A photograph of children in a classroom setting. In the foreground, a young boy with dark hair, wearing a blue and black striped shirt, is leaning over a wooden chair, focused on a string of colorful beads (red, yellow, green, blue) laid out on the floor. In the background, two other children are also engaged with similar bead strings on the floor. The room has large windows and a tiled floor.

Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for Life

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

May 2013



FIRST 5
MONTEREY COUNTY



FIRST 5
MONTEREY COUNTY



Table of Contents

2	FAST FACTS & KEY FINDINGS
4	WELCOME
6	CHAPTER 1 ■ CHILDREN Domains of Early Childhood Development
15	CHAPTER 2 ■ FAMILIES Child Development Starts at Home
20	CHAPTER 3 ■ RELATIONSHIPS AND READINESS Lessons Learned from Children, Parents, and Families
23	CHAPTER 4 ■ EDUCATORS Alignment and Beliefs Matter
29	CHAPTER 5 ■ RECOMMENDATIONS
33	SAMPLING AND METHODS
36	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fast Facts & Key Findings



Today's Children are Tomorrow's Workforce: Investments That Pay Off

- A total of 89 kindergarten teachers completed observations for 1,922 children for the 2012 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), representing 30 percent of Monterey County kindergartners and a six percent increase over the 2009 assessment of incoming kindergartners. Teachers assessed the development of children across four domains: *Self and Social Development*; *Self Regulation*; *Language and Literacy*; and *Mathematical Development*.
- The greatest share of kindergartners achieved the most mastery in skills that are related to the *Self Regulation* and *Self and Social Development* domains. These domains are the most closely linked to development of “character” and the socio-emotional skills necessary for success in school and in the County’s future workforce.¹
- Overall, children who participated in First 5 Monterey County (F5MC)-funded services before entering kindergarten were more likely to receive a higher rating in all four developmental domains compared to their counterparts in low income families who attend low-API² schools and who did not receive F5MC-funded services.

Families are the Primary Influencers of Child Development; Community Support Can Help

- For the 2012 KRA, 1,804 parents and caregivers completed family surveys. Kindergarten teachers distributed the surveys, available in both Spanish and English, at the start of the 2012 school year.
- Research shows that reading to young children has an enormous impact on school readiness, yet in 2012, only 52 percent of parents reported “reading stories or showing picture books” with their child daily. This reflects an increase of one percent over the 2009 KRA findings. Given the importance of this activity, more work needs to be done to (1) determine the barriers that prevent some families from reading with their children more often, and (2) maintain and expand strategies that encourage parents to read with their children.
- Economic and other inequalities lead to disadvantages in early childhood, and the achievement gaps in school readiness that are already wide by age 3 tend to persist through a child’s school years. When parents and families support and engage their children at home, they have a substantial impact on their development and attitudes toward learning. By continuing to direct early childhood investments toward these families, the community gains the most return on its investment.³
- Attending a high-quality preschool is a key factor in kindergarten readiness. However, many families in Monterey County do not have access to affordable, high-quality early care and education – only 52 percent of parents with less than a high school

1 Heckman, James. Schools, Skills, and Synapses. May 2008.

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

3 Heckman, James. Investments in Early Childhood Education as a Means to Deficit Reduction in California. Heckman Equation. 2012.

Children who participated in F5MC-funded services were more likely to be ready in all four developmental domains.

education and 66 percent of those with more than high school reported that their child was enrolled in a center-based preschool.

- Although it has been shown that investments in parenting programs that promote cognitive and character skills are cost-effective, the proportion of families who access and use these services in Monterey County remains low – only 14 percent of families countywide reported participating in parenting classes. Given that most F5MC-funded services tend to be filled to their maximum capacity, this finding suggests a need for additional affordable and accessible parenting services in the county.

Children Who Develop Strong Character Skills are More Likely to Succeed

- Findings from the 2012 KRA align with national research that shows that investing in strategies that promote “character,” (i.e., social and emotional skills) in children makes good economic sense. Children who develop strong character skills interact more productively with peers and adults and are better able to manage their emotions and impulses. In short, they are better prepared to succeed in school and life and become productive, contributing members of the workforce and community.⁴
- The variables that have the most influence on kindergarten readiness in Monterey County are consistent with national research in early childhood development. Among these are parents’ education level and poverty, daily reading, preschool attendance, and the development of character and “soft skills” such as *Self and Social Development*, and *Self Regulation*.

Educators Need Support and Want More Training Opportunities

- A total of 154 educators participated in the 2012 KRA, including 72 early childhood educators and 82 kindergarten teachers. Surveys gathered information about their backgrounds, experience, qualifications, and teaching philosophies – and also about the classroom environment, kindergarten transition activities, and level of involvement among teachers and parents.
- The most frequent training topics requested by early educators in 2012 were *kindergarten transition* and *working with children who have special needs*. And although 83 percent of kindergarten teachers wanted training on working with children with special needs, only 30 percent received that training.
- Early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers agree that character/social and emotional skills (i.e., *Self and Social Development* and *Self Regulation*) continue to be of the utmost importance as children enter and exit kindergarten.
- Addressing the concerns of children with special needs at Monterey County’s schools continues to be a challenge. The areas most in need of attention are modifying classrooms or activities; meeting with parents and teams addressing children with special needs; contacting specialists; and having a child observed or evaluated.

4 Ibid 3.

invest



Welcome

The evidence is clear and compelling: Young children who participate in early learning opportunities do better in school. Children who do better in school are more likely to graduate and go on to college. Those that go to college also gain access to additional resources and opportunities, making them well-positioned as productive members of the workforce and the community at large. To document and inform the early learning experiences of young children, First 5 Monterey County (F5MC) commissioned Harder+Company Community Research to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the readiness of the county's children who entered kindergarten in 2012. In the pages that follow, we present key findings from this research on topics including: developmental competencies of children; characteristics associated with school readiness; and ways in which parents and educators are helping prepare young children for school.

How to Use This Report

First 5 Monterey County is committed to serving as a catalyst for improved early childhood development in our community. To that end, F5MC has supported and sponsored implementation of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in 2004, 2006, 2009, and 2012 to provide a comprehensive picture of incoming kindergartners in the county.

Whether you are a business leader, policymaker, educator, or parent, we invite you to use this latest report and associated materials as a working tool to inform smart investments in the early years, to target

those investments where they are most needed, and to forge stronger partnerships among the organizations, families, and educators whose tireless efforts guide the future success of Monterey County's children. This report may be useful to:

Deepen your understanding of young children and families.

With in-depth data captured on nearly one-third of all incoming kindergartners in Monterey County, this report is the most representative and comprehensive picture of incoming kindergartners in the county.

Inform decisions that impact investments in early learning programs.

Local funders, policymakers, and other key influencers can reference findings in this report to make investments and track progress of Monterey County's youngest children.

Guide classroom planning. Each of the 26 schools participating in the 2012 KRA received school-level findings to help guide classroom planning.

Obtain funding. In the past, KRA data has enabled schools to solicit funding for early learning and kindergarten transition activities.

Spearhead collaborative efforts in the community.

The 2012 KRA provides a resource for dialogue among parents, educators, schools, organizations, key influencers, and policymakers to strengthen collective efforts that support school readiness for children in our county.



What's New

It is important to note that a **new assessment tool** was used in conducting the 2012 KRA. Previous KRA reports from 2006 and 2009 used the MDRDP (Modified Desired Results Developmental Profile) while this report uses the DRDP-SR© (Desired Results Developmental Profile-School Readiness). The MDRDP was a modified version of the previous iteration of the DRDP, which was used to assess preschoolers and measure school readiness at the start of kindergarten. The DRDP-SR was released for use in 2012 by the University of California at Berkeley and WestEd. It was specifically designed to measure kindergarten readiness.

A **new level of comparison data** is presented in the 2012 KRA. For the first time since the inception of the KRA Report in 2004, we compared data on 313 children who received F5MC-funded services prior to entering kindergarten with data on children who had not participated in F5MC-funded services. Because F5MC's funded partners largely serve the county's least advantaged children and families, kindergartners in low-API⁵ schools with income below the Federal Poverty Level were used as the comparison group.

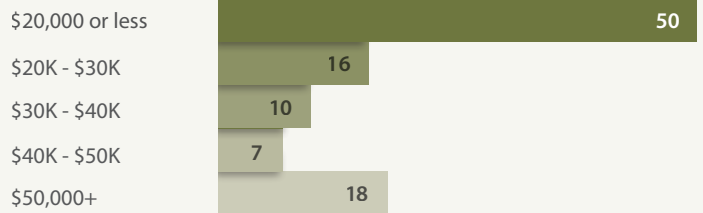
Exhibits 1 and 2 at right illustrate the demographic characteristics of the 2012 KRA participants. The race/ethnicity of KRA participants is representative of Monterey County.

5 Academic Performance Index, a measurement of academic performance and progress of individual schools in California. A school's API score is designed to be an indicator of a school's performance level and is calculated annually by the California Department of Education.

