

# Assessing Preschoolers' Socio-Emotional Skills: Comparing the TS-GOLD, MN Work Sampling System, and Teacher-Child Rating Scale



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## Background

- Socio-emotional (SEL) skills in early childhood lay an important foundation for lifelong wellbeing and achievement (e.g., Denham et al., 2003; Fantuzzo et al., 2007; Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, & Cox, 2000).
- Several SEL measures have been developed for academic settings, with varying psychometric properties, levels of rater burden, and financial costs.
- There is a need for research examining the reliability and concurrent and predictive validity of different SEL measures.**

## SEL Measures & Research Questions

The present study examined three teacher-rated SEL measures:

- Teaching Strategies Gold (TS-GOLD): Social and emotional subscale**
  - Teachers continually gather evidence on children's SEL progress and provide ratings at various checkpoints.
- The MN Work Sampling System (MN-WSS): Personal & social development subscale**
  - Teachers continually gather evidence on children's progress, based on Common Core Standards.
- Teacher-Child Rating Scale (T-CRS)**
  - 32-item checklist assessing SEL skills and school adjustment.

Three research questions were investigated in regards to the three measures:

- What are their **psychometric properties**?
- What are the **inter-correlations** among them?
- What is their **predictive validity** for SEL and academic outcomes?

## Sample

The study sample consisted of **768 children** who participated in the Midwest Child-Parent Center Preschool-3<sup>rd</sup> grade (MCPC) evaluation project. Participants attended Preschool in Chicago Public Schools in low-income neighborhoods and had to have data for at least 2 of the 3 SEL measures to be included in the study sample.

Independent Variables	N	%
Female	404	52.6
Hispanic or Latino	190	24.7
African American	576	75.0
In Special Education	40	5.2
Eligible for Free Lunch	673	87.6
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
Age in Months	48.53	6.39
Dependent Variables	Mean	S.D.
TS-GOLD SEL	40.94	14.17
MN-WSS Personal & Social Development	12.61	5.02
T-CRS Task Orientation	28.22	6.58
T-CRS Behavior Control	28.47	6.10
T-CRS Assertiveness	29.64	5.28
T-CRS Peer Social Skills	31.11	5.31
Fall of Preschool Woodcock-Johnson Letter-Word Identification scaled score	100.00	12.44
Fall of Kindergarten Woodcock-Johnson Letter-Word Identification scaled score	104.55	12.23

## Method & Results

- Scale reliability analyses were conducted for TS-GOLD, MN-WSS, and T-CRS.**
  - Results indicated that TS-GOLD, MN-WSS, and T-CRS have high reliability (Cronbach's alphas = .97, .95, and .95, respectively).
  - These results did not change significantly when splitting analyses by sex, race/ethnicity, or family income.
- To assess concurrent validity, bivariate correlations were examined among the fall Preschool SEL scores.**
  - Teachers' ratings on the TS-GOLD, MN-WSS, and T-CRS were highly correlated.
  - Sub-scales with similar content were significantly correlated with magnitudes of 0.5-0.6.
- To assess predictive validity, linear regression analyses predicting fall of Kindergarten scaled scores on the Woodcock-Johnson Letter-Word Identification subtest were conducted.**

Fall of Preschool SEL Independent Variable	Predicting Fall of Kindergarten WJ Letter-Word ID	
	Final R <sup>2</sup> – Model 3	Did the SEL Predictor Significantly Contribute to Model 3?
TS-GOLD SEL	.42	Yes; $\beta = .11^{**}$
TS-GOLD – Regulates own emotions & behaviors	.42	Yes; $\beta = .13^{**}$
TS-GOLD – Establishes & sustains positive relationships	.42	Yes; $\beta = .09^*$
TS-GOLD – Participates cooperatively & constructively in group situations	.42	Yes; $\beta = .09^*$
MN-WSS Personal & Social Development	.42	Yes; $\beta = .13^{***}$
T-CRS - Task Orientation	.41	Yes; $\beta = .08^*$
T-CRS - Behavior Control	.41	No
T-CRS - Assertiveness	.42	Yes; $\beta = .11^{**}$
T-CRS - Peer Social Skills	.41	No

\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001

### Model 1

Gender (1 = Female)  
 Hispanic or Latino (1 = Yes)  
 African American (1 = Yes)  
 Special Education (1 = Yes)  
 Eligible for free lunch (1 = Yes)  
 Age in months

**Final R<sup>2</sup> = .10**

### Model 2

Model 1 (Block 1)  
 +  
 Fall of Preschool SEL Independent Variable (Block 2)

### Model 3

Model 2 (Blocks 1 & 2)  
 +  
 Fall of Preschool WJ Letter-Word Identification scaled score (Block 3)

## Discussion and Future Directions

- These results indicate **reasonable validity and inter-correlations** among the three measures' SEL domains, and that **teachers can reliably use observational systems** to document the SEL skills of different subgroups of preschoolers.
- The extremely high reliability of several measures coupled with correlational analyses suggests that **teachers' sensitivities to different SEL subscales may be low.**
- Nonetheless, **several SEL measures predicted Kindergarten literacy above and beyond demographic variables.**
- Future work will investigate SEL prediction by **demographic and risk subgroups.**
- These results may have important implications for researchers aiming to develop more sensitive SEL assessments, and for schools weighing the costs and benefits of implementing different SEL assessments.

## References

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