

**2004 KINDERGARTEN READINESS ASSESSMENT
FOR THE FIRST 5 MONTEREY COUNTY SCHOOL
READINESS INITIATIVE: FINAL REPORT**

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Executive Summary

The *Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)* was conducted in fall 2004 to provide a snapshot of kindergarteners' readiness to begin school in those regions served by the First 5 Monterey County School Readiness Collaborative. The KRA, which utilized assessments of individual children by kindergarten teachers (MDRDP Child Survey) and a paper survey distributed to parents of kindergarteners, included data for 866 children attending kindergarten in high-priority schools across the county as well as 876 parents of kindergarteners.

Eighty-five percent of children who received an MDRDP assessment were identified as Latino, of which 76 percent spoke Spanish as their primary language. Over 90 percent of children were less than 5.5 years-old at the time of the assessment.

Overall, results of the MDRDP Child Survey conducted at schools in areas targeted by the School Readiness Collaborative suggest that most children at these schools entered kindergarten with low levels of school readiness. Key findings include the following:

- Fewer than 5 percent of children were assessed as having almost or fully mastered all items on the MDRDP;
- The percentage of children who almost or fully mastered each school readiness dimension was generally much lower than for children participating in the statewide MDRDP sample;
- Children were more likely to have almost or fully mastered the Approaches to Learning (18 percent) and Emotional Well-Being (17 percent) dimensions, and much less likely to have almost/fully mastered the Cognition and General Knowledge (7 percent) dimension.

Through a written survey, parents reported the following information about their child's health, physical development, pre-kindergarten experiences and kindergarten transition activities:

- Parents widely report that their children have high health insurance enrollment rates (91 percent), utilize preventive care regularly and rate their child's overall health as high;
- Less than half of parents report reading or showing picture books to their children on a daily basis;
- Parents identified health clinics (67 percent) and WIC clinics (43 percent) as primary sources of information about child health and family services.

An analysis of matched child (MDRDP) and Parent Surveys strongly suggest that the following factors were associated with higher levels of school readiness among participating children:

- Children older than five years old
- Children of parents with greater than a high school education
- Children who speak English as their primary language
- Children who were female

Introduction

This report presents the full findings from the *Kindergarten Readiness Assessment* conducted on behalf of First 5 Monterey County in fall 2004. The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, which utilized assessments of individual children by kindergarten teachers (MDRDP Child Survey) and a paper survey distributed to parents of kindergarteners, includes data for 866 children attending kindergarten in high-priority (Academic Performance Index of 3 or lower) schools across Monterey County. The data findings are intended to provide a snapshot of kindergarteners' readiness to begin school in those regions targeted by the First 5 Monterey County School Readiness Collaborative. Further, it highlights those characteristics and factors that are associated with increased school readiness among participating children. Assessment results from the MDRDP Child Survey do not reflect the quality of participating schools but are instead a measure of children's experiences before entering kindergarten.

Background

The Monterey School Readiness Collaborative, a formal collaboration of First 5 Monterey County (F5MC) funded agencies within four geographic regions, seeks to improve the readiness of Monterey County children to begin kindergarten. In addition to supporting direct services, the School Readiness Collaborative seeks to strengthen networks between service providers and schools, as well as between elementary and pre-school programs. Likewise, it has sought to elevate the visibility of issues surrounding the preparedness of children to begin school and the capacity of schools to receive children. The School Readiness Collaborative, initiated through a grant from First 5 California in 2001, has been further supported through additional funding from F5MC beginning in 2004.

Local F5MC efforts to support children's readiness are part of a larger investment by the First 5 California Children and Families' Commission, which has devoted over \$200 million since 2002 to support children's transition to kindergarten and the capacity of communities to support them.¹ To document children's school readiness, First 5 California has funded an annual statewide assessment of entering kindergarteners attending high-priority schools (Academic Performance Index of 3 or lower) across the state. Results from the 2004 assessment, which also relied on the Modified Desired Results Developmental Profile, were presented to the counties in April 2005.

To provide county-specific data on children's readiness for school, F5MC augmented the statewide evaluation by funding the *Kindergarten Readiness Assessment* (KRA). The KRA relied on two primary data collection methods: individual child assessments by kindergarten teachers (MDRDP) and parent surveys sent home with children. In fall 2004, Harder+Company coordinated assessment and data collection for fourteen schools in the local KRA and two additional schools participating in the state School Readiness Initiative Evaluation.² Participating schools represented those areas targeted by the School Readiness Collaborative.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Overview

How Was the Sample Selected?

F5MC selected schools to participate in the KRA based on two fundamental criteria. First, F5MC sought participation from 'high-priority' schools with Academic Performance Index (API) scores of three or lower (the lowest three deciles). Second, F5MC included schools that reflected the service areas targeted by F5MC and were distributed into the four School Readiness Initiative regions. The sample of schools participating in the KRA was not intended to be representative of schools in Monterey County but to include only schools in the catchment areas where F5MC focused School Readiness funding.

¹ First 5 California web site: <http://www.cfc.ca.gov/SchoolReady1.htm>

² Frank Paul and Ord Terrace participated in the state evaluation and are not included in this analysis.

In contrast, the state School Readiness Initiative Evaluation sought to select a sample of schools that was representative of high-priority schools (API of 3 or lower) statewide.³ Though the state and county assessments utilized different sampling strategies, it is nevertheless useful to compare assessment results between the two samples. Statewide results represent a comparable population of students within a state context and therefore a useful benchmark for Monterey County.

