Sonoma County Road to Early Achievement and Development of Youth (READY) Annual Report

2023-24

READY & Upstream Investments Stand With Commitments to Anti-Racism and Racial Equity

First 5 Sonoma County's Commitment

"First 5 Sonoma County envisions and contributes to a community and society where children 0-5, families and everyone in our communities can fully and safely participate, regardless of their race or ethnicity, the languages they speak, the makeup of their family, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, where they live, immigration status, their family's economic status or any other defining characteristic.

We will work to dismantle racism in our own operations, transform our systems, and partner with organizations that demonstrate commitment to anti-racism."

County of Sonoma's Commitment

"Sonoma County's collective well-being and prosperity are impacted by significant racial inequities. By focusing on racial equity and social justice in the Strategic Plan, the Board of Supervisors can begin to institutionalize equity and address disparate impacts on people of color both internally as an organization and in the community

Equity is an outcome whereby you can't tell the difference in critical markers of health, well-being, and wealth by race or ethnicity, and a process whereby we explicitly value the voices of people of color, low income, and other underrepresented and underserved communities who identify solutions to achieve that outcome.

"Data shows that the greatest disparities occur along racial and socio-economic lines. If Sonoma County wants to start closing those gaps, we have to start there. Research and best practices nationally show that successful equity programs begin with a focus on race. This allows you to develop a framework, with which you can then expand to broader equity issues, including sexual orientation, gender, and ability."

Angie Dillon-Shore, Executive Director
First 5 Sonoma County

Kellie Noe, Upstream Investments Manager
Sonoma County Human Services Department

Angie Dillon-Shore

Kellie Noe

Our Partners

The READY Project would like to thank the following organizations for their partnership in the planning and implementation of the Fall 2023-24 instrument of school readiness in Sonoma County, community outreach and engagement, review and analysis of data, development of report and presentation.

Child Care Planning Council (CCPC) of Sonoma County
Cloverdale Unified School District
Community Child Care Council (4Cs) of Sonoma County
County of Sonoma Office of Equity
Cradle to Career Sonoma County
First 5 Sonoma County
First 5 Sonoma County Evaluation Committee
Guerneville School District
Forestville Union School District
Healdsburg Unified School District
Human Services Department (HSD) Upstream Investments
HSD Planning, Research, Evaluation & Engagement Unit (PREE)
Julie Burns Translation Services
Latino Service Providers
Region 2 Migrant Education Program
Santa Rosa City School District
Sidekick Solutions
Social Solutions
Sonoma County Black Forum
Sonoma County Office of Education
Sonoma County Quality Counts Consortium
Two Rock Union School District

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Executive Summary

In 2014, after 2 years of planning and community engagement, the Road to Early Achievement and Development of Youth (READY) Project was launched in Sonoma County to contribute to the local body of knowledge about kindergarten readiness. Funded by First 5 Sonoma County, and implemented by Sonoma County Department of Human Services, Upstream Investments, READY began by partnering with a small cohort of Sonoma County schools. Over the years District participation has fluctuated ranging from 6-11 districts. However, since the 2016-17 school year, READY has partnered with a steady cohort of 6 school districts, representing approximately 15% of incoming kindergarten students annually. This valid sample enables the analysis of trends in student outcomes over time to be conducted. Partner teachers have observed kindergarten readiness in Sonoma County on an annual basis during the first four weeks of the school year using a validated kindergarten readiness instrument (KRI). A Parent/Guardian Survey has also been collected from incoming kindergarten students' parents and guardians to further examine factors that impact families' abilities to support their child's kindergarten readiness, such as access to supports in home languages and opportunities to attend early care and education (ECE).

Beginning in 2016-17, READY data revealed an overall decline in kindergarten readiness scores among the READY cohort of school districts, although this past school year a slight increase began to occur. Children are not innately ready or not ready for school so these scores do not necessarily reflect student's individual academic achievement or abilities. Rather, scores should be seen as an indicator of families' access to the resources and opportunities needed to support their children to be ready to succeed when they enter the public-school system. Additionally, kindergarten readiness scores reflect the education systems capacity to support student success.

In addition to the declining scores, READY data has also revealed large disparities in kindergarten readiness scores between white, Asian and Pacific Islander students and students that speak English at home when compared to students that identify as Black, Indigenous, Latine, or from a Community of Color (BIPOC) as well as students that are linguistically diverse. Overall, 32% of Sonoma County children were ready for kindergarten in Fall 2023, down from 40% in 2016. Aggregate review of the READY scores since 2016 found that on average 24% of Latine and Hispanic children, 36% of African American and Black children and 30% of Indigenous/Native American children were ready for kindergarten. In comparison, 45% of white children, 46% of Asian American, and 63% of Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian children were ready for kindergarten. These disparities also persist in family income and educational attainment, access to early learning opportunities and many factors beyond the individual and family level.

In efforts to examine the root causes of these disparities and overall decline of kindergarten readiness scores, READY applied the Anti-Racist Results Based Accountability (AR-RBA) framework to research efforts (1). Integrating the AR-RBA framework has led to an expansion of qualitative data collection, prioritizing BIPOC families, in the form of open-ended survey questions, focus groups, key informant interviews and reflection sessions. In addition, the AR-RBA framework supports the systems evaluation approach READY leverages to build upon research findings at the individual and family level. The research question that READY and partners want to answer is not are kids ready for school, rather are families, schools, communities and systems meeting the needs of all students to support their development?

Anti-Racist Results Based Accountability Framework

The history of racism in the United States spans centuries and has profoundly shaped our society, institutions, and perceptions of achievement. Integrating racial equity principles into READY's work signifies a commitment to uncovering and addressing disproportionate outcomes through specific metrics and elements. Racial inequity must be explicitly addressed, or it will be ignored.

Bridging the gap between a commitment to racial equity and actual work can be challenging. To meet this challenge, Upstream Investments, READY, and First 5 Sonoma County have pursued personal and institutional education and training through Anti-Racist Results-Based Accountability (AR-RBA) (1). AR-RBA begins with desired results and works backward to identify solutions that address the root causes of inequity. It requires implementers to ask three key questions: How much are we doing? How well are we doing it? And is anyone better off? This reflective inquiry is part of a seven-step process to ensure equitable benefits for people and communities of color (1).

AR-RBA Principles in Action

READY staff have applied AR-RBA methodology by building **authentic relationships** and increasing **participatory practices** with BIPOC families during data collection. Methods included open-ended questions on the READY Parent/Guardian Survey, focus groups, key informant interviews, and reflection sessions. READY staff are committed to integrating feedback from BIPOC participants into their evaluation methodology.

Regarding the AR-RBA principles of **data culture, sharing data, and data-informed practice**, READY aims to provide the community with resources for data-based decision-making. READY disseminates data collection results broadly in both English and Spanish each year. The staff of Upstream Investments, READY, and First 5 Sonoma County are committed to **self-reflection** at both the individual and organizational levels, ensuring that data collection tools are culturally and linguistically appropriate, evaluation methods are based on a systems perspective, and an iterative analysis approach is employed. READY has been receiving feedback on preliminary data from various community groups for several years and will continue this practice moving forward.

Finally, in examining data through a **root causes** lens, READY has worked to expand evaluation metrics beyond the individual and family level to consider broader systems associated with school readiness. READY research is guided by best practice frameworks, including Bronfenbrenner's Socioecological Model of Human Development (2) and Vélez-Agosto's Cultural Microsystems Model (3). This research investigates the larger context of individual skills and behaviors by examining factors impacting families, communities, systems, policies, and environments to support children's development.
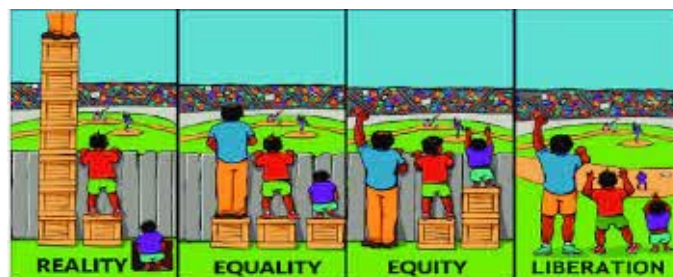
Root Causes - A Systems Approach
To investigate root causes that impact school readiness, READY expanded work towards a systems evaluation approach by applying the best practice framework used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Bronfenbrenner's Socio-Ecological Model to findings (see image below) (2). The Socio-Ecological Model considers:

"The complex interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. It allows us to understand the range of factors that put people at risk ….or protect them… The overlapping rings in the model illustrate how factors at one level influence factors at another level….Besides helping to clarify these factors, the model also suggests that….it is necessary to act across multiple levels of the model at the same time. This approach is more likely to sustain prevention efforts over time and achieve population-level impact." (2)

Image: Bronfenbrenner's Socio-Ecological Model

In addition to the Socio-Ecological model, READY research is guided by Vélez-Agosto's Cultural Microsystems model (3), which postulates that:

"Culture has the role of defining and organizing microsystems and therefore becomes part of the central processes of human development. Culture is an ever-changing system composed of the daily practices of social communities (families, schools, neighborhoods, etc.) and the interpretation of those practices through language and communication. It also comprises tools and signs that are part of the historical legacy of those communities, and thus diversity is an integral part of the child's microsystems, leading to culturally defined acceptable developmental processes and outcomes." (3)
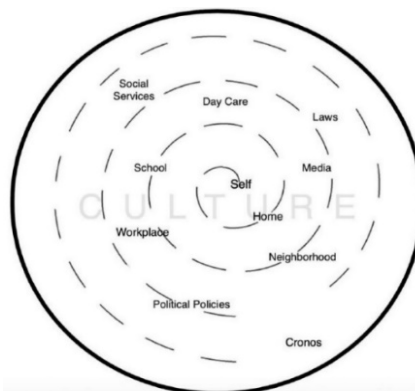

Image: Vélez-Agosto's Cultural Microsystems model

Understanding school readiness through a systems perspective reveals the interconnectedness of cultural influences within all systems. This perspective is crucial for delving into the root causes of disparities between different racial and ethnic/cultural groups. READY's data aims to inform local understanding of factors affecting kindergarten readiness. Therefore, READY and partners prioritize ongoing research into the community, societal, environmental, and systemic factors contributing to the overall decline and disparities in kindergarten readiness scores. While these declines and disparities are concerning, a deeper understanding of these inequitable outcomes will help identify strategies to ensure that in Sonoma County, a child's race or ethnicity does not determine academic success.

Investigating root causes from a systems perspective requires examining various factors. One local data source that assists in the investigation of root causes is the 2021 Portrait of Sonoma report (4). The updated report on Sonoma County reveals a complex picture of health, well-being, and socioeconomic outcomes for local residents. Overall, people in Sonoma County live longer, earn more, stay in school longer, and attain college degrees at higher rates than those in other counties across California and the United States. However, significant disparities remain, particularly among African American, Black, Indigenous, Latine, Hispanic and People of Color (BIPOC), as well as immigrant and undocumented community members (4).

The Portrait of Sonoma report key findings expose these disparities. BIPOC and immigrant communities persistently scored lower on health and well-being metrics than other populations. For example, Latine, Native American, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Island (NHOPI) residents have the lowest median personal earnings among the major racial and ethnic groups, with median incomes of approximately $29,000, $29,000, and $26,000, respectively. In addition, the African American and Black community has experienced the largest decline in overall health and well-being metrics since 2014 (4).

Education data further illustrate the gaps. Only 69.3% of African American and Black youth are enrolled in school, compared to 77.1% of Latine youth and 87.8% of Asian American youth. Life expectancy also varies significantly across neighborhoods. Although the gap between neighborhoods with the highest and lowest life expectancies has narrowed since 2014, disparities still exist. For example, residents of East Bennett Valley still live 8.7 years longer on average than those in the Roseland neighborhoods (4).

Additionally, environmental influences are particularly significant in our communities. Since 2017, Sonoma County has faced numerous natural disasters, including fires and floods, which have resulted in loss of life, housing, employment, a sense of safety, and significant disruptions in instruction for young learners. These disasters have also led to psychological trauma, loss of early care and education (ECE) centers, and the closure of before- and after-school care programs (5).

These environmental disasters have exacerbated the systemic inequities already faced by BIPOC families in Sonoma County. For instance, the traumatic October 2017 Sonoma Complex Fires took 24 lives, destroyed more than 5,300 homes, and led to a permanent loss of 450 licensed childcare slots according to the Sonoma County Community Child Care Council (4Cs) (6). Major flooding in February 2019 caused over $150 million in damage to homes and infrastructure. The Kincade Fire in October 2019 forced the evacuation of close to 200,000 residents, resulting in the largest evacuation in county history. In 2020, the Glass Fire and Walbridge/Meyers Fires further ravaged Sonoma County. In 2023, another rainstorm caused catastrophic flooding in West County, resulting in over $11 million in damages (7).

The COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020 compounded these disasters' impacts, leading to severe health, social, and economic consequences. The combination of severe wildfire seasons and the pandemic significantly disrupted the lives of Sonoma County residents, causing displacement, job loss, educational disruption, significant mental health challenges, and increased deaths, disproportionately affecting BIPOC communities. School districts and ECE programs experienced significant instructional losses, and many education providers had to adapt to offering virtual learning (5).

Furthermore, in Sonoma County, 52% of available child care slots were lost due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child care workforce, affecting the operation of child care centers and family child care providers, as reported by 4Cs (6, 8). This significant shortage, particularly for infants and toddlers, has made it difficult for many parents, especially women, to return to work.

Locally, the number of income-eligible children and families on the waiting list for subsidized childcare slots has significantly increased. Currently, there is a shortfall of nearly 9,700 childcare spaces and close to 12,000 childcare subsidies across all age groups in the county, with particularly severe shortages for infants and school-age children (39). Additionally, family childcare providers and child development centers are struggling with regulatory barriers that hinder their ability to expand or develop new facilities (8, 9). Even when spaces are available, the financial burden of childcare is often too great for many families, and financial assistance is scarce (8).

Clearly, the pandemic and environmental disasters have had traumatic impacts on the community and are major risk factors in examining kindergarten readiness disparities and declines. However, the community's resilience does offer protective factors for kindergarten readiness. These include employer-supported childcare initiatives by the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber, and support from organizations that support children and their families such as the Sonoma County Child Care Planning Council (CCPC), First 5 Sonoma County, the Community Child Care Council (4Cs) of Sonoma County, and the North Bay Children Center (NBCC) (12, 13). Dual Language Learner Programs, such as the Teachers Acquiring Language Learner Knowledge (TALLK) Project funded by the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) and First 5 Sonoma County (F5), and supports offered by local Family Resource Centers (FRCs) also play a critical role.

In addition, Sonoma County BIPOC residents have experienced and continue to experience racial trauma resulting from systemic and institutional racism. For example, in 2017, when READY scores began to decline, newly enacted federal executive orders negatively impacted immigrant families and their children. Increased border security, construction of detention facilities, expanded ICE enforcement, travel bans, Public Charge policies, and an expanded list of noncitizens subject to deportation are examples of legislation that created a decreased sense of safety among immigrant communities (10). Locally, Public Charge legislation led to fewer families seeking public benefits, fearing that accessing such services could jeopardize their ability to gain permanent legal status (11). In summary, understanding the decline in kindergarten readiness and associated disparities requires a comprehensive examination of systemic, environmental, and cultural factors. Dr. Camara Jones explains the impacts of institutional bias and racism (14):

"In this framework, institutionalized racism is defined as differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society by race. Institutionalized racism is normative, sometimes legalized, and often manifests as inherited disadvantage. It is structural, having been codified in our institutions of custom, practice, and law, so there need not be an identifiable perpetrator. Indeed, institutionalized racism is often evident as inaction in the face of need. Institutionalized racism manifests itself both in material conditions and in access to power. With regard to material conditions, examples include differential access to quality education, sound housing, gainful employment, appropriate medical facilities, and a clean environment. With regard to access to power, examples include differential access to information (including one's own history), resources (including wealth and organizational infrastructure), and voice (including voting rights, representation in government, and control of the media). It is important to note that the association between socioeconomic status and race in the United States has its origins in discrete historical events but persists because of contemporary structural factors that perpetuate those historical injustices. In other words, it is because of institutionalized racism that there is an association between socioeconomic status and race in this country." (14)
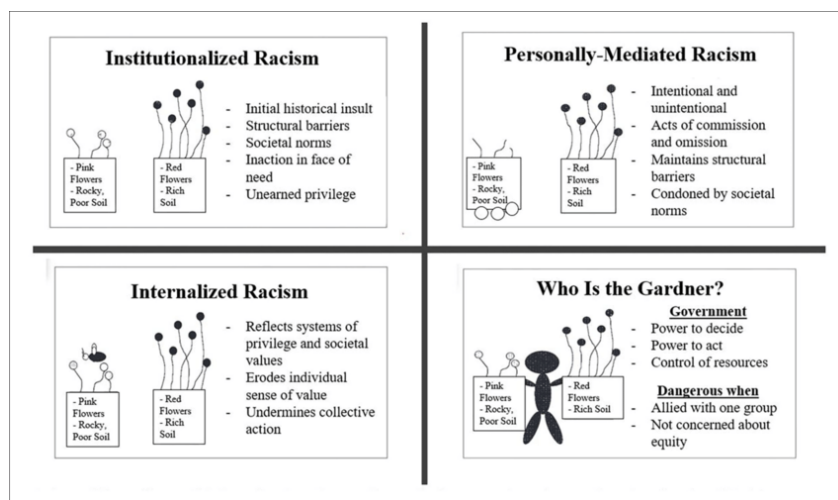
Image: Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework and a Gardener's Tale.

