

VPK Guidance – Required State-Approved COR Advantage Assessment Items for School Year (SY) 2026–27

Audience: This guidance is for voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) programs using developmentally appropriate state-approved assessments.¹ Other early learning programs may benefit from understanding the assessment requirements for VPK, especially those that partner with VPK or operate within the same district or school. Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs that elect to submit assessment data to MDE to obtain Child Outcome Summary (COS) ratings must complete and submit data for all assessment items in all domains of learning for ECSE students, including ECSE students who participate in VPK. Head Start programs must meet the federal requirements around assessments (Head Start Program Performance Standards 1302.22). Other early learning programs, like parent-aware rated child care programs, may find this guidance valuable.

Purpose: To inform VPK programs of the School Year 2026–27 minimum assessment items that must be completed to support successful learners. For SY 2026–27, Minnesota is requiring items that align to five domains of learning: Approaches to Learning (ATL); Language, Literacy, and Communications (LLC); Mathematics (MATH); Physical and Movement (PHYS); and Social Emotional (S&E). The five domains of learning required by VPK in SY 2026–27 represent a whole child approach to learning and align with (1) the domains that are required to be assessed by School Readiness programs and (2) the domains a Parent Aware-approved assessment must cover.

NOTE 1: This guidance represents the *minimum* number of items that a VPK program must use. Additional domains and items may be advisable based on the needs of your program and students, particularly students with disabilities and students for whom there are developmental concerns.

NOTE 2: Below are the required items that a VPK program must use out of the total number of items, for the COR Advantage assessment tool:

- COR Advantage: 24 items out of 34 items

NOTE 3: DCYF no longer supports paper/pencil data submissions; a VPK program **must** use the online version of their assessment tool of choice to submit assessment data. Send questions or concerns about data submission requirements to Alex Verhoye at alex.verhoye@state.mn.us or to dcyf.els@state.mn.us.

¹ VPK programs are required to use commissioner-approved formative, developmentally appropriate assessments, including the use of an approved assessment to collect data when a child enters and again before the child leaves the program (program ([Minn. Stat. § 142D.08](#))).

Table 1: COR Advantage Items Required for VPK Programs in SY 2026–27

The table below shows which COR Advantage items VPK programs must use in SY 2026–27. The items that must be completed are aligned to five domains of learning: ATL, LLC, MATH, PHYSICAL, and S&E. Administrators from different early learning programs within a district/school are encouraged to discuss the similarities and differences in which items are used by each program. To support successful learners, it may be beneficial to use additional items and domains for students receiving special education and related services or for whom there are developmental concerns.

COR Adv. Item	Required SY 2026-27	COR Advantage Domain and Item Description	ECIP Domain of Learning Alignment [†]
A	✓	Approaches to Learning: Initiative and Planning	ATL
B	✓	Approaches to Learning: Problem Solving with Materials	ATL
C	✓	Approaches to Learning: Reflection	ATL
D	✓	Social and Emotional Development: Emotions	S&E
E	✓	Social and Emotional Development: Building Relationships with Adults	S&E
F	✓	Social and Emotional Development: Building Relationships with Other	S&E
G	✓	Social and Emotional Development: Community	S&E
H	✓	Social and Emotional Development: Conflict Resolution	S&E
I	✓	Physical Development and Health: Gross-Motor Skills	PHYS
J	✓	Physical Development and Health: Fine-Motor Skills	PHYS
K	✓	Physical Development and Health: Personal Care and Healthy Behavior	PHYS
L	✓	Language, Literacy, and Communication: Speaking	LLC
M	✓	Language, Literacy, and Communication: Listening and Comprehension	LLC
N	✓	Language, Literacy, and Communication: Phonological Awareness	LLC
O	✓	Language, Literacy, and Communication: Alphabetic Knowledge	LLC
P	✓	Language, Literacy, and Communication: Reading	LLC
Q	✓	Language, Literacy, and Communication: Book Enjoyment and Knowledge	LLC
R	✓	Language, Literacy, and Communication: Writing	LLC
S	✓	Mathematics: Numbering and Counting	MATH
T	✓	Mathematics: Geometry: Shapes & Spatial Awareness	MATH
U	✓	Mathematics: Measurement	MATH
V	✓	Mathematics: Patterns	MATH
W	✓	Mathematics: Data Analysis	MATH
X		Creative Arts: Art	ARTS
Y		Creative Arts: Music	ARTS
Z		Creative Arts: Movement	ARTS
AA	✓	Creative Arts: Pretend Play	ATL

COR Adv. Item	Required SY 2026-27	COR Advantage Domain and Item Description	ECIP Domain of Learning Alignment [†]
BB		Science and Technology: Observing and Classifying	SCI
CC		Science and Technology: Experimenting, Predicting and Drawing Conclusions	SCI
DD		Science and Technology: Natural and Physical World	SS
EE		Science and Technology: Tools and Technology	SS
FF		Social Studies: Knowledge of Self and Others	SS
GG		Social Studies: Geography	SS
HH		Social Studies: History	SS
II		<i>Only English Language Learners: English Language Learning: Listening to and understanding English</i>	*
JJ		<i>Only English Language Learners: English Language Learning: Speaking English</i>	*

†: The following are acronyms for the [ECIP](#) Domains of Learning and symbols for alignment or lack of alignment with the ECIPs:

✓ : Item is required for SY 2026–27.

-- : Not aligned to any of the ECIP domains of learning.

* : Not aligned to any of the ECIP domains of learning as this item is specific to English language learners; there are no ECIPs specific to English Language Learners. Programs may find using these items beneficial to use with English language learners—please refer to the publisher for specific guidance on when and how to use these items.