

PA KEI Update

www.kei-pa.org



For Administrative Users: Student Data Upload Process

District or Building Administrators in the PA Kindergarten Entry Inventory (PA KEI) System can create an electronic file containing Student and/or Classroom data to be sent to the PA KEI team for upload to the PA KEI Database. Taking advantage of this process drastically reduces the time it takes teachers to manually enter this data into the PA KEI system. Directions for completing this process can be found at [How to upload Student Data](#) into the KEI database

To begin the process of creating your student data upload, download the 2026 PA KEI Student Data Template from the PA KEI Website. The 2026 Student Data Template can be downloaded [from the KEI website](#) under the Tips for Districts/Building-Level Users section.

Important CHECKLIST* for administrative users:

Before child-level data can be entered into the PA KEI data system, the following MUST occur:

- New proficient users must be imported
- Classrooms need to be created
- Teachers need to be assigned to a classroom

**If you take advantage of the Student Upload Process detailed above, PA KEI Support Staff will import your new Proficient Users, create classrooms, and assign teachers to classrooms.*

Technical Support staff are available by phone from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday – Friday:

- For Jeff Kay: 570-523-1155, x2137
- For Christy Veitch Kostyrka: 570-523-1155, x2293

Technical support questions during off-hours should be directed to KEI@csiu.org.



Why Should I Want to Know About a Student's Pre-K Experience?

Understanding a student's pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) experience offers numerous benefits to a school district, leading to improved student outcomes, more effective teaching, and better resource allocation.

Here are some key advantages:

1. Informing and Personalizing K-12 Education:

- **Continuity and Alignment:** Understanding a student's Pre-K experience helps bridge the gap between early childhood education and the K-12 system. It allows for better alignment of standards, curricula, instruction, and assessments from Pre-K through elementary school, creating a more seamless and effective learning pathway. This prevents repetition of basic content and ensures students are exposed to increasingly challenging material.

2. Optimizing School District Operations and Resources:

- **Resource Allocation:** Data on Pre-K experiences can help school districts allocate resources more effectively. By understanding the needs of incoming kindergarteners, districts can make informed decisions about staffing, teacher professional development, and specialized programs.
- **Long-Term Planning:** Understanding the educational trajectory of students from Pre-K onward can assist in long-term planning for the district, including forecasting enrollment, identifying potential challenges, and setting strategic goals.

3. Enhancing Collaboration and Parent Engagement:

- **Building Partnerships:** Being informed on Pre-K experiences can encourage stronger partnerships between school districts and external Pre-K providers, as well as with families, to ensure a smooth transition for students into kindergarten.

4. Supporting Student Success Beyond Academics:

- **Social-Emotional Development:** Understanding the Pre-K experience often includes observations of social-emotional skills like self-regulation, cooperation, and problem-solving. This information helps schools continue to support a child's social and emotional growth, which is critical for overall well-being and academic success.
- **Early Intervention for Attendance:** Research suggests that absenteeism in Pre-K can predict absenteeism in later grades. Understanding pre-K attendance allows districts to intervene early with families, emphasizing the importance of regular attendance and building a culture of attendance from the very beginning.

In essence, being familiar with a student's Pre-K experience provides a valuable window into their early development and learning, allowing school districts to be proactive rather than reactive in supporting their educational journey.



For Teachers: Standards and the PA KEI Go Hand-in-Hand

The PA KEI includes 30 standards-based indicators of children's competency as they enter kindergarten. These standards are directly derived from the Pre-Kindergarten Learning Standards for Early Childhood and are fully aligned with the Academic Standards for subsequent grade levels. The 30 standards-based indicators were chosen because they have been shown to be predictive of later school and life success and are most easily determined within the first 45 calendar days of the kindergarten year.

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has a comprehensive set of infant, toddler, and pre-kindergarten standards that state-funded early care and education providers, home visitation programs, pre-kindergarten programs, PreK Counts, and Head Start are all required to use.

The **Continuum** shows the standards in a learning progression, starting from infancy and ending with Grade 2. Having a continuum document that outlines standards for infants, toddlers, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 2 offers significant benefits to kindergarten teachers. This type of "vertical alignment" in curriculum and expectations creates a much smoother and more effective educational experience for both teachers and students.

