



# **WaKIDS Implementation Guide for Teachers 2021-22**

# WAKIDS IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS 2021–22

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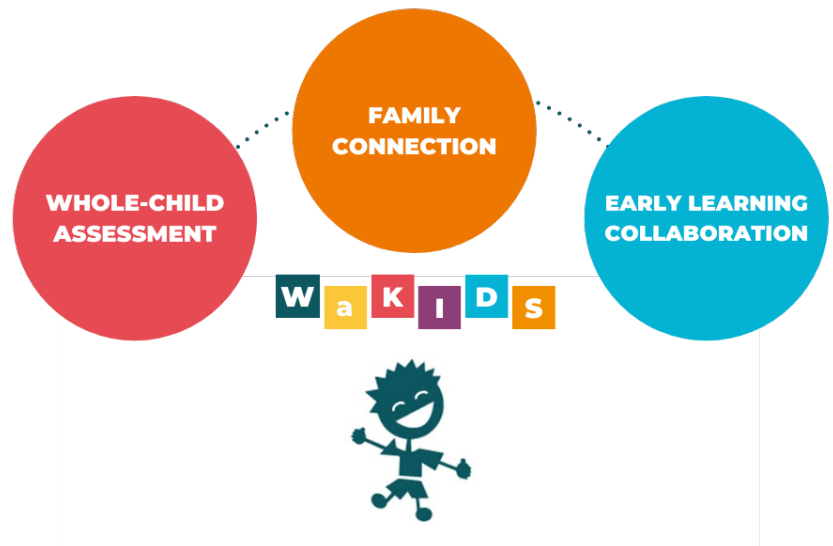
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# ABOUT WaKIDS

The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills, or WaKIDS, is legislatively mandated to be part of state-funded, full-day kindergarten, including Transitional Kindergarten.

WaKIDS is a three-part **kindergarten transition process** that is intended to identify the skills, knowledge, and characteristics of kindergarten students at the beginning of the school year; inform instruction; support family involvement; and build partnerships with early learning providers.



For every schedule that districts offer in fall 2021, **WaKIDS will be as important as ever** in supporting teacher and family collaboration around children’s healthy growth and development.

## How to Use this Guide

All three parts of WaKIDS will be required in the fall of 2021. The purpose of the *WaKIDS Implementation Guide for Teachers 2021-22* is to assist teachers in conducting all three parts of WaKIDS during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, with increased emphasis on:

- Involving families in assessment determinations
- Partnering with families to support children’s learning goals remotely
- Tailoring instruction with formative use of WaKIDS data
- Connecting with child care providers to promote extended learning

## Key WaKIDS Implementation Tasks

Below is a list of the key assessment implementation tasks for administering the whole-child assessment component of WaKIDS. Detailed information is provided in the following pages:

1. WaKIDS Training (July 7 – October 4, 2021)
2. Initial Communications with Families (as soon as possible)
3. Conducting Family Connections (beginning of school)
4. Establishing Early Learning Collaboration (as soon as possible)
5. Student Import (August/Mid-September)
6. WaKIDS Fall Assessment (Deadline: November 12, 2021)

# WaKIDS TRAINING

## WaKIDS 101 Training: July 7 – October 4

WaKIDS 101 is the one-time, self-paced, online training required for all kindergarten teachers new to WaKIDS, including Transitional Kindergarten teachers and certificated special education teachers who provide instruction to kindergarten students with disabilities. Only certificated teachers who have completed WaKIDS 101 can assess children in their classes. It is through WaKIDS 101 that teachers new to WaKIDS gain access to the assessment platform, *MyTeachingStrategies*®.

Reimbursement for first time WaKIDS teachers and 12 clock hours are available. [You can register for a WaKIDS training on the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\) website.](#)

## WaKIDS Refresher for Teachers: August 11 – October 1

An optional refresher course is available online for teachers who previously completed WaKIDS 101 but want to revisit the basics of WaKIDS implementation. Reimbursement is not provided for the refresher course. Teachers can earn three clock hours for the approximately three hours estimated to complete the course. [You can register for a WaKIDS training on the OSPI website.](#)

## FAMILY CONNECTION

The WaKIDS Family Connection component requires districts to invite families to meet with their child’s teacher prior to or at the beginning of the school year. The purpose of this meeting is to establish a relationship among the child, the family, and the teacher by providing time for families to share information about their child and voice their hopes and concerns about kindergarten.

