Q & A Guidance for Moving From
The Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System (AEPS)
To GOLD®

Updated August 28, 2018

The reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires each state to have a performance plan evaluating the state's implementation of Part B and describing how the state will improve such implementation. This plan is called the Part B State Performance Plan (SPP).

In addition, each state reports annually on the performance of each of its local educational agencies according to targets in its SPP. This report is called the Part B Annual Performance Report (APR). The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has identified 20 indicators used to track progress toward meeting state targets. Indicator 7 measures the percent of preschool children ages 3 through 5 with IEPs who demonstrate improved outcomes in three areas:

- Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
- Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy); and
- Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

Historically, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) utilized the Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System (AEPS) as the tool to measure child outcomes reported to OSEP. “Entry” assessment data is compared against the “Exit” assessment results to determine the degree to which a child demonstrates improved outcomes in the three key areas.

Beginning in 2018-2019, programs will use GOLD® (by Teaching Strategies) as a replacement for AEPS. GOLD® is used in every community in the state for publicly-funded children in birth to five programs. This shift will allow Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to streamline the assessment process by coordinating efforts with these programs.

The following Q & A is designed to provide guidance to LEAs as the state transitions to using GOLD® in place of AEPS.
GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. **What assessments are required for students with disabilities age 3-5?**
   All students with disabilities age 3-5 must be assessed within the Teaching Strategies GOLD OSEP license at least once for every year that they receive early childhood special education (ECSE) services:
   - Entry assessment, completed in the year when the child begins to receive ECSE services;
   - Middle year assessment(s), completed once a year for every year that the child receives ECSE services after the entry year but before the exit year;
   - Exit assessment, completed in the year during which the child exits ECSE services.

   Specific timelines for entry and exit assessments are detailed in questions 2 and 3 below.
   Note: Students with disabilities who are also receiving state funds (CCAP) must also be assessed within the Teaching Strategies GOLD Birth to 5 license three times a year based on guidance provided by LDE Early Childhood Education staff.

2. **When must an entry assessment be done?**
   An assessment must be completed within 6 weeks of entry into Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services after the child reaches 3 years old, (i.e., within 6 weeks of the 3rd birthdate or within 6 weeks of the day the child begins receiving services if after the 3rd birthdate), including when a child is:
   - transitioning from Part C to Part B 619;
   - newly identified as eligible under Part B 619;
   - entering from another state; or
   - re-entering a program after an exit assessment was completed.

   **NOTE:** Teachers and service providers can begin the entry assessment in the GOLD® system immediately after the child begins to receive services. Entry and exit dates should guide when providers are finalizing in the OSEP license, not checkpoint due dates (see timelines in question 2). For example, if a checkpoint end date is October 15, a provider should not wait to finalize until that date. Rather, the provider should finalize within 6 weeks of entry or exit, regardless of when the checkpoint period ends. However, if there are fewer than six weeks left in a GOLD® checkpoint period when the child enters programming/services, provider might postpone rating and finalizing the assessment until the following checkpoint period begins. For example, if a child turn 3 years old on September 5th, the providers might begin observing the student right away, but they might postpone entering and finalizing data in the system until after October 15th. The entry assessment can still be finalized within 6 weeks of the child’s third birthdate, but the data will all be associated with the new checkpoint.
3. **When must an exit assessment be done?**

An exit assessment must be completed within six weeks of withdrawal from ECSE services or within 6 weeks of the child’s 6th birthday, whichever comes first, including when a child is:

- no longer in need of ECSE (exiting early childhood special education services);
- leaving an early childhood setting and entering Kindergarten;*
- turning 6 years old (if, for example, the child remained in the early childhood setting for an additional year based on the recommendation of the IEP Team); or
- moving out of state. (If a child moves to another Louisiana school, it is better to complete the exit assessment and enter it into the online system before the child leaves your school if time permits. OSEP reporting will include only the latest assessment).

