

Great Start Collaborative of Berrien County

Get READY Campaign
- SCHOOL READINESS INDICATORS -

WHITE PAPER

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Their success starts with you.

Rationale:

The Get READY Campaign's "School Readiness Indicators" were developed to create a common measurement standard for Kindergarten readiness for *all* children living in Berrien County.

Campaign History:

In 2013, Berrien County agencies interested in promoting a common, standards-based early childhood benchmarking system formed a work group through the Berrien County Great Start Collaborative. The groups involved (see *Contributing Partners*) established the "School Readiness Indicators" that they believed would best determine a child's readiness for Kindergarten at age three and at the start of Kindergarten. These Indicators were discussed among professional educators and early childhood experts and then shared with parents and other childcare providers through a series of focus groups. The Indicators have been adopted as the Berrien County educational model to determine measurable growth expectations and to determine educational success.

As part of sharing the Indicators with the community, the United Way of Southwest Michigan along with all entities involved in the development of the Indicators have written a marketing campaign. The campaign, the Get READY campaign, will help the community understand what the Indicators mean and will foster an expectation that all children in Berrien County should be working toward mastering the Indicators to best prepare them for success in school and life. Target audiences include families, communities, and schools.

Funding:

To help educate target audiences about the Get READY Campaign's "School Readiness Indicators," the United Way of Southwest Michigan has agreed to provide financial support for the first year of a five year branding campaign. Funding will be sought from the United Way and other partner agencies to support years two through five of the branding campaign. In-kind contributions have been made through the Great Start Collaborative as well as Berrien Regional Education Service Agency (Berrien RESA).

Contributing Partners:

Immanuel Lutheran Child Care and Day Care
Berrien RESA Parents as Teachers
Great Start Parent Coalition
Great Start Regional Resource Center
Berrien RESA
Tri County Head Start
Buchanan Public Library
United Way of Southwest Michigan
Great Start Collaborative

Contributing School Districts:

Benton Harbor Area Schools
Benton Harbor Charter School
Berrien Springs Public Schools
Brandywine Community Schools}
Bridgman Public Schools
Buchanan Community Schools
Children's Center, The
Coloma Community Schools
Eau Claire Public Schools
Lakeshore Public Schools
Niles Community Schools
River Valley School District
Watervliet Public Schools

By integrating the School Readiness Indicators into the daily practices of Berrien County's early education programs (and family support agencies), it anticipated that:

1. **A common assessment could be made available to determine Kindergarten readiness.**
2. Children (and their families) who were found to be in need of additional support could be **matched with services/interventions to help them master the School Readiness Indicators.**
3. Children could have a more consistent "plan" to help them become ready for Kindergarten with **all agencies working toward a coordinated set of outcomes.**
4. By helping parents, the community and schools understand what it means to be ready for Kindergarten, children could be **nurtured in an environment with similar home and school readiness expectations/goals.**
5. The understanding of the School Readiness Indicators could become a **cultural norm of the greater community.**
6. Families could have a clearer understanding of **what they need to do to help children become ready for Kindergarten beginning at age zero.**

For the purposes of educational use, the information included in this White Paper provides a description of the Get READY Campaign's "School Readiness Indicators." Additional resource materials have been developed specifically for non-educational audiences. Please visit www.greatstartberrien.org for more information.

This project is supported in part by the United Way of Southwest Michigan.

The Great Start Collaborative of Berrien County's Definition of School Readiness

“School readiness” describes the abilities of children, their families, schools, and communities that will best promote student success in kindergarten and later grades. Each piece – children, families, schools and communities – plays an essential role in the development of school readiness. No one piece can stand on its own.

- **Ready Children.** A ready child has strong relationships, a strong mind, and a strong body. With-in each of those areas, key skills are developed so that children begin Kindergarten ready to learn and be successful.
- **Ready Families.** A ready family has adults who understand they are the most important people in the child's life. They take responsibility for their child's school readiness by playing and interacting with their child in a positive way every single day.
- **Ready Schools.** A ready school accepts all children, has high expectations, and provides a welcoming transition to a high-quality classroom, where the child feels safe, comfortable and able to learn. Children in ready schools are led by skilled teachers, who recognize children's strengths and who are respectful of cultural values and individual differences.
- **Ready Communities.** A ready community plays an important role in supporting families as they help their child get ready for school. Ready communities work together to support a child's school by providing families with affordable access to information, services, high-quality child care, and early learning experiences.



