# New Jersey Kindergarten to Third Grade EducationSelf–Assessment Validation System (K–3 SAVS)

## **Framework and Plan for a High–Quality K–3 Education Program**



This document is a companion to the *Guide to Using the K–3 SAVS*. It is a multi-purpose document containing a *Framework of Quality Criteria and Indicators, Analytic Rubric,* and *Growth Plan Templates*. It is intended to assist districts in using research-based criteria and quality indicators to develop and operate their kindergarten to third grade education program. The *Framework* was developed by state and national experts, New Jersey practitioners, and stakeholders who prioritize the quality of New Jersey’s early childhood education system. The criteria reflect three critical multi-dimensional components of a quality K–3 program and the indicators articulate research-based quality practices. The *Analytic Rubric* provides reference points for districts to self–assess the strength of alignment between their evidence of practice and the quality indicators. Finally, three brief Growth Plan Templates from each section of the Framework support districts in creating a unique Growth Plan for Continual Quality Review of the K–3 Education program. Together the Framework, Analytic Rubric, and Growth Plan Template, guide alignment of quality program development and practice across the full P–3 early childhood continuum.

Supporting References for the *Framework and Plan of Criteria and Indicators for a High–Quality K–3 Education Program*, detailed implementation support protocols, and questions and answers about implementation guidance, can be found in the K–3 SAVS tool titled, *Guide to Using the K–3 SAVS* which can be found on the New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Services [K–3 SAVS webpage](https://www.nj.gov/education/earlychildhood/grkto3/savs.shtml). The *Analytic Rubric* and *Growth Plan Templates* are embedded in this document. Instead of using enter to move the text to the second line, use "shift enter." If you use a regular enter, each line is tagged as a separate heading. If you use shift enter, both lines are treated as one.

### Directions for Using this Document

***Build a Unique K–3 SAVS Team***

* Identify individuals who have diverse knowledge, expertise, and authority to impact systems, structures, and operation of the K–3 program.
* Identify other district committees/groups that can contribute information.

***Guide to Using the K–3 SAVS***

* As a team, collaboratively review the K–3 SAVS tools, protocols, and Q&As. Supporting References for the Framework are included at the end of the Guide.

***Framework and Plan for a High–Quality K–3 Education Program***

* Review and discuss the criteria, indicators, Analytic Rubric, and Growth Plan Template
* Consider and take notes on the district’s evidence of practice as it relates to the quality indicators.
* Identify and highlight indicators that have little or no evidence of alignment with current practice.
* At the end of each section, click: “Go to the Growth Plan Template for Section 1.” (Section 2 and Section 3, respectively)

***Analytic Rubric***

* Review the Analytic Rubric at the top of each Growth Plan Template.
* Refer to the team’s notes from each of the three sections.
* Self–assess evidence of practice and strength of alignment with the quality indicators.

***Growth Plan Template***

* Create and prioritize goals based on areas of need and district values for the K–3 program.
* Populate a Growth Plan Template for each section. (Enter as many plan components as desired.)
* Combine the three completed templates, and if desired, utilize them in other district strategic plans.

***Continual Quality Review and Validation Cycle Plan and Infographic***

* The team may elect to articulate details of the Growth Plan by creating a step-by-step cycle of improvement.
* Use the Continual Quality Review and Validation Cycle Infographic to enter each step toward the goals selected for improvement.



Additional implementation support protocols are described in the Guide to Using the K–3 SAVS and are available on the Division of Early Childhood Services [K–3 SAVS webpage](https://www.nj.gov/education/earlychildhood/grkto3/savs.shtml).

### Framework Criteria

**[Section 1: Program Leadership and Administration](#Program_Leadership_and_Admin)**

* 1.A. Administrators have expertise in early childhood education.
* 1.B. Systems are in place to foster a positive school climate and culture.
* 1.C. The district provides structural supports for systemic P–3 coherence.
* 1.D. The district provides administrative support for instructional quality.
* 1.E. Fiscal operations are informed by K–3 quality standards and program needs.
* 1.F. Long-range and day-to-day decision-making are informed by data.

**[Section 2: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Professional Learning](#Curriculum_Instruction_Assessment)**

* 2.A. The district supports strategies for integrating the curriculum into one coherent approach.
* 2.B. There is a developmentally appropriate and comprehensive approach to assessing young students.
* 2.C. A cohesive professional learning system is implemented for instructional, non-instructional, and administrative staff.

[**Section 3: Family and Community Engagement**](#Family_and_Community_Engagement)

* 3.A. Educators and staff support active parent and family engagement in children’s learning and development.
* 3.B. The community is an essential component in children’s learning, development, and well-being.



### Section 1: Program Leadership and Administration

#### 1.A. Administrators have expertise in early childhood education.

##### Rationale

The key to the success of any educational program is effective leadership. Individuals who fill these positions must have experience and training in early childhood education (ECE) to effectively influence and fulfill their leadership role from preschool to third grade (P–3). To operate high–quality ECE programs, the leader must play an integral role in planning, curriculum and instruction, implementation, and evaluation (New Jersey Department of Education [NJDOE], 2022).