Who Participated?

Participating schools represented all four F5MC School Readiness regions and six school districts. In all, 866 MDRDP Child Surveys and 876 Parent Surveys were returned. The distribution of responses was similar between both surveys; approximately 41 percent of responses were from Region 1 (Alisal), 22 percent from Region 2 (Peninsula), 21 percent from Region 3 (South County), and 16 percent from Region 4 (North County).

Exhibit 1. List of Participating Schools

	Child Surveys	Parent Surveys
REGION 1 – Alisal		
<i>Alisal Unified School District</i>		
Alisal Community School	54	68
Cesar Chavez Elementary	--	48
Fremont Elementary	103	95
Loya Elementary	71	58
Jesse G. Sanchez Elementary	128	98
REGION 2 – Peninsula		
<i>Monterey Peninsula Unified School District</i>		
Del Rey Woods Elementary	55	64
Highland Elementary	68	64
Manzanita/King Upper Elementary	72	64
REGION 3 – South County		
<i>San Lucas District</i>		
San Lucas School	9	4
<i>San Ardo District</i>		
San Ardo Elementary	18	5
<i>King City Unified School District</i>		
Del Rey Elementary	69	60
Santa Lucia Elementary	76	109
REGION 4 – North County		
<i>Pajaro Valley Unified School District</i>		
Hall Elementary	107	89
Ohlone Elementary	36	50
TOTAL Participants	866	876

³ The statewide sample was also weighted to reflect distribution of students, ethnicity and English Language Learner proportions for the state as a whole.

Response Rates

Response rates for both the MDRDP Child Survey and Parent Survey were above 70 percent and similar to consent rates for the state School Readiness Initiative Evaluation. Participating schools utilized a passive consent form for the MDRDP Child Survey, which generally produces higher participation rates. Overall, 74 percent of MDRDP Child Surveys and 75 percent of Parent Surveys were returned.

Exhibit 2. Survey Participation Rate

	Distributed	Returned	Response Rate
Child Surveys	1,169	866	74%
Parent Surveys	1,169	876	75%
TOTAL	2,338	1,742	75%

Data Collection Tools: MDRDP Child Survey and Parent Survey

The MDRDP, a modified version of the Desired Results Developmental Profile, is a teacher-completed observation checklist. It includes items about four of the five dimensions of children’s readiness for school: Cognition and General Knowledge; Communicative Skills; Emotional Well-Being and Social Competence; and Approaches to Learning.⁴ Each dimension includes between three and twelve items (see sections on individual dimensions for listings of items). Teachers rate the level of mastery for each individual child according to a four-point scale. Children that achieve a 3 (almost) or 4 (fully) are rated as having “Almost” or “Fully” mastered an item.⁵

The Parent Survey, with passive consent from the parent, collects parent-reported information about the child’s health and physical development, preschool and home experiences prior to kindergarten, and kindergarten transition activities. The written survey, presented in Spanish and English, was sent home with children and returned by parents.

The combined information from the MDRDP Child Survey and Parent Survey address the five dimensions articulated by the National Education Goals Panel as critical to children’s readiness for school.⁶ In turn, these findings provide a snapshot of entering kindergarteners’ readiness for school, and can be compared with entering kindergarten cohorts to track school-readiness trends over time.

⁴ The Physical Well-Being & Motor Development dimension is not addressed by the MDRDP.

⁵ The MDRDP has been tested for inter-rater and test-retest reliability.

⁶ The five dimensions are Physical Well-Being & Motor Development, Social & Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Communication & Language Usage, and Cognition & General Knowledge.

Data Collection Process

Following school selection in the summer of 2004, Harder+Company conducted trainings with participating kindergarten teachers on how to assess children using the MDRDP Child Survey and the process for distributing Parent Surveys, which were completed in August and September 2004. The surveys were sent home with each kindergartener within two weeks of the start of the school session, and through a self-selection process, returned within one week. Participating teachers completed MDRDP Child Surveys for children in their classrooms in September and October 2004, between 30 and 60 days of the start of the school session.

Data Analysis

The Parent Survey (n=876) and the MDRDP Child Survey (n=866) were first analyzed independently, using frequencies and cross-tabulations. Next, a matching procedure was performed, which yielded (n=666) matched survey pairs (i.e., a parent survey and an MDRDP completed for the same child). An analysis was then performed on this subset of surveys to determine which parent and child characteristics (as reported on the parent survey) were predictive of better MDRDP outcomes. For this analysis, the MDRDP outcome was defined as a dichotomous variable: the child fully or almost fully mastered all items in the dimension vs. the child did not fully or almost fully master all items in the dimension. Significant associations are highlighted in the final section of this report.

