Teaching Strategies GOLD: Fast Facts for Decision-Makers

What specific objectives does Teaching Strategies GOLD® measure?
Teaching Strategies GOLD is grounded in 38 objectives that guide teachers throughout the assessment cycle. They are based on research, include predictors of school success, and are aligned with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, Common Core State Standards, and early learning standards for each state. The objectives are organized into 10 areas of development and learning, including broad developmental areas, content areas, and English language acquisition. Many of the objectives also include dimensions that guide teachers’ thinking about various aspects of that objective, and help clarify what the objective addresses.

What is the research behind Teaching Strategies GOLD?
Teaching Strategies GOLD was created following an extensive, literature-based research review of some of the most recent works in the field of early childhood education: the Child Trends School Readiness Predictors Research (2006), the work of the National Early Literacy Panel (2009), the Pathways Mapping Initiative (2007), and many individual research studies describing predictors of school success.

Additionally, each of the 38 objectives contained in Teaching Strategies GOLD were selected based on further review and to answer the following two questions: 1) Is this a key predictor of school success? and 2) Is this an outcome valued in most state early learning standards?

What kind of research is being conducted on Teaching Strategies GOLD?
Teaching Strategies GOLD has undergone an extensive research review and field testing, including a content review by 20 national early childhood experts, two instrument review pilots in Baton Rouge, LA, and Fairfax, VA, and a field test of more than 2,000 children in Head Start programs, child care programs, laboratory school, and public schools across the country. A recently released technical report based on this extensive research and conducted by The Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation (CEME) concludes that the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment system is highly valid and reliable.

How will English-language learners be assessed using Teaching Strategies GOLD?
Teaching Strategies GOLD includes a tenth area of development and learning on English-language acquisition, developed by national expert Dr. Patton Tabor, with two dedicated objectives that measure children’s receptive and expressive language skills. Additionally, Teaching Strategies GOLD offers Spanish language and literacy objectives to help teachers scaffold children’s learning in these areas. These objectives are similar to the English language and literacy objectives, but they have been adapted to reflect patterns of development unique to Spanish language and literacy. Teaching Strategies GOLD also enables teachers to assess.
dual-language learners progress in Spanish oral language and literacy, since it allows children to show what they know and can do in certain areas of development and learning without the use of English (for example, counting in any language). Finally, Teaching Strategies GOLD includes a Home Language Survey that will help teachers determine which children qualify as English-language learners.

Is Teaching Strategies GOLD inclusive of children with disabilities?
Yes. The universal design of Teaching Strategies GOLD enables it to be used with all children, including those with disabilities. Teaching Strategies GOLD shows typical progressions for each objective through the use of visually appealing, color-coded age bands that are tied to children's ages; because development is uneven and overlapping, the color-coded bands allow teachers to account for natural variations in children's development and learning. Teaching Strategies GOLD also contains "in-between" steps in each progression to allow for emerging skills or to indicate if a child needs support to accomplish a skill or behavior, making it easier to accurately assess all children, including those with disabilities or special needs. In some circumstances, however, such as a child with a severe disability, other more specific diagnostic and prescriptive tools may be needed.

Online, Teaching Strategies GOLD offers even more support for assessment of children with disabilities: it is fully aligned with OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs) outcomes. It automatically converts the information entered from Teaching Strategies GOLD to the seven-point scale on the Child Outcomes Summary Form (COSF), enabling administrators to generate OSEP-mandated reports. Plus, for children who have IEPs, Teaching Strategies GOLD online will automatically provide teachers with additional dimensions related to self-care, including feeding, toileting, dressing, and safety.

What kind of training or professional development will I need and how will I get it?
Teaching Strategies is proud to offer a wide range of professional development options that suit every need and budget. Our in-person sessions are available on-site in school communities or at Teaching Strategies’ Professional Development Center. We offer state-of-the-art online training sessions that provide comprehensive training whenever it suits the schedules of teachers and administrators. In addition, free basic online training is provided with every subscription, and regularly scheduled Webinars are also available at no cost. To learn more about our comprehensive training options, call 800.637.3652.

How will I know if my teachers are using Teaching Strategies GOLD correctly?
Teaching Strategies is pleased to offer Interrater Reliability Certification to help early childhood educators increase effectiveness as they identify the children's levels of development and learning. Teachers seeking interrater reliability certification analyze online portfolios. Their assessment decisions are then compared with those of Teaching Strategies GOLD developers, with an agreement goal of 80% or better. Teachers can participate in certification any time it's convenient for them, from any location. When reliability is achieved, teachers can stand behind assessment decisions with greater confidence.