

Issue Date: September 10, 2024

## UPK Guidance: My Teaching Strategies GOLD® 2024-2025 Requirements and Guidelines

Universal Prekindergarten Education (UPK) programs are to follow the information below to maintain student GOLD portfolios. Please contact Teaching Strategies Gold Coordinator [michele.johnson@vermont.gov](mailto:michele.johnson@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 location's name as it appears on your Child Care License 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:

2024-2025: \$15.05

2025-2026: \$15.55

### Contact Information:

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

Michele Johnson, Student Support Services, at [michele.johnson@vermont.gov](mailto:michele.johnson@vermont.gov).

## 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*.

## 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 counts this child in their Average Daily Membership (ADM).
2. Town of Residence.
3. The School District (SD) or Supervisory Union (SU) includes this child in the school census.

## **Disabling or Deleting Administrators and Teachers and FERPA**

The Program Administrator is responsible for ensuring 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 protecting student education records privacy. It 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 is no longer employed by the program, it is the program administrator or their designee's responsibility to delete or disable them 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 is responsible for completing *GOLD* fall and spring checkpoints to become certified on the Teaching Strategies tool. Educators and administrators demonstrate reliability by scoring at least 80% on the *GOLD* Interrater Reliability (IRR) online test in their My Teaching Strategies portal. Please note that there is no cost for IRR certification, and it is valid for three years.

If a teacher has not achieved interrater reliability certification by the required fall and/or spring checkpoint dates, we recommend the teacher work with another teacher or administrator who has attained IRR certification to complete the finalization of checkpoint ratings before the deadline.

## 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 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. The finalized fall and Spring checkpoint dates are in bold below.

**Fall:** 8/15/2024 - 12/15/2024      **Checkpoint due 12/15/2024**

**Spring:** 2/17/2025 - 6/15/2025      **Checkpoint due 6/15/2025**

**Fall:** 8/15/2025 - 12/15/2025      **Checkpoint due 12/15/2025**

**Spring:** 2/17/2026 - 6/15/2026      **Checkpoint due 6/15/2026**

### Finalizing Checkpoints

Once you have completed entering checkpoints for your children, you **MUST** finalize. This step is important for capturing data and verifying that your program has completed all checkpoints.

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. The [Vermont \*GOLD\* Transfer Form](#) will be used to transfer children from one program to another or from one site to another. It is not required if the child moves 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.