Limitations of this Study

When utilizing the results of the KRA, it is important that users note the limitations of the study:

- The MDRDP Child Survey provides a snapshot of developmental mastery among a cohort of children, but is not designed to track children's progress along school readiness scales over time. Rather, it operates as an inventory of items that are either mastered or still emerging. Therefore, results should not be viewed as a picture of where children fall on a linear scale of school readiness progress, but as a snapshot of what items/dimensions have/have not been mastered at the time of the assessment.
- Though distributing a written Parent Survey to parents may have been the most efficient method of disseminating surveys, it may pose a couple of potential biases. First, since the survey was written rather than orally conducted there is an inherent bias against those parents who have limited literacy skills. Parents were asked to return surveys with their children, which also poses a self-selection bias favoring more pro-active parents. Though the degree of the bias cannot be determined, it is likely that the effect of both biases is to produce more positive responses.
- In addition to examining findings from the individual surveys, Parent Surveys were 'matched' with MDRDP Child Surveys for their children wherever possible. Statistical analysis was then conducted to determine significant associations between responses to the Parent Survey and children's level of mastery on the MDRDP. Though the analysis

does highlight the degree to which certain characteristics are *associated* with higher MDRDP scores, it does not necessarily indicate *causality*. That is, as a result of this analysis we cannot be certain that a certain factor is the cause of higher or lower school readiness among children.

- Participating schools were purposely selected by F5MC to include those schools in areas where the School Readiness Collaborative is targeting services. Because the sample is not representative, results from both the MDRDP Child Survey and Parent Survey cannot be generalized to the County overall or to districts and regions. Comparisons between districts/regions do not accurately describe potential differences in school readiness among children in those areas.

Key Findings

Children participating in the MDRDP Child Survey were typically younger than 5.5 years old and Latino. Over 90 percent of children were less than 5.5 years-old at the time of the assessment, compared to 67 percent of the statewide cohort. Likewise, 85 percent of students were identified as Latino, of which 76 percent spoke Spanish as their primary language.

Findings from the MDRDP Child Survey suggest that most children at the participating schools entered kindergarten with low levels of developmental mastery. Fewer than 5 percent of children were assessed as having almost or fully mastered all of the items on the MDRDP and the percentage of children almost/fully mastering each dimension were typically half that of the statewide cohort. Children were most likely to have mastered the Approaches to Learning (18 percent) and Emotional Well-Being dimensions (17 percent), but only 7 percent were assessed as having mastered the Cognition and General Knowledge dimension.

In the Parent Survey parents widely report that their children have high health insurance, utilization of care and health status overall. Less than half (44 percent) said they read stories to their children everyday compared to 63 percent of parents in the statewide cohort. Nearly 80 percent of parents who submitted the survey had completed no more than a high school education.

An analysis of matched child (MDRDP) and Parent Surveys strongly suggest that certain factors are associated with higher levels of school readiness among children. The following characteristics were significantly associated with higher levels of mastery in one or more dimension of the MDRDP Child Survey⁷.

- Children older than five years old
- Children of parents with greater than a high school education
- Children who speak English as their primary language
- Children who were female

⁷ Each of these findings was statistically significant at a level of $p \leq .05$.

Demographics

Demographic characteristics for children and families were collected by both the MDRDP Child Survey and Parent Survey. Key findings include the following:

- The vast majority (85 percent) of children in the county sample were identified as Latino, compared to 77 percent of the state sample. Though the local ethnic breakdown appears similar to the state sample, data on primary language suggests some important distinctions between the state and local samples. According to teachers, nearly three-quarters of children speak Spanish as a first language (something that parents confirmed in the parent survey). Statewide, teachers identified Spanish as the primary language for only 54 percent of children, compared to over 75 percent of Monterey County children who participated in the MDRDP Child Survey. This finding is reinforced in the Parent Survey where 60 percent of participating Monterey parents said that only Spanish was spoken in the home and an additional 22 percent shared that Spanish and English were spoken in the home.

Exhibit 3. Parent Survey Demographics

Parent Demographic Characteristics	N	%	
		Monterey Target Schools	Statewide KEP
Household languages spoken	876		
English only		15	--
Spanish only		60	--
English and Spanish		22	--
Other/Missing		3	--
Parental Education level	818		
Less than High School		45	47
Finished High School		29	34
More than High School		26	19

- The ethnic characteristics reported through the MDRDP Child Survey and Parent Survey generally correlate to the population targeted by F5MC services. Eighty-five percent of MDRDP Child Survey participants were identified as Latino compared to 84 percent of children served overall by F5MC funded agencies.⁸
- Parents participating in the Parent Survey reported higher levels of educational attainment than those served through intensive services by F5MC agencies. Whereas 45 percent of parents who returned the Parent Survey had not completed high school, the same was true for 68 percent of parents receiving intensive services from F5MC funded agencies.⁹
- Kindergarteners at the targeted schools were particularly young. According to teachers, nearly all were less than 5.5 years of age compared to only 67 percent of children

⁸ “First 5 Monterey County OCERS Data Status Report: A Summary of findings from data records from July 2002 through August 2004”. Harder+Company Community Research; p. 8. March 15, 2005
⁹ Ibid; p. 17. March 15, 2005

surveyed statewide.¹⁰ Age is commonly regarded as an important factor contributing to school readiness among kindergarteners. It is unknown why the age of children varies so widely between the state and local samples.¹¹

Exhibit 4. MDRDP - Child Demographics

Child Demographic Characteristics	N	%	
		Monterey Target Schools	Statewide KEP
Age	866		
<=5.5 years		92	67
>5.5 years		8	33
Gender	864		
Male		55	51
Female		45	49
Race/Ethnicity	818		
African American		3	9
Asian/PI		2	5
Latino		85	77
White		7	7
Other		0	1
Multiracial		3	-
IEP	598		
Yes		4	6
No		96	-
Language	822		
Child's primary language			
English		23	43
Spanish		76	54
Other		1	4

MDRDP Child Survey Results – Overall Child Competencies

This sample of high-priority schools includes those schools in the areas targeted by F5MC School Readiness services. Results of the MDRDP Child Survey therefore provide a useful ‘snapshot’ of the developmental competencies of children in targeted schools. Likewise, since the statewide sample also targeted children attending high-priority schools, it represents a useful basis of comparison for Monterey County.