##### Criterion 1.A.1.

All dedicated ECE administrators (directors, supervisors, principals, etc.) have experience in early childhood education (K–3) and participate in annual professional learning opportunities specific to ECE.

##### Indicators

* If a dedicated ECE administrator is lacking ECE expertise, a plan is in place to ensure adequate professional learning activities are accessed.
* Among district ECE administration, at least one key leader has ECE expertise in each of the following:
* bilingual/dual language education (if relevant to the population);
* instruction of children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment;
* subject-specific ECE pedagogy (e.g. math, science, social studies, social-emotional learning, language and literacy, the arts); and
* development of self-regulation and executive functioning skills.

Notes about evidence:

##### Criterion 1.A.2

District and school administrators build continuity of ECE administrator expertise.

##### Indicators:

* ECE educators are provided with peer leadership opportunities (e.g., chairing school improvement,

committee, providing mentoring and peer coaching, developing new initiatives, and serving on district committees).

* When appropriate, current administrators encourage ECE educators to seek appropriate administrative credentials to build program continuity.

Notes about evidence:

#### 1.B. Systems are in place to foster a positive school climate and culture.

##### Rationale

School climate refers to the school’s shared values and practices, respect for individuals and diversity, and the relationships among members of the school community including parents, families, and students. School culture refers to the way members of the school community work together, and the set of beliefs, values, and assumptions they share. A positive school climate and culture begins with leadership and is designed to promote student learning. According to the National School Climate Center (2013), School climate includes major spheres of school life such as safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and the environment as well as larger organizational patterns (i.e., from fragmented to shared; healthy or unhealthy). These dimensions not only shape how students feel about being in school but also affect their learning and development (Thapa, 2013).

##### Criterion 1.B.1

Early childhood education administrators facilitate a shared K–3 vision and create coherence in implementation by regularly meeting with, and soliciting feedback from, district administrators, K–3 program staff, teachers, and families.

##### Indicators

* The district solicits input from the school community to develop a written and widely disseminated vision to guide district decision-making and enhance district culture and climate which includes explicit goals related to equity and inclusiveness.
* The district develops and implements an articulated and coherent alignment for grades Pre-K to grade 12 which is aligned with the K–3 vision.
* Multiple strategies are implemented to ensure that everyone in the school community feels welcome, safe, and supported in a positive school climate.
* There are multiple ways in which staff participate in key decision-making.
* There are multiple ways in which parents and families have input in key decisions (e.g., strong involvement with PTA/PTO, representation on the Early Childhood Advisory Council, family surveys, etc.).
* The school community (parents, families, staff, leaders, and students) collaborates to establish universal expectations (e.g., like those in a positive behavioral support approach). These universal expectations are clear throughout the school/district.

Notes about evidence

#### 1.C. The district provides structural supports for systemic P–3 coherence.

##### Rationale

Implementing a coherent P–3 system is an ongoing process that facilitates and maintains vertical and horizontal alignment of learning goals, curriculum, assessment, instruction, and program evaluation. By emphasizing a Pre-K–3 learning continuum, children are supported along consistent, high–quality pathways of learning that can help to prepare them for success in school, work, and life (National Association of Elementary School Principals [NAESP], 2021).

##### Criterion 1.C.1

Procedures are developed and implemented to ensure continuity of instruction as children move through the P–3 continuum.

##### Indicators

* Articulated transitions are planned and implemented between and within grades for students, parents, families, and teachers.
* Children visit the next grade before beginning that school year.
* Families are introduced to the expectations prior to the next grade level.
* Teachers from previous and next grade levels meet to ensure seamless transitions for individual children from one grade to the next.
* Meetings occur throughout the year to discuss P–3 student learning outcomes, areas of success, and focus.
* The learning goals, enacted curriculum, formative and summative assessment systems, and instructional practices are linked, resulting in a coherent teaching and learning system with and across the P–3 continuum.
* A commitment by district and school leadership to provide professional learning opportunities that enhance the P–3 system is evident (e.g., P–3 focused in-service, organization of professional learning communities (PLC), peer-to-peer support systems in place, etc.).
* Collaboration at the district and school level is evident across district departments including, but not limited to, curriculum and instruction, special education, bilingual education, early childhood education, and older elementary grades.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 1.C.2

At a minimum, state regulations on class size and specialized support staff are followed.

##### Indicators

* Kindergarten to third grade classrooms in former Abbott districts and districts with 40 percent or more at-risk students have a class size of less than 21 students per teacher and at least one paraprofessional. Kindergarten to third grade classrooms in all other districts have no more than 25 students per teacher.
* Regulations are followed in P–3 classrooms for inclusion and support for multilingual learners (MLs).
* When the district or school context requires it, the regulations are exceeded (e.g., to support inclusion, a co-teaching model or a consultative special education teacher model is used; a two-way immersion program is in place in P–3 to support multilingual learners (MLs) to become bilingual).

