



Ready Schools

The e-Newsletter of the CCSSO School Readiness Project

Issue 4 October 2005

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

Transitions: Parents are Key. Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

http://www.headstartinfo.org/pdf/transitions_parents/transitions_parents_are_key.pdf

This guide is designed to assist both parents and staff in developing skills that support the Head Start Program Performance Standards related to transition. The guide encourages active learning interaction and partnering through guided hands-on activities and tools based upon real life transition situations. Since partnering is at the core of this guide, teachers can use these materials for joint training and parent and staff development.

Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten

<http://www.nccic.org/poptopics/transition.pdf>

This 7 page document from the National Child Care Information Center provides information on national organizations with transition initiatives, State initiatives, and publications that provide information for children, families, and educators on smoothing the transition from preschool to kindergarten.

Student Readiness to Learn and the School Ready to Teach: An Internet Essay and Collection of Selected Documents

http://www.schoolfile.com/cap_start/schoolready.html

This collection of web documents has been prepared by the Canadian Association of Principals and was developed to assist school-based administrators and others to enhance the readiness of their schools. Over 100 selected documents are linked with the summaries that

explain and discuss the issues associated with schools being ready to support young children as they begin school. The emphasis is on practical strategies that are well-based in research.

Ready Schools Ensure High Quality Learning Environments

Child Outcome Standards in Pre-K Programs: What Are Standards: What is Needed to Make Them Work?

<http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/5.pdf>

This policy brief provides an overview of how the standards movement is being extended to preschool programs; describes child outcomes standards in relation to other types of standards and quality indicators; offers an overview of the conditions needed for standards to work, and describes the special considerations that must be taken into account if child outcome standards are to have a positive impact on preschool children and programs.

Ready Schools Have Strong Partnerships with Parents and the Community

Tackling the Achievement Gap Head On: A background and discussion paper for community groups interested in helping all children succeed in School

http://www.wilder.org/fileadmin/user_upload/research/SchoolSuccess_External_05.pdf

This is a background and discussion paper for community groups interested in helping all children succeed in school. Page 18 of the document begins a chapter on how some community organizations have worked with public schools to close the gaps.

Enhancing the Transition to Kindergarten

http://discovery.wcgmf.org/resources/sps_resource_363.pdf

This manual describes an approach to enhancing children's transitions into kindergarten. Specific strategies focus on forming a network of social connections that support children and families during the transition to school. These connections include interactions between children and teachers, children and peers, parents and teachers, as well as preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers. A variety of transition strategies are offered that can be tailored to the individual needs of families and schools.

Questions for State Level Leaders to Consider: A Focus on Early Education Partnerships That Stimulate Quality and Heighten Standards

<http://nccic.org/quilt/questions.pdf>

A series of questions are presented in this document to help state leaders assess the policies and practices that can serve to advance the quality of early education services in their state. Such state-level initiatives will assist local early education programs in building and sustaining high-quality partnerships. The questions are presented within five categories: (1) state regulations, policies, and requirements; (2) child care subsidy policies; (3) state incentives and activities to stimulate and sustain local partnerships; (4) communication among state-level early education leaders; and (5) state vision on partnerships at the local and state levels.

Ready Schools: Other Resources, Publications and Sites of Interest

Ready for Success in Kindergarten-A Comparative Analysis of Community Beliefs: Preschool and Kindergarten Parents, Teachers and Administrators

http://www.hawaii.edu/hepc/pdf/Reports/Readiness_Report.pdf

This research report, *Ready for Success in Kindergarten-A Comparative Analysis of Community Beliefs: Preschool and Kindergarten Parents, Teachers and Administrators* provides valuable insights relevant to the development of Hawaii's definition of school readiness. The purposes of the research was to discover, document, and synthesize the readiness beliefs about children and schools held by the Hawaii early childhood community (parents, teachers, administrators) and those of national experts to arrive at a proposed state definition of readiness; and to make policy recommendations based on Hawaii readiness findings that are augmented by national early childhood education literature.

Research questions included the following:

1. What beliefs are held by the Hawaii early childhood community (parents, teachers, and administrators) about two readiness components--children ready for school and schools ready for children?
2. What are the similarities and differences in the beliefs of Hawaii parents, teachers, and administrators?
3. How do these views compare to the findings of national studies and other research reported in the literature?

The research resulted in an interactional definition of school readiness that became law in 2002: *School readiness means that young children are ready to have successful learning experiences in school when there is a positive interaction among the child's developmental characteristics, school practices, and family and community support.*

Since the release of this research study, readiness instruments have been developed, field tested, validated, and are being used to gather aggregate, systemic data on whether early childhood efforts in Hawaii

are enabling more children to succeed in school. Preschool content standards and transitional activities have also been developed and implemented based on this research.

Essentials for Success in Preschool and Beyond. Congressional Briefing: Transitions to School: What Helps Children Succeed?
<http://www.apa.org/ppo/issues/pallen.html>

This 3 page congressional briefing identifies three keys to quality education in the early years: (1) school/family partnerships; (2) promoting academic and social-emotional competence; and, (3) continuity.

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. The PDF version of this newsletter is available at the following URL:

<http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/RSNewsletterOct05.pdf>

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.