



## Virtual Administration of Teaching Strategies GOLD

These unprecedented times have uniquely challenged preschool programs. Families may have their young children learning remotely due to health concerns and in situations such as a health pandemic. Preschool children require a great deal of adult assistance in their learning, including explanation of activities, scaffolding, and supervision in shared experiences. Virtual learning cannot replicate all aspects of a quality preschool program; however, it should not prevent teachers from conducting observational assessments through virtual means. [Iowa Code 279.60](#), [Child Development Coordinating Council Policy](#), [Senate File 2310](#), and the accompanying [Iowa Department of Education Guidance document](#) outline the expectations for required assessments, including Teaching Strategies GOLD, to be administered in local programs.

This document outlines considerations for teachers administering GOLD during virtual learning.

### Construct learning activities and collect assessment information aligned to Iowa Early Learning Standards.

The Iowa Early Learning Standards – 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (IELS) creates a framework for understanding how children develop and learn. The IELS define age appropriate expectations used when designing developmentally appropriate learning experiences and provide the basis for assessments. For information on the areas of development illustrating appropriate content for young learners, please review the [Iowa Early Learning Standards – 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition](#).

### Link to objectives within My Teaching Strategies GOLD.

As children engage in developmentally appropriate learning experiences and projects as referenced in IELS, teachers and families can collaborate to observe and document the knowledge and skills of children. This documentation can be used to inform decisions for instruction and in completing checkpoints in GOLD. The [Alignment between GOLD and IELS](#) is a reference tool for determining which GOLD objectives should be included for activities based on IELS.

### Plan to observe what is possible through virtual meetings.

Intentional planning of learning and observation opportunities within virtual large groups, small groups and one-on-one meetings will help to capture data for use in GOLD. Teachers and families can also consider what to look for in learning products such as student created art work or student writing, and in situations occurring within daily family routines.

### Utilize other methods to record observations.

Consider including classroom teaching assistants, trained to take observational notes, in virtual learning sessions to assist with documenting children's learning. Consider recording (with parent permission) virtual learning sessions for teacher review later to document observations for inclusion in GOLD.

## **Enlist the assistance of families and set the stage for success.**

Coach families on using the Family area within the My Teaching Strategies GOLD system.

All programs under the Iowa Department of Education licensing agreement have the Family area with Teaching Strategies GOLD available to them. This feature can enhance two-way communication, allow sharing of learning activities with families, and simplify the inclusion of family observations in the assessment as documentation.

Consider having families use the My Teaching Strategies Family App.

Families can download the app to a smartphone to record and send observations to the teacher for use in GOLD. Model and teach families how to upload pictures and videos using the app.

Coach families on what milestones and skills for which to look and listen.

Provide families with examples of milestones they can observe. They may want to take note of these and include activities or skills their children do for the first time or do with more independence.

Coach families on how to take observations.

Consider what type of documentation would be most beneficial for the activity. Provide examples of short narratives families could offer. Provide helpful tips on camera location for seeing specific skills necessary to complete the activity. Hand-written notes and questionnaires supplied by teachers may also be returned to school staff for inclusion in the assessment process.

Encourage families to give positive constructive feedback to children.

Assure family members their interactions during activities and feedback to the child are valuable in the learning process. Suggest families utilize phrases such as “Look how well you . . .” or “Maybe try it like this . . .” with a demonstration to model the skill.

Ask families to reflect on why they have selected and shared certain observations.

This could include asking families what new skills children have demonstrated or are now able to do with more independence. This demonstrates respect for their time and efforts, and honors their family culture, while also scaffolding connections to learning experiences.

Always consider individual family circumstances when providing activities and materials.

Circumstances can include, but are not limited to, home language, culture and work schedules.

## **Decide which objectives to link to family observations in GOLD.**

Consider if the observation is applicable to more than one objective. Step by step instructions on how to include observations from families can be found in the resources on the [My Teaching Strategies Support Portal](#).

## **Complete checkpoints for the seasons:**

November 13, 2020

February 19, 2021

May 21, 2021