

Louisiana Believes

PreK-3 Guidebook for Site and System Leaders

Session Objectives

As a result of this presentation, site and system leaders will **use the Guidebook to:**

- Identify five strategies for creating a successful PreK-3 system;
- Self-assess their current strengths and weaknesses in implementing each strategy; and
- Develop five key actions to improve their PreK-3 systems during the 2017-2018 school year.

Opening Activity

What do successful PreK-3 systems look like?

Discuss this question with a neighbor and jot down some characteristics of effective PreK-3 systems.

Introduction

- The years between pre-kindergarten and third grade are vital for creating the foundation for later school success.
- The skills our children develop in one grade must be built upon and reinforced in later grades.
- Despite efforts to close the achievement gap early, disparities in learning exist even in PreK and continue to grow larger throughout early elementary school.
- In fact, recent results for LEAP show fewer than 50% of third graders achieve mastery in reading or math.
- This picture is even more troubling for our most vulnerable youth.

PreK Through Third Grade ELA and Math Skills Progression

Area	PreK	Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade
ELA Examples					
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses frequently occurring nouns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses frequently occurring verbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses frequently occurring adjectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses frequently occurring adverbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses subordinating conjunctions
Writing About Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names topic or book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes a single event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes two sequenced events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses facts to develop points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides concluding statements on topic
Phonics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies initial sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segments syllables in spoken words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segments sounds in spoken words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decodes one-syllable words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decodes multisyllabic words
Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretend reads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads emergent-reader texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads grade-level texts fluently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads grade-level texts fluently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads grade-level texts fluently
Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies main topic of a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retells key details of a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connects two details in a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies main topic of a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes main idea of a text
Math Examples					
Numbers/Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds and subtracts up to 5 objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds and subtracts numbers within 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds and subtracts numbers within 20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds and subtracts numbers within 100 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use multiplication and division within 100
Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures an object using cubes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compares lengths of two similar objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order three objects by length 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimates lengths using standard units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures liquid volume and masses using standard units

Challenges

Though school districts across Louisiana are working hard on many fronts to improve the quality of education in PreK-3, **challenges remain**. These include:

- misaligned curriculum programs or ineffective implementation of quality programs;
- disconnected assessment methods (e.g., screening and progress monitoring);
- conflicting goals and priorities for professional development;
- inconsistent use of teacher observation systems; and
- lack of family engagement and awareness of support services available for children and families.

Vision

To eliminate these barriers, **we need to build a seamless support system for early learning -- one that prepares all of our children to achieve mastery in reading and math in third grade and beyond.**

Achieving this vision will require implementers at all levels -- from site and system leaders to classroom teachers -- to embrace policies and practices that support a consistent approach to children's education beginning in PreK.

Five Strategies to Create Successful PreK-3 Systems

Research identifies five strategies that have been and continue to be critical to alignment efforts in effective PreK-3 system. Successful systems:

1. implement high-quality curricula;
2. use meaningful assessment methods, including early and accurate identification;
3. create shared, curriculum and content specific professional development between PreK and K-3 teachers;
4. use teacher observation systems effectively; and
5. provide positive support systems for children and families.



STRATEGY 1: IMPLEMENT HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULA

In Louisiana, high-quality PreK-3 curricula:

- fully align with [state standards](#) for early learning, ELA, and math;
- cover the learning domains that it proposes to cover in a sequenced, progressive manner;
- use a combination of child-focused and teacher-directed strategies, including whole group, small group, and centers;
- include highly interactive, developmentally appropriate learning experiences;
- provide guidelines on how to adapt activities to meet different levels of need;
- include ongoing assessment to monitor children's progress and inform future learning activities; and
- provide materials for families to support their children's learning.