Notes about evidence

#### 1.D. The district provides administrative support for instructional quality.

##### Rationale

The quality of the staff is the most important determinant of the quality of an early childhood education program (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2020). Reflective practice supported by the administration benefits teachers and students because reflective teachers are mindful of their influence on individual student learning. Teachers’ instructional practices become more intuitive and efficient in supporting students’ needs through continual reflection promoted by leadership (Tomlinson, 2003).

##### Criterion 1.D.1

Leaders support reflective practice through the continual improvement cycle. The cycle consists of maintaining a culture of commitment to improvement; evaluating and assessing for areas in need of improvement using objective data; developing and implementing improvements or interventions; evaluating and reporting on improvements; revising as indicated and advancing through the continual process. Teachers and instructional leaders work collectively to determine areas in need of improvement and develop and implement interventions to achieve that improvement. This cyclical process establishes a focus and shared vision to improve teaching practices and student outcomes.

##### Indicators:

* Instructional leaders clearly articulate the supervision and evaluation protocol of teaching staff.
* Staff observations and routine walkthroughs are conducted to individualize support and professional learning.
* Research-based structured observation tools are used for continual improvement, including curriculum fidelity tools.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 1.D.2.

All multilingual learners (MLs) receive support for home and English language acquisition based on a tiered system, differentiating supports to best meet the needs of each student. A district-wide system is in place to ensure a range of classrooms are available to meet the different linguistic needs of students.

##### Indicators:

* Differentiated supports start with the most intense support: a bilingual classroom with a trained bilingual teacher; a classroom with a trained bilingual certified teacher; push-in ESL services; students who speak both English and their home language are in a general education classroom with a teacher who has been trained in sheltered instruction; and students are receiving ESL services.
* Progress monitoring for the acquisition of English occurs at regular intervals and placements are adjusted accordingly.
* District has an action plan to develop a bilingual workforce to match the needs of its student population.
* Prioritization of staff placement is based on the developmental needs of children such as children entering preschool with a native language other than English. It is recommended that the remaining bilingual staff be assigned to the K–3 setting.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 1.D.3.

The district has a well-articulated and written philosophy that demonstrates its commitment to supporting the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom to the maximum extent possible.

##### Indicators:

* To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment.
* A general education classroom is considered the first placement for children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 plans.
* Districts and schools have a coordinated system to provide tiered interventions and support for students who are struggling but have not been diagnosed with a disability.
* Students receive appropriate support and therapies (academic, behavioral, social, physical) within the activities and daily routines of the general education classroom whenever possible. When pull-out therapies and instruction are justified, the IEP should include steps for the transfer of skills to the regular environment to ensure the generalization of learning.
* Systems to ensure all staff working with a child with disabilities consistently document progress with data.
* Communication that is data-based occurs on a regular basis among staff and with parents and families about children’s progress in relation to their child’s IEP goals.
* Consultations about techniques and strategies regularly occur between therapists, special services, teachers.
* Special educators and therapists are supported in their role as consultants to general education staff. They have access to professional learning activities to develop necessary ECE expertise as well as, consultation/coaching skills and have adequate time to plan for and provide consultation.

Notes about evidence

#### 1.E. Fiscal operations are informed by K–3 quality standards and program needs.

##### Rationale

Leaders must address K–3 quality standards with sound and equitable fiscal management drawing attention to providing students with high–quality learning environments, resources, and a system of accountability to sustain the integrity of the program.

##### Criterion 1.E.1.

The specific needs of a K–3 system are reflected in the long-range facilities plan which is informed by a recent facilities assessment (e.g. classroom size, bathrooms, developmentally appropriate playground). The plan guides district decision-making.

##### Indicators

* A long-range facilities plan is developed to address specific needs/upgrades in K–3 settings.
* Improvements in K–3 settings are enacted based on need.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 1.E.2.

Resource needs in K–3 are clear in the fiscal plan and in district spending.

##### Indicators

* Budgets are developed with input from across the school district and across departments to maximize efficiencies for the K–3 continuum.
* Equitable spending in K–3 settings is apparent in relation to the district (e.g., professional learning opportunities, supplies, resources).
* Funding for meeting the educational needs of special populations is evident in the fiscal plan.

Notes about evidence

#### 1.F. Long-range and day-to-day decision-making are informed by data.

##### Rationale

Leadership makes data-driven decisions and uses that data to develop long-range strategic plans for the early Childhood Education Program. With access to various data, educators can tailor instruction to meet students’ needs (Manship, Farber, Smith, & Drummond, 2016). Data is derived from multiple sources and analyzed in various ways to establish goals and monitor progress. The assessment cycle includes reflecting on data, determining what the evidence is saying, and developing a plan for progress. A long-range strategic plan helps districts and schools determine what needs to be achieved for student success. Communication from various stakeholders is critical for everyone to work towards and support the same goals (New Jersey Kindergarten Program Implementation Guidelines, 2011; New Jersey First through Third Grade Program Implementation Guidelines, 2015).