Schools may structure time for these meetings any way they would like, including using up to three school days to meet with parents and families as part of the family connection component of WaKIDS ([RCW 28A.150.220](#)).

## Conducting the Family Connection

- Meet individually with the families of your students by phone, video conference, or another agreed-upon way.
- Guide the conversation by asking open-ended (vs. yes/no) questions, allowing the family to share information about their child. Use [Introducing Me!](#), a 2-page booklet to guide the family connection conversation.
- Ask if the family has any information to share about the child’s prior learning experiences at home and/or in settings such as preschool, child care, or care by a relative/friend. Invite

### ***Share the Purpose of WaKIDS with Families (put this in your own words!)***

*“WaKIDS stands for the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills. WaKIDS takes place over the first two months of school. The purpose of WaKIDS is to help families, students, and teachers get to know each other and create a smooth transition to kindergarten. Another purpose of WaKIDS is to learn about each child to guide beginning instruction. During WaKIDS, we will collaborate to identify learning goals for your child. We will work together to determine the best ways we can communicate about your child’s current strengths and needs, including through conversation, games, and learning activities that might take place together or at various times of the day during normal family routines. No one knows your child better than you! I look forward to getting started.”*

families to discuss any information they may bring to share.

- Provide an opportunity for the family to ask any questions they might have.
- Make time to share about yourself. Families and children will want to get to know you!

## Best Practice Recommendations for Initiating and Conducting Effective Family Connection Meetings

- Begin meeting with families as soon as possible, once you know the students who will be in your classroom.
- Anticipate and be prepared with strategies to communicate with parents/guardians who do not speak or read English.
- Poll families about their schedule preferences and child care needs.
- Refer families needing child care to [Child Care Aware](#).
- Explain the purpose of WaKIDS and discuss how families would like to be involved.
- Recognize that the child and family may be shy interacting with you virtually (or in person!) for the first few meetings. Focus on the most important questions in the first meeting and stagger other questions over a few meetings as they get more comfortable with you.
- Check your bias in assumptions about what constitutes [family engagement](#).
- Refer to the [Family Connection](#) page on the OSPI website for resources to support conversations with families. Materials will be added throughout the summer.

## Key Information to Learn through Family Connection

- What is the family routine? Are parents/guardians working at home or away from home?
- Who will be the child's primary caregiver during the school day? If the child will be in child care, ask if it would be okay to contact their child care provider. (Check with your district to determine the process for families to formally give permission to contact the provider.)
- What are the child's prior early learning experiences, including in settings such as preschool, child care, or care by a relative or friend.
- Will the families and/or child care providers have access to wifi, computers, other devices?
- What materials are needed to assist in-home learning?
- How do families prefer to receive materials for learning?

## Considerations for Continuing the Connection

Families may struggle to coordinate school, work, and child care schedules, and may have difficulty prioritizing time to connect with educators. Educators will need to calibrate the appropriate level of support for each child based on the priorities and goals shared by families.

- Communicate frequently with parents/guardians, adapting schedules to meet with and respond to families at different times of the day.
- Focus on sharing positive feedback about children's strengths.
- Recognize that families may have had prior negative experiences in public schools, including bias and racism, and it may take longer to build trusting relationships.
- Work with families to identify learning goals that are appropriate for both the child and family, recognizing that households will have varying degrees of access to time, online resources, books, and school supplies.

- If the child was/is in out-of-home care, ask about learning goals that may have been or are in place in that learning environment. This can inform the goal making process.
- Provide technology training for children’s families in their home language. Allow the families’ child care provider to participate in trainings.

*Communication was the number one request of families who participated in reopening schools focus groups. They want frequent and clear communication and opportunities for input about what is working for their family.*

## EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATION

The expectations for Early Learning Collaboration are outlined in [RCW 28A.150.315](#), which include developing strong connections to community early learning providers and participating in kindergarten-readiness activities.

During the pandemic, early learning collaboration has increased in importance. Depending on the schedule districts choose, working families with school-age children may have an increased need for additional care and supervision outside of the home. Communicate with local preschool and children’s care partners. Children might be spending a significant amount of time in child care during remote learning.

Be prepared to have closer connections to child care providers who may be caring for students during alternate days or hours of schooling. Recognize the important and expanded role they play in caring for and supporting students during remote learning. Make connections with your students’ child care providers and leverage their knowledge as professional partners.