A continuum provides kindergarten teachers with a precise understanding of what children are expected to have learned and mastered in infant, toddler, and pre-K programs. This includes foundational skills in social-emotional development, language, early literacy, math, and motor skills.

Teachers can avoid spending valuable time teaching concepts that many students have already grasped in previous years, allowing them to build upon existing knowledge rather than starting from scratch.

Conversely, if a student enters kindergarten with gaps in their foundational learning, the continuum helps the teacher pinpoint exactly where those gaps are, enabling targeted interventions and support.

Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy & Sustainability (STEELS) Standards were adopted by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education in January 2022. OCDEL revised the Science Standards to ensure alignment with the STEELS Standards. Revisions have been made to all Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood: Infant Toddler, Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, and the Continuum.

To access the standards, please visit the [Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood](#) webpage.

To purchase the standards, please visit the [Shop PA Heritage](#) website.



Data Corner

Kindergarten entry data plays a crucial role in promoting individualized learning, effective teaching strategies, and informed decision-making within the educational system. It supports the holistic development of each child and helps ensure that educational practices are responsive to diverse student needs. Data uses for the information collected within the PA KEI will be explored in subsequent newsletters.



Structured Literacy and the PA KEI

Structured literacy is systematic, explicit instruction that provides strong foundations in English language systems—phonology, orthography, syntax, morphology, semantics, and discourse—while integrating speaking, reading, spelling, listening, and writing.

22 Pa. Code § 49.14(4)(i) requires the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to identify competencies and develop associated standards for educator training in structured literacy. Structured literacy supplements core instruction with an increased focus on the five essential components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

The Pennsylvania Kindergarten Entry Inventory (PA KEI) has indicators that focus on four of the five components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. Structured literacy provides a strong core of foundational skills in the language systems of English.

Use of the PA KEI helps in understanding the foundational skills children enter kindergarten with and serves as a baseline to move instruction forward. A course titled *Overview of Structured Literacy for the Pre-Kindergarten Educator* is now available on the SAS PD Center.

Want to get or stay involved in the Early Childhood Education Community and Networks?

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

NAEYC is the premier membership association for early learning educators. NAEYC is available to help all ECE educators on the journey to improve educational opportunities for all young children. NAEYC offers four membership categories—Entry (Digital) Level, Standard, Premium, and Family—each with a unique set of benefits. [Visit the NAEYC website](#) for more information on how to join.

PA Early Ed News

Stay up to date with the latest information from the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL).

Sponsored by OCDEL, the PA Early Ed News is a monthly e-newsletter that informs early learning professionals, the early childhood community, school district staff, policymakers, community leaders, and the public about developments in early childhood education and care in Pennsylvania. The newsletter is free and open to anyone.

When you subscribe to PA Early Ed News, you may also receive special announcements throughout the month from OCDEL, keeping you up to date on current information. For more information and to subscribe, visit the [Pennsylvania Key website](#).

Early Childhood Education Summit

The ECE Summit is an opportunity to dialogue and learn while building a stronger early learning community. Discover Trends in Best Practices – learn from ECE experts and earn up to 12 professional development hours that meet Act 48 requirements. Network with Your Peers – network with colleagues and organizations that specialize in providing materials, services, and resources for the ECE community. Learn About State and National Policies and Priorities – learn how current state and national policies impact the ECE system and are critical to programs serving young children and families.

The ECE Summit is at the Penn Stater in State College, PA, October 18 - 21, 2026. For more information and to register, [visit the Early Childhood Summit website](#).



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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Need Help with the PA KEI?

Each implementing school and/or district has designated a school or district point of contact (PA KEI POC). Implementing teachers should request contact information for the designated PA KEI POC in your school or district. In addition, the following supports are available:

GENERAL QUESTIONS about the PA KEI or any of the information in this newsletter should be directed to OCDEL staff at RA-PWOCDELKEI@pa.gov.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT is available Monday through Friday from 8 am-4 pm.

- Jeff Kay: 570-523-1155, Ext. 2137
 - For Christy Veitch Kostyrka: 570-523-1155, x2293
 - Email your questions during off-hours to KEI@csiu.org.
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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 Veitch-Kostyrka at cveitchkostyrka@csiu.org to request to be added to the listserv.

[Access archived editions.](#)