* In the past, LDOE has advised programs to exit children within 6 weeks of the child’s 6th birthday, even if the child will be served in a Kindergarten setting at that time. However, based on available OSEP regulations and best practices in other states, beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, children with disabilities should have an exit assessment completed in the OSEP GOLD® license before they enter Kindergarten (i.e., in May of the year before Kindergarten). This does not change the status, coding, funding or the classification of the special education Kindergarten program. It simply ensures that those students served in Kindergarten will no longer be included in Part 619 OSEP reporting. As noted above, some children will remain in the early childhood setting (will delay entry to Kindergarten) past their 6th birthday based on recommendations from the IEP Team. In this case, the child will have an exit assessment completed within 6 weeks of turning 6 years old.

4. **Our district begins providing ECSE services to some students younger than 3 years old (i.e., at 1 and 2 years of age). Should we complete the entry assessment on the students when we begin services (i.e., at 1 or 2 years of age) or wait until the child’s 3rd birthday?**

The entry assessment in the OSEP license should be completed within 6 weeks of the student’s third birthdate, regardless of how early the student began receiving services. Note: In cases where the student’s special education services begin well before his/her third birthdate (i.e., initial placement on 2/1/15 but third birthdate is 5/1/16), the Part B Entry Date in GOLD (‘What Date Will This Child Begin Receiving IEP Services’ on the ‘Children’ tab) should indicate the child’s third birthdate.
5. When do I exit students who are in Kindergarten this year (2017-2018)?

For students who are currently in Kindergarten and have not yet had an exit assessment completed, districts have two options:
- Complete an exit assessment in TS GOLD before the due date of the first checkpoint so that the students are exited as close to their first day of Kindergarten as possible;
- Complete an exit assessment within 6 weeks of the student turning 6 or at the end of the school year (whichever comes first).

Because the guidance about exiting students before they matriculate to Kindergarten was not provided until this summer, we wanted to give districts discretion in terms of how to handle those exit assessments for students in Kindergarten this year.

6. Do ALL children with an IEP have to be entered into GOLD®?

Yes. All children with IEPs receiving Part B services (age 3-5) must have a full entry/exit assessment completed. This includes children who receive only speech services.

7. Do ALL children with an IEP have to be assessed across all three outcomes at entry and exit (i.e., administered the full GOLD® assessment), even if they are only receiving speech-therapy services?

Yes. The LDOE has learned that many districts did not administer the full assessment in AEPS if a child is only receiving speech services; however, because a child’s disability may impact his or her progress and performance in other developmental areas, it is important that all areas are assessed at entry and exit. Furthermore, the OSEP requirements are clear: “The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires that states provide data on all three outcomes for every child leaving Part B Preschool services. Data are required for all outcomes even if there are no concerns about a child's development in an outcome, or if the child has delays only in one or two outcome areas. This includes children receiving only a single service such as speech therapy.”

Recognizing that a therapist may only see a student who receives speech-only services for thirty minutes a week, speech therapists may consider collaborating with the ECE teacher (if the child is in a state-funded program) or collaborating with parents to obtain entry ratings in domains that are not directly observed. Guidance for this collaboration was provided to your APT Trainer at the train-the-trainer sessions in July and August.

8. Are there additional assessments beyond entry and exit required in the OSEP license?

The only additional assessment required in the OSEP license is a ‘middle year assessment’ for students who receive Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services for more than two years. All children who receive ECSE services in the year(s) following the entry assessment but prior to the year the student will exit from ECSE, a ‘middle year assessment’ should be completed. This entails observing, rating and finalizing an assessment in the TS
GOLD OSEP site which will provide a data point in addition to entry and exit for each of the years the child is served between entry and exit. For example, consider a child who begins to receive services in April of this year, on his or her third birthdate (2017-2018), is served next year (2018-2019) as a 3 year old, is served and exited during 2019-2020 and enters Kindergarten during the 2020-2021 school year. Such a child would have an entry assessment completed in May of 2017-2018, a middle year assessment during 2018-2019 and an exit assessment in the spring of 2019-2020. Districts have discretion on the timing of the middle year assessment, though the LDE recommends that districts use the winter checkpoint as a ‘due date’ for these assessments.

