Why this study?
The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) required all kindergarten teachers to use a kindergarten entry assessment called the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) starting in fall 2017. Because of the potential influence of the assessment results in the classroom and on education policy, stakeholders wanted more information on the patterns in the data, and teachers’ and principals’ experience administering it.

What the study examined
1. How do Illinois children’s knowledge and skills at kindergarten entry vary in each developmental domain and across child subgroups and school poverty levels?
2. What barriers did teachers and principals encounter in using KIDS in the first statewide administration, and what suggestions did they have for improvements?

Data sources
- Teacher ratings for 113,716 children on 14 KIDS items from the fall 2017 KIDS administration
- Child demographic data provided by ISBE
- Interviews with one kindergarten teacher and one principal from each of nine schools

Analytic methods
- Multilevel modeling with children nested in schools nested in districts
- Coding interview transcripts for emergent themes

What did we learn and what are the implications?

Gaps in academic knowledge and skills measured by days of kindergarten instruction

- Girls vs. Boys
- Non-FRL vs. FRL
- Non-IEP vs. IEP
- Non-ELL vs. ELL

Implications of descriptive findings
State and local education agencies might consider providing targeted support to reduce skill gaps at kindergarten entry across subgroups and schools, if gaps hold in future years.

Implications of qualitative findings
State and local education agencies might consider:
- Reducing the types and number of kindergarten entry assessments used
- Shifting away from didactic, whole-group instruction
- Continuing to provide KIDS training and professional development and time and support for attending
- Making use of Illinois KIDS regional coaches

Reaching a broad audience: Infographic

Access the Study