


Conquering The Readiness Gap

AFTER THE
COVID-19
PANDEMIC



Every year 40 percent of children walk into kindergarten one to three years behind. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the achievement gap has widened.



Once school resumes it is imperative that families are supported to interact with their young children in nurturing, responsive, stimulating interactions.¹

The Problem



The wide range in student academic achievement persists, and in some cases expands, from kindergarten through high school. Research shows that most students who start behind stay behind, year after year. Research also shows that those who start ahead, stay ahead.



This academic achievement gap was widened during the 2019–2021 school years due to the interruption of school because of the Coronavirus pandemic.



Students who start kindergarten below grade level form the largest cohort of dropouts, and they have less than a 2 percent chance of attending a four-year university.

After the pandemic, students are likely to enter school with more variability in their academic skills than under normal circumstances.² More than ever, parents and schools working in harmony is fundamental to improve academic outcomes, child development and well-being, regardless of their age or educational setting.³

¹Murray, J. (2020). In a time of COVID-19 and beyond, the world needs early childhood educators. *International Journal of Early Years Education*

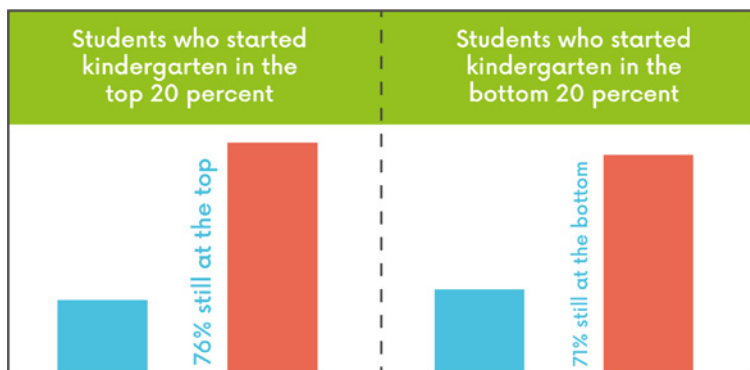
² Kuhfeld, Megan, James Soland, Beth Tarasawa, Angela Johnson, Erik Ruzek & Jing Liu. (2020). Projecting the potential impacts of COVID-19 school closures on academic achievement.

³Una O'Connor Bones, Jessica Bates, Jayne Finlay & Allison Campbell (2021): Parental involvement during COVID-19: experiences from the special school.



The Impact

Kindergarten literacy and math entry skill levels may be the single strongest factor in subsequent academic achievement. Students who start ahead tend to stay ahead. More than three quarters (76 percent) of students who started in the top 20 percent are still in the top (or second to the top) 20 percent entering fifth grade. Students who start behind tend to stay behind. The majority (71 percent) of students who began in the bottom 20 percent are still in the bottom (or second to the bottom) 20 percent entering fifth grade.



5th grade literacy and math entry level.



Forty percent of all students entering kindergarten each year are below the national standard.

The Future

The disruptions in early childhood education services are likely to be associated with poorer outcomes in language development, children's social and emotional learning, behavioral skills, and emotional regulation skills.

Bao, X., Qu, H., Zhang, R., & Hogan, T. P. (2020). Modeling Reading Ability Gain in Kindergarten Children during COVID-19 School Closures.

We expect that the current pandemic context would negatively impact young children's school readiness.

González, M., Loose, T., Liz, M., Pérez, M., Rodríguez-Vinçon, J. I., Tomás-Llerena, C., & Vásquez-Echeverría, A. (2022). School readiness losses during the COVID-19 outbreak. A comparison of two cohorts of young children.

We found the cognitive and motor development of children was suffering the most, followed by their attitudes toward learning. Within cognitive functioning, self-projection, language and logical-mathematical skills showed the largest losses. These losses could pose a threat to educational achievement later in life.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2022. Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on the Early Care and Education Sector.

When communities and families assure most students enter kindergarten at or above grade level, this problem is minimized for their districts.