SCHOOL READINESS INDICATORS

At 36 months READY Children have...

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS characterized by:

Self-Concept, as demonstrated by

- Independence / Confidence in one's skill by initiating a task
- Demonstrates resilience, optimism and confidence
- Understanding of self by identifying feelings and likes/ dislikes
- Take pride in accomplishments by soliciting recognition from others
- Shows a variety of emotions (ex. Pride, jealousy, anger, excitement)
- Knows his/her first and last name

Self-Control, as demonstrated by

- Understand and follows simple rules
- Self-regulations of thoughts/emotions
- Will follow directions given by adults
- Transition smoothly between activities
- Adapt to different environments
- Control their bodies

Self-Care, as demonstrated by

- Wash / Dry hands
- Cooperates and assists with daily care and routines
- Dress / Undress themselves with assistance for fastenings
- Use utensils to eat
- Drink from a cup

Interactions with Others, as demonstrated by

- Engage in cooperation, sharing and turn-taking (peers and adults)
- Demonstrate respect and cooperation
- Pretend play (demonstrate thoughts and feelings through dramatic play)
- Identify the emotions of others
- Interacting with family, peer and social communities across a variety of settings

STRONG MINDS characterized by:

Language and Literacy, as demonstrated by

- Follow 1 & 2 step directions
- Labeling objects & pictures
- Demonstrate ability to answer "wh" questions
- Speaks clearly, using age-appropriate speech sounds
- Labeling actions in pictures
- Effectively conveying information, desires, and needs
- Effectively conveying the 3 target feelings
- Shows interest in books and listens to stories
- Participate and imitate simple finger plays and rhymes
- I can start and carry on a short conversation.

Approaches to Learning, as demonstrated by

- Eagerness in seeking information through intense curiosity and exploration
- Children demonstrate initiative, engagement, curiosity, persistence, and attentiveness to pursue learning independently
- Demonstrates resilience, optimism and confidence

Cognitive & General Knowledge, as demonstrated by

- Math: sorting, matching, classifying, understanding concepts of puzzles and numbers
- Engage in imaginative and dramatic play: Multi-sequence play with props
- Identify size and shapes (square, circle, triangle)
- Avoid common dangers

STRONG BODIES characterized by

Fine Motor, as demonstrated by

- Holding and manipulating tools and toys for feeding, playing, dressing, and pre-writing
- Dressing with assistance
- Two-handed tasks
- Holding a pencil (etc.), copying first designs
- Drinking from a cup
- Using utensils

Gross Motor, as demonstrated by

- Walking, running, climbing, jumping, throwing / catching, kicking a ball/ balance on one foot
- Walking up / down stairs
- Navigates as independently as possible throughout their environment
- Body awareness and position in space

DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS

At 5 years old READY Children have...

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS characterized by Social Emotional and Engagement

Regulates own emotions and behaviors

- Manages feelings
- Follows limits and expectations
- Takes care of own needs appropriately

Establishes and sustains positive relationships

- Forms friendships over time
- Demonstrates knowledge about self

Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations

- Actively participates in class discussions and activities
- Balances needs and rights of self and others

Demonstrates positive approaches to learning

- Attends and engages in learning
- Is persistent when solving problems
- Makes predictions

STRONG MINDS characterized by: Language and Literacy Skills

Understands and uses increasingly complex language to express thoughts & needs

- Follows directions
- Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary

Uses appropriate communication skills

- Engages in appropriate conversations
- Recognizes and recalls experiences
- Makes connections with experiences

Demonstrates phonological awareness

- Experiment and play with sounds (phonics-rhyming, alliteration, etc)
- Hears and discriminates the sounds of language (phonemic awareness)

Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses

- Uses print concepts
- Uses and appreciates books (knows features such as title)

