Kindergarten Readiness in Missoula County

Findings from the Fall 2020 Kindergarten Entry Assessment

Sponsored by:

ZERO TO FIVE
Missoula County, Montana

Conducted by:

ASR

Acknowledgements

Applied Survey Research (ASR) would like to acknowledge Grace Decker, Karen Allen, and Gabe Sather-Olson from Zero to Five, Missoula County, Montana, for their support and assistance in the planning and implementation of the 2020 Kindergarten Entry Assessment in Missoula County, including their efforts to recruit districts, schools, and teachers, and conduct teacher trainings. ASR would also like to acknowledge Professor Allison Wilson at the University of Montana, for facilitating data review sessions with participating teachers.

ASR gratefully acknowledges the many Missoula County families who shared information about their background and their child's early experiences as well as the participating kindergarten teachers, listed in the table below, who generously gave their time and energy to help us better understand the skills of the children entering their classrooms.

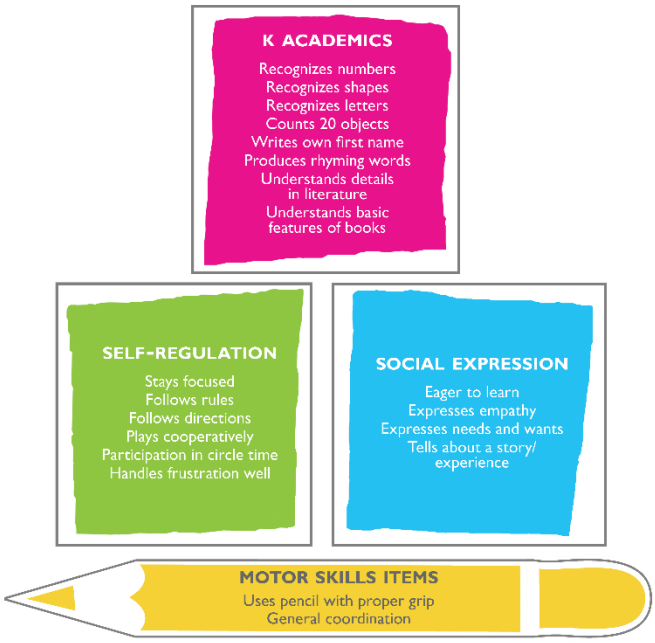
Participating Schools and Teachers

School	Teacher
Chief Charlo	Elyse Hege
	Rebecca Miner
	Megin Pelkey
	Jordan Krause
DeSmet	Melanie Pettit
Franklin	Wendy Melvin
	Cathy Poor
	Stephanie Rollins
Hellgate	Jessie Brown
	Keri Tirrell
	Paige Walde
	Christy Wasem
Lewis and Clark	Erin Kemmis
Lowell	Nicole Hosman
	Kelsey McFadden
St Joseph	Missy Neuman
Sunset	Lila Fox
Woodman	Morgan Elisson

Introduction

In fall 2020, the second annual Missoula County Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA), commissioned and funded by Zero to Five, Missoula County, was conducted. Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, including reduced in-class teaching time in many communities, 18 teachers in the county assessed the kindergarten readiness skills of 232 students entering their classrooms. Teachers used the *Kindergarten Observation Form* (KOF) to rate their students' proficiency levels on 20 kindergarten readiness skills on a scale from 1 (*Not Yet* demonstrating the skill) to 4 (*Fully Proficient* on the skill). These readiness skills sort into three *Building Blocks – Self-Regulation, Social Expression,* and *Kindergarten Academics*. Two additional items related to fine and gross motor skills serve as a foundation for these *Building Blocks*. The pyramid below illustrates the theoretical progression of readiness skills, with foundational motor skills preceding the more advanced socioemotional skills. The top of the pyramid contains early academic skills, like counting and letter recognition.

Figure 1. Basic *Building Blocks of Readiness* and Motor Skills Items



Students' families also completed a parent survey to better understand their access to community supports and their child's early childhood experiences, as well as how the COVID-19 pandemic affected them and their children. Approximately 72% of caregivers with students assessed on the KOF completed the survey. The caregivers of an additional 55 students, who elected to enroll their children in the Missoula County Public Schools Online Academy, also completed a parent survey, but because the students were attending classes virtually, their teachers did not complete the KOF. More information about the children and families who participated in the 2020 assessment can be found in the Appendix.

