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**FIRST 5 MARIN
KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL READINESS:
TEACHER'S FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS OF
THE CLASS OF 08-09**

Prepared for:

Amy Reisch, Executive Director
First 5 Marin Children and Families Commission
1101 5th Avenue, Suite 215
San Rafael, CA 94901
415.257.8556

Prepared by:

jdcPartnerships
5711 Santa Cruz Ave
Richmond, CA 94804
510.525.6662

Contact:

Jara Dean-Coffey, MPH, Principal
jara@jdcPartnerships.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes findings from First 5 Marin's Fall 2008 survey of Marin County kindergarten teachers. The survey was sent to and completed by 46 teachers from 16 elementary schools in five Marin county school districts. The purpose of the survey was to gain insight from current kindergarten teachers about the skills students need for a successful transition to kindergarten. The first part of the survey asked teachers for their opinions regarding the level of proficiency students need at entry to be ready for school. The survey then asked that teachers select among these 23 skills to indicate the five they feel are "most important" the five "easiest to impact" and the five where they "spend the most time." The survey then asked teachers to provide some background information about curriculum used in their classrooms and about their own educational backgrounds. The second section of the survey asked teachers to rate the proficiency of their 2008-09 students in each of five domains related to school readiness skills.

WHO RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY

A total of 46 Kindergarten teachers from 16 elementary schools in five Marin County school districts responded to the survey for a 100% response rate. The majority of respondents were from schools in either Novato (44%) or San Rafael (41%). Respondents (kindergarten teachers) are primarily Caucasian (83%) followed by Latino (9%), Asian (6.5%), and African American (2%).

All respondents hold undergraduate degrees and are fully credentialed with an average of 8 years of experience teaching kindergarten (range 1 to 24 years). Additionally, one-fourth of respondents have graduate degrees – almost all of which relate directly to education.

HOW TEACHERS DESCRIBE THEIR CURRENT CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Teachers report using a combination of district-wide, school-wide, and/or self-created curriculum. Almost all teachers (89%) report utilizing programs or activities in their curriculum to address assisting English Language Learners. Nearly three-fourths (74%) report using programs or activities to address the development of children's self-regulation skills; and more than one-half (59%) indicate using program or activities to address students with special needs. The majority of teachers also have had special training in at least one of these areas.

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

Level of Proficiency Students Need for Transition to Kindergarten

Teachers were asked to rate 23 school readiness skills in 6 categories in terms of their perception of what students must have in order to make a successful transition into kindergarten. Each skill was rated on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 = Not Yet; 2 = Beginning; 3 = In Progress; and 4 = Proficient.

Across all categories and school readiness skill areas, teachers' mean ratings suggest that students need to be *in progress*. In fact, with the exception of one skill (recognizing rhyming words), more than one-half of responding teachers indicated that students needed to be either "in progress" or already "proficient" upon entry. Eleven key school readiness skills were identified, distinguished by agreement from at least 90% of respondents that students need to be "in progress" or already "proficient" for successful transition into kindergarten (See Table 1). Overall, teachers' ratings suggest the importance of self-care, expression, and basic knowledge for successful transition to kindergarten.

Table 1. Key Skills for Successful Transition to Kindergarten

School Readiness Skill Area	Mean Rating for level of proficiency*	% Indicating Proficient	% Indicating In Progress
Perform basic self-help/self-care tasks	3.89	88.9%	11.1%
Recognizes eight primary colors	3.47	53.3%	42.2%
Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language	3.44	51.1%	42.2%
Controls impulses and self-regulates	3.42	44.4%	53.3%
Follows one- to two-step directions	3.38	44.4%	48.9%
Works and plays cooperatively with peers	3.38	40.0%	57.8%
Participates successfully in circle time	3.36	37.8%	60.0%
Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver	3.34	37.8%	62.2%
Recognizes three primary shapes	3.33	46.7%	44.4%
Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, button, zippers	3.27	27.3%	72.7%
Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying)	3.04	13.3%	77.8%

* Scale 1 = Not Yet; 2 = Beginning; 3 = In Progress; and 4 = Proficient.

Top 5 Skills – Most Important for Kindergarten Entry

By far, the largest percentage of responding teachers (80%) indicated that a student's ability to *perform basic self-help/self-care tasks (toileting, eating, washing hands)* was among the top five skills needed at entry. Only 6.5% of teachers reported that this was among the five skills easiest to impact, and no teachers reported spending most of their time on this skill.

The other skills most commonly indicated as important at entry include:

- Controls impulses and self-regulates (59%)
- Works and plays cooperatively with peers (46%)
- Stays focused/pays attention during activities (44%)

Top 5 Skills – Easiest to Impact

In terms of areas they perceive as easy to impact during the school year, teachers frequently selected skills related to Communication and Language Usage and/or Cognition and General Knowledge. Approximately one-half of teachers indicated that the following three skills were among the five easiest to impact.

- Writes own first name (52%)
- Recognizes eight primary colors (50%)
- Can count 10 objects correctly (48%)

Teachers were least likely to include Coping Skills (2% to 4% of teachers) among those easiest to impact during the school year, and inclusion of Social and Emotional Development Skills varied a bit but were also mostly infrequent (4% to 15%). (See Appendix B, Table 3 for full list of skills)

Top 5 Skills – Time Spent

While the greatest percentage of teachers (57%) included attending to alphabet recognition in their Top 5 areas of time spent during the school year, the next most common skills (listed below) on which teachers spend time relate primarily to student behavior and classroom management. (See Appendix B, Table 4 for full list of skills)

- Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance (e.g., engages in problem-solving), (54%)
- Stays focused / pays attention during activities (48%)
- Controls impulses and self-regulates (41%)
- Participates successfully in circle time (41%)
- Works and plays cooperatively with peers (35%)
- Follows one- to two-step directions (33%)

Summary

While teachers are confident in their abilities to impact students' academic development (as indicated in the commonality of several basic academic skills among the those that are "easiest to impact"), skills related to students coping and social and emotional development are harder to impact for most teachers and are commonly included among those where teachers are spending the most time. Taken as whole, teachers ratings and indications of importance, impact, and time spent suggest that pre-kindergarten experiences that would benefit incoming students are those that attend to their self-care, social-emotional development, and basic knowledge.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS FROM KINDERGARTEN OBSERVATION FORM

Teachers were asked to rate each of their 2008-2009 entering students in terms of their general proficiency (proficiency scale: 1 = limited; 2 = beginning; 3 = in progress; 4 = proficient) in five areas:

1. Transition to School (e.g., able to adjust to a new routine and follow teacher instructions)
2. Fine Motor Skills (e.g., ability to hold a pencil and scissors, copy, write, or draw)
3. Engagement in Reading (e.g., listens to stories and pucks up books/reads on his/her own)
4. Language Development (e.g., speech is understandable, participates in conversations)
5. Cognitive Development (e.g., able to recognize and label shapes, colors, his/her own name)

Overall, teachers' mean ratings suggest that in fall 2008 these students were "in progress" in terms of their proficiency in each area. Means ranged from 3.0 for Fine Motor Skills and Language Development to 3.2 for Transition to School on a 4-point scale. While these means suggest, on average, moderate proficiency across all 46 classrooms, approximately 25%-30% of students were rated as having "limited" or "beginning" proficiency in each of the five areas.

HIGHLIGHTS & CONSIDERATIONS

Overall, responding kindergarten teachers tended to report confidence in their abilities to impact the basic academic skills commonly associated with kindergarten readiness. Skills and behaviors associated with students' social emotional development, while highly regarded in terms of the necessity for successful kindergarten transition, are more difficult to impact and are skills on which a large percentage of teachers report spending most of their time. Interestingly, nearly three-fourths of teachers note that their curriculum includes special programs to address the development of self-regulation skills. Further discussion with teachers might illuminate areas for professional development that could enhance these programs and further assist teachers in areas related to students' social and emotional development.

With respect to pre-kindergarten experiences, these survey results suggest that kindergarten teachers indicate that a child's social emotional readiness and coping skills are important and necessary to successful kindergarten transition. In order to learn in a school setting and achieve academically, kindergarten teachers indicate that children should come to school with basic self-care, social and emotional skills and language skills. Teachers' survey responses also suggest that the greater students' proficiency in these areas upon entry, the more focused time could be spent on more academic and fine motor skills, areas in which they teachers indicated they are most able to impact. Consideration should be given to how the current educational climate and perceptions of/prescriptions for early childhood educational experiences fit with the skills kindergarten teachers perceive as highly relevant to successful transition and the focus of early childhood experiences.

