and enrollment can be directed to the [Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages](#) at obefls@nysed.gov, the Albany office at 518-474-8775, or the Brooklyn office at 718-722-2445. Questions specific to the NYSITELL can be directed to the Office of State Assessment at EMSCASSESSINFO@nysed.gov.

For more information and tips about transitions to Kindergarten, please revisit our [April 2015 newsletter](#).

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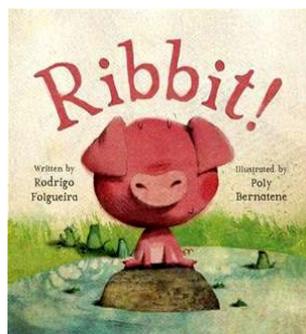
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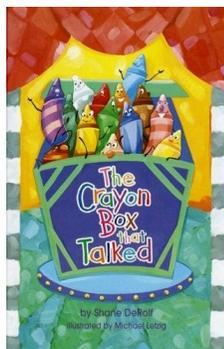
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Reading Recommendations



A story about acceptance and making new friends, *Ribbit!* by Rodrigo Folgueira is a fun and beautifully-illustrated book for children ages 2-5. This book would be a great read aloud for discussing transitions to new classes or schools but could also be used to talk about children’s feelings at any time.



The Crayon Box that Talked by Shane DeRolf is a wonderful story to read aloud to young children. It addresses issues of tolerance and community building. Children can relate to the feelings of the crayons while making connections to their own lives. Teachers can use this story to develop class discussions about how the classroom community works best together.

OBSERVING AND RECORDING CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

Why observe children?

Observing children provides teachers opportunities to learn about young children's needs, interests, skills, and learning styles. Teachers use observational notes to reflect on what is working in learning centers, what skills can be scaffolded with more challenging material, and what sparks children's enthusiasm for learning.

Observing children in their natural environment will provide the best objective notes about their developmental stages. For example, a child digging for buried letters in a sand table can give the teacher insight into the child's letter identification, fine motor and, if there is a peer at the table, social skill development.

How do I record children's development?

- Be sure to date all observations for monitoring progress. Plan to observe children at various times of day.
- Record exactly what is observed to remain objective. Write as many details as possible.
- Develop a system for taking observational notes, filing them, and retrieving them.

Recording Technique	What is it?
Anecdotal Notes	Short statements of what children are doing. The note contains the date and time of the observation, setting, observers initials, and objectively describes the child's actions. Direct quotes are used. Anecdotal notes have a beginning, middle and an end.
Running Records	Documentation of children's actions and conversations over a specified time period of typically at least ten minutes. Everything the child does or says is recorded. The teacher analyzes running records for the child's developmental progress in the domains.
Checklists	Designed to record if children are able to complete a particular skill. For example, a teacher may plan a small group activity to see who can cut on a straight line and may check whether or not children are able to successfully complete the task.
Time/Event Sampling	Documentation of a child's developmental information for a period of time. For example, this can be used to observe a child's behavioral interactions with peers during circle time. Samplings usually occur for 10-15 minutes at a time over a period of 2-4 weeks. Observers can then look for patterns of behavior while analyzing notes.
Frequency and Duration Counts	Record of the number of times a child exhibits a particular behavior in the classroom and how long that behaviors lasts. This type of tool assists the teacher in determining how often and how long a behavior is occurring and to make a plan of action.
Use of Technology	Audio recordings, photographs, and videos are useful tools for documenting children's progress. When using these methods, ensure that the appropriate permission is secure for the use of technology tools.
Family Questionnaires	Keep the questionnaire brief and only ask for information that may be valuable to you in understanding children's progress. This tool can help you design a survey that meets your needs: https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/harvard-education-surveys/
Portfolios	Collection of items such as work samples, photographs, rubrics, and developmental checklists, compiled throughout the year. A portfolio will illustrate the learning progression that has happened throughout the year.

Other Resources

- ◆ *The Developing Child: Observation Guidebook* by McGraw-Hill Companies
http://glencoe.mheducation.com/sites/dl/free/0078883601/680442/DC_ObsGuideBook.pdf
- ◆ *Kidwatching: Documenting Children's Literacy Development* by Gretchen Owocki and Yetta Goodman
- ◆ *The Power of Observation: Birth to Age 8* by Judy R. Jablon, Amy Laura Dombro, and Margo L. Dichtelmiller

Sources

- Ahola, D. & Kovacik, A. (2007). *Observing and understanding child development: A child study manual*. Belmont, CA: Delmar Publishing.
- Marotz, L.R. & Allen, K.E.. (2013). *Developmental profiles: Pre-birth through adolescence*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
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HIGHLIGHT ON EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Troy City School District and CEO's Head Start Program in Rensselaer County

Education Law requires school districts that receive state funding for prekindergarten programs to subcontract a minimum amount of such funding to local and eligible agencies. Though the law establishes this baseline requirement, school districts are encouraged to collaborate to the greatest extent possible with community-based organizations. Increased community-based collaboration and coordination that are better able to deliver high-quality early childhood education creates and demonstrates best practices for three- and four-year olds throughout New York State.

