

*As part of the
Interagency Resource Management Committee
Early Intervention Evaluation Projects*

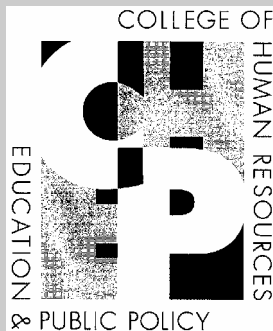
2000 Kindergarten Teacher Survey Report

September 2000

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About the *Center for Disabilities Studies*

The *Center for Disabilities Studies* at the University of Delaware is one of the 62 University Affiliated Programs (UAPs) in the United States. The *Center* was established in 1992 and works in conjunction with individuals with disabilities to better their lives. The *Center* staff and affiliated faculty teach both pre-service and in-service courses for teachers, social service workers, and other service providers working with individuals with disabilities and their families. The *Center* operates state-of-the-art programs and assists both public and private organizations in adopting the procedures developed to run those programs. *Center* staff and affiliated faculty also sit on state and national policy boards and commissions that address housing, transportation, education, advocacy, child care, health care, and other service areas. *Center* staff also conduct program evaluations with programs serving individuals with disabilities and assist in policy development at both the local and state levels. The *Center for Disabilities Studies* is located in 101 Alison Hall at the University of Delaware in Newark. The Director of the *Center* is Dr. Donald Peters.

About the Interagency Resource Management Committee

The Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC) is a Delaware state level governmental committee that includes the Secretaries of Education, Health and Social Services, and Services for Children, Youth and Their Families as well as the state Budget Director and Controller General. The Committee makes both policy and budgetary decisions for three major early intervention programs: the Birth to Three early intervention program of Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the state Early Childhood Assistance Programs, programs for four year olds and their families; and the Preschool Disabilities Program, programs for three and four year olds with mild disabilities and speech and language delays. The Committee also oversees a statewide data management system for child and family support services. The Chair of the IRMC is Ms. Valerie Woodruff, Secretary of Education. The IRMC Policy Coordinator during this project was Debbie Amsden.

This document was prepared with the support of the Delaware Public Assistantship Program through the College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy. The Public Service Assistantship Program is designed to provide both graduate and undergraduate students with experiences that will aid the citizens of the state of Delaware. We greatly appreciate the funding provided to support this program that allows for work such as this to continue.

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2000 Delaware Kindergarten Survey September 2000

PART I: INTRODUCTION

In May 2000, 243 surveys were distributed to a comprehensive list of kindergarten teachers in the state of Delaware. The surveys were mailed directly to the teachers at their schools using a mailing list compiled by the Delaware Department of Education. Two mailing distributions of the survey were made approximately two weeks apart. Surveys received through June 30, 2000 were included in the analysis.

The survey was designed to answer four primary questions:

- 1) Do Delaware kindergarten teachers think it is important to collect information about children's skills and would the teachers use this information about children entering their classrooms at the beginning of the school year, if that information were available to them?
- 2) If they would use the child information, in what type of format would the teachers prefer the information?
- 3) From what source(s) would the teachers prefer the child information?
- 4) How do Delaware kindergarten teachers define the term "readiness?"

In addition to answering these questions, the kindergarten teachers were asked to identify the five most important skills for children to possess as they enter kindergarten. The teachers were asked this question in order to determine how their definitions of readiness corresponded to the skills that they identified as most important for children entering kindergarten.

After a draft of the survey was constructed, it was tested on ten kindergarten teachers from Pennsylvania. Minor wording changes were made in response to their suggestions. The survey then was distributed to the Delaware population of kindergarten teachers. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

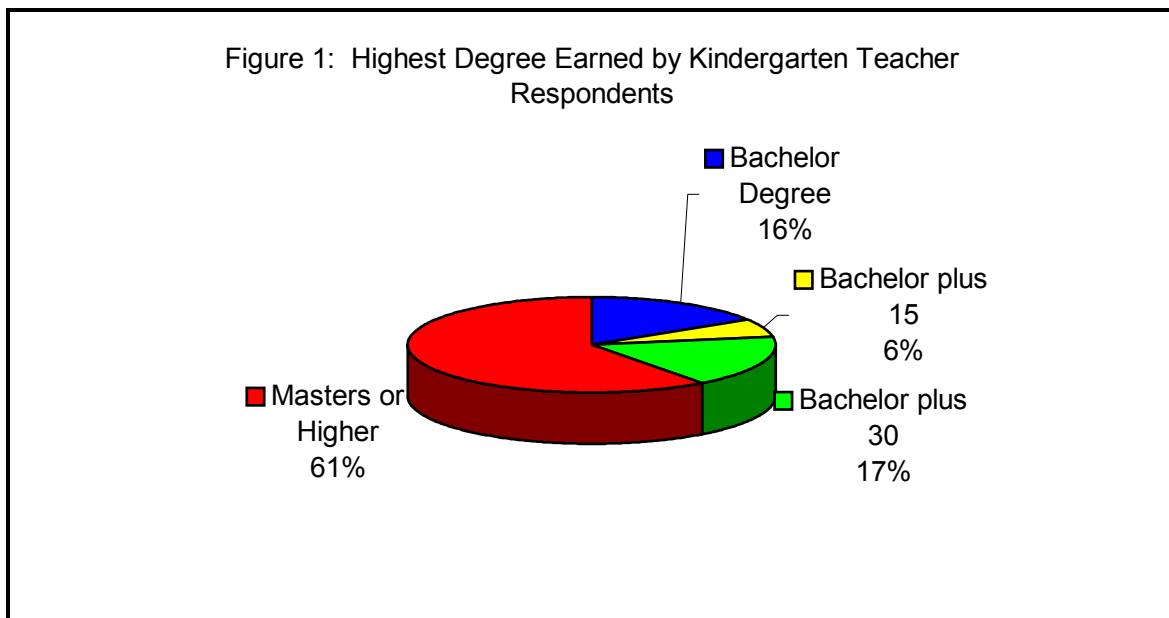
PART II: RESULTS

RESPONSE RATE

Of the 243 surveys distributed, 174 were returned. Three of those respondents indicated that they were not kindergarten teachers. These surveys were not included in the analysis, bringing the total kindergarten teacher distribution number to 240. The return rate for was, therefore, 71.25% of the 240 kindergarten teachers who received the survey.

DESCRIPTION OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS RESPONDING TO THE SURVEY

The majority of the kindergarten teachers answering the survey had advanced degrees. Only 15% of them were teaching with a bachelor's degree. Over 61% had a masters degree or higher. Of the remaining teachers, 7% had a bachelors degree plus 15 graduate credits and 17% had a bachelors degree plus 30 graduate credits. (See Figure 1.)



The respondents' teaching experiences varied widely. All of the respondents had experience in kindergarten settings, however, the length of time in teaching kindergarten ranged from a little as one year of service to a maximum of 32 years. The mean number of years teaching in kindergarten for this respondent group was 12.33 years. The mode of their years of experience in kindergarten was 10 years. In addition to their kindergarten experience, the teachers also had taught students as young as infants and as old as high school students. Table 1 indicates the number and percentage of kindergarten teachers answering the survey who have taught at various non-kindergarten levels.