While, overall, teachers report the majority of students in kindergarten in early fall of the 2008-09 school year were "in progress" or "proficient" in each of five domains of school readiness, approximately one-quarter of students have beginning or limited proficiency in each of these domains. The lack of proficiency in important school readiness skills speaks to needs related to improving access to pre-K experiences as well as increased awareness and knowledge of how to impact children's growth and development in key aspects of school readiness among parents, caregivers, and early childhood education providers. Consideration should be given to how communities are currently and could further support young children in these early learning experiences, so that they can be more successful in school.

Sharing the results of this survey to increase awareness among various individuals and agencies -- preschools, family child care providers, family education centers, kindergarten teachers, and the broader early childhood education community--that work and care for young children is important. More dialog needs to occur about effective and creative ways to partner with families to support and reinforce important school readiness skills in the home and in the daily lives of children.

Areas for further research might include a broader survey to the early childhood education community about expectations regarding school readiness skills and perceptions of where they can/should make the most impact. Further inquiry could also promote insight and foster dialogue about ways the early childhood education community and kindergarten teachers could work together to achieve the greatest impact in preparing young children for school and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes findings from First 5 Marin's Fall 2008 survey of Marin County kindergarten teachers. This two part survey was sent to and completed by 46 teachers from 16 elementary schools in five Marin county school districts. The purpose of the survey was to gain insight from current kindergarten teachers about the skills students need for a successful transition to kindergarten. The first part of the survey asked teachers for their opinions regarding the level of proficiency students need at entry to be ready for school. It then asked that teachers select among these 23 skills to indicate the five they feel are "most important" the five "easiest to impact" and the five where they "spend the most time." Teachers were then requested to provide background information about curriculum used in their classrooms and their own educational backgrounds. The second section of the survey asked teachers to rate the proficiency of their 2008-09 students in each of five domains related to school readiness skills.

METHODOLOGY

Surveys were delivered to teachers in Fall 2008. After receipt of the surveys, First 5 Marin School Readiness staff worked with individual respondents to clarify responses and ensure accuracy. Data were then entered into SPSS and descriptive statistics generated. The results of these analyses are summarized in this report.

REPORT STRUCTURE

This report is divided into three sections. The first two correspond to the primary data collection instruments that shaped the research and analysis, and the third includes highlights of findings, including consideration of next steps. Additional tables and figures and instruments are in the appendices.

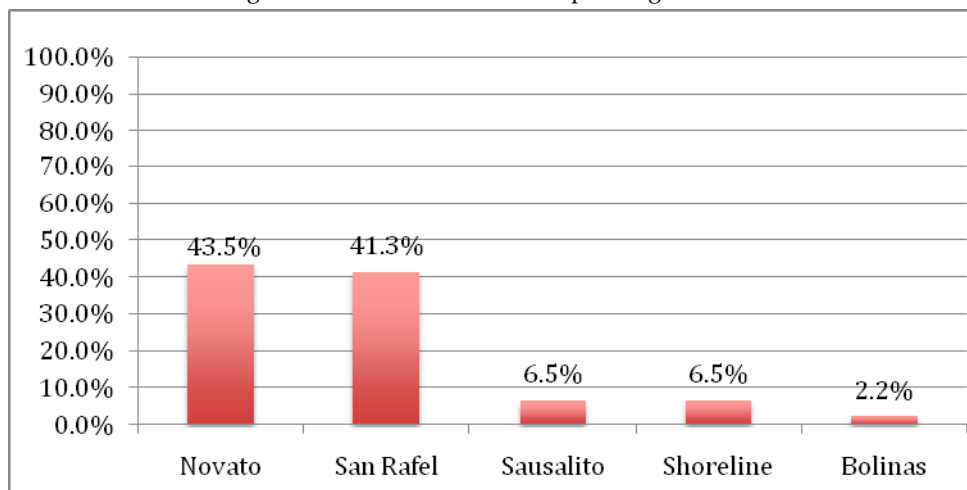
- **Overview of Findings from Teacher Survey on Importance of School Readiness**
 - This section provides a summary of findings from a survey responded to by 46 Marin county kindergarten teachers regarding their perceptions of the importance of 23 skills across six categories: 1) Physical well-being and motor-development; 2) Social and emotional development; 3) Approaches toward learning; 4) Communication and language usage; 5) Cognition and general knowledge; and 6) Coping skills.
- **Overview of Findings from Kindergarten Observation Form**
 - This section provides a summary of 2008-09 kindergarten student proficiency levels in fall 2008 based on individual student observation ratings provided by the 46 responding teachers. Proficiency ratings are provided for each of five domains: 1) Transition to school; 2) Fine motor skills; 3) Engagement in reading; 4) Language development; and 5) Cognitive development.
- **Highlights & Considerations**
 - This section provides highlights of findings and offers some initial considerations for how these findings might be used to inform action.

TEACHER SURVEY ON IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

WHO RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY

A total of 46 Kindergarten teachers from 16 elementary schools in five Marin county school districts responded to the survey for a 100% response rate. The majority of respondents were from schools in either Novato (44%) or San Rafael (41%). (See Fig 1.) Respondents are primarily Caucasian (83%) followed by Latino (9%), Asian (6.5%), and African American (2%).

Figure 1. School Districts for Responding Teachers



Responding Teachers' Educational Background and Years of Experience

All respondents hold undergraduate degrees and are fully credentialed with approximately 25% of respondents holding advanced degrees. While respondents report a variety of undergraduate majors, with few exceptions, their advanced degrees are directly related to education (e.g., Curriculum & Instruction, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education).

Respondents have an average of 8 years of experience teaching kindergarten (range 1 to 24 years). Approximately 40% of teachers have approximately a decade or more of experience, one-fifth of respondents have 1-2 years of experience and another one-fifth of respondents have 3-5 years of experience.

Figure 2. Years of Experience Teaching Kindergarten

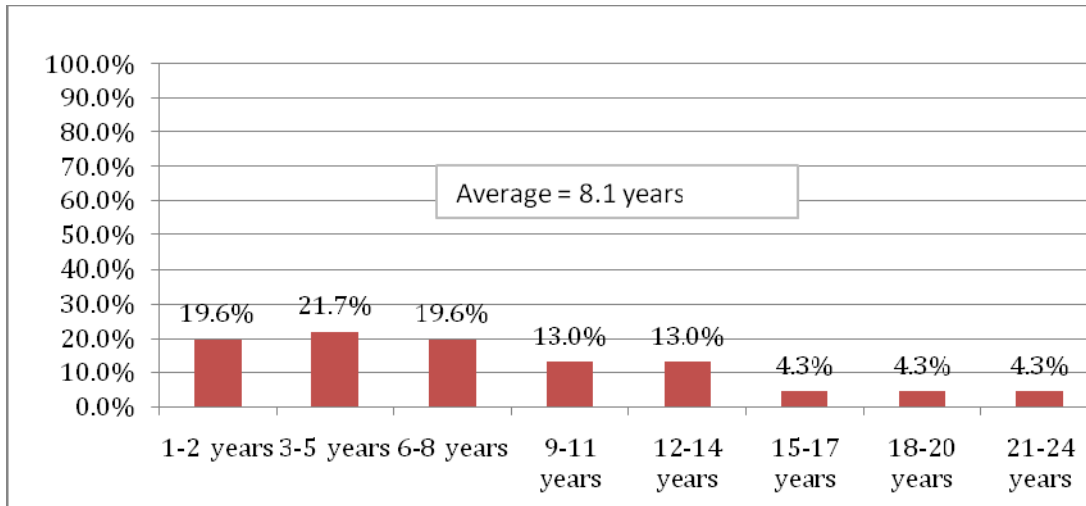
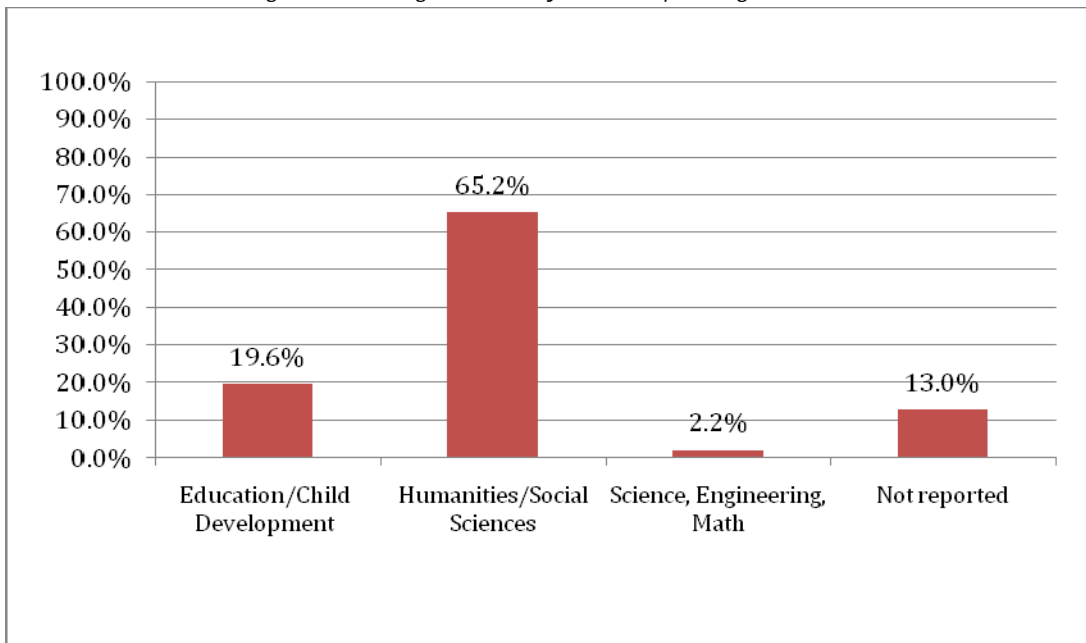