9. **What is the timeline for completing/finalizing the required assessments?**

   Entry: Within six weeks of the date the child begins receiving services  
   Middle Year Assessment: Districts have some discretion, see question #8  
   Exit: Six weeks prior to the child’s exit from Part B 619 programs/entry into kindergarten or his/her 6th birthday, whichever comes first

10. **Will the state pay for GOLD® as it has for AEPS?**

    The state will pay for portfolios for every child in Part B 619 programs including online access to the GOLD® system. No printed assessment materials such as those for training, etc. will be provided.

11. **What is considered the “Entry” date?**

    This date should reflect the first day that the child received or will receive Part B special education services, not necessarily the date that the I.E.P. was written. For example,

    a. If a child begins attending a program in the fall but is not identified as needing ECE special education services until later in the year, the SPED service start date is considered the “Entry Date”.
    b. If a child’s I.E.P. was created at the end of a school year in May but he/she does not receive services until the start of school on August 10th, then August 10th is the “Entry Date”.

12. **Who is responsible for managing and verifying child outcome data for an LEA?**

    This responsibility generally falls to the district/charter Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor/Director and is determined by each LEA. LDOE staff will assist LEAs in setting up accounts in GOLD® for administrators who can set up accounts for their staff. The LEA administrator is responsible for
ensuring all teachers and service providers have a GOLD® account and have been trained on GOLD®;

determining who will create and manage children’s GOLD® portfolios (NOTE: only one portfolio per child is allowable); and

overseeing the data entry and exit process to ensure that reliable and valid information is provided by teachers and other practitioners.

13. What child demographic information is collected in GOLD®?

Child’s First, Middle, Initial and Last name, Student ID (LEAs must use the LA Student ID number in this field, never Social Security Number), Gender, Date of Birth, Date of Entry into program, primary language, ethnicity level, race level, IEP, primary disability category and English Language Acquisition objectives (when applicable based on results of the Home Language Survey)

ACCESS TO GOLD®:

14. How will service providers and supervisors gain access to GOLD®?

LDOE staff will:

a) Create “Special Education OSEP” sites for each district/charter school in GOLD® OSEP license in order to create accounts for Special Education supervisors.
b) Create accounts for Special Education supervisors giving them “Standard Administrator Access” which allows them to add service providers and manage children’s portfolios

EC Special Education Supervisors will:

a) Create service provider accounts:

i. Click on the circle on the top right of the screen with your initials; click on “Administration”
ii. Click on “Users” (located at the top of screen)
iii. Click on the “Add” button (located on the top/left of screen)
iv. User Type + automatically defaults to “Teacher”- no action needed
v. Click on “User Info+”
vi. Complete all information (* indicates required information)
vii. Create a User Name (Under “Security”)
viii. Enter your password to confirm user entry
ix. Save
x. The system generates a time-sensitive e-mail instructing the provider to set up a permanent password
b) Create classes for service providers:

Classes should be created so that all children receiving ECSE services are assigned to a class within the OSEP license. The LDE recommends that a ‘class’ represents the caseload of an ECSE service provider. For example, ‘Jane Doe’s OSEP Class’ might include all of the students served in Jane Doe’s self-contained class, where ‘John Jones’ OSEP Class’ might include all of the speech-only students for whom John Jones is the case manager or folder holder. (Jane and John might also need team member access to additional children served in a related service capacity.)

i. Click on “Classes” (located at the top of the viewing screen)
ii. Indicate Teacher from drop down box
iii. Create a class name
iv. Indicate age/grade (select both ‘Preschool 3’ and PreK 4’)
v. Save

15. What is the difference between a teacher, a co-teacher and a team member?

A teacher is the primary case manager of the child and is responsible for completing and finalizing all assessments in TS GOLD. Anyone assigned as a co-teacher to the class in TS GOLD will have access to all of the same functions as the primary teacher. Team members can add documentation and enter preliminary levels, but can neither finalize ratings nor manage classes or children. See this document for a more complete comparison between levels of access.