### Best Practices for Conducting Early Learning Collaboration

- Determine if your district has an early learning/extended learning contact to serve as a point person between community and district-based early learning and extended learning programs.
- Refer families needing child care to [Child Care Aware](#). Where possible, help identify child care options for kindergarten students whose families don’t have the option to stay home with a child each day.
- With parent/guardian approval, share learning goals with child care partners to ensure consistency in working with a child across their learning experiences.
- Participate in early learning events with community-based child care providers in evenings and on weekends, and provide incentives for child care staff participation.
- Participate in shared professional development.
- Be aware that some care givers have completed the [Washington State Kindergarten Transition Form](#) or similar documents; find out if your school has collected these forms for any of the students in your class.

# WHOLE-CHILD ASSESSMENT

The Whole-child Assessment component of WaKIDS is conducted within the first months of the school year. Regardless of whether school occurs in-person or remotely, it will be necessary to understand where children are in their development in order to design instruction and partner with families. The Whole-child Assessment component of WaKIDS is a formative, observational assessment tool that provides information about each child’s current levels of development and next steps for growth in areas fundamental to social-emotional and academic achievement.

## Conducting the Whole-child Assessment

To allow more time to build relationships with children and families at the beginning of school, the fall WaKIDS assessment window will close **November 12, 2021**, rather than October 31.

Transitional Kindergarten programs will also be granted an extension, allowing them to conduct the assessment within 12 weeks (rather than 10 weeks) of the program start date.

Observations should be conducted across the full assessment period, allowing time to get to know students and observing for skills and abilities in authentic ways. **It is not appropriate to conduct the Whole-child Assessment within the first few days of school.**

Wherever possible, teachers should observe and assess students in-person, in authentic, play-based settings. Even schools engaging primarily in remote learning should consider opportunities for teachers to meet with small groups of students; for instance, outside on a play field.

In cases where students are engaging remotely, teachers and families will need to partner to observe and document the child’s skills, knowledge, and behaviors during family routines (e.g., cooking, grocery shopping); through learning activities, games, and play time; and during synchronous times, one-on-one, and in small groups. Educators can use multiple forms of evidence of students’ skills, including work samples received from families (e.g., photos, videos, worksheets, recordings).

*Schools that are engaged in remote learning have a unique opportunity to partner with families to collect evidence of what children know and can do.*

Teachers should use the “Not Observed” level sparingly and take advantage of the year-long availability of *MyTeachingStrategies*® to document children’s growth beyond the fall assessment window. If observations of an objective are not available because of family circumstances, please select “Not Observed”/“Other” and write in “NA”.

Students who have transferred or whose families have formally or informally withdrawn should be archived in *MyTeachingStrategies*® prior to November 12, so that an incomplete student portfolio does not prevent teachers from finalizing data by the assessment deadline. Please contact your principal or District Assessment Coordinator to let them know the child needs to be archived.

Children entering kindergarten from an Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) classroom will have prior *GOLD*® data available in *MyTeachingStrategies*®. View the Manage



Class/My Children section and look for students with a “Transferred Record” button. Knowing assessment determinations from children’s prior teachers will provide a helpful starting point for beginning WaKIDS.

Refer to [Whole-child Assessment on the OSPI website](#) for resources to support conducting the WaKIDS assessment (check frequently, as materials will be added throughout the summer and early fall).

## Best Practices for Conducting the Whole-child Assessment

- Prioritize building relationships with children and families at the start of the school year, prior to making observations.
- Work with families to build assessment observations around the child’s interests, adjusting the pace to accommodate the family’s capacity. WaKIDS assessment should take place slowly and gradually, observing over time.
- Work with families to identify opportunities to practice skills that can occur during daily routines using everyday household items as learning materials. Families see their child’s growth in daily routines and life skills such as counting forks to set the table for dinner or identifying all the vegetables that start with “A” while shopping for produce. Help families determine which objectives might be assessed through these experiences.
- Provide backpacks with materials like books, colored pencils, balls and other supplies that are connected to objectives for development and learning. Encourage children to take these backpacks with them if they are engaging in remote learning away from the home.
- Encourage the family to spend as much time as possible learning outdoors. [Learning in Places](#) offers field-based science activities in outdoor places. [OSPI also catalogued environmental education](#) opportunities in remote learning.
- Engage families in collecting evidence (work samples, photographs, etc.) and documenting their child’s progress toward learning goals. Be cautious not to pressure or suggest that families are expected to contribute.
- Leverage the resources embedded in the assessment system. This year, the online platform used for Teaching Strategies GOLD® of the WaKIDS assessment, *MyTeachingStrategies*®, will include additional resources to support teachers and families. See the Resources for Remote Assessment section of this guide for more information about these tools.
- Upload as much evidence as possible with preliminary levels in the *MyTeachingStrategies*® Assess tab. Assessing all evidence sets the stage for regular ongoing conversations about the child’s development.