##### Criterion 1.F.1.

K–3 SAVS is a cyclical practice and if it is used with the SAVS utilized in Preschool programs and other district data (e.g., review of district/school level performance and progress data) it can inform and update the long-range improvement plan (inclusive of budgeting for professional learning) at the school and district level.

##### Indicator:

* A self–assessment is conducted with a comprehensive P–3 team to determine which systems and/or structures need attention for areas such as professional learning, curriculum, assessment enhancements, learning environment, scheduling, etc.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 1.F.2.

Data at the school, grade, classroom, and student level are consistently used to inform day-to-day decision-making (e.g., a PLC on assessment). There is a system in place to collect and analyze data to inform the continual improvement cycle.

##### Indicators:

* A structured observation instrument or combination of instruments is used to measure the quality of instructional practices and the classroom environment.
* Results of performance-based, curriculum-based, and other developmentally appropriate child assessments are analyzed by teachers, and the results are used to individualize and personalize learning and instruction.
* The aggregated data from child assessments, structured classroom observations, and teacher evaluations are analyzed. The results are used to inform teachers’ individual professional learning plans.
* The aggregated data from child assessments, structured classroom observations, and teacher evaluations are used to plan professional learning opportunities for teaching staff across grades.
* Family and community input on curriculum, instruction, and assessment are solicited through surveys, meetings, and other methods.
* If an Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) exists in the district, formal and informal methods of soliciting input from the ECAC are considered in planning. The ECAC signs off on the long-range plan which includes the participation of families and community members.
	+ - * Conduct leadership learning walks, and brief classroom visits which are facilitated with a research-based tool to support reflection and discussion regarding student learning and make connections to data to inform professional learning.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 1.F.3.

Integrated data systems that are used to track P–3 student learning are accessible to teaching staff.

##### Indicator:

* Teaching staff are familiar with their district’s data warehouse where they can obtain access to their student’s information/achievement records.

Notes about evidence

###### [Go to the Growth Plan Template for Section 1](#_Section_1:_Growth)

### Section 2: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Professional Learning

#### 2.A. The district supports strategies for integrating the curriculum into one coherent approach.

##### Rationale:

The elementary school years are an important period in children’s learning as they set the foundation for academic success. Teachers must consider the whole child and know that development in various domains is interconnected. Unique to every child, the skills in each domain may develop at a different pace. Each child is different, and classrooms include diverse learners, therefore, teachers must respond to children's strengths and needs through differentiation of instruction and scaffolded learning with attention to domain-specific effective pedagogy. Providing children with evidence-based learning experiences using the developmentally appropriate curriculum with connections to previous learning, coherent instructional practices, and connections across domains is necessary to promote motivated, curious, and engaged learners. Continuity in children’s educational opportunities and experiences from preschool through third grade is more likely to sustain the gains made early on and lead to better development and learning outcomes (Stipek, Clements, Coburn, et al., 2017).

##### Criterion 2.A.1.

The curriculum is integrated, coherent, and supports interdisciplinary content learning.

##### Indicators:

* Curriculum content provides a progression of increasingly complex subject matter built on previous grades that sustain children’s interests.
* Curricular scope and sequence are clearly based on research-established trajectories of learning and provide teaching staff with a blueprint of age-appropriate learning outcomes.
* The instructional sequence, aligned to established learning trajectories in each domain, is implemented with differentiation and scaffolding within each child’s zone of proximal development.
* Connections between subject domains and constructs are explicit in instructional activities (e.g., large group, small group, learning center, and routine). The implemented curriculum provides integrated, balanced, and comprehensive content across domains. (e.g., social studies, literacy, and social-emotional learning K–3)
* Consistency in developmentally appropriate pedagogical practice is evident within and across schools, grade levels, and subject matter.
* All students are provided access to the same core general education curriculum.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 2.A.2.

The curriculum or set of curricula provides a clear process to support the implementation of the New Jersey Kindergarten Program Implementation Guidelines and New Jersey First through Third Grade Program Implementation Guidelines in alignment with the NJ Student Learning Standards including New Jersey Social Emotional Learning Competencies.

##### Indicators:

* The curriculum embeds guidance to ensure that teachers know how and when to use the various instructional activities (e.g., large group, small group, learning center, and routine) based on what is best for helping students achieve the desired goal, given their individual differences.
* Children’s interests are used by teachers during curriculum decision-making so that teaching responds to children’s strengths, abilities, and interests, leading to engagement in learning.
* Instruction is provided in flexible groupings based on student needs using strategies and techniques targeted to specific student groups.
* Whole group instruction is employed only as a brief first step in the learning process and used to introduce students to key concepts and new information on a topic or as a component of community-building.
* Centers, cooperative learning, and independent/group activities are aligned with age-appropriate instructional goals and objectives focused on achieving grade-level learning standards.
* Methods for providing a tiered system of support for learning are implemented.
* Universal Design for Learning Principles are implemented.
* Strategies are linguistically and culturally responsive to the students.
* Relevant materials such as books, bulletin boards, displays, instructional materials, and other visuals are used in the classroom to reflect students’ race, ethnicity, family type, gender, abilities, and cultural backgrounds.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 2.A.3.