¹⁰ The percentage of children reported to be under 5.5 years old differs somewhat in the Parent Survey (though minimally). This may be attributable to several factors, including that some parents that returned surveys did not have their children included in the MDRDP Child Survey. Also, surveys may have been filled out at different times by parents and teachers.

¹¹ Variation may be attributed to a number of factors and will be investigated for the final analysis.

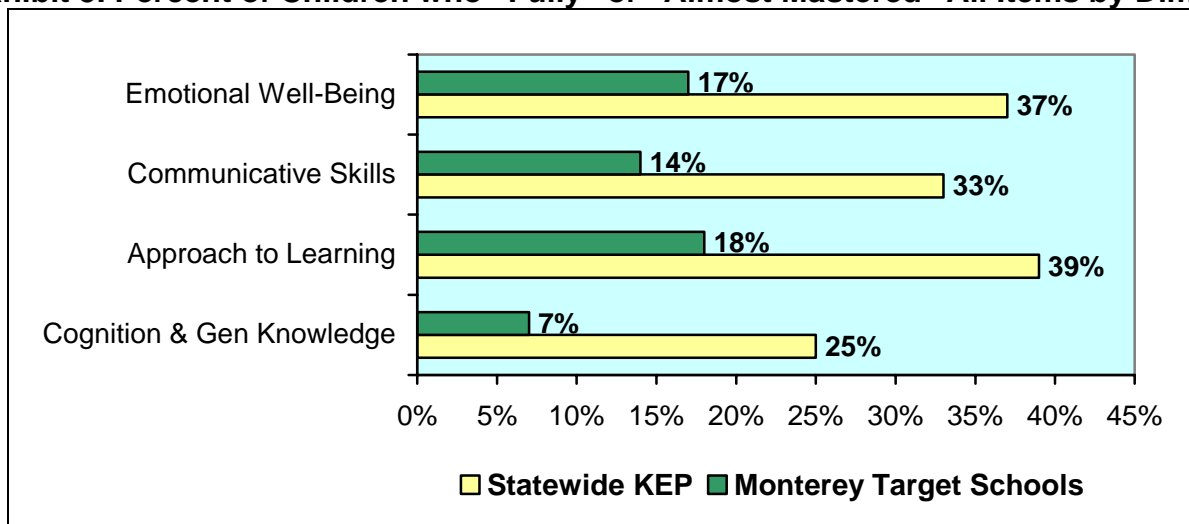
Overall, most children did not have high competencies across all four MDRDP dimensions. Fewer than 5 percent of children were assessed as having almost or fully mastered all items on the MDRDP. The percentage of children who almost or fully mastered each dimension ranged from 7 percent to 18 percent. Mastery levels for Monterey children participating in the MDRDP Child Survey were generally much lower than those for children participating in the statewide sample. Other key findings include the following:

- Children surveyed in targeted county schools were more likely to have almost or fully mastered the Approaches to Learning (18 percent) and Emotional Well-Being (17 percent) dimensions.
- The gap in mastery levels between county and statewide cohorts was most pronounced in the Cognition and General Knowledge dimension, where the statewide percentage of children almost or fully mastered was over three times the rate of Monterey County targeted schools.
- In the Communication, Emotional Well-Being and Approaches to Learning dimensions, the Monterey County rate of almost/full mastery was roughly half that of statewide percentages.

Interpreting the Data

Consistent with the statewide reporting, local MDRDP data is presented primarily by dimension. The data is reported as *the percentage of children who almost or fully mastered all items within each dimension*. For example, in the Approaches to Learning dimension 18 percent of participating children in the county were assessed by their teacher as having almost or fully mastered *all* items in that dimension.

Exhibit 5. Percent of Children who “Fully” or “Almost Mastered” All Items by Dimension



MDRDP Level of Mastery: Emotional Well-Being Dimension

Items in the Emotional Well-Being dimension of the MDRDP Child Survey examine the following developmental themes: interaction with adults, interaction with peers, and self-regulation.

- Overall, 17 percent of children in targeted county schools almost or fully mastered all items within this dimension compared to 37 percent of children in the statewide cohort.
- Typically, between 40 and 50 percent of children had almost/or fully mastered each of the individual items in this dimension.
- Children were assessed lowest on items relating to resolving social conflict.