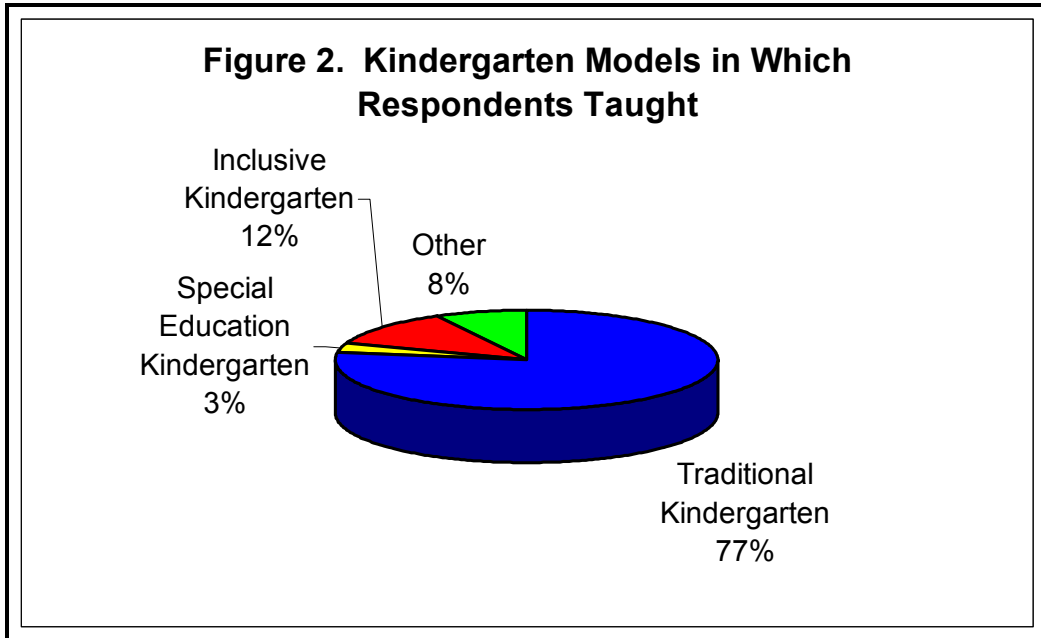
Table 1. Number and percentage of kindergarten teachers with experience at other levels of teaching.

Teaching Level	Number of Teachers*	Percentage ⁺
Infants and Toddlers	21	12.3%
Preschoolers	73	42.7%
Primary (Grades 1-2)	80	46.8%
Elementary (Grades 3-6)	46	26.9%
Middle School (Grades 7-8)	12	7.0%
High School	11	6.4%

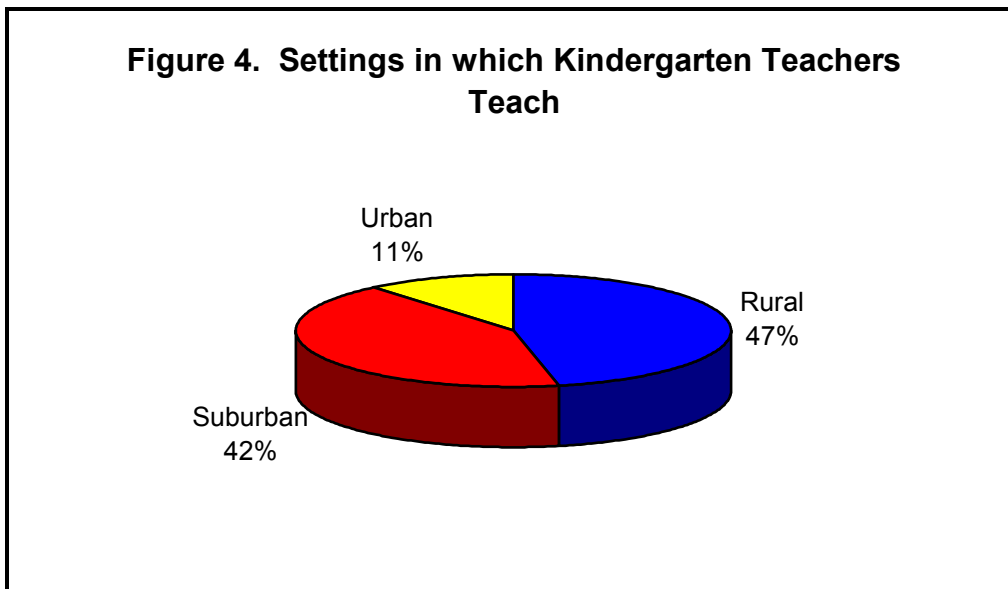
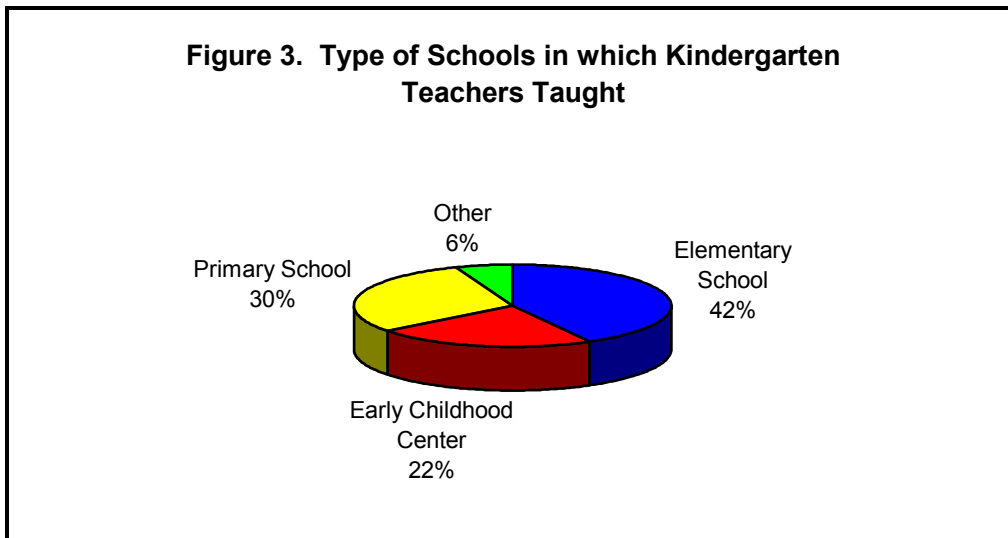
*Equals more than 100% because respondents indicated all levels at which they had previously taught.

+Percentage is of the total number of respondents.

The teachers returning surveys also worked in school with a variety of kindergarten models. Most of the teachers (77%) worked in traditional half-day kindergarten classrooms. However, 12% indicated that they taught in inclusive kindergarten settings and 3% reported that they worked in self-contained special education kindergartens. The remaining 8% of teachers worked in settings such as extended-day kindergartens, “at-risk” kindergartens, and ESL kindergartens. (See Figure 2.)



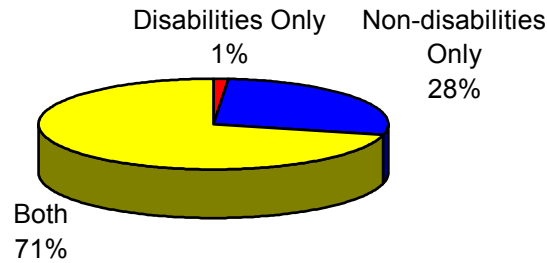
The teachers were also working in a variety of different school settings. A significant number of the teachers (42%) taught in traditional elementary schools that served children from kindergarten through 4th, 5th, or 6th grade. The second most likely type of setting at which the teacher worked was in a primary school building in serving children from kindergarten through 2nd or 3rd grade. Over 20% of the respondents indicated that they were working in an Early Childhood Center serving preschool to kindergarten or 1st grade. A small number of teachers taught in other school settings such as stand-alone kindergartens or K-1 only buildings. (See Figure 3.)