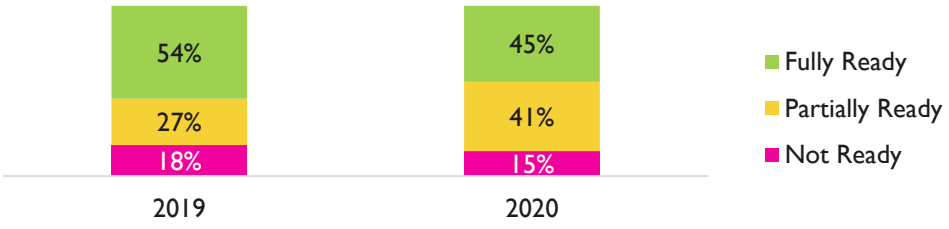
Key Findings

How ready for school were children assessed in Missoula County?

Students were considered *Fully Ready* for kindergarten in all areas if they scored at or above 3.25 out of 4 on the three *Building Blocks* – that is, if they were *Proficient* or nearing proficiency in *Self-Regulation, Social Expression,* and *Kindergarten Academics*. Students were considered *Partially Ready* if they were *Proficient* or nearly proficient in one or two *Building Blocks* and considered *Not Ready* if they were still progressing in all three areas.[i]

In 2019, 54% of children in the sample were *Fully Ready* for kindergarten, 27% were *Partially Ready*, and 18% were *Not Ready* on any of the *Building Blocks*. In 2020, the percent of children who were *Fully Ready* dropped to 45%, but the percent who were *Not Ready* also declined to 15%. Conversely, the percent who were *Partially Ready* increased significantly to 41%. However, it should be noted that there were differences in the sample of students who participated each year. **After controlling for child and family demographics, there were no significant differences in readiness between children assessed in 2019 and children assessed in 2020.**

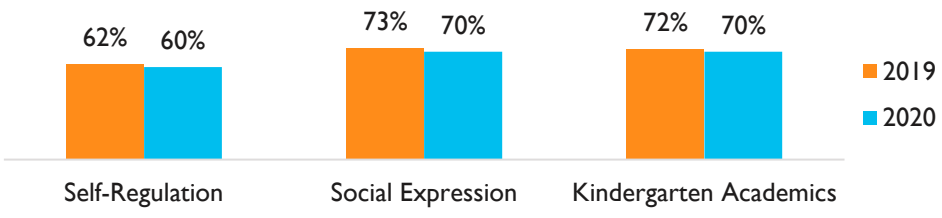
Figure 2. Readiness, by Year



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=250 (2019), N=231(2020). Differences statistically significant between 2019 and 2020, $p < .05$. However, differences were no longer significant after controlling for child gender, age, race, presence of special needs, maternal education, and family income.

In both 2019 and 2020, children were somewhat less likely to be ready (i.e., *Proficient* or nearly proficient) in their *Self-Regulation* skills than they were in *Social Expression* and *Kindergarten Academics*. The proportion of children ready in each domain dropped 2-3 percentage points between 2019 and 2020, but these declines were not statistically significant.