The Solution



READY! for Kindergarten® school readiness programs empower parents and caregivers to nurture a child's learning from birth to age 5. Created by child development experts using groundbreaking research, READY! provides Targets, training, and tools, equipping parents and caregivers to help infants and young children develop essential early literacy, math, and social and emotional skills.

Our programs support an integrated, whole-child, play-based learning approach that encompasses cognitive, social and emotional, and physical development, and enhance executive functioning.

Age-Level Targets®

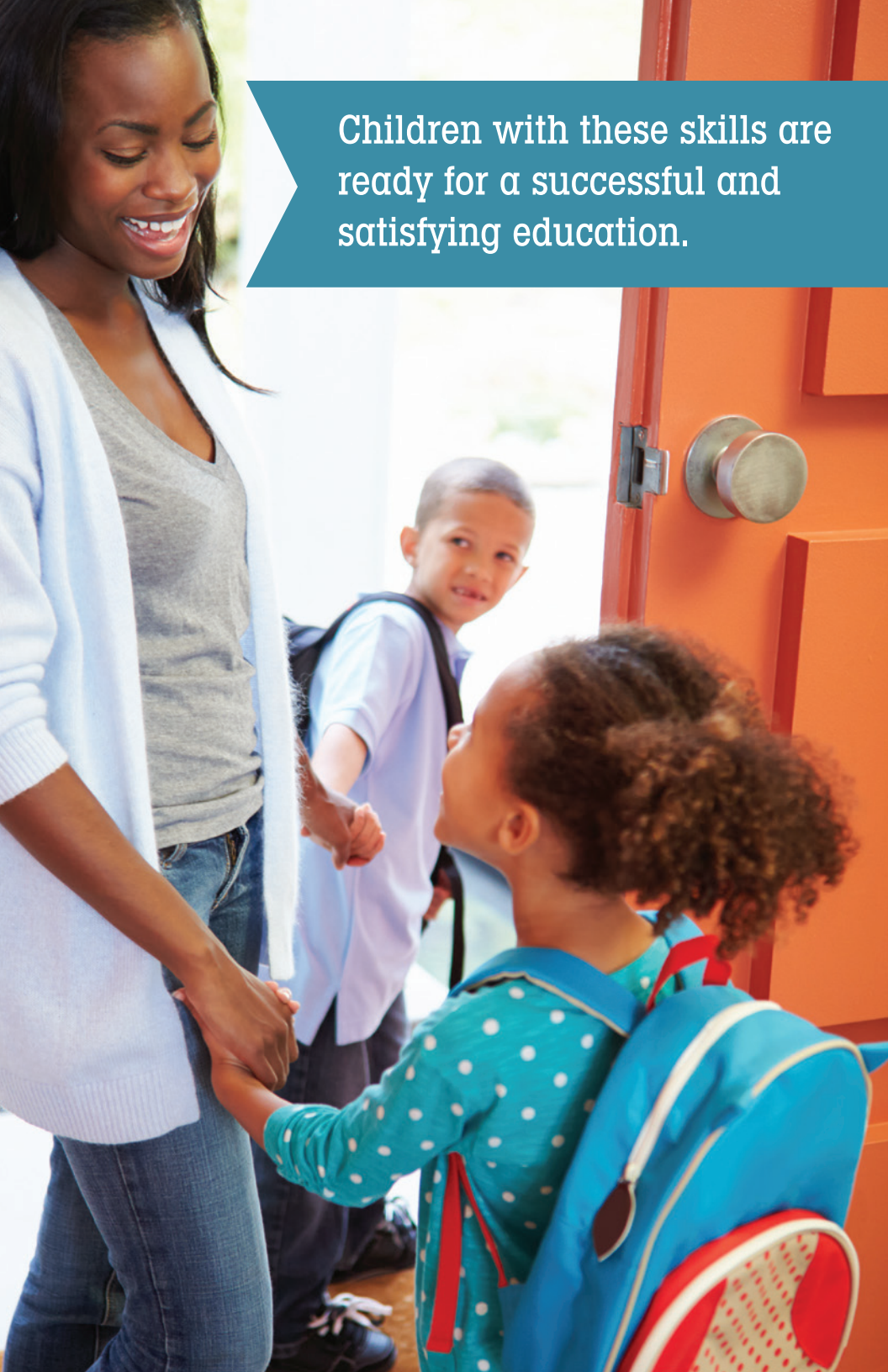
The foundation of the READY! program are 26 research-based Age Level Targets. These are skills and developmental milestones that a 5-year-old with typical development should have by the time they start kindergarten. Parents and caregivers aim for these targets in supporting a child's intellectual and social and emotional growth.