Teachers responding to the survey reported that they taught in a variety of localities. Suburban schools accounted for 42% of the settings in which teachers worked. Far fewer teachers felt that they taught in urban settings (11%). Approximately 47% of the teachers felt that they taught in a rural setting. (See Figure 4.)

The teachers responding to the kindergarten survey primarily taught children both with and without disabilities. Only 1% of the teachers exclusively taught children with disabilities. Approximately 28% of the teachers exclusively taught children without disabilities. The remaining teachers, about 71%, taught children both with and without disabilities in their classroom settings. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5. Children Taught by Kindergarten Teachers



QUESTIONS TO SURVEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this survey was to answer four questions:

- 1) Do Delaware kindergarten teachers think it is important to collect information about children's skills and would the teachers use this information about children entering their classrooms at the beginning of the school year, if that information were available to them?
- 2) If they would use the child information, in what type of format would the teachers prefer the information?
- 3) From what source(s) would the teachers prefer the child information?
- 4) How do Delaware kindergarten teachers define the term "readiness"?

A summary of the kindergarten teacher's responses to the survey is presented below to answer these questions.

Question 1: The Importance of Collecting Information about Children

The teachers responding to the survey overwhelmingly stated that they felt it was important to collect information about young children and to transmit that information to their perspective kindergarten teachers. A total of 157 (94%) of the 167 kindergarten teachers who answered this question felt that it was important to gather information about children entering kindergarten and to transmit that information to kindergarten teachers.

When the teachers were asked if a formal assessment instrument should be used in order to collect information about children entering kindergarten a 58.8% majority (n=99) stated that they did not think the process should use a formal assessment instrument (see Figure 6). This group of teachers stated a number of reasons why they did not want a formal assessment of children entering kindergarten. Included in these reasons were a) teachers reported they did their own assessment of children’s skills during the first weeks of school, b) teachers feared that the information would prejudice them about children’s abilities, c) they felt it was a waste of school resources, and d) they felt that standardized assessments were often not accurate nor predictive of children’s abilities (see Table 2).

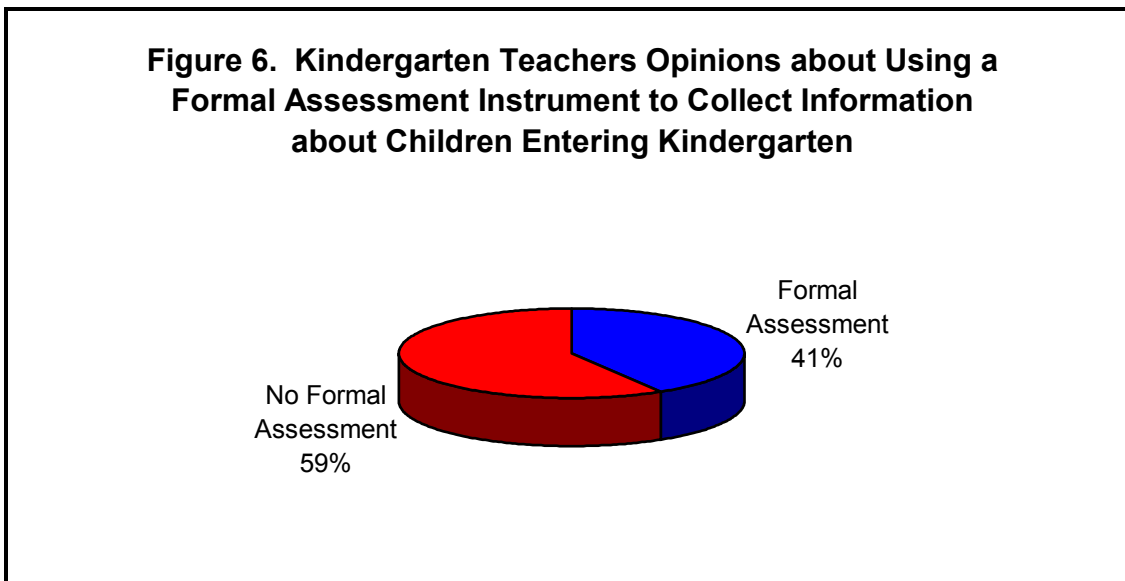


Table 2. Reasons why kindergarten teachers did not want a formal assessment of entering kindergarten students (n=99)

Reason	Number	Percentage+
Do their own informal assessment at the beginning of the school year	76	76.8%
Could prejudice teacher opinion about the entering children	29	29.3%
It is expensive and a waste of school resources	21	21.2%
Standardized testing is not always accurate nor predictive	66	66.7%
Other*	22	22.2%

*includes such items as “screenings are sufficient”

+total percentage is greater than 100 because respondents could choose more than one reason

Sixty-seven (67.7%) of these teachers indicated that they would be interested in receiving information about children entering their classrooms if it was informal information instead of collected from a standardized assessment source.

The 70 teachers who stated that they would like standardized, norm-referenced information about children entering their class gave two reasons. Over 82% of these teachers wanted standardized information about the children’s developmental skills, such as communication, cognitive, fine motor, and personal-social skills. Almost 12% of the teachers wanted to obtain standardized information about the children’s academic abilities.

All 171 of the kindergarten teachers were asked, if they were to receive information about students entering their classrooms, what categories of information would they be interested in receiving? Over 81% of the teachers (n=139) wanted to receive information about children's language skills. Over 74% of the teachers (n=127) wanted to receive information about the children's academic skills. Over 73% of the teachers (n=125) wanted information about the children's social skills. (See Table 3.)

Table 3. Number of kindergarten teachers wanting categorical information entering children's skills.

Skill Category	Number	Percentage
Language skills	139	81.2%
Academic skills	127	74.3%
Social skills	125	73.1%
Self-help skills	111	64.9%
Physical skills	92	53.8%
Problem solving skills	63	36.8%

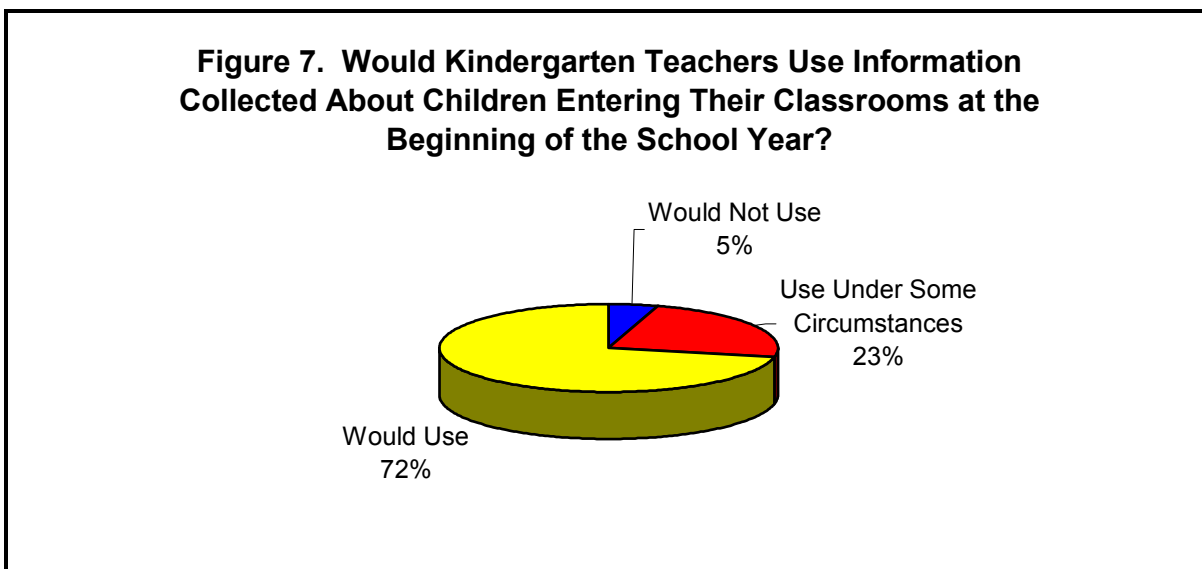
Question 2: Format for Receiving Information