16. How can I assign team member access and to whom?

Team member access should be provided to related service providers who need access to specific children (rather than an entire class of children). Team member access can be assigned to specific children across multiple ‘classes’ and is assigned in the ‘User’ tab.

- Click on ‘User;’
- Click on ‘Add’ (to add a new user who will have Team Member access) or select the user from the ‘Manage Users’ list if you have already created the user in the system;
- Scroll to the ‘Team Member Access’ section;
- Select the teacher and class of the child for whom you wish to grant team member access. For example, if you want to grant access to two students who are currently in Jane Doe’s OSEP class, select this teacher and class from the drop-down;
- All of the children in the selected class will now be visible. Select only the children to whom this user should be granted team member access. The selected children will now be visible under the ‘Selected Children’ section;
- If you would like to grant team member access to children in another class, select the teacher and class from the drop-down and repeat the steps above until you have selected all of the children that the user needs to access;
- Enter your password and click ‘Save’ when you have finished.
Note: Related service providers should only have access in GOLD to the students whom they serve. As caseloads change, please update Team Member access accordingly. Also, districts have discretion to determine whether or not they wish to add Physical and Occupational Therapists as Users and Team Members in GOLD, or whether they wish simply to ask them to collaborate in-person with the case manager on the assessments.

PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT:

17. How are portfolios going to be managed?

Due to the number of assessment items required for OSEP reporting, portfolios for early childhood students with disabilities will be managed in a license that is separate from the birth to five accountability license. As a result, all of the portfolios for early childhood students with disabilities will be managed solely by special education service providers, even if the student is also a publicly-funded child enrolled in an early learning program. In these cases, the students will have portfolios across two GOLD® licenses, one in the birth to five accountability license and one in the OSEP license.

In some cases, this may mean that the special education teacher will also have two TS GOLD accounts, one log-in for the birth to five accountability and an additional log-in for the OSEP license. In the case, for example, of a self-contained ECSE classroom, the teacher will need to follow the guidance from Early Childhood for completing checkpoints in the birth to 5 accountability license and follow guidance from SPED for completing entry and exit assessments in the OSEP license. Duplicate documentation is not required in the OSEP license in this case, as it is already maintained in the birth to 5 accountability license.

In the case of ECSE students who are included in a state-funded early childhood classroom, general education teachers and special education service providers will want to share assessment data to gain a fuller picture of the child's skills and progress and to better assess in areas where one or the other may have access to more detailed data. The Individual Child Report is the primary means for sharing ratings for a child between Birth to 5 and TS GOLD OSEP. Because the OSEP item set is different from the Birth to 5 item set, ratings for all items will not be included on this report, but most items will be included.

18. Can multiple service providers be linked to children?

Yes, multiple providers (e.g. SLT, OT, PT, etc.) can be linked to these portfolios (through Team Member feature) if the program chooses to do so.

19. How are portfolios managed for children coming from other programs?

In the event that a child transfers to or from another school outside of a district/charter school, LDOE staff can provide assistance with the transfer. This is why student records should be
archived, rather than deleted when a student moves or exits. Remember, for students who are both publicly-funded early childcare AND are receiving special education early childhood services, two portfolios will need to be transferred. See contact information at the end of this document for transfers across sites.

If a student is coming from another state and will be served for more than 6 months, a new entry assessment should be completed when the student is made eligible for services in your district.

