

## Kindergarten



### Portrait of a Model Assessment System: KINDERGARTEN

AUGUST – SEPTEMBER

#### ***Reviewing Data; Meeting and Learning about Children and Families: Phone Calls and “All About Me” Activities***

At the start of the school year, kindergarten teachers for Emma, Ayesha, and Emmanuel begin by getting to know children as readers and writers. Before the children arrive at school, they review the children’s electronic files, as well as the data binders they received from their pre-kindergarten (PreK) teachers. When they have questions about the data binders or the end-of-year student data sheet from the PreK teachers, they follow up with the teachers.

During the first month of school, the kindergarten teachers focus on getting to know the students in their classrooms. They engage the children in “All About Me” activities in which children can share more about their backgrounds, out-of-school interests, favorite topics, and even their learning goals for kindergarten.

Teachers also call each family at home in the evening to learn more about children’s interests, their strengths, and the parents’ goals for—and any concerns about—children’s learning in kindergarten.

They learn that Emma loves to draw and that she says she wants to learn to read in kindergarten. Her teacher learns, from data collected in PreK and from the discussion with Emma’s parents, that she has been receiving Tier 2 speech and language pathology (SLP) service in PreK. At an

individualized educational program (IEP) meeting scheduled early in September, it is determined that Emma will continue to receive speech and language services during her kindergarten year.

Ayesha’s kindergarten teacher learns that she enjoys riding her bike and playing outside. She loves dogs and wants to be a “doctor for pets” when she grows up. She likes to build with Legos during her free time. She says she wants to learn how to tie her shoes in kindergarten. Her parents share that they try to read aloud with Ayesha every day at home, but they are concerned because Ayesha often expresses disinterest or tries to engage in another activity in the middle of the book.

Emmanuel’s teacher learns that he loves to play pretend superhero games, and he enjoys listening to books and fantasy stories. He says he wants to learn multiplication in kindergarten and do homework like his big sister. His parents share that he is very interested in reading. He points out letters on signs he sees outside the window whenever his family is in the car. Because Emmanuel’s parents share that they primarily speak Haitian Creole at home, the school’s English language teacher administers the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (Kindergarten W-APT) to determine whether Emmanuel needs English language supports. Based on his scores, he does not qualify for additional language supports at this time.

## Portrait of a Model Assessment System: KINDERGARTEN

AUGUST – SEPTEMBER *continued***Assessments or “Games”**

The children participate in the fall computer adaptive benchmark assessment that provides a reliable and valid screening score to identify children who may need additional Tier 2 literacy supports. Emma’s scores are below what the school typically expects at the start of school, but it is decided to allow some time for her classroom teacher to work with her and to continue to observe her progress until the January screener. Ayesha and Emmanuel’s scores are at or above expectations for children at the start of school. Early in the school year, the children’s kindergarten teachers use a variety of assessment tools to understand children’s literacy development. While the rest of the children are engaged in independent work at play centers, teachers meet with each child individually at a table, inviting the children to play reading “games.”

The teacher plays a game where she shows children letters and they tell her the letter names for lower and upper-case letters, letter sounds, and a word that “starts with the sound that the letter makes.” Emma can identify the letter A from her name. She says A is for Emma. She also recognizes eight other uppercase letters. She says “I don’t know” for the rest of the letters. Her teacher discontinues the assessment after showing her ten more letters.

Ayesha can correctly identify and name all upper-case letters. She names most lower-case letters but says “don’t know” for: e, g, h, i, l, n, q, r, y. She can provide sounds and words for seven upper-case letters: B, C, D, K, P, S, T.

Emmanuel can correctly name all of the upper- and lower-case letters. He correctly identifies words and sounds for most letters. He says /s/ for C and when prompted for another sound does not include the /k/ sound; he then says “sad” for a word that starts with C. He says /w/ for Y and then says “water” for a word that starts with that letter. He says “don’t know” for words that start with X and Q. He identifies vowel letter names. He says that A makes the /ă/ sound. He does not know sounds for the rest of the vowels.

The teacher plays some word games with each child to learn more about the children’s phonological awareness. She wants to determine whether children can rhyme words and whether they can blend and segment phonemes in one-syllable words. Emma has difficulty producing rhyming words, but she can say “that rhymes” when her teacher says the words. She giggles when her teacher works on segmenting/ blending words but is not able to segment or blend independently yet. Ayesha easily produces rhyming words, blends words when her teacher talks in a robot voice, and segments first and last sounds (but not middle/vowel sounds). Emmanuel easily produces rhyming words and correctly blends and segments one-syllable words.

## K

## Portrait of a Model Assessment System: KINDERGARTEN

AUGUST – SEPTEMBER *continued***Initial Observations in a Classroom Setting**

Children draw/write regularly over the first month of school. Their teachers examine their writing to understand more about their letter-sound knowledge and writing development in order to inform instruction. Emma draws detailed pictures, writes strings of letter-like symbols on her page, and describes her pictures in detail when asked to tell what she wrote. Ayesha draws quickly, writes in upper-case letters, and attempts to represent first consonant sounds in words. She provides a brief description of her work but cannot always remember the exact words she wrote to “read” them back. Emmanuel draws detailed pictures, represents first and last sounds in words, and tries to read back his writing, but sometimes he cannot remember exactly which word he was trying to write.

