



2016 CONTRA COSTA COUNTY KINDERGARTEN READINESS ASSESSMENT

Purpose of the Readiness Assessment

This study profiles readiness among kindergarteners in Contra Costa County. This is the first large-scale kindergarten readiness assessment funded by First 5 Contra Costa.

The goal of this study is to gather baseline levels of readiness among children in the county, particularly those living in First 5 service areas. Additionally, this study seeks to create a better understanding of the factors that influence readiness, particularly those considered “malleable,” such as participation in specific programs or services (preschool, parenting classes, etc.).

Study Design and Methodology

Contra Costa County Office of Education, First 5 Contra Costa, and Applied Survey Research (ASR) approached Contra Costa County school districts located near First 5 service areas about participating in the kindergarten readiness study. Three districts enrolled: Antioch, Mt. Diablo, and Pittsburg Unified. ASR selected 19 schools that were located near First 5 Centers; these schools tended to have lower 3rd grade reading proficiency and high poverty rates relative to other schools in the district and county.

One teacher from each selected school used the Kindergarten Observation Form (KOF) to assess students in their class at the beginning of the school year. In addition, 71 percent of parents completed a Parent Information Form (PIF), which provided data on additional family and child factors often associated with Kindergarten readiness.



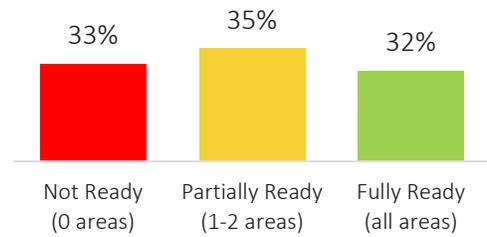
Characteristics of Participating Children

The table below presents the demographic, educational and family characteristics of the 425 children who participated in this study, including for children who were “Fully Ready” and “Not Ready”:

Factor	Classification	All Children (N = 425)	Not Ready Children (N = 134)	Fully Ready Children (N = 131)
GENDER	Female	49%	41%	55%
RACE/ETHNICITY	Hispanic/Latino	52%	53%	41%
	White	12%	9%	13%
	Black/African American	11%	14%	12%
AGE	Younger than 5.5 years	43%	52%	33%
	Between 5.5 and 6.0 years	47%	42%	51%
	6.0 years and older	10%	6%	16%
EDUCATION	English Learner	45%	51%	29%
	Special Needs	6%	10%	3%
	Prior Formal ECE (Center, FCCH, TK)	69%	65%	77%
FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS	Family Income Under \$35K	56%	67%	48%
	Mother Has HS Diploma or Less	60%	52%	38%
	Single Parent Household	34%	48%	22%

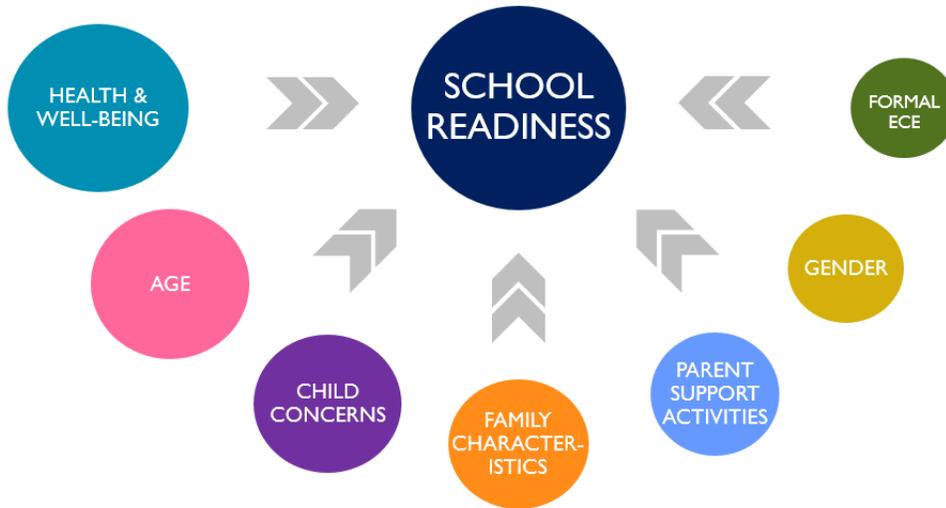
Portrait of Overall Kindergarten Readiness

Across the 425 kindergarten students assessed in Contra Costa County, this study found that 32 percent of the children assessed scored as "Fully Ready," indicating that they had mean scores in Kindergarten Academics, Self-Regulation, and Social Expression that are highly correlated to third grade academic success. The remainder of the children scored "Partially Ready" (35%) or "Not Ready" (33%).



Strongest Predictors of Kindergarten Readiness

A multiple regression model was used to find the factors that best predict readiness in Contra Costa County, after controlling for all factors in the model. The results showed the factors below were significantly associated with readiness.¹



Health & Well-being	Children whose teachers say they come to school hungry, tired, or sick on at least some days were less ready than those who do not
Age	Older children were more ready
Child Concerns	Children whose parents reported fewer child-related concerns—such as being concerned about managing their child’s behavior or feeling their child is much harder to care for than most children—were more likely to be ready
Family Characteristics	Children whose mothers had more than a high school education, whose family income was at least \$35,000, and who came from multi-parent households had higher readiness than children who lacked one or more these characteristics
Parent Support Activities	Composite index of 9 items about other activities parents have done to support them in parenting, such as home visits from a nurse or community worker; books, magazines or newspapers; or parenting websites. Children whose parents engaged in at least 1 of these activities were more ready.
Gender	Girls were more ready than boys
Formal ECE	Having attended a pre-K program (Head Start, other center-based program, family child care home or transitional kindergarten program) was related to higher levels of readiness.

Next Steps

- Repeat the assessment to include more districts, schools, and classrooms in order to broaden our understanding of kindergarten readiness across the county.
- Use the data to reexamine First 5’s investments and promote better service integration between First 5 and other service systems for children and families.

¹ Multivariate linear regression with seven significant factors, controlling for school effects (percentage of students with Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL)). Overall model accounted for 37% of variance ($R^2 = .370$). Largest variances: HEALTH (17%), AGE (9%), FRL (3%), all others (1%-2%).