Exhibit 7. Percentage of Children in Targeted Schools who Fully or Almost Mastered all Items within Emotional Well-Being Dimension

Emotional Well-Being	N	Percentage Fully or Almost Mastered	
		Monterey Target Schools	Statewide KEP
Seeks adult help when appropriate (e.g., asks adult for assistance to open bottle of paint)	855	47	66
Seeks adult help after trying to resolve conflict or problem on his or her own (e.g., “Miss Lu, I asked Frederica not to play with the ball around our sand castle but she won’t stop.)	853	35	55
Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance (e.g., agrees to alternatives like sharing or taking turns)	844	28	53
Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying)	839	45	58
Participates in cooperative group efforts (e.g., group project or game, dramatic play, taking turns; organized play and games with specified or invented rules)	854	43	63
Exhibits impulse control and self-regulating (e.g., uses appropriate words or sign language to show anger when a toy is taken by another child, waits for turn on playground equipment, shows some patience)	854	42	60
Follows rules when participating in routine activities (e.g.; handles toys with care, joins group for snack or circle time, tolerates transitions)	854	47	67
Comforts self and controls the expression of emotion with adult guidance (e.g.; can express anger or sadness without tantrums, fights, or physical conflicts)	848	48	66
Understands and follows rules in different settings (e.g.; transitions between classroom, after-school program, and playgroup; lowers voice when enters library)	856	45	66
Percentage of Children who Fully or Almost Mastered All Items	866	17	37

Note: Denominator used is valid cases and so the % is out of valid cases, not out of total 866.

MDRDP Level of Mastery: Communicative Skills Dimension

Items in the Communicative Skills dimension of the MDRDP Child Survey examine the following developmental themes: language comprehension, language expression.

- Overall, 14 percent of children in targeted county schools almost or fully mastered all items within this dimension compared to 33 percent of children in the statewide cohort.
- Generally, between 20 and 30 percent of children were rated as having almost or fully mastered individual items. This lower rate compared to the statewide cohort is not surprising given the significant population of Spanish speaking students.
- Children were most likely to rate well on following two-step requests (44 percent) and participating in songs, rhymes, etc. that play with sounds (37 percent).

Exhibit 8. Percentage of Children in Targeted Schools Who Fully or Almost Mastered Items in Communicative Skills Dimension

Communicative Skills	N	Percentage Fully or Almost Mastered	
		Monterey Target Schools	Statewide KEP
Follows two-step requests that are sequential, but not necessarily related (e.g., “Please pick up the ball and then get your coat.”)	858	44	67
Understands increasing number of specialized words (e.g., different types of dinosaurs, various ingredients in recipe)	850	28	48
Understands complex, multi-step requests (e.g. “Put your jacket away, get any materials you need to finish what you started yesterday, and let me know if you need any help”)	835	25	51
Engages in conversations that develop a thought or idea (e.g., tells about a past event, asks how something works)	856	29	49
Participates in songs, rhymes, games, and stories that play with sounds of language (e.g., claps out sounds or rhythms of language; creates own rhyming words through songs, finger plays, chants)	857	37	57
Tells about own experiences in a logical sequence (e.g., “After I get picked up, it’s usually dinner time. Then, I play, brush my teeth, and go to bed.”)	855	25	48
Percentage of Children who Fully or Almost Mastered All Items	866	14	33

Note: Denominator used is valid cases and so the % is out of valid cases, not out of total 866.

MDRDP Level of Mastery: Approaches to Learning Dimension

Items in the Approaches to Learning dimension of the MDRDP Child Survey examine the following developmental themes: interest in learning, cognitive competence.

- Overall, 18 percent of children in targeted county schools almost or fully mastered all items within this dimension compared to 39 percent of children in the statewide cohort. This was the highest rate for the four dimensions.

Exhibit 9. Percentage of Children who Fully or Almost Mastered All Items within Approaches to Learning Dimension

Approaches to Learning	N	Percentage of Fully And Almost Mastered	
		Monterey Target Schools	Statewide KEP
Observes and examines natural phenomena through senses (e.g., notices different types of bugs, asks why it rains.)	787	27	46
Shows willingness to take risks in learning new skills (e.g., climbs jungle gym, tries to play a new musical instrument, tries out a new game)	858	40	59
Stays with or repeats a task (e.g., finishes a puzzle, asks that block structure be left to work on after snack, makes a really long Play-Doh snake out of many pieces)	858	40	59
Percentage of Children who Fully or Almost Mastered All Items	866	18	39

Note: Denominator used is valid cases and so the % is out of valid cases, not out of total 866.

MDRDP Level of Mastery: Cognition and General Knowledge Dimension

Items in the Cognition and General Knowledge dimension of the MDRDP Child Survey examine the following developmental themes: measure, order and time; number concepts; reading skills; interest in books and other written materials; writing.

- Overall, 7 percent of children in targeted county schools almost or fully mastered all items within this dimension compared to 25 percent of children in the statewide cohort. This was the lowest rate for the four dimensions.
- 47 percent of children could write three or more letters and 46 percent pretended to read books.
- Only 20 percent of children were rated as understanding numbers and simple operations and using math concepts in daily activities.

Exhibit 10. Percentage of Children in Targeted Schools who Fully or Almost Mastered all Items within Cognition and General Knowledge Dimension

Cognition and General Knowledge	N	Percentage Fully or Almost Mastered	
		Monterey Target Schools	Statewide KEP
Orders objects from smallest to largest (e.g., orders various circle sizes, nests cups, lines up from shortest to tallest)	779	34	56
Understands that numbers represent quantity (e.g., can get three apples out of the box, asks for two more crackers, can put out one napkin for each child)	852	37	59
Understands numbers and simple operations, and uses math manipulatives, games, toys, coins in daily activities (e.g., adding, subtracting)	778	20	40
Understands that letters make up words (i.e., knows some of the letters in his or her name)	854	36	60
Recognizes print in the environment (e.g., recognizes signs around the room as labels for “Puzzles,” “Toys,” or “Books”)	852	30	54
Makes three or more letter-sound correspondences (e.g., knows the letter “b” makes the “buhh” sound)	852	26	53
Pretends to read books	852	46	64
Engages in discussion about books (e.g., predicts events in a story, retells main events from a story in order)	854	30	49
Draws a picture related to a story and talks about his or her drawing	855	39	56
Uses pretend writing during play activities (e.g., scribbles lines and shapes)	820	33	54
Writes three or more letters or numbers	854	47	69
Uses pictures and letters to express thoughts and ideas	852	33	56
Percentage of Children Who Fully or Almost Mastered All Items	866	7	25

Note: Denominator used is valid cases and so the % is out of valid cases, not out of total 866.