20. How are portfolios managed for children coming from home and enrolling in a program?

Because the portfolios for early childhood students with disabilities will be managed in a separate GOLD license, this should not require any changes to the management of the portfolio unless there is a change to service providers/case managers. Children served in a home setting should be assigned to a teacher and a class in the OSEP license as soon as they begin receiving ECSE services or on their third birthdate, whichever comes first. If team member changes result from a child enrolling in a program, these changes can be managed by the LEA/district/charter.

21. Will student portfolios roll over in the GOLD system from year to year? Should portfolios ever be archived in GOLD?

Children’s portfolios can remain active and do not need to be archived until the student has exited Part B services. When a child exits Part B services or at the end of the year, the student’s record can be archived. Student records should not be deleted unless directed by the LDOE.

22. Do programs delete records of children who have exited Part B services?

NEVER DELETE A GOLD RECORD UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY THE LDOE.

After state OSEP reports have been completed, LDOE staff will send a message indicating when LEAs are free to archive records of children who have exited Part B services the previous year. By archiving, the data will continue to be available should the district or LDOE need to access it for historical purposes.

23. Can providers use GOLD assessments for more than entry/exit for OSEP reporting?

Yes, GOLD is designed as an on-going assessment, and programs may use it throughout the time the child is receiving Part B services. The decision to complete more assessments than those required by the LDOE (entry, middle year and exit) are made at the district level.
CHECKPOINTS AND DOCUMENTATION:

24. Do portfolios have to be finalized (at a checkpoint)?

Yes. In order for the system to recognize a child’s level of functioning, a checkpoint must be finalized for both entry and exit assessments. Providers may finalize a checkpoint prior to the deadline (See #26 below); however, providers should finalize within 6 weeks of entry or exit, regardless of the checkpoint end date.

25. What checkpoints must be finalized?

The data must be finalized for the checkpoint at which the entry/exit assessment is completed (See the NOTE in #1 for additional details). However, programs may choose to use the assessment tool continuously through the length of time that a child receives Part B services and finalize additional checkpoints throughout that entire time period.

26. What are the checkpoint deadlines in the GOLD® system?

For Louisiana, the deadline for finalizing checkpoints in the GOLD® system are the:

- last working day of October;
- last working day of February;
- last working day of May; and
- 15th of July 15 (optional).

These dates are set in the GOLD® software for the Louisiana license, and programs do not have the option of changing them. As a reminder, though, compliance in the OSEP site requires that a student’s full assessment is finalized within 6 weeks of entry or exit, regardless of when the checkpoint ends. The only impact of the checkpoints within the OSEP license is the structure of where data appears in the system based on the calendar. Ratings are tied to the checkpoint in which they are entered, so a teacher may need to toggle back to a previous checkpoint if his/her ratings aren’t visible after the new checkpoint begins. See #27 for guidance when a student’s entry/exit is due close to a checkpoint due date.

27. What should programs do if the child’s entry/exit is close to the checkpoint period, and there is not enough time to complete a full assessment by the deadline?

If a child’s entry or exit falls close to the end of the current checkpoint period, the teacher can choose to enter ratings and finalize the entry or exit assessment in any of the following ways:

- Use a hardcopy of the OSEP assessment and begin to complete ratings on the hard copy until the new checkpoint period begins. Enter the ratings into the system after the new checkpoint period has begun and finalize as expected within the 6 week timeframe;
- Begin entering ratings in the current checkpoint and finalize all items before the current checkpoint ends;
- Begin entering ratings in the current checkpoint; when the new checkpoint period begins, simply select the former checkpoint in the system and either complete and finalize the assessment within the former checkpoint (regardless of the current date) or print those ratings so that they can be entered in the new checkpoint and complete and finalize within the new checkpoint.