The kindergarten teachers were asked, if they were to receive information about students entering their classrooms at the beginning of the school year, in what format would they prefer to receive this information? Of three options, which included a portfolio, a brief written report, and a checklist of skills, the teachers overwhelmingly indicated that they would prefer to receive a checklist of skills for the students entering their classrooms. The teachers' preference for this format was more than two to one over the other two options. (See Table 4.)

Table 4. Kindergarten teachers' preferred mode for receiving information about students entering their classroom.

Method	1 st Choice	2 nd Choice	3 rd Choice	4 th Choice	Overall Value
Checklist	94	17	9	0	445
Portfolio	26	28	22	1	233
Brief Report	17	36	21	3	204

When asked if they would use written information about children's developmental and academic skills, almost 72% of the kindergarten teachers indicated that they would use the information. Another 23% indicated that they would only use the information under certain circumstances. These included looking at the information after the beginning of the school year. Only 5% of the teachers (n=8) said they would not use the information. (See Figure 7.)



Question 3: From What Sources Should the Information Be Collected?

The kindergarten teachers were asked from what sources they would prefer to receive information about the children entering their classroom. Overwhelmingly, the teachers identified the children’s preschool teachers or child care providers as the preferred source of information. Families were valued, but at a much lower rate than the children’s pre-kindergarten teachers. Other sources of information that the teachers thought would be valuable for learning about entering children’s skills were physicians, child find teams, and a combination of pre-kindergarten teachers and family sources. (See Table 5.)

Table 5. Kindergarten teachers’ preferred sources for receiving information about students entering their classroom.

Source	1 st Choice	2 nd Choice	3 rd Choice	Overall Value
Child’s pre-kindergarten caregiver	88	24	5	317
Child’s family	18	58	7	177
Other sources*	15	9	8	71

* Include physicians, other family members, screening teams

Question 4: Definition of Readiness

The final question of the survey asked the kindergarten teachers to define the term “readiness” for children entering kindergarten. Sixty-three of the teachers took the time to write their own definitions for the term (see Appendix B for a verbatim list of the definitions).

There were 301 individual concepts contained in the definitions. The concepts were analyzed to find common themes across the definitions. Nine specific themes in five categories were found. The five categories were: a) social/behavioral skills, b) pre-academic/academic

skills, c) self-care/adaptive skills, d) communication skills, and e) family considerations. The categories with the individual themes are listed below.

Category I: Social/Behavioral (112 comments)

1. **Social Interaction (28 comments)** – These comments were concerned with how a child interacts with other children and adults, including sharing, taking turns, and cooperating in group settings.
2. **Social Behavior (14 comments)** – These comments were concerned with how a child acts around other children and adults, including such skills as getting along with other children and respecting adults in authority.
3. **Group Entry (70 comments)** – These comments were concerned with how a child enters and participates in group settings and include such specific skills as following directions, focusing on a task, and working cooperatively with others.

Category II: Pre-Academic/Academic (81 comments)

4. **Pre Academic (48 comments)** – These comments were concerned with such skills as the use of crayons, markers, pencils, or scissors; being familiar with books; and recognizing some letters in print; also included in this category is children demonstrating an interest in learning.
5. **Academic (33 comments)** – These comments were concerned with specific school skills such as children writing their own names; identification of some letters, numbers, colors, and shapes; and comparative concepts (e.g., big/little).

Category III: Self-Care/Adaptive (69 comments)

6. **Adaptive (44 comments)** – These comments were concerned with how a child reacts to his environment and to changes in that environment, and how a child feels about him/herself; specific adaptive skills mentioned included the ability to separate from one's parents, the ability to transition between activities and to change routines; and the willingness to risk trying new tasks.
7. **Personal Care and Information (25 comments)** – These comments were concerned with how a child cares for him/herself (e.g., dressing, toileting) and his/her personal possessions, and relays information such as their address, phone number, and parent(s)' name(s).

Category IV: Communication (34 comments)

8. **Communication** – These comments were concerned with how a child lets someone know he needs, wants or likes something; expresses himself; and listens to others when they are communicating to the child.

Category V: Family Considerations (5 comments)

9. **Family** – These comments were concerned with how a child’s family can help foster in the child how a sense that learning is essential; families can show they are interested in their children’s education, be a role model by respecting others and caring for each other, and keep current with educational practices affecting their children.

Taken as a group, the kindergarten teachers’ definitions cover most of the developmental domains of young children except for physical skills. Most of the definitions contained references to social, behavioral, and adaptive skills that allow children to participate in group situations and to be independent at a developmentally appropriate level.

A significant minority of the teachers’ definitions included pre-academic and academic aspects. The pre-academic skills identified by the teachers included specific discrete skills such as names of colors and recognition of numbers. Also included were cognitive skills such as problem solving, discrimination, seriation, and comparison.

For most of the teachers their definitions of “readiness for kindergarten” are focused on children’s abilities to interact with peers and adults, enter and work in a group, and to care for oneself in a group setting. In addition to these social and behavioral skills, children should bring to kindergarten some ability to observe, compare, contrast, and explain to others.

IDENTIFICATION OF MOST ESSENTIAL SKILLS

The 171 kindergarten teachers were asked to identify the five most important skills for children entering their classrooms from a list of 20 skills that included social, pre-academic, academic, and self-care items (see the survey for the full list of the skills).

The top five skills identified by the teachers were all social or self-care skills. The top skill identified by the teachers was the ability to exhibit self-control. Three of the remaining four top five skills were also social, communication, and behavioral skills. The sole item in the top five that was not a social skill was the ability to care for one’s own bathroom needs, an adaptive/self-care skill.

The five least important skills according to the teachers were all academic skills. These included counting to 20, naming the days of the week, and reading three letter sight words. The only two academic skills among the top ten skills identified by the teachers were “prints first name,” which was ranked as number eight and “names letters of the alphabet” which was ranked as number ten. Of the remaining six academic skills the teachers had to choose from, five were ranked as the least important skills from the list of twenty. (See Table 6 for a full list of the rankings of the twenty skills.)

Table 6. Top five skills identified by Delaware kindergarten teachers as being needed by children when they entered kindergarten at the beginning of the school year.

