North Carolina has developed and piloted a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) as part of a broader K-3 Formative Assessment Process and has begun implementing the assessment statewide in kindergarten.

Why is it important?

Almost 120,000 children in North Carolina enter kindergarten each year with varying experiences, knowledge, and skills. The K-3 Formative Assessment Process, which includes the Kindergarten Entry Assessment, helps teachers and families gain an ongoing understanding of children’s growth in all five domains of development and learning as a way to help ensure that each child reaches his or her greatest potential.

What happens?

In the formative assessment process, teachers collect evidence of learning to guide teaching and learning. The information gathered during the first 60 days of kindergarten creates a snapshot of each child’s early

How does it work?

The teacher intentionally collects evidence during the course of regular instruction (e.g., observations, conversations, learning activities, work samples, family input) to document what children say, do, make or write. The focus is on five domains of learning and development:

- Approaches to Learning
- Cognitive Development
- Emotional-Social Development
- Language Development and Communication
- Health and Physical Development
learning and development in key areas. Teachers use this understanding, as well as information collected throughout the school year, to meet the specific learning needs of each child.

The teacher and student use the evidence collected through the formative assessment process to better understand where a child is developmentally in his or her learning. This helps the teacher and student make immediate and ongoing adjustments to instruction and learning.

A secure electronic platform stores the collected student information to support sound instructional decision-making.

The materials developed to support this process align with both the *NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development* and the *NC Standard Course of Study*.

**Who participates?**

In 2016-2017, kindergarten teachers in all school districts will assess children in all five domains of learning and development by targeting these areas of learning:

- Following Directions and Letter Naming (Language Development and Communication)
- Object Counting (Cognitive Development)
- Engagement in Self-Selected Activities (Approaches to Learning)
- Emotional Literacy (Emotional-Social Development)
- Fine Motor: Grip and Manipulation and either Crossing Midline or Hand Dominance (Health and Physical Development)

**Roll Out and Sustainability**

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte has coordinated the pilot testing of the K-3 Assessment. Findings from the pilot have been used to make revisions to assessment materials and inform ongoing work on the full K-3 Assessment. Piloting of the full K-3 Formative Assessment Process began in January through April of 2016, when K-3 teachers tried out the assessment process with select constructs. This process continues with these and other K-3 teachers during the 2016-17 school year, with information gathered through this process informing plans for next steps beyond kindergarten.

North Carolina is also the lead state for the Enhanced Assessment Grant K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium, which was funded to enhance NC’s K-3 Formative Assessment Process for use in multiple states. Consistent with the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant, the enhanced assessment must provide valid and reliable information about children’s learning and development in the five domains of development at kindergarten entry. The consortium includes nine states (Arizona, District of Columbia, Delaware, Iowa, Maine, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, and North Carolina as the lead state) and one collaborating state (South Carolina). Three research partners are assisting with grant activities. SRI is conducting the assessment enhancement process; BUILD is assisting consortium states with stakeholder engagement; and Child Trends is providing support for implementation planning.