Figure 3. Percent *Ready* Within Each *Building Block*, by Year



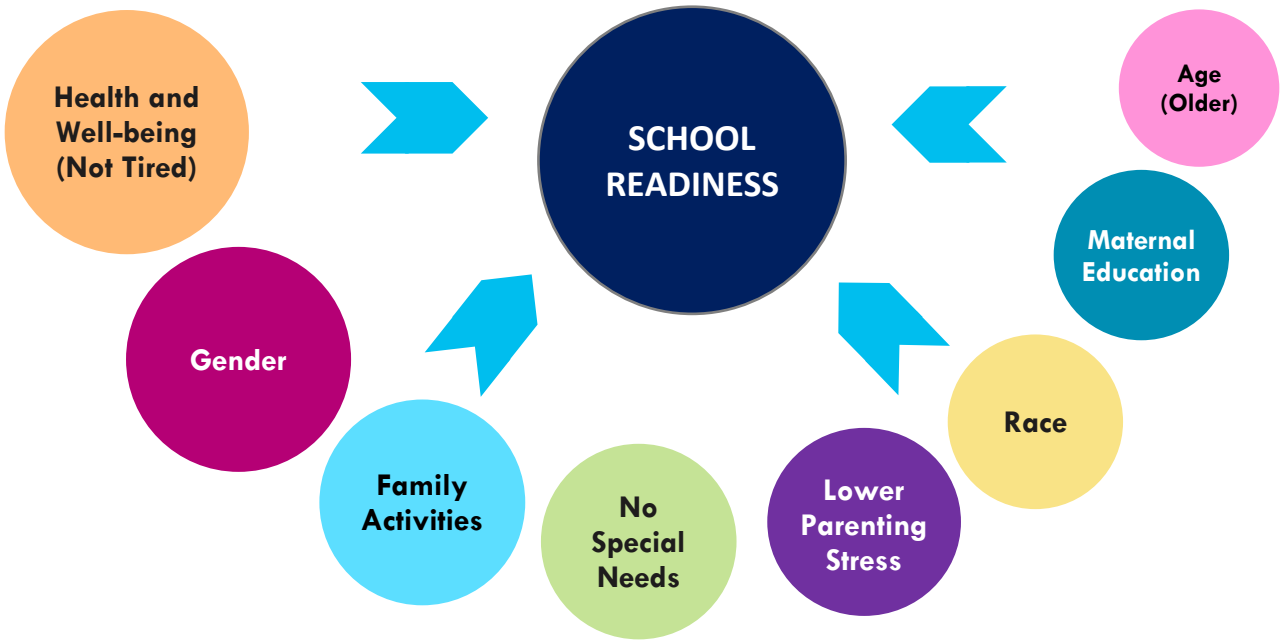
Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=250-251 (2019), N=231-232 (2020).

What community and family factors and child characteristics are associated with higher levels of school readiness?

The factors that were strongly and independently associated with readiness are illustrated in the following diagram. Although many of these predictors are related to one another, each factor in the diagram contributes to readiness even after taking into account the contributions of the other factors. The size of the circle corresponds to the strength of the relationship between the factor and readiness, after holding constant all other child and family characteristics.

The strongest predictor of school readiness was coming to school well-rested, according to the child's teacher, followed by gender, with girls being more ready than boys. The more frequently families engaged in activities with their children, like reading and telling stories, the higher their children's readiness. Higher readiness was also observed for children without special needs and those whose parents reported less parenting stress (i.e., less difficulty caring for the child). White children had higher readiness than children of color as did children with more educated mothers and older children. Several of these factors predicted school readiness in 2019 as well, including health and well-being, not having a diagnosed special need, lower parenting stress, and child age.

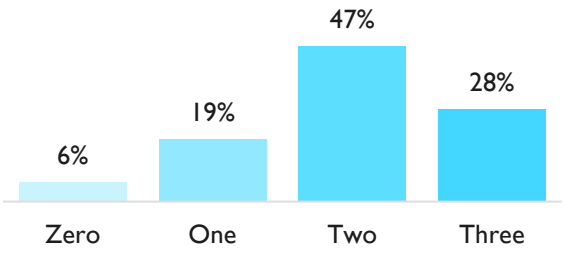
Figure 4. Key Predictors of Overall School Readiness (in Order of Strength)



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form, Parent Information Form (2020).
Note: N=159. All variables were significant at $p < .05$, except mother's education level which was marginally significant at $p < .10$.

Some of the factors strongly associated with readiness can be modified through intervention. These malleable "assets" include child health and well-being, engagement in family activities, and low levels of parenting stress. The chart below shows the prevalence of these assets in the sample. Six percent of participants did not have any of the three assets, 19% had one, 47% had two, and 28% had three.

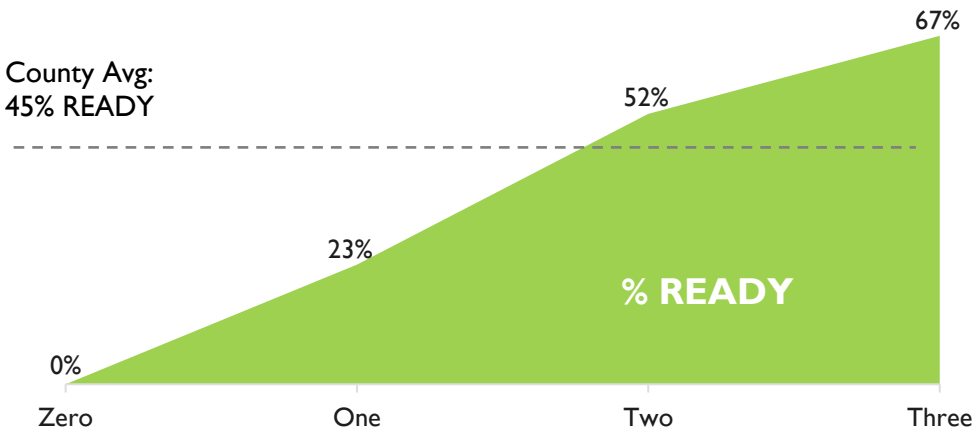
Figure 5. Percent of Participants with Malleable Assets



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form, Parent Information Form (2020).
Note: N=164.