Skill	Ranked #1	Ranked #2	Ranked #3	Ranked #4	Ranked #5	Total Rank Value
1. Exhibits self-control	29	25	38	13	15	362
2. Cares for own bathroom needs	54	9	6	7	9	347
3. Communicates needs	27	25	7	14	9	293
4. Attends to peer or adult talking	16	9	20	16	15	223
5. Modifies behavior when asked	2	24	8	17	14	176
6. Interacts cooperatively	9	35	19	21	21	153
7. Respects others & their property	5	3	20	16	7	136
8. Prints first name	8	7	2	9	10	102
9. Waits, takes turn, shares	0	5	8	16	14	90
10. Names letters of the alphabet	2	2	10	4	8	64
11. Stays with group outside class	0	4	7	8	0	53
12. Seeks adult if hurt	1	3	2	4	17	48
13. Identifies numbers 1 to 10	0	2	4	6	5	37
14. Responds to recognition	0	0	3	2	0	16
15. Aware of/attends to appearance	0	0	1	0	2	5
16. Counts to 20	0	0	0	0	4	4
17. Copies simple printed material	0	0	0	0	2	2
18. Names days of the week	0	0	0	0	0	0
19. Says what sounds letters make	0	0	0	0	0	0
20. Reads three-letter sight words	0	0	0	0	0	0

PART III: ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

The kindergarten teachers who responded to the survey listed a number of concerns and issues not addressed through the survey questions. Most common among these comments was the shortness of the kindergarten year and the need for full-day kindergarten.

The teachers who made additional comments also spoke about what they perceived as a shift in kindergarten instruction from addressing children's needs at the developmental level at which they enter kindergarten to pushing children through the standards without teaching necessary foundation skills in the social and behavioral domains.

Finally, the teachers who made additional comments also addressed the need for child find or beginning of the school year screening procedures to better meet the needs of the children and the kindergarten teachers. A number of the comments suggested that child find procedures be amended so that the screenings occur prior to children entering the classroom. These comments seemed to reflect the teachers responses to Question 1 in which they overwhelmingly indicated that they would like to receive information about children entering their kindergarten classes.

PART IV: CONCLUSIONS

The Delaware kindergarten teachers answering the survey indicate that they felt it was important to collect information about children entering their classrooms and to share that information with the children's perspective kindergarten teachers. The respondents, however, were split about whether or not the information should be collected through the use of a standard assessment instrument. Over 58% of the teachers felt that a more informal method of information collection should be used. This group of teachers feared that standard assessment instruments were unreliable and could possibly prejudice the children's prospective teachers. A significant minority of the teachers did, however, indicate that they felt a standard assessment instrument should be used to collect information about the children. Over 80% of those teachers felt that the instrument should collect developmental information. Only 11% of those teachers felt that the instrument should collect academic information.

The teachers overwhelmingly indicated that they would use information that was provided to them about children entering their classrooms at the beginning of the school year. Only 5% of the teachers indicated that they would not use the information. An additional 23% said that they would only use the information under specific circumstances, such as when they were experiencing a problem with a child.

The teachers had a strong preference for the mode in which the information collected would be communicated. By a margin of two to one, the teachers stated a preference for receiving the information about children in the form of a checklist. The second mode of communication preferred by the teachers was a portfolio documenting the children's skills.

The teachers had strong opinions about the sources of information about the children who would be entering their classrooms. Again, at a ratio of two to one, the teachers expressed a preference for pre-kindergarten teachers or caregivers as the source of the information. The

teachers acknowledged the importance of receiving information from the children's parents, however, their preference was strongly for receiving the information from the teachers in the children's pre-kindergarten settings.

The kindergarten teachers' definitions of "readiness for kindergarten" included five categories with nine different themes. Three of the categories addressed social, communication, and self-care skills. These three categories accounted for 224 of the 301 concepts expressed by the teachers; almost three fourths of the concepts included in their definitions. However, almost a quarter of the concepts found in the teachers' definitions of "readiness" addressed pre-academic or academic skills.

When comparing the categories and themes of the concepts expressed in the teachers' definitions of "readiness" to the rankings of the 20 skills in Question 7 of the survey, there seems to be corroboration of what skills are important for children as they enter kindergarten. The teachers focus on social, behavioral, self-care, and communication skills as the top five skills necessary when starting kindergarten are also reflected in their definitions of readiness. For this respondent group of Delaware kindergarten teachers, the highest priority for skills of children entering school seems to be social and behavioral skills that allow them to interact with others and to work in group situations. These priorities seem to be corroborated both in the teachers' definitions of readiness and in their ranking of skills necessary for children when they begin kindergarten.

APPENDIX A

2000 DELAWARE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER SURVEY

Delaware Kindergarten Teacher Survey May 2000

The transition to kindergarten is a critical passage for children, families and teachers. Much has happened to children before they start public school. Discussions have emerged about developing a process to examine the skills kindergartners bring with them as they enter school. This would be a more comprehensive process than current child find screening activities. To assist the Delaware Department of Education in making decisions about what processes and guidelines to recommend about pre-kindergarten assessment, we need to know what kindergarten teachers think and what they feel is important to know about children entering kindergarten classrooms. This survey is designed to take 10 minutes. Please take a moment to complete it and return in the postage paid envelope. Thank you for your time.

1. **Is it important to gather information about children entering kindergarten and to transmit that information to kindergarten teachers?** YES NO

2. **Do you think a process for gathering this type of information should be a formal assessment of children's skills (more in depth than a child screening)?**

YES (proceed to Question 2a)

NO (proceed to Question 2b)

2a. **If you answered YES to Question 2, what type of assessment process should it be? (please check only one)**

2b. **If you think children entering kindergarten should not be given a formal assessment, please indicate why (please check all those that apply):**

Standardized, norm-referenced assessment to measure academic skills only

I do my own informal assessment during the first weeks of school

Standardized, norm-referenced assessment to measure the five developmental domains

I think the information could prejudice teachers about children's abilities

Other (please specify what you would want the assessment to measure):

I would be interested in receiving information that has been collected on the child in a less formal process

It would be expensive and a waste of school resources

Standardized assessment of young children's skills is not always accurate nor predictive

Other (please specify): _____

3. **What information would you like to know about children entering your kindergarten classroom at the beginning of the school year? (Check all that apply)**

Language skills Social Skills Problem Solving Skills Academic skills (e.g. knowledge of numbers, letters)

Physical skills Self-help skills (e.g., can put on own coat; use the bathroom independently)

others (please specify): _____

4. As a kindergarten teacher, how would you prefer to receive this information? (Choose as many as you want, ranking your choices with 1= the most desired method)

As part of a portfolio including samples of the child's work In a brief report (1-2 pages) As a profile checklist of skills child has accomplished
 Other (please specify): _____

5. If written material were available about the academic and developmental skills of all children entering your kindergarten, would you use the information?

YES (proceed to Question 6) NO (proceed to Question 7)
 Under some circumstances (please specify and proceed to Question 6): _____

6. From whom would you like to receive this information? (Choose as many as you want, ranking your choices with 1=the most important source of information)?

Child's family Child's pre-K program teachers/caregivers Other (please specify): _____

7. Below are 20 skills that many five-year-olds possess or develop. Select the five most important skills for a child to possess when they enter your kindergarten class at the beginning of the school year. Place a "1" beside the most important skills, a "2" beside the next most important skill up to "5."