STRATEGY 1: IMPLEMENT HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULA

Self-Assessment

1. At which age/grade spans do all teachers have access to Tier 1 curriculum? Which content areas?
2. Which level on the [Curriculum Implementation Scale](#) best reflects the site's current status for each age/grade span and content area?
3. What are you going to do to move to the next level or sustain the highest level of implementation on the Scale?
4. How do you help teachers use curriculum resources to maximize children's opportunities to learn?
5. How do you engage families with the curriculum and related resources to promote children's learning?

Self-Assessment, Key Actions, and Resources Table Example

Self-Assessment	Key Actions	Resources
At which age/grade spans do all teachers have access to Tier 1 curriculum? Which content areas (for example, Integrated for PreK, ELA, Math)?	Ensure teachers have access to Tier 1 curricula and all of the materials necessary to implement those curricula.	Annotated Reviews
Which level on the Curriculum Implementation Scale best reflects the site's current status for each age/grade span and content area?	Diagnose where your school is along the path to providing teachers with support that helps them use their curricula effectively.	Curriculum Implementation Scale
What are you going to do to move to the next level or sustain the highest level of implementation on the Scale?	Create an intentional sequence of curriculum-based PD based on identified needs.	Professional Development Planning Guide
How do you help teachers use curriculum resources to maximize children's opportunities to learn?	Identify vendors with proven track records of success who can help your teachers navigate and use their curriculum effectively.	Vendor Professional Development Course Catalog
How do you engage families with the curriculum and related resources to promote children's learning?	Implement family engagement strategies included in Tier 1 curriculum.	Tier 1 Curriculum

STRATEGY 2: USE MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT METHODS, INCLUDING EARLY AND ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION

A comprehensive assessment plan for young children has three main purposes:

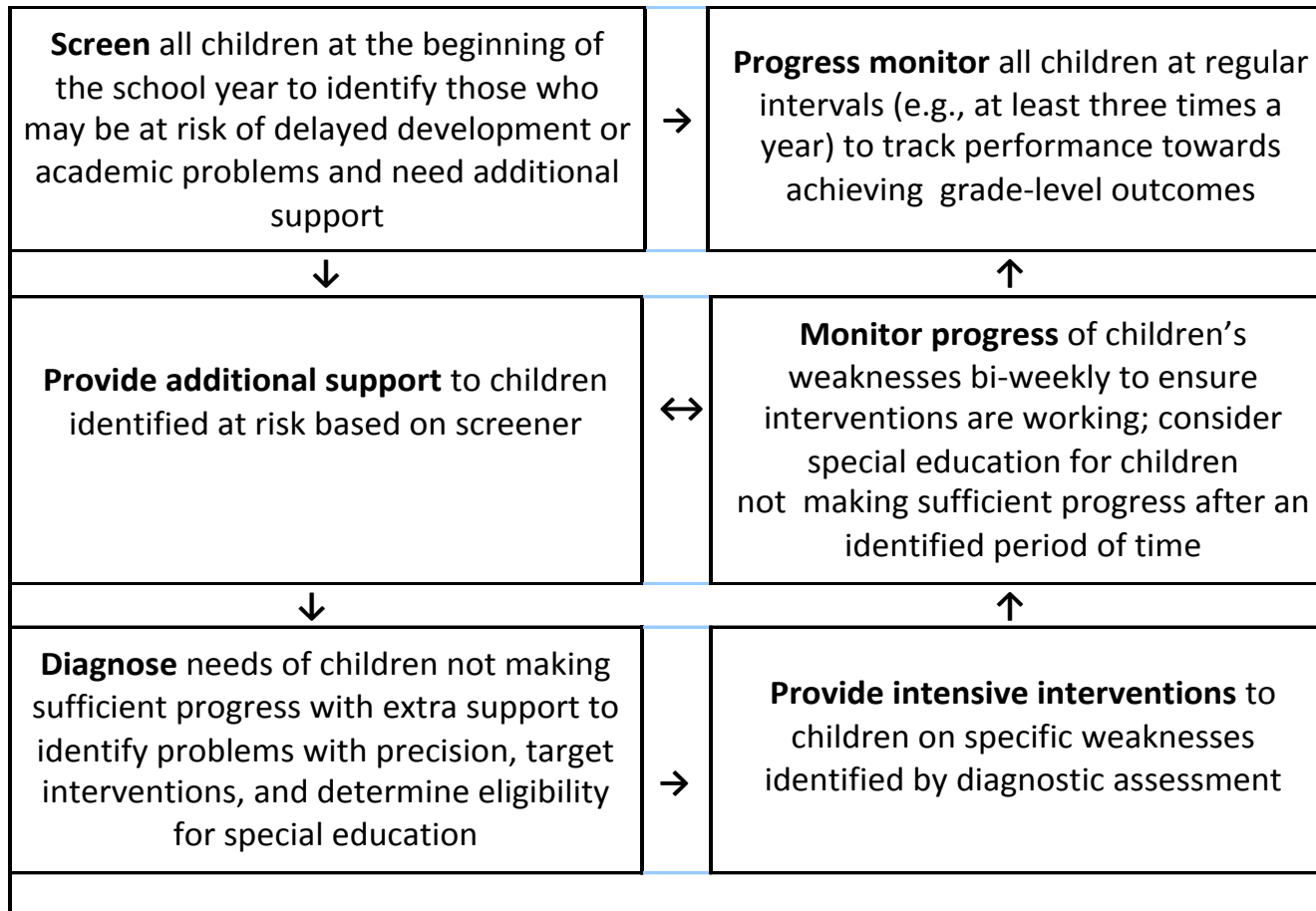
- to **screen** children at the beginning of the year to identify those who may be at risk for delayed development or academic failure and need additional support or intervention to achieve age- or grade-level standards by the end of the year;
- to **diagnose** the specific needs of at-risk children that will be helpful in providing additional instruction or services to meet their most critical learning needs; and
- to **progress monitor** children during the year to determine whether they are making adequate progress and to identify those who may be falling behind.

