UPK Guidance: My Teaching Strategies GOLD®
2023-2024 Requirements and Guidelines

Universal Prekindergarten Education (UPK) programs are to follow the information below to maintain student GOLD portfolios. Please contact Leslie Freedman, UPK ACIS Monitoring Coordinator at leslie.freedman@vermont.gov for further clarification or information.

Site Naming Guidance

All administrators of *TS GOLD®* program accounts are to use the following guidance and make changes, if necessary, to ensure that student assessment results are reported correctly as required under Act 166

1. If you have a **single site**, your site name is the name of the location as it appears on your Child Care License as received from the Agency of Human Services (AHS) Child Development Division (CDD).
2. If you have **multiple sites**, your site names will be the names of the locations as they appear on each of your Child Care Licenses.
3. **DO NOT USE DEFAULT AS THE SITE!**

Universal PreK Vermont Umbrella and Pricing

Prequalified PreK programs are required to be listed under Vermont's *GOLD®* umbrella license by completing the online form to obtain approval. Only one application per organization/district is required. The primary authorized administrator or his/her designee should complete the form on behalf of all the sites/schools in the organization or school district. If a program is currently not under the Vermont *GOLD®* Umbrella, program administrators should contact a Vermont Teaching Strategies *GOLD®* representative. Prequalified PreK programs not under the Vermont Umbrella are at risk of losing their prequalification status.

The *GOLD®* pricing per Vermont's agreement is as follows:
2023-2024: $14.55
2024-2025: $15.05

Documentation in *GOLD®*

Staff should make every effort to have enough documentation for each Objective and Domain, so checkpoint levels can be confidently chosen for each child. Documentation will vary depending on language of indicators. It is **highly recommended** that documentation be uploaded and/or added directly to *MyTeachingStrategies®*.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information please contact:

Leslie Freedman, Student Support Services, at leslie.freedman@vermont.gov.

Checkpoint Completion for Mid-Year Transfers

If the child leaves within two weeks or so of the fall or spring final checkpoint date, the current provider should finalize the checkpoints for that child. If it is 3 weeks or more, the current provider should continue to add documentation until the child leaves. The "new" provider will use previous and current documentation within *GOLD®* to make the checkpoint determination.

One Portfolio for Each Child

Each child participating in Act 166 are to have **one** *GOLD®* portfolio only. This portfolio should be maintained by the program providing the 10 hours of Universal PreK. If a child attends another program for additional hours, that program may contribute feedback either in written form to the program providing Universal PreK or request to be a contributing member of Team Central.

Duplicate Portfolios

If a child has two portfolios, it is the program administrator's responsibility to determine which portfolio should be maintained and transfer any information needed. The State *GOLD®* Administrator should then be notified to delete the duplicate portfolio.

Duplicate Accounts

If a program has a duplicate account, it is the program administrator's responsibility to determine which account should be maintained and transfer any information needed. Contact *Teaching Strategies®* in order to close out and delete any duplicate accounts.

Archiving Students

Three years is the recommended time for archiving students after they have left your program and you know for certain that they are NOT transferring to another program.

Student Transfers

When a child leaves a program, it would be helpful if the sending program asked the family if they intend to enroll their child in another PreK program. If it is another Prequalified PreK, both sending and receiving providers must **complete and sign the necessary** [Vermont GOLD® Transfer Form](#) and send it to the AOE *GOLD®* Administrator. The *GOLD®* Administrator will make changes ensuring the child's portfolio will transfer with the child.

Funding Sources

The following three sources are to be completed on **every** child:
1. The Supervisory Union or School District counting this child in their Average Daily Membership (ADM).
2. Town of Residence.
3. The School District (SD) or Supervisory Union (SU) including this child in the school census.

