



PARENT GUIDE TO ALTERNATE K-PREP

Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress



IMPORTANT TERMS TO KNOW

1. **Adaptations** – Changes made specific to the students individual academic needs.
2. **Alternate Diploma** – Provided to students with disabilities who are unable to meet requirements for a regular high school diploma. Recipients of an Alternate Diploma will participate in alternate assessments. The Alternate Diploma is not equivalent to a regular high school diploma.
3. **(ARC) Admissions and Release Committee** – A group of individuals responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising an individual education program (IEP) for a child with a disability.
4. **Assistive Technology** – Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, off the shelf, modified or customized and used to increase, maintain, or improve the overall capabilities of a child with a disability.
5. **Attainment Tasks** – Attainment tasks are multiple choice items that require students to complete a task, working step by step as directed by the teacher. These tasks are multiple choice questions based on content. Content may be broken down into sequential steps.
6. **Dimension A** – Student's using intentional communication, but not at a symbolic language level. Student uses understandable communication through such modes as gestures, pictures, objects, textures, pointing, signs, etc. to clearly express their intentions.
7. **Dimension B** – Student's communicate primarily through cries, facial expressions, change in muscle tone but does not present a clear use with objects, textures, gestures, pictures, pointing, signs, etc. to communicate in a consistent manner.
8. **Functional (life) Skills** – Activities and skills that are not considered academic or related to a child's academic achievement as measured by statewide assessments.

9. **Grade Level Content Standards** –Standards linked to the general education curriculum based on specific grade level placement.
10. **(IDEA) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** –
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law enacted in 1990 and reauthorized in 1997 and again in 2004. It is designed to protect the rights of students with disabilities by ensuring that everyone receives a **free appropriate public education** (FAPE), regardless of ability. Furthermore, IDEA strives not only to grant equal access to students with disabilities, but also to provide additional special education services and procedural safeguards.
11. **(IEP) Individualized Education Program** – A written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised annually. It consists of learner goals and objectives utilized for student success.
12. **Modifications** – *A change in what is being taught to or expected from the student.* Making an adjustment to the materials in order to service the individual students needs.
13. **(NCLB) No Child Left Behind** – A federal law passed under the George W. Bush administration meant to hold primary and secondary schools measurably accountable to higher standards. NCLB is written so that it requires 100% of students (including special education students and those from disadvantaged background) within a school to reach the same set of state standards in math and reading by the year 2014.
14. **Participation Guidelines for Alternate Assessment** – The Participation Guidelines for the Alternate K-PREP identify the requirements set by the state department of education for students with severe cognitive disabilities. These requirements must be agreed upon by the ARC committee and revisited at the annual meeting.
15. **(SDI) Specifically Designed Instruction** – Adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the individual needs of the child and to ensure access to the curriculum so that the child can meet the educational standards set in place.
16. **Transition Attainment Record (TAR)** - The Transition Attainment Record is a checklist which evaluates the student’s readiness in reading, mathematics and science. The TAR represents the Alternate Assessment for the EXPLORE at grade 8, the PLAN at grade 10 and the ACT at grade 11.

QUESTION:

What is the Alternate K-PREP?

ANSWER:

The Alternate K-PREP (Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress) serves students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These disabilities may require an alternate means of participation in Kentucky's statewide assessment to demonstrate achievement. The Alternate Assessment is designed to address the needs of the students by allowing greater depth of adaptations, modifications and alternative modes of participation.

MORE INFORMATION:

Students participate in the Alternate Assessment either in Performance Dimension A: Attainment or Performance Dimension B: Progress. This determination is based on a description of the student's communication level. The description of communication is as follows:

Performance Dimension A: Attainment should be chosen if the student's communication is best described by the following indicators:

Student uses verbal or written words, signs, Braille, or language-based augmentative systems to request, initiate, and respond to questions, describe things or events, and express refusal.

OR

Student uses intentional communication, but not at a symbolic language level. Student uses understandable communication through such modes as gestures, pictures, objects/textures, points, etc., to clearly express a variety of intentions.

Performance Dimension B: Progress may be chosen if the student's communication is best described by the following indicators:

- While students who participate in Performance Dimension B may be able to score at the proficient level, distinguished scores are not available if this performance dimension is chosen.
- Student communicates primarily through cries, facial expressions, change in muscle tone, but no clear use of objects/textures, regularized gestures, pictures, signs, etc., to communicate.
- Student alerts to sensory input from another person (auditory, visual, touch, movement), BUT requires actual physical assistance to follow simple directions, or the student's response to sensory stimuli (e.g., sound/voice, sight/gesture, touch, movement; smell) is unclear.

QUESTION:

Who is assessed?

ANSWER:

Unbridled Learning: College - and/or Career - Ready for All assesses every student in grades 3 through 8 with a combined Norm Referenced/Criterion Referenced Test. Students in grades 9 through 12 complete End –of- Course assessments for specific content areas in Kentucky’s public schools. Students are tested on specific standards at various grade levels. Students identified with educational disabilities are also assessed. Some students with disabilities will take the assessment without accommodations, some with accommodations, and some through an Alternate Assessment process.