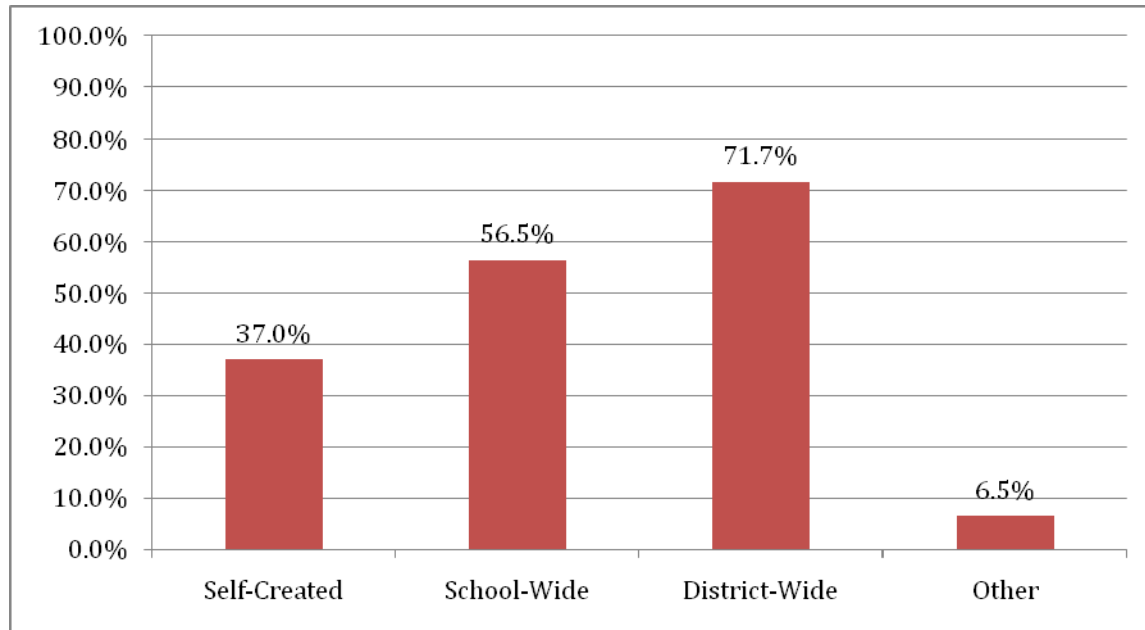
Figure 3. Undergraduate Majors of Responding Teachers



HOW TEACHERS DESCRIBE THEIR CURRENT CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

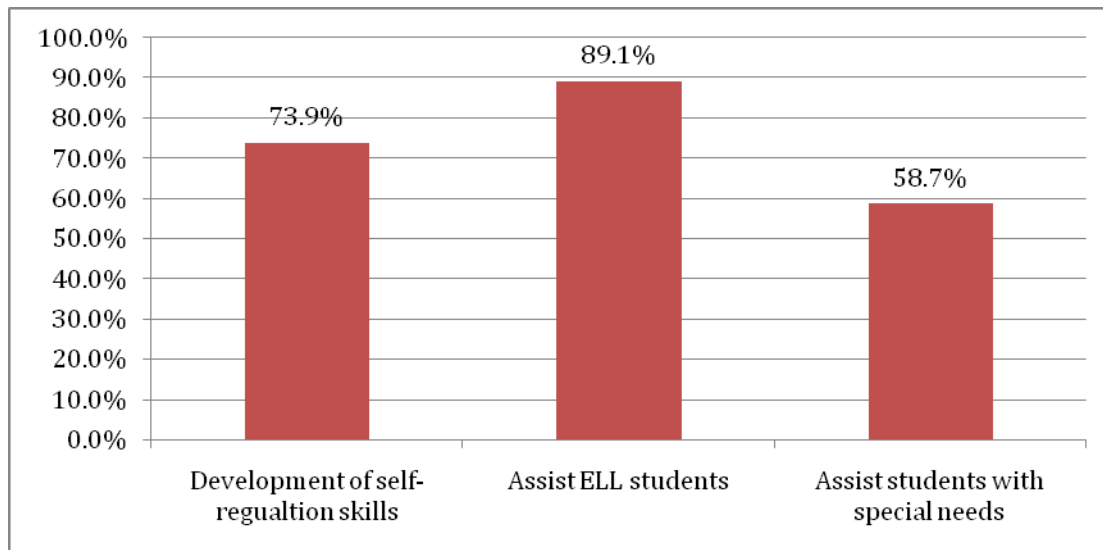
In terms of curriculum, nearly three-fourths of responding teachers report using a district-wide curriculum, approximately one-half are using a school-wide curriculum, and approximately one-third are using curriculum they created themselves. In many instances, teachers report that their classroom instruction is based on more than one type of curriculum. For instance, approximately one-third of those using a district-wide curriculum also report using a school-wide curriculum and/or a curriculum of their own creation; however, no teachers report classroom instruction is based entirely on self-created curriculum.

Figure 4. Type of Curriculum Upon Which Classroom Instruction is Based



Teachers were also asked about special programs or activities in their curriculum. Almost all teachers (89%) report programs or activities in their curriculum to address assisting English Language Learners. Nearly three-fourths (74%) report programs or activities to address the development of children's self-regulation skills; and more than one-half (59%) indicate program or activities to address assisting students with special needs. The majority of teachers also had special training in at least one of these areas. Nearly all responding teachers report having special training for working with students who are English Language Learners (91%) and just under one-half of responding teachers (46%) have had special training in working with students with special needs (46%).

Figure 5. Special Programs



TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

Level of Proficiency Students Need for Transition to Kindergarten

Teachers were asked to rate 23 school readiness skills in 6 categories in terms of their perception of what students must have in order to make a successful transition into kindergarten. Each skill was rated on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 = Not Yet; 2 = Beginning; 3 = In Progress; and 4 = Proficient.

Across all categories and skill areas teachers' mean ratings suggest that students need to be *in progress*. In fact, with the exception of one skill (recognizing rhyming words), more than one-half of responding teachers indicated that students needed to be either "in progress" or already "proficient" upon entry. In several instances (11 of 23 skills, 47.58%) teachers ratings indicated that a minimum of "in progress" proficiency is needed – that is, less than 10% of responding teachers selected "not yet" or "beginning" for these skills. And, in one instance (students must be able to perform basic self-help/self-care tasks.) nearly all teachers (89%) believe proficiency is required for a successful kindergarten transition. These eleven key skills, distinguished by agreement from at least 90% of respondents that students need to be "in progress" or already "proficient" for successful transition into kindergarten are shown in the Table 1 below. Within district mean ratings for these eleven items are shown in Table 1a. (See Appendix A , Figures 7 – 12 for frequency and mean ratings for all 23 skills.)

Table 1. Key Skills for Successful Transition to Kindergarten

School Readiness Skill Areas	Mean Rating for level of proficiency*	% Indicating Proficient	% Indicating In Progress
Perform basic self-help/self-care tasks	3.89	88.9%	11.1%
Recognizes eight primary colors	3.47	53.3%	42.2%
Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language	3.44	51.1%	42.2%
Controls impulses and self-regulates	3.42	44.4%	53.3%
Follows one- to two-step directions	3.38	44.4%	48.9%
Works and plays cooperatively with peers	3.38	40.0%	57.8%
Participates successfully in circle time	3.36	37.8%	60.0%
Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver	3.34	37.8%	62.2%
Recognizes three primary shapes	3.33	46.7%	44.4%
Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, button, zippers	3.27	27.3%	72.7%
Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying)	3.04	13.3%	77.8%

* Scale 1 = Not Yet; 2 = Beginning; 3 = In Progress; and 4 = Proficient.

