



World's Best Workforce—Goal 1: All children are ready for school

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World's Best Workforce

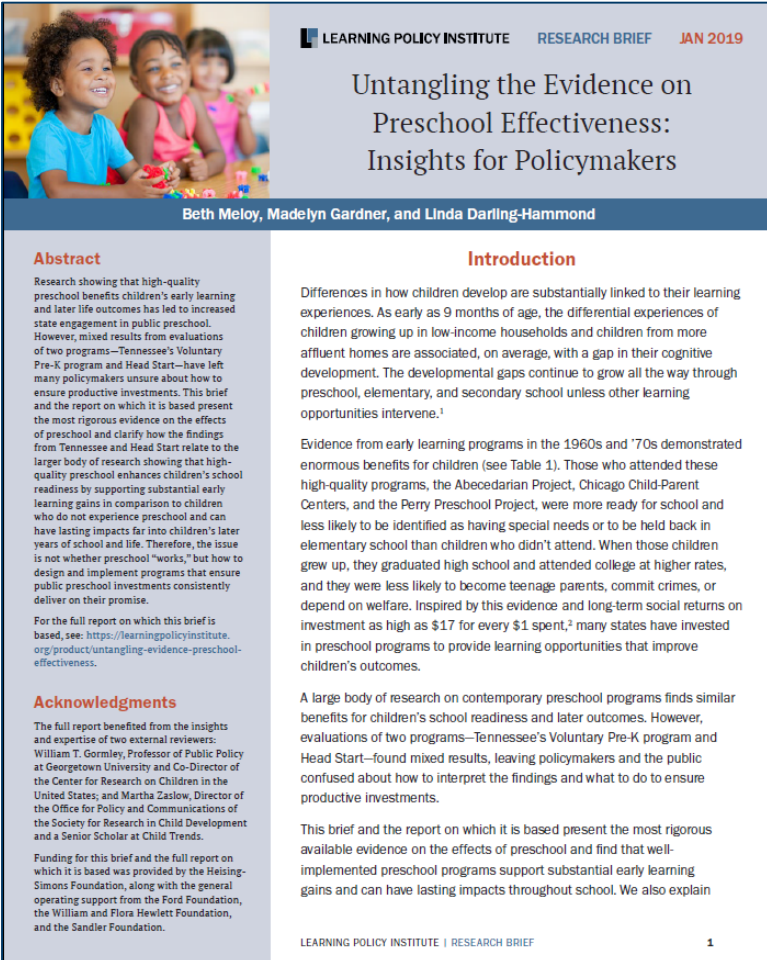
Under Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11, school boards are to adopt a long-term, comprehensive strategic plan to support and improve teaching and learning. This plan addresses the following five goals:

- All children are ready for school.
- All third-graders can read at grade level.
- All racial and economic achievement gaps between students are closed.
- All students are ready for career and college.
- All students graduate from high school.

Participant Outcomes

Participants will be able to:

- Describe key attributes of high-quality early learning programs
- Explain the connections between program quality and return on investment in early learning
- Define school readiness and its multiple dimensions
- Write a SMART goal (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) addressing constructs of readiness within Goal #1 of the district's World's Best Workforce plan
- Take steps to promote meaningful use of early learning assessment data to others within their districts



LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE RESEARCH BRIEF JAN 2019

Untangling the Evidence on Preschool Effectiveness: Insights for Policymakers

Beth Meloy, Madelyn Gardner, and Linda Darling-Hammond

Abstract

Research showing that high-quality preschool benefits children's early learning and later life outcomes has led to increased state engagement in public preschool. However, mixed results from evaluations of two programs—Tennessee's Voluntary Pre-K program and Head Start—have left many policymakers unsure about how to ensure productive investments. This brief and the report on which it is based present the most rigorous evidence on the effects of preschool and clarify how the findings from Tennessee and Head Start relate to the larger body of research showing that high-quality preschool enhances children's school readiness by supporting substantial early learning gains in comparison to children who do not experience preschool and can have lasting impacts far into children's later years of school and life. Therefore, the issue is not whether preschool "works," but how to design and implement programs that ensure public preschool investments consistently deliver on their promise.

For the full report on which this brief is based, see: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/untangling-evidence-preschool-effectiveness>.

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Differences in how children develop are substantially linked to their learning experiences. As early as 9 months of age, the differential experiences of children growing up in low-income households and children from more affluent homes are associated, on average, with a gap in their cognitive development. The developmental gaps continue to grow all the way through preschool, elementary, and secondary school unless other learning opportunities intervene.¹

Evidence from early learning programs in the 1960s and '70s demonstrated enormous benefits for children (see Table 1). Those who attended these high-quality programs, the Abecedarian Project, Chicago Child-Parent Centers, and the Perry Preschool Project, were more ready for school and less likely to be identified as having special needs or to be held back in elementary school than children who didn't attend. When those children grew up, they graduated high school and attended college at higher rates, and they were less likely to become teenage parents, commit crimes, or depend on welfare. Inspired by this evidence and long-term social returns on investment as high as \$17 for every \$1 spent,² many states have invested in preschool programs to provide learning opportunities that improve children's outcomes.

