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.
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. 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.

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


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.

The Impact

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.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 PARENT WORKSHOPS</th>
<th>FALL</th>
<th>WINTER</th>
<th>SPRING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ 3 TOOL KITS</td>
<td>duck</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>heart</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**$210.00**

**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.
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**
- Language & Literacy Tools
- Resource Notebook

**Math & Reasoning Social & Emotional Kit**
- Math & Reasoning Tools
- Social & Emotional Tools
- Resource Notebook

**$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](http://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.
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

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

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
“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, Swanzey, 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)