Systems are in place to ensure fidelity of curriculum implementation.

##### Indicators:

* Teachers, coaches, and instructional leaders use curriculum fidelity tools and checklists to monitor and improve implementation.
* Educators work together to ensure curriculum fidelity (e.g., through peer-to-peer observations, professional learning communities, etc.).

Notes about evidence

#### 2.B. There is a developmentally appropriate and comprehensive approach to assessing young students.

##### Rationale:

Developmentally appropriate assessment of young children includes multiple types of assessment that serve different functions (NAEYC, 2018). All assessments should be clearly articulated to learning trajectories and connected to the curriculum. The K–3 assessment system should generate information to identify children for referral and further diagnostic testing, plan for individual student learning, inform general instruction and curriculum adjustments, and evaluate program quality.

##### Criterion 2.B.1.

Time is provided for teachers and leaders to work together throughout the school year to analyze multiple data sources and make instructional decisions for individual children and adjust the curriculum.

##### Indicators:

* + - Trends are identified to inform practices, future professional learning opportunities, and tiered supports;
		- Data are analyzed to ensure all sub-groups of students are progressing (e.g., by gender, race, Socio-Economic Status (SES), and IEP status); and
		- Ongoing data analysis leads to adjustments to the curriculum to best support student learning.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 2.B.2.

Formative and summative assessments are aligned with K–3 student learning standards.

##### Indicators:

* Assessments provide information on students’ progress on learning trajectories and are used to inform a tiered system of instruction (e.g., to differentiate for each student).
* A formative assessment system has been chosen or developed with teacher input and implemented on a regular basis to drive instruction.
* Results of standardized assessments (except diagnostic assessments for special education placement) are primarily used for program evaluation and to inform professional learning. Results are not for high-stakes decisions about administrators, teachers, or students.
* All assessment tools and methods are valid for the student population.
* K–3 assessments are aligned to NJ Student Learning Standards.
* Inter-rater reliability for administering the assessments (both formative and summative) is established.

Notes about evidence

#### 2.C. A cohesive professional learning system is implemented for instructional, non-instructional, and administrative staff.

##### Rationale:

Teaching children in the elementary grades is a complex undertaking requiring educational professionals who can apply their knowledge of the subject matter, children’s learning and development, teaching strategies, and assessment to ensure that all children in their care learn to the best of their abilities. Children follow generalized developmental pathways as they are learning. When instructional staff receives training to understand the pathways and develop lessons to support children’s progression, they can effectively differentiate and support each student’s needs. (Sarama & Clements, 2009). Professional learning should be aligned with current research and best practices about early childhood education, using feedback from evaluations, data on learner performance, and school-wide and district-wide priorities (New Jersey Department of Education, 2014).

##### Criterion 2.C.1.

Professional learning is focused, ongoing, connected to current research in early childhood education, and aligned with best practices.

##### Indicators:

* Job-embedded professional learning activities are evident, such as focused classroom learning walks, instructional rounds, training/workshops, lesson study, self-evaluation, and PLCs connected to data from assessment and observation tools.
* The content of professional learning is congruent with New Jersey Student Learning Standards, New Jersey Kindergarten Program Implementation Guidelines, New Jersey First through Third Grade Program Implementation Guidelines, and New Jersey requirements for professional learning for teachers and school leaders.
* Professional development plans are co-designed with teaching staff to ensure personalized learning.
* Educators are encouraged to participate in professional learning opportunities based on their areas of strength and expertise.
* Teachers are provided with professional time (e.g., prep time or PLC meeting time) to collect and use data from multiple sources to make instructional decisions about students.
* Professional learning opportunities consistently embed methods for providing tiered support for students.
* Consultation regularly occurs between special services and teaching staff regarding techniques or strategies.
* Multiple opportunities exist for leaders, teaching staff, paraprofessionals, and non-instructional staff to participate in collaborative professional learning that provides for vertical articulation and alignment.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 2.C.2.

All teaching staff members, paraprofessionals, and non-instructional staff receive professional learning opportunities to meet the needs of multilingual learners (MLs).

##### Indicators:

* Sheltered Instruction training is provided to all early childhood education educators who serve MLs.
* All bilingual and ESL teachers are certified and have received training to serve MLs.
* Instructional coaches with expertise in bilingual learners are available to consult with teachers, other coaches, and principals.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 2.C.3.

All teaching staff members, paraprofessionals, and non-instructional staff receive professional learning opportunities to meet the needs of children with IEPs in general education settings.