Table 1a. Key Skills for Successful Transition to Kindergarten by District

Skill	Overall Mean Rating (N=46)	Novato Mean Rating (N = 20)	San Rafael City Schools Mean Rating (N = 18)	Sausalito Mean Rating (N=3)	Shoreline-Bolinas Mean Rating (N=4)
Perform basic self-help/self-care tasks	3.89	3.95	3.89	3.67	3.75
Recognizes eight primary colors	3.47	3.70	3.22	3.67	3.25
Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language	3.44	3.65	3.22	3.00	3.75
Controls impulses and self-regulates	3.42	3.65	3.17	3.33	3.50
Follows one- to two-step directions	3.38	3.60	3.22	2.67	3.50
Works and plays cooperatively with peers	3.38	3.55	3.17	3.33	3.50
Participates successfully in circle time	3.36	3.65	3.06	3.00	3.50
Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver	3.34	3.50	3.22	3.33	3.50
Recognizes three primary shapes	3.33	3.50	3.06	3.67	3.50
Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, button, zippers	3.27	3.37	3.22	3.00	3.25
Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying)	3.04	3.05	3.00	3.33	3.00

While there is some variation in the rank orders of districts' mean ratings, overall, teachers tended to indicate that students needed at least a beginning level of proficiency for any of the school readiness skills. There were only two skills that more than 5% of teachers indicated students did not yet need even a beginning level of proficiency – recognizing rhyming words and recognizing letters of the alphabet (13.3% and 9.1% of teachers indicating “not yet”, respectively).

Overall, teachers' ratings suggest the importance of self-care, expression, and basic knowledge for successful transition to kindergarten. These ratings align with and are further illuminated by teachers' indications of *Top 5 Skills* in terms of: 1) Skills Most Important at Entry; 2) Skills Easiest to Impact During the School Year; and 3) Skills on Which Teachers Spend the Most Time During the School Year.

Top 5 Skills – Most Important for Kindergarten Entry

By far, the largest percentage of responding teachers (80%) indicated that a student's ability to *perform basic self-help/self-care tasks (toileting, eating, washing hands)* was among the top five skills needed at entry. Only 6.5% of teachers reported that this was among the five skills easiest to impact, and no teachers reported spending most of their time on this skill.

The other skills most commonly indicated as important at entry include:

- Controls impulses and self-regulates (is not disruptive of others or class) (59%)
- Works and plays cooperatively with peers (takes turns and shares, helps others) (46%)
- Stays focused/pays attention during activities (44%)

Approximately one-quarter to one-third of teachers included the following skills in their Top 5:

- Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, buttons, zippers, etc. (33%)
- Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language (30.4)
- Participates successfully in circle time (listens, focuses, sits still, engages) (30%)
- Writes own first name (spelling and writing all letters correctly) (28%)
- Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver (converses with, seeks help from) (26%)
- Follows one-to-two step instructions (24%)

Teachers were least likely to include the following skills in their Top 5:

- Engages with books (knows where a book starts, associates print with storyline, pretends to read) (6.5%)
- Engages in symbolic / imaginative play with self or peers (plays house, fire station) (6.5%)
- Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying) (6.5%)
- Has expressive abilities (tells about a story or experience in response to a prompt) (4%)
- Can count 10 objects correctly ("Please give Maria 5 crayons" or "Please put 10 blocks in the basket") (2%)

No teachers included recognition of rhyming words among their Top 5 skills needed for entry. This skill also received a low mean rating with teachers indicating, on average, that students need a "Beginning" level of proficiency. Furthermore, approximately one-fifth of teachers included this item in their top five areas of time spent and one-fifth indicated it is easy to impact. (See Appendix A, Table 2 for full list of skills)

Top 5 Skills – Easiest to Impact

In terms of areas they perceive as easy to impact during the school year, teachers frequently selected skills related to Communication and Language Usage and/or Cognition and General Knowledge. Approximately one-half of teachers indicated that the following three skills were among the five easiest to impact:

- Writes own first name (spelling and writing all letters correctly) (52%)
- Recognizes eight primary colors (Crayola basic 8: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, black) (50%)
- Can count 10 objects correctly (“Please give Maria 5 crayons” or “Please put 10 blocks in the basket”) (48%)

The next most frequently indicated skills included:

- Engages with books (knows where a book starts, associates print with storyline, pretends to read) (43.5%)
- Recognizes the letters of the alphabet (note: may be CAPs, lowercase or combination) (41%)
- Recognizes three primary shapes (circle, triangle square) (41%)

Teachers were least likely to include Coping Skills (2% to 4% of teachers) among those easiest to impact during the school year, and inclusion of Social and Emotional Development Skills varied a bit but were also mostly infrequent (4% to 15%). (See Appendix A, Table 3 for full list of skills)

Top 5 Skills – Time Spent

While the greatest percentage of teachers (57%) included attending to alphabet recognition in their Top 5 areas of time spent during the school year, the next most common skills (listed below) where teachers spend time relate primarily to student behavior and classroom management. (See Appendix A, Table 4 for full list of skills)

- Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance (e.g., engages in problem-solving), (54%)
- Stays focused / pays attention during activities (48%)
- Controls impulses and self-regulates (is not disruptive of others or class) (41%)
- Participates successfully in circle time (listens, focuses, sits still, engages) (41%)
- Works and plays cooperatively with peers (takes turns and shares, helps others) (35%)
- Follows one- to two-step directions (33%)

Approximately one-fifth to one-quarter of teachers included the following skills in their Top 5 areas of most time spent during the school year:

- Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language (26%)
- Engages with books (knows where a book starts, associates print with storyline, pretends to read) (24%)
- Can recognize rhyming words (22%)
- Can count 10 objects correctly (20%)

Summary

While teachers are confident in their abilities to impact students' academic development (as indicated in the commonality of several basic academic skills among the those that are "easiest to impact"), skills related to students coping and social and emotional development are harder to impact for most teachers and are commonly included among those where teachers are spending the most time. Taken as whole, teachers ratings and indications of importance, impact, and time spent suggest that pre-kindergarten experiences that would benefit incoming students are those that attend to their self-care, social-emotional development, and basic knowledge.

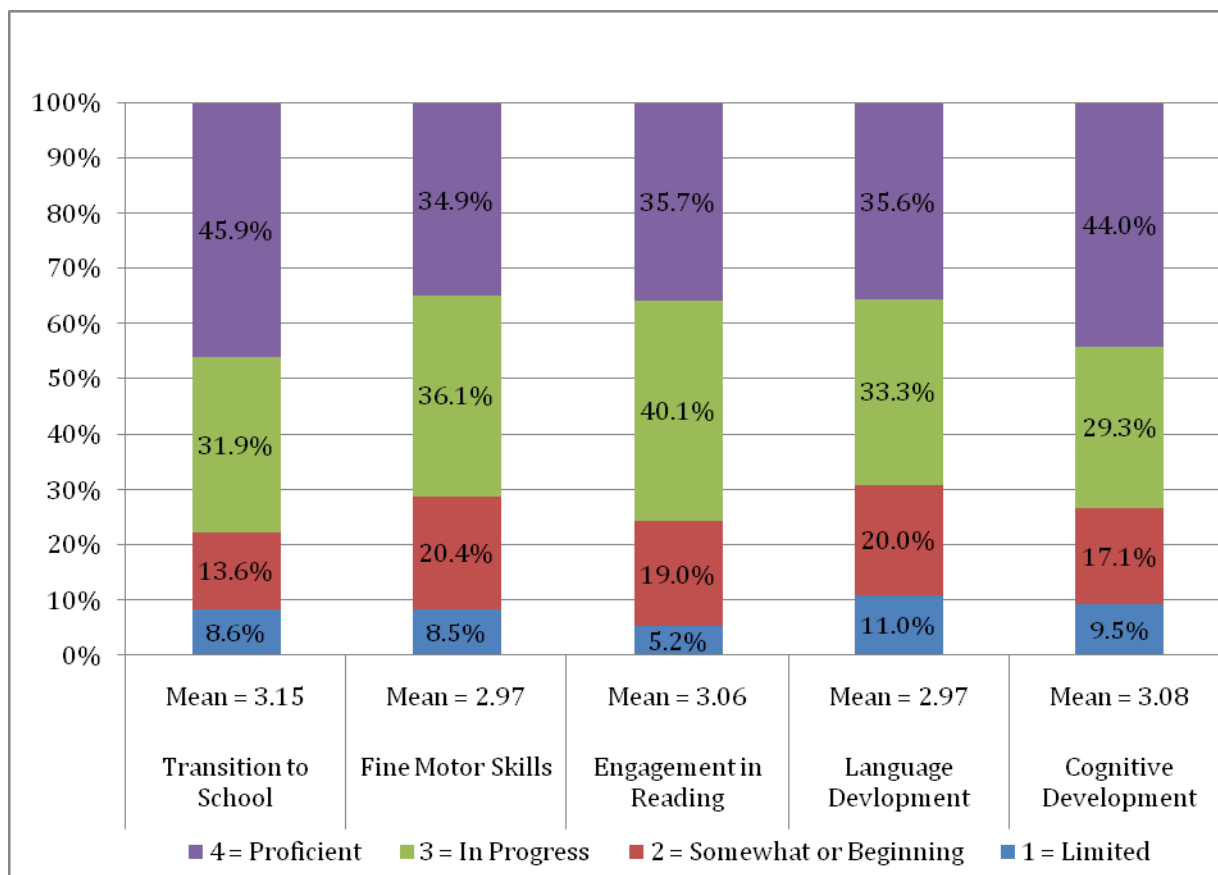
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3. Engagement in Reading (e.g., listens to stories and pucks up books/reads on his/her own)
4. Language Development (e.g., speech is understandable, participates in conversations)
5. Cognitive Development (e.g., able to recognize and label shapes, colors, his/her own name)

