



# AlaKiDS

ALABAMA KINDERGARTEN INVENTORY OF DEVELOPING SKILLS

## Frequently Asked Questions

August 10, 2020

### Why AlaKiDS?

- Due to COVID19, Alabama's early learning programs, childcare, and livelihoods of families have been disrupted, putting many of our children at risk of entering kindergarten behind the widely held expectation of a typically developing five-year-old. The full extent of achievement gaps is present when children enter Kindergarten, and many are often up to two years behind. Research shows that even the best teacher and instruction can close that gap by 1 to 1 ½ years only to have the summer slide widen the gap once again. A statewide whole child assessment is needed to provide early learning agencies, families, and teachers with information on what is taking place in the early years before the child transitions into the school environment.

### What is AlaKiDS?

- AlaKiDS is a whole child assessment given the first month of Kindergarten that will provide the early learning agencies, families, and teachers with needed information on a child's independent skills and abilities. Young learners do not learn skills in isolation. For example, a Harvard study revealed a strong correlation between alphabet knowledge and social skills, and vocabulary and impulse control. AlaKiDS will give teachers and families a picture of this interdependence of development for children.

### How will the assessment be given?

- Teachers will administer the assessment during the months of school to obtain the most accurate results. Assessment is administered in small group settings and/or with individual child. AlaKiDS is an online portfolio with a paper version included for data collection purposes. A materials kit will be provided. There will be two shipment of kits. The first shipment will provide enough kits for teachers to share to begin the assessment process.

### How long does the assessment take?

- Teachers will have until October 23<sup>rd</sup> to give the assessment. It does not have to be administered in a particular time frame.

### Can assessment be done virtually if needed?

- Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Alabama State Department of Education and Teaching Strategies® is currently working to respond to provide support with virtual learning and AlaKiDS.

### Will teachers need to be trained to administer AlaKiDS?

- **Kindergarten teachers and school level Reading Specialist** will attend virtual trainings on how to administer AlaKiDS. **Sessions will take place in 2, 3-hour blocks over two consecutive days.** Teachers will be sent information and handouts electronically before their session date. If a teacher is unable to attend training, they need to contact the ARI Regional Literacy Specialist for support.

### Will teachers receive PD credit for training?

- Participants will be emailed a certificate of completion with contact hours. Participants will take the certificate to their LEA for credit.

### What support can teachers expect?

- Teachers and School Admin will be provided support through **ARI Regional Literacy Specialist**. ARI Regional Specialist attended a Deeper Dive session July 21st & July 23<sup>rd</sup>.