##### Indicators:

* Training on the types of tiered systems of support and inclusion of students with disabilities are included in the comprehensive district professional development plan for all staff.
* District provides opportunities for staff to receive specialized training related to the needs of children.
* Child Study Team members and therapists provide training to teachers regarding techniques and strategies to support all students (6A:14-3.1(d)3.)
* All staff who work with students with disabilities are provided training opportunities on the general education curriculum and assessment of learning measures.
* Instructional coaches, with expertise in educating children with IEPs in a general education classroom, are available to consult with teachers, other coaches, the child study team, and principals.

Notes about evidence

[**Go to the Growth Plan Template for Section 2**](#_Section_2:_Growth)

### Section 3: Family and Community Engagement

#### 3.A. Educators and staff support active parent and family engagement in children’s learning and development.

##### Rationale:

Effective early childhood educators value and utilize equitable parent and family engagement as a strategy to extend student learning and development beyond the classroom. Early childhood educators understand that a child’s successful education depends upon building partnerships with students’ families and the community in which they live. Those partnerships are most effective when they focus on each child’s learning and development both in the classroom and outside of school. High–quality programs operate with a broad view of the parents and families who serve in the parenting role for their students. In addition to the child’s parents, other adults might serve in a parenting role (i.e., grandparents, aunts/uncles, older siblings, caregivers, legal guardians, and sometimes a child’s community mentor.) Creating respectful, cultural, linguistically responsive, and reciprocal learning partnerships with key family members is the responsibility of every staff member. Beyond a child’s classroom, early childhood education programs can also serve their young students by providing connections for 2-Generation (2-Gen) supports that build on family strengths and well-being. 2-Gen support means intentionally and simultaneously working in partnership with children and the adults in their lives. It is important for educators to understand that educational effectiveness for young children goes beyond classroom instruction. To promote optimal learning and development for young children, educators must engage in respectful, reciprocal partnerships with their students’ families.

##### Criterion 3.A.1.

Direct communication with families takes place regularly and is reciprocal, where educators are both sharing and seeking information from families about their children’s interests, experiences, characteristics, and goals. Families are provided several opportunities to build their capacity to support their child’s learning and share their expertise about how their child learns and is developing. The focus of the partnership is on student learning and development.

##### Indicators:

* Programs value and build effective, equitable home/school relationships that impact student learning and development, including family involvement and participation; direct engagement in student learning and development; compliance and policy development; and a 2-Gen approach to supporting healthy children and families.
* Families’ preferred methods of communication are determined and used regularly to share ongoing learning-based support and student progress.
* Families are made aware of multiple methods for contacting school personnel based on their needs. Multiple methods of reciprocal communication are in place.
* Educators model and provide families with strategies, support, and tools to extend student learning outside of school.
* Schools share resources with families to help them build their capacity to support their child’s learning at home and outside of the classroom.
* Educators who seek to provide their students with comprehensive learning experiences provide families with information and equitable access to student learning standards, curriculum content, and an understanding of assessment in the educational process.
* Collaborative meetings, orientation, conferences, and home visits (based on the needs and interests of families) are in place to learn about students from their families.
* Teachers integrate families’ knowledge and observations about their child’s learning with their own professional expertise and jointly develop shared goals to plan appropriate instruction and support.
* Schools work collaboratively with families to schedule intervention planning meetings (such as IEPs and 504 plans) and jointly review student progress data, provide opportunities to reinforce or expand content, adjust pedagogy, and provide additional support to best meet the student’s learning needs.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 3.A.2.

Staff ensure that all families are included in all aspects of the educational and student development program, regardless of family structure, socioeconomic status, race, religious and cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, or preferred language.

##### Indicators:

* High–quality programs prioritize and take intentional steps to ensure equity as they provide student instruction, educational support services, and support for healthy children and families.
* The school creates a variety of effective ways to learn about families’ goals for their children and the support they need to help their children learn to the best of their ability.
* Cultural practices in the home are identified, celebrated, and reflected in the curriculum content, classroom activities, teaching approaches, and school celebrations.
* Equitable parent-teacher conferences are differentiated for individual family and student needs, especially those who are traditionally marginalized. Educators recognize these may differ for each family.
* Educators can effectively facilitate meaningful family engagement in student learning and development by first making a commitment to their own professional learning to ensure awareness and understanding of the varied needs of their students and families.
* Administrators and educators obtain critical resources, including bilingual staff and professional development, to accommodate the cultural and linguistic needs of their students and families.
* Multiple structures and methods exist to ensure that all parents have access to 2-way communication and capacity–building to share, receive, and understand information about standards-based learning, performance expectations, and the child’s needs in and outside of school.
* The make-up of the school staff reflects the population of students and their families.
* The program offers a Home Language Survey to every family for the sole purpose of preparing to best serve the student and family.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 3.A.3.

Families are provided with a variety of opportunities to participate in children’s school experiences in-person and virtually.