MORE INFORMATION:

You may find out more about what is specifically tested at each grade level for Alternate Assessment students by going to the Alternate K-PREP page at <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Testing+and+Reporting+/District+Support/Kentucky+Alternate+Assessment+Program/> or call (502) 564-4394.

QUESTION:

What grade levels are tested on the Alternate K-PREP? How is it represented?

ANSWER:

The Alternate Assessment has two major components:

1. Attainment Tasks which measure the student’s performance on completing specified tasks/activities. Students will be assessed in:

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|----------------|------------------------------|
| Reading | Grades 3-8 and 9 |
| Mathematics | Grades 3-8 and 10 |
| Science | Grades 4, 7 and 11 |
| Social Studies | Grades 5, 8 and 12 |
| Writing | Grades 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 11 |

2. Transition Attainment Record which measures student performance on academic skills needed for transition. This is completed by the Admissions and Release Committee members (ARC): Students will be assessed in: reading, English, mathematics, and science readiness at grades 8, 10, and 11.

QUESTION:

Who decides if my child will participate in Alternate Assessment?

ANSWER:

An Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) makes decisions about the educational program and placement for students with disabilities. The ARC will also determine how students with disabilities participate in state and district assessments. The ARC determines if a student will participate in the state wide assessment with accommodations, without accommodations, or if they need to be assessed through the Alternate Assessment.

QUESTION:

How is the decision made by the ARC?

ANSWER:

Using the Participation Guidelines for Alternate Assessment, the ARC will analyze student information, including on-going progress data specific to the student's present level of performance. The Participation Guidelines contain statements that describe specific learning aspects and characteristics. The ARC must agree to a "yes" answer and provide required documentation for each statement from the Participation Guidelines in order to determine if the student is eligible for participation in the Alternate Assessment. The ARC must have specific data to evidence and support answering "yes" to each statement, including, but not limited to: an integrated psycho-educational report, adaptive behavior rating scales, curriculum assessments, diagnostic assessments and student work.

MORE INFORMATION:

Once participation in the Alternate Assessment Program is determined, the ARC must then decide the performance dimension in which the student will participate. Performance Dimension A: Attainment or Performance Dimension B: Progress. This decision is based on the student's communication level.

QUESTION:

When does the ARC make the decision?

ANSWER:

The ARC meets at least annually to review the student's educational program by reviewing and revising the student's IEP and determines how the student will participate in the Kentucky state wide assessment. Using the Participation Guidelines, the ARC must review and re-determine Alternate Assessment participation.

QUESTION:

Once an ARC determines a student will participate in Alternate Assessment is the decision final?

ANSWER:

Based upon current data at the time of the ARC, a student may initially be determined to participate in the Alternate Assessment, however, if new data or changes with a student occur, an ARC may reconvene and determine that a student is no longer eligible for participation in the Alternate Assessment. An annual meeting held by the ARC should make that decision on a year to year basis.

QUESTION:

Why is my child working with the same content as children who do not have a disability? If my child could do that, is special education necessary?

ANSWER:

Education has made tremendous gains since the first special education law was passed in 1975. In the 1980s, success was found in teaching students functional (life) skills that helped them at home and in the community. In the 1990s, inclusion in same age classrooms helped students improve self-determination, communication, and social skills. Assistive technology has provided increased access to general curriculum for students with disabilities through providing alternative means of demonstrating their understanding of concepts. Beginning in 2000 it became evident that students with the most significant disabilities could find success in accessing academic learning. Building on these experiences the federal No Child Left Behind Act requires that alternate assessments be based on grade level content standards.

MORE INFORMATION:

Kentucky has held schools accountable for the progress of all students on state standards since 1990, including students with significant cognitive disabilities. In 2001 the federal law known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) required every state to develop an accountability system that includes all students to determine how well they are educating America's children.

QUESTION:

Why must my child be assessed on the same grade level content standards as students who do not have an identified disability?

ANSWER:

There are two very important federal laws that determine how schools will be held accountable for the education of all students in the United States, No Child Left Behind (NCLB 2001) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004). Both NCLB and IDEA very clearly require high expectations for academic learning and access to the general curriculum for every child. This sets the expectation that all students are valuable and can learn at high levels. Recent research findings show that students with significant cognitive disabilities can learn. The assessment information is used to assist in improving schools and programs along with providing the best educational experience for all students.

MORE INFORMATION:

Instruction on grade level content standards provides the student with the opportunity to learn concepts that can be used in many situations along with learning more traditional functional (life) skills. The combination of these two opportunities creates a truly meaningful school experience. For example, as a student is working on the standard that asks the students to analyze data, create a graph, and make an appropriate choice using the data or graph, the student could:

- increase communication and social skills (including switches and augmentative communication boards) while conducting a survey to collect data;
- increase number sense as he/she enters the data on a graph (e.g., one to one correspondence);
- increase appropriate and informed decision making skills when using the data to make a choice using the data or graph (e.g., which one has more); and/or, increase skills that may be used for a job (e.g., entering data on a computer, using a switch to enter data, polling people at a mall).

