



Iowa GOLD® Online Procedures

Purpose

This technical assistance document is intended for use by teachers, practitioners, and administrators who are responsible for measuring and reporting child, program, and family outcomes in Iowa. Unless otherwise noted, these requirements apply to all children birth to age five enrolled in any public school district (hereafter referred to as district), accredited nonpublic school, Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) licensed child care center or preschool, Head Start agency or area education agency (AEA) early childhood program and/or service under the Iowa State Umbrella Agreement for GOLD® on the MyTeachingStrategies® platform. The information included here is specific to Iowa users.

Acknowledgement

The Iowa Department of Education extends a message of appreciation to Teaching Strategies for their support in reviewing this guidance for the GOLD® assessment system users in Iowa.

Requirement

Iowa Code § 279.60

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General Information

MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal

Users can access the [MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal](#) by clicking on the blue “?” icon on any page in MyTeachingStrategies® and/or clicking on the Support Portal from the Dashboard, upon logging in. Users can quickly and easily find information about how to navigate the GOLD® system by browsing articles, watching videos, or asking a question in the box provided.

The information included in this document is specific to Iowa guidelines and not included in the MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal.

Children required to be assessed with GOLD®

Districts are required to assess preschool children enrolled in district programs with GOLD®. [Iowa Code 279.60](#) was amended in 2013 to include the administration of the GOLD® assessment *for every resident prekindergarten or four-year-old child whose parent or guardian enrolls the child in a district program*. This would include all children whose participation is funded by Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP), Shared Visions Preschool Program (SVPP) or Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) funds.

All children enrolled in SVPP are required to be assessed with GOLD® per the [Child Development Coordinating Council Policy Regarding Child Assessment and Student ID Numbers](#).

GOLD® Subscription

Any public school district, nonpublic accredited school, registered or licensed child care/preschool, registered child development home, Head Start agency, or AEA in Iowa is eligible to participate in the Iowa State Umbrella Agreement with Teaching Strategies for GOLD®. A program does not need to be operating in partnership with a district or AEA to establish a program account.

All district-sponsored programs, SWVPP, and SVPP must establish an account under the Iowa State Umbrella Agreement. Either the district, Head Start, or community partner may establish this account.

Registering for the Iowa GOLD® subscription

By registering for GOLD®, the local agency agrees to the following:

1. Program Administrators understand GOLD® data are protected by FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g) and that personally identifiable information may not be disclosed except in compliance with FERPA, such as parental consent or a legal exception to parental consent.

2. Programs acknowledge that one FERPA exception is reporting to the Iowa Department of Education (Department) under FERPA's exception for audits and evaluations.
3. Programs designate the Department as the authorized representative to receive GOLD® data.
4. The records to be disclosed are GOLD® data required by Iowa Code section 279.60 to be included in the statewide longitudinal data system.
5. The purpose of the disclosure is to comply with the requirement that GOLD® data be included in the statewide longitudinal data system. That system is used in furtherance of audit, evaluation, enforcement and compliance activities.
6. The system will be used to monitor compliance and improve performance in Iowa's early learning environments.
7. The data will not be destroyed, as it is required to be maintained in a longitudinal manner.
8. The statewide longitudinal data system will not re-disclose personally identifiable information and has adopted policies and procedures to prevent inappropriate use and authorized disclosure. These data may only be used for audit and evaluation purposes consistent with Iowa Code section 279.60.
9. As a subscriber under the Iowa State Umbrella Agreement, the program agrees to maintain accurate registration and default administrator contact information, and to communicate changes to this information to the Department.
10. As a subscriber under the Iowa State Umbrella Agreement, the program will implement the assessment and complete reporting including a minimum of one checkpoint, according to the timeline established by the Department. Programs are encouraged to complete two checkpoints, fall and spring. Completing three checkpoints is best practice in administering the assessment in a valid and reliable manner.
11. As a subscriber under the Iowa State Umbrella Agreement, the program administrator is aware of state level activities in data cleanliness and agrees to address data hygiene as described by the Department.

In order for Teaching Strategies to activate **NEW** GOLD® subscriptions, local programs will need to register by completing the [online form](#). Teaching Strategies will contact all potential subscribers upon completion of the registration form to set up the local contract.

The Department renews the Iowa State Umbrella Agreement with Teaching Strategies annually. While new subscribers may choose to activate a subscription at any time, activating in July or August at the beginning of a new program year is recommended. Teaching Strategies will prorate the subscription cost at any point during the year if a program chooses to subscribe at other times of the year.