Teachers rated students on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 = limited, 2 = somewhat or beginning, 3 = in progress, and 4 = proficient. Overall, teachers' mean ratings suggest that students are "in progress" in terms of their proficiency in each area. Means ranged from 3.0 for Fine Motor Skills and Language Development to 3.2 for Transition to School on 4-point scale. While these means suggest moderate proficiency across all 46 classrooms, it is important to note that approximately 25%-30% of students were rated as having "limited" or "beginning" proficiency in each of the five areas.

Figure 6. Frequency and Mean Proficiency Ratings for Kindergarten Student by Teachers



HIGHLIGHTS & CONSIDERATIONS

Overall, responding kindergarten teachers tended to report confidence in their abilities to impact the basic academic skills commonly associated with kindergarten readiness. Skills and behaviors associated with students' social emotional development, while highly regarded in terms of the necessity for successful kindergarten transition, are more difficult to impact and are skills on which a large percentage of teachers report spending most of their time. Interestingly, nearly three-fourths of teachers note that their curriculum includes special programs to address the development of self-regulation skills. Further discussion with teachers might illuminate areas for professional development that could enhance these programs and further assist teachers in areas related to students' social and emotional development.

With respect to pre-kindergarten experiences, these survey results suggest that kindergarten teachers indicate that a child's social emotional readiness and coping skills are important and necessary to successful kindergarten transition. In order to learn in a school setting and achieve academically, kindergarten teachers indicate that children should come to school with basic self-care, social and emotional skills and language skills. Teachers' survey responses also suggest that the greater students' proficiency in these areas upon entry, the more focused time could be spent on more academic and fine motor skills, areas in which they teachers indicated they are most able to impact. Consideration should be given to how the current educational climate and perceptions of/prescriptions for early childhood educational experiences fit with the skills kindergarten teachers perceive as highly relevant to successful transition and the focus of early childhood experiences.

While, overall, teachers report the majority of students in kindergarten in early fall of the 2008-09 school year were "in progress" or "proficient" in each of five domains of school readiness, approximately one-quarter of students have beginning or limited proficiency in each of these domains. The lack of proficiency in important school readiness skills speaks to needs related to improving access to pre-K experiences as well as increased awareness and knowledge of how to impact children's growth and development in key aspects of school readiness among parents, caregivers, and early childhood education providers. Consideration should be given to how communities are currently and could further support young children in these early learning experiences, so that they can be more successful in school.

Sharing the results of this survey to increase awareness among various individuals and agencies -- preschools, family child care providers, family education centers, kindergarten teachers, and the broader early childhood education community--that work and care for young children is important. More dialog needs to occur about effective and creative ways to partner with families to support and reinforce important school readiness skills in the home and in the daily lives of children.

Areas for further research might include a broader survey to the early childhood education community about expectations regarding school readiness skills and perceptions of where they can/should make the most impact. Further inquiry could also promote insight and foster dialogue about ways the early childhood education community and kindergarten teachers could work together to achieve the greatest impact in preparing young children for school and beyond.

APPENDIX A: Additional Figures

ANALYSIS OF OF SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

Teachers were asked to rate twenty-three school readiness skills in six categories in terms of their perception of what students must have in order to make a successful transition into kindergarten. Each skill was rated on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 = Not Yet; 2 = Beginning; 3 = In Progress; and 4 = Proficient. A summary highlighting the school readiness skills teachers most frequently rated as requiring proficiency upon entry is provided in the main body of the report (Table 1)

Figures 7-12 provide the percentages of teachers indicating each level of proficiency (see scale above) and mean rating for each of the 23 school readiness skills. The school readiness skills are categorized in the figures as follows:

- Physical well-being and motor development (Fig. 7)
- Social and emotional development (Fig. 8)
- Approaches toward learning (Fig. 9)
- Communication and language usage (Fig. 10)
- Cognition and general knowledge (Fig. 11)
- Coping skills (Fig. 12)

Figure 7. Key Skills for Successful Transition to Kindergarten: Physical Well-Being and Motor Development.

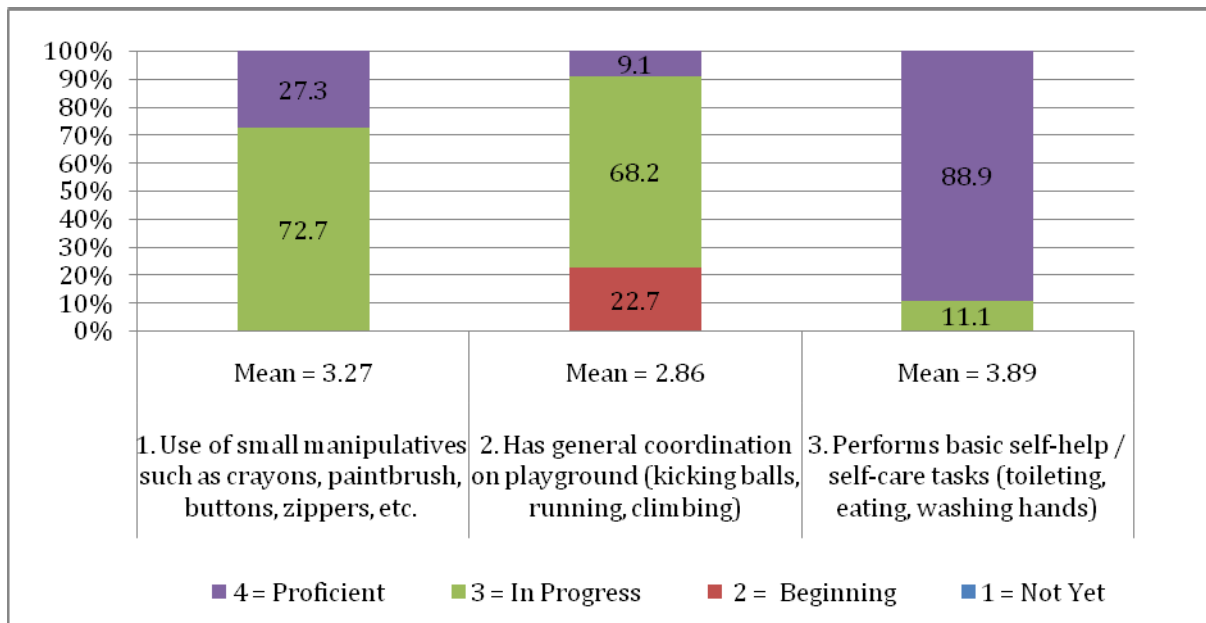


Figure 8. Key Skills for Successful Transition to Kindergarten: Social and Emotional Development.

