# K–3 Self-Assessment Validation System (K–3 SAVS)

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## K–3 SAVS Protocol: Building a Unique K–3 SAVS Team

### Purpose

The team-building protocol is intended to assist districts in selecting diverse, district-wide team members who possess knowledge and have decision-making authority in many areas of district and program operation. Collaborating with a variety of professionals who understand district operations but may not regularly engage in discussions about the quality of the early elementary program, brings depth and breadth to continuous program review and improvement. Inclusion of non-traditional team members can create opportunities to increase comprehensive district knowledge around quality programming and the impact it can have on child development and future success. A diverse team may also build a larger advocacy network that will increase the commitment to the value of growing and maintaining a high-quality K–3 program.

K–3 SAVS team members should serve in a variety of district capacities that are complimentary, not duplicative, to ensure that the team is able to effectively identify and influence beneficial improvements in the system, structure, and operation of the kindergarten through third grade program.

### System

**The Early Childhood Education Program *System* is built at the district level.** The system is the entire support structure necessary to create the conditions and uphold quality teaching, learning, and the developmental growth of every child from preschool through graduation. It is a coordinated framework of economic and social factors including the combination of district knowledge, expertise, functions, resources, policies, and decisions that impact the education of all children served. To be successful, the district’s education system must prioritize early education as an anchor of quality for all children.

It is important to include representatives who understand and can influence district planning, budgeting, and decision-making necessary to operate a comprehensive educational program for young children in each unique community.

**District knowledge and influence should include:**

* Regulations, policies, and procedures
* Funding, purchasing, staffing
* Facilities, equipment, and resources
* Partnerships with private providers
* Transportation
* Community relations

### Structure

**The Early Childhood Education Program *structure* is built at the program level.** The structure is created through the interrelationships between expertise in child development, relevant qualifications and experience, application of research and data-based decision-making, articulation of approaches to learning, and a commitment to the community’s goals for the education and development of young children from five through eight years old.

It is important to include representatives who have leadership authority to influence program design and delivery.

**Program knowledge and influence should include:**

* P–3 Alignment
* Hiring recommendations
* Equitable opportunities for leading, teaching, and learning
* Curriculum and academic supports
* Professional learning and development
* Program administration
* Data collection
* Facilitating a positive school climate and culture
* Coaching on best practice
* Student transition continuum

### Operations

**The Early Childhood Education Program *operations* are built at the central office, building, and classroom level.** Operations are the day-to-day integrated actions necessary to accomplish the overall program goals of providing every young child with a high-quality early education.

It is important to include representatives who have professional abilities as a practitioner who can stimulate a child’s creative and cognitive development, facilitate a responsive classroom, foster healthy and supportive relationships, design stimulating learning environments and experiences, and ensure equitable practices tied directly to quality teaching, learning, and individual student development.

**Practitioner knowledge and influence should include:**

* Practicing knowledge of child development and learning
* Understanding of NJ K–3 student learning standards to build a meaningful curriculum
* Age-appropriate observation, skill documentation, and assessment strategies
* Developmentally appropriate practices
* Social and Emotional Learning competencies
* Content knowledge and cross-content curriculum integration
* Professional qualifications for teaching and interacting with 5–8-year-old children
* Knowledge of high-quality classroom learning environments
* Building parent and family engagement in student learning
* Research-based instructional delivery
* Effective resource utilization
* Collaborative professional learning to support practice

#### Who should make-up the District’s K–3 SAVS team?

After review of the system, structure, and operation of the district’s K–3 program, consideration of goals, and who in the district has relevant knowledge and influence, districts may want to include the following representatives for membership on the K–3 SAVS team:

* Superintendent
* Assistant Superintendent
* Business Administrator
* Directors/Supervisors/ Coordinators of Early Childhood and/or Elementary Education
* Principal
* Classroom teachers in each grade from K–3
* Parents
* Child Study Team members
* Instructional Coaches
* Members of the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)\*
* Vice Principal
* Coordinator of Gifted & Talented Programs
* Social Workers
* Transition Team Members
* School Nurse
* Community Parent Involvement Specialists (CPIS)
* English Language Learner (ELL) Specialists
* Member of the Board of Education

\*In addition to the educators, administrators, and district employees mentioned above, a Professional Learning Community (PLC) and an Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) can serve as resources for diverse membership on the K–3 SAVS team. An ECAC is an advisory group of education community stakeholders interested in the education and welfare of children in preschool through third grade. Districts operating many state-funded preschool programs are bound by state statute to operate an ECAC ([Elements of High-Quality Preschool: state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap13a.pdf](https://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap13a.pdf)). The regulations require Boards of Education in many districts to establish a preschool through grade three Early Childhood Advisory Council. The ECAC’s responsibilities are defined in code.