

What is VKRP?

The Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP) is an initiative focused on building a more comprehensive understanding of students' skills in the fall and spring of Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten. As an assessment system, VKRP adds measures of mathematics, self-regulation, and social skills to complement Virginia's statewide assessment of literacy skills using the Virginia Literacy Partnerships (VLP) Pre-K Language & Literacy Screener in pre-k and the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS-K) in kindergarten. Data from the assessments are beneficial for a wide range of stakeholders including state policymakers, division and school leaders, educators, and families who support young students' learning during their early school years and beyond.

What is the History of VKRP?

Kindergarten

VKRP was initiated by Elevate Early Education (E3), a statewide, bipartisan, issue-advocacy organization dedicated to early childhood education. E3, in partnership with the University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) and with guidance from the Virginia Department of Education, launched a three-phase approach to creating a statewide, comprehensive kindergarten assessment. In Phase I, CASTL researched and selected assessment tools that could be used statewide to accurately assess readiness skills across a range of domains upon kindergarten entry. During Phase II, VKRP was administered to a group of students who were representative of kindergartners across the Commonwealth, and data indicated that 34% of children arrived at kindergarten unprepared in at least one critical learning domain (literacy, mathematics, self-regulation, and/or social skills). These results were reported to the Virginia State Legislature, which allocated funding to begin for the statewide implementation of the expanded assessments to provide a more comprehensive snapshot of kindergarten students' incoming skills. Phase III has included a gradual statewide roll-out of VKRP, allowing for input from administrators and teachers, as well as the expansion of VKRP assessments, to include the beginning and end of kindergarten. In 2018, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation that requires all kindergarten students to be assessed using VKRP in the fall and spring of the 2019-2020 school year and annually thereafter (HB5002, Item 128, H.) and to develop a version of VKRP to use in assessing pre-kindergartners (HB5002, Item 340, Q.). As a result of this legislation, statewide implementation of the VKRP assessments in all Virginia public school kindergarten classrooms began in the 2019-20 school year and still continues.

Pre-Kindergarten

In the 2021-2022 school year, VKRP became available to all publicly funded pre-kindergarten programs to assess four-year-old children's skills in fall and spring. In spring 2022, VKRP also implemented a voluntary pilot of VKRP assessments with a sample of three-year-old students in pre-kindergarten classrooms. In 2022-2023, VKRP will be administered to three- and four-year-old pre-kindergarten students in publicly funded programs, and all kindergarten students, in the fall and spring ([HB30, Chapter 2, 129.H](#)).

How Does VKRP Work?



Divisions, programs, and teachers receive training to learn about the VKRP assessment system. Teachers complete the mathematics, self-regulation, and social skills assessments in the two-three weeks prior to the school's VLP assessment window in the fall and spring. VKRP then provides reports with detailed information about students' skills at the student, classroom, school, division/program levels. These reports give a snapshot of students' skills in the fall and spring and information about growth in students' skills across the year. VKRP reports are linked to aligned instructional resources that teachers can use to support students' growth and learning.

What Assessments Does VKRP Use?

VKRP places a purposeful and equal emphasis on children's academic and social-emotional skills.

- The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS-K) and the Pre-K Language & Literacy Screener are used to assess students' literacy skills. These assessments provide a comprehensive assessment of young students' knowledge of the important literacy fundamentals that are predictive of future reading success.
- The Early Mathematics Assessment System (EMAS) is used to assess students' mathematics skills. The EMAS for both pre-kindergarten and kindergarten is designed to measure a broad range of mathematical content in the areas of numeracy, computation, geometry, and patterning.
- The Child Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS) is used to assess students' social skills and self-regulation. The Child Behavior Rating Scale is a teacher report measure of two areas of students' social-emotional skills: self-regulation and social skills.
- The Mental Health Well-Being items are designed to provide standardized information about teacher perceptions of students' mental health well-being.