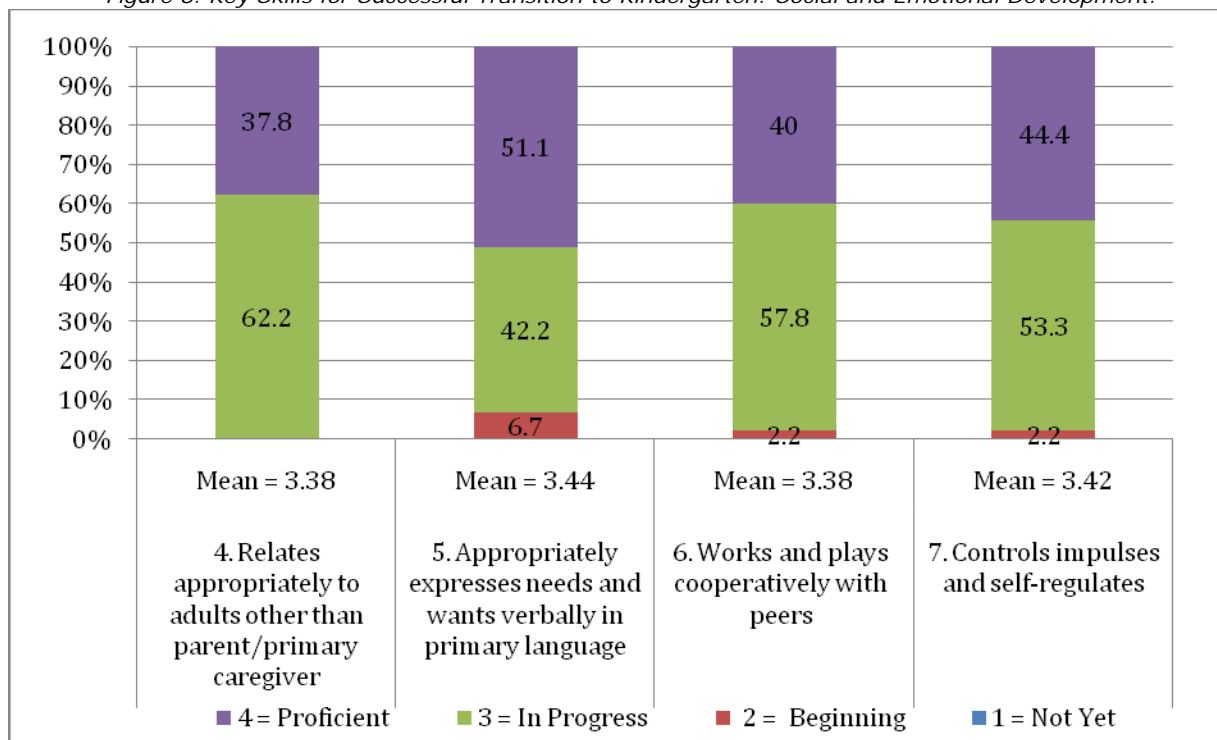


Figure 9. Key Skills for Successful Transition to Kindergarten: Approaches Toward Learning.

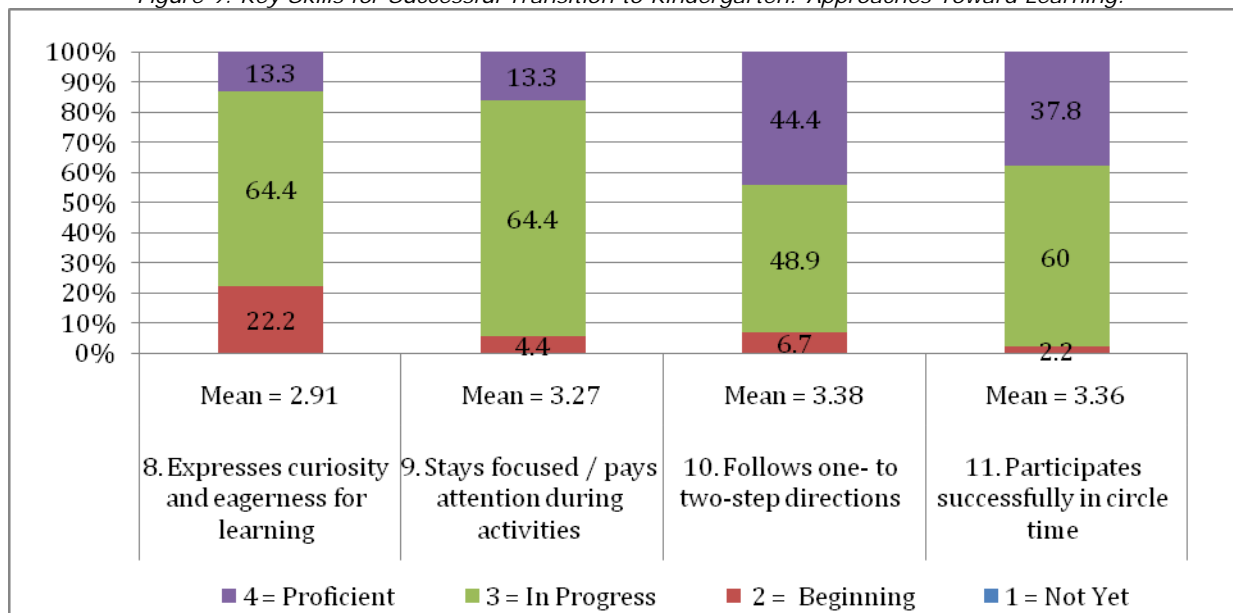


Figure 10. Key Skills for Successful Transition to Kindergarten: Communication and Language Usage.

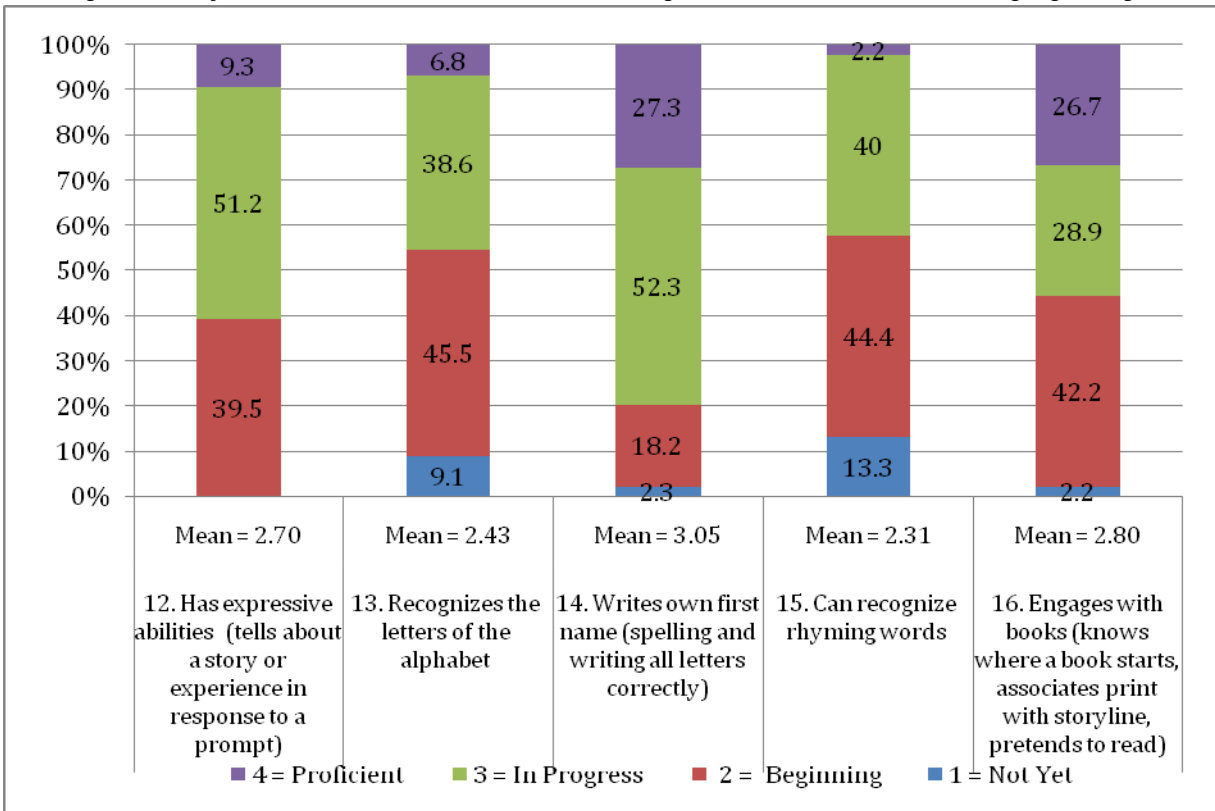


Figure 11. Key Skills for Successful Transition to Kindergarten: Cognition and General Knowledge.

