



key findings

Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for Life

An Exploration of the School Readiness of Monterey County's Children

May 2013

20%
optimally
ready

20% of Monterey County's kindergartners have the skills they need to be **optimally ready for kindergarten**¹

KRA² Key Findings

Children are more likely to be optimally ready for kindergarten when...

developmental domains

- ▶ they master **Self & Social Development** skills (e.g. interact positively with classmates & adults; clearly understand feelings & actions of others; are eager to learn)
- ▶ they master **Self Regulation** skills³ (e.g. manage their behaviors & feelings; engage with others; persist in completing tasks)

practices

- ▶ they were enrolled in **preschool**
- ▶ their parents **read** to them on a daily basis

family characteristics

- ▶ their parents have more than a **high school education**
- ▶ they live in households that are **not in poverty**
- ▶ their parents reported an easy **transition to kindergarten**

¹ For the purposes of this study, kindergartners that are optimally ready for kindergarten are those that exhibited comprehensive mastery of skills.

This means that, on the average, they had ratings in the top two levels of the developmental domains. These top two levels are called integrating and applying.

² The 2012 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) is representative of all kindergartners in Monterey County attending public schools (30% of all kindergartners in the county).

³ Girls were also more likely than boys to master Self-Regulation skills.

Early Childhood Developmental Domains



Educators assessed child development of incoming kindergartners across 4 domains using the DRDP-SR⁴.

Children were optimally ready for kindergarten if they demonstrated mastery of skills across all 4 domains.

Kindergarten teachers and early educators agree - the domains linked to character development are “most” critical to success:

- ▶ Self & Social Development
- ▶ Self-Regulation

⁴ Desired Results Developmental Profile – School Readiness

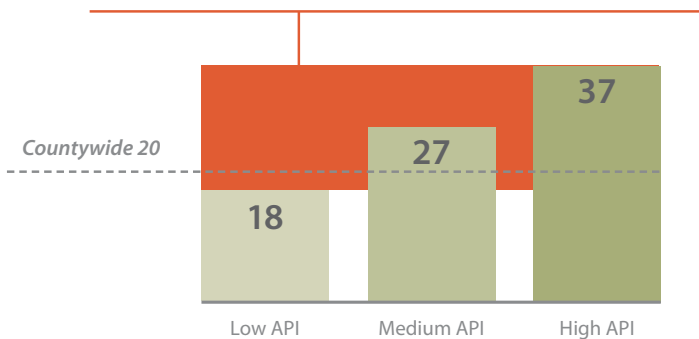
readiness

The percentage of children in low API⁵ schools who achieved comprehensive mastery was significantly lower than children in high API schools.

Children in High API Schools are More Ready for Kindergarten

[% of total with optimal readiness]

High API schools show a readiness increase of **106%** over low API schools



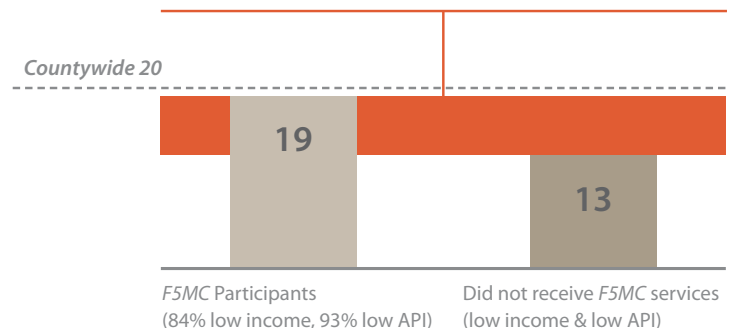
⁵ Academic Performance Index, a measurement of academic performance and progress of individual schools in California.

A greater proportion of children who participated in F5MC services mastered readiness skills across all four domains, as compared to their low-income peers at low API schools.

Low Income Children Gain from Participation in F5MC Programs

[% of total with optimal readiness]

F5MC participants show a readiness increase of **51%** over their peers



F5MC Participants (84% low income, 93% low API) | Did not receive F5MC services (low income & low API)