A large body of research on contemporary preschool programs finds similar benefits for children's school readiness and later outcomes. However, evaluations of two programs—Tennessee's Voluntary Pre-K program and Head Start—found mixed results, leaving policymakers and the public confused about how to interpret the findings and what to do to ensure productive investments.

This brief and the report on which it is based present the most rigorous available evidence on the effects of preschool and find that well-implemented preschool programs support substantial early learning gains and can have lasting impacts throughout school. We also explain

LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE | RESEARCH BRIEF 1

High-quality preschool leaves children better prepared for school, especially in terms of their academic skill development.

Students who attend **high-quality** preschool programs reap lifelong benefits:

- are more prepared for school and
- experience substantial learning gains

...compared to children who didn't attend preschool.

Return on Investment in Early Learning

Studies of preschool programs that have followed students into adulthood find up to \$17 returned in social benefits for every dollar invested.

Even when students are followed only into elementary school, there are significant benefits from preschool in lower rates of grade retention and special education placements. These benefits produce an average of \$2 to \$4 returns on the dollar.

High-quality preschool programs help close the gap in school and life outcomes between those raised in low-income families and their wealthier peers.

Untangling the Evidence

Sufficient Learning Time

Small class size and low student-teacher ratio

Well-prepared teachers

Voluntary Prekindergarten

At least 350 hours per school year

staff-to-child ratios of 1:10 and a maximum group size of 20

teachers knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum, assessment, native and English language programs, and instruction

Untangling the Evidence

ongoing support for teachers,
including coaching and mentoring

Engaging interactions and classroom
environments

program assessments that measure
the quality of classroom interactions
and provide actionable feedback for
teachers to improve instruction;

Voluntary Prekindergarten

provide high-quality coordinated
professional development, training,
and coaching for both school district
and community-based early learning
providers that is informed by a
measure of adult-child interactions

measuring the impact of their
voluntary prekindergarten program
and provide results in their World's
Best Workforce annual summary

Untangling the Evidence

research-based, developmentally appropriate early learning standards and curricula;

assessments that consider children's academic, social-emotional, and physical progress and contribute to instructional and program planning; and

Voluntary Prekindergarten

Comprehensive program content including curriculum, assessment, and instructional strategies aligned with the state early learning standards, and kindergarten through grade three academic standards;

measure cognitive and social skills using a formative measure aligned to the state's early learning standards when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program,

Untangling the Evidence

meaningful family engagement.

Voluntary Prekindergarten

involve parents in program planning and transition planning by implementing parent engagement strategies that include culturally and linguistically responsive activities

Complexities of funding access and quality

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) oversees multiple early learning programs:

- Early Childhood Family Education,
- Early Childhood Health and Development Screening,
- Early Learning Scholarships, Pathway I and Pathway II
- School Readiness,
- Voluntary Prekindergarten/School Readiness Plus,
- Early Childhood Special Education, and
- Head Start

Each program receives substantial state funding. However, each receives a separate stream of revenue with its own requirements.

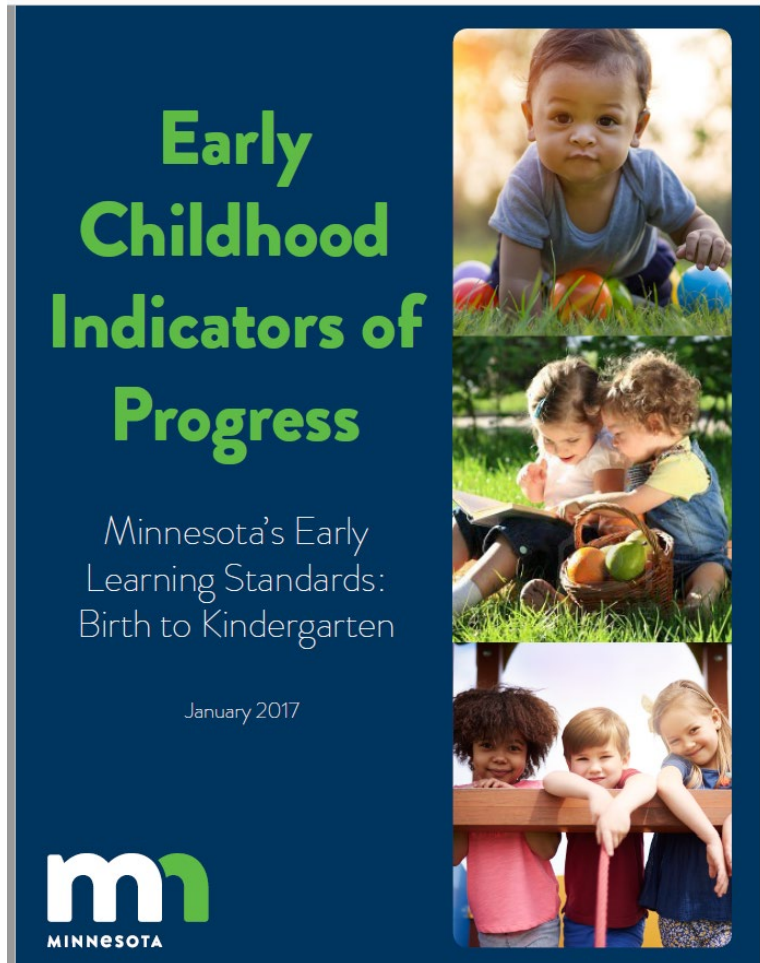
WHAT IS SCHOOL READINESS?