28. Are programs required to upload actual documentation in GOLD as part of OSEP reporting requirements?

No. However, all assessment ratings should be based on observations that can be supported with documentation. Documentation such as work samples, checklists, anecdotal observations, etc. is beneficial in providing a complete picture of a child’s development. It is also helpful for teachers in planning additional instruction and learning activities. If the documentation has already been uploaded in the early childhood site (for example, for a student who attends an LA4 class and has an IEP), then there is no need to duplicate this entry in the OSEP site.

29. How are “not yet” and “not observed” ratings used in GOLD?

“Not yet” indicates that a child of that age is not expected to demonstrate a particular skill or behavior or may apply to a child with a disability or developmental delay who is not yet demonstrating a particular skill or behavior.

“Not observed” should be used ONLY on rare occasions. It may be appropriate to indicate “not observed” if a child has experienced significant absences but should NOT be used because the teacher or child’s service team has not had the opportunity to observe the child in that area and has not gathered adequate information on the child’s level of functioning. One instance in which ‘not observed” may be appropriate is for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. For those students, item 15c may be marked ‘not observed’ because the item is assessing a skill that may not be observable for a deaf or hard of hearing student.

ENTRY AND EXIT PROTOCOL:

30. Should a child who will receive Special Education services for less than 6 months be entered into GOLD®?

If it is clear that a child will be served in the early childhood setting for less than 6 months, then he or she should not be entered into GOLD®. For example, if the child will begin receiving services within 6 months of turning 6 years old or within 6 months of transitioning to kindergarten.
All other children with disabilities should be entered and assessed in GOLD within 6 weeks of beginning early childhood special education services. However, if a child is exiting early childhood special education services less than 6 months after he or she entered (for example, because the child is moving to another state), he or she does not need to have an exit assessment completed with GOLD®. In this case, the program should archive the student in case he or she returns and resumes services or enters another Louisiana school system before entering kindergarten.

31. How will entry and exit data be managed if children have an AEPS entry and a GOLD® exit assessment?

Although the two assessments broadly measure the same skills and behaviors, there are some nuanced differences between the two. This makes it difficult to match data from different entry and exit assessments in a reliable and valid manner. The LDOE is working with OSEP to report shifts in the state’s data as programs transition to GOLD® as the new assessment.

Even though there are differences in the two assessments, data from both programs is reported to OSEP as a score in each of three developmental categories (positive social-emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs). Before the end of the contract with AEPS, district personnel were directed to download several important files, including the ECO: Entry Data Only report. This report provides the three required scores to complete the Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF) in TS GOLD to document the student’s entry assessment scores:

- Teachers or administrators should click on ‘COSF Checkpoint’ (only students assigned to your class will be visible);
- Use the AEPS data to enter and finalize the required scores;
- If the child is not showing up, check to be sure that ‘AEPS’ is selected in the ‘Children’ tab as the assessment used for entry. Also, check to be sure that the teacher is assigned to the child. Finally, try clearing your cache.

If the child’s exit assessment was also already completed in AEPS, then no entry data will need to be entered into GOLD®. You are safe to delete these children from TS GOLD, as the entirety of their ECO data was completed in AEPS in a previous school year.

Any new children entering the program during the 2018-2019 school year or students who did not have an entry assessment completed in AEPS will be assessed at both entry and exit in GOLD® using the full assessment tool.
32. How is an exit assessment completed in TS GOLD®?

After the full assessment is complete and finalized in GOLD®, both the teacher and the administrator must complete an additional step to successfully ‘exit’ the student from OSEP. See here and here for the teacher’s steps for exiting from OSEP and here for the administrator’s steps. Note: the ‘Exit Date’ entered by the teacher is the date that the child will exit OSEP services (i.e., the end of the school year in the case of a child entering Kindergarten the following year or the student’s 6th birthday in the case of child remaining in ECSE services until she turns 6.) Both of these steps must be complete before the child can be successfully exited.

33. In AEPS, a student’s exit assessment was completed on the same Level the entry assessment was completed on. Will GOLD® make adjustments for children’s changes in ages?