STRATEGY 2: USE MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT METHODS, INCLUDING EARLY AND ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION

When looking across the spectrum of measures designed to examine what young children know and/or can do, two types of methods surface: **direct assessment and observation-based assessment.**

- Direct assessments are formal measures that are typically standardized.
- Observation-based assessments are informal approaches in which teachers observe children on a daily basis.
- The younger the child, the more appropriate it is to use observation.

STRATEGY 2: USE MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT METHODS, INCLUDING EARLY AND ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION



STRATEGY 2: USE MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT METHODS, INCLUDING EARLY AND ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION

Self-Assessment

1. Are there multiple assessments that give the same information? Which ones could be eliminated?
2. Are all teachers trained to use required assessments effectively? How do you know?
3. What process does the school/site use to determine if children need special support or services? Could the process be improved?
4. How do you engage [Child Find](#) staff and special education personnel in the assessment process?
5. How are families included in the assessment process?

STRATEGY 3: CREATE SHARED CURRICULUM AND CONTENT SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN PRE-K AND K-3 TEACHERS

Site leaders, can serve as a catalyst for PreK-3 alignment by creating opportunities for “vertical teams” of teachers to regularly engage in joint planning and professional development. These opportunities help teachers:

- build a shared understanding of early childhood development **and** where students need to be by the end of grade 3;
- facilitate more effective transitions between grades and programs;
- establish more developmentally appropriate strategies; and
- broaden their knowledge of student learning across age groups.

STRATEGY 3: CREATE SHARED CURRICULUM AND CONTENT SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN PRE-K AND K-3 TEACHERS

Site and system leaders **should not support** professional development activities that:

- only involve one-shot workshops or trainings;
- only occur mostly before or after school hours;
- focus on topics unrelated to using high-quality curriculum well;
- exclude the use of data and reflection to improve teaching and learning;
- use random providers; and
- create separate structures for PreK and K-3 teachers to learn and plan.