## Considerations for In-person Assessment

- Adults providing in-person instruction to young students will need to facilitate play-based learning opportunities following [Department of Health Guidelines](#).
- Use [outdoor areas for learning opportunities](#) to observe children.

## Considerations for Assessing Remotely

- Investigate [best practices for remote learning with young children](#), including [developmentally appropriate technology use](#).

- Involve families in scheduling decisions. Because young children are not independent online learners, families will need to be available to assist with remote learning.
- Plan short remote lessons, recognizing that young children will have limited capacity for sitting for prolonged periods in front of a computer.
- Develop strategies for young children to feel comfortable engaging virtually and to understand how the online platform works; for instance, children may not understand that all of the classmates they are seeing on an online platform are each in separate locations.

## RESOURCES FOR REMOTE ASSESSMENT

OSPI and Teaching Strategies *GOLD*® have developed resources to help facilitate conducting WaKIDS remotely. These items are referenced below, with an explanation of the purpose of the resources and where to find them.

### Goal Planning and Reflection Sheet

Kindergarten children are not yet able to manage their learning independently, so it will be important to establish goals together with the key adults who will help them engage in remote learning. The [Goal Planning and Reflection Sheet](#) is intended to be co-created with the child, their parent/guardian, and teacher during meeting times. It can include goals identified by the child and their parent/guardian. Filling it out together, the family can work with the teacher to determine when in their daily routine children will have the opportunity to work on their goals, as well as documentation that can be collected to help inform the WaKIDS assessment. At one of the next regular check-ins, review the goals with both the child and the parent/guardian. The number of goals included and the amount of time before reflecting on the goals should also be jointly decided. Be sure to include goals that include play and get students active!

The *Goal Planning and Reflection Sheet* will be available in nine languages: Chinese, Khmer, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Translated documents will be available in early fall.

### Discussion Prompts, Look-fors, and Observational Activities

Teachers may use [Discussion Prompts, Look-fors, and Observational Activities](#) as a resource for engaging families in learning activities that may inform the WaKIDS assessment. This document can be used with the [Goal Planning and Reflection Sheet](#) to help parents/guardians understand what behaviors and skills to look for during highlighted activities. Discussion prompts, look-fors, and observational activities are listed for each of the objectives for development and learning assessed as part of WaKIDS. Because it may be difficult to observe all of the assessment objectives remotely, teachers may find discussion prompts to be an important means of collecting information from families about their child's skills and abilities. They should be shared with families gradually, over the course of the assessment period.

## Choice Boards

[Choice boards](#) include a variety of activities associated with objectives assessed as part of the whole-child assessment component of WaKIDS. Laid out in a table, they are filled with fun activities that kindergartners can choose from to build skills and manage their own learning. Choice Boards can be used with the [Goal Planning and Reflection Sheet](#) and [Discussion Prompts, Look-fors, and Observational Activities](#) to engage parents/guardians in learning activities that may inform the WaKIDS assessment. This resource will be available in nine languages: Chinese, Khmer, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Translated documents will be available in early fall.

## Example from Bellingham

Bellingham Public Schools developed a [Remote Learning Early Childhood Framework](#) that includes kindergarten schedules for remote learning that other districts may find helpful in designing/adapting their own plans. Among the different scheduled activities that create opportunities for developing skills and conducting observational assessment, Bellingham has integrated daily time for a learning routine called “Plan Do Reflect,” described briefly below. Each aspect of “Plan Do Reflect” provides opportunities to observe objectives assessed as part of WaKIDS, particularly from the social-emotional, language, and cognitive areas.

### Plan Do Reflect

#### *Plan: “Choice with Intention”*

The goal of “the Plan” is for children to make a plan for what they will be doing during a 60-minute block of time/play with an adult who will help them carry it out. Plans should focus on playful learning opportunities that are not online. When making the plan, the teacher helps the child articulate what they will do and the materials they will need, including identifying possible choices, if the child is unsure. Take notes about what the child’s plan is, to refer back to during reflection time. The process of planning encourages children to express their ideas, intentions, and decisions, increasing their self-confidence and sense of control. Planning begins the process of engagement, leading to concentrated play that allows a child to move along a continuum with increasing complexity. Plans can be developed one-on-one with children or in small groups. Since children will carry out their plans away from direct time with teachers, and may need support with aspects of their plan, it will be important to involve the parent/guardian.