Training

Parents have access to several activities and engage with the materials at each of the 15 available workshops. Parents choose which activities and materials to use at home based on the interests and abilities of the child. Information is available to help parents/caregivers assess a child's progress and guide them through the learning steps.

Tools

The programs provide high-quality materials and toys for home and preschool or child care settings. Parents and caregivers use the resources to make learning fun and effective. Examples of READY! tools include puzzles, books, magnetic letters, matching games, and

A photograph of a woman with dark skin and hair, wearing a light blue cardigan over a grey V-neck shirt and jeans, smiling warmly. She is holding the hands of two children. In the foreground, a young girl with curly hair, wearing a teal polka-dot shirt and a large blue backpack with red straps, looks up at the woman. Behind her, a young boy in a light blue school shirt and dark pants, also wearing a backpack, looks towards the camera. They are standing in front of a bright orange door with a silver handle and lock. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Children with these skills are
ready for a successful and
satisfying education.

READY! for Parents

School districts and organizations fund READY! for Kindergarten for parents and caregivers of children birth to age 5. Sessions focus on understanding developmental milestones and how to nurture emerging literacy, math, and social and emotional skills. Workshops share information and teach age-appropriate learning activities based on the READY! Age Level Targets. Lessons are available in English and Spanish, and can be adapted for other non-English speaking populations. Online modules for parents' self-paced participation are available to all licensees. Each series of workshops present all domains – language and literacy, math and reasoning, and social and emotional development. Every workshop helps parents learn a variety of activities to support reading and letter knowledge at home, as those are two of the skills highly correlated with school readiness.

READY! for Child Care & Preschool Programs

The program creates consistency for the child between home and preschool or child care settings. The activities and tools are designed to meet the learning needs of children from ages 2 to 5. Tools provided are versatile, durable, and ideal for a multi-age setting. Self-paced e-learning modules are available for child care providers and preschool teachers in English and Spanish.

Two kits are available:

Language & Literacy

Math & Reasoning/Social & Emotional Development

READY! Is Adaptable

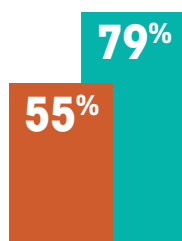
READY! is designed to be adapted for local needs and opportunities including Head Start programs, preschools, home visiting, and other delivery models. This provides flexibility in how programs serve diverse populations.



READY! is a research-based,
proven program that won
a **Top 100 Award** for
programs from *District
Administration Magazine*.

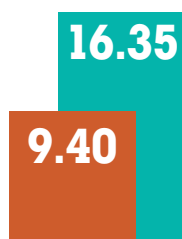


The Research



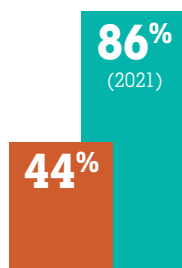
Independent research verified that 79 percent of children whose parents attended READY! workshops met the kindergarten reading readiness standards, compared to 55 percent of children whose parents did not attend. Equally important, the program significantly decreased the number of at-risk children entering kindergarten two to three years behind.

*Washington State University Study
Kennewick School District (Washington)*



In Muhlenberg County, the Felix E. Martin Jr. Foundation's SOAR program began offering the READY! for Kindergarten program in partnership with the local school system and family resource centers in 2014. With more than 50 percent of families participating each year, kindergarten teachers tell us they can see a difference and the county's kindergarten readiness scores have improved significantly.