Yes, the GOLD® system recognizes children's birthdays and adjusts accordingly regardless of the age of entry or exit.

34. Is there a calendar for teachers/service providers that alerts supervisors/service providers when exit assessments need to be completed?

There is currently no calendar feature in TS GOLD that calculates according to the 6-week timeline established by the LDOE. However, teachers can view and/or print their class lists and sort by date of birth and/or ‘first date in program’ to manage due dates of entry and exit assessments. Administrators can also run the OSEP Status Report to monitor completion of entry and exit assessments.

35. Are LEAs required to provide any reports on child outcomes to the LDOE?

The LDOE will work with the staff at Teaching Strategies (GOLD®) to run the Outcomes reports. Instructions for running district-level outcomes reports will be provided in future trainings.

TRAINING:

36. What training will be provided for teachers, therapists, and other service providers?

Each district was invited to participate in the 2-day APT Training in late July/early August to have one person certified as a GOLD Trainer. Those trainers are expected to redeliver in their districts to ensure that all special education teachers and providers are trained.

Additionally, PreK teachers and the local GOLD® trainers through the Early Childhood Community Network may be able to assist with training of staff members who are new to the GOLD® system.
Also, when an account is created for an individual, he or she will have access to a suite of on-demand courses, including the *Introducing MyTeachingStrategies* and *Objectives for Development and Learning* courses. These courses are intended to equip teachers and administrators to administer *GOLD* and evaluate the data to determine a child’s level of skill development and to make decisions about planning for future learning.

37. **Who should be trained on *GOLD*?**

Supervisors/administrators, classroom teachers, service providers (speech therapists, occupational therapists, etc.), and others who need access and are responsible for children’s assessments.

38. **Will the *GOLD* Inter-rater Reliability Certification be required for service providers?**

Inter-Rater Reliability Certification is strongly recommended but not required. Other states who have utilized *GOLD* for OSEP reporting have indicated that data quality is greatly improved when assessors are skilled in effectively administering *GOLD* and evaluating children’s assessment data.

39. **Are there printable or downloadable user guides?**

Yes. When logged into the system, users can access user guides by clicking on the ‘question mark’ icon in the bottom left of the site. Depending on where you are in the system, guides appropriate to that section will be accessible. Users can download and/or print these guides.

40. **What is the TS GOLD help desk and how do I reach them?**

There is a TS GOLD help desk available at 1-866-248-2575 from 6am to 8pm CST. Note: This is a technical help desk number primarily for assistance with the Teaching Strategies assessment and with the TS GOLD website. Representatives at the help desk may be unable to assist with questions specific to OSEP and Louisiana’s requirements regarding OSEP.

41. **Is the item set for the OSEP license the same as the item set for the birth to 5 accountability license or the KEA?**

No. In order to calculate a score for the three domains required for OSEP reporting, a larger item set is required for OSEP than for the abbreviated and KEA licenses. A crosswalk of the item sets is available in this document.

42. **Is it possible to print a hard copy of the full OSEP item set?**

You can download and print the full TS GOLD item set by clicking on ‘Develop,’ then ‘My Courses,’ then ‘Objectives for Development and Learning.’ Then, click on ‘Exploring the
Objectives’ and finally, click on ‘Progressions for Birth Through Third Grade.’ You should then be able to print the PDF. Note: This document contains all items, including items that are not included in the OSEP license. Consult this document to determine what items are required for the OSEP license.

REPORTING:

43. Will administrators be able to run reports similar to those in the AEPS system?

Yes. There are several reports that will be helpful for monitoring entry and exit completion, for completing OSEP reporting requirements and for analyzing the growth of students and the impact of ECSE services. Instructions for running and reading these reports will be provided in the fall.

For assistance or questions about the transition to Teaching Strategies GOLD® or for Part 619-related questions, contact Melissa McConnell at Melissa.mcconnell@la.gov