PREKINDERGARTEN TO GRADE THREE TOOL

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with input from the New York State Education Department
and the Northeast Regional Comprehensive Center

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INTRODUCTION

The early childhood years establishes the foundation for later learning success. The Prekindergarten through 3rd grade (P-3) Tool is a planning and reflection tool for use by states, districts, schools, early childhood programs, and classrooms working to align more coherent policies and practices to support improved outcomes for students in prekindergarten through third grade. This tool serves as a companion to the Kristie Kauerz and Julia Coffman's 2013 framework entitled Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches.

What is P-3? According to Kauerz, "What matters most to the success of P-3 approaches is ensuring that children have consistent, coherent, high-quality learning opportunities provided to them day-after-day, year-after-year. P-3 efforts can frame the context, supports, and incentives to support consistency across early learning programs, schools, families, and teachers."

Table 1 below presents a snapshot of what P-3 is and is not.

Table 1. What P-3 Is And Is Not

What P-3 is?	What P-3 is not?
• A framework	• A new initiative or extra effort
• An approach that educators and educational leaders can use to create greater alignment across initiatives and efforts	• A new set of requirements that will add to the burden of educators and educational leaders
• An approach to creating consistent, coherent, high-quality learning opportunities from day-to-day and year to year	• A mandate that requires extra resources and distracts from community priorities
• In New York, the term P-3 refers to prekindergarten through third grade. Some states use this term to include programs serving children from prenatal through third grade.	• A term that refers to prenatal through age three programs and services. However, elements of this tool could be useful to those working on prenatal through age three systems alignment.

Why a tool? CEELO developed this tool in collaboration with the New York State Department of Education and the Northeast Comprehensive Center to guide the process of planning and revising a P-3 plan. It is designed to be used by districts, schools, program leaders, and classroom teachers beginning to plan as well as those that are now revisiting P-3 plans and implementation approaches.

P-3 Tool

This tool is designed to assist with identifying the steps that can guide the plan development or revision. For additional details about how districts are engaged in P-3 planning and implementation, see the report entitled; PreK-3rd Grade Systems: Lessons Learned from New York School Districts and the National P-3 Center.

Who is engaged in P-3 planning and implementation? In some instances, a single individual is leading the P-3 planning and implementation activities and in other cases, a larger team is supporting the effort. The tool provides information about how to set up a team to become engaged in P-3 planning and implementation. This tool provides guidance about who should be engaged in the P-3 planning and implementation activities.

How to use the tool? Teams charged with P-3 work should begin with the Preparation and Design section. It is recommended moving to Implementation and Revision once the team has made sufficient progress preparing and designing their work. Much like a cookbook, this tool is not intended to be read and completed from start to finish. Instead, the Preparation and Design section provides guiding questions for teams to consider in their "menu planning." The Implementation and Revision section provides questions based on the "menu" that the team has chosen as the focus of their work and therefore is not intended to be completed in a linear manner. It is recommended to use the tool as a "living" document and to guide the team's work. Teams may choose to skip and come back to certain questions at a later date. Teams are encouraged to read and discuss each guiding question and choose a select few to focus on before the next meeting. Teams should brainstorm together on who will be responsible for this work, what additional supports or resources may be needed, the potential timeframe, and any additional details that may be needed to complete the work.

P-3 TOOL STRUCTURE

Preparation and Design. We recommend that all of those using the tool begin by reviewing and completing the preparation section. This section provides instructions about setting up the P-3 process, regardless of the current status of the team in the P-3 process. The design section provides a set of questions to assist those engaged in P-3 activities; with the establishment of goals, identification of strengths, set up of processes and procedures, and exploration about the priority areas of focus.

Implementation and Revision. This section is organized into nine sub-sections based on topics. Rather than completing each of the nine sub-sections, users are encouraged to review the sub-sections associated with priority topics. This section is both for those at the beginning stages and those who are further along in the P-3 process. It helps districts and/or schools take a closer look at specific topics they are focusing on, determine what is in place, establish what the team plans to work on, assesses how they are doing, and areas that may need to be revisited throughout the plan.

Resources. This includes information about what P-3 is, how to engage in planning and examples of state and community P-3 planning and implementation efforts.