Renewing the GOLD® Subscription

Subscriptions should be renewed annually. Renewing typically occurs in July or August to avoid interruption in services. Subscribers should watch for the new agreement to arrive electronically, then return the agreement with electronic signature and payment. The number of child records needed is estimated at the local program level based on class rosters or registration. Programs should consider the number of child records the prior year when anticipating the number of the upcoming year. Programs who need additional child records midyear should contact Teaching Strategies directly.

Subscribers may **RENEW** the local contract with Teaching Strategies by completing the [online renewal form](#). Programs may check or troubleshoot their renewal status by emailing Renewals@TeachingStrategies.com.

Data Hygiene

Data cleanliness routines are critical in any data system. Subscribers to the Iowa State Umbrella Agreement have responsibility to ensure the accuracy of data entered into the GOLD® system. MyTeachingStrategies® Administrators who are responsible for GOLD® implementation should establish a routine to regularly address data hygiene for their program data to ensure:

- All child demographic information matches information in other state reporting systems (e.g., Student Reporting in Iowa/Certified Enrollment).
- Child enrollment is accurate for each classroom; records for children who have left the program are either transferred or archived accordingly. Receiving classrooms should ensure child records are updated and accurate (i.e. funding source, IFSP/IEP status).
- There is only one child record per child, with exceptions for children who are dually enrolled in different programming (e.g., enrolled in an AM Head Start classroom and a PM SWVPP classroom).
- All staff demographic information matches information in other state reporting systems (e.g., Fall BEDS Staff, Board of Educational Examiners).
- Staff access is maintained as appropriate for current users, and other users are removed from the system.
- All program, site, and class demographic information matches information in other state reporting systems (e.g., School Information Update, Preschool Desk Audit – Session ID information).
- The program is following appropriate procedures for archiving and deleting child records.

Note: Once final reports have been run and child records have been mass archived, classroom information (i.e. class name and associated teachers) may be edited to reflect the new school year. Renaming classes ensures that lesson plans associated with a particular teacher’s class will remain associated with that class for the upcoming school year. Classrooms from prior years that are no longer being utilized should be deleted. If there are one or more students associated with the classroom, the delete option for the classroom will not be available. All students must be moved to another classroom (Teaching Strategies recommends archiving children instead of deleting children) or deleted from MyTeachingStrategies® in order to delete a classroom.

Getting Started

The subscriber establishes a MyTeachingStrategies® Administrator as the point of contact who assumes responsibility for overseeing all data entry, reporting, and information updates related to the management of GOLD®. Examples of MyTeachingStrategies® Administrators may include a superintendent or principal, program coordinator, child development home care provider, or director. It is recommended that someone other than a teacher is assigned as the contact.

The responsibilities of the MyTeachingStrategies® Administrator include:

- Completing the yearly subscription process;
- Managing and overseeing the full implementation of GOLD®;
- Communicating updates and changes related to GOLD®;
- Requesting the Department to transfer children between districts/agencies;
- Overseeing the data entry process to ensure that reliable and valid information is provided by teachers and other practitioners;
- District reporting; and
- Maintaining data hygiene routines.

Creating Programs, Sites, and Classrooms

For more information about creating programs, sites, and classrooms within the GOLD® system, go to the MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal. However, to get you started please see links below:

[How do I add a site?](#)

[How do I add a class as an administrator?](#)

[How do I add a teacher?](#)

Programs that are affiliated with a district, including ECSE, or receive state funding through SWVPP or a SVPP grant should follow the guidelines below for naming programs, sites, and classrooms.

PROGRAM/SITE

As applicable, ensure that program and site information entered in MyTeachingStrategies® GOLD®, including building and program names, match other data reporting systems such as the Preschool Desk Audit – Session ID Information in the Consolidated Accountability and Support Application (CASA) and the School Information Update to assist with data matching.

- Head Start – A Head Start agency would identify the full program name as the name of the agency operating the Head Start program such as the community action agency.
- School District – A school district would enter the full school district name as the program and the full building name as the site.
 - A SWVPP community partner would enter the full name of the program as stated on the document titled ADD H_Off Site PK on the [Student Reporting in Iowa page](#) of the Department website, e.g., Serendipity Preschool. In addition, the community partner must enter the physical address of the program.
- Shared Visions – A Shared Visions funded program would enter the program name as the name of the *Shared Visions Preschool Grantee* and the site as the *Program Location* as stated on the document titled [Shared Visions Preschool Program Awarded Locations](#) located on the Department website.
- Private early childhood programs (without state funding) – Enter the full program name and physical address in order to assist with any necessary communication.