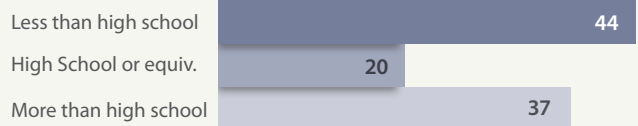
Exhibit 1: 2012 KRA Participants – Income, Education, and Language [PERCENT OF TOTAL]

Family Characteristics

Income



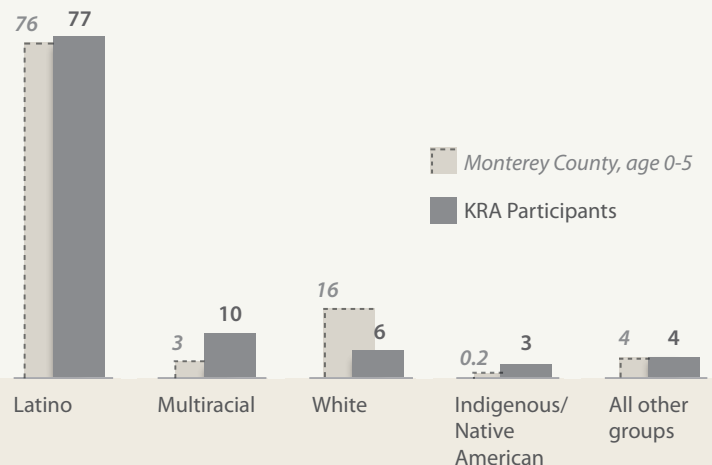
Education



Language



Exhibit 2: 2012 KRA Participants – Children's Race and Ethnicity [PERCENT OF TOTAL]



Chapter 1 ■ Children Domains of Early Childhood Development

In this chapter, we take a closer look at findings across four developmental domains of the Desired Results Developmental Profile-School Readiness® (DRDP-SR). The definition of – and insight into – each domain is followed by a discussion of emerging trends. Because the 2012 KRA utilizes this newly released assessment tool, findings were matched as closely as possible to the 2006 and 2009 findings to examine trends over time. You can read more about this new assessment tool on page 34.

The exhibits that follow represent the distribution of Monterey County’s kindergartners across five developmental levels (i.e., degree of mastery) for each of the four developmental domains (i.e., skill area). The distribution shown in these exhibits is based on overall averages for all of the items in each of the domains.⁶

The Five Developmental Levels

For the observational assessment, teachers were asked to rate each child’s incremental development along a continuum for a number of items in each of the four domains using the following responses:⁷

- Exploring Competencies
 - Developing Competencies
 - Building Competencies
 - Integrating Competencies
 - Applying Competencies
- } Mastery

In the analysis that follows, we identify children who exhibit “mastery” in each domain area, defined as those who were rated as “integrating” or “applying” competencies.



6 Scores were only calculated on children for whom at least two-thirds of the domain items were completed
7 For more information regarding the in-depth meaning of each developmental level please visit http://drdpsr.org/drdpsr_instrument.html.

develop

English Language Development

While the measures in the *Language and Literacy Development* domain are used to assess all children's progress in developing foundational language and literacy skills, the measures in the *English Language Development* domain are used to document and assess the progress of children who speak a language other than English at home. Children who are dual language learners will vary substantially in their acquisition of English language competencies, depending on factors such as the degree of exposure to English, level of support provided in their home language, and their motivation to acquire English. Teachers were asked to rate each child's incremental development for a measures associated with *English Language Development* using the following responses:

Discovering
Exploring
Developing
Building
Integrating } Mastery

Fifty-six percent of the 2012 KRA participants spoke a language other than English. This is closely aligned with kindergartners countywide, among whom 58 percent are English Language Learners.⁸

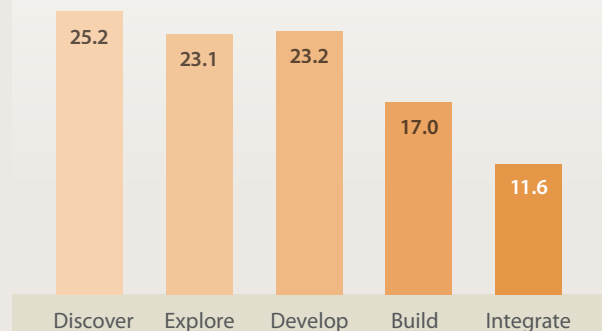
⁸ California Department of Education, 2012-13 school year data

Key findings from the 2012 KRA as shown in Exhibit 3 reveal that:

- Twenty-nine percent of Monterey County kindergartners who spoke a language other than English were “building” or “integrating” English Language skills; 12 percent were “integrating” this skill. Forty-eight percent were still “discovering” or “exploring” English Language skills.

Exhibit 3: Developmental Levels of English Language Skills, Countywide

[PERCENT OF TOTAL]



Domain 1

Self and Social Development

The socio-emotional skills that form character are pivotal to success in school and in the workplace. These skills can – and should – be cultivated in a child's earliest years. Ratings in the *Self and Social Development* domain indicates how well Monterey County's kindergartners interact with classmates and adults; how clearly they understand the feelings and

actions of others; and how eager they are to learn.

The items included in this domain are:

- Identity of self in relation to others
- Recognition of one's own ability
- Relationships and social interactions with adults
- Relationships and social interactions with peers
- Social and emotional understanding
- Conflict negotiation
- Curiosity and initiative in learning

The socio-emotional skills that form character are pivotal to success in school and in the workplace.

Key findings from the 2012 KRA as shown in Exhibit 4 reveal that:

- Just under one-fourth (24 percent) of Monterey County kindergartners were rated as mastering (i.e., “integrating” or “applying”) the skills in this domain area.
- Nineteen percent of children were still “exploring” *Self and Social Development* skills upon entry into kindergarten.



Teachers at high-API schools ranked a greater share of their students as mastering the skills in this domain area compared to countywide averages. Out of kindergartners in low-API schools, a slightly greater proportion than the county average were still “exploring” (22 percent), while a slightly smaller proportion of children at low-API schools were rated as mastering (i.e., “integrating” or “applying,” at 20 percent). Among high-API schools, only seven percent of students were still “exploring” while 39 percent were rated as mastering skills.

Domain 2

Self Regulation

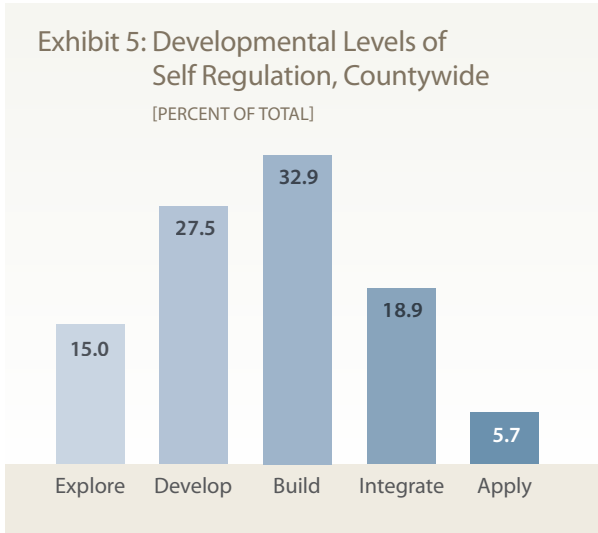
The ability of children to regulate their own behavior has a direct impact on how well they are able to work with others – a precursor not only to success in school, but also to success in the workplace. The domain of *Self Regulation* relates to a child’s persistence; the ability to share; and the capacity to manage his or her feelings or behavior. This domain includes four measures of behavior:

- Self-control of behavior and feelings
- Engagement and persistence
- Responsible conduct
- Shared use of space and materials

The 2012 KRA reveals that:

- One-fourth of children were rated as mastering (i.e., “integrating” or “applying”) *Self Regulation* skills.
- Upon kindergarten entry, 15 percent of children were still “exploring” their competencies in *Self Regulation*.

Findings for children at low-API schools were similar to countywide averages in this domain. Compared to countywide scores, only a slightly greater proportion of children at low-API schools were still “exploring” (16 percent); a smaller proportion of children at low-API schools were rated as mastering (“integrating” or “applying,” at 21 percent). A much smaller proportion of kindergarten students at high-API schools – only 6 percent – were still “exploring” *Self Regulation* skills; on the other hand, 34 percent were rated as mastering skills in this domain.



Domain 3

Language and Literacy Development

For this domain, the tool asked kindergarten teachers to assess how effectively their students understand language and communicate with others, and to observe their knowledge of letters, words, and sounds.⁹ Mastery of these skills lays the groundwork for the capacity to understand and express ideas and for establishing successful relationships in school and life. Included in this domain are the following items:

- Understanding of language (receptive)
- Follows increasingly complex instructions
- Communication of needs, feelings, and interests (expressive)

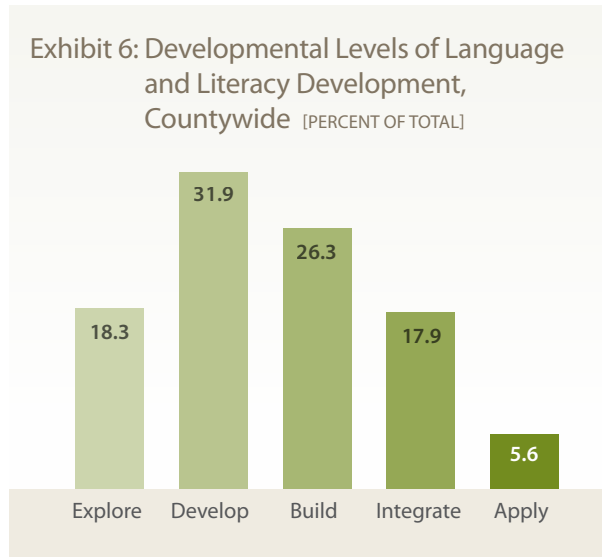
⁹ English Language Learners were also assessed on their English language acquisition in a separate domain.

- Reciprocal communication and conversation
- Comprehension and analysis of age-appropriate text, presented by adults
- Letter and word knowledge
- Phonological awareness
- Emergent writing

As indicated in Exhibit 6, results of the 2012 KRA found that:

- Just under one-fourth (24 percent) were mastering (i.e., “integrating” or “applying”) skills in the domain of *Language and Literacy*.
- Eighteen percent of students were still “exploring” these skills.