Date: _____ **Team Members:**_____

District/School: _____ _____

_____

_____

Coordinator: _____

PREPARATION AND DESIGN PHASE INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Identify the individual or core team who will be engaged in P-3 planning and implementation.
2. Encourage all team members to review the tool. (Distribute the tool electronically or use paper copies based on what works best for your team members.)
3. Ask each participant to review the Preparation Phase section individually.
4. Ask each participant to fill out the tool, using the following rating system:
   Not implemented
   In progress
   Implemented
5. Ask each participant to fill out the tool to assess whether or not the team needs support by noting "Needs Support" or "Not Applicable".
6. Explore what needs to be worked on by considering strengths to build on, gaps, and opportunities to select one or two priority areas. If any items in the Preparation and Design Phase are not yet accomplished, discuss whether support is needed, if progress is emerging or if some progress has been made. If support is needed, type in the date, the person responsible for follow up and a target date. If the item is accomplished, mark the date that the item has been completed.
7. If support is needed, discuss with the team the types of supports that could advance the work.
8. If progress is being made or all items have been accomplished, move to the next section "Implementation."
9. Review resources tailored to the issues of the team's focus.

PREPARATION AND DESIGN PHASE: During this phase, the coordinator and team works to set the stage for the P-3 effort.

PREPARATION AND DESIGN PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
P-3 Leader/Coordinator. It is important to designate a leader or coordinator who takes responsibility for convening a team, addressing logistics, and ensuring clarity around team member roles and responsibilities.		
Has a coordinator/leader been identified to guide the P-3 work?	Not Applicable	
Has a coordinator working on some aspect of P-3 taken on responsibility convening a team of interested stakeholders?	Not Applicable	
Has the coordinator identified the dates, times and locations for convening the group of stakeholders?	Not Applicable	
Has a group of stakeholders met once or twice to get to know one another an existing group met to consider P-3)?	Not Applicable	
Has a P-3 team been established OR has an existing team decided to focus on P-3 work?	Not Applicable	
Has the team clearly articulated roles and responsibilities (e.g., who will s emails to notify the group, who will take notes, etc.)?	Not Applicable	
Are the appropriate people in the room to work on this P-3 Activity?	Not Applicable	

PREPARATION AND DESIGN PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
Has the team established calendar for convening on a regular basis that accommodates schedules of participants?	Not Applicable	
Has the team set up way to communicate over the phone or email in case of challenges meeting in person?	Not Applicable	
Has the team determined who will volunteer to pay out of pocket to bring foo or beverages to meetings or some way to create an incentive for participation	Not Applicable	
Have possible logistical issues such as parking been discussed and addressed up front?	Not Applicable	
Team Member Selection: Determining who should be on a P-3 team depends on your school/district structure, the goals of your P-3 work, and the activities you plan to tackle.		
Is there a representative from the superintendent's office or other appropriate office who can approve or support decisions made by the team? If not, who will reach out?	Not Applicable	
Does the team include representatives of each grade level that will be affected by the plan?	Not Applicable	
Does the team represent the key activities that are included?	Not Applicable	

PREPARATION AND DESIGN PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
Does the composition of the team need to be modified over time based on shifting priorities?	Not Applicable	
Is a transition plan in place if one team member leaves?	Not Applicable	
Building on Strengths: When designing your P-3 plan, consider what is already happening in the school or district.		
Has the team identified existing activities in the district that focus on any aspect of the P-3 grade framework?	Not Applicable	
Can the team focus on existing initiatives and apply the P-3 lens?	Not Applicable	
Has the team identified existing teams that have been working on priority topics that could be persuaded to shift focus to include a P-3 grade focus?	Not Applicable	
Has the team identified strengths in the district that could be built on to focu specifically on P-3?	Not Applicable	
Has the team identified other innovations that could be leveraged to support P-3 grade implementation such as standards implementation, planning for Every Student Success Act (ESSA), etc.?	Not Applicable	
Has the team identified priorities articulated by the superintendent or other district stakeholders that could be leveraged?	Not Applicable	