CLASSROOM NAME

As applicable, ensure that class names entered in MyTeachingStrategies® match all class names included in other data reporting systems such as the Preschool Desk Audit – Session ID Information in CASA in order to assist with data matching. Use the following format for class names in MyTeachingStrategies®.

Name classes with the teacher’s last name followed by an indication of the class meeting times; such as “Smith AM” and “Smith PM” for a teacher teaching a morning and an afternoon class. Another example would be “Smith MW” and “Smith TTh” for a teacher teaching a class meeting on Monday and Wednesday and another class – with different students – on Tuesday and Thursday. A final example would be “Smith M-F” for a teacher teaching a class meeting Monday through Friday (even if this is this teacher’s only class).

Entering Child Information

When adding new children, it is required to enter complete information to ensure accurate and valid child data and in order to meet State and legislative reporting requirements. All information entered must match information from the student information system or information submitted for state reporting (e.g., Student Reporting in Iowa/Certified Enrollment, when applicable) unless otherwise indicated below.

For more information, including how to use a CSV template to import child information, go to the MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal and/or [click here](#).

REQUIRED FIELDS FOR IOWA USERS

Enter the indicated information in all of the following fields in the new child record, unless otherwise stated:

Select Class

- **Site**
- **Teacher**
- **Class**

Class Details

- **Age or Class/Grade**
- **First day in program**

Child Details

- **First name** – use the child’s *full legal first name* as indicated on a birth certificate or other legal document. Do not enter any other letters, placeholders, nicknames, abbreviations, or variations on the child’s first name.
- **Middle Initial (optional)** – If the child does not have a middle name, enter “NMN” (no middle name).
- **Last name** – Use the child’s *full legal last name* as indicated on a birth certificate or other legal document. Do not enter any other letters, suffixes, placeholders, nicknames, abbreviations, or variations on the child’s last name.
- **Nickname (optional)**
- **Identifier** – Do not insert information here. This will be populated by the Department.
- **Gender**
- **Birth Date**
- **Primary Language**
- **Ethnicity Level 1** – Enter information that matches the student information system or information submitted for state reporting (e.g., Student Reporting in Iowa/Certified Enrollment, when applicable).
 - Select *Spanish/Hispanic/Latino* if the child is a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. If *Spanish/Hispanic/Latino* is selected, **Ethnicity Level 2** is also required. Select the specific culture or origin for this child.
 - Otherwise, select *Not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino*.
- **Race** – Enter information that matches the student information system or information submitted for state reporting (e.g., Student Reporting in Iowa/Certified Enrollment, when applicable).
- **Student ID (optional)** – Programs may insert a local or program child ID here.
- **Funding Sources** – This is a newly required field. Check the boxes indicating the funding sources that support this child in this program. More than one funding source can be selected. All that apply to this child should be marked. Funding sources checked here should match information in the student information system or information submitted for state reporting (e.g., Student Reporting in Iowa/Certified Enrollment, when applicable).
- **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** – Indicate if the child has an IEP for special education instructional and/or support services. (If a child is less than three years of age and has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), check “yes” for IFSP in order to populate additional fields for IFSP.) If “yes” is selected, the following fields open up:
 - Entry into IDEA Part B Preschool (3-5) – The Part B entry date is the date of the initial IEP meeting. However, if the initial IEP meeting occurs at the end of the school year or during the summer, the MyTeachingStrategies® GOLD® Part B entry date will be the date the child begins receiving special education services (ex. First day of school in August).
 - Preschool Entry Assessment – Select MyTeachingStrategies® GOLD®
 - Preschool Exit Assessment – Select MyTeachingStrategies® GOLD®
- **Free or Reduced Lunch (optional)**

Home Language Survey

The administration of a home language survey is a requirement under federal civil rights law for all preschool children enrolled in preschool programs under the authority of the Department. Preschool programs may use the Home Language Survey within MyTeachingStrategies® or the Iowa Home Language Survey on the TransAct website. The Home Language Survey assists programs in meeting civil rights obligations. It also assists teachers in planning for language acquisition and in determining the use of the English Language Acquisition objectives in GOLD®, Objectives 37 & 38. In addition, the Home Language Survey is useful in completing the data element Potential English Language Learners (PELL) in Student Reporting in Iowa.