Among children at low-API schools, 19 percent were still “exploring;” 21 percent – slightly lower than the countywide average – were rated as mastering





(i.e., “integrating” or “applying”) *Language and Literacy* skills. Compared to the countywide results, a much smaller proportion of kindergartners at high-API schools were rated as “exploring” these skills (only 7 percent); teachers rated a substantially greater proportion (31 percent versus 24 percent) as mastering (“integrating” or “applying”).

Domain 4

Mathematical Development

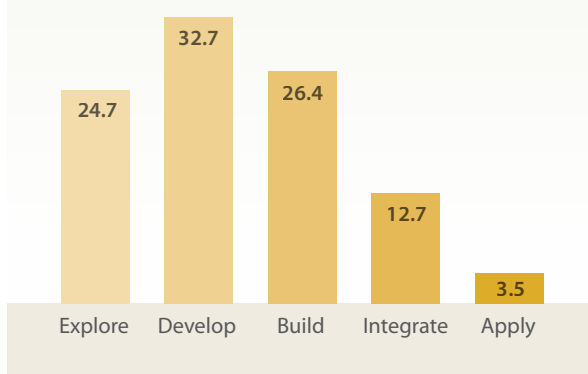
For the final domain, teachers observed children’s mathematical competencies, including counting, measurement, and the ability to identify shapes and patterns. The specific skills assessed were:

- Number sense of quantity and counting
- Number sense of mathematical operations
- Shapes and measurement
- Patterns and classification
- Problem solving

Key findings in the domain area of Mathematical Development include:

- Sixteen percent of students were mastering (i.e., “integrating” or “applying”) *Mathematical Development* skills.
- Among all four domains, *Mathematical Development* has the greatest proportion of children rated as “exploring” skills (25 percent).

Exhibit 7: Developmental Levels of Mathematical Development, Countywide [PERCENT OF TOTAL]



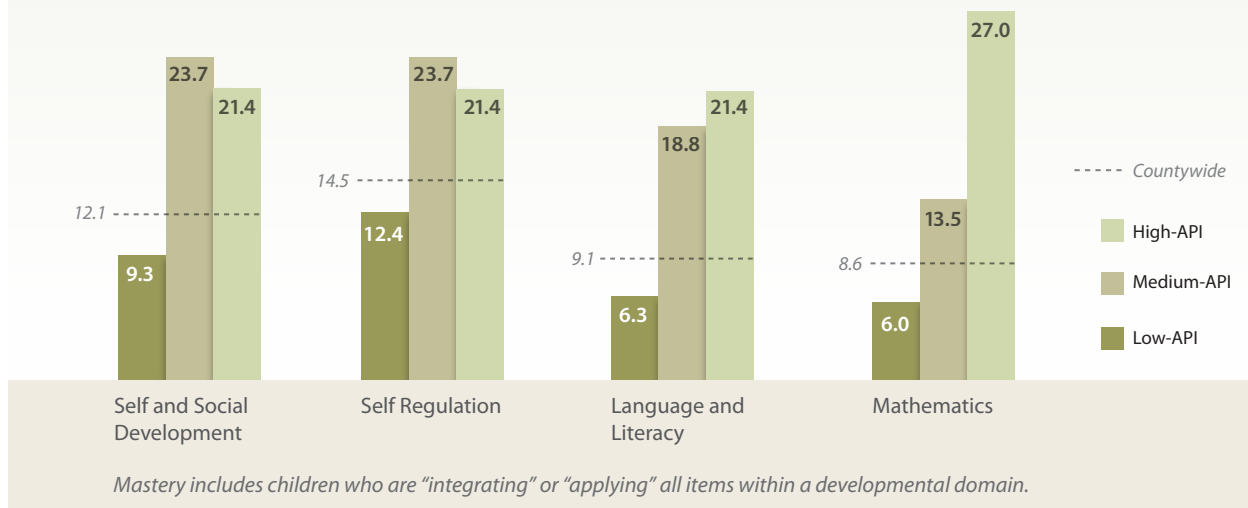
While a slightly greater proportion of children at low-API schools were still “exploring” skills in this domain compared to the countywide average (27 percent), a smaller proportion were rated as mastering (“integrating” or “applying,” at 13 percent versus 16 percent). A much lower proportion of children at high-API schools were rated as “exploring” mathematical skills (only 7 percent); a far greater proportion of these children were rated as mastering at 34 percent).

How Successfully are Children Mastering Key Skills?

When one takes into account developmental levels across the four domains, it is clear that the similar proportions of children were rated as mastering (i.e., “integrating” or “applying”) all skills in *Self Regulation* (25 percent), *Self and Social Development*



Exhibit 8: Children Mastering All Skills in Each Domain by API Level [PERCENT OF TOTAL]



(24 percent), and *Language and Literacy Development* (24 percent). A smaller share of children (16 percent) was rated as mastering all the skills in *Mathematical Development*. As shown in Exhibit 8, the percentage of children in low-API schools who were mastering skills across the four domains was lower than the countywide average. Additional details about specific item comparisons are available in the KRA databook, accessible at www.first5monterey.org.

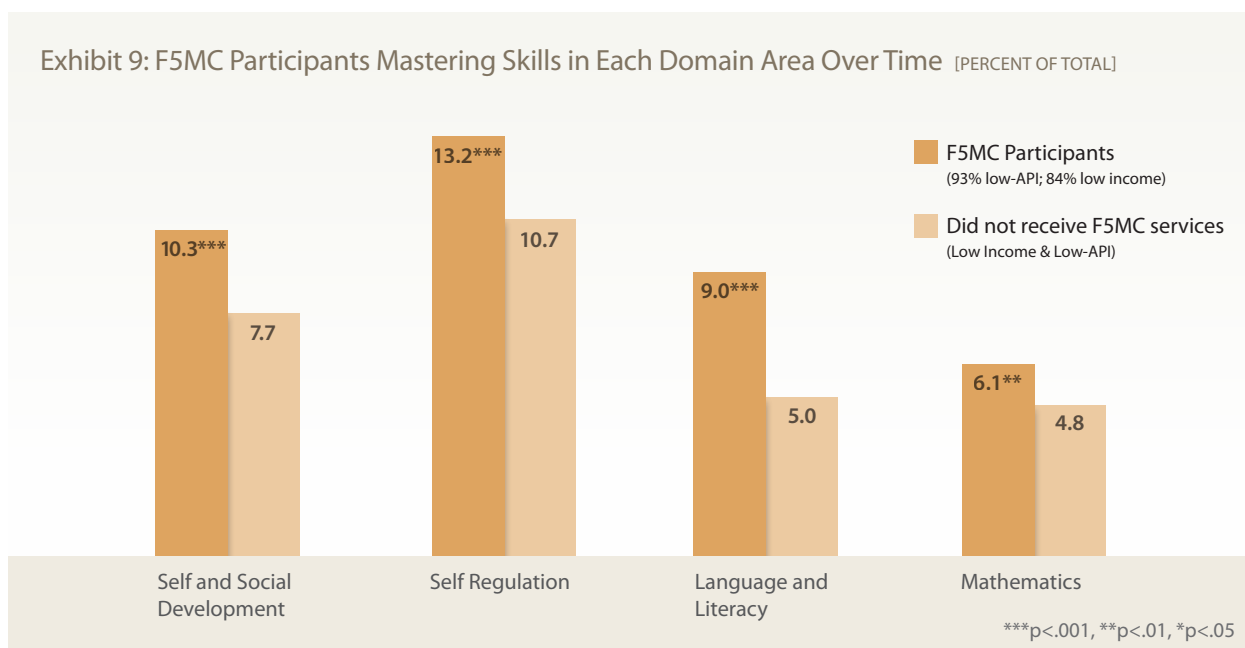
KRA Findings through the Lens of F5MC's Impact

For the first time since the inception of the KRA Report in 2004, we identified children whose families received F5MC-funded services – such as playgroups, group parenting classes, information and referrals, home visits, and counseling – prior to entering kindergarten. By comparing 313 children who

received F5MC-funded services to those who did not participate in these services, we are able to highlight the potential impact of participation in F5MC services on kindergarten readiness. Almost two-thirds of those families (62 percent) live in Salinas, with the remainder located in North Monterey County (15 percent), the Peninsula (14 percent), and South County (8 percent). Among F5MC families included in the 2012 KRA, 86 percent live at or below the poverty level. Further, 93 percent have a kindergarten-age child at a low-API school, five percent at a medium-API school, and the remaining two percent at a high-API school.

Because F5MC's funded partners serve many of the county's least advantaged children and families, kindergartners in low-API schools with low income families are the most appropriate comparison group. As illustrated in Exhibit 9, children who

Participation in F5MC-funded services appears to help children master all four domains



participated in F5MC-funded services before entering kindergarten were more likely to receive a higher rating in all four domains compared to their counterparts in low income families who attend low-API schools and who did not receive F5MC-funded services. The difference between children whose families participated in F5MC-funded services and low income families who attend low-API schools is statistically significant. In other words, participation in F5MC-funded services appears to be helping move children along the developmental continuum in all four domain areas. Additional analyses will be performed for a forthcoming report to determine which children benefited the most from their family's participation in F5MC-funded services. Special attention will be paid to the length and nature of participation in F5MC-funded services.

Key findings from the comparison of F5MC participants versus those who did not participate include:

- Compared to low-income kindergartners in low-API schools who did not receive F5MC-funded services, a larger share of children who did receive F5MC-funded services were rated as mastering all items in every domains area, most notably in *Language and Literacy Development*. Nine percent of F5MC participants mastered all items in that domain area compared with just 5 percent of low income kindergartners in low-API schools who did not receive F5MC services.
- Thirteen percent of kindergartners who received F5MC-funded services mastered all items in the *Self Regulation* domain compared to 11 percent of low income kindergartners



in low-API schools who did not receive F5MC-funded services.