Disabling or Deletion of Administrators and Teachers and FERPA

It is the Program Administrator's responsibility to ensure that the correct administrators and teachers have access to a child's portfolio.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (**FERPA**) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

Therefore, if an administrator, teacher, or other individual who has access to a child's *GOLD®* portfolio becomes no longer employed by the program, it is the program administrator or their designee's responsibility to [delete](#) or [disable](#) the administrator, teacher, or other individual from the *GOLD®* system.

Teaching Strategies GOLD® Interrater Reliability (IRR)

Reliability, accuracy, and fidelity of *GOLD®* data reporting is essential. Therefore, it is best practice that every teacher and/or administrator in a prequalified prekindergarten education program who is responsible for completing *GOLD®* fall and spring checkpoints gain certification on the tool from Teaching Strategies™. Educators and administrators demonstrate reliability by scoring at least 80% on the *GOLD®* Interrater Reliability (IRR) online test, located in their *My Teaching Strategies®* portal. Each school district and/or program administrator should verify that all designated school district staff and contractual partners achieve interrater reliability and certification by Teaching Strategies™. This verification should occur prior to the completion of annual fall and spring *GOLD®* checkpoints. **Please note that there is <u>no cost for IRR certification,</u> and it is valid for three years.**

In the event that a teacher has not achieved interrater reliability by the required fall and/or spring checkpoint dates, we recommend the program designate another teacher or administrator who has achieved the required level of IRR to complete the checkpoint(s) prior to the deadline.

It is required that based on State rules of Act 166, administrators of prequalified prekindergarten education public and private programs maintain IRR certification records for all staff to ensure the validity and reliability of *GOLD®* data.

2023-2024 and 2024-2025 Checkpoint Dates

Prequalified PreK programs are required to use *GOLD®* to observe, assess, and complete fall and spring checkpoints for each child in their program. Per Act 166, all checkpoints must be finalized by July 31st. Fall and Spring checkpoint finalized dates are in bold below.

Fall: 8/15/2023-12/15/2023   **Checkpoint due 12/15/2023**
Spring: 2/17/2024-6/15/2024   **Checkpoint due 6/15/2024**
Fall: 8/15/2024-12/15/2024   **Checkpoint due 12/15/2024**
Spring: 2/17/2025-6/15/2025   **Checkpoint due 6/15/2025**

Finalizing Checkpoints

Once you have completed entering checkpoints for your children, you **MUST** finalize. This step is important for data to be captured and verify your program has completed the checkpoint.

Primary teachers and co-teachers can complete and finalize checkpoint ratings for the children in their classrooms in MyTeachingStrategies®. Assistant teachers can view checkpoint ratings but cannot add, edit, or finalize checkpoint ratings.

It is important that checkpoints are finalized on or before the checkpoint due date. To confirm you have submitted correctly, you may run the report "Assessment Status". The Assessment Status report enables you to see whether you have entered finalized checkpoint levels by area and by objective/dimension. The report also makes it easy to determine where you are missing finalized data.

Helpful Resources and Documents

1. [Alignment of *GOLD* Objectives for Development and Learning Birth-Grade 3 with the VELS.](#)

2. [*MyTeachingStrategies*® Support Portal](#): quickly and easily find the support you need by browsing articles, videos, frequently asked questions, archived and live webinars from the resource library, or simply type your question into the search bar on the home page. The Portal also contains a form for reporting GOLD® issues. The Portal can be accessed after logging into your account on the MyTeachingStrategies® home page or by clicking on the **?** on the left side of your screen.

3. [Vermont GOLD® Transfer](#) Form is to be used for transferring children from one program to another of one site to another. It is not required if the child is moving to a different classroom within the same site.

4. [Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS)](#): The Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS) help inform educators and families about the development and capabilities of children from birth through grade 3 and guide educators in the development and selection of program-wide curriculum and educational strategies for children from birth through grade 3. These standards are central to the shared vision of what we want for young children in Vermont and highlight the importance of high-quality early childhood experiences as the foundation for school success and lifelong learning.