Accessing Child Data

Once data are entered into the online system, data are secure within the system. It is accessible only by those who have a user ID and password for the program's online account.

The Department has administrative access to all accounts in Iowa. Only authorized Department and AEA personnel with an assigned user ID and password have access to the Iowa MyTeachingStrategies® system.

Documentation and Checkpoints

Required Child Documentation

At least one piece of documentation for each objective and dimension at minimum, excluding those objectives indicating Not Yet for the corresponding color band/age or class.

Documentation for science, technology, social studies and the arts objectives is optional.

Teachers, lead teachers, providers, and teaching assistants may provide documentation. Additionally, it is a local decision to add Team Members who may add documentation. See the Team Members section of the Iowa GOLD® procedures for more information.

Preliminary Levels

It is recommended that lead teachers enter preliminary levels. Additionally, teaching assistants who have completed MyTeachingStrategies® GOLD® Introduction and Interrater Reliability Certification may complete preliminary leveling if the lead teacher and administrator are in agreement.

Completing Checkpoints

The Department establishes annual checkpoint dates. Programs under the Iowa State Umbrella Agreement must adhere to the state determined checkpoint dates found below in the section titled Annual Checkpoint Information. Only teachers or lead teachers should complete finalized checkpoints. Checkpoint dates can be found in the Assess area under Checkpoint Dates.

Team Members

Team Members, formerly known as Team Central, allows teachers and other specialists who are working with a particular child in the assessment process to collaborate and share information. For example, a child who is receiving speech and language services could have documentation added to his/her child record by the Speech Language Pathologist (SLP).

Note: Team Members are only able to add or view documentation for specific children for which they have been assigned. Also, teachers should not be assigned as a Team Member for children within their own classroom. Teachers may be assigned as a Team Member for children enrolled in classrooms other than their own as needed.

Family Area

The Family Area in MyTeachingStrategies® provides an opportunity for families to share observation that may be used as documentation for finalizing checkpoints. For further information on the Family Area, refer to the MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal.

Reporting

Information on how to access and create reports is available on the MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal. Running reports prior to mass archiving at the end of a program year is necessary to ensure that all students are included with all reports.

Archiving, Deleting, and Reactivating

Archiving, deleting, and reactivating child records are functions performed by a person within the local program who has administrative access. Users with Teacher access do not have the ability to archive or reactivate child records in MyTeachingStrategies®.

Information on how to archive, delete, and reactivate child records is available in the MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal.

Archiving

Archiving children's records will allow users to store and reactivate the data at any time during the program year.

- Each program receives unlimited free archives. It is recommended that child records be archived rather than deleted.
- At the end of the program year, all child records under the Iowa State Umbrella Agreement will be mass archived.
- If a child is gone from the program for more than a couple weeks and attempts to locate the child are unsuccessful, the child should be archived in MyTeachingStrategies®.
- At the end of the program year, the teacher will complete the final checkpoint and run final reports before children's records are mass archived.

*Note: All administrative reports can include archived files.

Deleting

DELETING CHILD RECORDS

While archiving child records is recommended, deleting child records may be necessary if:

- A record was created for a child that never attended the program;
- Child records contain no data;
- Duplicate child records were created in error and contain no data; or
- Duplicate child records are merged (Note: After all information is moved to the child record to be kept, the other records will need to be deleted.).

DELETING CLASSES

Deleting a class will permanently delete all weekly plans associated with that class. In most cases, we recommend editing the name of the class instead of deleting the class. For more information on editing and deleting classes, see the MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal.

Reactivating Archived Child Records

All child records under the Iowa State Umbrella Agreement will be mass archived at the end of the year. Therefore, child records for those returning to the program will need to be reactivated and placed in the current classroom. Do not create a duplicate child record for those returning to the program or for whom a child record already exists. For more information, go to the MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal.

Transferring Child Data

For information on transferring child records within a program, refer to the MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal.

Transfer between Programs

1. If a child is transferring to another site outside of the program, complete the [Iowa transfer form](#). If a child is transferring but information about the receiving program is not available, archive the child's record in MyTeachingStrategies®.

Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.