STRATEGY 3: CREATE SHARED CURRICULUM AND CONTENT SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN PRE-K AND K-3 TEACHERS

Self-Assessment

1. Have you developed a PD plan for the current school year? Does it explicitly state the instructional change it is driving toward with teachers?
2. Is the plan designed to help teachers use high-quality curriculum effectively? In what ways?
3. **Are there opportunities for teachers to collaborate within and across age/grade levels? How often?**
4. Does the PD plan leverage existing structures (e.g., teacher planning times, faculty meetings, school-based professional development days)?
5. Does the plan leverage local educators (e.g., Teacher Leaders) and [vendors](#) with proven track records of success? Do providers complement each other and provide a consistent message?
6. Are PD investments making an impact on teaching and learning? How do you know?

STRATEGY 4: USE TEACHER OBSERVATION SYSTEMS EFFECTIVELY

When site and system leaders use teacher observation systems effectively they:

- understand what high quality teacher-child interactions and instruction looks like;
- conduct ongoing observations and provide teachers with frequent feedback.;
- ensure teachers are familiar with the observation tool and understand what great teaching looks like;
- ensure all observations are aligned to the same quality indicators so teachers are not receiving conflicting information;
- use observation findings to drive curriculum changes that will support children's growth;
- create professional development plans based on teachers' needs;
- help teachers improve their practice. PreK provides a tiered model of support that tailors the coaching teachers receive based on need; and
- create a common language for talking about what constitutes quality teaching across grades.

STRATEGY 4: USE TEACHER OBSERVATION SYSTEMS EFFECTIVELY

Self-Assessment

1. How do you create a common language for talking about what constitutes quality teaching across grades, especially if you use different observation systems at different age levels to observe teachers?
2. How often do you conduct classroom observations and provide feedback to teachers?
3. How do you ensure ongoing accuracy and consistency in classroom observations?
4. How does the observation system support student learning?
5. Do you use observation results to drive decisions about curriculum? In what ways?
6. How do you use observation results to provide teachers with individualized support to improve their practices?

STRATEGY 5: PROVIDE POSITIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Effective PreK-3 systems provide support systems for children and families that include:

- positive behavior management;
- health screenings and other types of support; and
- family engagement

STRATEGY 5: PROVIDE POSITIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Site and system leaders take an integrated approach to engaging parents by:

1. Developing a welcoming environment on campus by:

- offering an inviting space where families can explore resources;
- recognizing the role culture plays in interactions with families; and
- designing programs that meet the wide-ranging needs and interests of parent.

2. Increasing families' in-school participation by:

- engaging parents in the decision-making process for their child and the school.

3. Increasing families' at-home participation by:

- equipping parents with the knowledge and skills they need to understand what their child is learning during the school day, and how they may be able to reinforce that learning at home; and
- establishing effective school-to-home and home-to-school communication channels.

STRATEGY 5: PROVIDE POSITIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Self-Assessment

1. Do PreK-3 teachers use positive strategies to manage student behavior? What are some specific examples?
2. Are PreK-3 teachers familiar with the Developmental Screenings Guidebook and other resources described in this section? How do they use the guide and resources to support children and families?
3. Does the school/site have a dedicated family center where parents can spend time together and learn about community supports?
4. What opportunities does the school/site offer to engage families in unique ways?
5. What strategies do you use to ensure smooth transitions for children and their families?
6. What are some specific strategies the school/site uses to connect to and involve hard-to-reach families?

In Sum, the Best Sites...

- Provide all teachers in all classrooms with access to high-quality curriculum and help them use it well.
- Use data from a limited number of standards-aligned assessments to track how well students are meeting the outcomes of high-quality curricula.
- Ensure professional development helps teachers use high quality curriculum effectively and provides frequent opportunities for PreK and K-3 teachers to learn and work together.
- Have a system to ensure ongoing accuracy and consistency in all classroom observations and use classroom observation data to help all teachers improve their practice.
- Implement positive behavior supports in all classrooms and create structures that engage all families in their child's education.

**SO ALL CHILDREN ACHIEVE MASTERY IN READING AND MATH IN
GRADE 3 AND BEYOND.**