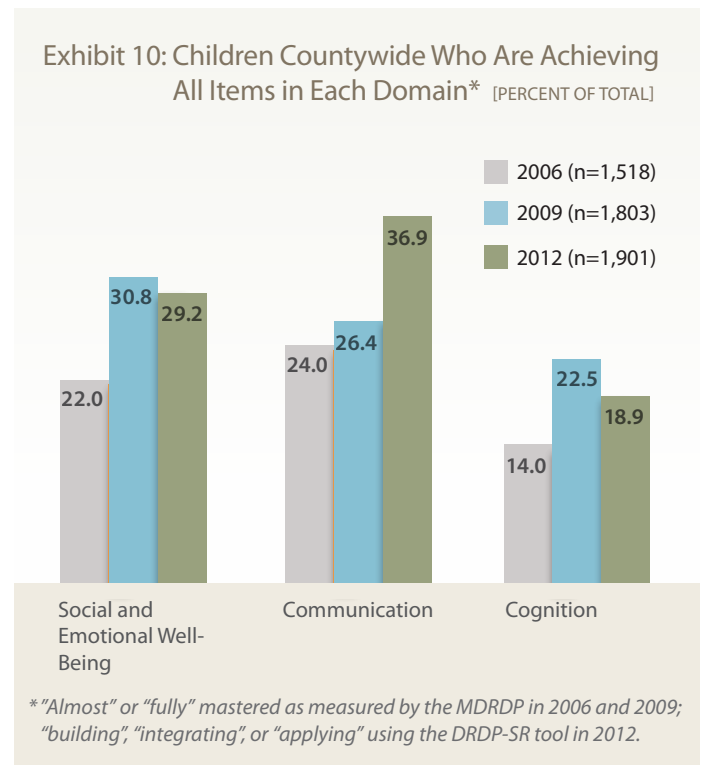
- Ten percent of kindergartners who received F5MC-funded services mastered all items in the *Self and Social Development* domain compared to nearly 8 percent of low income kindergartners in low-API school who did not receive F5MC-funded services.

What Emerged

Since development of character begins in the home and is further supported by early care and education and other community environments, children enter kindergarten with varying character traits already developed. Skills that comprise the first three domains (*Self and Social Development, Self-Regulation, and Language and Literacy*) were found to be those where the greatest share of incoming kindergartners achieved the highest level of mastery. More importantly, these skills – such as the ability to work with others, the capacity to communicate and understand ideas, and persistence in completing tasks – are vital to the quality of Monterey County’s future workforce. Finally, compared to their low-income counterparts at low-API schools, a greater proportion of children who participated in F5MC services were rated as mastering kindergarten readiness skills in the all four domain areas.

Comparing Trends over Time

Because a new assessment tool was used for the 2012 KRA, findings were matched as closely as possible to the 2006 and 2009 outcomes to examine trends over time. For example, achievement in developmental domains in the MDRDP domains was defined as being “almost mastered” or “fully mastered.” To compare previous findings to those using the newer DRDP-SR assessment tool, the equivalent developmental levels of “building”, “integrating”, and “applying” are used. Exhibit 10 shows the percent of participating kindergartners who were rated as achieving every item in a given domain – using the three MDRDP domains – in 2006, 2009, and 2012.





Chapter 2 ■ Families

Child Development Starts At Home

One of the most essential experiences in developing the architecture of a young child’s brain is the interaction between young children and the significant adults in their lives. During the first few years of life, a child’s brain develops rapidly in response to his or her environment. When parents and families support and engage their children at home, they have a substantial impact on children’s development and attitudes toward learning. However, many children – particularly those living in poverty – are more likely to live in environments and communities that do not support early development and potential. A recent national study¹⁰ found that fewer than half (48 percent) of low-income children are ready for school by age five, compared to 75 percent of children from families with moderate and high incomes. Findings from the 2012 KRA align with these trends. Economic and other inequalities lead to disadvantages in early childhood, and the achievement gaps in school readiness tend to persist through a child’s school years.

In this chapter, we focus on what families in Monterey County are doing to support school readiness. Our findings are based on surveys received from 1,804 parents and caregivers of children who participated in the 2012 KRA. The surveys—available in both English and Spanish—were distributed by kindergarten teachers at the start of the 2012 school year. The resulting data are presented by parents’ level of education, which is one of the factors most closely linked to school readiness in children.

Parents and Children

Home Activities Can Have a Big Impact

There are a number of everyday activities that parents can do to engage their children in early learning and promote school readiness. Interactions with young children, such as asking questions, involving a child in household tasks, encouraging them to play with other children, or reading a story together, promote school readiness by giving them the opportunity to gain new knowledge and solve problems on their own.

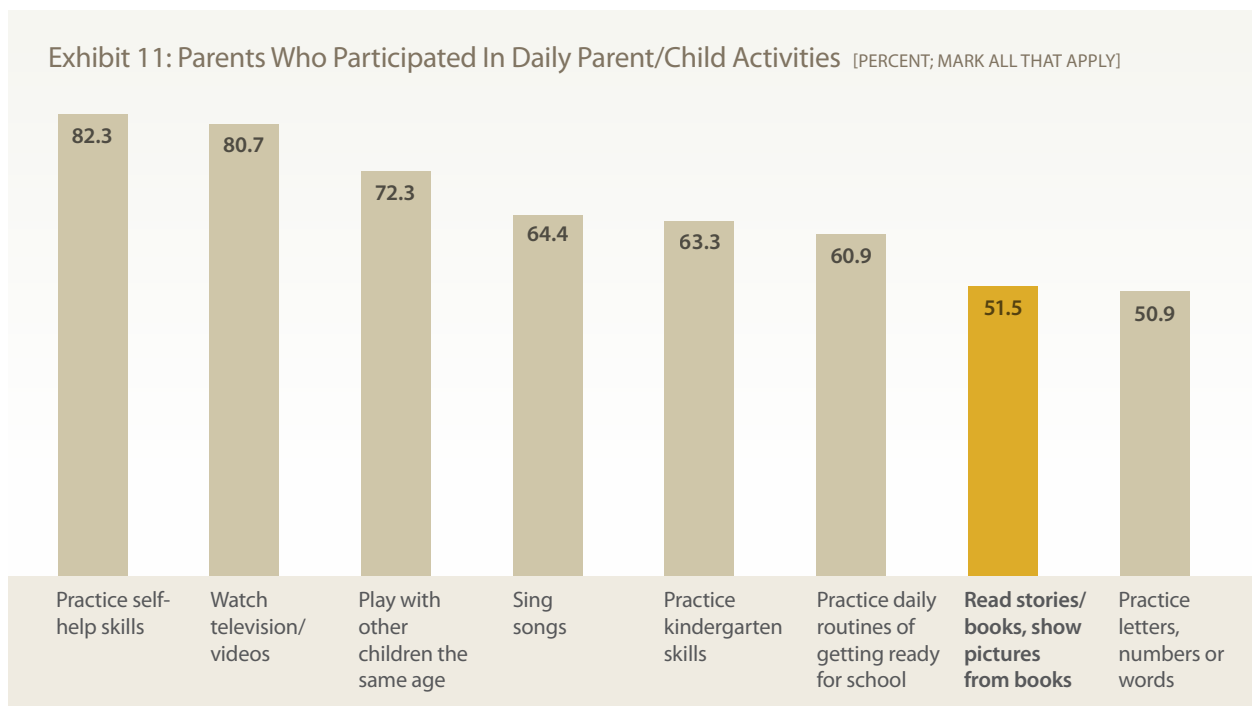
As in past KRAs, we asked parents to tell us how often they engaged in certain early learning activities during the year prior to their child entering kindergarten. As shown in Exhibit 11, parents ranked these activities similarly to those in our 2006 and 2009 KRA findings. Reading, the one activity proven to have the greatest impact on school readiness,¹¹ remains near the bottom of the list. In 2012, 52 percent of parents countywide reported engaging in “reading stories or showing picture books” with their child daily. Among those, 47 percent of parents with less than a high school education read to their child daily, while 58 percent of parents with more than a high school education did so.¹² On the other hand, parents with less than a high school education were 10 percent more likely than those with more than a high school education to report that their children played with other children on a daily basis (77 percent versus 66 percent, respectively). Playing with other children is a positive activity that helps boost social and emotional competencies.

10 Rodriguez, Eileen T. and Catherine S. Tamis-LeMonda. Trajectories of the Home Learning Environment across the First 5 Years: Associations with Children’s Vocabulary and Literacy Skills at Prekindergarten. 2011.

11 Schorr, Lisbeth B. and Vicky Marchand. Pathways Mapping Initiative: School Readiness and Third Grade School Success. June 2007.

12 Refer to databook for full information on activities by parent level of education available at first5monterey.org.

nurture



Early Care Environments

Where Young Children Spend Their Time Affects School Readiness

Given the fact that a child's environment in the years between birth and age 5 is likely to have a lifelong effect on his or her success in school and in life, it is important to consider where young children spend most of their time.

Irrespective of their education level, a vast majority (between 91 and 97 percent) of parents and caregivers reported that their children were cared for at home during the year preceding kindergarten. We know

that children who attend high-quality preschool are more likely to be school-ready than those who do not.¹³ However, many families in Monterey County do not have access to affordable, high-quality early care and education – in fact, the number of licensed early childhood education and care slots in Monterey County is only sufficient for 20 percent of parents in the workforce. And because of limited funding, Head Start only has the capacity to serve 25 percent of eligible families. The 2012 KRA found that a little over half of parents with less than a high school education (52 percent) reported that their child was enrolled in a center-based preschool, compared to 66 percent of parents with more than a high school education.