2. All transfer requests between programs must go through Mary Breyfogle, Program Consultant, in the Bureau of Leading, Teaching, Learning Services at the Department. Enter all the information requested in the [Iowa transfer form](#), paying close attention to the receiving program's "Teacher or Class Name (Designate AM or PM if applicable)." Including the full classroom name ensures the child's record will be placed in the correct classroom when the receiving program's teacher has more than one classroom.
3. The Iowa transfer form must be password protected before sending to the Department. Iowa transfer forms that do not have password protection will not be accepted by the Department.
4. Directions for how to submit a password protected form are embedded in the [Iowa transfer form](#).

Merging MyTeachingStrategies® Records When a Child has Transferred Between Programs

Upon receiving a transfer request, the Department completes a search for all child records in MyTeachingStrategies®.

All of the child's records will be transferred to the receiving program; except in the case where a child attends two separate preschool programs. The Department will notify the receiving program that a child has been transferred to their program with multiple child records and request that they be merged into one complete record. Follow the procedures in the MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal for Merging Child Files.

Managing Children with an IEP/IFSP

Exit Requirements for Children with an IEP/IFSP

If a child is exiting Part C Early ACCESS or Part B Early Childhood Special Education, then the child must be exited from those services in the MyTeachingStrategies® system. See the MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal for procedures on how to exit a child from an IEP/IFSP.

*Note: If a child exits Part B Early Childhood Special Education services in the middle of a school year, but the child will continue to attend the preschool as a general education student, then the MyTeachingStrategies® record should still be accessible and the teacher can continue to enter data and checkpoints for the remainder of the school year. Exiting a child from Part B does not automatically delete or archive a child, it just assigns an exit date for Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) reporting purposes.

Transferring from an IFSP to IEP

If a child is transferring from Part C Early ACCESS to Part B Early Childhood Special Education and the child was assessed using GOLD® in Part C, then the following must occur:

- The child must be exited from Part C in MyTeachingStrategies® using the procedures described in the previous section.
- A transfer form must be completed to transfer the child from Part C Early ACCESS to the Part B Early Childhood Special Education preschool program (see section "Transfer Between Programs").

Assigning Color Bands for Children on an IFSP/IEP

If a child is on an IFSP and assigned to a class that is Infants, Toddlers and Two's, then a color band is automatically assigned by date of birth when the birthday is entered on the demographic profile. The color band automatically changes on the child's birthday.

If a child is on an IEP and attending a preschool classroom (ages 3-5), the teacher assigns a color band according to the age of the child:

- Green color band – A child who is three years old by September 15 of the current school year
- Blue color band – A child who is four years old by September 15 of the current school year
- A purple color band is used for children enrolled as kindergarteners and participating in kindergarten programming. If a kindergarten age-eligible child is enrolled as a preschooler in a preschool program, the child is assigned the blue color band.
- The color band is never changed during the school year when a child is in preschool. A child in preschool must be on the same color band all year, regardless of the child's birthday.

*Note: If a child is entering a preschool program while still two years old, the child's color band is green for the remainder of that school year and all of the following school year. The MyTeachingStrategies® system does not allow a child to be assigned a yellow color band (2 years old) if the child is assigned to a preschool classroom.

Example: A child on an IFSP is turning 3 on November 1 of the current year. The child is going to transfer from Early ACCESS and start ECSE preschool programming on October 1 at the age of 2 years, 11 months. The child will be assigned a green color band for the current school year as well as the following school year.

Professional Development

Teachers and program administrators are encouraged to explore the Develop area within MyTeachingStrategies® and take advantage of embedded professional development. There are two options within the subnavigation bar of the Develop area: Interrater Reliability and My Courses. Note that there may be an associated cost with some courses.

It is highly recommended that teaching staff complete the Interrater Reliability Certification (IRC) to support reliable use of GOLD®.

Teaching staff may also utilize the Practice Environment to practice using MyTeachingStrategies® without affecting the data of the children in a class. This offers the opportunity to explore and learn about all of the features in the system. For more information, go to the MyTeachingStrategies® Support Portal.

Contacts

Iowa Department of Education

- Mary Breyfogle, mary.breyfogle@iowa.gov or 515-326-1030
- Jennifer Adkins, jennifer.adkins@iowa.gov or 515-954-5652 (SWVPP)
- Amy Stegeman, amy.stegeman@iowa.gov or 515-725-2273 (SVPP)
- Betsy Lin, betsy.lin@iowa.gov or 515-725-2039 (ECSE)
- Kimberly Villotti, kimberly.villotti@iowa.gov or 515-339-5519

Teaching Strategies

- TS Tech Support (Iowa dedicated line), 866-246-5352
- TS Tech Support (general) [online form](#) or 866-736-5913