The levels of racism are evidenced by the disparities seen in READY data among BIPOC and linguistically diverse students. As stated in the Sonoma County Strategic Plan's Racial Equity Pilar:

"Data shows that the greatest disparities occur along racial and socio-economic lines. If Sonoma County wants to start closing those gaps, we have to start there. Research and best practices nationally show that successful equity programs begin with a focus on race. This allows you to develop a framework, with which you can then expand to broader equity issues, including sexual orientation, gender, and ability." (15)

READY and other researchers agree that differences in kindergarten readiness scores are largely due to systemic inequities in access to resources and opportunities (16). First 5 Sonoma County is committed to implementing targeted, evidence-based policies and practices to address these inequities, prioritizing children and families that identify as African American and Black, Indigenous, Latine, and Communities of Color (BIPOC). READY's findings play a crucial role in shaping First 5's policy priorities and investments.

READY data aims to enhance local understanding of kindergarten readiness and childcare support systems, highlighting the disparities faced by BIPOC children and their families in Sonoma County. The READY Project and its partners are dedicated to investigating the systemic root causes contributing to the overall decline and disparities in kindergarten readiness as a continuous research priority. While the decline and disparities are challenging to confront, these data provide an opportunity to advance equity-focused, data-driven decision-making. This approach promotes racial equity and empowers decision-makers to seek solutions rather than assign blame.

School Readiness & the READY Project

Why Care About Kindergarten Readiness?

Education is widely recognized as a pathway to better jobs and higher pay, a relationship that has only strengthened since the 1970s due to globalization, technological changes, shifts in social policies, and economic downturns. These factors have made it increasingly difficult for individuals with limited formal education to achieve economic stability and security. However, the benefits of education extend beyond economic outcomes. Access to knowledge significantly impacts long-term well-being, self-determination, and self-sufficiency, offering individuals the freedom to choose their paths in life (4).

Education does more than equip people with skills and credentials. It builds confidence and opens doors to a broader range of future possibilities. More education is correlated with better physical and mental health, longer life expectancy, greater marital stability, tolerance, and adaptability to change. These non-economic benefits of education are critical for overall well-being (4). Furthermore, beyond formal education, knowledge encompasses what individuals learn at home and in their communities. This includes understanding how the world works, recognizing valuable principles, knowing what it means to be a good person, overcoming challenges, and managing practical life tasks. These informal sources of knowledge are essential for survival and flourishing, offering strength and resilience to communities.

Historically, kindergarten readiness (also referred to as school readiness) has focused on the individual level of a child's capacity to be successful when they enter kindergarten. Individual level kindergarten readiness has been defined as a set of social-emotional, self-regulation and academic skills a student requires to make a successful transition to kindergarten (16). This mental model of school readiness does not take into account the larger context of human development, however.

Human beings are shaped by the societal conditions around them. A more comprehensive understanding of kindergarten readiness includes the capability of families, schools, community and systems surrounding children to support their success in school. Central to the human development approach is the concept of capabilities—what individuals can do and become. These capabilities are crucial in child development. Essential capabilities for children include good health, access to knowledge, and a safe and nurturing environment free from discrimination, violence and harm (4).

A practical example of the capability approach in child development is educational opportunity. While all children may have the right to quality education, real opportunities can vary significantly. For instance, children from low-income neighborhoods may face constraints such as under-resourced schools and financial barriers that limit their ability to succeed academically, compared to their more affluent peers. Thus, formal rights alone are not sufficient; true capabilities require that children have the real, practical ability to achieve their educational goals (4).

In addition, experts now believe that a comprehensive definition of school readiness includes a child's characteristics, as well as the influence of past and present environmental and cultural contexts (16). As school readiness researchers have stated:

"Children are not innately 'ready' or 'not ready' for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school." (16)

Furthermore, researchers agree that disparities in kindergarten readiness among racial groups are largely attributable to inequities in access to resources and opportunities:

"There is a growing evidence and recognition that institutionalized discrimination and segregation based on race are detrimental to early childhood development and that policies and practices that create systemic barriers to opportunities and resources are the true root causes of most disparities in children's health, well-being and readiness to succeed in kindergarten". (16)

Image: The Roots and Symptoms of Racism

(Source: The Roots and Symptoms of Racism, A Window Between Worlds)
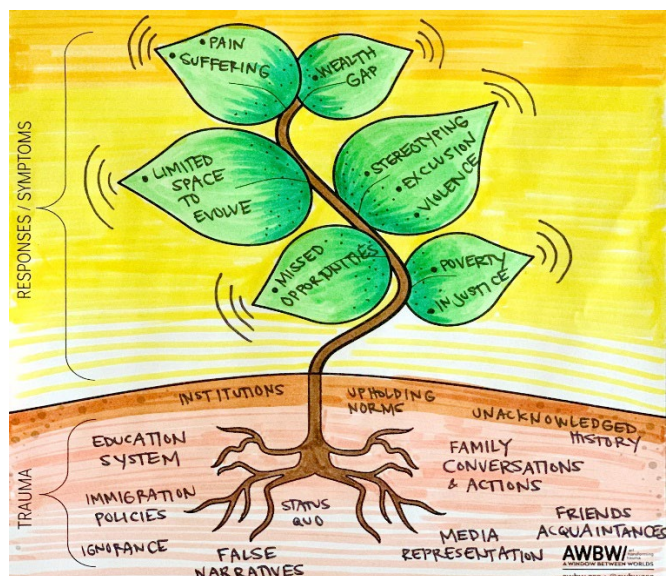
Trauma and Kindergarten Readiness

Another contributing factor that creates barriers to school readiness is trauma. For example, adversity and stress experienced by one generation can biologically impact subsequent generations through mechanisms such as epigenetics (18). These biological mechanisms involve changes in stress response systems and immune functioning that can be passed down. For children, exposure to trauma can alter their stress response, making them more susceptible to anxiety, depression, and other health issues that can impair their cognitive development and readiness for school. Traumatic experiences in parents can influence their parenting styles and attachment behaviors, increasing the risk of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in their children (18).

Children who experience inconsistent or insecure attachment due to parental trauma are at a higher risk of developing behavioral and emotional difficulties that hinder their readiness for school (18). A Behavioral Health Needs Assessment conducted by the Sonoma County Child Care Planning Council (CCPC) in 2023 revealed that local educators of children 0-5 (including kindergarten, TK, family child care, state funded and private preschools sites) are witnessing an increase in challenging behaviors among the students they work with (19). Of the 112 teachers surveyed, when asked what their biggest work stressor was, 67% stated that it was children's Challenging Behavior compared to other responses including Lack of Resources at 41%, Staffing Issues (lack of staffing, understaffed, staff turnover or inexperienced staff) at 39% and Extra Work Responsibilities (assessments, classroom maintenance, etc.) at 29%. Furthermore, when survey respondents were asked if the challenging behaviors they saw with children have gotten worse, 77% reported the behaviors had gotten worse, scaling from somewhat to extremely worse (19).

In 2023, the most frequently reported work stressor of educators working with kids 0-5 was children's CHALLENGING BEHAVOIRS (67%).

Furthermore, social determinants of health (SDOH), such as economic opportunities, educational resources, and structural inequities, including racism, play a significant role in perpetuating cycles of adversity and toxic stress across generations (18). Children growing up in low-income families or communities with inadequate educational resources face significant barriers to school readiness. These factors contribute to disparities in access to quality early childhood education, healthcare, and safe living environments, which are critical for a child's development and readiness for school (18).

In addition, historical and cultural trauma, such as the experiences of descendants of Holocaust survivors, Native American genocides, and slavery, have long-term impacts on communities. These traumas are often compounded by ongoing systemic discrimination and socioeconomic disadvantages, creating a cycle of adversity that also impacts school readiness. Addressing both current and historical trauma is crucial to breaking this cycle and fostering environments where children can thrive (18).

The above finding speaks to the need for the development of practices, programs and policies that address varying types of trauma and reduce systemic barriers in the way of children succeeding in school. In addition, multiple research studies have identified that investing in trauma informed, developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive early childhood programs and systems that support early learning, behavioral health and resilient families produce measurable benefits. Nobel prize winning economist Dr. James Heckman and colleagues have discovered that investing in high quality early childhood development programs in combination with support for families, particularly for children impacted by poverty, can deliver up to $14 for every $1 invested by improving long-term

outcomes linked to health, education, employment, and social behaviors. Heckman states, "The highest rate of return comes from investing as early as possible." (17)

Heckman's longitudinal research was able to identify a return on investment for society when families and their children have the opportunity to access to early childhood programs and supports (17). A lack of the access to these supportive opportunities creates what is known as the "opportunity gap", the disparity in access to the resources needed for all children to be successful (20). Addressing trauma and SDOH is essential for improving school readiness for children and their families. By understanding and intervening in these areas, we can help create supportive environments that enable all children to develop the skills and resilience needed to succeed in school and beyond.

READY Project

Established in 2014, the Road to the Early Achievement and Development of Youth (READY) Project is a cross sector partnership in aligned with the vision of Upstream Investments. READY is built on the fact that prevention focused policies and interventions can have long-term impacts. READY is reliant on collaborations with school districts and many early learning partners in order to collect kindergarten readiness data from incoming kindergarten students and their families. At the county level, local data collected informs the development of policies and strategies that increase access to high quality and equitable early learning opportunities and resources. Data collected is also provided back to the district, school sites and participating teachers to offer a data-driven quality improvement resource that can be used as a tool for conversation with families, to inform instruction and program development.

Since 2014, the READY Project has conducted ongoing background research to support the pilot and scaling of a common kindergarten readiness instrument (KRI) in Sonoma County. READY's pilot year began by implementing the KRI, the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) with a small cohort of schools. In 2016-17, based on teacher feedback, READY transitioned to a more classroom friendly KRI, the Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP) to observe kindergarten students within the first four weeks of school. In 2016-17, READY also grew to encompass partnerships with 6 local school districts. Since then, READY has worked with the same school districts, using the same KRI. This steady cohort has enabled the examination of trends in kindergarten readiness over time to help inform a county-wide conversation about the importance of equitable early childhood learning opportunities. For more information about READY and Kindergarten Readiness Instruments, please visit Appendix A. Listed below is a brief summary of READY's vision:

- Grow an equity focus by expanding research from individual level factors of kindergarten readiness to encompass community and system level factors
- Expand early learning programs in Sonoma County
- Increase access to high quality, equitable and innovative early learning programs for low-income families, prioritizing community members that identify as Black, Indigenous, Latine and Communities of Color (BIPOC)
- Expand support to teachers regarding use of READY data
- Continue to strengthen the connection between ECE programs and the TK-12 school system
- Support investment in ECE programs and promote public-private partnerships to increase collective impact

2023-24 READY Evaluation Findings

2023-24 Demographics of READY & Sonoma County All Kindergarten Student Cohorts

READY Cohort & County Kindergarten Student Comparison of Gender Demographics

County

Non-Binary: 0.2%
Female: 48.9%
Male: 50.9%

READY

Non-Binary: 0.4%
Female: 49.8%
Male: 49.8%
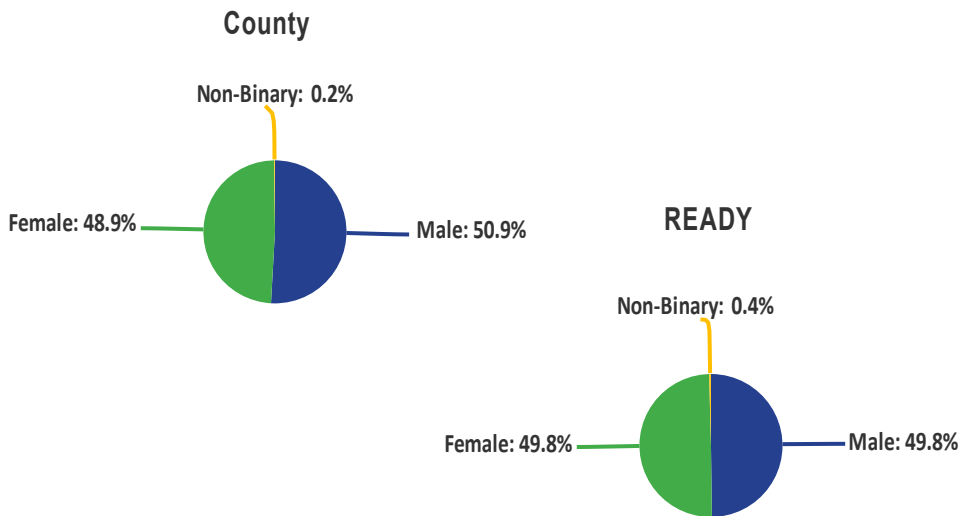
2023-24 Countywide data contained a slightly higher percentage of male than female incoming kindergarten students, whereas READY data contained equal percentages of both male & female students.

N= 4,189, Source: CA Dep. of Education (CDE)
n = 490, Source: READY KSEP

READY Cohort & County Kindergarten Student Comparison of Dual Language Learner Demographics

2023-24 Countywide data shows nearly a third of incoming kindergarteners as Dual Language Learners.

N= 4,189, Source: CDE
n = 490, Source: READY KSEP

County

Yes: 28.9%
No: 71.1%

READY

Yes: 35.0%
No: 65.0%
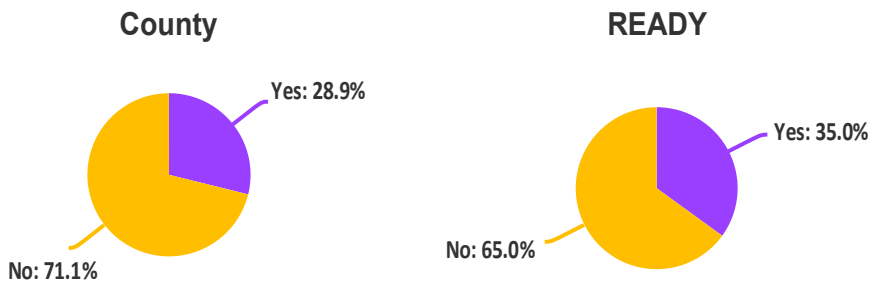
READY Cohort & County All Kindergarten Student Comparison of Ethnoracial Demographics

Countywide & READY kindergarten student Ethnoracial demographics are comparable

2023-24 Sonoma County Kindergarten Student Demographics

N = 4,189, Source: CDE

Hispanic/Latinx: 48.8 %
White: 38.9 %
Pacific Islander: 0.8 %
Mixed Race: 7.0 %
Native American: 0.5 %
Asian American: 2.7 %
African American: 1.3 %
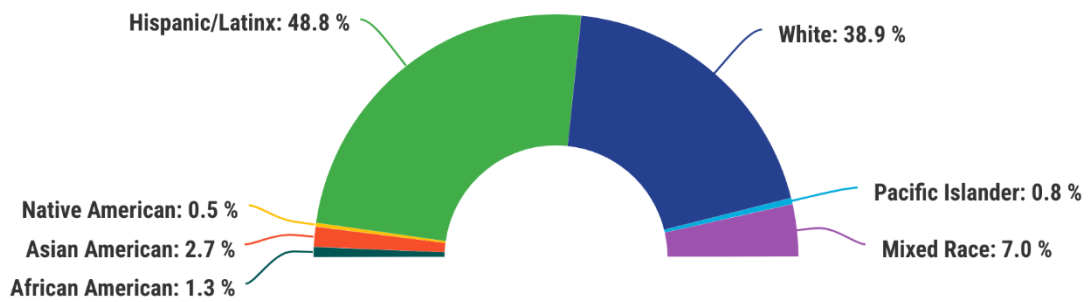
2023-24 READY Cohort Kindergarten Student Demographics

n= 341, source: READY Parent Survey, Kinder Students

Hispanic/Latinx: 40.8 %
White: 35.9 %
Pacific Islander: 1.0 %
Mixed Race: 13.7 %
Native American: 2.9 %
Asian American: 3.1 %
African American: 2.4 %
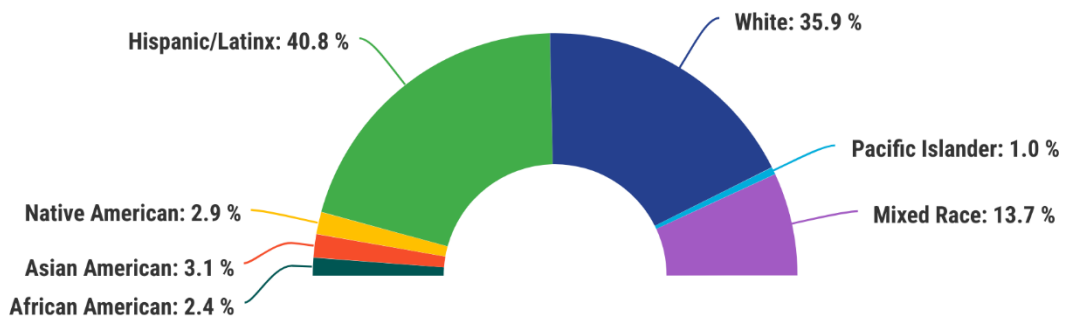
2023-24 Comparison of School Teacher and Staff Ethnoracial Groups Compared to Kindergarten Students in Sonoma County

READY BIPOC focus group & interview participants reported a decreased sense of belonging in early education settings for serveral reasons, including the lack of represtation of BIPOC teachers in their children's schools and early learning sites.