Parent Survey Findings

The Parent Survey was distributed to parents in schools where the MDRDP Child Survey was being conducted. The survey collects parent-reported information about the child's health and physical development, preschool and home experiences prior to kindergarten, and kindergarten transition activities. Key findings from the survey include the following:

- Parents reported that their children had high rates of health insurance enrollment (91 percent), health status and utilization of medical care. Likewise, parents reported their children in “very good” or “excellent” health at slightly higher rates than those found in the 2003 California Health Interview Survey.
- According to parents, health clinics and Women Infants and Children (WIC) clinics were the most noted sources of information about child health and family services. Slightly less than one in five parents said family resource centers were sources of information.
- About 79 percent of parents said that their child had a “very easy” or “somewhat easy” transition into kindergarten. Likewise, about two-thirds (66 percent) reported enrolling their children in kindergarten “months” before classes began and a similar rate (65 percent) received a letter from the school about preparing their child for kindergarten.
- Prior to beginning kindergarten, children most commonly were cared for at home with a parent (66 percent) and/or in a pre-school, Head Start or child care center (53 percent).
- Less than half of parents reported reading or showing picture books to their children on a daily basis. Comparatively, 63 percent of parents in the statewide KEP sample reported reading to their children everyday.

Health and Social Services

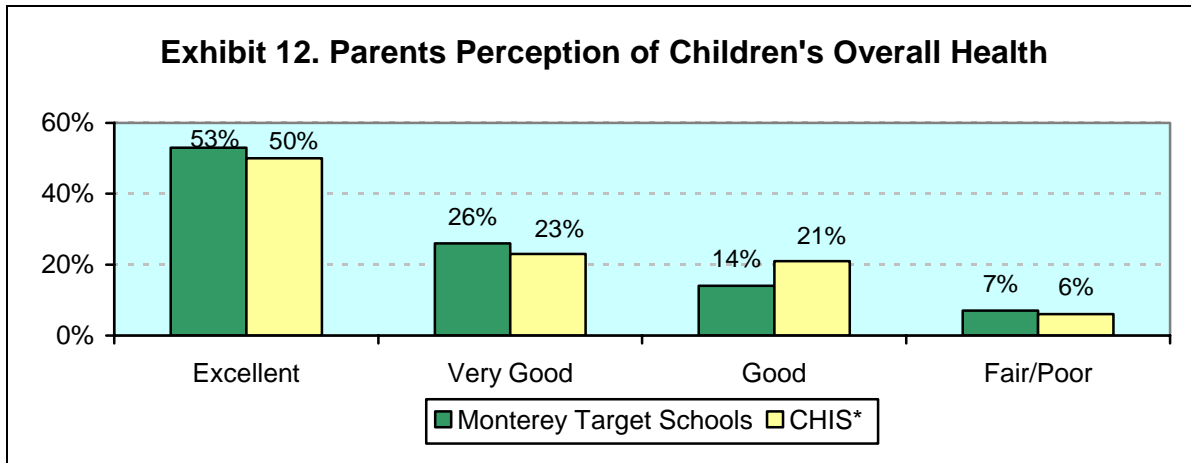
Findings from the 2004 statewide KEP asserted a strong link between a child’s overall health and their readiness to begin school.¹² Parents participating in the Parent Survey responded to several questions about health status and health care utilization, including health insurance rates, presence of a medical home and use of dental services. Overall, parents reported very high rates of health status and service utilization. Likewise, the rates communicated by Monterey County families met or exceeded findings from the statewide KEP parent survey. Over 90 percent of county parents said their child was covered by some form of health insurance compared to 88 percent statewide. Likewise, 83 percent of county parents reported that their child had a “regular medical practitioner for routine child-care.” In a similar question, 70 percent of parents statewide reported having a medical home for their child. Lastly, parents noted that their children’s overall health was high. The percentage of parents who reported their child in excellent health (53 percent) paralleled the rate reported for all parents in the 2003 California Health Interview Survey (50 percent).

Exhibit 11. Health Insurance and Utilization from Parent Survey

Health Insurance and Utilization	%	
	Monterey Target Schools (N=876)	Statewide KEP
Child has health insurance	91	88
Child has a regular place and medical practitioner for routine well-child care	93	70
Child has had routine dental care in the last 2 years	83	84
Child lives in a smoke free home environment	90	85
Child has had routine dental care in the last 12 months	72	--
Child was breastfed for 6 months or more	46	--
Child has been professionally diagnosed with a developmental delay	3	--

Note: Denominator used is valid cases and so the % is out of valid cases, not out of total 876.

¹² “First 5 School Readiness Initiative Evaluation: Kindergarten Entry Profiles – Overview and Preliminary Statewide Results”. First 5 California: p.1. Fall 2004.