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Names Days of Week | <input type="checkbox"/> Names letters of alphabet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates needs and preferences | <input type="checkbox"/> Seeks out adult if hurt or cannot handle social situations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prints first name | <input type="checkbox"/> Is aware of /attends to appearance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stays with group outside classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies number 1-10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waits and takes turns and shares | <input type="checkbox"/> Attends to peer or adult who is talking to a group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cares for own bathroom needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Interacts cooperatively with others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Says what sounds letters make | <input type="checkbox"/> Counts to 20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Modifies behavior when provided with verbal directions | <input type="checkbox"/> Copies simple printed material |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responds positively to recognition | <input type="checkbox"/> Respects others and their property |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibits self-control | <input type="checkbox"/> Reads three-letter sight words |

8. Please write in the space below how you define "readiness" for kindergarten (use the back of the form if you need more space): _____

Please take a moment to answer some questions about your background and training.

My highest level of education is: (please check)

- B.A./B.S. degree
- B.A./B.S. plus 15 credits
- B.A./B.S. plus 30 credits
- Masters Degree (please specify major _____)
- Ph.D./Ed.D. (please specify major _____)

What age children have you taught? (Check all that apply)

	Children without Disabilities	Children with Disabilities
Infants/Toddlers	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____
Preschoolers (3 – 5 yr olds)	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____
Kindergartners	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____
Primary age (1–2 graders)	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____
Elementary age (3-6 graders)	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____
Middle School age (7-8 graders)	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____
High School age (9-12 graders)	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> # of yrs: _____

What type of Delaware Teacher Certification Do You Hold?

- Standard License (specify area[s]: _____)
- Limited Standard License (specify area[s]: _____)
- Professional
- Public School Kindergarten

What type of setting do you currently teach in? (choose the one that best fits)

- Public School Kindergarten
- Special Education Public School Kindergarten
- Inclusive Public School Kindergarten
- Private Kindergarten
- Other (please specify)

APPENDIX B

DEFINITIONS OF “READINESS”

Please write in the space below how you define “readiness” for kindergarten.

- 1) Ready and able to learn and be taught
- 2) Able to communicate needs in some fashion and the ability to handle transitions
- 3) A child who respects him/herself, attends, respects others, loves books, expresses him/herself well, has a good self-concept, and has a supportive family who fosters learning. This child will learn because they have been provided with the atmosphere and attitude of a good student.
- 4) I do not feel there is a true readiness for kindergarten. If we waited for some children to be ready, they might be seven before they started school. I think that all children, who meet the age cut-offs should come to kindergarten. Many children need the structure of a school setting. I do approve of testing young children and sharing the results with teachers. This information can help identify special needs and programming.
- 5) Self control, follows directions, listens, writes name, and gets along with others
- 6) The child must have the attention span, interest and motivation to learn what is being presented. Children can learn anything if they are able to listen and process information presented
- 7) For me, as special needs, we just like for them to have some real solid appropriate social behaviors down when they come to school
- 8) Children should be socially ready to interact with a group of peers and adults in a controlled way. Student should demonstrate interest in academic activities.
- 9) Can sit for 10-15 minutes, has used a pencil and scissors, can part from parents, gets along well with others
- 10) I feel the readiness I look for in entering kindergartners is a social readiness, a sufficient attention span, ability to listen and follow directions, an ability to control one’s self (no hitting), and an ability to learn (a child needs to be ready to learn and be in a structured atmosphere). Often “immature” children are not ready to be in a structured learning environment. They are not ready to learn in this type of atmosphere (a kindergarten classroom) but certainly can learn in another type.
- 11) Readiness for kindergarten means being able to listen and take direction from an adult. It also means that the child must be able to dress himself and care for his personal needs without individual help from the teacher. The child need not have any academic skills but should be able to play without hurting his peers or destroying the center.
- 12) Child is able to be independent for 2.5 hours of time. Is ready to cooperate, listen, and follow directions. Attention span is long enough to attend to a short stay. Child is able to understand verbal directions and can respond to others.
- 13) An ability to participate in a group situation, coupled with an interest in his or her surroundings, such as books, other people, etc.
- 14) Student has basic social skills and knows how to behave appropriately in a structured setting. Has begun to learn letters, numbers, colors, shapes, positions. Can write name.
- 15) Ability to interact in positive manner with peers and adults. Willingness to attempt tasks and cooperate in activities
- 16) Excited to attend school, listens and responds to directions, ability to learn to cooperate with others, good gross motor skills and readiness for fine motor skills (cut, color, copy), ability to separate from parents, and become independent
- 17) Readiness for kindergarten suggests that the child has come with the skills to learn, not necessarily with the knowledge that will be acquired during the school year. I believe that social and emotional readiness are as important as academic readiness with beginning school.
- 18) Child can sit and listen to story, focuses on task, has self control, follows simple directions, shares, gets along with others, and takes care of bathroom needs
- 19) Readiness is the ability to sit, focus attention and communicate. Child should have developed gross and fine motor skills through play and manipulatives. Too many preschools do not allow enough time for children to learn through play. Kindergarten can teach letters, sounds, numerals, writing, etc. to children who can focus.
- 20) A child that has experiences to prepare him/her for academic learning. Being able to attend to task, while interacting cooperatively in group (large or small) situations.
- 21) A child needs to exhibit a sense of self control, confidence, and an ability to attend to peers and adults who are talking to a group. A readiness to “learn”.
- 22) I believe readiness for kindergarten is demonstrated when a child is able to listen and willing to put forth his/her best effort.

- 23) Readiness for kindergarten is the ability to be part of a group and respecting the adults in the classroom. A child should be able to listen and follow simple directions.
- 24) Able to identify some letters, can print name, interested in books, can name some sounds, can follow simple directions to be familiar with concepts of print
- 25) As child enters kindergarten, I expect them to have a good foundation of letters and number recognition and to be able to use self help skills
- 26) Child who has past social/academic experiences, who is mature enough to handle routines/transitions, who is eager to learn
- 27) Possessing the five most important skills that I have listed above (bathroom needs, communicates needs/preferences, self control, attends to peer/adults, interacts cooperatively)
- 28) Children are able to work in a group setting. They are able to identify their needs (use the restroom) and wants (want to paint). They are able to work with other children cooperatively and respectfully. They can attend to the adult's directions and follow the directives. Children should be able to identify their names when they see it and they should be able to write their names. They should be able to identify the basic eight colors and four shapes. Children should be able to distinguish between letters and numbers and be able to recognize some of them.
- 29) As a teacher, I will accept any child where they are when I meet them and take them as far as they will go.
- 30) A child entering kindergarten shows an interest in beginning to learn. At the readiness level, children have some knowledge of letters and numbers. They may show an interest in books and their world around them in a more formal setting.
- 31) Ready to be part of a larger group than a preschool setting. Curiosity. Knowledge of colors, letters, counting, numerals. Likes books.
- 32) The ability to function in a group. Able to follow 2 step directions, take turns, a desire to work with others.
- 33) Readiness for the kindergarten class begins with the 1-5 items (bathroom, self control, modifies behavior with verbal directions, communicates needs/preferences, seeks adult if hurt) in question #7 – if those do not have to be learned then the child is “ready” to learn all of the other behaviors listed and the performance indicators for the grade level.
- 34) They can do all the things checked above (attend to peer/adults talking to group, modify behavior when given verbal directions, waits/takes turn, exhibits self control, interacts cooperatively with others), plus ones I did not check
- 35) Readiness is the basic social skills needed to work in a group environment
- 36) Can focus on the teacher at least 3-5 minutes, printing at least one letter or shape symbol for name, recognizes name. In our LA program, needs to know letter recognition of ABC's
- 37) --A child is ready when they can listen and attend to direction. Although knowing their first name, some letters and numbers is helpful- the social skills seem to be the most important in gaining the other knowledge.
- 38) Readiness for kindergarten should include most of the skills listed above
- 39) Cooperates, focuses on activities
- 40) Readiness for kindergarten is the point of development a child enters. Each child is different and develops at different levels. As kindergarten teachers, we must take each child from their readiness level and make them bloom.
- 41) Children are ready when they possess some independence and the social skills needed to interact within the group dynamic. Being able to handle the tools of kindergarten as well as with their own name and having some concepts of print make children more ready as well.
- 42) Readiness for kindergarten refers to the skills needed by the kindergarten child in order to be ready to learn the skills presented in the kindergarten program. Readiness means ability to listen attentively, follow directions, work independently and cooperatively, and have a basic knowledge of letters, numbers, positional terms, sorting, and classifying, colors, etc.
- 43) Children who can follow simple 2-3 step directions, ask for help when needed but also be able to take care of personal needs. They should have some knowledge of the alphabet and numbers. They should also know their phone number and address.
- 44) I believe children are ready for kindergarten when they are able to conformably separate from a parent and are interested in learning and being with peers.
- 45) I think it is important to have listening skills and to be able to sit in a chair long enough to complete a lesson or listen to a story. I also think it is important to have skills using writing tools (pencil, crayons, chalk, etc.), scissors, etc. Another essential readiness indicator is being able to share and take turns – listening, talking,