*Vicki Yonts,
Program Manager, Felix E. Martin Jr. Foundation
SOAR Program, Muhlenberg County (Kentucky)*



In 2008, 44 percent of Lake Pend Oreille School District children entering kindergarten tested below proficiency for learning readiness. After the first year, and every year since, an average of 86 percent of the READY! for Kindergarten graduates entered school testing at or above kindergarten readiness levels. (90 percent pre-pandemic).

*Panhandle Alliance for Education
Lake Pend Oreille School District (Idaho)*

Read research, results, and more at
ReadingFoundation.org/Research.



For every \$1 spent on early education between birth and age 5, states will see a return of \$13. A small investment at the start will produce great gains for life.

HeckmanEquation.org/Resource/13-ROI-Toolbox/



READY!

Parent Program

For Parents of Children Birth to Age 5

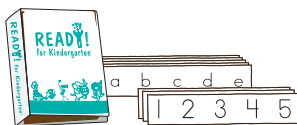
The READY! for Kindergarten Parent Program is sponsored by school districts and organizations that provide the funding, trained facilitators, workshop space, advertising, registration, and child care. Workshops are generally provided at no charge to parents and caregivers. Pricing below reflects program materials costs for one child for one year.

READY! for Kindergarten Parent Program

3 PARENT WORKSHOPS	FALL 	WINTER 	SPRING 	} \$210.00
3 TOOL KITS				

READY! Orientation Kit

Required purchase for
first-time attendees



\$26.50

Prices are subject to change – shipping and handling not included. Licensing agreement and fee required. For additional information and other cost considerations to deliver the READY! Parent Program visit ReadingFoundation.org/ReadyforKindergarten/Start-a-Ready-Program.

The program is adapted from the parent lessons and creates consistency for the child between home and preschool or child care settings.



READY! @ Child Care & Preschool

The READY! for Kindergarten program for Child Care & Preschool is purchased by organizations working with preschool educators and child care providers or directly by individual early childhood professionals. The program includes training and tools providers use to help nurture the skill development of children ages 2 to 5 in their care. Each kit contains enough tools for up to three children, as well as a bound notebook of resources.

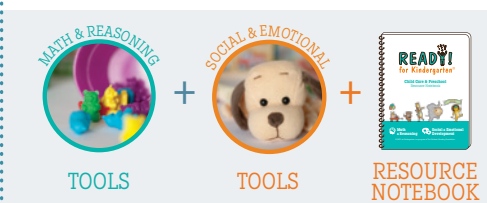
READY! @ Child Care & Preschool Program



Language & Literacy Kit



Math & Reasoning Social & Emotional Kit



\$398 Serves a Small Group

Prices are subject to change – shipping and handling not included. Licensing agreement and fee required. For additional information about the READY! @ Child Care and Preschool Program visit ReadingFoundation.org/ReadyforKindergarten/Start-a-Ready-Program.

READY! for Kindergarten Social & Emotional Learning consists of training and tools to Play With a Purpose around five Social & Emotional Targets.



READY! Social & Emotional Learning

Parents attend one 60-minute workshop in which they learn and reflect about strategies to support a healthy social & emotional development on their child. School districts and organizations offer READY! SEL in conjunction with the READY! for Kindergarten parent engagement program so children have more tools to succeed in school and in life.

For Children Ages 3 to 4 and 4 to 5

Social & Emotional Learning Kits

*Available in
English & Spanish*



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL
LEARNING WORKSHOP

+



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL
LEARNING TOOLKIT

\$70 Introductory
Price

Prices are subject to change – shipping and handling not included. Licensing agreement and fee required. For additional information about the READY! for Kindergarten SEL Program visit:
ReadingFoundation.org/ReadyforKindergarten/Start-a-Ready-Program.



READY! for Math™ introduces Seven Foundational Skills That Every Child Needs to Start Kindergarten Prepared for Math.