##### Indicators:

* All families are offered multiple ways of participating in the teaching, learning, and student development components of the program.
* Teachers provide families with an equitable background of applicable student learning standards, student learning objectives, performance expectations, insight into instructional strategies, and strategies that support and guide learning outside of the classroom.
* Families regularly join educators as partners in decision-making bodies that review and develop policies and practices (i.e., visitation policies, homework policies, the number and type of parent/teacher conferences, joint goal-setting practices, etc.).
* The school has jointly developed parent and family involvement and engagement policies as required by Title I, Title III, and all other ESSA mandates.
* Diverse families are invited to inform and participate in the development of the school’s vision, mission, and programs.
* All families are provided with equitable support, resources, and opportunities to create a healthy, developmentally appropriate learning environment for their children.
* A variety of transition activities that include student learning, development, support, and expectations are provided to all families at various points between each grade level from preschool to 3rd grade.
* The district upholds all mandates, parental rights, and personalized opportunities to support and engage families of children with IEPs or 504 plans so they can equitably contribute to the development of their children’s goals including multiple opportunities to share strength-based strategies with staff.

Notes about evidence

#### 3.B. The community is an essential component in children’s learning, development, and well-being.

##### Rationale:

The education process is more successful when children learn and develop with the support of strong families who, in turn, enjoy the support of individuals and institutions in their surrounding communities. In addition to building partnerships with families, early childhood educators should utilize community resources and civic engagement to support families and children’s successful learning and healthy development. Communities are viewed as assets and partners in providing the best possible education for their children. School leaders maximize shared resources among schools, districts, and communities that provide key social structures and gathering places, in conjunction with other organizations and agencies that provide critical resources for children and their families.

##### Criterion 3.B.1.

Schools engage with the community to ensure local resources are used to support student learning and families’ well-being.

##### Indicators:

* + - * Information about available community resources and opportunities are accessible for families seeking services outside of the school community.
			* The school assists in fostering social networks that benefit children and families in the community (e.g., family-to-family social interactions, community service projects, community cultural resources, adult education services, etc.).
			* Community resources are utilized in curriculum planning and implementation.
			* Educators recognize and celebrate diversity as an asset of the school community and utilize it to strengthen educational programs.
			* Information regarding extracurricular activities in the community is shared with families as an opportunity to enhance students’ academic, social emotional, and physical well-being outside of school.
			* Summer and after school learning opportunities, programs, camps, and resources are offered to children in the community to expand and extend students’ learning and prevent academic regression.

Notes about evidence

##### Criterion 3.B.2.

The district prioritizes community outreach and collaboration and maintains an active Early Childhood Advisory Council. In addition to families, members include diverse community stakeholders interested in the education and welfare of children in preschool through third grade. The advisory council participates in program evaluation and improvement to support the implementation of a high-quality early learning program. (The Early Childhood Advisory Council can serve as a source of advisement for the K–3 SAVS team.)

##### Indicators:

* The program communicates and engages with diverse community representatives such as mental health agencies, social service providers, preschool and early childhood program providers, community leaders, business owners, child and family advocates, special education parent advisory group members, etc.
* A community needs assessment is conducted annually. The results are summarized to inform a continual improvement plan to enhance the quality of the program.
* The program invites diverse community representatives to participate in establishing collective goals for educating the children in the community.

Notes about evidence

[**Go to the Growth Plan Template for Section 3**](#_Section_3:_Growth)

### Build a Growth Plan for Continual Quality Review

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#### Directions for Using the Sample Growth Plan Template

Prior to using the Growth Plan Template, teams should collaboratively review the K–3 SAVS tools, protocols, and Q&As. Utilize the following:

***Framework and Plan for a High-Quality K–3 Education Program***

* Review and discuss the quality criteria, indicators, and Analytic Rubric.
* Consider and take notes on the district’s evidence of practice as it relates to the quality indicators.
* Identify and highlight indicators that have little or no evidence of alignment with current practice.
* At the end of each section, click: “Go to the Growth Plan Template for Section 1.” (Section 2 and Section 3, respectively)

***Analytic Rubric***

* Review the Analytic Rubric at the top of each Growth Plan Template.
* Refer to the team’s notes from each of the three sections.
* Self-assess evidence of practice and strength of alignment with the quality indicators.

***Growth Plan Template***

* Create and prioritize goals based on areas of need and district values for the K–3 program.
* Populate a Growth Plan Template for each section. (Enter as many plan components as desired.)
* Combine the three completed Templates, and if desired, utilize them in other district strategic plans.

**The team may elect to articulate the details of their Growth Plan by creating a step-by-step cycle of improvement. Use the Quality Review and Validation Cycle Infographic to enter each step toward the goals selected for improvement.**

#### Communicate the Growth Plan with an Infographic



* The K–3 SAVS protocols include a *Sample Quality Review and Validation Cycle Infographic* which articulates the flow of the district’s plan to strengthen alignment between evidence of practice and the criteria and indicators of high-quality practice.
* The infographic is an illustration of a sample plan built with key action steps. When engaging stakeholders, it may be helpful to use both an infographic and text description to provide a clear explanation of the district’s dedication to continual quality review and improvement of the K–3 education program.
* The protocol includes directions for K–3 SAVS teams to modify the sample and create an infographic representing their own unique plans.