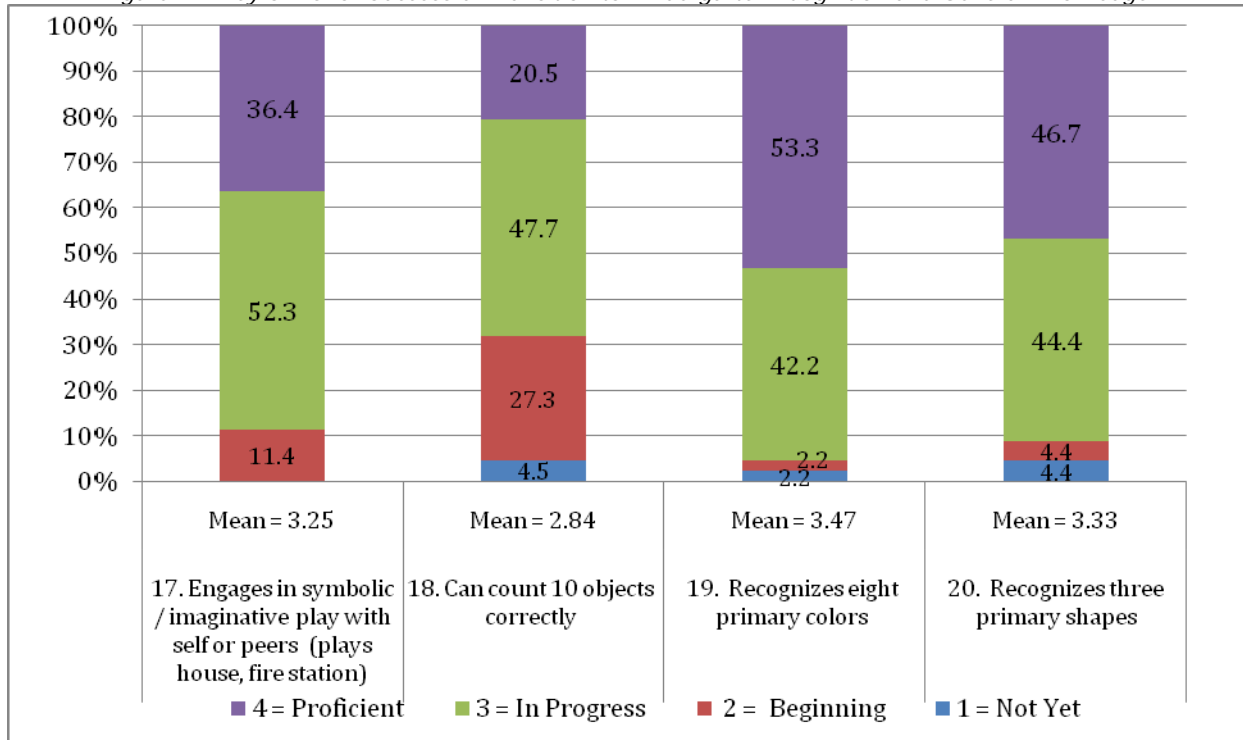
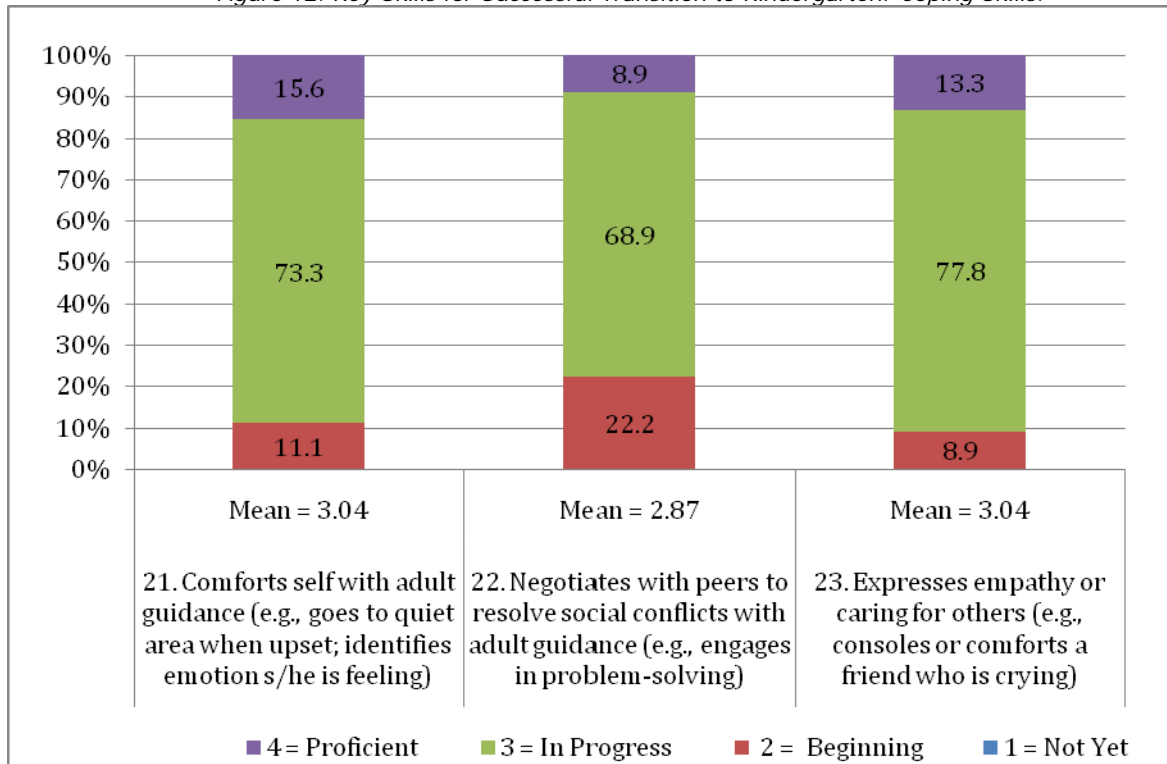


Figure 12. Key Skills for Successful Transition to Kindergarten: Coping Skills.



Tables 2-4 on pages 19-21 reflect teachers indications of the “Top 5” skills that are:

- Most important (Table 2)
- Easiest to impact (Table 3)
- On which teachers spend the greatest amount of time (Table 4)

A summary of Tables 2-4 can be found on pages 7-9 in the main body of the report.

Table 2. Frequency of Teachers' Indications of Top Five Skills "Most Important" for Kindergarten Entry

Skills	% Indicating MOST IMPORTANT at entry
Performs basic self-help / self-care tasks (toileting, eating, washing hands)	80.4
Controls impulses and self-regulates (is not disruptive of others or class)	58.7
Works and plays cooperatively with peers (takes turns and shares, helps others)	45.7
Stays focused / pays attention during activities	43.5
Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, buttons, zippers, etc.	32.6
Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language	30.4
Participates successfully in circle time (listens, focuses, sits still, engages)	30.4
Writes own first name (spelling and writing all letters correctly)	28.3
Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver (converses with, seeks help from)	26.1
Follows one- to two-step directions	23.9
Recognizes three primary shapes (circle, triangle square)	13.0
Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance (e.g., engages in problem-solving)	13.0

Table 2a. Frequency of Teachers' Indications of Top Five Skills "Most Important" for Kindergarten Entry

Skills	% Indicating MOST IMPORTANT at entry
Has general coordination on playground (kicking balls, running, climbing)	10.9
Expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning (tries new activities, asks questions)	10.9
Recognizes the letters of the alphabet (note: may be CAPs, lowercase or combination)	10.9
Recognizes eight primary colors (Crayola basic 8: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, black)	10.9
Comforts self with adult guidance (e.g., goes to quiet area when upset; identifies emotion s/he is feeling)	10.9
Engages with books (knows where a book starts, associates print with storyline, pretends to read)	6.5
Engages in symbolic / imaginative play with self or peers (plays house, fire station)	6.5
Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying)	6.5
Has expressive abilities (tells about a story or experience in response to a prompt)	4.3
Can count 10 objects correctly ("Please give Maria 5 crayons" or "Please put 10 blocks in the basket")	2.2
Can recognize rhyming words ("Shoe rhymes with Glue. Does Blue rhyme with Glue? Does Dog?")	--

Table 3. Frequency of Teachers' Indications of Top Five Skills "Easiest to Impact" During the School Year.

Skills	% Indicating EASIEST TO IMPACT
Writes own first name (spelling and writing all letters correctly)	52.2
Recognizes eight primary colors (Crayola basic 8: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, black)	50.0
Can count 10 objects correctly ("Please give Maria 5 crayons" or "Please put 10 blocks in the basket")	47.8
Engages with books (knows where a book starts, associates print with storyline, pretends to read)	43.5
Recognizes the letters of the alphabet (note: may be CAPs, lowercase or combination)	41.3
Recognizes three primary shapes (circle, triangle square)	41.3
Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, buttons, zippers, etc.	30.4
Has general coordination on playground (kicking balls, running, climbing)	28.3
Follows one- to two-step directions	23.9
Can recognize rhyming words ("Shoe rhymes with Glue. Does Blue rhyme with Glue? Does Dog?")	19.6
Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver (converses with, seeks help from)	15.2
Works and plays cooperatively with peers (takes turns and shares, helps others)	15.2
Participates successfully in circle time (listens, focuses, sits still, engages)	10.9

Table 3a Frequency of Teachers' Indications of Top Five Skills
 "Easiest to Impact" During the School Year.