#### *Do: “Develops Competent Thinkers, Decision-Makers, and Problem Solvers”*

Work with the parent/guardian to identify 60 minutes of dedicated time during their day when the child can carry out their plan. During this time, the parent/guardian should plan to observe, support, and extend the students’ play, as needed. As soon as the child has made their plan, they should begin.

#### *Reflect: “Remembering and Reflecting with Analysis”*

Once the plan has been finished, or the child has disengaged, the parent/guardian and/or the teachers should review how things went. By using language and/or props the child should be encouraged to share what they did, reflecting on what worked as anticipated, how they adjusted to

challenges, and what they might do differently next time. This is an important step in the Plan Do Reflect process, so be sure to include it. The reflection may happen with the teacher and/or with the parent/guardian.

Teachers will need to work with parents/families to determine how to best integrate the Plan Do Reflect learning routine into their remote schedules, keeping in mind that the planning and reflection should occur right before and after the child gets to execute their plan. Teachers may consider using Plan Do Reflect with the *Goal Planning and Reflection Sheet* and the *Discussion Prompts, Look-fors, and Observational Activities* to establish how parents/guardians can potentially document the child demonstrating learning objectives that are part of the WaKIDS assessment.

To learn more about Plan Do Reflect, see pages 33 and 34 of the [Washington State Full-day Kindergarten Guide](#). Sample schedules and Plan Do Reflect resources can be found on the [Whole-child Assessment](#) page of the WaKIDS website.

## Open Educational Resources (OER) Commons – Washington OER Hub

[OER Commons](#) is a free digital library of educational resources for families and educators. Anyone may access, download, and share the resources on the site. (In order to evaluate or create resources, users need to register with an email address and password.) Within OER Commons, OSPI has created a [Washington OER Hub](#). This hub is Washington's platform for sharing K–12 open educational resources developed by OSPI, expert Washington educators, and our collaborators, promoting equitable access to standards-aligned, quality instructional materials. The resources listed above will be available in the [Washington Early Learning](#) group on the hub, in formats that teachers can change and adapt according to their own needs.

On the site, visit our [“Supporting Youngest Learners”](#) collection for additional suggested materials for educators and families. Some of these resources have been developed by OSPI, Washington educators, or collaborators and others link to external organizations providing both open and “free to use online” educational materials.

## MyTeachingStrategies® Tools

Teaching Strategies has enhanced the resources available in the online assessment platform used as part of the WaKIDS assessment, *MyTeachingStrategies*®, to support teachers and families.

In order to gain access to the additional resources described below, you need to have students in your class in *MyTeachingStrategies*®. If you wish to start using these resources before your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) has uploaded students into your class, you may manually add a fake student. Please name this student “Test Student”. [Instructions on adding students are available on the Teaching Strategies website.](#)

Once your DAC has uploaded your students into your class, please make sure to delete your “Test Student” from your *MyTeachingStrategies*® class. [Instructions on deleting students are available on the Teaching Strategies website.](#)

## **Intentional Teaching Experiences**

Intentional Teaching Experiences use the most recent assessment information to help teachers individualize their instruction and efficiently add documentation with preliminary levels.

### **Mighty Minutes®**

Mighty Minutes® are short engaging activities that rarely require additional materials and provide valuable learning opportunities teachers can incorporate into virtual learning sessions. Teachers will find extensions for families in these short activities in the Teach tab in *MyTeachingStrategies®*.

Family activities associated with Intentional Teaching Experiences and Mighty Minutes® can be printed or shared digitally with families to extend learning at home and/or to facilitate distance learning.

### **Resources Library**

*MyTeachingStrategies®* includes a Resources Library in the Family tab. Be sure to adapt activities to be relevant for remote learning with materials commonly found at home.

### **Family Mobile App**

For the 2021–22 school year, Teaching Strategies enabled a mobile app that introduces two-way communication between teachers and family members and allows teachers to use photos and videos shared by families as documentation.

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Download this material in PDF at <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/testing/state-testing-overview/washington-kindergarten-inventory-developing-skills-wakids/early-learning-resources>. This material is available in alternative format upon request. Contact the Resource Center at 888-595-3276, TTY 360-664-3631. Please refer to this document number for quicker service: 20-0028.



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