Why School Readiness?
Why Now?

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Why Early Literacy? Why Now?

• 21st century jobs demand a well-educated workforce
• Education begins long before children enter kindergarten
• Early literacy and learning development has become an economic issue
Newborn brain size proportionate to 6 year old brain.

Newborn neural networks compared to networks of a 6 year old.

Experiences from birth-5 profoundly affect children’s learning and intellectual growth.

Why Early Literacy? Why Now?

• Differences in early experiences result in a “readiness gap.”

• Children who enter kindergarten with limited readiness skills are more likely to develop reading difficulties and require remedial education.

• Children who start school behind their peers are UNLIKELY to catch up.
• Why do children’s language and reading readiness learning trajectories differ?

• 2 1/2 year study with 42 families.

• Race/ethnicity doesn’t matter.

• Gender doesn’t matter.

• Relative economic advantage does matter.
Language Experiences Matter Greatly

![Graph showing the estimated cumulative words addressed to children of different SES levels over their age in months. The graph illustrates that professional children are exposed to significantly more words than working-class and very low SES children.](image)
Number of Books at Home

A national study of entering kindergartners identified 4 risk factors highly associated with student achievement:

- Have a mother with less than a high school education
- Living in a low-income family
- Living in a single-parent household
- Having parents whose primary language is one other than English
Distribution of Risk Factors

Percentage distribution of first-time kindergarteners, by number of risk factors and race-ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race-ethnicity</th>
<th>Two or more risk factors</th>
<th>One risk factor</th>
<th>No risk factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Recognizing Letters of the Alphabet

Understanding Beginning Sounds of Words

Understanding Ending Sounds of Words

Parents Reading to Children Every Day

If 50 first graders have problems reading, then 44 of them will still have problems reading in fourth grade.

If 50 third graders are poor readers, then 37 of them are still poor readers in ninth grade.

High Quality Early Care and Learning Experiences

Successful Start in School

More Successful Learning

Less Delinquency and Truancy

Higher High School Graduation Rates

Higher Rate of Entrance to and Completion of College

Better Jobs

More Durable Family Life

Greater Engagement in Civic Life
Quality-Related Studies

The Carolina Abecedarian Project Study

The Perry Preschool Project

The Chicago Child-Parent Centers
Age 14 achievement at 10th percentile +

Graduated from High school on time

Didn’t require Special education

Source: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
Own home

Earned $20,000+

Have a savings account

Source: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
Benefits of High-Quality Preschool

- Increased Achievement Test Scores
- Improved Behavior and Attitudes
- Decreased Special Education
- Decreased Crime and Delinquency
- Increased High School Graduation
- Remarkable Return on Investment
Optimal Investment for Higher Rates of Return

![Diagram showing optimal investment by age, with categories: Preschool, School, Post School.](image)
What Needs to Be Done?

New Research Findings
New Visions
New Expectations

High Quality Early Care and Learning Experiences

Identify Needed Changes in Current Practice and Program Quality

Monitor and Assess Progress. Use Answers to Guide Future Actions

Changes in Current Practice Begin to Take Place

Increase Access to Research-Based Strategies, Tools, and Materials (at home, at childcare centers, in the community)

Provide Ongoing Support (to families, to teachers, to caregivers)
An Aligned and Multi-Pronged Approach

Early Care and Learning Programs
Support and Services that Contributes to Children’s Readiness

Families
Support that Contributes to Children’s Readiness

Ready Readers
Ready Learners

Community
Support and Services that Contributes to Children’s Readiness

Elementary Schools
Support and Services that Contributes to Children’s Readiness