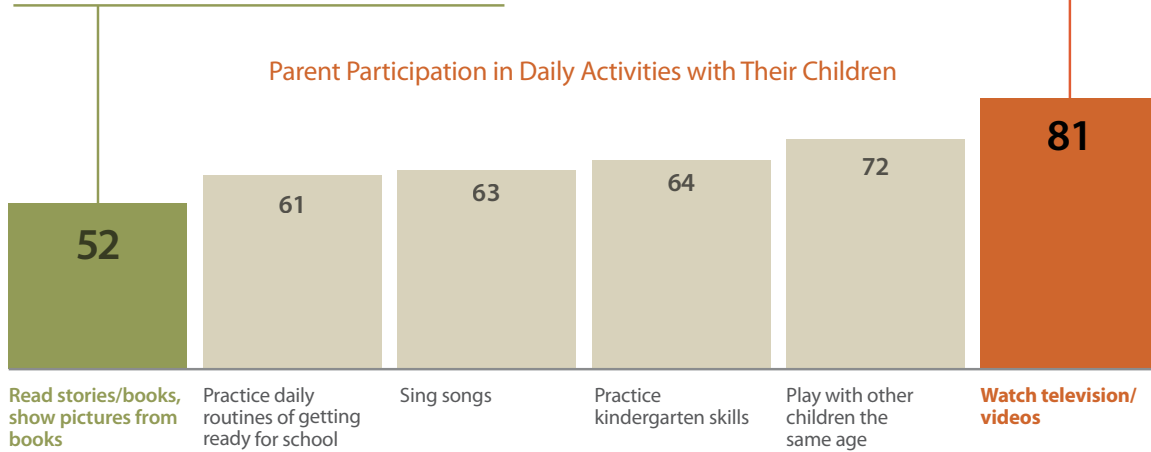
Families are First Teachers

During the first few years of life, much of how a child develops, cognitively and socio-emotionally, depends on the experiences provided by the family. By investing in programs that help to strengthen families, the community gains a greater return on its investments.⁶



Research shows daily reading to young children makes a huge difference, yet only 52% of parents countywide reported “reading stories or showing picture books” daily. However, 60% of F5MC participants reported reading to their children daily.

81% of parents report “watching television/ videos”, an activity the American Academy of Pediatrics discourages before age 2 and recommends limiting with older children.⁷



⁶ http://www.childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/pdfs/10yranniversary_Heckmanhandout.pdf

⁷ <http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx>



Affordable, Quality Child Care & Preschool

Children who attend high-quality preschool are more ready for kindergarten.⁸ However, many families do not have access to affordable, high-quality early care and education.

59% of children (under 5) attended preschool

More Parenting Programs

Given that most of F5MC funded parenting programs are filled, additional parenting programs (that are accessible and affordable) are needed.

14% participate in parenting programs

⁸ <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2012/03/19-school-disadvantage-isaacs>

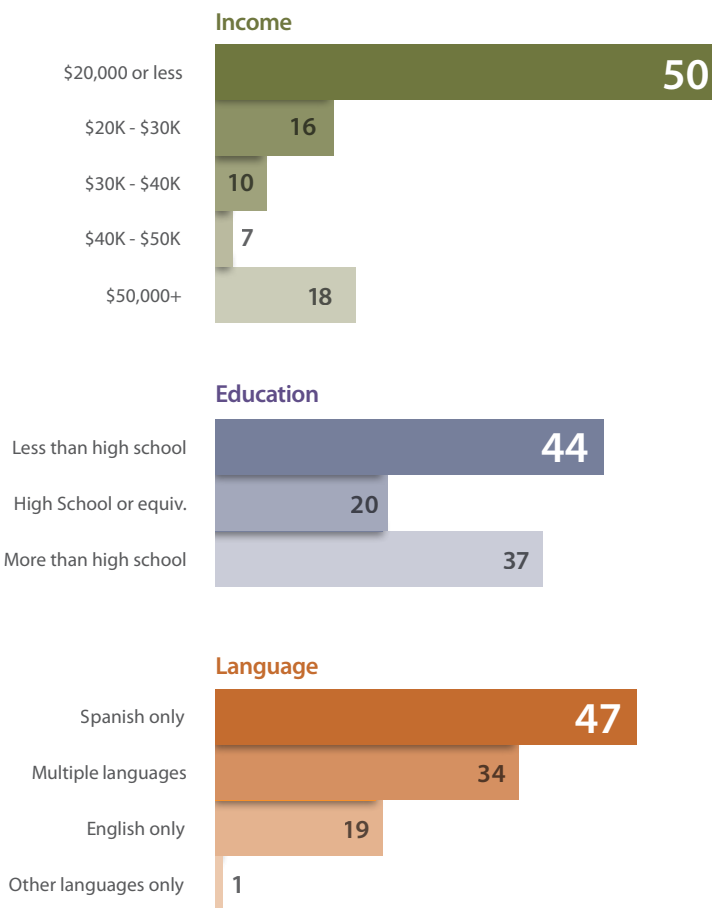
4th Study to Track School Readiness

Findings represent a countywide sample based on:

- ▮ Observations of 1,922 kindergartners completed by 89 kindergarten teachers
- ▮ Family surveys completed by 1,804 parents (English and Spanish)
- ▮ Educator surveys completed by 72 early childhood educators and 82 kindergarten teachers

2012 KRA Participants – Income, Education, and Language [% of total]

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS



Recommendations

Below are ways to help our youngest children be more prepared for kindergarten...

Parents & Community Members

- ▮ Read or show picture books to your child every day
- ▮ Advocate for and enroll your child in quality preschool
- ▮ Enroll in a parenting program

Educators & Administrators

- ▮ Encourage parents to read or show picture books to their children every day
- ▮ Promote collaboration among early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers
- ▮ Implement kindergarten transition practices

Policymakers & Key Influencers

- ▮ Support efforts to develop a comprehensive strategy for early childhood development
- ▮ Invest in efforts to expand affordable, high quality preschools; increase parenting programs; and support children with special needs
- ▮ Influence local and state policies enhancing existing early childhood strategies

For First 5 Monterey County

- ▮ Continue to highlight the importance of children's social and emotional development
- ▮ Continue to expand resources for families with greatest needs
- ▮ Delve deeper into barriers preventing families from participating in educational activities



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harder+company
community research
harderco.com

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