“Readiness” defined

Minnesota’s school readiness definition, the agreed-upon expectations at kindergarten entry, stipulate that children are ready when the child:

- Is at least 5 years of age by September 1 of the child’s enrollment year **(Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.20)**
- Has received early childhood screening **(Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.17)**
- Has received medically acceptable immunizations **(Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.15)**

Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs)



- Minnesota's early learning standards
- Revised and expanded in 2017
- A common set of developmentally appropriate expectations for children ages birth to kindergarten
- Aligned to the Minnesota Kindergarten Academic Standards.

Your handout provides districts with sample goals that may serve as a template or inspiration for their School Readiness goal. The examples are not meant to be inclusive of all potential acceptable goals.

There are four classifications of school readiness goals:

- Child-level goals and measures (Ready Children)
- School-level goals and measures (Ready Schools)
- Family-level goals and measures (Ready Families)
- Community or system-level goals and measures (Ready Communities)

Community-Level Goals

- Ensure seamless transitions from community-based early childhood education (ECE) programs to kindergarten
- Increase enrollment in early learning programs
- Increase the intensity and duration of preschool programs



Increase family engagement

- Percent of families engaged in parenting education.
- Number of home visits conducted by early learning or kindergarten teachers.
- Percent of staff who participate in a professional development activity focused on family engagement.



School-Level Goal

Improve...

- ...the coordination and alignment of curriculum and assessments and
- ...professional learning opportunities with community-based early learning programs



Increase the percentage of children:

- who participate in Early Childhood Screening—especially those who participate at age 3
- who are fully immunized by kindergarten
- enrolled in preschool programs who meet age expectations across early learning standards (ECIPs).
- With disabilities who make greater than expected developmental progress or exit meeting age expectations.



Early Learning Assessment System

Ongoing assessment is aligned ECIPs and to the curriculum in school-based early learning programs.

Assessment data can now be reported to MDE.

MDE links assessment data to multiple existing data sources:

- Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS)
- Minnesota Common Course Catalogue (MCCC)
- Staff Automated Reporting (STAR)

District leaders can access meaningful interactive reports/data displays to support continuous quality improvement.

Item Level Data: MDE is Ready!

- MDE has successfully accepted item level assessment data for two years.
- Upon batch upload submission, data is automatically reviewed for completeness.
- Complete data are automatically aligned to the early childhood indicators of progress (ECIPs) and child progress for all children can be measured along those dimensions.
- The data are also aligned to the three federally required child outcomes for young children with disabilities.
- Data is held in the early childhood data warehouse with other MDE data sources: MARSS, MCCC, etc.

The How: Item level data is submitted three times annually

Period	Observations Made	Submission Deadline
Fall	July 1-November 1	November 30
Winter	November 2-February 28	March 30
Spring	March 1-June 30	July 15

Item Level Data Submission: Are you ready for 2018-19?

To submit item level data for this school year, you need to be using one of the three approved assessment tools:

- Teaching Strategies Gold (TS Gold)
- Work Sampling System (WSS)
- Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)

Observations should have been made during required periods—or even just this spring! This data could replace exit Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF) ratings.

Support is available: mde.ecse@state.mn.us

Are you planning to be ready for 2019-20?

Select an approved tool, if you are not already using one.

Ensure all staff members are able to use the tool as developed by the publisher.

- Train
- Coach/Community of Practice
- Provide sufficient oversight to ensure fidelity of use

Authentic Assessment Procedural Fidelity Measure: Grisham-Brown & Pretti-Frontczak

Important Clarifications

All programs in your district do not need to be using the same tool. You can submit using a combination of tools.

All children with disabilities do not need to have data reported on the same tool.

Entry data for a child nearing exit can have been reported using a COSF.

A COSF rating informed by a more granular developmental assessment may remain the best way to capture developmental gains made by children experiencing significant delays.

Thank you!

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