*2003 California Health Interview Survey (CHIS).

Sources of Information for Child Health and Family Services

Parents were also asked to note both formal and informal sources of information about child health and family services. Though parents shared a number of sources of information, by far the largest majority reported utilizing health clinics (67 percent). The second greatest source of information was Women Infants and Children (WIC) clinics (43 percent). Also, about one-quarter of parents highlighted use of informal community networks of family and friends (27 percent).

Exhibit 13. Sources of Child Health and Family Services

	% (N=876)
Health Clinic	67
WIC	43
Family/Friends	27
Schools	23
Family Resource Center	15
Advertisements	13
Home Visitation Worker	5
Church/Synagogue/Mosque	3
Other	6
Parent or other adult household members attended ESL or other adult education classes in last 12 months	23

Note: Denominator used is valid cases and so the % is out of valid cases, not out of total 876.

Additionally, 23 percent of parents reported utilizing schools for information and 15 percent listed family resource centers (an important aspect of F5MC School Readiness funding). For the most part, parents appear to visit family resource centers at similar rates across regions. The greatest rate of utilization appeared to be in North County, where 20 percent of Parent Survey respondents highlighted resource centers as a source of information. In contrast, 11 percent of South County parents listed family resource centers as a source of information.

Exhibit 14. Percent of Families Who Report a Family Resource Center as a Source of Information

Region	% (N=876)
Region 1 – Alisal	14
Region 2 – Peninsula	18
Region 3 – South County	11
Region 4 – North County	20

Kindergarten Transition Activities

Transition activities are defined as interactions between the parent and the school, as well as between the parent and child. Parents were asked to indicate which transition activities they had participated in prior to their child’s entry into kindergarten. About half of parents reported meeting a teacher, participating in school activities or touring a classroom in the year before their child began kindergarten. Though few reported receiving in-person contact (phone call or home visit) from the school specifically about child development, about two-thirds said they had received written materials about how to prepare their children for kindergarten. This is slightly lower but similar to the rates reported by parents statewide, which was 76 percent. Also, most parents reported enrolling their child in the months before school started. Lastly, nearly 8 in 10 parents described their child’s transition into kindergarten as “somewhat” or “very” easy.

Exhibit 15. Kindergarten Transition

	%	
	Monterey Target Schools (N=876)	Statewide KEP
Transition to Kindergarten		
Very difficult	5	4
Somewhat difficult	16	19
Somewhat easy	30	28
Very easy	49	48
Time period when child enrolled in kindergarten		
Months before kindergarten began (kindergarten registration, round-up)	66	--
A few weeks before kindergarten began	24	--
On the first day of kindergarten	7	--
After school started	3	--

Note: Denominator used is valid cases and so the % is out of valid cases, not out of total 876.

Exhibit 16. Parent Contact with School

During the 12 months before your child entered kindergarten, did you or anyone else in your child's household...	%	
	Monterey Target Schools (N =876)	Statewide KEP
Receive a letter or written information from your child's school about preparing for kindergarten?	65	76
Tour the school or visit a kindergarten classroom with your child?	58	--
Participate in school-activities (open house, assemblies, reading night, parent meeting, etc.)?	53	--
Had your child's skills and development assessed by someone in the school or district?	53	--
Meet with a kindergarten teacher?	47	
Meet the elementary school principal or other school staff?	46	--
Receive a phone call or home visit from someone at the school who talked to you about child development?	19	--

Note: Denominator used is valid cases and so the % is out of valid cases, not out of total 876.

Early Care and Education

Parents were also asked where their child spent time during the day before entering kindergarten. According to parents, their children attended pre-school, Head Start or a child care center at similar but slightly lower rates than children in the statewide KEP sample. Just over half of kids reportedly attended pre-school or a child care center compared to 60 percent statewide.

Exhibit 17. Types of Regular Care

Where child spent time on a regular basis prior to kindergarten*	%	
	Monterey Target Schools (N=876)	Statewide KEP
Home with parent	66	--
Pre-school, Head Start or child care center	53	60
At someone else's home under someone else's care	16	--
In a family child care home	8	--
Summer camp	2	--

Note: Denominator used is valid cases and so the % is out of valid cases, not out of total 876.

*Percentages do not add to 100 percent because respondents could check more than one response.

Parent-Child School Readiness Activities

Parents were also asked to report which activities they engaged in with their child prior to entering kindergarten. Though responses varied, about half of parents engaged in each of the pre-kindergarten activities with their children presented below. Parents reported reading to their children less frequently than those interviewed for the statewide KEP. Specifically, forty-four percent of parents said they read stories or showed picture books to their children, compared to 63 percent of parents responding to the statewide KEP parent survey. Practicing daily routines of getting ready and playing active games were cited as the two most frequent activities between parents and children. Parents and children were much less likely to play games that order objects or practice kindergarten skills.

Exhibit 18. Parent-Child Activities

Activities to help child prepare for kindergarten	%		
	Not at all or a little (monthly)	Sometimes (weekly)	Frequently (Daily)
Practice daily routines of getting ready for school	9	25	66
Play active games (toss ball, jump, climb, etc.)	7	34	57
Practice counting with child	7	46	47
Read stories or show picture books with child	10	46	44
Practice kindergarten skills: holding a pencil, cutting with scissors, counting, colors, shapes, letters	28	46	25
Play games that order objects (nest cups, lining up from smallest to largest, etc.)	29	49	23

Note: Denominator used is valid cases and so the % is out of valid cases, not out of total 876.