playing, waiting in line, etc. An independence with personal care – putting on and taking off jackets, etc, fastening shoes, using the bathroom etc is desired as well.

- 46) Knowing how to socialize and interact with others their age and knowing the early kindergarten skills such as letters and number recognition and counting.
- 47) A child entering kindergarten should be able to communicate with others and interact appropriately. The academics will be learned as the year goes by but social skills are very important when entering school. Parents need to be educated about the new state standards and performance indicators for kindergarten. Kindergarten today is highly academic/structured versus when I began my career in 1978. Things were very different then and I feel sometimes we don't spend enough time on the social aspects and children don't learn early on how to deal with or handle social situations.
- 48) Able to attend to adults, sit and work at a short task, some knowledge of numbers and alphabet, ability to write name.
- 49) Child can sit and listen for 10-15 minutes, enjoys a story read, can handle a book, self-control, and can follow basic rules
- 50) Being a first year teacher, I do not feel experienced enough to answer this question. I do feel that kindergarten readiness involves children being socially ready for kindergarten, having self control, being able to listen, and follow directions. Other skills such as numbers, alphabet can be taught throughout the year if they have the social skills.
- 51) Readiness should be a combination of basic social skills (especially 1-5 above – bathroom, self control, attends to peer/adult, communicates need/preference, modifies behavior with verbal direction) and basic academic skills such as recognizing and writing first name, color recognition, number recognition to 10, some letter recognition, able to hold crayon/pencil, make scissors snips, attend to story, and respond to story activities
- 52) Has had socialization in a group, can follow a direction, attends, listens for brief period, gets along with others, speaks in sentences, cares for own needs (feeding, bathroom, etc)
- 53) Children can attend and are interested in learning academically, are interested in listening to books and interacting with them, ready to work cooperatively in a group.
- 54) Readiness for kindergarten would include being somewhat self sufficient, able to verbalize needs, familiarity with letter/numbers and able to take part in group activities.
- 55) A child who is ready for kindergarten can sit still for 10 minutes (at least), has an attention span of 15-20 minutes and has good listening skills. They should also be independent in using the bathroom and able to tie his/her own shoes.
- 56) Readiness for kindergarten is seen in a child showing self control, listening and speaking skills, an ever increasing attention span, respect for peers and authority, as well as the basic bathroom and physical care needs. Past experiences are so varied for this age child that a standardized test could not address readiness unless it is strictly for skill level.
- 57) Ready to listen and focus, ready to learn academically and socially, ready to treat others nicely, idea of print and what it is used for, some counting skills, recognizes and prints name
- 58) Readiness means the child is ready to socialize with other children properly. They are able to communicate and take turns to talk. They have respect for people in charge of them. They can take care of their own needs (self help – bathroom, put sweater or coat on, blow their nose and take care of their personal belongings)
- 59) Readiness means that the child is ready to learn in a group setting and they are ready to learn the kindergarten skills. I do not think that the children should have advanced academic skills, although many do come to school knowing very much.
- 60) Readiness for kindergarten is a child who has some experience in a social group.
- 61) A child is able to interact, use self control, and communicate with others. The child is enthusiastic and eager to learn new skills. The child is able to focus and respond in the classroom. Can physically respond in the classroom.
- 62) Child can attend for some period of time, can follow simple directions, cares for personal needs, can function in a group.
- 63) Able to attend, sit in a chair, play cooperatively, respond to verbal direction

APPENDIX C

READINESS DEFINITION CATEGORIES AND COMMENTS

2000 DELAWARE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER SURVEY COMMENTS

Responses to Question 8: "...please define 'readiness' for kindergarten."

Social Interaction (N=28)	Social Behavior (N=14)	Group Entry (N=70)	Pre Academic (N=48)	Academic (N=33)	Adaptive (N=44)	Personal Care and Info (N=25)	Communication (N=34)	Family (N=5)
Ready to interact with peers and adults 32, 234	Respects others 4, 85, 231	Attend to activities in group setting 37, 67, 71, 114, 157, 178	Loves books 4, 47, 99 , (familiar with books) 108, 134, 137 , (enjoys story read) 189, 210	Writes name 11, 37, 49, 99, 114 , (at least one letter) 154, 188, 195, 232	Able to handle transitions 3, 102	Dress self 42, 181, 234	Able to communicate needs 3 , (and preferences) 110, 146, 195, 212	Supportive, fosters learning 4
Shares 37, 63, 108, 181	Gets along with others 11, 33, 63, 209	Work independently in group 37, 178	Has used pencil and scissors 33 (used writing instruments) 108, 181, 195	Counts 37, 182, 232	Respects self 4	Care for own personal needs 42, 179, 181, 209, 231, 242	Expresses self well 4	Interested in being part of child's ed. 108
Waiting for turn 37	No hitting 39	Attends to/ focus on task 4, 63, 66, 166 , (story) 195, 209, 210, 232, 238, 242, 243	Motivation 12	Knows some letters, numbers, colors, shapes, positions 49, 137, 178	Has good self concept 4	Cares for own bathroom needs 63, 110, 146, 181, 195, 213, 231, 234	Listens 11 , (and process info) 12, 45, 74, 85, 157, 181, 192, 209, 213, 231, 232	Show respect for others 108
Takes turns 108, 145, 181	Knows how to behave in structured setting 49	Ready to be taught/able to learn in structured atmosphere 2, 39, 232	Interest in learning 12, 32, 134, 180, 210	Identify some letters 99	Can sit (for 10-15 mins.) for short time 33, 51, 63, 66, 108, 181, 188, 189, 213, 243	Has self help skills 101, 234	Express feelings/needs 37, 108	Instill good values (acceptance of differences, respect for others,