The students participating in the Alternate Assessment are allowed to use supports that help them learn and be independent. These supports may include reducing the level of difficulty, providing pictures or objects and using assistive technology.

QUESTION:

Doesn't my child's IEP determine what they learn at school?

ANSWER:

The purpose of an IEP is to ensure that your child with disabilities receives a free and appropriate education. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written plan describing the specially designed instruction (SDI), accommodations/modifications and related services needed to address the individual needs of your child. Specially designed instruction is defined in IDEA as adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child and to ensure access to the general curriculum so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children. The educational standards are the content standards that Kentucky has adopted from the National Common Core Standards; they are the Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS). As daily instruction specific to these content standards occur within the classroom, the IEP's clearly defines components (i.e., present level of performance, annual goals and objectives/benchmarks, accommodations and modifications, etc.) are necessary for ensuring that an appropriate education occurs.

MORE INFORMATION:

An IEP is not intended to be the student's entire educational program. Instead it is the support program that students need to access to ensure progress in the general curriculum. The IEP is developed by the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) as a record of decisions made by its members. The IEP is a plan of action and a commitment of the resources identified within the program. The ARC membership consists of the

following members: parents; teacher(s), both general and special; chairperson; and the student if appropriate. By state and federal requirements, the IEP must be developed during the ARC meeting. The IEP should determine the necessary special education and related services as well supports that the student requires when learning the general curriculum content. For additional information, you may contact your local Special Education Cooperative and/or The Kentucky Department of Education, Division of Learning Services at (502) 564-4970.

QUESTION:

Does the Alternate Assessment limit the help that my child receives?

ANSWER:

The teacher should provide the student with the help needed in order to learn the required skills in the curriculum. However, that instruction should be shaped over time to help the student move toward a greater level of independence. So when it comes time to assess the student can do work independently.

MORE INFORMATION:

The Alternate Assessment allows for whatever assistance the student needs during instruction. Assistance on the assessment should be based on the individual students needs. The assistance provided to the student should in no way direct them to a correct response.

QUESTION:

Is my child allowed to use any modifications in the Alternate Assessment?

ANSWER:

The Alternate Assessment allows the student to use supports (modifications, adaptations, and assistive technology) during instruction and during assessment. Providing supports allows the student to learn content that is age appropriate, interesting and challenging. The only time this is not allowable is when the support directly guides the student to the correct answer. An example of an allowable support would be to color code so that the student knows to start with the green and end with the red. An example of a support that is not allowable would be to color code the correct answer green and the incorrect answer red.

QUESTION:

Can my child receive a diploma if they participate in the Alternate Assessment?

ANSWER:

The ARC must determine if a student's demonstrated cognitive ability and adaptive behavior prevents completion of the general education course of study even with program

modifications and/or accommodations. The ARC using a variety of data and information such as the Participation Guidelines for the Alternate Assessment, psycho-educational integrated report, student work, student observations and any other relevant information makes this determination. If this is the case, the ARC must determine the student would not be able to earn a regular high school diploma and would therefore receive an Alternate Diploma as stated in [Kentucky Regulations 704 KAR 3:305 \(section 8\). Student in the Alternate Assessment program are eligible to receive an Alternate Diploma.](#)

QUESTION:

When does my child have the opportunity to work on functional (life) skills listed on the IEP?

ANSWER:

All teachers should look at the functional application of all learning. This is especially true for the student with significant cognitive disabilities. Functional skills can be embedded in much of the academic instruction. When an IEP skill cannot be taught within the academic instruction, time should be set aside to teach this skill as necessary. Once a student has completed the [state alternate assessment required in 12th grade](#) the student can then concentrate solely on transition into life skills until age 21.

MORE INFORMATION:

Following the grade level standards that are designed for all students to help ensure that a sequence of skills are taught as the student moves from elementary to middle and on to high school, teachers can individualize the instruction and expectations to meet the needs of the student while following the curriculum. As teachers individualize the instruction and expectations they can emphasize functional and IEP skills. For example, when an elementary student is learning about measurement of liquids, the student can learn to measure liquids for cooking or doing laundry. When a middle school class is studying fiction and nonfiction, the student can learn to identify nonfiction materials (e.g., cookbooks, newspapers, etc.) and fiction (novels on tape). When high school students are studying about chemical reactions the student is able to focus on which household chemicals to avoid mixing.

QUESTION:

What happens if it is determined that my child needs to stay at a grade more than one year?

ANSWER:

The student would be recorded in that grade again on the school records and would participate in the grade level alternate assessment again.

MORE INFORMATION:

Retaining a student is an ARC decision and should be made on an individual basis, not as a school policy (e.g., a school keeps all students an extra year at any given grade

level). When the student completes all high school assessments then the student can use the remaining years, to age 21, to work on transition life skills. Upon completion of 12 years of assessment a student should be coded as grade 14 and focus only on those transitional skills mentioned earlier in this passage.