

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACTJeffrey Capizzano
(301) 634-0842**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

New Birth-to-Six Assessment System to Focus on Key Predictors of School Success

Innovative Features of Teaching Strategies GOLD™ Assessment System Promote Ease of Use and Increased Accuracy

Bethesda, MD, October 13, 2009 –Teaching Strategies announced today that it is field testing an innovative, seamless, birth-to-6 early childhood assessment system designed to measure those aspects of child development and learning most predictive of later school success. The authentic, ongoing observation-based assessment system, Teaching Strategies GOLD™, assesses key elements that research indicates are most predictive of school success in the areas of social–emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development, as well as learning in literacy and mathematics. The system also includes objectives to help teachers plan instruction in science and technology, social studies, and the arts. It is designed to assess all children accurately, including children with developmental delays and disabilities, children who are advanced learners, and children who are English-language learners. The assessment tool includes two objectives to assess English language acquisition, developed by Dr. Patton Tabors, a researcher, formerly at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and an expert on English language acquisition of young children.

“This is one of the most important products that Teaching Strategies has ever developed,” said Diane Trister Dodge, founder and President of Teaching Strategies, Inc. “Assessment information is essential for individualizing instruction for young children. This new system will support teachers and promote appropriate teaching practices that help all children be more prepared for school.”

The new system, available online and in paper form, is designed to assess a child’s development and learning so that early childhood educators can plan instruction, and report and communicate children’s progress to families and stakeholders. It can also be used by administrators to guide professional development. Assessment items are aligned with most state early learning standards and can be used to assess whether a child has met a particular state standard. Because teachers assess children as they learn and play in the classroom, the assessment system can be used with any developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Teaching Strategies GOLD™ contains a number of important innovations that move the field of early childhood assessment forward. The first is the inclusion of ten *Assessment Opportunity Cards*, which present focused tasks for assessing selected predictors of school readiness in the areas of literacy and numeracy. “Teachers often don’t have enough observation information to assess children on a given item, or they find it hard to observe certain skills during the course of a typical day,” explained Cate Heroman, Vice President of Curriculum and Assessment at Teaching Strategies and the lead developer of the new assessment system. “Implementing these curriculum-embedded activities takes the guesswork out of the assessment process, makes it easier for teachers, and makes their assessment information more accurate.”

Other innovations include a training protocol designed specifically to improve interrater reliability, summaries of the research behind each assessment item, and clear guidance on how to assess children who are English-language learners.

“The guidance this system gives teachers when assessing children who are learning English as a second language is like nothing else in the field,” commented Dr. Tabors. “With this new assessment tool, teachers will get a much clearer picture of where English-language learners are developmentally, making it easier to help with their English language acquisition.”

The assessment system is currently being field tested nationwide with over 250 teachers and 2000 children. Field test information will be used to revise the instrument as necessary and provide data for the system’s technical manual. The new system will be released to programs serving children birth to age 6 in July 2010. More information on the new assessment system is available at: www.TeachingStrategies.com/GOLD.

Teaching Strategies, Inc., is a woman-owned company committed to making a difference in the lives of young children by providing scientifically based educational materials to preschool programs nationwide. Believing that our country's future depends on our ability to nurture the optimal growth of every child, the company's mission is to enhance the quality of early childhood programs by offering practical, innovative, and developmentally appropriate curriculum materials, training services and materials, and parenting resources. Teaching Strategies materials are used in thousands of Head Start, child care, public school, and other preschool programs throughout the country, including programs run by all branches of the military and Department of Defense schools worldwide.