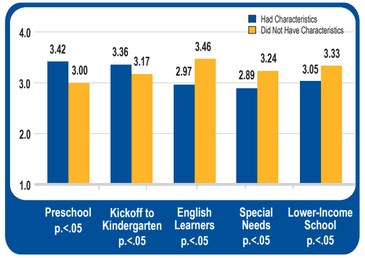
What Characteristics Are Most Associated With Kindergartner's Readiness?

To answer this question, the researchers first calculated an overall average school readiness score. This score represented children's average level of proficiency across all of the 20 skills included in the assessment and shown in Figure 3. The researchers then tested the relationship between the overall average readiness score and characteristics, such as participation in preschool, Headstart, and Kickoff to Kindergarten as well as the presence of special needs, English Learner status, age, gender and income (based on school-level data). Because these characteristics often co-occur, appropriate statistical procedures were used to adjust for children's varying backgrounds. For example, when testing for differences between children with and without preschool experience, the influence of the effects of Head Start, Kickoff to Kindergarten, English Learner status, presence of special needs, age and gender were held constant. The analysis revealed that children who had participated in preschool and Kickoff to Kindergarten had significantly higher average school readiness scores than children who had not participated in these programs. Though not included in the 2003 analysis, participation in Raising a Reader® has also been shown to positively impact children's overall average readiness scores.[5] Children who were English Learners had significantly lower readiness scores than their English proficient peers. Children with special needs and those attending lower-income schools also had significantly lower scores.

Figure 4 - Overall Average Adjusted Readiness Score by Key Characteristic of Observed Students, 2003



Note: In statistical terminology, if p.<.05, a difference is reported to be statistically significant.

[5] The overall average readiness score for Raising a Reader® was calculated based on the five skills the program expects to impact: expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning, has expressive abilities, recognizes the letters of the alphabet, engages with books and can count 10 objects correctly.

How Will We Use These Findings?

- Children with preschool and/or summer transitional program experience are better prepared for kindergarten. Therefore, we must champion early learning experiences for children in their youngest years.
- Children are least prepared in the developmental area of communication and language usage. Therefore, we must support efforts that foster the development of early literacy skills.
- Schools must be ready for children. This includes schools' ability to support a child's successful transition into kindergarten no matter where they fall on the developmental continuum. Therefore, we must strengthen efforts to link early care/learning programs with the elementary school system.

Acknowledgements

The Peninsula Partnership gratefully acknowledges the financial support of

First 5 San Mateo County
and
Morgan Family Foundation

The Peninsula Partnership acknowledges the invaluable contribution of the following partners:

Applied Survey Research
Peninsula Community Foundation
Peninsula Partnership Council
San Mateo County Office of Education
School Readiness Assessment Task Force

Participating superintendents, principals and kindergarten teachers from:

Cabrillo Unified School District
Jefferson School District
La Honda-Pescadero Unified District
Pacifica School District
Ravenswood City School District
Redwood City Elementary District
San Mateo-Foster City Elementary School District
South San Francisco Unified School District

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An Initiative of Peninsula Community Foundation and San Mateo County

For a copy of the full report or questions regarding the assessment methodology, please contact Michelle Fries, Special Projects Manager, at 650.581.4373 or visit our web site at www.pcf.org/peninsula_partnership/.

Photos: Terry Lorant, Kaarin Knudson, R.R. Jones, Photodisc and Comstock.
Design: Digital Renaissance

Ready For School?

A Report on Skill Levels of San Mateo County Kindergartners

Executive Summary
2004