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Most of county's kids ready for kindergarten

San Mateo County children fared better than those in Santa Clara County in recent report

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By T.S. Mills-Faraldo, STAFF WRITER

A majority of San Mateo County kindergartners are ready to meet their teachers' expectations when they start school, according to a report released Wednesday by agencies in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

The report, the first to examine kindergarten readiness for both counties, was sponsored by San Mateo County's Peninsula Partnership for Children, Youth and Families, and the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness.

Data were compiled by observing more than 1,400 kindergartners in the two counties, and surveying parents and teachers.

It showed that 74 percent of San Mateo County students are ready to take on the tasks assigned to them when they enter kindergarten, compared with 62 percent in Santa Clara County.

"Overall, I think there is definitely some good news," said Erica Wood, executive director of the Peninsula Partnership, a division of the Peninsula Community Foundation. "But we shouldn't sit back on our laurels and say our work is done."

Some of the results from the report show:

- 74 percent of San Mateo County kindergartners met teachers' expectations for academics, next to 66 percent in Santa Clara County.
- 7 percent of San Mateo County kindergartners need significant help catching up with the rest of the class, compared with 13 percent in Santa Clara County.

- 53 percent of San Mateo County and 46 percent of Santa Clara children belong to the "All-Stars Readiness Portrait," which means they are nearly proficient in every measured developmental area.
- 66 percent of San Mateo County children have had preschool experience, compared to 58 percent in Santa Clara County.

The report also showed that some qualities contributing to a more prepared student include better problem-solving skills, ability to control impulses, preschool experience and starting kindergarten when they are older.

Parents, who were asked about some of the things they do to prepare their kids for school, said they establish routines for their children, involve them in chores and activities around the house and read to them, Wood said.

"Our challenge is to help all children succeed in school," said Lori Burns, co-chair of the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness. "This means working with families to help prepare children, and with schools to develop strategies for working with children that have diverse combinations of skills that are expected in 5-year-olds."

To view the full report, go to <http://www.pcf.org>.