PREPARATION AND DESIGN PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
Has the team identified unique contextual features of the district and the students served that are important to consider for the P-3 effort?	Not Applicable	
Has the team identified dimensions that are strong and could be aligned better to support a P-3 approach?	Not Applicable	
Early Successes: Focus on the small wins. A P-3 plan that includes short- and long-term goals helps everyone involved see that progress is being made, which is a great motivator.		
Has the team focused on early success in a few areas? (If multiple areas have been selected, has the team determined priorities?)	Not Applicable	
Has the team identified activities that will lead to early, documented successes?	Not Applicable	
Has the team identified priority areas that are most aligned with the priorities of team members and district stakeholders?	Not Applicable	
Has the team identified opportunities to begin with one set of activities that could then leverage support and momentum?	Not Applicable	
Has the team developed a system to regularly track progress and refocus on priorities based on data?	Not Applicable	
Has the team engaged others in the effort? (others could include champions help maintain focus and enthusiasm for an initiative.)	Not Applicable	

PREPARATION AND DESIGN PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
Has the team identified individuals whose support is necessary for successful implementation?	Not Applicable	
Has the team engaged those who are respected by their peers in voicing support for the effort?	Not Applicable	
Has the team considered how to meet potential champions on their own terms rather than imposing conditions regarding their participation?	Not Applicable	
Has the team phase in activities and learning from early implementation? It is important to have a clear plan for early implementation.	Not Applicable	
Has the team developed a strategy to phase in the activities over time?	Not Applicable	
Has the team planned a pilot where the district can learn from early adopters what is working and what problems arise from the strategy?	Not Applicable	
Has the team identified data to inform implementation and refinements?	Not Applicable	
Has the team engaged the appropriate individuals during this period? It is important that individuals who can make decisions about the specific topics are in the group.	Not Applicable	

PREPARATION AND DESIGN PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
Communication Strategy: A communication strategy helps everyone understand the why, what, and how of your P-3 plan. It can be a vital mechanism to build understanding, garner buy-in, create common language, and share successes. When designing a communication strategy, consider the following:		
Has the P-3 team developed a strategy for communicating about the planning process and implementation?	Not Applicable	
Has the team taken steps to ensure the strategy engage all appropriate stakeholders (administrative leaders, teachers, family members, members of the community, etc.)?	Not Applicable	
Does the strategy employ multiple means of communication such as newsletters, email, forums, as well as the media and social media?	Not Applicable	
Does the strategy reflect opportunities to share information about the success of the P-3 efforts more broadly?	Not Applicable	
Priorities of Focus: Successful P-3 efforts focus initially on a few priority areas rather than attempting to address all issues at the onset. Select one or two priorities of focus		
Has the team reviewed the key sub-sections and determined the one or two that will be the initial priority?	Not Applicable	
Has the team considered sub-sections that will be phased in over time?	Not Applicable	

PREPARATION AND DESIGN PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
Resources to Support: It is important to obtain resources to ensure all team members have a consistent understanding of issues.		
Has the team reviewed the resources available in this document to identify those that will be most useful in supporting the activities?	Not Applicable	
Has the team reached out to content experts to support the P-3 work?	Not Applicable	

Date: _____ Team Members:_____
District/School: _____ _____
_____
_____
Coordinator: _____

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION PHASE INSTRUCTIONS:

This section of the tool is based on the Kauerz and Coffman (2013), Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. This items in this framework map onto the Kauerz and Coffman tool. Team members are encouraged to review the entire section and then **focus on one or two priority areas**.

1. Implementation Phase
    a. Encourage all team members to review this section of the tool.
    b. This section allows teams to select their area of focus. **Rather than completing all sections, ask participants to reflect on the priorities that best match the priorities or needs of the district, program, school or classrooms**.
    c. Ask each team member to rate all items in the section that is chosen.
    d. Review the ratings as a team. Determine which step the team feels is most critical to set the stage for success.
    e. Once all activities in the specific section of Implementation are underway, move to another section.
2. Revision Phase
    a. Annually review the plan.
    b. Complete each item in this section.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
Aligned Professional Learning Communities		
What professional learning communities (PLCs) exist in the school/district that could be leveraged to support the P-3 activities?	Not Applicable	
Are there existing professional learning communities that need more support to understand and strengthen P-3 approaches?	Not Applicable	
Are there structures and systems for scheduling time for P-3 teamwork among individuals, especially teachers, at all levels within the P-3 work?	Not Applicable	
Has the P-3 team considered how to integrate the work into existing PLCs with other teachers at their age or grade levels?	Not Applicable	
Family Engagement		
What efforts are underway in the school/district to engage families, specific to P-3?	Not Applicable	
What specific strategies are needed at the school/district, administrator, teacher, and building levels to meaningfully engage families at the P-3 level? (Consider the specific interests and needs of your P-3 families and their children.)	Not Applicable	