Children with a greater number of these assets were significantly more likely to be *Fully Ready* for kindergarten. No child with zero assets was *Fully Ready*, compared to approximately one-quarter of children with one asset, just over half of those with two assets, and over two-thirds of those with all three assets.

Figure 6. Percent *Fully Ready*, by Number of Malleable Assets



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form, Parent Information Form (2020).
Note: N=163. Differences statistically significant at p < .001.

How did COVID-19 impact children and families?

The kindergarten readiness levels found in Missoula County in 2020 may be best interpreted in the context of the various ways in which young children and their families were impacted by COVID-19. Detailed data on the experiences reported by families can be found in the Appendix, but the table below summarizes key differences between 2019 and 2020 as well as reports from families on how COVID-19 affected their income, employment, and access to child care:

Increased job loss and concerns about health

- 23% of caregivers reported temporary or permanent job loss in 2020, compared to 8% of caregivers in 2019.
- 80% of families indicated that COVID-19 had impacted their income and employment in some way, such as:
  - having to work from home with children around (48%);
  - having a job that put them at increased risk of getting COVID-19 (35%);
  - having their work hours or wages reduced (25% and 9%, respectively); and
  - losing their job temporarily or permanently (17% and 8%, respectively).
- Families in 2020 were less concerned about work-related stress, but significantly more concerned about health and health care issues, compared to families in the 2019 study.

Declined use of community resources

- Likely due to stay-at-home orders, families were significantly less likely to use community resources, like parks, libraries, and museums, in 2020 than they were in 2019.

More screen time and later bedtimes

- In 2019, 65% of children had no more than one hour of screen time on weekdays (as is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics[ii]), whereas only 51% of children in 2020 had no more than one hour of screen time during the week.
- 83% of children in 2019 went to bed before 9 PM, while 73% of children in 2020 had a bedtime this early.

Reduced access to health and early learning resources

- 78% of parents reported that their child's child care or preschool closed during COVID-19.
- Children were somewhat less likely to have received vision, hearing, and developmental screenings in 2020 than they were in 2019.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted children and families in Missoula County in unprecedented ways. The second annual Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) found that while 54% of children had been *Fully Ready* in 2019, only 45% were *Fully Ready* in 2020. Although this decline in readiness was largely due to demographic differences between the 2019 and 2020 samples, children and families in the current year also experienced stressors that likely affected children's readiness. For example, stay-at-home orders closed many schools and early care and education sites, putting parents and caregivers in the position of keeping their children occupied and educated, while in many cases also working from home. Families also experienced job loss, financial insecurity, and health threats from the virus, and many community resources like libraries also closed or could only offer services online.

The findings from the KEA also indicate that children in Missoula County would benefit most from early childhood supports that build their self-regulation skills, as children in both assessment years were least likely to be ready in this domain. Such efforts are more important now than ever; having consistent, predictable routines helps children develop self-regulation skills,[iii] yet COVID-19 disrupted established routines for many families.

Finally, the study identified characteristics of children and families that are strongly associated with readiness, including experiences that can be modified with intervention, such as children's health and well-being, parental stress, and family activity engagement. Steps the community can take to address these malleable factors and the effects of COVID-19 include the following:

PARENTING SUPPORT & EDUCATION

- Increase access to parent education programs and resources that help parents manage their stress and engage in nurturing and supportive parenting practices.
- Educate parents on the importance of regularly engaging in enriching activities at home, like reading; minimizing screen time to the extent possible; and ensuring children have regular bedtimes and adequate sleep so they are well-rested at school.
- Teach parents strategies to help their children adjust to the changes and cope with the challenges caused by COVID-19 and foster self-regulation skills.