The below graphs further reveal that there is an over representation of white staff and under representation of Latine & Hispanic staff compared to student racial demographics.
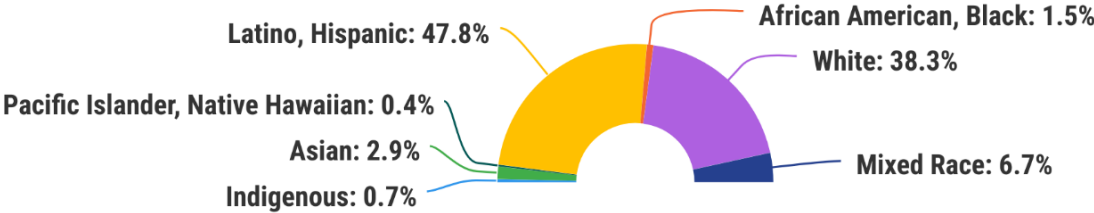Source: CDE

Sonoma County Kinder Student Demographics

Latino, Hispanic: 47.8%
African American, Black: 1.5%
White: 38.3%
Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian: 0.4%
Asian: 2.9%
Mixed Race: 6.7%
Indigenous: 0.7%

Sonoma County Teacher Demographics

African American, Black: 1.2%
White: 41.1%
Latino, Hispanic: 37%
Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian: 0.3%
Asian: 3.2%
Mixed Race: 16.5%
Indigenous: 0.6%
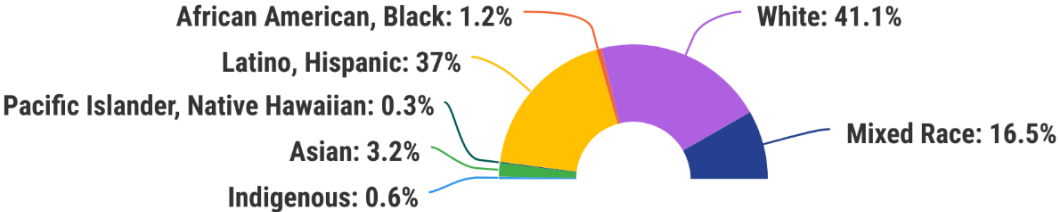
"I was looking for some diversity, it was hard because none of the bigger preschools were available… I found one that was smaller but there was no diversity at all and was too expensive. I could see my kids being singled out for being different, I want my kids to see themselves reflected in teachers. I feel really lucky where we landed because my teacher was mixed race like my daughter." – African American Interview Participant

6 Districts Participated in READY in 2023-24

2023-24 Quantitative Data Counts
KSEPs completed: **608 (490 Kinder & 118 TK)**
Parent/Guardian Surveys completed: **341**
KSEP & Parent/Guardian Survey Report Counts: **34 Classroom, 12 School & 6 District**
Participating Schools: **12**
Participating Teachers: **34**

2016-2023 Trend Quantitative Data Counts
KSEPs completed: **5,660**
Parent/Guardian Surveys completed: **4,483**
Participating Schools: **12,** Participating Teachers: **34**
Annually, between 14%-20% of total incoming Kindergarten students in Sonoma County were observed.
No data available for 2020

6 Participating Districts:
Cloverdale Unified School District
Forestville Union School District
Guerneville School District
Healdsburg Unified School District
Santa Rosa City Schools District
Two Rock Union School District
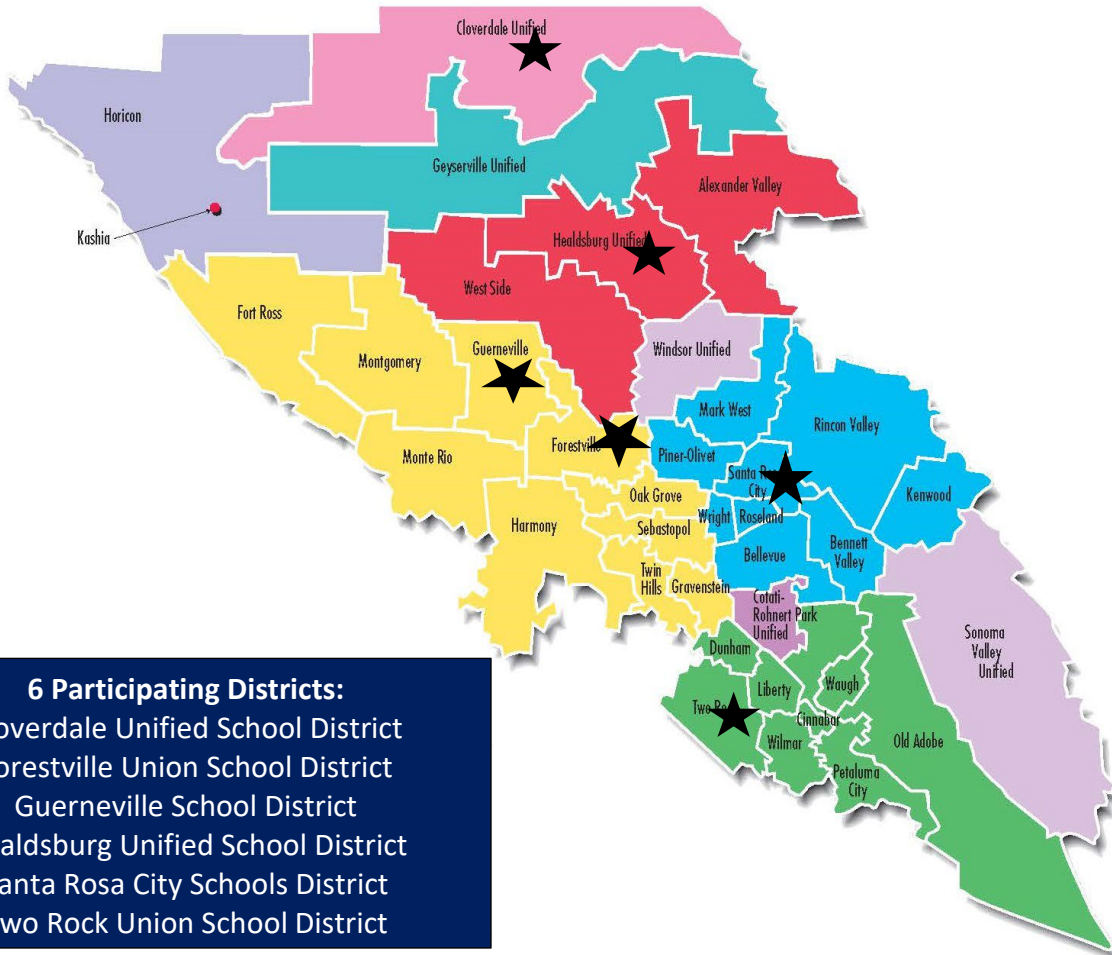
Sonoma County Aggregate Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP) Scores: 7 Year Trend

In 2023-24, overall about 1 out of 3 students (32%) entered kindergarten "Ready to Go"

Year	Immediate Follow-Up	Monthly Monitoring	Quarterly Monitoring	Ready to Go	n
2023-24	9%	24%	35%	32%	n=490
2022-23	6%	33%	37%	24%	n=419
2021-22	14%	24%	33%	29%	n=512
2019-20	7%	23%	30%	40%	n=527
2018-19	7%	21%	32%	40%	n=537
2017-18	7%	18%	35%	40%	n=591
2016-17	7%	21%	34%	38%	n=645

■ Immediate Follow-Up ■ Monthly Monitoring ■ Quarterly Monitoring ■ Ready to Go

♡ 🔍 ✔ ☆
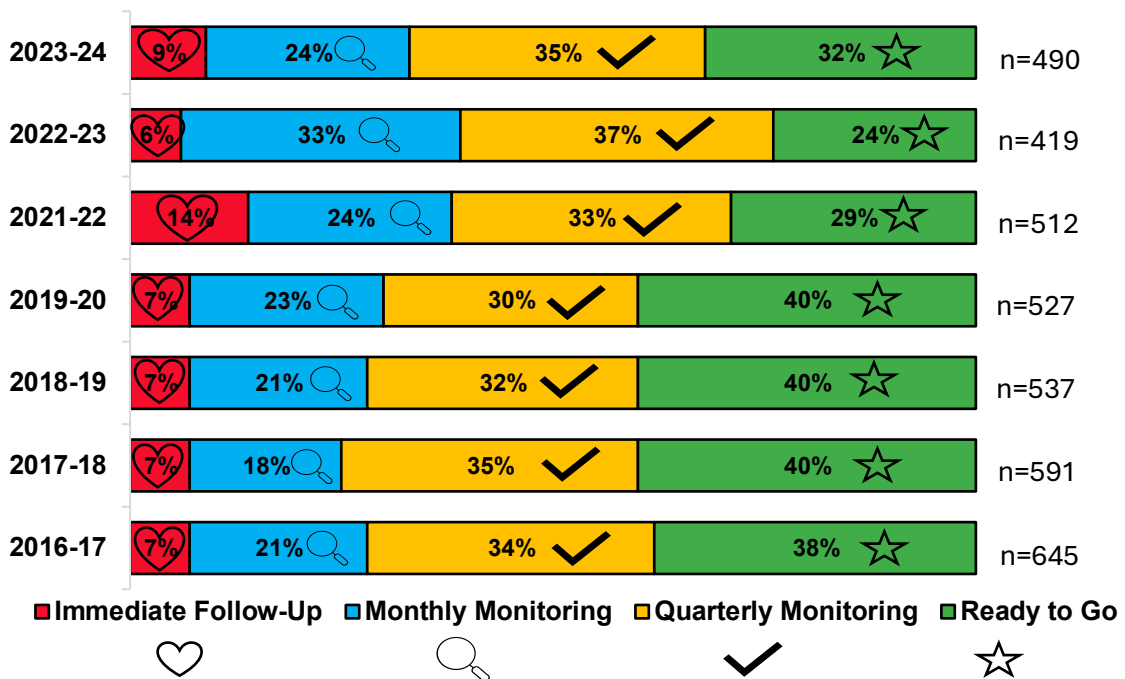
No data available for 2020-21 school year due to COVID & Fire evacuations
Source: READY KSEP files

Disparities Exist Between Different Ethnoracial Communities' School Readiness Experiences

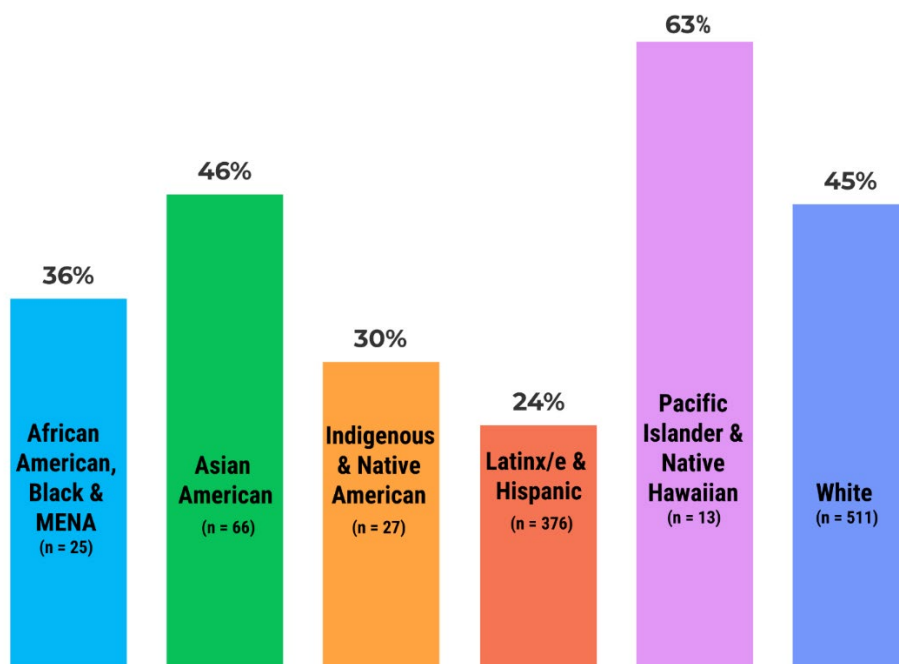**APPROXIMATELY half of incoming kindergarten students that identify as White, Asian American, Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian were "Ready to Go," while other Ethnoracial groups were signifcantly less likely to be "Ready to Go".**

Average calculated from 2016-23 data to stabilize sample size
Source: KSEP & READY Parent/Guardian survey, Total N = 2,754
*Multiple Race Responses disaggregated, 18% of respondents identified with more than one category
*MENA = Middle Eastern & North African *no data for 2020-21 due to COVID & Fire Evacuations

Bar chart values:
- African American, Black & MENA (n = 25): 36%
- Asian American (n = 66): 46%
- Indigenous & Native American (n = 27): 30%
- Latinx/e & Hispanic (n = 376): 24%
- Pacific Islander & Native Hawaiian (n = 13): 63%
- White (n = 511): 45%

READY Conducted Focus Groups & Interviews with BIPOC Families to Learn More About Their Experiences with the Early Education System:

"I feel safe at Spring Hill now, when I moved here there wasn't that many people that look like me and I did not feel safe, I felt like I was treated differently in a nonverbal way at first. People eventually treated me differently after they got to know me. I don't want [my child] to switch campuses because I don't want to have to go through that again… It is easier to feel safe than that I belong, I don't think that people mean to be this way they just don't know."
-African American Parent & READY Interview Participant

English-Language Learners Were Less Likely to be "Ready to Go"

In 2023-24, kids who spoke English at home were over 2x more likely to be "Ready to Go" than kids who spoke Spanish at home.
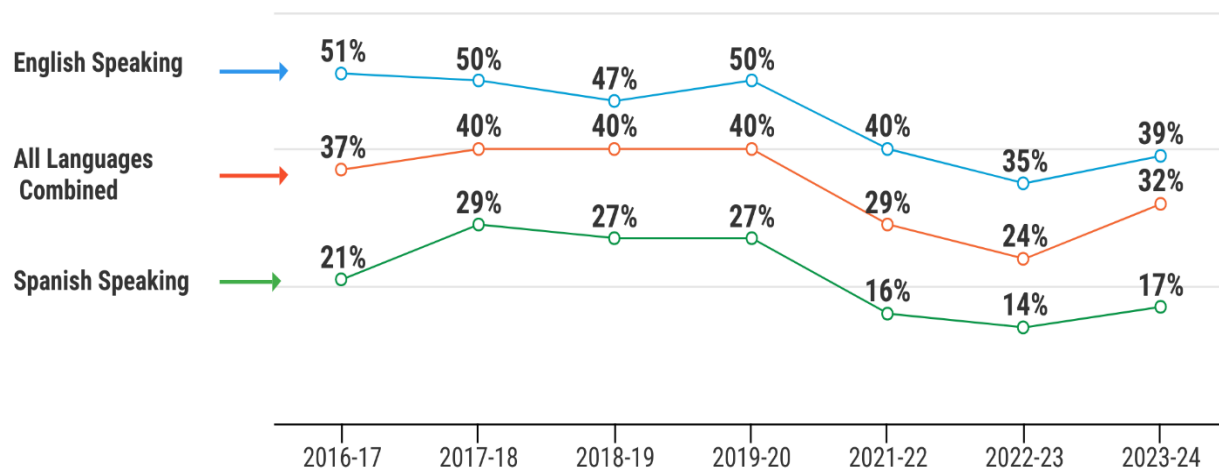
However, research shows <u>Advantages to Multilingualism</u>: enhanced cognitive & academic skills; stronger ties with family, culture, community, & professional & economic benefits.

