2015 Waukegan Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Results

United Way of Lake County has conducted a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment every three years in Waukegan since 2006. This important undertaking would not be possible without the support of United Way of Lake County’s Women’s Leadership Council, Waukegan Community Unit School District 60 and its staff, principals, and teachers, and all our volunteers. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the 2015 Waukegan Kindergarten Readiness Assessment!

Why Do We Measure Kindergarten Readiness?

- To understand the skills and demographics of WPS60 students in order to develop programs that meet their needs.
- To establish baseline data.
- To measure effectiveness of initiatives over time.
- To track overall community improvement against goal.

How Do We Measure Kindergarten Readiness?

- Readiness was measured using a 2-PONGED ASSESSMENT donated by Applied Survey Research that included:
  - evaluation of student skills through teacher and volunteer observation
  - parent survey
- 15 SKILLS were assessed in 4 CATEGORIES:
  - communication & language usage
  - cognition & general knowledge
  - physical well-being & motor development
  - social & emotional development
- Children receive one of 6 POSSIBLE SCORES on each skill:
  - not yet started
  - beginning
  - in progress
  - proficient

28 CLASSROOMS were assessed at 7 SCHOOLS:
- Carman-Buckner
- Cooke Magnet
- Clearview
- Glen Flora
- Hyde Park
- Lyon
- North

480 CHILDREN were assessed:
- 43% of total Waukegan kindergartners assessed
- 46% of parents responded to the parent survey

22 VOLUNTEERS helped conduct the assessment in both English and Spanish
Methodology:
- The assessment was conducted using a two-pronged tool developed by Santa Clara Partnership for School Readiness and Applied Survey Research (a non-profit research firm with several published studies).
  - Teachers and trained volunteers observed each child in his/her classroom and tested their proficiency in 15 readiness skills. Children were scored Not Yet Started, Beginning, In Progress, or Proficient on each Readiness skill. The skills are grouped into four educational focus areas recognized by educators as essential to a comprehensive education (Exhibit 1):
    - Communication and Language Usage
    - Cognition and General Knowledge
    - Physical Well Being and Motor Development
    - Social and Emotional Development
  - Parents complete a survey of family demographics, preschool experience, family education, language proficiency and kindergarten readiness activities.
- We assessed a statistically valid sample of 480 children from 28 classrooms in 7 schools (43% of total kindergarteners).

Exhibit 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Kindergarten Readiness Scores</th>
<th>Not Yet</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>In Progress</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writes own name correctly</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engages with books</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can recognize rhyming words</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has expressive abilities</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes the letters of the alphabet</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes primary shapes</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can count 10 objects correctly</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes primary colors</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resolution/problem solving ability</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls impulses and self-regulates</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works/plays cooperatively with peers</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbally expresses needs and wants</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relates appropriately to adults</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performs basic self-help/self-care tasks</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses small manipulatives (crayons, etc)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kindergarten Readiness Progress:
After talking to many professionals, Success By 6 defined “ready” as being able to score ‘In Progress’ or ‘Proficient’ in five key kindergarten readiness skills – recognizing shapes, letters, colors, being able to write your name, and count 10 objects.
- In 2006, during UWLC’s first KRA, only 6% of Waukegan children were assessed as ready.
- In 2009, 29% of children were ready.
- In 2012, that number had risen to 41%.
- In 2015, the KRA showed that 48% of children were assessed as ready to start kindergarten! (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2:

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

Percent of Waukegan Children Who Are Ready to Start School

Additional Findings:
- 75% of children who attended formal preschool were considered “ready”, while only 39% of those who did not were “ready.”
- Children from the lowest income homes scored poorer than higher income peers in almost every category.
- Children whose mothers were high school grads or above scored higher on all key cognition and literacy skills.
- Children who were read to more often had higher scores in literacy skills.
- Language spoken at home did not have the same effect as in previous years.
Results:

- Children scored higher in six of seven key cognitive and early literacy skills than previous years (Exhibit 3).
- United Way’s Success By 6 programs continue to have a big impact on helping improve kindergarten readiness (Exhibit 4).
- Children who attended UWLC’s Early Learning Clubs, SB6 Home Visiting, and Kindergarten Countdown Camp scored higher in cognitive and early literacy scores than children who did not participate in UWLC programs (Exhibit 5).
  - Parents who attended Early Learning Clubs or whose children attended Kindergarten Countdown Camp helped their child with projects and learning activities more often and allowed their children to watch less television than other parents.
- Children who participated in UWLC programs were more “ready” for kindergarten than children who did not (Exhibit 6).
  - 54% of Early Learning Club participants, 71% of Home Visiting participants, and 67% of Kindergarten Countdown Camp participants were assessed as “ready” for kindergarten.

Exhibit 3:

**Children Proficient in Key Kindergarten Readiness Scores - Comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes rhyming words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writes own name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes letters of the alphabet</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts 10 objects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engages with books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exhibit 4:
How has United Way Helped Improve Kindergarten Readiness in Waukegan since 2012?
Compared to children who did not take part in UWLC Programs, children who participated in Early Learning Clubs, Home Visiting, and Kindergarten Countdown Camp were more “Ready” for kindergarten.

- **23 Children Completed Kindergarten Countdown Camp**
  - 33% Ready
  - 67% Not Ready

Summer 2015 was the successful pilot year for camp, which targeted children with little to no preschool experience.

- **1,377 Individuals served in Home Visiting**
  - 29% Ready
  - 71% Not Ready

The Home Visiting Program targets at-risk families at home to teach skills, ensure children are immunized, and monitor the healthy development of families.

- **1,988 Early Learning Club Participants**
  - 46% Ready
  - 54% Not Ready

Early Learning Clubs empower parents to be their child’s first teacher by providing them with the knowledge and materials to teach key readiness skills.
Exhibit 5:

% Proficient/In Progress for Key Skills

- Recognizes primary colors
- Counts 10 objects correctly
- Recognizes primary shapes
- Recognizes letters
- Recognizes rhyming words
- Engages with books
- Writes first name

Success By 6 Waukegan Goals for 2015-16:

- More targeted approach for reaching and engaging new families.
- Focus Early Learning Club to teach the skills most needed (e.g. Alphabet).
- Expand Kindergarten Countdown Camp (dependent on additional funding).
- Work closely with schools that performed the lowest.