13 Isaacs, Julia B. Starting School at a Disadvantage. March 2012.

Exhibit 12: Location of Child Care Prior To Kindergarten [PERCENT; MARK ALL THAT APPLY]

Child Care Location	County-wide	Less than high school	High school or equivalent	More than high school
At home with his/her parent or other relatives (n=1,645)	94.3	96.6	93.8	91.4
Public or private center-based preschool (n=1,413)	59.0	52.3	61.0	65.9
Someone else's home under someone else's care (n=1,277)	37.7	42.3	32.9	33.1
Licensed family child care home (n=1,228)	21.5	19.8	18.9	22.7

Family Services and Support

Resource Availability and Utilization

Families play a central role in the development of skills and character in their children; while all families need support to foster that development, F5MC's resources are designed to support families in difficult socioeconomic conditions. A longstanding goal of F5MC is to ensure that parents of young children have access to the services, support, and resources to support them in their role as their child's first and most important teacher.

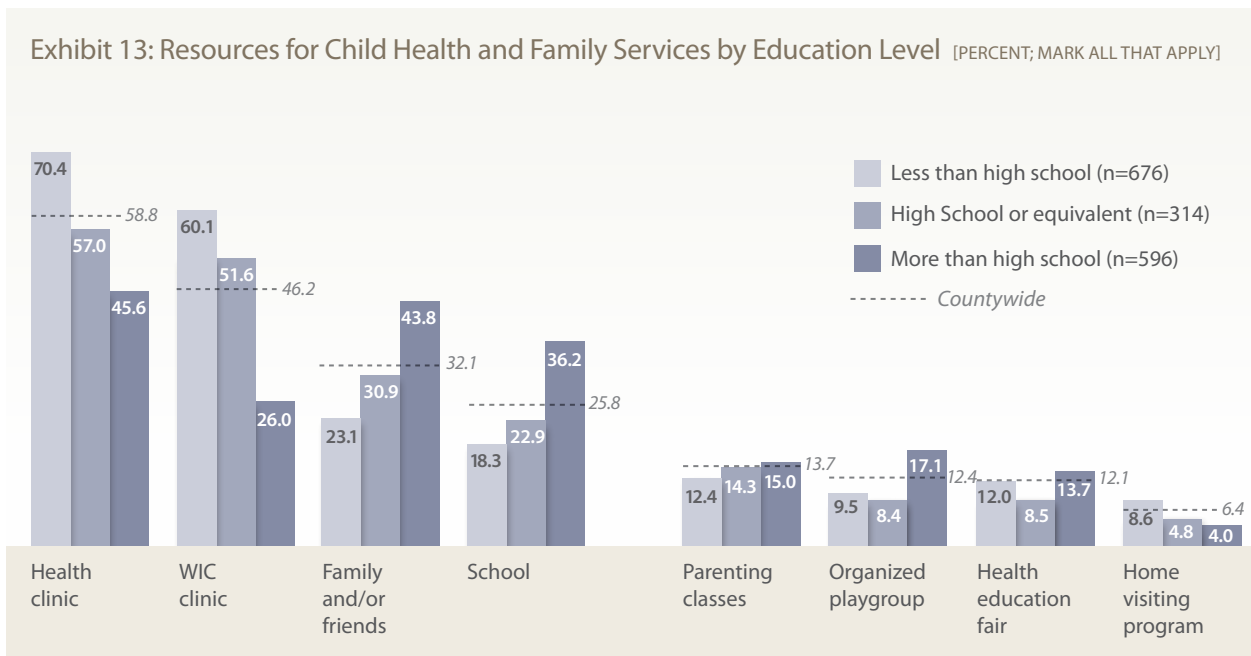
The 2012 KRA found that, countywide, parenting classes were the most commonly accessed type of service, followed closely by organized playgroups and health education events. It is interesting to note that parents with less than a high school education were more than twice as likely to participate in a home visiting program as those with more than a high school education (8 percent versus 4 percent, respectively). Although strong evidence points to the fact that investments in parenting programs that

promote cognitive and character skills are cost-effective,¹⁴ the proportion of families who access and use these services in Monterey County remains low. This is in part due to the fact that the availability of these services countywide is not sufficient to serve the entire population.

For the 2012 KRA, we also asked parents how they access information about child health and family services. In keeping with *2009 KRA findings* and *2011 Parent Interview* findings, the top responses countywide were health clinics (59 percent), Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clinics (46 percent), and family or friends (32 percent). Notably, while a relatively high proportion of parents report access to information about services, the proportion of parents in Monterey County who actually participate in the activities and services is substantially lower (see Exhibit 13). As with many parenting programs, this is likely due, at least in part, to a lack of accessibility.

¹⁴ Heckman, James. The Heckman Equation.

All of these findings emphasize the need to direct investments to support early learning experiences for families in Monterey County.



Parents and Schools

Parents' Education Level Affects Ease of Transition into Kindergarten

Once children are enrolled in kindergarten, schools typically offer various outreach activities to facilitate a smooth transition for children and families. As in past KRAs, we asked parents to tell us about their involvement in these kindergarten transition activities. Countywide, the two activities that most parents engaged in were “receive a letter or written information” and the more proactive “tour the school and/or visit kindergarten classroom” (see Exhibit 14).

With the exception of these two popular activities, parents' involvement with kindergarten transition activities is correlated with their education level. Compared to parents with higher levels of educa-

tion, fewer parents who had not finished high school reported receiving a letter or written information; having met with a school principal or other staff; or having participated in school-wide activities. More parents with less than a high school education noted that they had their child's skills and development assessed and/or had received a phone call or home visit from the school.

As with the 2009 KRA, parents were asked to rate the ease of their child's transition into kindergarten. As indicated in Exhibit 15, 76 percent of parents countywide rated their child's transition as “very easy” or “somewhat easy” – an increase of two percent over 2009. Parents with higher levels of education were more likely to report an easy transition for their child compared to parents who did not finish high school (83 percent versus 70 percent, respectively).



Exhibit 14: Parent Participation in Kindergarten Transition Activities [PERCENT; MARK ALL THAT APPLY]

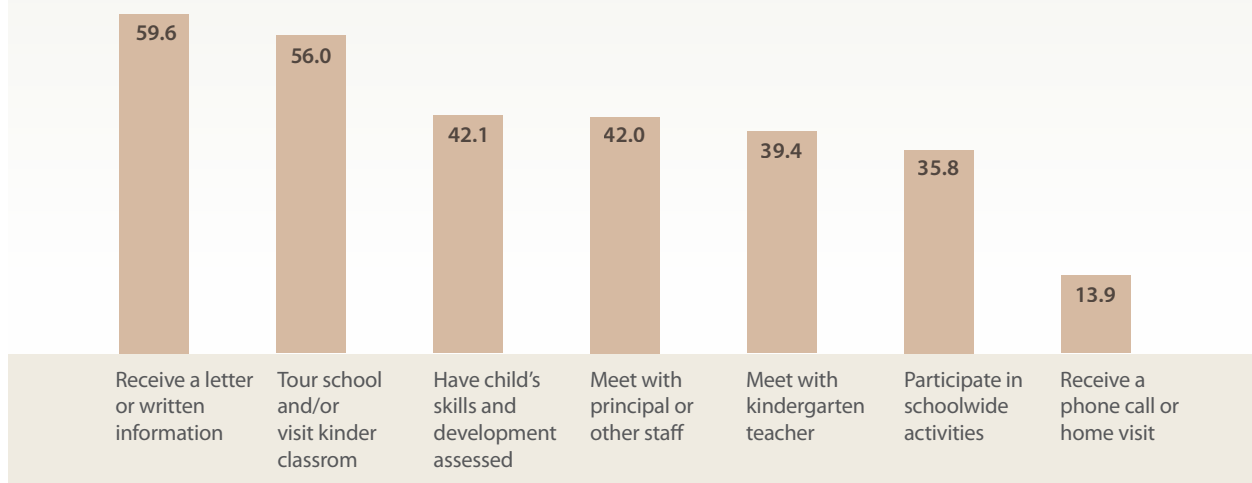


Exhibit 15: Parent Rating of Kindergarten Transition [PERCENT OF TOTAL]

Ease of Kindergarten Transition	Countywide (n=1693)	Less than High School Education (n=675)	High School or Equivalent Education (n=318)	More Than High School Education (n=606)
Somewhat difficult or very difficult	21.5	26.2	22.3	15.4
Somewhat easy or very easy	75.6	69.5	75.8	82.7

What Emerged

We know that reading to children in the early years and enrolling them in high-quality preschool are the two most significant ways parents can contribute to school readiness (see Exhibit 16). However, Monterey County parents may not have the knowledge, skills, or confidence to read regularly to their children and may not have access to affordable, high quality preschool and early education opportunities. Among parents with less than a high school education, only 47 percent read to their child daily and just 52 percent

had enrolled their child in preschool—the latter finding is closely linked to the limited accessibility and availability of preschool slots in Monterey County. In addition, utilization of support services is very low: only 12 percent of parents with less than a high school education reported taking advantage of parenting classes. Again, this finding points to a lack of accessible services and supports for parents. All these findings emphasize the need to direct investments to support early learning experiences for families in Monterey County.

Chapter 3 ■ Relationships & Readiness

Lessons Learned from Children, Parents, and Families

In this chapter, we examine how family characteristics and early learning opportunities influence a child's readiness for school, particularly as they relate to the developmental competencies measured in the 2012 DRDP-SR. The family is the primary relationship for young children, and the quality of the home environment has an enormous influence on a child's start in life. The events and experiences that shape children from birth to age five can prepare them for school or create stumbling blocks in their transition into kindergarten. Regardless of disparities in socio-economic status and education, every parent can make meaningful contributions to their child's school readiness. For example, the data in presented in Exhibit 16 shows that reading or showing picture books to children and enrolling them in preschool can be important contributors to school readiness.

