



Ready Schools

The e-Newsletter of the CCSSO School Readiness Project

Issue 7 January 2006

The Ready Schools e-newsletter is a monthly publication from CCSSO that provides information, ideas and resources to support schools as they strive to become more prepared and ready to meet the needs of all children. A "ready school" is a critical component of the school readiness conversation and school improvement efforts. Through this newsletter, we will highlight efforts at the state and local level that support schools in their process toward becoming "ready schools".

Ready Schools Support Children's Transition to Kindergarten

Removing Roadblocks to Success: Transitions and Linkages between Home, Preschool and Primary School

<http://www.ecdgroup.com/download/cc121ari.pdf>

This document from the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development addresses children's transition to school within the context of three approaches: (1) Changing the child and the home; (2) Changing the school; and, (3) Supporting smooth transitions through building linkages: education as a shared experience. An elaboration of each of the approaches is provided.

[Note: The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development is a diverse consortium of agencies and foundations that links with others involved in programming, research, policy-advocacy, monitoring and evaluation for young children (0-8) at risk in the Majority World. The term Majority World refers to those countries that are often referred to as South countries, developing or third world countries and serves to remind us that the majority of the world's children are at risk of delayed or debilitated development.]

Ready Schools Encourage Continuity and Alignment between Early Care and Education Programs and Elementary Schools

Getting from Here to There: Organization and Coordination of Early Childhood Services

<http://www.brookings.edu/es/research/projects/wrb/200411Gallagher.pdf>

This is one of several papers presented during the Conference on Creating a National Plan for the Education of 4-Year Olds in September

2004. A discussion is provided on seven components required for creating an ideal early childhood service system:

(1) Information & Support. All families would have access to information and support about parenting, child development, and community services.

(2) Universal screening. The ideal early childhood system would offer systematic, ongoing health and developmental screenings for all children.

(3) Continuum of high-quality services. The ideal early childhood system would offer a continuum of high-quality care and education services to meet the diverse needs of families and children.

(4) Competent personnel. Well prepared teachers and aides would be present in proper proportions to deliver the services to the preschool children.

(5) Appropriate curriculum. A well-accepted program of developmental activities would be applied to help enhance children's health and motor development, cognitive abilities, language development, and social and emotional development.

(6) Constructive learning environment. Constructive learning environments and meeting professional standards would provide sufficient space and equipment in attractive surroundings.

(7) Adequate financing. Direct services would have adequate funds to achieve goals for children, provide adequate compensation for staff, and purchase supplies and necessary equipment to aid program delivery.

The authors conclude with several recommendations aimed at legislation, court cases, administrative rule making, and professional initiatives.

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

<http://www.eec.state.ma.us/>

The new Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) in **Massachusetts** combines the functions of the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) with those of the Early Learning Services Division at the Department of Education. This agency is supervised and guided by a new independent board, the Board of Early Education and Care. Ann Reale was appointed as Early Education and Care's first Commissioner. The creation of EEC represents an exciting opportunity to build a new, coordinated, comprehensive system of early education and care in Massachusetts. In the short term, the new agency will be focused on bringing together the people, services, and resources of the two agencies. Visit the EEC web page for several key resources including various reports and research about early education and care from stakeholders.

Ready Schools Ensure High Quality Learning Environments

Critical Issue: Organizing for Effective Early Childhood Programs and Practices

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/earlyclid/ea100.htm>

Critical Issue: Organizing for Effective Early Childhood Programs and Practices is an online, multimedia document that synthesizes research on organizing for effective early childhood programs. Practical examples are provided from schools addressing five factors that contribute to an effective early childhood program: quality staff, suitable environment, appropriate grouping practices, consistent schedules, and parent involvement. Action steps, implementation pitfalls and different points of view are provided to help others develop effective programs and practices for young children.

Ready Schools Have Strong Partnerships with Parents and the Community

Background for Community-Level Work on School Readiness: A Review of Definitions, Assessments, and Investment Strategies

http://www.childtrends.org/files/LIT_REVIEW_DRAFT_7.pdf

Many communities across the country have set for themselves the ambitious goal of enhancing school readiness. But what does school readiness mean, and how do communities know whether they have achieved it? This report is intended to help communities invest wisely in school readiness initiatives. It begins by summarizing recommendations from the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) for defining and assessing school readiness. The report then presents a framework for community investments based on an ecological view of child development. In other words, this framework considers factors related not only to the child, but also to the child's family, early childhood care and education and neighborhood.

Ready Schools: Other Resources, Publications and Sites of Interest

Sustaining and Growing Father Involvement for Low-Income Children

<http://www.nasassembly.org/fspc/practice/documents/Fathersbrief.pdf>

This policy brief looks at effective father-involvement programs. It calls for policies that address disadvantaged fathers' needs for employment services and other supports, which can be done with existing federal funds.

Parents' Reports of School Practices to Provide Information to Families: 1996 and 2003

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006041>

This document focuses on parent-reported school information practices and examines these in relation to the frequency of parent involvement

at their children's schools. In addition, these information practices are examined in relation to school, family, and student characteristics.

About the School Readiness Project at CCSSO

The School Readiness Project is part of the School Improvement Initiative housed at CCSSO and is supported through funding from the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#). The school readiness project is designed to support states in the development and implementation of comprehensive systems of early childhood education in low-income communities with a particular focus on ready schools.

To submit a news item relevant to School Readiness-Ready Schools at the state or district level, provide feedback, or to subscribe/unsubscribe, send an email to Susan Taylor at susant@ccsso.org. PDF versions of all Ready Schools newsletters are available at http://www.ccsso.org/whats_new/newsletters/ready_schools/index.cfm.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on the major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress and the public.

Our mission statement: The Council of Chief State School Officers, through Leadership, Advocacy, and Service, assists chief state school officers and their organizations in achieving the vision of an American education system that enables all children to succeed in school, work, and life.