Source: KSEP & READY Parent/Guardian Survey
All Languages Combined Category includes: Swahili, Vietnamese, Punjabi, Nepali, French, Italian, Arabic, Burmese
*no data for 2020-21 school year due to COVID & Fire Evacuations
Total N = 2,360

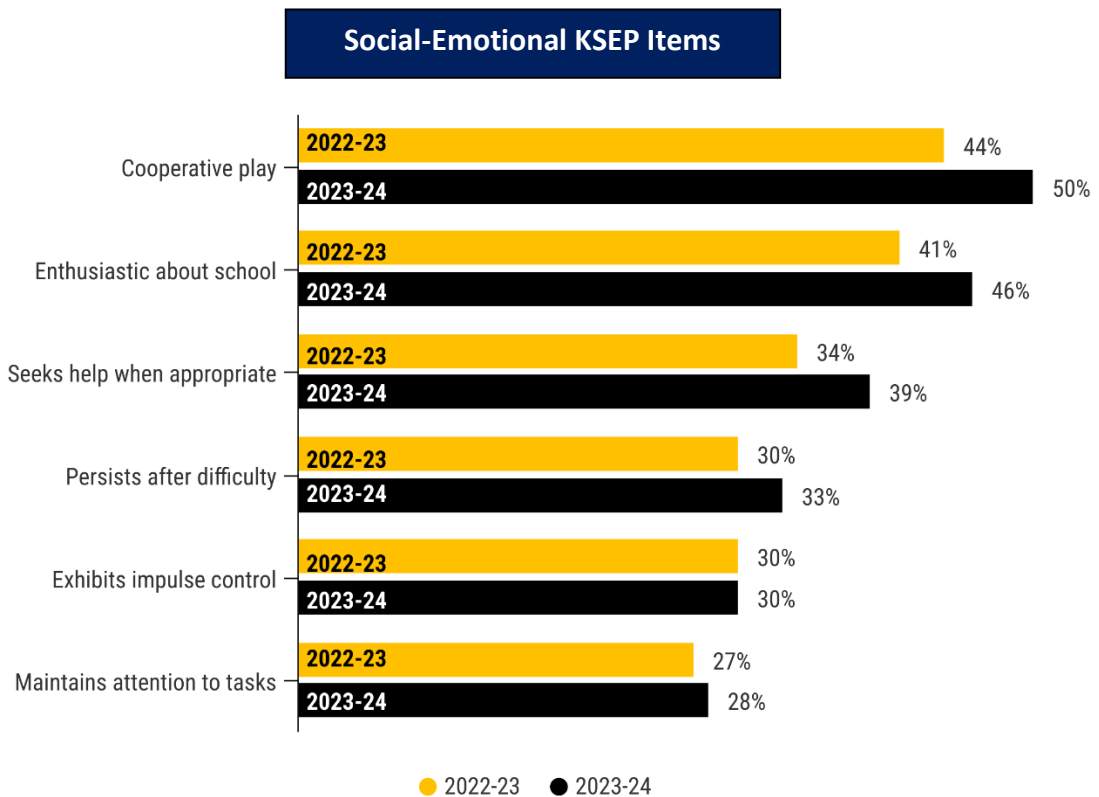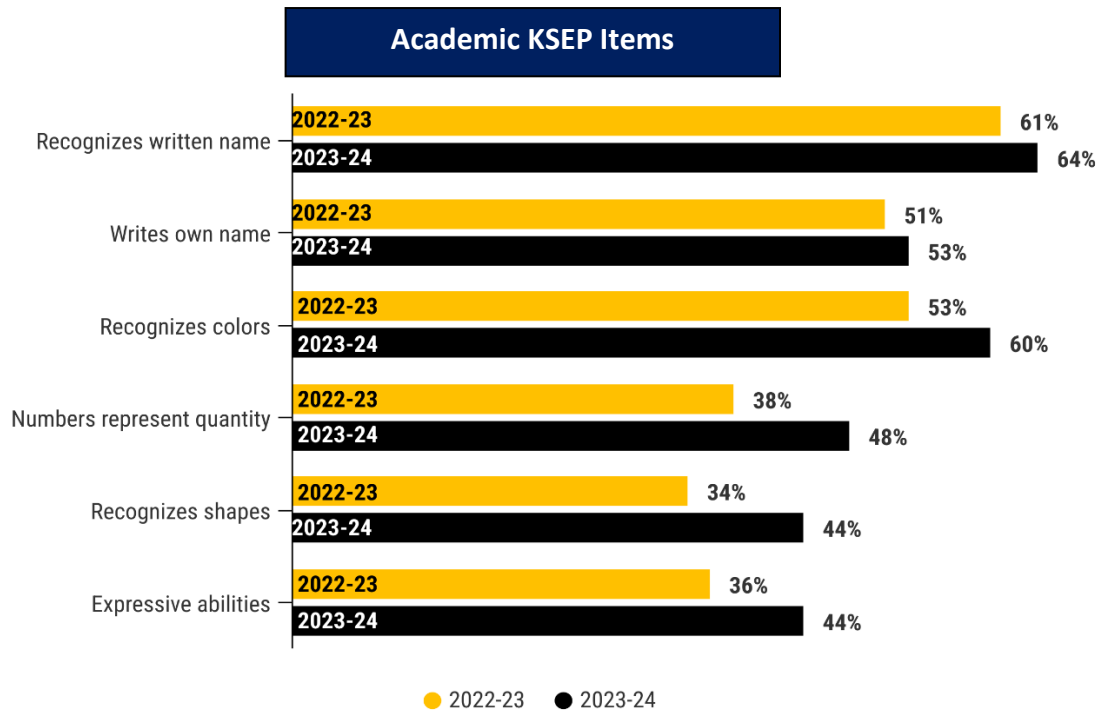|	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
English Speaking	51%	50%	47%	50%	40%	35%	39%
All Languages Combined	37%	40%	40%	40%	29%	24%	32%
Spanish Speaking	21%	29%	27%	27%	16%	14%	17%

"And when he (my child) entered his class speaking Spanish…. and he comes back sad because he says my teacher tells me that I shouldn't speak Spanish, that he was in English class, but he was just learning English when he entered kinder."
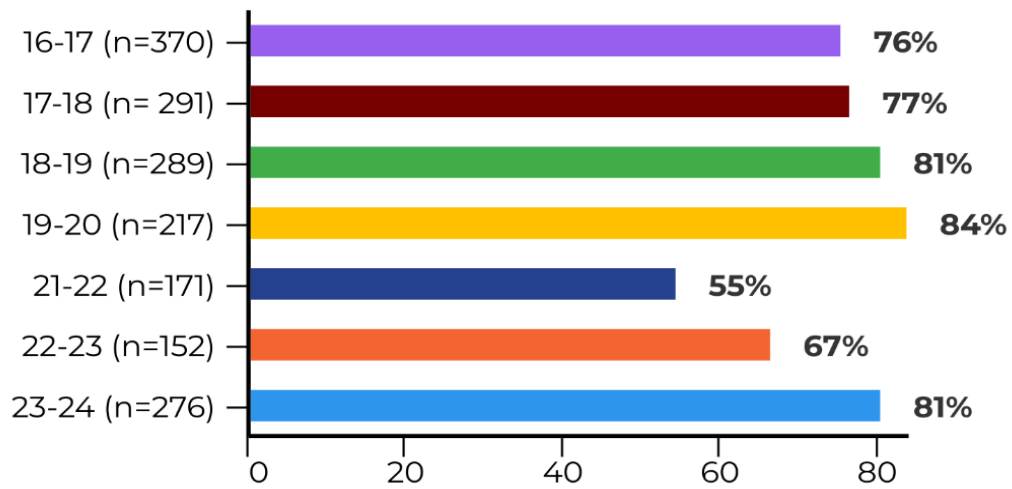*– Spanish Speaking Focus Group Participant*

2022-23 & 2023-24 Comparison of KSEP Domain Items: Overall Scores Increased

Academic KSEP Items

Recognizes written name
- 2022-23: 61%
- 2023-24: 64%

Writes own name
- 2022-23: 51%
- 2023-24: 53%

Recognizes colors
- 2022-23: 53%
- 2023-24: 60%

Numbers represent quantity
- 2022-23: 38%
- 2023-24: 48%

Recognizes shapes
- 2022-23: 34%
- 2023-24: 44%

Expressive abilities
- 2022-23: 36%
- 2023-24: 44%

● 2022-23   ● 2023-24

Social-Emotional KSEP Items

Cooperative play
- 2022-23: 44%
- 2023-24: 50%

Enthusiastic about school
- 2022-23: 41%
- 2023-24: 46%

Seeks help when appropriate
- 2022-23: 34%
- 2023-24: 39%

Persists after difficulty
- 2022-23: 30%
- 2023-24: 33%

Exhibits impulse control
- 2022-23: 30%
- 2023-24: 30%

Maintains attention to tasks
- 2022-23: 27%
- 2023-24: 28%

● 2022-23   ● 2023-24

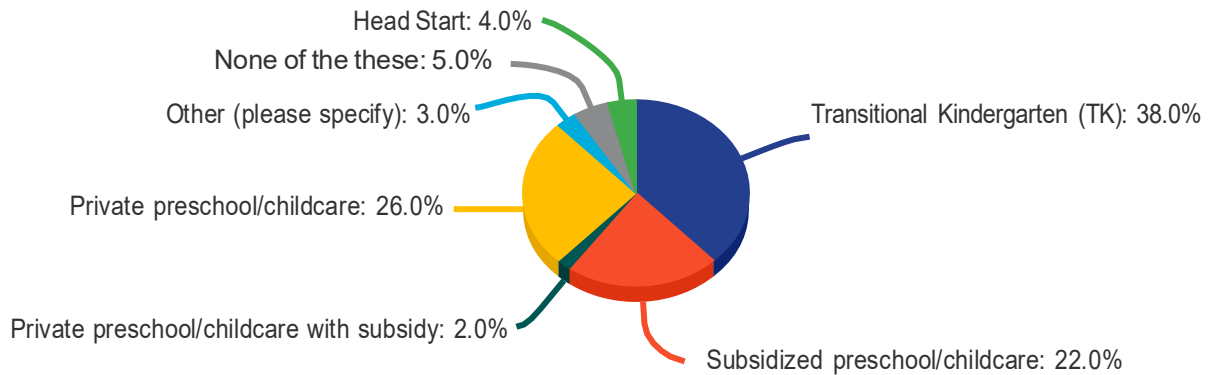# READY Cohort-Early Care & Education (ECE) Participation Trend

ECE participation increased among the 2023-24 READY student cohort comparted to the previous year.

Source: READY Parent/Guardian Survey
*no data for 2020-21 school year due to COVID & Fire Evacuations
Total N = 2,360

Cohort	Percentage
16-17 (n=370)	76%
17-18 (n= 291)	77%
18-19 (n=289)	81%
19-20 (n=217)	84%
21-22 (n=171)	55%
22-23 (n=152)	67%
23-24 (n=276)	81%

Types of ECE Students Attended
n= 276

- Head Start: 4.0%
- None of the these: 5.0%
- Other (please specify): 3.0%
- Private preschool/childcare: 26.0%
- Private preschool/childcare with subsidy: 2.0%
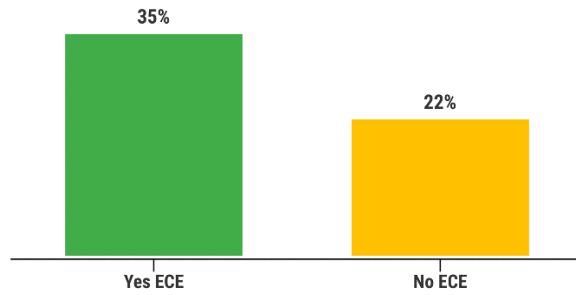- Subsidized preschool/childcare: 22.0%
- Transitional Kindergarten (TK): 38.0%

Early Care & Education (ECE) Comparisons

**Kids that attended ECE were More Likely to be " Ready to Go" (35%)
Compared to kids that did not attend ECE (22%)**

n=305, Source: READY KSEP & Parent/Guardian Survey

The most commonly reported reason parents did not enroll their child in ECE was **"Did not want to enroll their child in care outside of home" (28%).**

35%

22%

Yes ECE

No ECE

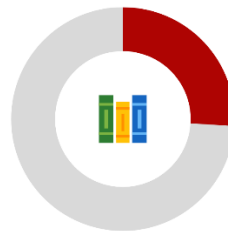**More kids from English speaking families (73%) attended ECE Compared to kids from Spanish speaking families (26%).**

n=305, Source: READY Parent/Guardian Survey

Percentage of Kids that Attended ECE prior to Entering Kindergarten by Home Language
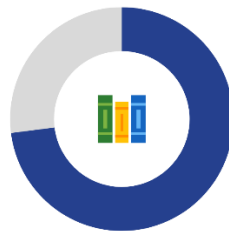
73%
Kids From English
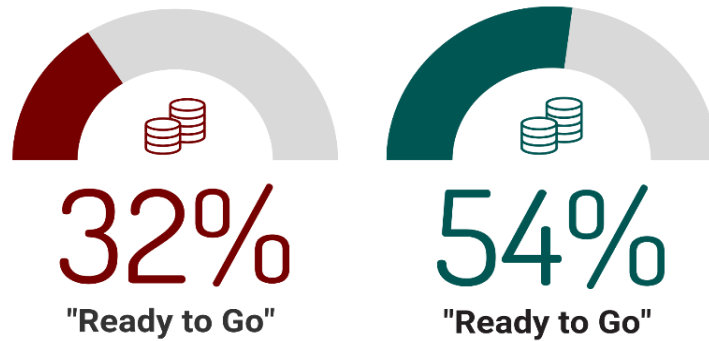Speaking Families

26%
Kids from Spanish
Speaking Families

Income, Ethnicity, Race & KSEP

In 2023-24, kids from families that earned $200K (54%) or more annually were more likely to be "Ready to Go" Compared to kids from families that earn $75,000 - $99,999 (32%).

n=305, Source: READY KSEP & Parent/Guardian Survey

32%
"Ready to Go"

54%
"Ready to Go"

Sonoma County Resident's Median Annual Earnings Disaggregated by Ethnicity & Race

Economic disparities are stark. Latine, Native American, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Island (NHOPI) residents have the lowest median personal earnings among the major racial and ethnic groups, with median incomes of approximately $29,000, $29,000, and $26,000, respectively.

Latino
29,066

NHOPI
26,378*

Native
American
28,864

Asian
37,083

Black
38,511

White
44,131
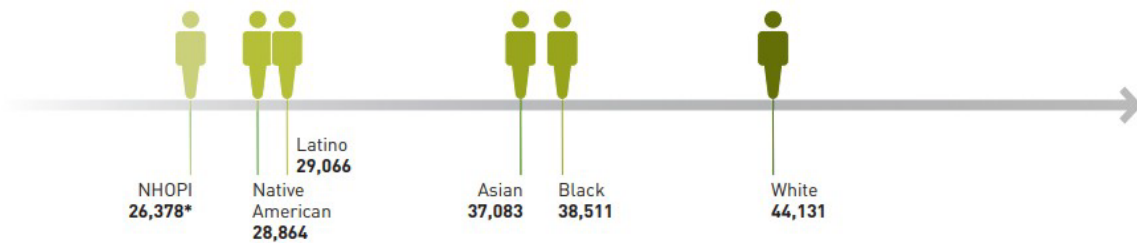
Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau ACS Public Use Microdata Sample, 2015–2019.
* Estimates with an asterisk have a greater degree of uncertainty. Due to small population sizes and survey sampling the standard error of the estimate is greater than 20% of the estimate. *NHOPI (Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander)

READY Qualitative Findings

READY staff sought to build authentic relationships and increase participatory practice with BIPOC families in the data collection process using qualitative data collection methods. These methods included the integration of open-ended questions on the READY Parent/Guardian Survey, as well as conducting focus groups and key informant interviews with parents and guardians, prioritizing families that identify as BIPOC. The decision to engage in family conversations was driven by several key factors. While READY consistently collects data from schools through assessments and surveys, these quantitative measures alone could not fully capture the experiences and perspectives of all communities, particularly those who face systemic racism and discrimination. Quantitative data gathered provides valuable insights, but it does not always tell the entire story, especially for families who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latine, Hispanic, or belong to other Communities of Color.

To address this gap, it was essential to engage directly with these communities to gain a deeper, more nuanced understanding of their experiences and needs. As a result, READY organized and hosted three **Focus Groups** specifically with families who identify as Latine or Hispanic and primarily speak Spanish at home. READY additionally conducted **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** with six parents and guardians that identify as Black or African American and two parents/guardians that identify as Latine or Hispanic. Once focus groups and interviews were complete, READY staff conducted inductive qualitative coding to identify the key themes that emerged from these conversations. READY then reached back out to participants to invite them to participate in follow-up **Reflection Sessions** to review identified themes to validate if they accurately reflected what interviewees and focus group participants had intended to share. Individuals that participated in focus groups, interviews and reflection sessions were given $50 Amazon gift cards for each hour of their time. Individuals that completed surveys were entered into a raffle for the chance to win a $25 gift card. These engagement strategies provided a platform for open dialogue and allowed READY staff to hear firsthand from the people most impacted by the challenges we aim to address.

Furthermore, qualitative research questions used in the parent/guardian survey, focus groups and key informant interviews were developed in partnership with staff from F5 Sonoma County, Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) team, Upstream Investments, Latino Service Providers, Santa Rosa City Schools Parent Engagement team and the Migrant Education Program. Development of questions also reflected best practice themes generated from literature reviews and strengths-based approaches to data collection (29). The intention of asking strengths-based questions was to uplift positive aspects of families and their children as child level assessments can be overwhelming for parents and guardians, especially with the focus is on child deficits.

Strengths based approaches can also foster a growth mindset. As described by researchers at WestEd, strengths-based strategies help to promote equity:
*"Approaching teaching and learning from a strengths-based mindset can look very different from teaching and learning that is generated through a deficit-based mindset. Unfortunately, deficit-based approaches are pervasive and can undermine attempts to promote equity, improve schools, and increase student achievemen*t."(30)

In addition, deficit thinking, where educators hold negative beliefs and stereotypes specifically about culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students contributes to inequitable educational

practices and outcomes, as educators may view some diverse students and their families through a lens of deficiency rather than potential (31).

Overview of Methodology

Parent/Guardian Surveys were distributed in English and Spanish, in both paper and electronic format. Surveys were sent through communication channels at partner districts. In 2023, 341 parents completed the READY survey. Due to the fact that questions were open-ended, respondents included multiple themes in an individual response, often making the total above 100%. Coding was conducted of survey responses by three people to achieve interrater reliability. The entire Parent/Guardian survey was translated into Spanish using a professional translation service. Open ended survey responses received in Spanish were additionally translated professionally for analysis.

Focus Group engagement was through the schools as well as early learning partners including F5 Sonoma County and the Migrant Education Program. Three focus groups (n=24) and two reflection sessions (n = 6) were held in 2024. Focus groups were facilitated by a professional Spanish language translator. The Spanish translator also recorded participants responses in Spanish, translated them to English and then shared with READY researchers for analysis.