Variables that Most Influence Kindergarten Readiness in Monterey County

When one considers key findings in the last three KRAs (2006, 2009, 2012), it is apparent that the variables that have the most influence on kindergarten readiness in Monterey County are consistent with national research in early childhood development. The top variables influencing kindergarten readiness are illustrated in Exhibit 16.





Exhibit 16: Variables Influencing Kindergarten Readiness in Monterey County¹⁵

Family Characteristics					
	Self and Social Development	Self Regulation	Language and Literacy	Mathematical Development	Comprehensive (all domains)
Parent education level	***	***	***	***	***
Poverty	***	***	***	***	***
Ease of kinder transition	***	***	***	***	***
Child gender		**			

Practices					
	Self and Social Development	Self Regulation	Language and Literacy	Mathematical Development	Comprehensive (all domains)
Reading daily	***	**	***	**	
Preschool attendance	*	**	*	**	**

Developmental Domains		
		Comprehensive (all domains)
Self and Social Development		***
Self Regulation		***

- ★ p < 0.05
- ★★ p < 0.01
- ★★★ p < 0.001

¹⁵ For more detailed information about the variables associated with specific developmental domains please reference the 2012 Monterey County KRA Databook.



Investing in Comprehensive Achievement

The Case for Building Soft Skills That Are the Cornerstones of School Readiness

For the 2012 KRA, we analyzed how well children mastered all four developmental domains associated with school readiness as defined in the DRDP-SR©. Across the board, parent education level, poverty, and kindergarten transition rating were independently associated with comprehensive achievement of the skills (i.e., mastery of all four domains).

Findings from the KRA add county-specific confirmation to the ample evidence that investing in strategies that promote character makes good economic sense.¹⁶ Children who master the domains of *Self and Social Development* and *Self Regulation* and also attended preschool were far more likely to master the other domain items in the DRDP-SR©.

Children who develop strong character skills interact more productively with peers and adults, ask for help when needed, and are better able to control their emotions and impulses. These skills enable children to achieve greater academic success in areas like language arts and math. These are the skills that will also most serve children as they transition into adulthood and continue to be productive, contributing members of society – in Monterey County and beyond.

As displayed in Exhibit 16, the six variables independently associated with comprehensive achievement (i.e., in all four domains) include:

¹⁶ Ibid 3.

Family Characteristics

Parent Education Level ★★★ - Children whose parents had more than a high school education were more likely to master kindergarten readiness skills.

Poverty ★★★ - Children whose families live at or below the federal poverty level were less likely than families with higher income levels to master kindergarten readiness skills.

Kindergarten Transition Rating ★★★ - Children whose parents reported an easy transition to kindergarten were more likely to master kindergarten readiness skills.

Practices

Preschool Attendance ★★ - Children who were enrolled in preschool were more likely to master kindergarten readiness skills.

Developmental Domains

Self and Social Development ★★★ - Children who exhibited mastery of *Self and Social Development* skills (e.g., positive interactions with classmates and adults; clear understanding of the feelings and actions of others; eagerness to learn) were more likely to master Kindergarten readiness skills in all four domains.

Self Regulation ★★★ - Children who exhibited mastery of *Self Regulation* skills (e.g., control over one's own behavior and feelings) were more likely to master kindergarten readiness skills in all four domains.

★ p < 0.05 ★★ p < 0.01 ★★★ p < 0.001

Chapter 4 ■ Educators Alignment and Beliefs Matter

Teacher-Child Relationships Matter

Children in preschool and kindergarten spend a large part of their days in the company of early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers. Consequently, these educators play a pivotal role in helping support character development and imparting the skills that will prepare young children to succeed in school and beyond. A total of 154

educators took part in the 2012 KRA, comprising 72 early childhood educators and 82 kindergarten teachers.¹⁷ As illustrated in Exhibit 17, a majority of educators speak at least one language in addition to English. In terms of education level, Kindergarten teachers at low-API schools were far less likely to have a graduate degree than their counterparts at medium- and high-API schools (see Exhibit 18).

Exhibit 17: Early Education and Kindergarten Teacher Language (PERCENT OF TOTAL)

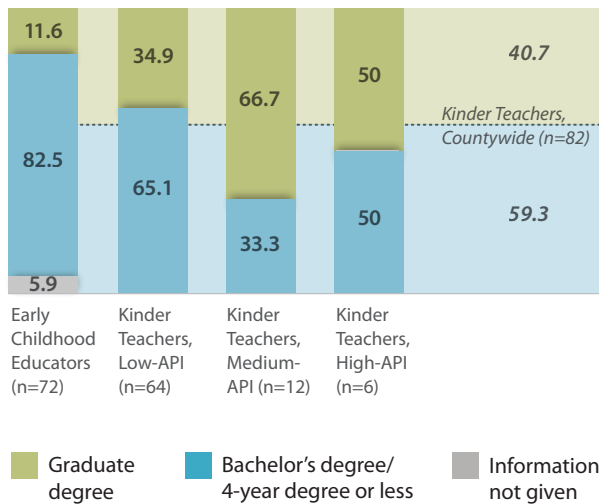
	Early Childhood Educators (n=72)	Kinder Teachers, Low API Schools (n=64)	Kinder Teachers, Medium API Schools (n=12)	Kinder Teachers, High API Schools (n=6)	Kinder Teachers, Countywide (n=82)
Speak a language other than English	75.7	81.3	50.0	33.3	73.2



¹⁷ Early childhood educators completed the teacher survey; Kindergarten teachers completed the teacher survey and the DRDP-SR observational assessment for their students

sustain

Exhibit 18: Early Education and Kindergarten Teacher Education [PERCENT OF TOTAL]



Note: Among the 83 percent of early childhood educators with a Bachelor's or other 4-year degree or less, 19 percent attended college, no degree; 36 percent have an Associate's or other 2-year degree, and 28 percent have a Bachelor's or other 4-year degree.

Teachers Report Needing Support to Do Their Best

Educators in Monterey County are tasked with meeting the needs of a highly diverse population of students. To provide the best guidance for children and their families, teachers need ongoing support and opportunities for professional development. Many teachers want specialized training to help guide children through the transition into kindergarten.

Exhibit 19 shows the percentage of early childhood educators (ECE) and kindergarten teachers (kinder) who “desired” and “received” training in four key areas:

Working with children with disabilities and other special needs

Guiding children through the transition into kindergarten

Working with children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds

Educating English language learners

The data makes it clear that teachers desire training in all four of these areas, but in only two instances did a majority receive the training: 79 percent of kindergarten teachers were trained in working with English language learners, and 61 percent of early childhood educators received training to work with children with special needs – the latter up from 41 percent in 2009.

Exhibit 19: Teacher Training By Skill Area [PERCENT; MARK ALL THAT APPLY]

	ECE - desired	ECE - received	Kinder - desired	Kinder - received
Children with disabilities and other special needs	86.7	61.2	83.3	29.9
Kindergarten transition	88.1	32.3	75.0	25.6
Children or families from cultural backgrounds different from your own	80.0	42.2	62.9	44.3
English language learners	72.9	37.3	74.6	78.8



Exhibit 20: Ranking of Developmental Domains Upon Kindergarten Entry and Exit

Rank	ECE – entering	ECE – exiting	Kinder – entering	Kinder – exiting
1	Self and social development	Self regulation	Self regulation	Self regulation
2	Self regulation	Self and social development	Self and social development	Language and literacy development
3	English language development	English language development	Language and literacy development	Self and social development
4	Language and literacy development	Language and literacy development	English language development	English language development
5	Mathematical development	Mathematical development	Mathematical development	Mathematical development

Among the most frequently requested training types requested in 2012 were:

Early childhood educators: Kindergarten transition and working with children with special needs

Kindergarten teachers: Working with children with special needs

The largest disparity reported was among kindergarten teachers: 83 percent desired training to work with children with special needs and only 30 percent received it.

The Changing Role of Developmental Domains

As in 2009, educators who participated in the 2012 KRA indicated that the relative importance of developmental domains changes from the time a child begins kindergarten and the time he or she completes the school year. Early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers agree that character/social and emotional skills (i.e., *Self and Social Development* and *Self Regulation*) continue to be of the utmost

importance as children enter and exit kindergarten. All educators indicated these two domain areas as the most important upon entering kindergarten (see Exhibit 20).

Teacher Beliefs Influence Student Learning

The beliefs held by educators can have a profound influence on the environment in which children have their first classroom learning experiences. In keeping with 2009 KRA findings, early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers continue to strongly support practices that promote character/social and emotional development, such as socialization, play, and exploration. As in 2009, relatively few educators advocated for practices that prescribe rules for how a child should learn, such as working silently at their seats and teaching each subject separately. The sole exception was among kindergarten teachers, 86 percent of whom believed that their students should learn to form letters correctly. Exhibit 21 shows what percentage of teachers “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with various teaching practices on the next page.



Exhibit 21: Preferred Teaching Practices for Preschool Children [PERCENT; MARK ALL THAT APPLY]

ECE Teachers (n=70-72)		Kindergarten Teachers (n=80-82)	
Children should be encouraged to play	98.6	Children should be encouraged to socialize with other children	96.4
Children should learn through active explorations	97.2	Children should be encouraged to play	91.5
Children should be encouraged to socialize with other children	97.2	Children should learn through active explorations	90.1
Children should be allowed to select many of their own activities from a variety of prepared learning areas	88.9	Activities should be responsive to individual differences in development	89.0
Activities should be responsive to individual differences in development	85.9	Children should learn to form letters correctly on a printed page	86.3

Pre-reading and Language Activities Pave the Way for School Success

When educators engage young children in pre-reading and language activities, they are cultivating the skills children need to succeed in school. The three activities most commonly used by early childhood educators with children are engaging in conversations, reading stories, and reading books out loud in English. Among kindergarten teachers, the top three reading and writing activities used in 2012 were practicing letter recognition, writing one’s name, and working on phonics – the same activities most used in 2009. Exhibit 22 details the five most common pre-reading and language development activities reported by educators for the 2012 KRA.

