

# ILLINOIS “TOO YOUNG TO TEST”

## Illinois [Senate Bill 21-3986](#)

**PURPOSE** -- Although the federal government only mandates testing for grades 3 and up, many states require testing in pre-kindergarten through second grade. These tests come in the form of commercially prepared interim and through-year standardized exams that create stress for students and fail to provide useful information to teachers and parents.

Assessment experts, teachers, and early childhood researchers agree that standardized test scores from children below the age of eight are not statistically reliable or valid measures of what they know and can do. That is why they should not be used to assess academic achievement or school performance. Furthermore, survey results from the Center for Assessment showed that three-fourths of Illinois respondents were not satisfied with the current Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR).

Parents, educators, and bill sponsors described the previous system as ineffective, inappropriate, and a misdirection of resources. They urged the state to invest in research based, whole child, support systems that support cognition and learning of early learners. Most other advanced countries only use grade span testing for all students and do not test young learners at all who may not have the motor skills to be accurately tested.

**SUMMARY** -- The [“Too Young to Test”](#) bill prevents the Illinois State Board of Education from testing students in pre-kindergarten through second grade. It prohibits funding for the development or purchase of standardized tests of public-school students pre-kindergarten through second grade, except for the case of diagnostic and screening purposes or federally mandated testing of English Language Learners. Nothing in the bill limits the ability of a classroom teacher or school district from developing, purchasing, administering, or scoring a standardized test for classrooms or groups of students in pre-kindergarten through second grade.

**LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE/CITATION** -- The full text of this law is available [here](https://ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=3986&GAID=16&GA=102&DocTypeID=SB&legID=139088&SessionID=110):  
<https://ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=3986&GAID=16&GA=102&DocTypeID=SB&legID=139088&SessionID=110>:

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS** – The Illinois Senate amended the bill to change the term “diagnostic purposes” to “diagnostic and screening purposes” and included a definition of diagnostic and screening for the purposes of determining eligibility for special education, early intervention, bilingual education, dyslexia services, or other related services.

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