Julianne (Juli) Curry, Coordinator of Grants and Funded Programs at the Troy City School District, and Pamela (Pam) Maxstadt, Assistant Director of Curriculum and Education for the Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) Head Start program, have worked diligently to develop a strong partnership committed to providing high-quality and coordinated early childhood programming for 135 students in the Troy community.

Juli and Pam recently sat down to share some tips to managing such a successful prekindergarten collaboration. First, they agreed, each partnership must have give and take. For example, it is important to understand and be cognizant of each other's respective responsibilities and work collaboratively to meet the needs of both agencies. Further, from the very beginning of the working relationship it is critical to set clear mutual expectations, and as Juli stated, "always keep in mind that these are all our kids, and we are all here to serve them."

Next, collaboration is key. Though there will be different and perhaps unique strategies to reflect distinct communities, Juli and Pam agreed that the following list summarizes the most effective strategies that have worked for them:

- Having a joint interview process when hiring staff—interview candidates together with mutual focus on hiring high-quality teaching staff;
- Meeting regularly—create a meeting schedule in advance and stick to it. In Troy, district and Head Start classroom staff meet monthly for an hour to share best practices and address concerns;
- Having Head Start staff participate in district trainings, and co-sponsoring trainings for prekindergarten and other grade level staff;
- Closing prekindergarten for a half day so Head Start staff can attend federally-required training;
- Sharing critical information regarding individual student needs, building safety, etc.;
- Adhering to the stricter standards when there are 'gray areas' in the partnership;
- Working together to develop an enrollment packet with forms that are suitable for both agencies, including Head Start-required income verification;
- Developing a random selection process, keeping in mind that neediest children get first priority for enrollment when there is a waiting list; and
- Being aware that in any collaboration, sometimes one partner may have to compromise more than the other now and then.

Finally, Juli and Pam recognize that effective partnerships take time to develop. For other districts looking to strengthen partnerships in their own communities, they recommend: "get to know each other and learn each other's systems, have patience, have well-developed policies, and keep in mind that at the end of the day students and families are not yours, mine or theirs. As members of the school district community, they are ours."

For more information about their collaboration, contact:

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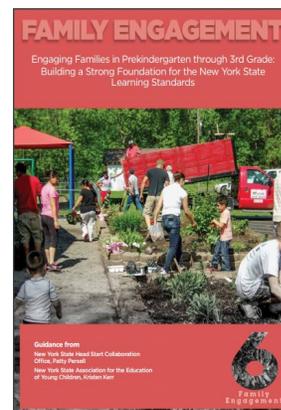
The Office of Early Learning (OEL) is responsible for a wide range of educational programs and works closely with parents, early care and education agencies, schools and state agencies to coordinate programs and resources with the goal of making New York's early learning system as comprehensive and seamless as possible. The OEL is tasked with implementing over \$800 million per year in State and Federal grants for prekindergarten programs with the goal of providing high-quality programs for early learners to all children.

For more information and helpful resources, please visit our website at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/earlylearning/>



Family Engagement Brief

In January, a Family Engagement brief was issued to support early learning programs in engaging families from the start. The sixth in a series produced as a collaborative effort among members of the NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), including the NYS Head Start Collaboration Office and the NYS Association for the Education of Young Children, this brief connects family engagement best practices to previously issued briefs such as curriculum and leadership.



The Family Engagement brief presents the many benefits that come from engaging families as well as strategies for what leaders and teachers can do to create welcoming environments in early learning programs and schools. Other topics covered include: how providing families with an understanding of play-based learning can support a child's language development at home, how screenings and assessments can support children's development, and strategies that teachers and leaders can implement. In addition, the brief places great importance on creating practices that support smooth transitions throughout the early learning years and supporting families' sense of belonging in their child's educational setting.

The Family Engagement brief and the five prior briefs can be downloaded from the NYS ECAC website at <http://www.nysecac.org/news-and-events/developmentally-appropriate-practice-guidance/>.

ELL Resource: Teaching Channel

Have you visited the [Teaching Channel](#) website? This is a great resource, overall, but we have found that the English Language Learner (ELL) articles and videos provide practical suggestions for implementing strategies in classrooms. The website covers all grade levels, but there are many useful resources for early childhood education. For example, this [video](#) demonstrates how a kindergarten teacher meets the needs of ELL students in a reading workshop model. Let us know if you found this helpful!