Supporting Children with Special Needs

Children arrive in kindergarten demonstrating a range of abilities and barriers to learning. It is incumbent on early educators, kindergarten teachers and administrators to identify children’s special needs, and to provide the guidance they need to learn. Nationally, 9 percent of children under age 5 have special needs. For children between ages 6 and 11, this number rises to 18 percent.¹⁸ In Monterey County, kindergarten teachers reported that, on average, only 5 percent of their students had been identified by a professional as having a developmental problem or delay. For the county’s high-API schools, this number is 9 percent, much closer to the national average. However, teachers at low- and medium-API schools reported the number

18 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs. 2009-10.

Exhibit 22: Top Five Pre-reading and Language Activities [PERCENT; MARK ALL THAT APPLY]

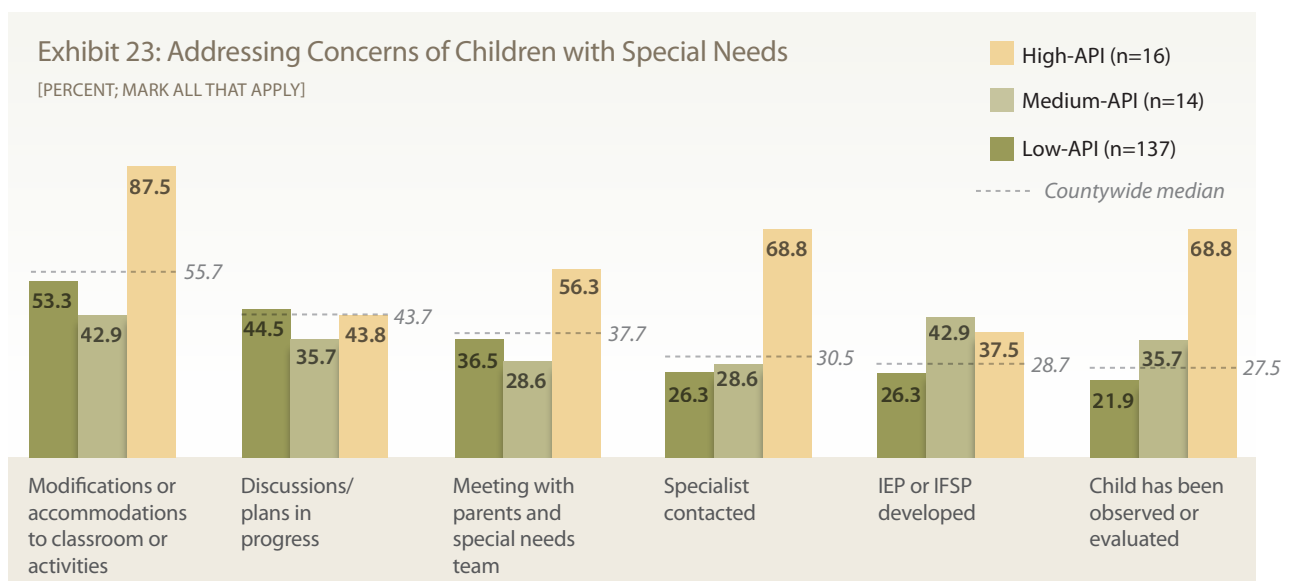
Early Childhood Educators (n=70-72) "3+ Times per Week"		Kindergarten Teachers (n=80-82) "3+ Times per Week"	
Engage in meaningful conversation during self-initiated activities	88.9	Practice letter recognition	100.0
Children listen to you read stories where they see the print (e.g., Big Books)	86.1	Write own name	100.0
Read books in English	80.0	Work on phonics	98.8
Listen to adult/teacher use common prepositions, such as over and under, up and down	76.4	Children learn about conventions of reading (left to right orientation, book holding)	96.3
Practice letter recognition	76.4	Engage in informal conversations	96.3

of students with special needs at 5 percent and 4 percent, respectively.

As illustrated in Exhibit 23, Monterey County's low performing schools appear to have more challenges addressing the concerns of children with special needs. The areas with the greatest disparities are modifying classrooms or activities; meeting with parents and special needs teams; contacting specialists; and having children observed or evaluated.

What Emerged

Kindergarten teachers at low-API schools are far less likely to have a graduate degree than their counterparts at medium- and high-API schools. Educators want and need more opportunities for professional development, particularly in the area of working with children with special needs. This is of special note for educators at the county's low-API schools.





Chapter 5 ■ Recommendations

The 2012 Monterey County Kindergarten Readiness Assessment – the fourth since 2004 – is the only assessment that monitors changes over time of school readiness in Monterey County. Today, First 5 Monterey County is the only dedicated source of funding in the county for children prenatal to age five and their families. This report serves as a rich source of information for anyone interested in nurturing our county's most valuable resources: our children. However, the true value of this assessment is not in how it increases knowledge, but in whether it inspires action. Below, we offer recommendations (in no particular order) for ways in which parents, educators, policy makers as well as key influencers, and the First 5 Monterey County Commission can put the findings of the 2012 KRA into practice.

Recommendations for Parents and Community Members

- **Read or show picture books to your child every day.** National and local research shows that reading or showing picture books to young children has more impact on school success than any other single activity. Despite this fact, the 2012 KRA demonstrates that reading remains near the bottom of the list of activities that parents do with their children on a daily basis. If you are a parent, take time to read or show picture books with your child every day, from infancy to the first day of kindergarten and beyond. This can be a challenging practice for many parents for a number of reasons, and may require additional support from the larger community.
- **Cultivate the character and socio-emotional development of your child.** Child development experts and Monterey County educators agree that character and soft skills are the most important developmental domains for children to master upon entering kindergarten. Strengthen your child's abilities in this critical area by playing games, engaging in projects together, and creating or placing your child in environments that promote shared play with other children their age.
- **Advocate for and enroll your child in a quality preschool.** The 2012 KRA demonstrates that preschool continues to be one of the best investments any parent can make in their child's future. If you have not done so already, explore the options available for your child in Monterey County. In particular, parents are encouraged to find out if they are eligible for Head Start and/or State preschool, get on preschool waiting lists as early as possible, and advocate for more childcare in your community.
- **Enroll in a parent development program.** Evidence points to the benefits of participating in parenting programs that model positive home educational activities, provide information about child health and development, give referrals and access to community resources, and connect parents to one another. Visit the First 5 Monterey County website for ideas about parent development programs: www.firs5monterey.org.



Recommendations for Educators and Administrators

- **Encourage parents to read or show picture books to their children on a daily basis.** The 2012 KRA demonstrates that reading to children continues to be the parent-child activity most often recommended by educators. Make sure parents hear this recommendation from you early and often. Find out what barriers families confront (e.g., limited access to books, lack of time) and work with parents to overcome them. Instill more confidence in parents by sharing techniques you have used in the classroom or by providing information regarding parent development programs that will allow them to read with their children at home.
- **Promote collaboration among early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers.** While early educators and kindergarten teachers tend to support practices that promote character and social development, their teaching beliefs are not always in alignment with each other. Encourage educators and administrators to explore how their beliefs diverge and how they align with developmental research. Collaborate to achieve greater articulation of teaching and learning practices that affect children upon kindergarten entry and beyond.
- **Make transitions to kindergarten as easy as possible by emphasizing transition practices that support schools in getting ready for all children.** The latest KRA reveals that some families experience an easier transition to kindergarten than others. Make sure families with entering kindergartners have access to transition activities, including tours of the school, assessments of child development and skills, and meetings with kinder teachers.
- **Support and celebrate the character and social development of your students.** 2012 KRA data demonstrate the importance of mastering character and social development. In fact, children who mastered *Self and Social Development* and *Self Regulation* were far more likely to master other important developmental domains. We strongly recommend that educators continue to focus on strategies and activities that cultivate these traits, especially for children from communities with socio-economic challenges.
- **Provide early educators and teachers with professional development opportunities related to supporting children with special needs and ample resources to effectively include children with special needs in their classrooms.** While educators and teachers continue to express a desire for training in this area, it appears that teachers do not have access to the support and resources (environmental adaptations, aides or assistants, screenings, and assessments) they want and need.

Recommendations for Policymakers and Key Influencers

- The responsibility of investing in our children is shared not only by families but also by policymakers and key influencers.** Children are Monterey County’s most precious resource, and key influencers play an important role in shifting attention and resources to help develop the cognitive and character skills that children need to be productive and engaged members of society. Actionable recommendations include:

 - Support efforts underway to develop a comprehensive strategy for early childhood development using a Collective Impact¹⁹ approach.
 - Provide policy and financial support to early childhood development strategies that reduce disparities and have long-term benefits to the community and future workforce, including preschool, parent development programs that promote literacy and parent-child engagement, and support for children with special needs.
 - Influence local and statewide policies that have the potential to enhance early childhood development strategies already under way.

Recommendations for First 5 Monterey County

- Shed light on the critical role of character and the socio-emotional development of children.** The 2012 KRA, as aligned with national research, continues to confirm that character and socio-emotional development increase a child’s ability to attain comprehensive achievement in school. In addition to supporting programs that focus on social and emotional well-being, F5MC should continue to educate policymakers and key influencers about the economic imperative of investing in prevention and early intervention programs that improve the developmental trajectories of children.
- Continue to build resources for families in communities with socio-economic challenges.** Research shows that investing in communities that face financial hardships yields a high rate of return for the family, community, and the future workforce. Families benefit from parent development programs that engage in positive home educational activities and shift attitudes about the importance of child development. Parenting development programs offer new insights into the importance of the earliest years of a child’s life as well as positive activities to support their growth and development.