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
In what ways is data used to inform family engagement activities and data from families to inform P-3 activities more broadly?	Not Applicable	
Transitions		
Are there adequate transition policies and practices that exist in the district?	Not Applicable	
Are there pockets of opportunity related to transitions, such as sharing of information between teachers at different grade levels, that could be leveraged?	Not Applicable	
Is there a need to establish or refine an efficient format for transitions o student files and information throughout the grades beginning with PreK students?	Not Applicable	
Learning Environment		
Has the team had conversations about what a high-quality early learning environment looks like at the preschool through early elementary levels	Not Applicable	
Does the team have a way to assess the quality of learning environments at each P-3 level? Are there specific assessments being used among preschool and early elementary school teachers?	Not Applicable	

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
How can the team ensure the learning environments at each level are welcoming of children and their families in terms of home, community, culture, and language?	Not Applicable	
How can the team ensure the learning environment at each level fosters the development and learning of children and serves as an instructional resource for teachers?	Not Applicable	
Curriculum		
In what ways does our current curriculum build vertically across P-3 levels and align with current state standards?	Not Applicable	
Is the P-3 curriculum balanced, meaningful, follow a developmental sequence, individualized to student needs/learning goals, and address all domains of development and learning across all P-3 levels?	Not Applicable	
Do P-3 teachers have adequate time and opportunity to review curricular content and goals, plan effective instruction, collaborate with others, and adjust as needed?	Not Applicable	
Developmentally Appropriate Practice and Instruction		
What are the current instructional approaches being employed in preschool and the early elementary grades?	Not Applicable	

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
Are teachers provided specialized training, materials, resources and support to effectively employ developmentally appropriate and responsive teaching?	Not Applicable	
What common and cohesive instructional practices (across classrooms) that are both developmentally appropriate and differentiated to meet the needs of all children does the team want to promote and why?	Not Applicable	
Assessments		
What assessments (screening, diagnostic, formative and summative) are currently used at each level?	Not Applicable	
What domains are covered by current formative assessments and how is information used by teachers?	Not Applicable	
What high-quality assessments, if any, are common across levels?	Not Applicable	
How can teachers be better supported in selecting, using and sharing common and cohesive assessments that are aligned, developmentally appropriate and differentiated?	Not Applicable	

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
Quality Leaders		
In what ways does the district and school leadership support P-3 approaches and what support does the team need to move forward?	Not Applicable	
What is needed to use, establish and support a collaborative (cross-organizational and cross-sector) board or committee that formalizes decision-making roles and responsibilities among partners and prioritizes P-3 efforts?	Not Applicable	
Are coaches and curriculum directors engaged in the P-3 efforts?	Not Applicable	
How can the team use or establish a PreK-3rd leadership group that includes both school- and community-based teachers and is responsible for building teamwork across age, grade levels?	Not Applicable	
Quality Teachers		
What existing professional development opportunities exist for P-3 teachers?	Not Applicable	

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION PHASE GUIDING QUESTIONS	STATUS OF ITEM	NEXT STEPS (Name of person responsible, date to be completed, additional support needed, any additional notes)
What opportunities are there to support collaborative professional education and development across preschool and early elementary school teachers that is aligned across domains?	Not Applicable	
What opportunities exist to focus on specific content such as supporting children's language and early reading, math, social, and emotional development? What steps can the team take to ensure teachers are differentiating instruction for all young learners?	Not Applicable	
Revision Phase: Over time, team members change, progress is made, and priorities change. Annually, it is important to review the steps below to recharge the planning and revision process.		
If there has been a change in team membership, has the team reviewed the steps on pages 3-6?	Not Applicable	
Once all steps have been accomplished in a section, has the team selected a new set of priorities? [The team should review the entire to and decide where to focus as a next step.]	Not Applicable	
Has the team developed a process to ensure the work focuses on new priorities?	Not Applicable	

RESOURCES

General P-3

Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches. Kauerz and Coffman developed this Framework which is grounded in research and evidence-based practice. Developed over the course of more than two years, it went through three key phases: [1] extensive review of multiple bodies of literature that describe the essential elements of teaching and learning that produce positive changes in children's outcomes, birth through age 8; [2] pilot-tested in more than 35 school districts and communities across the country; and [3] peer review by leading academic scholars and practitioner-experts. The framework is intended to be referenced and used over an extended period of time for re ection, self-evaluation, and improvement of PreK-3rd grade efforts.