2000 DELAWARE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER SURVEY COMMENTS

Responses to Question 8: "...please define 'readiness' for kindergarten." (continued)

Social Interaction	Social Behavior	Group Entry	Pre Academic	Academic	Adaptive	Personal Care and Info	Communication	Family
"Social readiness" 39, 57, 192	Interact appropriately 183	Attention span 12, 39, 45, 213, 231	Interest in surroundings 47, 134	Can name some sounds 99	Can part from parents 33, 55, 108, 180	Takes care of personal belongings 108, 234	Understand verbal directions 45	acceptance of responsibilities) 108
Can respond to others 45	Has real solid, appropriate social behaviors 14	Follow rules and routines 37, 102, 189	Problem solve 37	Letter recognition 154	Play without hurting peers/destroying center 42	Seek adult if hurt 146	Participate in discussion 51	Need to know new state standards and PI's 183
"Basic social skills" 49, 152	Ready to treat others nicely 232	Follows directions 11, 39, 42, 45, 55, 63, 85, 99, 114, (two step)145, 178, 179, 192, 209, 242	"ready to learn" 51	Has good foundation of letters and number recognition 101, 114, 182, 188	Cooperate 45, 53, 114, 166	Know phone number and address 179	Communicate 66, 183, 234, 238	
Able to interact positively with peers and adults 53	Respect authority 231, 234	Able to be independent (for 2.5 hours at a time) 45, 55, 177	Listens to stories 51, 63	"Has past academic experience" 102	Willing to attempt tasks 53, (best effort)74	Self sufficient 212	Speak English 108	

2000 DELAWARE KIDNERGARTEN TEACHER SURVEY COMMENTS

Responses to Question 8: "...please define 'readiness' for kindergarten."

Social Interaction		Group Entry	Pre Academic	Academic	Adaptive	Personal Care and Info	Communication	
Interacts cooperatively in group 67, 110, 147		Able to participate in group 47, 85, 212	Excited to attend school 55	Distinguish letters from numbers 108, 114	Emotional readiness 57	Able to tie own shoes 213	Speak intelligibly 108	
"Has past social experiences" 102, 209, 237		Interested in others 47, 180	Ready for cutting, coloring, copying 55	Comparative concepts 108	Has self control 11, 63, 71, 108, 110, 146, 147, 189, 192, 195, 231, 238		Identify needs and wants 114	
Play cooperatively 108, 243		Able to learn to cooperate with others 55	"Academic readiness" 57	Sequencing 108	Confidence 71		Ask for help when needed 179	
Social skills needed to interact with group 177		Work cooperatively 108, 114, 178, 210	Developed gross and fine motor skills through play and manipulatives 66	ID eight basic colors 114, 178, 195	Can adapt to changes in routine 108		Speaks in sentences 209	
Knows how to socialize and interact 182, 238		Can function in a group 108, 145, 242	Familiar with concept of print 99, 177, 232	ID four basic shapes 114	Understand behaviors and consequences 108		Speaking skills 231	

2000 DELAWARE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER SURVEY COMMENTS

Responses to Question 8: "...please define 'readiness' for kindergarten."

		Group Entry	Pre Academic	Academic	Adaptive			
		Attends to peers and adults 110, 147, 188, 195	Eager to learn 102, 238	Sorting and classifying 178	Modifies behavior with verbal directions 146, 147, 195		Take turns talking 234	
		Ready to be part of larger group 137, 152, 236	Interest in drawing 108	Respond to story activities 195			Respond to verbal direction 243	
		Desire to work with others 145	Rote count 108					
		Can focus on teacher for 3-5 mins. 154	Sing ABC song 108					
			ID name in print 114, 154, 157, 177, 195, 232					
			Some knowledge of letters and numbers 134, 157, 179, 212					
			Can handle a book 189					
			Some number recognition 195					

OTHER:

6 – I do not feel there is a true readiness for kindergarten....; 51 – investigate manipulatives; 51 – retain information, such as letters and name, after repeated exposure; 55, 66 – good gross motor skills (108 – balance self); 66 – allow time for children to learn through play; 133, 176 – take each child at their own level; take them as far as possible; 162 – “includes most of the skills listed above” ; 206 – attached copy of report card

APPENDIX D

OTHER COMMENTS

Other Comments

- 1) It would be helpful if we (Kindergarten teachers) could briefly meet with incoming kindergartners registered in our school and their parent(s). We could then ask them the questions and learn about the child and look for readiness skills. I feel this would give us the best results.
- 2) We currently use DIAL screening. It is difficult to assess those who register late. We need to look at all day for “at risk” or transitional 1st grades. Many children learn letters/sounds as we teach and remain on level. I am more concerned with evaluations for end of year.
- 3) I find the school year goes so fast and in a half day program it is often difficult to access extra support, such as speech, but a pre-referral would speed the process (ideally even before school starts)
- 4) The current child-find screening is inadequate. It should also be completed before school starts in August/September as a requirement for school entrance.
- 5) I would like to see extra help in the classroom in September so that I can assess my own students one-on-one while another teacher or para can watch the rest of the class.
- 6) I would like to see a really good screening test for incoming kindergarten children – to identify children who need special help.
- 7) Most of my kindergarten teaching has been in a full day setting outside of DE. Due to the diversity in the readiness of children entering kindergarten today, why is DE so far behind in implementing a full day program for all kindergartners?
- 8) I feel it is necessary for the state of Delaware to realize that early intervention is necessary in order to address their needs of our at-risk students. We must commit time and space to full-time, all-day kindergartens for every 5 year old. With more being required of our program, it is imperative that we have the time in which to accomplish it. The state must commit financial resources as our districts are unable to.
- 9) We have been very disappointed with the lack of social skills of our kindergartners who are attending local day cares. Their programs do not seem to be developmentally appropriate. We definitely need all-day kindergarten in order to serve our children better and also to help them meet the standards now in place.
- 10) Children entering kindergarten are coming from two different kinds of backgrounds. Children who have been exposed to language and academic skills and those who haven’t. We are seeing more and more gaps between the ones who “know” and the ones who “don’t”. Some children have been afforded a rich background and wealth of experiences and some enter kindergarten not even knowing one color. We need to find a way to bridge this gap so the “have nots” can catch up early instead of in kindergarten. Early education is the key.
- 11) The Delaware curriculum standards are demanding more and more of our kindergarten students. Those children who come to school with no academic skills have a difficult time meeting these standards. I feel that many of the standards are too high for the average Delaware kindergarten child.
- 12) I feel that kindergarten students are pushed so hard! (Remember they are only there ½ day) My students are required to know 20 sight words for promotion. Many students do not know them, but I disagree with the promotion policy. Many students do come to school with advanced skills, but there are many that come without much!
- 13) I am concerned about the movement in Early Childhood Education (i.e., Kindergarten curriculum) as to pushing along readiness skills. With the focus on reading (which I feel is vitally important) and other basic skills, I’m noticing that kindergarten children are hurrying through extremely important skills to get to learning to ready. It is crucial that we spend the appropriate amount of time on readiness skills and social skills to develop children to their fullest and “appropriate” level. They are missing important skills or not being given a correct amount of time because of the “push” to go on into reading, etc. A child can “regurgitate” a skill “parents have taught them” BUT do they truly know and have mastered the skill?