Significant Indicators of School Readiness

In addition to calculating assessment and survey responses independently, Parent Surveys were matched with the MDRDP Child Surveys completed for their children using unique identifiers to protect confidentiality. An analysis of 666 matched pairs highlighted those parent and child characteristics that are indicative of higher MDRDP outcomes. The analysis strongly suggested that the following factors are associated with higher levels of school readiness among participating children:

- Children older than five years old
- Children of parents with greater than a high school education
- Children who speak English as their primary language
- Children who were female

Age of Child

According to the matched analysis, the age of children had the strongest association with higher levels of school readiness as defined by the MDRDP. Specifically, children aged five and older were significantly more likely to be rated as having almost/fully mastered all four dimensions, as well as overall mastery. As Exhibit 19 highlights, children five and older were typically twice as likely as those younger than five to have almost/fully mastered each dimension.

Exhibit 19. Percent Almost/Fully Mastered by Age

MDRDP Dimension	%		Significance Level*
	Younger than 5	Age 5 and Older	
Communication	11	20	p=.000
Emotional Well-Being	12	27	p=.000
Cognition and General Knowledge	5	12	p=.001
Approaches to Learning	14	27	p=.000

*Difference is significant if $p \leq .05$

Parent Education Level

Higher scores on the MDRDP were also associated with higher parent education levels. Children of parents with greater than a high school education were about twice as likely to almost/fully master MDRDP dimensions as those children whose parents had a high school degree or less. The difference was statistically significant for three dimensions: Communication, Emotional Well-Being, and Approaches to Learning. Though not statistically significant, children older than five were also more likely to almost/fully master the Cognitive and General Knowledge dimension as well.¹³ It should be noted that though these findings are statistically significant, they indicate only *association* and not necessarily *causality*. That is, *parent education level may*

¹³ Given the low percentage of children who almost/fully mastered the Cognitive and General Knowledge dimension overall, it was generally difficult to establish statistical significance within this dimension.

be a proxy for another factor such as socio-economic status. Given the very close association of education and income, we cannot be certain of the degree to which parent education is independently associated with higher school readiness scores.

Exhibit 20. Percent Almost/Fully Mastered by Parental Education

MDRDP Dimension	%		Significance Level*
	High School or Less	More than High School	
Communication	12	26	p=.000
Emotional Well-Being	15	23	p=.013
Cognition and General Knowledge	7	11	p=.176**
Approaches to Learning	16	27	p=.000

*Difference is significant if p≤.05

**Finding was not statistically significant

A second layer of analysis revealed that parent education level was also associated with different school readiness activities. Parents with more than a high school education were significantly more likely to:

- Have their children in preschool or regular child care on a regular basis before starting kindergarten;
- Read or tell stories to their children everyday;
- Have a library card;
- Meet with a kindergarten teacher or school principal before starting school.

On the other hand, parents with a high school education or less were more likely to:

- Have their kids at home on a regular basis before kindergarten;
- Receive a call or home visit from someone at school.

Exhibit 21. Significant Associations by Parent Education Level

	%		Significance Level*
	High School or Less	More than High School	
Child in Preschool, Head Start or Child Care Center on a regular basis before kindergarten	52	64	p=.001
Read/tell stories everyday	41	52	p=.009
Have a library card	41	70	p=.000
Met with kindergarten teacher	44	53	p=.018
Met with elementary principal or staff	41	58	p=.000
Child at home on a regular basis before kindergarten	72	55	p=.000
Call/home visit from someone at school	21	11	p=.001

*Difference is significant if p≤.05

English as Primary Language

According to teacher responses to the MDRDP Child Surveys, over 75 percent of entering children spoke Spanish as their primary language. Those children that spoke English as their primary language were generally more likely to have almost/fully mastered the Communication, Emotional Well-Being, and Approaches to Learning dimensions. A second analysis investigated whether Spanish speaking children with teachers who also spoke Spanish were more likely to be assessed as having almost/fully mastered MDRDP dimensions. Though children with Spanish speaking teachers were somewhat more likely to be assessed as having almost/fully mastered the Cognitive and General Knowledge dimension, this finding was not statistically significant.

Exhibit 22. Percent Almost/Fully Mastered by Primary Language

MDRDP Dimension	%		Significance Level*
	English	Spanish	
Communication	26	11	p=.000
Emotional Well-Being	26	15	p=.000
Cognition and General Knowledge	7	8	p=.631**
Approaches to Learning	28	16	p=.001

*Difference is significant if $p \leq .05$

**Finding was not statistically significant

Gender

Lastly, female students were significantly more likely to almost/fully master the MDRDP in the Communication and Emotional Well-Being dimensions. Whereas 19 percent of girls almost/fully mastered Communication, the same was true for 13 percent of boys. The difference was more pronounced for Emotional Well-Being, where girls were about twice as likely to almost/fully master the dimension.

Exhibit 23. Percent Almost/Fully Mastered by Gender

MDRDP Dimension	%		Significance Level*
	Male	Female	
Communication	13	19	p=.040
Emotional Well-Being	12	22	p=.000
Cognition	6	10	p=.108**
Approaches to Learning	17	22	p=.081**

*Difference is significant if $p \leq .05$

**Finding was not statistically significant.