

# Principals Want to Know

## The Kindergarten Communication of Learning Templates

### The Question:

What are some key components of the Kindergarten Communication of Learning Templates that will support principal leadership?

### The Answer:

Key information to support the new process of Communicating Learning can be found in the new policy documents *Growing Success-The Kindergarten Addendum* and *The Kindergarten Program 2016*

Referring to *Growing Success*, here are six things to consider:

1. Two templates will be used at different times of the year;  
Kindergarten Communication of Learning: Initial Observations, Fall  
The Kindergarten Communication of Learning, Winter and June
2. Alignment with *The Kindergarten Program (2016)* ;
3. Highly personalized content;
4. Children with Special Education Needs
5. Role of pedagogical documentation and collaboration between educators;
6. ‘Family-friendly’, asset-based language.

#### 1. TWO TEMPLATES WILL BE USED AT DIFFERENT TIMES OF THE YEAR

Beginning in Fall 2017, Kindergarten children in each of years 1 and 2 of Kindergarten will receive the Kindergarten Communication of Learning: Initial Observations document, shared with families between October 20 and November 20. This document provides parents <sup>1</sup>with an overview of a child’s key learning and early evidence of growth in relation to the overall expectations in *The Kindergarten Program (2016)* and provides information about next steps to further a child’s learning. This document serves as part of the ongoing discussion with parents, and supports parents’ continuing participation in their child’s learning. (Examples of the templates for the Kindergarten Communication of Learning: Initial Observations are available in the appendix of *Growing Success-The Kindergarten Addendum* pp.18-21)

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<sup>1</sup> The word *parents* is used in this document to refer to parent(s) and guardian(s). It may also be taken to include caregivers or close family members who are responsible for raising the child.

In Winter 2017, the Kindergarten Communication of Learning template will be sent home between January 20 and February 20. This document will reflect a child's learning since September. Towards the end of June, another communication document will be issued to describe the child's learning since January/February. (Examples of the templates for the Kindergarten Communication of Learning are available in the appendix of *Growing Success-The Kindergarten Addendum* pp.22-29).

## 2. ALIGNMENT WITH THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM (2016)

As stated in *Growing Success – the Kindergarten Addendum*, “assessment, evaluation, and reporting for Kindergarten aligns with the content, philosophy, and intent of *The Kindergarten Program (2016)*, a play- and inquiry-based program designed to be developmentally appropriate for young children.” (p.3) Educators will provide detailed information to help support children in their learning by describing the child's strengths and growth in relation to the overall expectations within each frame of The Kindergarten Program. Identification of possible next steps will inform instructional decision making and assist parents to support their child's learning at home. For further descriptions of the three categories of learning, see page 14 of *Growing Success- The Kindergarten Addendum (2016)*.

## 3. HIGHLY PERSONALIZED CONTENT

*The Kindergarten Program (2016)* is designed with “the understanding that all children's learning and development occur in the context of relationships – with other children, parents and other family members, educators, and the broader environment.” (p.9) Furthermore, *Growing Success – The Kindergarten Addendum* “recognizes that children enter Kindergarten at different stages of development and with diverse backgrounds and experiences, and that they will also leave Kindergarten demonstrating variations in growth and learning in relations to the expectations.” (p.3). In this context, principals should look for Communication of Learning documents that contain highly personalized content that may highlight different aspects of learning and reference different overall expectations of the program from one child to another. This highly personalized content may result in a different look and feel than previous report cards as the evidence of learning will be based on the analysis of observations of the individual child.

## 4. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) box will only be checked for those children who have IEPs that require modified or alternative learning expectations. When expectations must be modified to support English language learning (ELL) needs, the ELL box must be checked. See pp.15-16 of *Growing Success- The Kindergarten Addendum* and Chapter 7 of *Growing Success* for further information.

## 5. ROLE OF PEDAGOGICAL DOCUMENTATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN EDUCATORS

Educators use pedagogical documentation (discussed in detail in *The Kindergarten Program 2016*, pages 36-40) to gather and analyze a range of evidence of children's thinking and learning in relation to the overall expectations in the four frames of the Kindergarten program. This documentation directly informs the anecdotal comments educators will write in which they will describe

significant strengths demonstrated by the child, recognize the child's growth in learning and identify possible next steps for learning for the child. It is "very appropriate to use examples of learning from pedagogical documentation to provide evidence of the child's learning in a play environment." (p.13, *Growing Success-The Kindergarten Addendum*)

There is an expectation that both teachers and early childhood educators (ECEs) will collaborate in gathering evidence of learning and growth in learning and assess the development of the children in their class. While all members of the team participate in the communication of learning with families, the teacher is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate Kindergarten Communication of Learning template be properly completed and submitted. The ECE's name(s) will appear on the document as acknowledgment of the contributions made to the observations, monitoring and assessment of the child's learning (pages 13, 19, 21, 24, 28).

#### 6. "FAMILY-FRIENDLY", ASSET-BASED LANGUAGE

Acknowledging the critical role that families play in the learning of their child and the benefits of engaging parents as partners in learning, it is important that comments on the Communication of Learning document be written in 'plain language'.

*Growing Success – the Kindergarten Addendum* reminds us that the "primary purpose of assessment is to improve learning and to help children become self-regulating, autonomous learners." (p.6) Comments are to be framed by asset-based language. *The Kindergarten Program (2016)* states, "When educators view the child through an "asset lens" – that is, with a focus on what the child brings to the learning (strengths, interests, previous learning and experience) rather than on what the child does not know or cannot do – they are able to capture the child's unique learning processes." (p.38)

#### REFERENCES

*The Kindergarten Program 2016*

*Growing Success – The Kindergarten Addendum 2016*

e-Module series; *Key Features of Growing Success and Kindergarten Assessment 2016*  
www.EduGAINS.ca