



PA KEI Update

www.kei-pa.org

Sign up NOW for School Year 2026-2027 implementation

All elementary schools are encouraged to implement Pennsylvania's Kindergarten Entry Inventory (PA KEI) in the 2026-2027 school year to assist in meeting federal requirements.

PA KEI is a reliable reporting tool that offers teachers an instructional strategy for understanding and tracking a student's proficiency at kindergarten entry. The PA KEI is available to all local education agencies (LEAs) at no cost.

The PA KEI collects information on a consistent set of standards-based indicators across the Commonwealth. The PA KEI is based on Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Early Childhood and the Pennsylvania Core Standards. PA KEI includes 30 indicators and provides a comprehensive profile that includes the domains of: Social and Emotional Development; English Language Arts; Mathematics; Approaches to Learning; and Health, Wellness, and Physical Development. PA KEI is intended to be used by kindergarten teachers to record a student's demonstration of skills within the first 45 calendar days of the kindergarten year. More information is available at www.kei-pa.org.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides opportunities to strengthen the contribution of high-quality early childhood education in school reform and improvement efforts. The law recognizes that school success starts before a student enters the K-12 setting and calls on states to describe how they will assist LEAs and elementary schools in collaborating with early childhood education programs and in investing in evidence-based practices. ESSA supports early learning and LEA collaboration in three main ways: (1) expanding access to high-quality early learning; (2) encouraging alignment and collaboration from birth through third grade; and (3) supporting educators. The PA KEI is a tangible tool to assist LEAs in understanding the comprehensive learning strengths and needs of students entering the K-12 setting, establishing common expectations and language for beginning and extending collaborative conversations with pre-kindergarten programs and families, and planning and implementing joint professional development opportunities that focus on strengthening evidence-based practices for young learners.

Implementing the PA KEI requires a Point of Contact (POC) who will serve as the liaison between LEA administrative staff, implementing kindergarten teachers, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), and data systems staff. A dedicated POC ensures effective communication and implementation throughout the PA KEI process.

To initiate PA KEI participation in the 2026-2027 school year, send the POC name, email address, and phone number to RA-PWOCDELKEI@pa.gov by May 30, 2026.

All kindergarten teachers who have not previously participated must complete a required professional development online course and obtain a certificate of completion. Teachers with an expired proficient user certificate (more than five years since certification) must also complete the professional development online course. More information about taking the online course is available at [Professional Development – Pennsylvania Kindergarten Entry Inventory](#).

Below are the tentative training schedules and timeline for participation:

- **March-September:** Required professional development online course available

- **August-September:** PA KEI systems professional development opportunities available
- By the start of school: Implementing kindergarten teachers must have a required professional development online course certificate of completion on file in order to gain system access
 - **45 calendar days from start of school:** Observation and evidence collection/scoring completed
 - **60 calendar days from the start of school:** Data submissions (student outcomes) finalized within the data system.

Questions about this communication may be sent to RA-PWOCDELKEI@pa.gov.

Want to find out more about the KEI? Attend an informational session.

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) along with Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) will offer two PA KEI informational sessions in April. Consider signing up for a session to learn more about PA KEI implementation.

- April 22 - [Register here.](#)
- April 27 - [Register here.](#)

OCDEL and CSIU can also schedule individualized calls with school districts if the above dates conflict with scheduling.

Another option is the PA KEI asynchronous course. This course provides a deeper understanding of the PA KEI tool, implementation strategies, timelines, and an opportunity to practice scoring sample scenarios. Access to the PA KEI Professional Development website can be found here [KEI Professional Development](#).

Research, Reports, and Resources

The Power of Play: Investigating Student Success in Kindergarten Classrooms

A study, *The Power of Play: Investigating Student Success in Kindergarten Classrooms*, by Karyn Allee at Georgia's Mercer University, suggests that academic rigor can go hand in hand with the stimulation and engagement that mark a playful classroom.

The study compared reading and math gains in two kindergarten classes. Both teachers followed the same curriculum but differed in their implementation styles. One hewed to a didactic approach, including assigned seating and limited chances for students to choose. The other pursued what the paper calls a "playful approach," with flexible seating and time for movement, music, play, and reading and math skills. Children in the more playful classroom made greater gains in reading and math.



Kindergarten, Here I Come

This activity guide helps families prepare their child for kindergarten. It provides monthly learning activities, resources and information to help their preschool-age child. This would be a great resource to share with families during kindergarten registration.

- [View and print Kindergarten, Here I Come Activity Guide \(English\)](#)
- [View and print the Kindergarten, Here I Come Activity Guide \(Spanish\)](#)

Sign up to receive *Kindergarten, Here I Come* newsletter. Each month, receive tips and information to help your preschooler prepare for kindergarten. [Sign up now.](#)

If you'd like to order hard copies, please send an email to Mary at marhal@pakeys.org.

Need a Password Reset?

Resetting your password for PA KEI data system:

1. Go to the website: <http://kei-pa.org>
 2. Select the *Data System Login* tab.
 3. Click on the *I forgot my password* link located below the login boxes.
 4. You will be asked to enter your Username, which should be your school email address.
 5. A password reset email will be sent to you.
 6. Follow the instructions in the email.
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Subscribing to the eNewsletter

If you have a co-worker who is participating in KEI, but does not receive the newsletter, email Christy at cveitch@csiu.org to request to be added to the listserv.

[Access archived editions.](#)