For detailed, step-by-step implementation support, refer to the *Guide to Using the K–3 SAVS* and the implementation protocol *Quality Review and Validation Cycle Infographic* on the [K–3 SAVS webpage](https://www.nj.gov/education/earlychildhood/grkto3/savs.shtml).

#### Section 1: Growth Plan Template for Continual Quality Review of the K–3 Education Program

Use this Analytic Rubric to self-assess the strength of alignment between evidence of practice and the quality indicators.

| **No Evidence** | **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Approaching** | **Accomplished** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| There is no evidence in support of the criterion or indicators. | Very basic evidence exists to support the criterion and indicators. The need for change is recognized. | Evidence shows that the criterion and indicators are being supported but are still unmet. Plans and early steps have been developed and initiated. | There are several examples of evidence to show that the criterion and indicators are addressed, but not yet fully accomplished. Practice has shifted to the implementation phase. | There is an abundance of evidence to show that the criterion and indicators are being accomplished. |

##### Area(s) of need:

Add specific indicator(s) in column 1. Use the rubric above to self-assess alignment of practice and quality indicators and enter the information in column 2.

| **Specific Indicators** | **Use rubric to assess alignment of practice and indicator** |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

##### Evidence that validates alignment/nonalignment of practice and indicators:

(Use Analytical Rubric and add evidence of baseline alignment here.)

##### Goal(s) to strengthen alignment between practice and indicators:

(Add goal(s) here.)

##### Responsible person(s):

(Add responsible person(s) here.)

##### Resources required:

(Add required resources here.)

##### Evidence of Change:

(Add new evidence here.)

##### Timeline:

(Add timeline for progress monitoring and achievement here.)

##### Recalibrate new alignment:

(Refer to the Analytic Rubric and add updated alignment here.)

#### Section 2: Growth Plan Template for Continual Quality Review of the K–3 Education Program

Use this Analytic Rubric to self-assess the strength of alignment between evidence of practice and the quality indicators.

| **No Evidence** | **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Approaching** | **Accomplished** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| There is no evidence in support of the criterion or indicators. | Very basic evidence exists to support the criterion and indicators. The need for change is recognized. | Evidence shows that the criterion and indicators are being supported but are still unmet. Plans and early steps have been developed and initiated. | There are several examples of evidence to show that the criterion and indicators are addressed, but not yet fully accomplished. Practice has shifted to the implementation phase. | There is an abundance of evidence to show that the criterion and indicators are being accomplished. |

##### Area(s) of need:

Add specific indicator(s) in column 1. Use the rubric above to self-assess alignment of practice and quality indicators and enter the information in column 2.

| **Specific Indicators** | **Use rubric to assess alignment of practice and indicator** |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

##### Evidence that validates alignment/nonalignment of practice and indicators:

(Use Analytical Rubric and add evidence of baseline alignment here.)

##### Goal(s) to strengthen alignment between practice and indicators:

(Add goal(s) here.)

##### Responsible person(s):

(Add responsible person(s) here.)

##### Resources required:

(Add required resources here.)

##### Evidence of Change:

(Add new evidence here.)

##### Timeline:

(Add timeline for progress monitoring and achievement here.)

##### Recalibrate new alignment:

(Refer to the Analytic Rubric and add updated alignment here.)

#### Section 3: Growth Plan Template for Continual Quality Review of the K–3 Education Program

Use this Analytic Rubric to self-assess the strength of alignment between evidence of practice and the quality indicators.

| **No Evidence** | **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Approaching** | **Accomplished** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| There is no evidence in support of the criterion or indicators. | Very basic evidence exists to support the criterion and indicators. The need for change is recognized. | Evidence shows that the criterion and indicators are being supported but are still unmet. Plans and early steps have been developed and initiated. | There are several examples of evidence to show that the criterion and indicators are addressed, but not yet fully accomplished. Practice has shifted to the implementation phase. | There is an abundance of evidence to show that the criterion and indicators are being accomplished. |

##### Area(s) of need:

Add specific indicator(s) in column 1. Use the rubric above to self-assess alignment of practice and quality indicators and enter the information in column 2.

| **Specific Indicators** | **Use rubric to assess alignment of practice and indicator** |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

##### Evidence that validates alignment/nonalignment of practice and indicators:

(Use Analytical Rubric and add evidence of baseline alignment here.)

##### Goal(s) to strengthen alignment between practice and indicators:

(Add goal(s) here.)

##### Responsible person(s):

(Add responsible person(s) here.)

##### Resources required:

(Add required resources here.)

##### Evidence of Change:

(Add new evidence here.)

##### Timeline:

(Add timeline for progress monitoring and achievement here.)

##### Recalibrate new alignment:

(Refer to the Analytic Rubric and add updated alignment here.)