

## **The Thinking & Engagement Assessment**

### **Overview**

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the constraints that it will impose on the running of schools during the 2020-2021 academic year, a group of New York City Independent School Admission Directors enlisted the help of two experts in early childhood development--each with over forty years of experience in working with children as they learn, grow, and transition to Kindergarten. The Admission Directors asked that these two psychologists develop a virtual assessment to serve the needs and interests of Kindergarten applicants, their families, and schools.

The goal was twofold: to put minimal pressure on young children and families during this unprecedented time and to provide our Admission Committees with information about children when schools would not be able to meet and observe them in person.

The T&E Assessment is a stop gap solution for the 2020-2021 admission season. This common assessment provides families with the ability to apply to multiple schools but forgo the burden of multiple virtual assessments. Instead, applicants to participating schools engage in one common assessment, the results of which are shared with schools to which the family has applied and that accept and/or require the T&E Assessment.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What does the T&E assess?**

The T&E is a non-standardized, non-normed, child-friendly set of activities designed specifically to be administered virtually to four and five year olds applying to Kindergarten. The T&E taps expressive and receptive language, verbal and non-verbal reasoning skills, teachability, problem-solving skills and developmental areas in which schools need information to determine fit between applicant and program.

## **How does my child take the T&E, and who is assessing them?**

The T&E Assessment is administered using Zoom technology on a desktop or laptop computer, or on a tablet, in the child's home.

During the assessment, the child should be sitting in a chair at a table and be wearing comfortable headphones to block out noise and to help focus on the materials (Amazon sells an assortment of reasonably priced headphones). Children are required to wear headphones throughout the assessment. The assessor will stop the assessment should the child remove the headphones and will resume when the child puts them back on. Laptops and tablets should be set up on a flat surface so the child's hands are free. Please leave up to 45 minutes for the entirety of the assessment though it may take much less time.

Please click this link for information about joining a Zoom session.

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-How-Do-I-Join-A-Meeting>.

Upon starting the T&E, the assessor guides the child through a variety of developmentally appropriate activities. The cohort of assessors are a diverse group of early childhood professionals who have been expertly trained to administer the T&E. During the T&E session, one adult (e.g., parent, guardian, caregiver, family member) is required to be present. However, this person is expected only to provide technological support as needed.

Contrary to what we advised earlier this summer, we have changed our requirement for the adult sitting with the child during the T&E. This change is the result of extensive beta testing.

Once the adult and child greet the assessor, and all technology needs have been met, the adult must put on headphones or earbuds and connect to a phone, tablet, or computer and engage in an activity that does not require typing--i.e., watching a video. The adult is welcome to listen to a podcast but must avoid observing the child.

By wearing earbuds and focusing on something other than the child, the adult is both modeling what the child should be doing and improving the odds of the child feeling comfortable with the assessor. If at any time the assessor needs the adult's attention, he or she will ask the child to turn around and signal.

### **Will I receive a report after my child has taken the T&E Assessment?**

No. The results of your child's assessment will only be sent to the participating schools and organizations to which you have requested that reports be forwarded.

## **How much does the T&E Assessment cost and how do I sign up?**

The fee for the T&E Assessment is \$250.00. If you are applying for financial assistance and have a total household income of less than \$150,000, the fee will be waived.

The T&E Assessment Project is administered by a Coordinator and an Assistant Coordinator who will be available to answer questions and address any issues. Once you have submitted an application to any of the participating schools, you will receive a link to register your child for the T&E. Please remember that you only register your child once. Upon registration, you will receive instructions from the T&E staff regarding scheduling.

Appointments for the T&E may be scheduled from September 8 through December 18 and will be available seven days a week. We recommend that you schedule your child's assessment as early in the season as possible.

## **What if I do not have access to a computer or a tablet?**

Upon registering for the T&E, please contact the Project Coordinator to discuss this issue.

## **How do I help my child prepare for the T&E Assessment?**

To help your child prepare for the T&E Assessment, have your child practice wearing headphones while talking to an adult via Facetime, Zoom, Google-meet, or any other virtual platform. A few days before the scheduled assessment, we recommend that parents/guardians explain to their children that they will meet with a teacher online who will invite them to do some fun and interesting activities.

## **Is there anything else I should know about the T&E Assessment?**

As part of the registration process for the T&E, parents/guardians are required to sign a consent and release form that requires them and any other supervising adult to refrain from recording the session, helping the child answer questions, and sharing content they may observe.

## **Participating Schools**

The Allen-Stevenson School

The Berkeley Carroll School

The Birch Wathen Lenox School

The Brearley School

The Browning School

The Buckley School  
The Calhoun School  
The Cathedral School of St. John the Divine  
The Chapin School  
Collegiate School  
Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School  
Convent of the Sacred Heart  
The Dalton School  
Early Steps--Partnering Organization  
The Elisabeth Morrow School  
The IDEAL School of Manhattan  
Marymount School of New York  
The Nightingale-Bamford School  
Rodeph Sholom School  
The Packer Collegiate Institute  
Saint Ann's School  
The Spence School  
Speyer School  
St. Luke's School  
St. Bernard's School  
St. Hilda's & St. Hugh's School  
Trevor Day School

Trinity School