



RTT–ELC: Supporting Schools with the Kindergarten Observation Tool

Understanding what children know and are able to do allows teachers to plan instruction to meet the needs of each child and support him or her on a pathway to success in school. The research-based Kindergarten Observation Tool (KOT) helps teachers and families understand a child's developmental strengths and areas for growth at the start of kindergarten.

As a tool, the KOT looks at the “whole child” to support teacher planning for individualized student instruction. By using the KOT, kindergarten teachers can account for what each student has mastered and what areas should be focused on to build mastery across multiple developmental domains.

Kindergarten Observation Tool (KOT) Timeline

2014 – 2015

Design & Validation

The process included a validation study, pilot test, field testing, training, and teacher feedback via surveys and focus groups.

2015

Field Testing

39 districts and 7 charter schools in New Mexico participated in the KOT field test, with additional input obtained via focus groups and surveys.

2016

Implementation

100% of all districts and charters in New Mexico implement the KOT within the first 30 instructional days of the school year, including K-3 Plus programs.

RTT–ELC: Building a Strong Foundation for New Mexico

Through the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT–ELC) grant, New Mexico is creating an environment that allows young children to build a strong foundation for learning by:

Raising Quality: Ensuring a highly qualified and skilled workforce to best support children's optimal development; and Implementing FOCUS, a rating system that allows parents to identify high quality programs.

Promoting Accountability: Developing a system that integrates data from across programs serving young children to measure child outcomes over time and to enable planning for early learning investments.

Supporting Schools in Meeting Each Child's Needs: Through the Kindergarten Observation Tool (KOT), assessing school readiness to understand individual child needs at the beginning of school and provide early interventions for positive learning outcomes.

Investing in Communities: Identifying where children are at the greatest risk and prioritizing services to meet needs in designated areas.





KOT gives teachers needed information about what children know and can do upon entering the classroom

What is assessed on the KOT?

The Kindergarten Observation Tool (KOT) looks at the whole child, focusing on the following areas:

- Self, Family and Community
- Physical Development, Health and Well-being
- Approaches to Learning
- Scientific Conceptual Understanding
- Literacy
- Numeracy

Who designed the KOT?

The Public Education Department designed the KOT with Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT–ELC) funding to achieve the vision that every child in New Mexico will have an equal opportunity for

in school based upon equitable access to an aligned and high quality early learning system that is tailored to individual strengths and challenges.

How will KOT benefit children and families?

Information gathered via the KOT allows teachers to make informed instructional and curricular decisions in the classroom to meet the needs of each child. Parents and guardians can meet with their child's teacher to ask what learning was obtained through the KOT and what additional supports and interventions may be needed to ensure their child's continued learning success.

For more information, visit www.earlylearningnm.org or email Kathy.Ytuarte2@state.nm.us



Children learn many things before they enter a kindergarten classroom

The KOT is not a test that requires the child to perform a task; rather it's a tool to gather information in a natural authentic way during the course of normal day-to-day instruction. The observation tool allows the teacher to watch the child in a variety of learning and play experiences. Each child's unique response to these experiences is recorded to easily identify his or her areas of strength and need.