PreK-3rd Grade Systems: Lessons Learned from New York School Districts The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes developed case studies of district P-3 efforts based on the experiences of districts in New York. This brief is designed to provide examples of how districts approach P-3 planning and implementation.

Preschool-to-Third Grade Programs and Practices: A Review of Research This peer-reviewed research article provides an overview of research on P-3 programs and policies, presents the history and purposes of P-3 efforts, and presents evidence about the benefits of P-3 approaches.

National P-3 Center Kauerz leads the National P-3 Center, which provides resources, tools and technical assistance to support states and districts with P-3 planning and implementation.

Aligned Professional Learning Communities

Elements affecting the development of professional learning communities in schools This article focuses on the development of professional learning communities (PLCs), which are communities within schools, composed of voluntary participating teachers facilitated by school principals with a specific task to accomplish as part of a larger innovation project.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) The Kentucky Department of Education website provides information about PLCs including a description of the structure, and purpose, videos and case studies, as well as other resources.

Professional Learning Community Handbook: Mount Vernon School District

The Mount Vernon School District has developed a handbook to guide PLC's which provides information on the rationale behind PLC's, steps in implementing PLCs, example calendars and useful resources.

Family Engagement

Parent Engagement from Preschool Through Grade 3. This policy brief provides information about evidence-based parent engagement practices from preschool through early elementary school.
Towards Equitable Parent-School Collaboration: Developing Common Parent Engagement Indicators. This white paper presents a common set of indicators of parent engagement

Transitions

Building Bridges: Transition Practices that Support Children This PowerPoint presentation from the New Jersey Department of Education describes effective transition practices.
PreK-K Transition Report This pre-kindergarten to kindergarten transition report produced by the Northwest Educational School District 189 was developed as a way for teachers who had engaged in regional P-3 literacy alignment to continue their partnership
New York Transition Toolkit This tool developed by the New York State Department of Education is designed to help districts assess the effectiveness of their prekindergarten to kindergarten transition policies and practices.

Learning Environment

FirstSchool Learning Environments: Supporting Relationships. This brief from FirstSchool proposes that an optimal indoor and outdoor environment for children.
Effective Environments in Prekindergarten through 3rd Grade: Building a Strong Foundation for the Common Core Learning Standards.
This report, produced by the New York Head Start State Collaboration Office and the New York Association for the Education of Young Children describes effective environments for pre-K through third grade.

Curriculum

PreK-3rd: Getting Literacy Instruction Right Dr. Lesaux produced this report for the Foundation for Child Development that describes effective early literacy instruction.
New York State Board of Regents Early Childhood Workgroup The New York State Board of Regents Early Childhood Workgroup produced this report that provides recommendations to better align the State's early care, preschool and early childhood educational policies and create a comprehensive plan to ensure that all children in New York State have an even start.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice and Instruction

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8
This position statement from the National Association for the Education of Young Children is designed to provide a framework for best practice.

Assessments

Watching Teachers Work: Using Observation Tools to Promote Effective Teaching in the Early Years and Early Grades. The New America Foundation's report describes effective observational practices.

Quality Leaders

Leading Pre-K-3 Learning Communities Competencies for Effective Principal Practice
National Association of Elementary School Principals produced this report for principals and districts working on P-3 efforts.

Pre-K–3 Leadership National Association of Elementary School Principals' website includes multiple resources for principals to support P-3 efforts.

Quality Teachers

Examining Teacher Effectiveness Between Preschool and Third Grade. This report from the Center for American Progress examines the consistency of children's access to effective teachers between preschool and third grade

Building a Skilled Teacher Workforce: Shared and Divergent Challenges in Early Care and Education and in Grades K-12
This paper produced by Whitebook from Center for the Study of Child Care Employment Institute for Research on Labor and Employment University of California, Berkeley identifies the unique personnel-related opportunities and challenges the early childhood education sector faces, and describes how these differ from those encountered in grades K-12.