¹⁹ Collective Impact seeks the support and commitment from a range of groups to come together to develop a common vision for achieving social impact.



The true value of this assessment is not in how it increases knowledge, but in whether it inspires action.

- **Partner with key players in the community who have pre-existing relationships with parents of young children in Monterey County.** The 2012 KRA demonstrates that families with young children continue to access child health and family services in a number of locations, including health clinics, WIC clinics, and schools. Given this strong community connection, F5MC should deepen its relationships with these organizations to conduct outreach and engagement services that increase awareness of F5MC-funded services.

- **Delve deeper to determine the barriers that prevent some families from participating in the home educational activities that are associated with school readiness.** The latest KRA findings reveal that participation in parent-child activities known to be associated with school readiness (e.g., reading) are slowly increasing over time. The Commission may wish to investigate challenges that prevent parents from feeling competent, well-informed, and capable of supporting their children.



Sampling ■ Establishing the Framework

A Sample Representative of Monterey County Children Entering School

As with previous iterations of the F5MC KRA, kindergartners sampled were identified using a stratified sampling framework. Sampling stratifications were based primarily on Academic Performance Index (API) ratings (low, medium, and high) of schools, Monterey County geographic region, and demographic variables, including race/ethnicity and gender. Once the framework was established, schools within each API level were randomly selected until the desired sample size was reached. Accommodations were also made to include a subset of schools that were not selected during the random selection process but that expressed a strong desire to participate in the assessment. This responsive, yet rigorous, sampling strategy means that findings are applicable to the entire public school kindergarten population in Monterey County.

A Large Sample Size

In keeping with previous KRAs prepared for F5MC, statistical reliability is considered to be high due in part to the size of the sample. The large sample size enabled the analysis to detect statistically significant differences across key variables. Therefore, key results of the 2012 KRA demonstrated ample statistical power for most statistical tests (i.e., a minimum of 0.80 out of a maximum of 1.0).



Methods ■ Determining the Tools

The Teacher-Completed Child Observation Tool

For the 2012 KRA, observations were completed by 89 kindergarten teachers for each child in their classroom between 30 and 60 days following the start of school. Observations were completed for a total of 1,922 children, a six percent increase over the 2009 assessment. This year's assessment produced an overall response rate of 81 percent. The observation tool, known as the Desired Results Developmental Profile – School Readiness (DRDP-SR®), is designed to allow teachers to observe, document, and reflect on the learning, development, and progress of all children upon kindergarten entry and during the kindergarten year. The DRDP-SR collects information across four developmental domains: 1) *Self and Social Development*; 2) *Self Regulation*; 3) *Language and Literacy*; and 4) *Mathematical Development*. In addition, children who speak a language other than English in the home were observed by their teachers for *English Language Development* in order to document and assess progress in learning how to communicate in English. Teachers who completed the child observation tools rated the mastery level of each student in each domain as “exploring,” “developing,” “building,” “integrating,” or “applying” competencies.

- **Exploring** – Children at this level show awareness of the feelings and physical differences of self and others; engage in play; use language to describe self, others, events, and stories; enjoy interacting with familiar adults; engage with and respond to literacy activities; recognize symbols, shapes, and patterns; make basic movements with

confidence; cooperate in completing routines; and follow guidance from adults about rules and routines.

- **Developing** – Children at this level engage in play and communicate about play with peers; initiate cooperative activities with adults; show increasing knowledge of print; use familiar strategies to solve problems; know some letters and numbers; sort and count small quantities of objects; copy patterns; use movement skills in a variety of settings and tasks; and begin to complete routines and follow rules on their own.
- **Building** – Children at this level express their feelings and acknowledge the feelings of others; engage in play that is increasingly complex and cooperative; develop close friendships; relate to adults to share experiences and get information; understand and use language to refer to real and imaginary experiences and for social purposes; show increasing understanding of stories and books; write some letters to communicate meaning; use a variety of strategies to learn about objects and solve problems; count, sort, and order objects; use complex movement skills in play and activities; independently complete simple routines; and apply rules in a variety of situations.
- **Integrating** – Children at this level are able to communicate the “how” and “why” of actions and events. They consider the needs and feelings of others and propose activities and solutions that work for themselves and others; cooperate with adults and peers to plan activities and solve problems; understand and



use language to explain, predict, compare, or summarize real and imaginary events and activities and for complex social purposes; know most letters; show understanding of text; show awareness that sounds make up language; solve simple subtraction and addition problems; coordinate multiple movements with balance, strength, or control; and communicate why practices and rules are important.

- **Applying** – Children at this level engage in extended conversations, understand that language can be used to express different intentions, comprehend increasingly complex informational text, and use increasingly complex grammar. They have a greater capacity to take the perspective of their peers, such as expressing concern for friends' feelings, displaying better conflict resolution skills, and demonstrating a concern that others be treated fairly. At this developmental level, children know how to solve addition and subtraction problems, engage in measuring length, recognize a greater variety of shapes, solve increasingly complex problems that require multi-step solutions, and can sometimes explain why those solutions may work.

Family Surveys

Available in English and Spanish, family surveys were distributed by 89 kindergarten teachers at the start of the school year. The surveys were sent home with children who gave them to their parents or caregivers to be completed and returned. A total of 1,804 parents completed the surveys – nearly equal to the 1,857 surveys completed for the 2009 KRA. Overall, 76 percent

of families who received a survey completed it and sent it back. Survey topics included family characteristics, child health status, school readiness activities, kindergarten transition, and parental support.

Kindergarten Teacher and Early Childhood Educator Surveys

A total of 82 kindergarten teachers and 72 early childhood educators responded to the surveys. Educators were asked to complete surveys about their backgrounds, experience, qualifications, and teaching philosophies. The surveys also gathered information about the nature and quality of the classroom environment, use of kindergarten transition activities, and level of involvement among teachers and parents. Early childhood educator survey data was also collected.

Data Analysis

All survey data were entered into the statistical software database Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). We used multiple analysis techniques to examine frequencies, averages, cross-tabulations, and multivariable analyses. A total of 1,569 DRDP-SR and family surveys were matched and merged into a database. We then compared children's school readiness with family activities and other family-influenced factors using chi-squared analyses, ANOVAs, and logistic regression analyses. For F5MC participants, we extracted information from F5MC's management information system (Persimmony) of all children with a birth year of 2006 and 2007 and their families who received services. We found 313 of those children that were also KRA participants.

Acknowledgements

First 5 Monterey County (F5MC) and Harder+Company Community Research would like to thank the many early childhood educators and teachers, schools, and districts who helped make the 2012 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment a reality. The success of this study was dependent on the participation of over 1,900 children and their parents, early care and education providers, kindergarten teachers, teacher assistants and aides, school administrators, district officials, F5MC staff, and members of the F5MC Evaluation Advisory Committee.

F5MC and Harder+Company would like to thank the district officials who recognized the value of this study for the County and public schools, and encouraged their elementary schools to participate. We would also like to thank schools administrators for acknowledging the importance of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, and for empowering kindergarten teachers by providing them the opportunity to participate in the study.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to the 89 kindergarten teachers who participated in this study, despite multiple and competing demands. They administered over 1,900 surveys to incoming kindergartners and encouraged nearly the same amount of parents to complete family surveys. Their professionalism and flexibility, as well as their commitment to educating Monterey County's youth, made it possible to collect a representative sample of incoming kindergartners.

The schools that participated in the 2012 KRA are:

ALISAL UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
Alisal Community Elementary School
Bardin Elementary School
César E. Chavéz Elementary School
Creekside Elementary School
Dr. Oscar F. Loya Elementary School
Fremont Elementary School
Jesse G. Sánchez Elementary School

CARMEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Tularcitos Elementary School

GONZALES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
La Gloria Elementary School

GREENFIELD UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
Mary Chapa Literacy and Technology Academy

MONTEREY PENINSULA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Del Rey Woods Elementary School
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School
Foothill Elementary School
Highland Elementary School

NORTH MONTEREY COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Prunedale Elementary School

PAJARO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Hall Elementary School

SAN ANTONIO UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
San Antonio School

SALINAS CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Henry F. Kammann Elementary School
Laurel Wood Elementary School
Loma Vista Elementary School
Los Padres Elementary School
University Park Elementary School

SANTA RITA UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

McKinnon Elementary School
New Republic Elementary School

SOLEDAD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Jack Francioni Elementary School
Gabilan Elementary School

F5MC and Harder+Company Community Research are also grateful for the expert guidance provided by the F5MC Evaluation Advisory Committee during the planning, execution and analysis of the study.

F5MC Evaluation Advisory Committee

- Len Foster, retired Director of Health, Monterey County Health Department
- Krista Hanni, Program Manager, Monterey County Health Department
- Jan Phillips-Paulsen, retired Early Childhood Educator
- Josefina Silva, Preschool Coordinator, Greenfield Union School District

We acknowledge the participation of parents of incoming kindergartners in Monterey County who completed the family survey. Their contribution gives voice to families with young children entering school throughout Monterey County. Finally, we value children as explorers; capable, competent, and full of curiosity about themselves, others, and their world. We work in service of all of our youngest children.





1125 Baldwin Street
Salinas, California 93906

first5monterey.org

harder+company
community research

SAN FRANCISCO

DAVIS

LOS ANGELES

SAN DIEGO

harderco.com

copy editor: Susan Sharpe, words-ideas.com

design: Paulette Traverso & Patrick Santana, traversosantana.com