Skills	% Indicating EASIEST TO IMPACT
Has expressive abilities (tells about a story or experience in response to a prompt)	10.9
Controls impulses and self-regulates (is not disruptive of others or class)	8.7
Expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning (tries new activities, asks questions)	8.7
Stays focused / pays attention during activities	8.7
Performs basic self-help / self-care tasks (toileting, eating, washing hands)	6.5
Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language	4.3
Engages in symbolic / imaginative play with self or peers (plays house, fire station)	4.3
Comforts self with adult guidance (e.g., goes to quiet area when upset; identifies emotion s/he is feeling)	4.3
Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance (e.g., engages in problem-solving)	4.3
Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying)	2.2

Table 4. Frequency of Teachers' Indications of Top Five Skills on Which Teachers Spend the "Most Time" During the School Year.

Skills	% Indicating MOST TIME SPENT
Recognizes the letters of the alphabet (note: may be CAPs, lowercase or combination)	56.5
Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance (e.g., engages in problem-solving)	54.3
Stays focused / pays attention during activities	47.8
Controls impulses and self-regulates (is not disruptive of others or class)	41.3
Participates successfully in circle time (listens, focuses, sits still, engages)	41.3
Works and plays cooperatively with peers (takes turns and shares, helps others)	34.8
Follows one- to two-step directions	32.6
Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language	26.1
Engages with books (knows where a book starts, associates print with storyline, pretends to read)	23.9
Can recognize rhyming words ("Shoe rhymes with Glue. Does Blue rhyme with Glue? Does Dog?")	21.7
Can count 10 objects correctly ("Please give Maria 5 crayons" or "Please put 10 blocks in the basket")	19.6
Expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning (tries new activities, asks questions)	17.4
Writes own first name (spelling and writing all letters correctly)	15.2
Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, buttons, zippers, etc.	13.0

Table 4a. Frequency of Teachers' Indications of Top Five Skills on Which Teachers Spend the "Most Time" During the School Year.

Skills	% Indicating MOST TIME SPENT
Has expressive abilities (tells about a story or experience in response to a prompt)	13.0
Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying)	8.7
Comforts self with adult guidance (e.g., goes to quiet area when upset; identifies emotion s/he is feeling)	4.3
Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver (converses with, seeks help from)	2.2
Recognizes eight primary colors (Crayola basic 8: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, black)	2.2
Recognizes three primary shapes (circle, triangle square)	2.2
Has general coordination on playground (kicking balls, running, climbing)	--
Performs basic self-help / self-care tasks (toileting, eating, washing hands)	--
Engages in symbolic / imaginative play with self or peers (plays house, fire station)	--

APPENDIX B: Instruments

Kindergarten Teacher Survey on Importance of Readiness Skills 2008

Teacher: Please first complete the general information below.

A. Your name: _____

B. Your school: _____

C. Type of kindergarten class: Please circle: **Full-day** **Half-day**

Please rate the **LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY** (by placing an **“X”** in one of the boxes for each item) you think students must have in the following skills in order to have a successful transition into kindergarten, e.g. for them to be “school ready.”

<i>School Readiness Skill</i>		NOT YET 1	BEGINNING 2	IN PROGRESS 3	PROFICIENT 4
Physical Well-being & Motor Development	1. Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, buttons, zippers, etc.				
	2. Has general coordination on playground (kicking balls, running, climbing)				
	3. Performs basic self-help / self-care tasks (toileting, eating, washing hands)				
Social & Emotional Development	4. Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver (converses with, seeks help from)				
	5. Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language				
	6. Works and plays cooperatively with peers (takes turns and shares, helps others)				
	7. Controls impulses and self-regulates (is not disruptive of others or class)				
Approaches Toward Learning	8. Expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning (tries new activities, asks questions)				
	9. Stays focused / pays attention during activities				
	10. Follows one- to two-step directions				
	11. Participates successfully in circle time (listens, focuses, sits still, engages)				
Communication & Language Usage	12. Has expressive abilities (tells about a story or experience in response to a prompt)				
	13. Recognizes the letters of the alphabet (note: may be CAPS, lowercase or combination)	0 – 5 letters	6 – 12 letters	13 – 19 letters	20 – 26 letters
	14. Writes own first name (spelling and writing all letters correctly)				
	15. Can recognize rhyming words (“Shoe rhymes with Glue. Does Blue rhyme with Glue? Does Dog?”)				
	16. Engages with books (knows where a book starts, associates print with storyline, pretends to read)				
Cognition & General Knowledge	17. Engages in symbolic / imaginative play with self or peers (plays house, fire station)				
	18. Can count 10 objects correctly (“Please give Maria 5 crayons” or “Please put 10 blocks in the basket”)	0 – 2 objects	3 – 5 objects	6 – 8 objects	9 – 10 objects
	19. Recognizes eight primary colors (Crayola basic 8: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, black)	0 – 1 colors	2 – 4 colors	5 – 7 colors	All 8 colors
	20. Recognizes three primary shapes (circle, triangle square)	0 shapes	1 shape	2 shapes	All 3 shapes
Coping Skills	21. Comforts self with adult guidance (e.g., goes to quiet area when upset; identifies emotion s/he is feeling)				
	22. Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance (e.g., engages in problem-solving)				
	23. Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying)				

PLEASE TURN THIS SHEET OVER TO CONTINUE ...

1. Please read through the same list of 23 skills in the table below when answering these three questions:

- A. Which 5 skills are most important for entry into kindergarten? *In the first column, please mark 5 of the following skills with an "X." Please only mark 5 skills.*
- B. Which 5 skills are easiest to impact during the school year? *In the second column, please mark 5 of the following skills with an "X." Please only mark 5 skills.*
- C. On which 5 skills do you spend most of your time during the school year? *In the third column, please mark 5 of the following skills with an "X." Please only mark 5 skills.*

A. <i>Most important for kindergarten entry</i> <i>(Check only 5)</i>	B. <i>Easiest to impact</i> <i>(Check only 5)</i>	C. <i>Where do you spend most of your time?</i> <i>(Check only 5)</i>	
			Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, buttons, zippers, etc.
			Has general coordination on playground (kicking balls, running, climbing)
			Performs basic self-help / self-care tasks (toileting, eating, washing hands)
			Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver (converses with, seeks help from)
			Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language
			Works and plays cooperatively with peers (takes turns and shares, helps others)
			Controls impulses and self-regulates (is not disruptive of others or class)
			Expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning (tries new activities, asks questions)
			Stays focused / pays attention during activities
			Follows one- to two-step directions
			Participates successfully in circle time (listens, focuses, sits still, engages)
			Has expressive abilities (tells about a story or experience in response to a prompt)
			Recognizes the letters of the alphabet (note: may be CAPs, lowercase or combination)
			Writes own first name (spelling and writing all letters correctly)
			Can recognize rhyming words ("Shoe rhymes with Glue. Does Blue rhyme with Glue? Does Dog?")
			Engages with books (knows where a book starts, associates print with storyline, pretends to read)
			Engages in symbolic / imaginative play with self or peers (plays house, fire station)
			Can count 10 objects correctly ("Please give Maria 5 crayons" or "Please put 10 blocks in the basket")
			Recognizes eight primary colors (Crayola basic 8: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, black)
			Recognizes three primary shapes (circle, triangle square)
			Comforts self with adult guidance (e.g., goes to quiet area when upset; identifies emotion s/he is feeling)
			Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance (e.g., engages in problem-solving)
			Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying)

Finally, please take a moment to fill out the information below.

2. Which statement or statements below describe how you plan your lessons for your kindergarten classroom? (Please check all that apply.)

My classroom instruction is based on a curriculum that . . .

- I have created. is used school-wide. is used district-wide. Other: _____

3. Do you have any special programs or activities in your curriculum that directly address any of the following?

	<i>Please circle:</i>	<i>If yes, please describe briefly:</i>
a. Development of children's self-regulation skills?	No Yes	
b. Assisting English Language Learners?	No Yes	
c. Assisting children with special needs?	No Yes	

4. What percentage of your curriculum instruction is done in a language other than English? About _____%

5. Are you bilingual? *Please circle: No Yes* If yes, in what language other than English? *Please circle: Spanish Other: _____*

6. How many years have you taught kindergarten? _____ years

7. Please indicate below ALL of the levels of education you have completed, from what school you received each degree, and what your major course of study was.

<u>Degree completed:</u>	<u>From what college/university?</u>	<u>What was your major?</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate degree (e.g., AA)	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA or BS)	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Advanced degree (e.g., MA, PhD)	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	_____	_____

8. Have you had any special training in working with students who are English Language Learners? *Please circle: No Yes*

9. Have you had any special training in working with students with special needs? *Please circle: No Yes*

10. What type of teaching credential do you have?

- Full credential University internship Pre-internship
 District internship Emergency Permit Waiver

11. Which of the following words best describes you? *Please circle: Caucasian Latino Asian African American Other: _____*

THANK YOU!