Key Informant Interview (KII) engagement was conducted through the dissemination of flyers in English and Spanish through READY participating schools as well as through community partner agencies. Partner agencies that supported engagement with flyer distribution included F5 Sonoma County, the Migrant Education Program and the Sonoma County Black Forum. Key Informant Interviews were conducted by the READY manager and eight were completed, with six people that identify as Black or African American and two people that identify as Latine or Hispanic. All participants were invited to participate in a reflection session and six people participated in these conversations. Both focus group and KII participants were asked the same set of questions. Open ended survey questions were similarly framed and an overview of the most commonly reported responses and main themes shared are in the sections that follow.

Parent/Guardian Survey Reponses

The following open-ended questions were asked on the READY Parent/Guardian Survey:
1. What are you child's gifts or strengths that you would like their teacher to know about?
2. What are you family's gifts or strengths that you would like your child's teacher to know about?
3. What can the school do to include you in your child's education? Ex. Translated homework assignments, home activity ideas, etc.
4. What can this school do to make sure your child & family feel like they belong at this school?

Themes About Family's and Children's Gifts and Strengths
Regarding family's gifts and strengths, there was a broad range among survey respondents. The most commonly reported responses included themes of the **family's love, support and care for one another (39%) and spending time together (29%)**. The second most reported responses included themes around doing family activities together such as cooking, playing games, arts and crafts, spending time outdoors, and strong communication skills. Other themes included strengths around the family's background in early care and education in math and science. Finally, the strength of family's linguistic diversity, or being multilingual, was highlighted by many survey respondents.

Regarding children's gifts and strengths, the number one most reported theme by survey respondents was their **child's ability to be kind and care for others (34%)**. Secondary themes included their children's ability to learn quickly, artistic talents, interest in helping others, and finding joy in learning new things.

Themes About Family Inclusion and Belonging
Families shared several ideas of how to include them more in their child's education, however, the most commonly reported theme was to offer **home activity ideas (29%)**, with the school site providing **regular communication (23%)** being a close second. Other themes reported included providing opportunities for families to volunteer in the school, offering homework support and to translate homework into Spanish so that families that speak Spanish at home can support their child's learning optimally.

Regarding fostering a sense of safety and belonging in the school community for both the family and their child, again **clear communication (35%)** was the most commonly reported theme, with acceptance of their child and offering family events as secondary themes. It should be noted that many families reported that they already felt like they belong (74%). However, there was a disparity between different racial identities. Of those that reported they already feel like they belong, 35% of people that identify as white shared this, while 27% of individuals that identify as Asian American, 25% that identify as Black or African American, 27% that identify as Indigenous or Native American and only 19% of people that identify as Latine or Hispanic reported feeling this way.

Family Conversations: Results from Focus Groups & Interviews

Results from Focus Groups with Families that Identify as Latine or Hispanic

Regarding the focus groups with Latine and Hispanic families, a total of 23 parents and guardians participated in these discussions (23 in the focus groups and 6 in the reflection sessions). These conversations not only enriched understanding but also highlighted the unique challenges and aspirations of these families. By integrating their voices into decision-making processes, we can better tailor programs and initiatives to support and uplift some of the most marginalized people in our community.

The following questions were asked in both Focus Groups and Interviews:
1. What do you see as the benefits of your child attending early learning sites or preschool? What are the reasons not to have your child attend?
2. Do you feel safe and like you belong at early learning sites and school? Why or why not? If not, what would make you feel this way?
3. How does your race and culture play a role in your child's education?
4. How does your native language play a role in your child's education? Do you do early learning activities at home in your native language (e.g. read, talk, sing, play games)? Why or why not?

Themes About Benefits and Barriers to Attending Early Learning Sites or Preschool

Skill Development

A significant benefit highlighted by parents and guardians was the increase in skills their children gained through early education. These skills encompass both academic and independence-related abilities. Parents and guardians observed that their children showed marked improvements in basic academic skills, such as literacy and numeracy, as well as in essential life skills like self-care and problem-solving.

> *"I like it because he's starting to socialize more with other children… It's just my husband and I and my son and he doesn't socialize with other people or the only way he socializes is going to the library, going to the park, I take him to the Sonoma County Museum, taking him to the Children's Museum and other classes. But unfortunately, those classes you have to pay…So, for me, programs like Pasitos that is free…it's very good for the community."*

Socialization

Another theme regarding benefits that emerged was socialization. ECE programs provide an invaluable opportunity for children to interact with their peers, develop social skills, and form early friendships.

Access

Additionally, many parents and guardians appreciated the availability of free or low-cost programs such as AVANCE and Pasitos. These programs make early education accessible to families who might otherwise be unable to afford it, ensuring that children from low income families can benefit from quality early learning experiences.

However, parents and guardians also identified several barriers that hindered their ability to enroll their children in these programs. A significant concern was the cost of early learning sites or preschools. Despite the availability of some free or low-cost options, many parents and guardians found that the majority of programs were too expensive and not affordable within their budgets. This financial barrier often forced parents and guardians to forgo these valuable educational opportunities for their children.

Another barrier was the accessibility of program locations. Parents and guardians noted that many early learning sites were not conveniently located, making it difficult for them to transport their children to and from these facilities. This logistical challenge was particularly pronounced for families without reliable transportation or those living in areas with limited access to early learning centers.

> *" I think that there should be someone at these [programs] that tell people about these classes for kids. Or at least put up signs, posters or something because a lot of us don't have Facebook or anything like that. I don't like to have internet stuff, but I like to go out and take my kids to a store or the bookstore, I think that you should put up some signs there."*

Moreover, there was a notable lack of information or understanding about the available options. Many parents and guardians felt uninformed about the different early learning programs and what they offered. This gap in knowledge prevented them from making informed decisions about their children's education and taking advantage of resources that could benefit their families.

<u>Themes About Safety and Belonging in Early Learning Sites or Preschool</u>

Positive Experiences
Parents and guardians feel safe and a sense of belonging for them and their children at early learning sites or preschools for several key reasons. One significant factor is that the staff at these sites respect and often represent the families' culture, race, and home language. This cultural representation fosters a welcoming and inclusive environment where families feel understood and valued.

Another important aspect is the emphasis on parent interactions and community building within the programs. These efforts create a supportive network among parents and guardians, staff, and the broader community, enhancing the sense of belonging for both children and their families. Regular activities, meetings, and events help parents and guardians connect with one another and feel like active participants in their child's early education experience. Both AVANCE and Pasitos programs were lauded by focus group members as excellent models to foster this sense of inclusion.

"I take my son to the Pasitos program… And this teacher Luz… the truth is that she makes us feel like, like a family, it's really nice. That's how she makes us all feel…even though we don't know the other families or the other children, as time goes by, she makes us interact, we get to know each other, we know the names of the other mothers and vice versa. And the children also learn. My son is three years old and he already knows the names of all his classmates, so it's like a mini family, so to speak. It's a very nice relationship. And besides the teacher, she always gives us the confidence to talk to her if we have any doubts or concerns."

Clear and consistent communication from the program or site about the child's progress, daily activities, and any concerns also contributes significantly to the feeling of safety and belonging. When parents and guardians are kept informed and engaged in their child's learning journey, it builds trust and reassures them that their child's well-being is a priority.

"I also feel safe because besides learning things [in the AVANCE class], they give us as parents… very good information about how to learn to be a mom… Everyone can say it's easy, but it's not, it's hard. It is difficult to understand what is going on, how they are growing, how should I treat them? I like it, I like it a lot… it is like a distraction after five days of work, sharing with other moms, that I can talk with and I hear what happens to other moms and I say okay, so that's normal and details like that. I feel very comfortable."

Negative Experiences

On the other hand, there are several reasons why some families do not feel safe or a sense of belonging at early learning sites or preschools. A primary concern is when staff do not respect or represent the families' culture, race, or home language. This lack of cultural sensitivity and representation can lead to feelings of isolation and discomfort for both parents/guardians and their children. It should be noted that AVANCE and Pasitos participants did not report this concern, however.

Another major issue is the high student-to-teacher ratio. When classrooms are overcrowded, children may not receive the individual attention they need, which can impact their safety, learning, and overall experience. Families worry that their children are not adequately supervised or supported in such environments.

Additionally, mixed-age classrooms can create challenges, particularly when older children are expected to assist with younger children. This dynamic can be problematic, as it places undue responsibility on the older kids and may disrupt their own learning experience. Several parents/guardians were concerned that this arrangement does not provide an optimal learning environment for either age group.

Themes About Race, Culture, and Native Language Influence in Early Learning Sites or Preschool

The Role of Race, Culture, and Native Language in Education
Parents and guardians emphasized that race, culture, and native language are integral to their children's education. These elements are not just background details but central aspects of their identities and daily lives. When early learning sites and preschools acknowledge and integrate these cultural components, it profoundly impacts the children's educational experience.

> *"The children's support system, they had her helping other children, comforting other children as well as taking care of them because they were younger… And she's not going to kindergarten because I didn't like the system."*

Importance of Cultural Respect
Respecting families' race, culture, and native language is crucial in making them feel safe and welcome in early learning environments. Parents and guardians noted that when staff and programs are sensitive to and respectful of their cultural backgrounds, it fosters a supportive atmosphere. This respect can manifest in various ways, such as incorporating cultural traditions into the curriculum, celebrating non-U.S. holidays, and using bilingual communication methods.

Bilingual and Bicultural Education
For Latine and Hispanic families, raising their children to be bilingual and bicultural is a significant value.

> *"Because sometimes they want to force us as Hispanics to keep quiet. And sometimes out of fear we stay quiet."*

These families seek early learning environments that support and nurture both their native language and cultural heritage alongside English language acquisition and dominant cultural practices. They believe that being bilingual and bicultural not only enhances their children's cognitive abilities but also strengthens their connection to their cultural roots.

Impact of Cultural Disconnect

However, when early learning sites or preschools do not share or support this value, families experience a decreased sense of safety and belonging. Parents and guardians feel that when their cultural identity is sidelined or undervalued, it leads to a lack of trust and comfort. This disconnect can result in children feeling alienated and less engaged in their educational journey.

Stories of Resilience

In the face of numerous challenges, the parents and guardians in the focus group exhibited remarkable resilience as they navigated the early education system for their young children. Their stories highlight their commitment to child development, overcoming financial barriers, building a supportive community, advocating for cultural and linguistic preservation, and addressing systemic challenges.

Commitment to Child Development

One of the central themes of resilience was the families' unwavering dedication to their children's development. One example is a parent that observed significant progress in her son after enrolling him in the Pasitos program. Initially, he struggled to sit and pay attention, but soon he began following instructions and showing enthusiasm for school. This parent expressed her joy, noting how her son learned numbers, colors, and even fine motor skills like using scissors. This transformation underscores her resilience in continuing to bring him to the program despite initial challenges.

> *"I am Mexican. So, for me it is very important that they don't lose their culture, their roots. Which is us, their parents and guardians and guardians, and that they also learn to respect different people and different cultures."*

> *"I think it is a source of pride that I have something to give her. Something to pass on to her and I hope that it will help her in the future so that she has more opportunities. That she will be able to speak another language and that she connects with her roots."*

Overcoming Financial Barriers

Financial constraints were a significant concern for many families, yet they demonstrated resilience by finding and utilizing free community resources. The Pasitos and AVANCE programs were particularly valued for being free or low-cost, allowing families to provide their children with educational experiences without financial strain. One mother spoke about the benefits of these free programs, emphasizing how they allowed her son to socialize and learn without the burden of additional costs. She also took her son to various paid classes, balancing financial challenges with the need for quality education. Another mother mentioned the relief and joy she felt in finding the AVANCE program. Without these free options, she would have struggled to provide her child with similar educational opportunities, highlighting the critical role these programs play in supporting families with limited resources.

Advocacy for Cultural and Linguistic Preservation

Preserving cultural and linguistic heritage was of paramount importance to families as well. Many actively sought environments that respected and promoted their native language and culture. One mother emphasized the importance of her children learning Spanish and staying connected to their cultural roots. She appreciated programs where teachers spoke Spanish and incorporated cultural activities, ensuring her children did not lose touch with their heritage. Another parent shared how she and her husband speak Spanish at home, reinforcing the language through activities like reading and

singing. Despite some challenges, such as their son preferring English books, they remained committed to bilingual education. This dedication to maintaining their cultural identity reflects a deep-seated resilience in the face of cultural assimilation pressures.

Navigating Challenges in the Education System
The focus group participants also recounted their experiences of navigating systemic challenges and advocating for their children's needs. One mother shared her proactive approach in addressing an issue where her child was not given adequate attention due to a large class size. She communicated her concerns to the teacher and the district, resulting in improved attention and support for her child. This example underscores the importance of advocacy in ensuring children receive the necessary support within the education system. Another mother discussed her hesitation and eventual confidence in leaving her child at the AVANCE program. Initially anxious about leaving her child with others, she grew to trust the teachers and the program, recognizing the benefits it brought to her child's socialization and learning. This journey from apprehension to trust illustrates the resilience required to navigate new and unfamiliar systems.

The focus group discussions underscore the resilience of these local families as they navigate the early education system in Sonoma County. Their stories reflect a strong commitment to their children's development, a proactive approach to maintaining cultural heritage, and the importance of community support. Despite financial constraints, language barriers, and systemic challenges, these parents and guardians demonstrate perseverance and adaptability, ensuring their children receive the best possible start in life. Their resilience is a testament to their strength and dedication as parents.

> *"And besides there weren't many Hispanics there… my daughter was one of the only ones who was Hispanic… so we felt a little uncomfortable at the school. When I changed her to Shepherd, my daughter changed completely, and she felt more confident. She felt more appreciated and valued more. So that's where we saw the difference… we felt the change and we felt the support of the whole school at the time when my daughter entered, she was only there for one year. And with that year I had enough to know that it was a very good school. So, I said without a doubt I am going to enroll my son, my other child."*

Results from Interviews with Parents and Guardians that Identify as African American or Black

> *"You want your kids to feel safe, Black kids, specifically boys get sent to the principal's office and get in trouble more, I often think about how the schools will receive him as he is very spirited and we want to foster in him that but also don't want him to get into trouble."*

In interviews with parents and guardians who identify as African American or Black, a total of six individuals participated in the discussions (six in interviews and four in reflection sessions). These conversations provided valuable insights into the challenges and aspirations of these families. By incorporating their perspectives into our data and decision-making processes, we can more effectively design programs and initiatives that help to mitigate the impacts of interpersonal, structural and systemic racism.

<u>Themes About Benefits and Barriers to Attending Early Learning Sites or Preschool</u>

Benefits

Like focus group participants, one of the primary benefits mentioned was the opportunity for socialization regarding attendance at early learning sites or preschool. Parents and guardians observed that early learning environments provided their children with valuable chances to interact with peers, helping them to develop crucial social skills. Another significant benefit was fostering a love of school, learning, and forming relationships with teachers. These positive experiences were seen as foundational for a lifelong appreciation for education and academic success.

Barriers

However, parents and guardians also identified several barriers to enrolling their children in early learning programs. A major concern was the experiences of discrimination and racism within these settings. Parents and guardians expressed worries that their children might not recognize such negative experiences and that they might not be aware of them either since they are not present on site. This concern was especially poignant when discussing how discrimination can manifest at different stages: staff-to-child in early education and child-to-child as children grow older. One parent recounted a painful incident where a staff member called their child "Medusa" because of her braids, thinking it was funny. This incident made the child feel separate, othered, and less valued, causing lasting harm that could not be undone. Another significant barrier was that staff often do not represent or respect the culture and race of African American and Black families. This lack of representation and respect contributes to a feeling of exclusion and lack of understanding. Additionally, practical barriers such as high costs, inaccessible locations, and inflexible schedules further hindered participation. Parents and guardians suggested that scholarships specifically for BIPOC children and those without

> *"How do you institute racial bias training, and not looking at kids as the problem? The restorative practices my kids experienced were reactionary, I do not know if any of the harm was undone, the adults perception was very biased. Upon investigation the person who started the conflict wasn't even sent to the office, the reaction (my daughter's) was punished, daughter's head was hit against the wall, name calling, majority of the time she was punished, it was for my daughter's reaction to harassment…"*

> *"There is ed code on racism, BUT no follow up or ramifications at the local school. In fact, there was not recognition of RACIAL incidents when they occurred."*

economic privilege could help increase access to more holistic early childhood education sites like Montessori or Waldorf schools. They also noted the barrier of long waitlists for more affordable sites, which disproportionately affects children of color.

Themes About Safety and Belonging in Early Learning Sites or Preschool

Feelings of Safety and Belonging

Similar to focus group participants, parents and guardians reported that their children felt safe and a sense of belonging in early learning environments where staff respected and represented their culture, race, and home language. Programs that reflected the diversity of the community, even through visual representations like posters and holiday highlights, were particularly appreciated. This inclusiveness extended beyond the student body to the broader community, fostering a welcoming atmosphere.

Additionally, a low student-to-teacher ratio was also reported here as crucial for ensuring that children received adequate attention. A safe physical environment was also paramount, encompassing factors like traffic management and plans for emergencies. Parents and guardians emphasized the importance of an environment where their child's spirit could feel at peace and safe from over-policing. One parent shared their experience of feeling that their children were being overly monitored and frequently reported for behavior that was comparable to their peers. This constant scrutiny led the parent to choose homeschooling. Another parent described how their child was disproportionately disciplined for behaviors learned from peers, illustrating a broader issue of biased reactions from staff.