Children begin to learn some common songs and rhymes. The children’s kindergarten teachers put the words for these rhymes on large chart paper and point as the children read along. After the first week, they invite different children to take a turn holding the pointer each day. The teachers take notes to see whether children are pointing to one word for each word that the class sings/chants. Emma is not sure where to point, and she needs the teacher to help her move the pointer from left to right and to touch each word. Ayesha moves the pointer from left to right. She starts by pointing to one word at a time, but she gets confused as the children chant quickly. Emmanuel moves the pointer from left to right, touching each word as the class says it.

OCTOBER – MAY

**Planning**

The children’s kindergarten teachers use data collected in September and start to meet with children in needs-based reading groups. Children practice skills and then have opportunities to apply what they have learned in real reading contexts.

Emma’s kindergarten teacher works with her and several other students on blending and segmenting consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words using Elkonin boxes with tokens and letters. She also uses sound/letter picture sorts, along with building CVC words and reading these CVC words in sentences that the teacher writes. She also engages this small group in scaffolded writing opportunities in which children try to write the first sound in words.

Ayesha’s teacher works with her in a group that is focusing on learning the consonant and vowel letter-sound relationships that they do not already know. Ayesha practices reading short books every day, and her teacher asks her to notice words that include the new sounds she is learning. The teacher focuses on helping this group to identify and represent vowel sounds in their writing.

Emmanuel is part of a small group of students who review the consonant sounds that are not yet secure but focus primarily on learning short vowel sounds. Emmanuel practices reading short books every day, and his teacher asks him to notice words that include the new sounds he is learning. The teacher focuses on helping this group identify and represent vowel sounds in their writing.

## Portrait of a Model Assessment System: KINDERGARTEN

OCTOBER – MAY *continued*



### **Planning** *continued*

In addition to needs-based, small-group work, all children have lots of opportunities to engage with text. Their kindergarten teachers read aloud throughout the day to support children's learning about literature, science, social studies, mathematics, and the arts. Their classes discuss the ideas in these texts and talk about the

meanings of new words. Their classes continue to read along as they sing songs and learn rhymes and chants. The children write often throughout the day individually, and their teachers often record on the white board children's words and ideas when they contribute to a conversation.

### **Continued Observation**

As the children engage in small-group and class-wide literacy activities, their teachers take observational notes or use checklists to monitor how the children's literacy is developing towards meeting kindergarten ELA and literacy standards. Analysis of these data enables the children's kindergarten teachers to learn that:

Emma loves to participate in read-alouds and songs. She is enthusiastic about sharing her ideas about books, but her speech can be unclear and other children may need to ask her to repeat what she is saying. She is now writing strings of real letters and continues to draw very detailed pictures.

Ayesha seems to enjoy all class activities and listens attentively, but she is very quiet. She rarely participates in whole-class discussions. She is starting to write in lower-case letters and represents end sounds in words. She likes to practice reading the books that her teacher gives her, and she can read and point along with these simple texts.

Emmanuel loves to participate in read-alouds and songs. He is enthusiastic about sharing his ideas about books. He has started representing vowel sounds in all of the words he writes. He likes reading books he chooses from the class library to other friends in the class.

### **Assessments**

As the year progresses, the children take computer adaptive assessments in January and May. Data from these assessments are considered in conjunction with the teachers' observational notes and informal assessments to determine whether students need additional supports. In January, Emma's scores are at the 10th percentile for phonological awareness, the 15th percentile for letter knowledge, and the 75th percentile for language comprehension. These scores qualify Emma for Tier 2 reading instruction in addition to continued speech services. From February through June, this Tier 2 instruction focuses on supporting

Emma to develop her phonemic awareness, letter-sound knowledge, and early word reading.

Ayesha's scores are at the 75th percentile for phonological awareness and at the 80th percentile for letter knowledge. Her score is at the 55th percentile for language comprehension, which does not indicate a need for additional support at this time.

Emmanuel scores above the 85th percentile for all subscales. These data align with the teacher's observations that he is well above grade level in his literacy development.



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**OCTOBER – MAY** *continued*

**Conferences**

Twice each year, the children’s kindergarten teachers meet one-on-one with each child’s family member(s) for an extended conversation about the child’s progress, next steps for development, and celebrations. The teachers share writing and other work samples. The

teachers also ask questions about each child’s interests both in and out of school, from the perspective of the family member(s), and ask if families have any questions or concerns that they would like to share with teachers about their child’s literacy development.

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**Celebrating Growth**

By the end of the year, there is a lot to celebrate. Emma, Ayesha, and Emmanuel have each made progress in their literacy development. Their teachers end the year by filing anecdotal notes in each child’s transition form so that these records

are available to their first-grade teachers. This ensures that their next teachers can begin the year with a lot of information to begin meeting each child’s individual learning goals and needs.