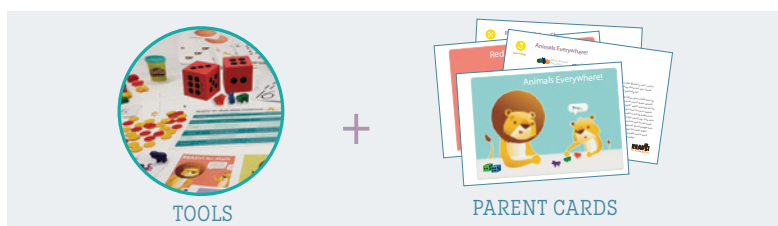
READY! for Math

READY! for Math™ includes nine take-home tools and 14 activity cards! The activity cards guide parents on how to use the tools to Play With a Purpose with their child to foster their early math skills. Parents and caregivers first experience READY! for Math activities and tools during a 60-minute interactive workshop delivered by school districts or organizations.

For Children Ages 3 to 5

READY! for Math™ Learning Kit

*Available in
English & Spanish*



\$70.00

Prices are subject to change – shipping and handling not included. Licensing agreement and fee required. For additional information about the READY! for Math Program visit:
ReadingFoundation.org/ReadyforKindergarten/Start-a-Ready-Program.

From birth to age 5, a child
learns at a speed unmatched
the rest of their life.



The Response

"The READY! for Kindergarten workshops were very beneficial in helping me foster a culture of learning in my household. I was given an abundance of free learning materials and tools that are FUN and EASY to use with my child. My son and I still use these materials often, and there wasn't one activity we didn't enjoy together."

*Paige Hosford
Sunnyslope Elementary School (Oregon)*

"My daughter knew her alphabet, counting, and simple things, but I was not sure what to do next. The program gave me tools to use at the right time to help with her learning. Each time I went to a workshop, I learned more about her development and what she was capable of. My child asks to do the activities, and it helps to have that positive time together."

*Toni Wheeler,
Capital Area Community Services, Head Start (Michigan)*

"READY! for Kindergarten workshops are warm and friendly settings with other parents. They gave me the tools and knowledge to nurture our child's learning journey. I felt supported and that I was doing the right thing. Using the methods we learned improved our quality time through purposeful play. Our son learned faster, and it allowed us to focus on skill development."

*Cassandra Krawec Paul
McMinnville School District (Oregon)*



Providing parents with activities and games to use as part of everyday routines will help tackle the medium-term challenges of the pandemic and the transition to a new normal.¹

The Response

“READY! offers parents an integrated, incredibly organized, lifestyle approach that enhances literacy, mathematics, and social-emotional development within a child’s first five years.”

*Rae Smith, Monadnock School District,
Swansey, New Hampshire*

“Early Learning in Sumner includes children, families, schools, and the community from birth to third grade. As a school district, we go beyond the requirement of K–12 education to begin supporting families and children well before they walk into our schools as kindergartners.

READY! for Kindergarten is an excellent program to build the potential and the foundation for our youngest learners. And READY! does it by supporting their first and most important teachers: their parents!”

*Laurie Sjolund, Early Learning Coordinator,
Sumner School District, Sumner, Washington*

“We began offering the READY! for Kindergarten program in partnership with the local school system and family resource centers in 2014. With more than 50 percent of families participating each year, kindergarten teachers tell us they can see a difference and the county’s kindergarten readiness scores have improved significantly.”

*Vicki Yonts, Program Manager, Felix E. Martin Jr. Foundation,
SOAR Program, Muhlenberg County (Kentucky)*

¹Hincapié, D., López-Boo, F., & Rubio-Codina, M. (2020).
The High Cost of COVID-19 for Children.



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ReadingFoundation.org/ReadyforKindergarten



READY! for Kindergarten is a program of
The Children's Reading Foundation

ReadingFoundation.org

A 501(c)(3) national nonprofit.



The
Children's
Reading
Foundation