Not Feeling Safety and Belonging

Conversely, parents/guardians and their children felt unsafe and unwelcome when staff did not respect or represent their culture, race, or home language. This lack of cultural competence often resulted from staff having limited exposure to communities beyond the dominant culture. The lack of skill in diversity, multicultural communication, and cultural humility contributed to an environment where African American and Black families felt marginalized.

A high student-to-teacher ratio also exacerbated this issue, as it prevented children from receiving the individual attention they needed. Parents and guardians stressed the need for staff to be adequately trained in recognizing and addressing cultural and racial issues. They suggested that having a policy in place to handle such situations, ideally navigated by someone with the appropriate training, would help bring understanding and reconciliation.

> *"[There is] lots of motivation to muster to go through, there is always something no matter where you go, it is not new and I have been doing it for so long… you know that you are different, a lot of white people that see you will say something different because I am Black, this creates internalized oppression and shame. You don't have anywhere to put it, it lasts so long its almost permanent."*

Themes About Race, Culture, and Native Language Influence in Early Learning Sites or Preschool

Role in Education

Race, culture, and native language play a significant role in the education of African American and Black children. Families highly value celebrating and honoring these

aspects of their identity within the educational setting. However, due to the lack of institutional support, families often have to supplement their children's education with cultural learning opportunities at home and through community events.

Importance of Respect
As shared previously, respecting the race, culture, and native language of families positively impacts their sense of safety and belonging in early learning environments. Parents and guardians interviewed expressed the desire to have educational settings where they do not constantly have to explain their culture, which can be emotionally exhausting. They recommended having a designated staff member with training in cultural and racial issues to handle related situations, thus relieving parents and guardians of this burden.

Emotional Labor
Furthermore, families often engage in increased emotional labor to navigate an education system that does not fully understand, honor, or celebrate their race, culture, or native language. This includes code-switching, where individuals from marginalized groups adjust their behavior and language to fit into the dominant culture. Despite these efforts, children still face discrimination and exclusionary practices. Parents and guardians highlighted the importance of having staff that are trained in inclusive and race informed practices who can address behaviors in a constructive manner, rather than punishing the child.

> *"The concern I always I have is how would he be treated in a school space, whether or not if any of his teachers have done any examination around racism and bias. When we did find a school for him, I expressed my concern to the director about my boy getting in trouble for having big feelings, emotions and wanting to be active and move around. Most of his teachers are white women. I let the teachers know that I am available, I will show up and am engaged. It is really important to me, especially in the early years, as they are about establishing a love of learning."*

> *"It is important for me when I live out here that I am exposing my kids to cultural learning opportunities, for example, we go to Black book stores, otherwise they won't learn it. It could be really disorienting for them when they go to school and have experiences that don't reflect who they are. I make sure the Black side of them has a place."*

Representation Matters
The absence of racially diverse staff in educational settings was a recurring issue. Parents and guardians noted that their children had never seen a teacher who was Black or Latine, underscoring the importance of representation in fostering an inclusive environment. They stressed that having diverse staff would not only address discriminatory behaviors but also provide positive role models for all students.

Stories of Resilience

In the face of interpersonal and systemic racism and institutional barriers, African American and Black parents and guardians demonstrate remarkable resilience as they navigate the early learning education system for their young children. Their stories are rich with themes of overcoming obstacles, advocating for their children, and finding strength in community and hope.

Addressing Racism and Safety Concerns
Parents and guardians reported frequently encountering racism within early learning sites and schools. Despite these adverse experiences, they remain engaged and advocate for better treatment and understanding of their children's needs and behaviors. All parents and guardians interviewed, despite harmful experiences with racism in the education system, reported remaining engaged and advocating for better treatment and understanding of their child's needs and behaviors. Their resilience is evident in their proactive stance and refusal to accept unjust limitations placed on their children.

Cultural Awareness and Advocacy
Many parents and guardians emphasize the importance of cultural awareness and advocacy. A parent with biracial children stresses the need to be prepared to navigate educational challenges related to race, using their own experiences and advocacy skills learned from their mother. Parents and guardians highlight the significance of recognizing Black English Vernacular (BEV) and ensuring their children are proficient in code-switching to navigate different social spaces effectively. These parents and guardians work tirelessly to ensure their children can navigate a world that often does not recognize or value their cultural identity. They teach their children to be proud of their heritage and to be adept at code-switching to thrive in various environments.

Educational Choices and Support Systems
Parents and guardians often have to make difficult choices about their children's educational environments. One parent discussed moving their child to the YMCA from Montessori for a more racially diverse socialization experience and character learning, highlighting the importance of the right preschool environment. Others struggle for adequate support and resources for children with special needs, continually advocating for special education services. These parents and guardians are deeply invested in finding the best educational settings for their children, often making significant personal and financial sacrifices. They understand the critical impact that early education has on their children's future and strive to provide the best opportunities despite the challenges.

> *"It is important to me that my children understand Black English Vernacular [BEV] and understand code switching, especially since we live in Sonoma County. I want them to understand BEV, and treat it with respect."*

Community and Cultural Engagement

> *"I take my kids to other communities, even though the school might lose funds due to absenteeism, I decided to take my kids out of school [sometimes] as there is a better benefit at a cultural event and want to teach them about our Black community."*

To compensate for the lack of cultural representation in Sonoma County, most families interviewed shared that they take their children to cultural events in the east and south Bay Areas, stressing the importance of cultural education and community connection. Additionally, parents and guardians make concerted efforts to create a home environment that celebrates Blackness and fosters a sense of pride and identity in their children. These parents and guardians recognize the importance of cultural representation and go to great lengths to ensure their children are connected to their heritage. By attending cultural events and creating a home environment rich in cultural pride, they instill a strong sense of identity and self-worth in their children.

Navigating Special Needs and Foster Care
Parents and guardians with children who have special needs often face additional challenges in an already complex education system. These challenges are further exacerbated for those in the foster care system. One parent chose preschool over junior kindergarten due to the specialized care available for their daughter with special needs and appreciated the transportation support provided. A foster parent, who is also a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), highlighted the attendance problems and PTSD in children from the foster system, emphasizing the need for more support. These parents and guardians navigate these challenges with determination, ensuring their children receive the care and education they need despite the systemic obstacles.

The resilience of African American and Black parents and guardians navigating the early learning education system is multifaceted. Through overcoming obstacles, advocating for their children, leveraging community support, making personal sacrifices, and confronting racism directly, these families exemplify strength and determination. Their stories are a testament to the power of hope, community, and unwavering commitment to their children's future. These parents and guardians' resilience, courage, and determination not only pave the way for their children's success but also contribute to creating a more equitable and just educational system for all.

Program and Policy Recommendations

To create a more equitable and supportive early learning environment, especially for African American, Black, Hispanic, Latine, Communities of Color and linguistically diverse families, it is essential to integrate culturally inclusive and competent education, engage and support the community, ensure financial and physical accessibility, provide social and emotional support, and promote racial and cultural sensitivity. The next section includes policy and program recommendations developed from the findings from READY qualitative and quantitative research that are validated further from best practice literature reviews.

Enhanced Professional Development:
➢ Educator Supports: Provide ongoing professional development and support for ECE, TK and kindergarten teachers to improve instructional practices and child outcomes (32, 33, 39).
➢ Provide Resources: Provide ECE professionals with resources and services to support their work (32, 33, 39).
➢ Equitable Pay: Ensure fair wages and support for mental health for child care providers. Ensure adequate funding and resources are allocated to support the expansion and quality improvement of ECE, TK and kindergarten programs, including funding for classroom materials, teacher salaries, and professional development (32, 33, 39).

Culturally Inclusive and Competent Education
➢ Culturally Inclusive Curriculum: Develop and implement a curriculum that respects and incorporates the diverse cultural backgrounds of the children. Celebrate various cultural holidays, teach basic phrases in multiple languages, and integrate cultural stories and traditions into the daily routine. Incorporate bilingual and multilingual programs into early learning curricula. Recommended languages include Spanish and Black English Vernacular (BEV) (33).
➢ Bilingual Education Support: Provide robust support for bilingual education programs by hiring bilingual staff and offering language support services to ensure children maintain and develop their native languages alongside English (33).
➢ Parental Resources and Training: Provide resources and training for parents and guardians to support language learning at home (37).
➢ Cultural and Linguistic Proficiency: Encourage the use of native languages in educational activities to foster cultural identity and linguistic proficiency. Recommended languages include Spanish and Black English Vernacular (BEV) (33, 37).
➢ Cultural Competency and Humility Training: Offer regular cultural competency and humility training for all staff members. Focus on understanding and respecting the cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds of the families served, prioritizing the recruitment of staff who reflect the community's diversity (36, 38).
➢ Inclusive Policies: Develop and clearly communicate policies that explicitly support cultural inclusivity and bilingual education to families and staff (33). Encourage policies and practices that engage fathers and other traditionally excluded family members (33, 35). Ensure policies are inclusive of children with disabilities (37).
➢ Representation and Training: Hire staff who represent the racial and cultural diversity of the student body and provide ongoing training in cultural competency and racial bias (33).
➢ Address Deficit Thinking: Educators need to deconstruct deficit thinking by recognizing and valuing the cultural knowledge and strengths that diverse students bring to the classroom. This shift in mindset should be fostered through continuous professional development and reflection on personal beliefs and practices (29, 31) .

➢ Recognize and Support Cultural Assets: Emphasize the concept of "verve," which reflects the lively and varied home environments of many African American children. Encourage lively and active play to align with these cultural strengths and reduce misunderstandings about behavior (37).

Community Engagement and Support
➢ Community Engagement: Create opportunities for parents and guardians to share their cultures with the school community, including cultural exchange days, parent-led activities, and family cultural nights. Offer incentives to parents and guardians willing to educate students on their family's cultural practices as this enhances overall student learning. Build stronger partnerships with community organizations to engage directly with families, especially those from marginalized communities, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are met (33, 34).
➢ Information Dissemination Campaigns: Launch comprehensive outreach and information campaigns to educate parents and guardians about available early learning options, benefits, and application processes. Provide multilingual resources and community workshops (33).
➢ Centralized Information Systems: Develop a centralized, easily accessible information system or portal where parents and guardians can find details about various early learning programs, their locations, costs, and enrollment procedures (33).
➢ Educational and Developmental Opportunities: Expand apprenticeship and workforce pipelines in early care and education to provide opportunities for parents (37).
➢ Integrated and Holistic Support Systems: Implement an integrated system that connects kindergarten and transitional kindergarten programs with broader health, economic, and human services. This ensures that children and their families receive comprehensive support, promoting overall well-being and school readiness (37).
➢ Strategic Service Expansion: Expand the range of services offered within ECE, kindergarten and transitional kindergarten settings to address fundamental needs such as nutrition, health care, and family support services. This could include on-site services or partnerships with local service providers (37).

Communication and Trust Building
➢ Transparent Communication Channels: Develop channels for parents and guardians to easily access information about school policies and curriculum (34, 37).
➢ Feedback Mechanisms: Regularly survey parents and guardians to gather feedback and address concerns (34, 37).
➢ Parent Advisory Boards: Establish advisory boards to give parents and guardians a voice in decision-making processes and policy development (34, 37).
➢ Enhancing Accessibility: Reduce barriers to accessing services by simplifying application processes and minimizing administrative burdens. Ensure that families are aware of and can easily access available supports through clear communication and outreach efforts (34).

Financial Accessibility
➢ Subsidies and Financial Support: Introduce or expand financial aid programs and subsidies for families to cover the cost of early learning sites or preschools, making them more affordable for low- and middle-income families (31).
➢ Free or Low-Cost Program Expansion: Increase the availability of free or low-cost early learning programs to ensure that financial barriers do not prevent families from accessing quality early education (31).
➢ Address Structural Inequities: Invest in community conditions that support family well-being, such as affordable housing and access to public transportation and family-friendly spaces (28).

Physical and Logistical Accessibility
➢ Improved Accessibility: Establish more early learning centers in underserved and remote areas. Provide transportation services or assistance to families in need (31).
➢ Flexible Scheduling and Part-Time Options: Offer flexible scheduling and part-time attendance options to accommodate families with varying schedules and commitments (31, 32).

Social and Emotional Support
➢ Community Building Initiatives: Strengthen efforts to involve parents and guardians and build community within early learning programs through regular social events, parent-teacher meetings, and collaborative projects (32).
➢ Improved Communication Strategies: Establish clear and effective communication channels between the program and parents and guardians, such as regular newsletters, parent portals, and scheduled updates (34, 37).
➢ Emotional Support Systems: Establish policies and support systems to address and mediate cultural and racial issues. Designate trained staff members to handle these situations, ensuring that parents and guardians do not have to bear the burden of educating staff on these matters (37).
➢ Address Current and Historical Traumas: Community programs that provide social support and build strong, supportive networks for families can enhance children's readiness for school by fostering a stable and nurturing environment. A multigenerational and multidisciplinary approach, including trauma-informed care and family-focused therapies, can promote healing and resilience (18).
➢ Effective Referral Systems: Strengthen referral systems to help children, adults, and families access appropriately targeted services that can interrupt or mitigate toxic stress physiology. This includes connecting families to comprehensive services that address ACEs, toxic stress, and social determinants of health (SDOH), especially in rural and underserved communities (18).

Classroom and Environment Management
➢ Manageable Class Sizes: Implement policies to maintain low student-to-teacher ratios to ensure each child receives adequate attention and support, which may require increased funding for staffing and resources (32, 33).
➢ Age-Appropriate Classrooms: Design classroom environments that cater to specific age groups, ensuring each child receives appropriate care and educational activities suited to their developmental stage (32, 33).

Safety and Inclusivity
➢ Safety Measures: Conduct regular safety audits and implement physical safety measures around school zones.
➢ Psychological Safety and Inclusive Practices: Provide comprehensive training for staff on psychological safety, anti-bullying, and inclusive trauma-informed practices (18).
➢ Emergency Protocols: Establish clear protocols and communication channels for emergency situations (34).

Special Needs and Foster Care Support
➢ Increased Funding and Resources: Allocate more funding for specialized care and resources for children with special needs and those in foster care (37).
➢ Transportation and Access: Provide transportation support to ensure educational opportunities are accessible.

➢ Support Networks: Develop a network of support services, including mental health resources, for foster parents, guardians, and caregivers (18).

Conclusion

Creating an equitable and supportive early learning environment and system for all children, especially those from African American, Black, Hispanic, Latine, and linguistically diverse backgrounds, requires a multifaceted approach. By implementing culturally inclusive education, engaging communities, ensuring financial and physical accessibility, providing social and emotional support, and promoting racial and cultural sensitivity, an environment can be fostered where every child has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their race, ethnicity or languages spoken. Enhanced professional development for educators and continuous community partnerships further reinforce this foundation, ensuring that all families receive the support they need. These prioritized, evidence-based policies and practices, rooted in inclusivity and accessibility, pave the way for all children, especially those living on the margins of society, to succeed in their educational journey and beyond.

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Appendix A

Kindergarten Readiness Instruments (KRI)

Given the growing body of evidence identifying that prevention focused and upstream policies and practices have a high return on investment for health, education, employment, and social behaviors, there is increasing interest in implementing evidenced-based school readiness instruments to identify and address disparities and opportunity gaps as early as possible (20). There is also rising commitment to implementing upstream policies nationally, most recently seen by the implementation of Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) and Transitional Kindergarten (TK) in the state of California (21). To enhance the ability of schools and communities to provide the support necessary for children to succeed in school, holistic and culturally appropriate kindergarten and school readiness instruments can be important tools for school districts, early learning partners, education stakeholders and policy decision makers when used in the manner in which they were designed (22).

The majority of early childhood researchers agree both on investing early in children and their support systems, and conducting assessments in order to identify levels of school readiness, systemic factors contributing to these levels, as well as areas of possible intervention and opportunity for new students (16, 20, 23). However, there are some emerging theories in the Early Care and Education (ECE) field that kindergarten and school readiness needs to be reimagined completely. One of the most well-known proponents for this paradigm shift is Dr. Ida Rose Florez. Dr. Florez has a Ph.D. in educational psychology and has consulted on young children's development and education for over 20 years. Her expertise focuses on early childhood assessment, data-based instructional decision-making, improving classroom teaching and learning, and the preparation of early childhood educators (24).

Dr. Florez explains the idea that school readiness is based on Piaget's theory of maturation, due to the natural unfolding of pre-programmed developmental milestones that children grow through (25). She further postulates, that at some point in time, society determined that by age 5, children are ready for school. However, Dr. Florez argues that there is no evidence that there are developmental milestones for children that emerge around the age of 5 that specifically prepare them for the school environment. Some children are not ready by age 5, and the solution has always been for them to wait another year before attending school. Florez believes that the school schedule is what determines when children start kindergarten, not their developmental needs (24). Furthermore, Piaget's research was done with a small, exclusive sample of white children in Switzerland, so it shouldn't necessarily be generalized to the greater population (25).

The READY Project is committed to reviewing all of the available research and theories, both established and emerging, regarding early learning supports and kindergarten readiness. One of the elements of applying an Anti-Racist Results Based Accountability framework to the READY Project includes organizational self-reflection. Local researchers would be remised to not reflect on current practices, how and why they emerged, and if they are perpetuating systemic inequities and racism unknowingly.

Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP)

READY uses the kindergarten readiness instrument (KRI), the Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP), for quantitative data collection. The KSEP is paired with a parent/guardian survey to gather

information on early learning experiences and family activities of children entering kindergarten. Developed in 2004, the Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP) has undergone continuing validation as part of a school, community, and university action research collaboration involving the First 5 Commission of Santa Barbara County, the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education at the University of California Santa Barbara, and school districts throughout Santa Barbara County and California (26). The KSEP KRI includes content in alignment with the essential school readiness indicators proposed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Governor's Task Force on School Readiness (16). One of the key recommendations of the National Governor' Association was to implement practices and policies that promote local collaboration and needs assessment for school readiness. The KSEP was designed to support local communities' strategies to meaningfully and efficiently implement a universal school readiness assessment system. In addition, the KSEP has been assessed for validity to use with dual language learners. As KSEP developers have noted:

"*The KSEP is not an assessment of language proficiency; therefore, children can demonstrate mastery in any language. In fact, many of the items from the social-emotional and physical sections of the KSEP do not require language in any form to demonstrate readiness.*" (27)

Recognizing the upmost importance of utilizing a KRI that is appropriate for dual language learners, READY conducted a literature review to assess the validity of the KSEP tool for our diverse local community. References of research reviewed are included at the end of this report, along with the KSEP tool itself in the appendices. Highlights from findings are referred to below:

"*…[researchers] evaluated the achievement of Latino and non-Latino students during kindergarten. Individual student-level variables (family low socioeconomic context, non–English-speaking household, and students' learning orientation) accounted for about 75% of the variation in student achievement. Participating students were 48.3% male, 91.3% Hispanic, 19.8% migrant students, 63.9% English language learners.*" (28)

"*This project provides a unique example of how a district–community– university partnership can lead to meaningful research and systems change….Sample comprised predominately Latino students (91.3%), with a significant proportion of English language learners (63.9%). It is our view that if the KSEP were valid only for use with Latino students, it still may be resource for an increasing number of educational agencies.*" (28)

The KSEP is a 12-item observational screening tool that gathers information about the social-emotional and academic domains of school readiness. During the first four weeks of the school year, teachers observe and rate a child's proficiency across the items (e.g., engages in cooperative play or recognizes shapes) using the following rating categories: Not Yet (1), Emerging (2), Almost Mastered (3), Mastered (4). The KSEP item ratings are then totaled to calculate an overall KSEP score, ranging from 12 to 48, which corresponds to one of four KSEP rating categories:

- Not Yet Ready/Immediate Follow-Up Recommended (12-24): These students are at high risk and their developmental needs should be evaluated in more depth.
- Emerging Ready/Monthly Monitoring Recommended (25-35): Teachers should keep track of students from October to December to see if they make a satisfactory adjustment to kindergarten.
- Almost Ready/ Quarterly Monitoring Recommended (36-43): Teachers should use their districts' current Fall, Winter and Spring progress monitoring procedures to keep track of these students.
- Ready-to-Go (44-48): These students experience a smooth transition into kindergarten.

Teachers should follow-up as needed with these students and monitor progress using standard district benchmark assessments.

How Are Kindergarten Readiness Instruments (KRI) Used?

- Adapt teaching practices at the school level and ensure schools are well-designed to meet the needs of their incoming kindergarten students.
- Support early learning and kindergarten classrooms in developing closer connections and aligning their curriculum to best meet the needs of their students.
- Inform the continuous quality improvement of early learning programs by incorporating assessment information into their improvement practices.
- Support teacher-parent partnerships by sharing with families what is known about the child's school readiness and how the parent can support the child's learning needs from home.
- Inform policy decisions about early learning resources and systems.
- Provides a benchmark for understanding how communities can supports students for their future. Offers predictive information for 3rd grade reading levels, high school graduation, career & college readiness
- Provides local data for strategic planning, funding proposals & Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) Resource to adapt systems & programs to address systemic equity issues as well as emergent academic, health, & psychological student needs.

Appendix B: Methodology

Purpose: The purpose of the Fall 2023 evaluation was to gather and analyze data through the common kindergarten readiness instrument, Parent/Guardian Surveys, focus groups and key informant interviews to reach roughly one-quarter of all Sonoma County kindergarten students and their families, and to conduct more detailed analysis on the early learning experiences of incoming kindergarten students.

Sample: In Fall 2023, 6 school districts, 12 schools, 34 kindergarten teachers, 508 students (490 Kinder & 118 TK) and 341 parents and guardians and guardians/guardians chose to participate in the instrument of school readiness. Participation was open to all Sonoma County Elementary School Districts.

Research Questions

1. Reasons parents choose to send their kids to early care & education (ECE)?
2. Reasons parents choose Not to send their kids to ECE?
3. Parents' beliefs and values around ECE? (to be able to address misconceptions via public outreach campaigns designed to educate parents on the benefits of ECE)
4. If a barrier to accessing ECE is based on fear of lack of safety, both psychological and physical?
5. How race and culture play a role in families experiences with ECE? (Experiences including: accessing ECE, feeling a sense of inclusion at ECE sites, if ECE sites are providing culturally appropriate care for families)
6. Families level of awareness that, as their child's first teacher, teaching them at home in their native language is a great strategy?
7. Are there misconceptions with families from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds other than white & English-speaking, that they have to do early learning activities at home in English?
8. If F5 public education campaign regarding read, talk, sing in any language is effective or if there are still beliefs that early learning activities must be in English?
9. What are the resiliency factors of families from cultures other than the white dominant culture that contribute to their child's development prior to school starting?

Theoretical Frameworks

The Theoretical Frameworks used to inform the READY research include: Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development & Velez Agosto's cultural microsystem model. The type of study conducted was Exploratory.

Data Collection – Methodologies & Tools

School District Outreach and Contracts/Data Sharing Agreements:
Between February and June 2023, READY staff contacted Superintendents of school districts that expressed interest in participating in the Fall 2023 instrument of school readiness. Superintendents and other school administrators were provided with information about the READY project, the KSEP tool, the parent survey, focus groups, key informant interviews, data collection procedures and timelines. School districts that agreed to participate were offered a stipend for teachers' time to attend trainings and to conduct the KSEP, in the amount of $100 Amazon gift cards. Superintendents signed a Memorandum of

Understanding /contract with the County of Sonoma Human Services Department delineating roles, responsibilities, data sharing agreements and stipend amounts

Quantitative

Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP): The common kindergarten readiness instrument used is an evidenced-based, kindergarten readiness screening tool called the KSEP. Developed in 2004 as part of a University, school and community-action research collaboration in Santa Barbara, the KSEP is a 12-item observational screening tool that gathers information about the social-emotional and academic domains of school readiness. The KSEP includes content consistent with the essential school readiness indicators proposed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Governor's Task Force on School Readiness. Research has found that the KSEP significantly predicts second grade student achievement, whereby 60% of students from disadvantaged backgrounds (high percentage of English Language Learners and low-income students) rated Ready to Go at kindergarten entry are reading at grade-level in second grade, compared to only 7% of students rated as "Immediate Follow-up" (Quirk et al., 2012). The KSEP tool is included in the Appendices.

KSEP Teacher Training: Between July and August 2023, READY staff promoted on-line trainings that covered an overview of the READY project, detailed information on observing and rating students using the KSEP, data collection and data entry procedures, and parent survey administration. Teachers with previous KSEP experience were encouraged to watch a 45-minute recorded refresher training.

Conducting the KSEP: During the first three weeks of school, between August and September 2022, teachers observed their kindergarten students on the 12 KSEP items (six social-emotional and six school ready knowledge items). During the fourth week of school, teachers compiled their ratings for each student using the rating categories Not Yet (1), Emerging (2), Almost Mastered (3), Mastered (4) and entered KSEP data into the online, secure cloud-based Shared Outcomes Measurement System (SOMS), named Apricot.

Data Analyses: In the 2023 school year, a total of 341 Parent/Guardian Surveys were able to be matched with KSEP data. All others were excluded because the child did not attend school at one of the participating districts or parent survey data did not match with a KSEP rating record. SPSS statistical software was used for all statistical analyses. Child-level parent survey data were merged with KSEP rating data. Matched data were then extensively cleaned and additional variables were created to prepare for analyses. Select questions were analyzed descriptively, followed by a series of bivariate analyses using independent t-tests/Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) or chi-squared tests to analyze differences in means and proportions, respectively.

Parent/Guardian Survey: The survey gathers demographic information, early intervention and early learning experiences of participating children entering kindergarten. The Parent/Guardian Survey was adapted from a survey developed and validated by a research and evaluation firm in the San Francisco Bay area. Information from the Parent/Guardian Survey is paired with KSEP ratings to better understand the early learning experiences of kindergarten students. Parent/Guardian Surveys were distributed in English and Spanish, in both paper and electronic format. Surveys were sent through communication channels at partner districts. Open ended survey responses were translated professionally for analysis. The Parent/Guardian Survey is included in the Appendices.

Qualitative

Focus groups: Three focus groups with Spanish speaking parents and guardians were conducted in 2024. Focus groups were facilitated by a professional Spanish language translator. The Spanish translator also recorded participants responses in Spanish, translated to English and shared with READY researchers for analysis. Focus group questions are included in the Appendices. Participants in focus groups received $50 Amazon gift cards.

Key Informant Interviews: Flyers in English and Spanish were also disseminated through schools as well as through community partner agencies to recruit individuals interested in participating in key informant interviews. Partner agencies that supported engagement with flyer distribution included: Sonoma County Black Forum, Community Baptist Church and The California Indian Museum and Cultural Center. Both focus group (n = 14) and key informant (n = 3) participants were asked the same set of questions. Questions asked are included in the Appendices. Participants in interviews received $50 Amazon gift cards.

Recruitment: Participants for focus groups and key informant interviews (KII) were recruited using purposeful and snowball sampling methods. Inclusion criteria to participate in the focus groups and KIIs included: parent or caregiver of a child(ren) ages 1-6 years old, lives in Sonoma County, identifies as Black, African-American, Indigenous, Hispanic, Latine or from a Community of Color.

Research Question Development: Qualitative research questions were developed in partnership with the following people and agencies: Latino Service Providers, Migrant Education Program, Santa Rosa City Schools (SRCS) family engagement staff, First 5 Sonoma County, Sonoma County Office of Education Early Education staff, HSD Upstream Investments and Planning, Research, Engagement & Evaluation (PREE) units.

Coding Approach: Interrater Reliability with n=3, using Inductive coding methods

Parent/Guardian Interview and Focus Group Questions:
1.What do you see as the benefits of your child attending early learning sites or preschool? What are the reasons not to have your child attend?
2.Do you feel safe and like you belong at early learning sites and school? Why or why not? If not, what would make you feel this way?
3.How does your race and culture play a role in your child's education?
4.How does your native language play a role in your child's education? Do you do early learning activities at home in your native language (e.g. read, talk, sing, play games)? Why or why not?
5.Anything else?

Parent/Guardian Survey Questions:
1.What are your child's gifts/strengths that you would like their teacher to know about?
2.What are your families gifts/strengths that you would like your child's teacher to know about?
3.What can the school due to include you in your child's education?
4.What can the school do to make sure your child and family feel like they belong at this school?

Research Limitations:
The following limitations should be taken into account when considering the implications of the evaluation findings described in this report.

- The 7-year trend analysis included only the original schools and 6 Districts that participated in READY starting in 2016-17 and continued to participate annually through the 2023-24 school year. In order to compare multiple years, the populations must be matched.
- Parent survey findings rely on self-reported data from parents that may be subject to "response bias" (when respondents are concerned what the evaluator will think, despite being assured their answers are confidential) or "poor memory/selective recall bias" (inability to accurately recall events and/or recalling more favorable events).
- The evaluation design enables exploration of patterns or correlations related to school readiness, but cannot determine which factors caused school readiness. One would need to implement a resource intensive evaluation with a randomized control group design to assess which factors caused school readiness.
- The focus group participants were predominately female
- The focus group and interview participants were identified as Latine, Hispanic, Indigenous, Black and African American. Other racial and cultural groups that exist in Sonoma County were not successfully recruited for participation.

The KSEP does not measure other elements of knowledge that are important to human development, including cultural, ancestral and community knowledge.

Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP)

Read KSEP Training Resource & Apricot Connect User Guide
for instructions on how to use this form.

1. **Teacher's name:** _____

2. **Class:** Kindergarten   Transitional Kindergarten

3. **School district name:** _____

4. **School name:** _____

5. **Student name:** _____

6. **Student ID:** _____

7. **Student home language:** English   Spanish   Other

8. **Date rating completed (MM/DD/YYY):** ____/____/_____

9. **Languages used when making KSEP ratings:**   Mostly English   Mostly Spanish   English and Spanish   Other language

10. **Student's gender:**   Male   Female

11. **Student's DOB (MM/DD/YYYY):** _____/_____/_____

12. **Did this child attend preschool?**   Unknown (go to question #15)   No (go to question #15)   Yes (go to question #13)

13. **If child attended preschool, how long?**   Unknown   1-6 months   7-12 months   13+ months

14. **If child attended preschool, what type?**   Unknown   State Preschool   Head Start   Private

15. **Does child have an IEP?**   Yes, active IEP   Yes, inactive IEP   Never had an IEP

KSEP Item	Not Yet (1)	Emerging (2)	Almost Mastered (3)	Mastered (4)	Rating (1-4)
1. Seeks adult help when appropriate	When unable to complete tasks, does not seek and will not accept adult assistance ○	When unable to complete tasks, does not seek but will accept adult assistance ○	When unable to complete tasks, ask for assistance without being able to express a specific need ○	When unable to complete tasks, seeks adult assistance and can express specific needs related to the tasks ○	
2. Engages in cooperative play activities with peers	Rarely engages with other children and/or may use aggression to disrupt others' cooperative play ○	Plays alongside other children, but does not engage in interactions with them ○	Plays next to other children and may initiate conversations or share toys but actions are not part of an ongoing shared activity ○	Engages with other children in ongoing shared activities (e.g. imaginative play, tag, blocks, etc.) ○	
3. Exhibits impulse control and self-regulation	Unable to delay having wants and needs met ○	Distracted by getting wants and needs met, yet able to be redirected by others ○	Distracted by getting wants and needs met but redirects self ○	Able to delay wants and needs until appropriate time ○	
4. Maintains attention to tasks (attention focus, distractibility)	Does not sustain attention to tasks; is frequently distracted by external stimuli ○	Stays with tasks for a short time but becomes easily distracted by external stimuli ○	Distracted from tasks by external stimuli but can redirect self back to tasks after becoming distracted ○	Consistently attends to tasks without becoming distracted by external stimuli ○	
5. Is enthusiastic and curious about school	Is lethargic, unenthusiastic, and/or indifferent towards school activities and rarely responds to prompting ○	Is not self-initiating to participate in school activities but will participate when prompted ○	Shows some excitement and interest in school activities, but only for selected activities ○	Expresses excitement and interest in participating in a wide range of school activities ○	
6. Persists with tasks after experiencing difficulty (task persistence, coping with challenges)	Easily becomes visibly frustrated and quits with tasks when difficulty is encountered ○	Persists with tasks for a short amount of time but quits when difficulty is encountered AND child does not respond to teacher's attempts at redirection ○	Persists with tasks for a short amount of time but quits when difficulty is encountered BUT child does respond to teacher's attempts at redirection ○	Usually persists with tasks until completed even after difficulty is encountered; no teacher redirection is needed ○	

Adapted from CSBYD-UCSB, First 5 SBCO

Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP)

KSEP Item	Not Yet (1)	Emerging (2)	Almost Mastered (3)	Mastered (4)	Rating (1-4)
7. Recognizes own written name	Child cannot read or located name O	Child can find name after several attempts (recognizes first letter) O	Child identifies own name in routine settings O	Child can consistently find name even in new situations O	
8. Demonstrates expressive verbal abilities	Communicated primarily in a nonverbal way or using one word utterances O	Expresses self in simple 3-4 word phrases O	Expresses self in 5-6 word sentences O	Child clearly communicated using fuller, more complex sentences O	
9. Understands that numbers represent quantity	Does not know numbers O	Knows numbers but does not associate numbers to objects in one-to-one fashion O	Demonstrates number-object correspondence when counting objects, assigning one number per object O	Can select an accurate amount of objects upon request (e.g., can provide 4 blocks upon request) O	
10. Writes own name	Unable to do O	Scribble-writes first name with some letter-like form O	Writes first name with letters and some phonetically appropriate letter/sounds (e.g. first letter) O	Writes first name phonetically correct, exact spelling and capital letters not required O	
11. Recognizes colors	Can name 0-4 colors Red Yellow Green Blue Orange Purple Brown Black Pink White Gray O	Can name 5-8 colors Red Yellow Green Blue Orange Purple Brown Black Pink White Gray O	Can name 9-10 colors Red Yellow Green Blue Orange Purple Brown Black Pink White Gray O	Can name all 11 colors Red Yellow Green Blue Orange Purple Brown Black Pink White Gray O	
12. Recognizes shapes	Can name 0-1 primary shapes Square Circle Rectangle Triangle O	Can name 2 primary shapes Square Circle Rectangle Triangle O	Can name 3 primary shapes Square Circle Rectangle Triangle O	Can name all 4 primary shapes Square Circle Rectangle Triangle O	
KSEP Rating Categories	Immediate Follow-up 12-24 O	Month Monitor 25-35 O	Quarterly Monitor 36-43 O	Ready to Go 44-48 O	

Comments:

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child's school is participating in a Sonoma County Human Services and First 5 sponsored project, **Road to the Early Achievement and Development of Youth (READY)**. Since 2013, READY has been focused on increasing access to quality early learning and supporting the transition of young learners into kindergarten. The information you share will support us to understand family and student needs. We count on your insights to help shape new programs and investments. **By completing this survey, you will be entered into a raffle to win an Amazon $25 gift card. We will draw 3 winners!**

As part of READY, your child's teacher will be using an observational assessment called the Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP). To see our most recent reports or to learn more, visit: http://upstreaminvestments.org/Impact/Learning-Communities/READY/

• During the first 3 weeks of school, your child's teacher will be observing your child and the other students in daily activities to learn about each child's strengths and how he/she learns best.
• Your child will not be asked to do anything he/she would not be normally doing as part of the regular school day.
• The information collected about your child will be used to better meet student needs.

