



First 1,000 Days on Medicaid Proposal #: 5

Proposal (Short Title): New York State Developmental Inventory Upon Kindergarten Entry

Implementation Complexity: Medium
Implementation Timeline: Short term

Required Approvals/Systems Changes:

- Administrative Action, State Plan Amend, Statutory Change, Federal Waiver, IT/data infrastructure, NYS budget request

Proposal Background/Description:

Under this proposal the State Education Department, Medicaid, and other partners would agree upon a measurement tool to assess child development upon Kindergarten entry.

In recent years, unprecedented investments have been made in New York State on behalf of young children, in direct response to the growing body of evidence that shows that the ages between 0 and 5 are the fastest growing, most malleable years for the human brain.

A standardized measurement tool at kindergarten entry would enable (1) population-level tracking of trends over time in child development; (2) assessment of how policy and programmatic changes are possibly affecting child development; and (3) identification of areas (e.g. whether regions of the state, areas within child development) in need of improvement, investment, and policy change.

Such a measurement tool could also be valuable to child-serving health care providers. Providers frequently note that there are few viable outcome measures for assessing well-being in young children, which can make it challenging to invest in and evaluate interventions that promote health and development, especially as the Medicaid program becomes more outcomes-focused.

Many states have used similar tools for numerous years to better understand these critical first years of a child's life. Additionally, at least one other state – Oregon – has embraced the use of such a tool to drive improvements in pediatric care in addition to other early childhood sectors.



collaborate more effectively with early childhood providers, engage more meaningfully with parents, and drive improvement. Institutions of higher education can use the data to better tailor teacher preparation programs, both for k-12 teachers and early childhood specialists, to ensure New York has the best teaching workforce its children deserve. Developmental inventories help maximize the efficiency of government services that serve children and families, particularly those from low-income backgrounds.

This proposal suggests that New York State, in collaboration with its partners- State Education Department, State University, Medicaid program, experts in the field of early childhood development, and others as necessary- agree upon a tool to be implemented state-wide to drive results for children. As experts agree, any such tool needs to be developmentally appropriate and have a holistic approach to child development that includes cognitive, social-emotional, language, and motor development. The tool would need to be affordable, implementable across the state, and evidence-based.. The data from the tool would need to be made available as widely as possible, including to service providers in each relevant sector and parents/caregivers, in the most appropriate form for the use case. The tool also needs to be flexible to respond to advances in the field, such as the evolving tool used in Ohio, which has expanded over recent years to include social-emotional measures as well as cognitive ones. The State should consider how to use the cumulative measure to provide sector-specific information back to all sectors involved in child development, including but not limited to health care, early childhood education, social services, and parents and families, in order to drive sector-specific improvements.

Cross-Sector Collaboration Component: Yes No

Cost Assumptions:

N/A—the recommendation herein includes the selection/creation of a tool; the State Education Department would be the implementation partner for this recommendation and would need to develop an appropriate cost estimate, if applicable.

Potential Return on Investment:

- Understanding of the ROI of federal, state, and local investments in early childhood
- Better coordination of services across multiple systems for children
- Lower long-term costs of care and social services as children experience better outcomes

Metrics to Track Success/Outcomes:

- # of kindergarten students across NYS assessed
- #/% of kindergarten students identify as “developmentally on-track” for kindergarten

Benefits of Proposal:

- Understanding of the ROI of federal, state, and local investments in early childhood
- Identify populations of children in need of support as early as possible, reducing high long-term costs as delays intensify
- Creates an outcome measure that could be tied to incentives or new strategies in children’s health care and other sectors
- Such a measurement tool is necessary for measuring year-over-year progress in improving child development



Concerns with Proposal:

While a Developmental Inventory is an invaluable tool to measure how we are serving our children, these tools can be used in destructive, inappropriate manners. The tool should not influence whether a child can enroll in kindergarten; should also not be used as a measure of the effectiveness of individual early childhood providers or programs, or for accountability purposes within early learning settings.

- The most critical years of child development are ages zero to three, and some argue measurement at kindergarten is too late. However, since pre-kindergarten is not yet universal in New York State, kindergarten is the first opportunity to universally collect data on children across New York State.
- Measurement tool could create a situation where each sector blames another for poor outcomes in child development

Links to Available Evidence:

<https://www.nhsa.org/kindergarten-entry-readiness-assessments>

http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/research/Assessment_Systems.pdf

Oregon “Health In All Policies”:

<http://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/ProviderPartnerResources/HealthInAllPolicies/Education/Pages/index.aspx>

Additional Technical Detail: (If needed, to evaluate proposal)

Reviewer Name/Organization: State Education Department