

What is Strong Beginnings?



Strong Beginnings is an assessment that occurs early in September for students in Kindergarten to Grade 8. On September 16th and September 19, 2022 children will attend school by appointment for *approximately 60 minutes* to participate in assessment activities. The appointments on these days replace regular classes. This is an opportunity for teachers to extend and consolidate their understanding of each child in order to plan for instruction. This in turn will effectively address unique learning needs as early as possible in the new school year.

How does Strong Beginnings enhance classroom assessment?

Teachers begin to observe and assess their students on the very first day of school in order to get to know them as individuals and as learners. They typically use a variety of assessment strategies such as observation, interviews, paper/pencil tasks, individual, small group and whole group interactions. All of these activities yield information that contributes to creating a 'strong beginning' for each student. The time to meet individually with students by appointment affords teachers the opportunity to reflect upon information collected in classroom assessments and engage in more in-depth assessments that contribute to a more complete understanding of each child. All students are included in this process.

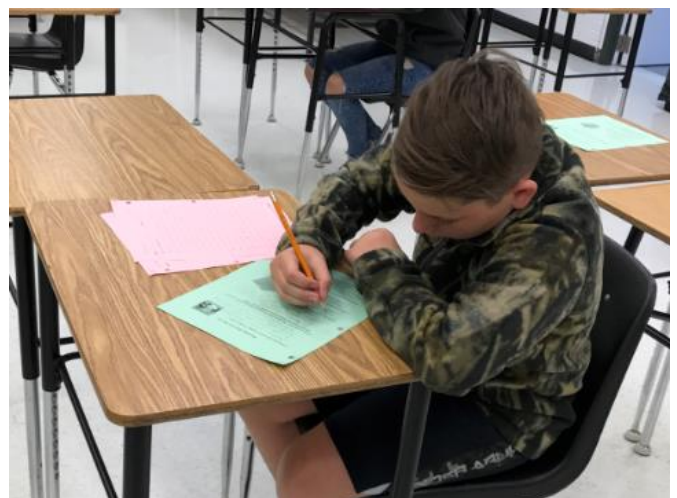
What information will appointments yield that classroom assessment might not?

Teachers working individually with their students in an atmosphere of support and encouragement have an opportunity to collect first-hand information on them about such things as:

- how they learn
- their confidence as learners
- the learning strategies they possess
- their reading and writing skills & strategies
- their attitudes toward school and learning
- their ability to reflect upon and set goals for their learning

What will it look like in the classroom?

- Teacher will be working with one student at a time
- Other students will be working independently at literacy stations (examples on the following page)



What kind of assessment is done during these appointments?

Strong Beginnings is a formative assessment process. The major focus during the appointments is on **literacy** and the data collected at the Divisional level.

Eg. Instructional Text Level – Gr 2-8 for September assessment

Typically, three students are scheduled at the same time during the one-hour appointments. Students will only be with the teacher for approximately 20 – 30 min to conduct the Instructional Text Level (F & P Benchmark Assessment or PM Benchmark Reading Assessment).

While the teacher is conducting the instructional text level with one student, the other two students are occupied at stations in the classroom. Teachers may or may not have the support of an additional adult in the room in which case, students must be prepared in advance for the task that he/she will be asked to perform. (i.e. pre-teach the survey and writing assignment prior to the day of the Strong Beginnings).

Station ideas for K-2

Station 1 – Teacher administering the & Pinnell/PM Benchmark Assessments

Station 2 – Additional support adult to record answers for Reading and Writing Interest Survey and/or All About Me and/or What I'd like you to know about me as a Learner documents (all in Google strong beginnings shareable drive). If you don't have an additional adult, you may want to have picture books or ebooks available for the students to engage with.

Station 3 – Drawings of their favourite things that they could share later and could be used for reading/writing topics.

Station ideas for Grade 2 - 8

Station 1 – Teacher administering the Fountas & Pinnell/PM Benchmark Assessments

Station 2 – Reading and Writing Interest Survey and if time All About Me, What I'd like you to Know about Me as a Learner (located in the strong beginnings shareable drive on google)

Station 3 – Writing piece from the reading assessments, writing prompts, writing started in class prior to Strong Beginnings dates.

Kindergarten & Grade 1 have other literacy assessments they are completing during this time. Letter Identification; Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, Phonological Awareness, Writing Vocabulary & Writing samples.

All results (from the Benchmark assessment) are compiled and submitted to the school designate for divisional/school data collection. The other recommended assessments will add to the collection of assessment to be used for planning purposes and targeting instruction within the school and classroom.



HELP ME GET TO KNOW YOU!

What is your whole name? _____

When is your birthday? _____

How old will you be? _____

Do you have pets? _____ What kind? _____

What was the last book you read? _____

What is your favorite food(s)? _____

Do you have any brothers or sisters? _____

Are you the oldest, youngest, middle, or only child in your family? _____