Comprehends and responds to books and other text

- Interacts during read-aloud and book conversations
- Uses emergent reading skills and strategies
- Retells story

Demonstrates emergent writing skills

- Writes or draws to convey meaning
- Writes name
- Demonstrates fine-motor strength / coordination using writing / drawing tools

Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet

- Identifies and names uppercase letters
- Identifies lower case letters
- Uses letter-sound knowledge

Mathematics, Science and Technology Skills

Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes

- Understands spatial relationships
- Understands shapes
- Uses classification skills (sorts)

Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

- Creates and extends simple patterns

Compares and measures

- Compares and orders objects using a variety of tools

Uses tools and technology to perform tasks

- Demonstrates the appropriate use of various tools and other technology

Uses number concepts and operations

- Connects numerals with their quantities
- Rote Counts
- Counts Objects

READY FAMILIES HAVE...

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS characterized by:

- Engaging with children with joy, warmth, and comfort
- Helping children learn to cooperate with others
- Fostering friendships with other children
- Working in partnership with schools
- Appreciating the child's view of the world
- Teaching children routines and how to respond to rules and structures
- Helping children learn how to handle disappointment
- Speaking to children respectfully
- Saying it and following through

STRONG MINDS characterized by:

- Reading to children regularly and respectfully
- Appreciating and accepting the child's view of the world
- Helping children follow simple directions and complete basic tasks
- Speaking with children regularly and respectfully
- Encouraging children to explore the world in which they live
- Exposing children to and helping them describe different people, places & things
- Understanding the importance of the early years and the importance of their role
- Understanding the importance of regular school attendance

STRONG BODIES characterized by:

- Completing all appropriate eye, ear, dental and other medical screenings as well as immunizations
- Encouraging children to explore the world in which they live
- Helping children follow simple directions and complete tasks
- Limiting screen time
- Providing healthy diet and exercise opportunities

READY SCHOOLS HAVE...

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS characterized by:

- Forming effective relationships with parents and early childhood programs to share children's pre-Kindergarten experiences and to assess their development
- Having Open Houses so family-school partnerships can be made
- Forming effective relationships between parents and early childhood programs
- Providing before and after school care
- Regularly focusing on and supporting the quality of teachers' interactions with children at all grade levels

STRONG MINDS characterized by:

- Employing highly qualified teachers
- Maintaining appropriate class size and using best practices in the classroom (nutrition, physical, instruction)
- Supporting teachers as they assess the individual needs of children
- Understanding the value of imaginative play by children
- Designing instruction based on child needs and regularly monitoring progress
- Providing and encouraging family literacy activities
- Regularly reviewing the quality, appropriateness, and alignment of the curriculum across all grades and phases of development
- Focusing on and supporting the quality of teachers' interactions with children at all grade levels
- Sharing children's pre-Kindergarten experiences and assess development
- Communicating with other early childhood education programs in the community
- Communicating kindergarten standards and other school information to families through activities such as home visits, telephone calls, questionnaires, and kindergarten visitation days

STRONG BODIES characterized by:

- Providing recreational and enrichment programs
- Understanding and promoting the value of physical activity
- Providing balanced nutrition in their food programs
- Using best practices in the classroom (nutrition, physical, instruction)

Their success starts with you.

READY COMMUNITIES HAVE...

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS characterized by:

- Providing programs to support healthy families including:
 - Mental health counseling programs
 - Drug and alcohol counseling
 - Family court services
- Child abuse prevention programs

STRONG MINDS characterized by:

- Understanding the value of imaginative play by children and having community activities that support it
- Providing access to Home visiting programs to families
- Providing access to preschool for ALL 4 year-olds
- Providing access to literacy, English language learning, parenting skills and adult education

STRONG BODIES characterized by:

- Insuring access to basic health care and nutrition services including prenatal care
- Providing information for parents in hospitals at birth
- Working for early identification and treatment of children with disabilities and other special needs
- Funding before and after school care programs for working families
- Valuing the early childhood experience and need for it
- Funding for the development and upkeep of playgrounds and parks in the community

Please note:

A “Get READY Guide” has been developed for parent/family use.

Please visit www.greatstartberrien.org to download a printable version of the Get READY Guide.