Additionally, in order to support children and families as they enter kindergarten, we are asking parents to complete this parent survey, which asks questions about your child's experiences prior to entering elementary school. The parent survey is voluntary.

The results of the KSEP and parent survey will be shared confidentially with READY's project staff, funder, and evaluators and your child's teacher, to conduct evaluation(s) of the project and strengthen supports for local children and families.

• The results will be complied into school and county-wide level reports.
• **No confidential information about you or your child (such as your child's name or birth date) will be included in any public report.**

If you have any questions about this project, or about your rights, please contact Norine Doherty, READY Manager, at ndoherty@schsd.org or (707) 565-7186. If you do not want your child or family's information used for evaluation purposes, please inform the school office as soon as possible. You will receive an opt-out form to complete.

We really appreciate your insight and time and we thank you for your participation!

Norine Doherty, READY Manager

Upstream Investments, Sonoma County Human Services Department, 2255 Challenger Way, Santa Rosa, CA

This survey is online! To complete this survey online, use the following links or the QR Code below:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TQKDPQW (English) or
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TQKDPQW?lang=es_US (Spanish).

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Parent Survey

1. **What is your child's name?** _____
   First   Middle   Last

2. **What is your child's date of birth**? _____/_____/_____
   Month   Day   Year

3. **What is your child's gender?**
   O   Male   O   Female   O   Another gender not listed here (please specify) _____

4. **What is your child's race/ethnicity? (Mark <u>all</u> that apply.)**

O Asian American	O Caucasian or White	O Hispanic	O Two or more races	O Middle Eastern or North African
O Black or African American	O American Indian or Indigenous Peoples	O Latino/a/e/x	O Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	O Another race not listed here (please specify) _____

5. **Has your child participated virtually or in-person in one of the following Early Care and Education (ECE) options?**

O Subsidized preschool/childcare	O Private preschool/childcare	O Licensed home care/childcare	O None of these
O Transitional Kindergarten (TK)	O Head Start	O Private preschool/ childcare with subsidy	O Other _____

6. **If you answered yes to the previous question, what was the name and location of the program your child attended?**
   Name: _____ City: _____

   How <u>long</u> did your child attend this program? _____ months _____years

   How <u>often</u> did your child attend, either virtually or in-person? _____ days per week and _____ hours per day

7. **If your child attended another program in addition to the one selected above, please share the name and location.**
   Name: _____ City: _____

   How <u>long</u> did your child attend this program? _____ months _____years

8. **If your child did not attend any ECE programs, what reasons contributed to this decision? (Mark <u>all</u> that apply.)**

O Hours didn't meet our needs	O Did not understand options	O Lack of info about options	O Not available in neighborhood	O Concerned about safety/quality
O My child was on the waitlist	O Was not affordable	O COVID-19 shut down	O Did not qualify for reduced cost	O Did not want to enroll my child in care outside the home. If so, why not?
O Unable to find provider that speaks my language	O Unable to find provider from my culture	O Transportation Challenges	O None of the above / O Other (please specify) _____	_____

9. **Playing outdoors is important. What are the greatest barriers to your child playing outdoors? (Mark <u>all</u> that apply.)**

O Lack of time	O Neighborhood crime	O Fear of strangers	O No yard or nearby outdoor play space
O Traffic	O Risk of injury in play	O Child not interested	O No barriers to outdoor play
O Too messy	O Weather/air quality	O COVID-19 shut down	O Other_____

10. **In the past 30 days, have you or your family done the following things with your child? (Mark all that apply.)**
    - O Told them a story
    - O Played with other kids
    - O Worked on arts or crafts together
    - O Listened to music, danced or sang songs together
    - O Played games using letters, words, or numbers
    - O Played a game, sport, or exercised together
    - O Involved child in household chores such as cooking

11. **What are the barriers to your family and child participating in any of the above activities? (Mark all that apply.)**
    - O Lack of time
    - O Too messy
    - O Lack of materials in home language
    - O Lack of money for supplies
    - O COVID-19 shut down
    - O No yard or nearby outdoor play space
    - O Child not interested
    - O Risk of injury in play
    - O Other (please specify) _____
    - O Weather/air quality
    - O No kids to play with
    - O No barriers

12. **Have you participated in any of these parenting programs either virtually or in person? (Mark all that apply.)**
    - O Abriendo Puertas
    - O AVANCE
    - O Early intervention (please specify) _____
    - O Pasitos
    - O Family Resource Center program (food programs, financial literacy, etc.)
    - O Triple P
    - O Home visits from nurse, or other provider (please specify) _____
    - O None of these
    - O Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI)
    - O Other (please specify) _____

13. **What is the highest level of education you or your child's other parent/guardian has completed?**
    - O Elementary school
    - O Some high school (not a HS graduate)
    - O High school graduate/GED
    - O Some college
    - O Associate's degree (AA/AS)
    - O Bachelor's degree (BA/BS)
    - O Advanced degree (MA, Ph.D., MD, etc.)
    - O Other (please specify)
    - O Decline to state

14. **What is your approximate family income per year?**
    - O $15,000 - $34,999
    - O $35,000 – $49,999
    - O $50,000 - $74,999
    - O $75,000 - $99,999
    - O $100,000 - $124,999
    - O $125,000 - $149,999
    - O $150,000 - $199,999
    - O $200,000 or more

15. **What are you child's gifts or strengths that you would like their teacher to know about?**

16. **What are you family's gifts or strengths that you would like your child's teacher to know about?**

17. **What can the school do to include you in your child's education? Ex. Translated homework assignments, home activity ideas, etc.**

18. **What can this school do to make sure your child and family feel like they belong at this school?**

Please share your email if you would like to be entered to win a gift card: _____

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Estimado padre o tutor:

La escuela de su niño(a) participa en El Camino hacia el éxito Temprano y Desarrollo de la Juventud (READY) un proyecto patrocinado por el condado de Sonoma. Desde el 2013, READY se ha centrado en aumentar el acceso a un aprendizaje temprano de calidad y en apoyar la transición de los niños al kindergarten. Como parte de READY, el maestro de su niño(a) utilizará una evaluación, conocida como Perfil del Estudiante del Ingreso al Kindergarten (KSEP). Al completar esta encuesta, participará en una rifa para ganar una tarjeta de regalo de Amazon de $ 25. ¡Habran 3 ganadores! Para ver nuestros informes más recientes u obtener más información,visite: http://upstreaminvestments.org/Impact/Learning-Communities/READY/.

- Durante las primeras tres semanas de clases, el maestro de su niño(a) vigilará a su niño(a) y los otros estudiantes en actividades diarias para aprender acerca las fortalezas de cada niño y cómo el niño(a) puede mejor aprender.
- No se le pedirá a su niño(a) que haga algo que no haría normalmente como parte del día regular escolar.
- La información que coleccionemos sobre su niño(a) será utilizada para mejor satisfacer las necesidades estudiantiles.

Adicionalmente, para apoyar a los niños y familias que entran al kindergarten, pedimos a los padres que completen la encuesta para padres, la cual hace preguntas sobre las experiencias de su niño(a) antes de entrar a la escuela primaria. La encuesta para padres es voluntaria.

Los resultados de la evaluación KSEP y la encuesta para padres será compartida, en forma confidencial, con el personal del proyecto de READY, el fundador del proyecto y el maestro de su niño(a) para poder evaluar el proyecto y fortalecer y brindar apoyo a los niños y las familias locales.

- Los resultados serán compilados en reportes escolares y al nivel de todo el condado.
- Ningún tipo de información confidencial sobre usted o su niño(a) (como nombre y fecha de nacimiento de su niño(a)) será incluida en reportes públicos.

Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de este proyecto o de sus derechos, comuníquese con Norine Doherty, READY Manager, at ndoherty@schsd.org o (707) 565-7186. Si usted no desea que la información de su niño(a) o familia sea utilizada para fines de evaluación, por favor informe a la oficina de la escuela. Usted recibirá un formulario para llenar y terminar esta solicitación.

¡Gracias por su tiempo y su apoyo!

Norine Doherty, READY Manager

Encuesta para los padres

1. **Nombre del niño/a** _____
                              Primer nombre   Segundo nombre   Apellido

2. **Fecha de nacimiento del niño/a** _____/_____/_____
                                        Mes   Día   Año

3. **Sexo del niño/a (marque)**
   O   Masculino   O   Femenino   O   Otro género no incluido aquí (especifique) _____

4. **Raza/etnia de su niño/a (marque todas las respuestas que se apliquen)**

O Asiático	O Caucásico/ blanco	O Hispano	O Multirracial/ birracial	O Medio Oriente o Norte Africano
O Negro o Afroamericano	O Nativo americano o Pueblos Indígenas	O Latino, Latina, Latine, o Latinx	O Nativo Hawaiano o Isleño del Pacifico	O Otra raza que no figura aquí (por favor especifique) _____

5. **¿Ha participado su niño/a en persona o virtualmente en una de las siguientes opciones de atención y educación tempranas?**

O Preescolar/cuidado de niños subsidiados	O Head Start	O Kindergarten de transición (TK)	O Ninguno de estos
O Preescolar/cuidado de niños privados	O Atención domiciliaria/cuidado de niños con licencia	O Preescolar/cuidado de niños privados subsidiados	O Otro _____

6. **Si respondió afirmativamente a la pregunta anterior, ¿cuál era el nombre y la ubicación del programa al que asistió su niño/a?**
   Nombre: _____ Ciudad: _____
   ¿Cuánto **tiempo** asistió su niño/a este programa? _____ meses _____ años
   ¿Con qué **frecuencia** asistió su niño/a este programa? _____ de días/semana y _____ de horas/día

7. **Si su niño/a asistió a otro programa además del programa seleccionado en la pregunta anterior, comparta el nombre y la ubicación**. Nombre: _____ Ciudad: _____
   ¿Cuánto **tiempo** asistió su niño/a este programa? _____ meses _____ años

8. **Si su niño/a no asistió a un programa de atención y educación tempranas (ECE), ¿cuáles fueron los motivos que contribuyeron a esta decisión? (Por favor marque todas las respuestas que apliquen)**

O Los horarios que ofrecían no eran convenientes	O No pude encontrar un proveedor que hablara mi idioma	O Falta de información sobre las opciones	O No cumplí los requisitos para costo reducido	O Mi niño/a estaba en la lista de espera
O No entendí las opciones	O No era asequible	O Cierre debido a COVID-19	O No disponible en mi vecindario	O Yo no quería que mi niño/a fuera a una guardería fuera de la casa De ser así, ¿por qué no?_____
O Tuve preocupaciones acerca de la seguridad/calidad	O No pude encontrar un proveedor de mi cultura	O Ninguno de estos O Desafíos de transporte	O Otros motivos (por favor especifique) _____	

9. **Jugar al aire libre es importante ¿Cuáles son los mayores obstáculos que no permiten que su niño/a juegue al aire libre? (Marque todas las que apliquen)**

O Falta de tiempo	O Tráfico	O Cierre por COVID-19	O Demasiado desordenado
O Delincuencia en el vecindario	O El riesgo de lesionarse mientras juega	O Falta de interés por parte del niño/a	O No existen obstáculos

| O | Temor a desconocidos | O | Debido al clima/ mala calidad del aire | O | No hay patio o un lugar cercano al aire libre | O | Otra razón (por favor especifique) _____ |

10. En los últimos 30 días, ¿alguien de su familia o usted han hecho las siguientes cosas con su niño/a? (Marque <u>todas </u>las que apliquen)

- O Contarle un cuento
- O Jugar con otros niños
- O Trabajar juntos en artes y manualidades
- O Escuchar música, bailar o cantar juntos
- O Jugar juegos con letras, palabras o números
- O Jugar un juego, deporte o hacer ejercicio juntos
- O Involucrar al niño/a en tareas del hogar tales como cocinar

11. ¿Cuáles son las mayores barreras para que su familia y su niño/a participen en cualquiera de las actividades anteriores? (Marque <u>todas</u> las que apliquen)

- O Falta de tiempo
- O Falta de dinero para suministros
- O El riesgo de lesionarse mientras juega
- O No hay niños con quienes jugar
- O Cierro debido a COVID
- O Falta de interés por parte del niño/a
- O No hay patio o un lugar cercano al aire libre
- O Demasiado desordenado
- O Falta de materiales en la lengua materna
- O Debido al clima/mala calidad del aire
- O No existen obstáculos
- O Otra razón (por favor especifique) _____

12. ¿Ha participado en alguno de los siguientes programas para padres, ya sea virtualmente o en persona? (Marque <u>todas</u> las que apliquen)

- O Abriendo Puertas
- O Ingreso básico garantizado (GBI)
- O Programa del Family Resource Center (educación financiera, etc.
- O AVANCE
- O Triple P/Paternidad Positiva
- O La Intervención temprana (por favor especifique) _____
- O Pasitos
- O Visitas a la casa de una enfermera, un asistente social u otros proveedores (por favor especifique _____
- O Ninguno de estos
- O Otros (por favor especifique) _____

13. ¿Cuál es el nivel educativo más alto que ha completado usted o el otro padre de familia/guardián?

- O Educación primaria
- O Algo de educación secundaria (no graduación de secundaria/bachillerato
- O Graduación de la escuela secundaria
- O Algo de universidad
- O Título de asociado (AA/AS)
- O Licenciatura (BA/BS)
- O Título avanzado (MA, Ph.D., MD, etc.)
- O Otros _____
- O Prefiero no responder

14. Aproximadamente, ¿cuál es su ingreso anual familiar?

- O $15,000 - $34,999
- O $35,000 – $49,999
- O $50,000 - $74,999
- O $75,000 - $99,999
- O $100,000 - $124,999
- O $125,000 - $149,999
- O $150,000 - $199,999
- O $200,000 o más

15. ¿Que puede hacer la escuela para incluirlo a usted, en la educación de su hijo/a? Ejemplos, Tareas traducidas, etc.

16. ¿Cuáles son los talentos o puntos fuertes de su familia que le gustaría que su maestra/o conociera?

17. ¿Cuáles son los talentos o puntos fuertes de su hijo/a que le gustaría que su maestra/o conociera?

18. ¿Que puede hacer esta escuela para garantizar que su hijo/a y su familia sientan que pertenecen en esta escuela?

2

Comparta su correo electrónico si desea participar para ganar una tarjeta de regalo: _____

READY
road to the early achievement and development of youth

Share Your Family's Experience with READY & Get $50 gift card

What does READY (Road to the Early Achievement and Development of Youth) do?

- Looks at kindergarten readiness in Sonoma County using an equity lens
- Provides early learning information to community for decision-making & funding
- Makes connections between local providers, funders, and schools

All **parent/guardian voices** are not always included in the numbers we collect. To change this, we want to have more **conversations** regarding kindergarten readiness with **families** of students that **identify as Black, Indigenous, Latine or from a Community of Color/Global Majority**. It is important to have these conversation so we can bring equity to our work and **learn from our beautiful and diverse community.**

People interested in sharing their journey with their child's early learning in a group or one on one will **receive a $50 Amazon gift card.** If you are interested in participating, please **email the READY manager before 3/1/24**, so we can connect with you. Thank you for considering!

Norine Doherty, READY Project Manager
To participate, please email:
ndoherty@schsd.org
To learn more about READY click here: **READY**

Human Services Department
COUNTY OF SONOMA
"Empower, Support, Protect"

UPstream INVESTMENTS
SONOMA COUNTY

FIRST 5
sonoma county

READY
road to the early achievement and development of youth

Comparta la experiencia de su familia con READY y obtenga una tarjeta de regalo de $50

¿Qué hace READY (Road to the Early Achievement and Development of Youth)?

- Analiza la preparación para el jardín de infantes en el condado de Sonoma usando una perspectiva de equidad
- Proporciona información sobre la preparación para el jardín de infantes a la comunidad para la toma de decisiones y la financiación
- Hace conexiones entre proveedores locales, financiadores y escuelas.

Todas las voces de los padres o guardián no siempre están incluidas en los números que recopilamos. Para cambiar esto, queremos tener más **conversaciones** sobre la preparación para el kindergarten con familias de estudiantes que se identifican como Afroamericano, Indígenas, Latinos o de una Comunidad de Color. Es importante tener estas conversaciones para que podamos aportar equidad a nuestro trabajo y **aprender de nuestra hermosa y diversa comunidad.**

Gente interesados en compartir su viaje con el aprendizaje temprano de sus hijos en un grupo o uno a uno **recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de Amazon de $50.** Si está interesado en participar, envíe **un correo electrónico al gerente de READY antes del 2/15/24**, para que podamos conectarnos con usted. ¡Gracias por considerarlo!

Norine Doherty, Gerente de Proyecto READY
Para participar envíe un correo electrónico a:
ndoherty@schsd.org
Para obtener más información sobre READY, haga clic aquí: READY

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