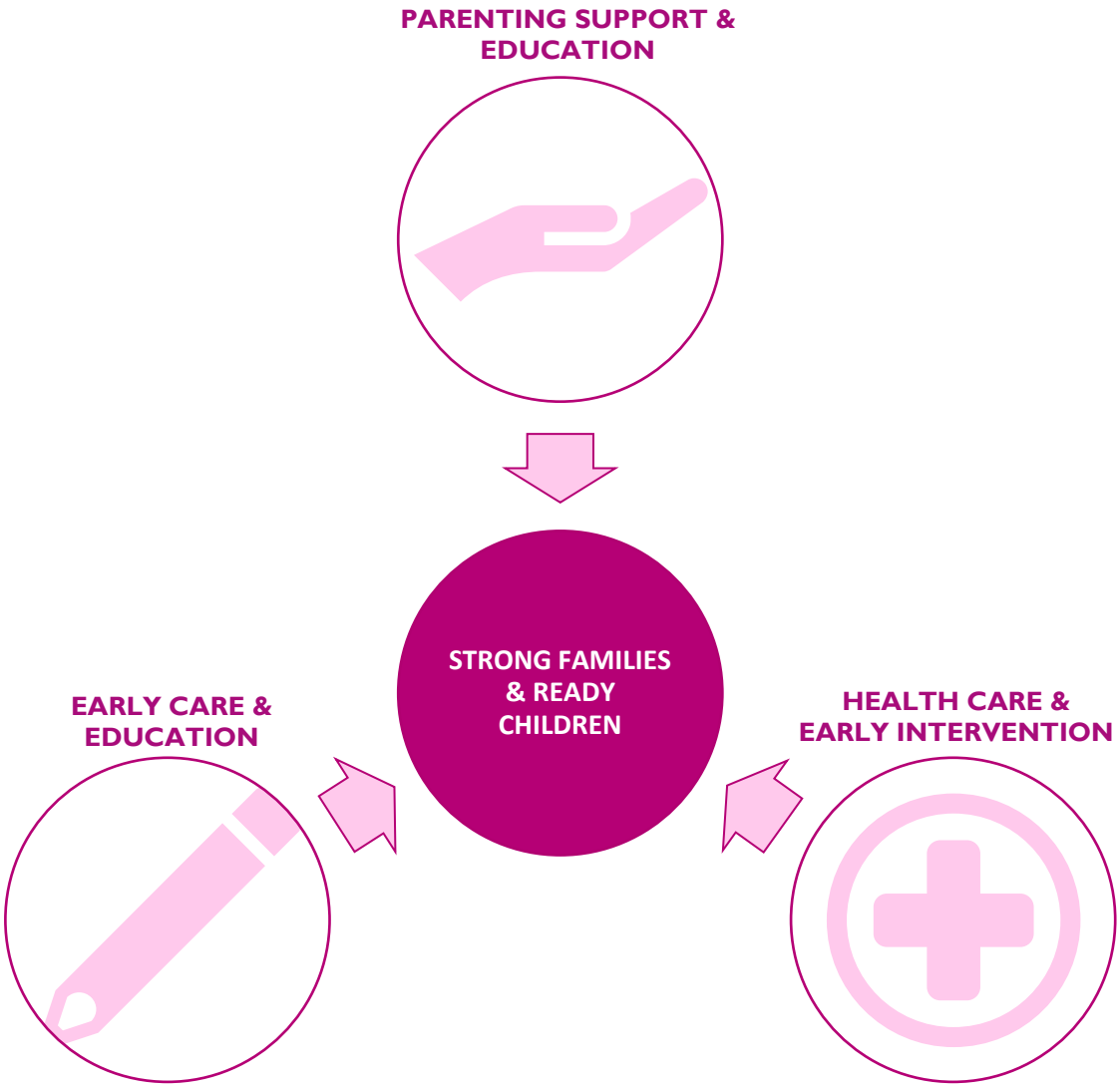
HEALTH CARE & EARLY INTERVENTION

- Encourage parents/caregivers to continue seeking routine health care for themselves and their children during COVID-19.
- Reduce barriers to access to health care and early intervention services for children, including barriers to remote service delivery.

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

- Invest in the stabilization of child care, which allows caregivers to work and develops the school readiness of their children.

The KEA findings suggest the pandemic has adversely impacted children and families in Missoula County in the short term, and past research has found that pandemics can have adverse long-term effects on children's development.[iv] It is also likely that disparities in developmental outcomes have widened due to disproportionate impact the virus has had on low-income families and communities of color.[v] Thus, interventions targeted to families most impacted by the pandemic are urgently needed to help families recover from the effects of COVID-19 and improve the likelihood that all children in Missoula County enter school fully ready to learn.

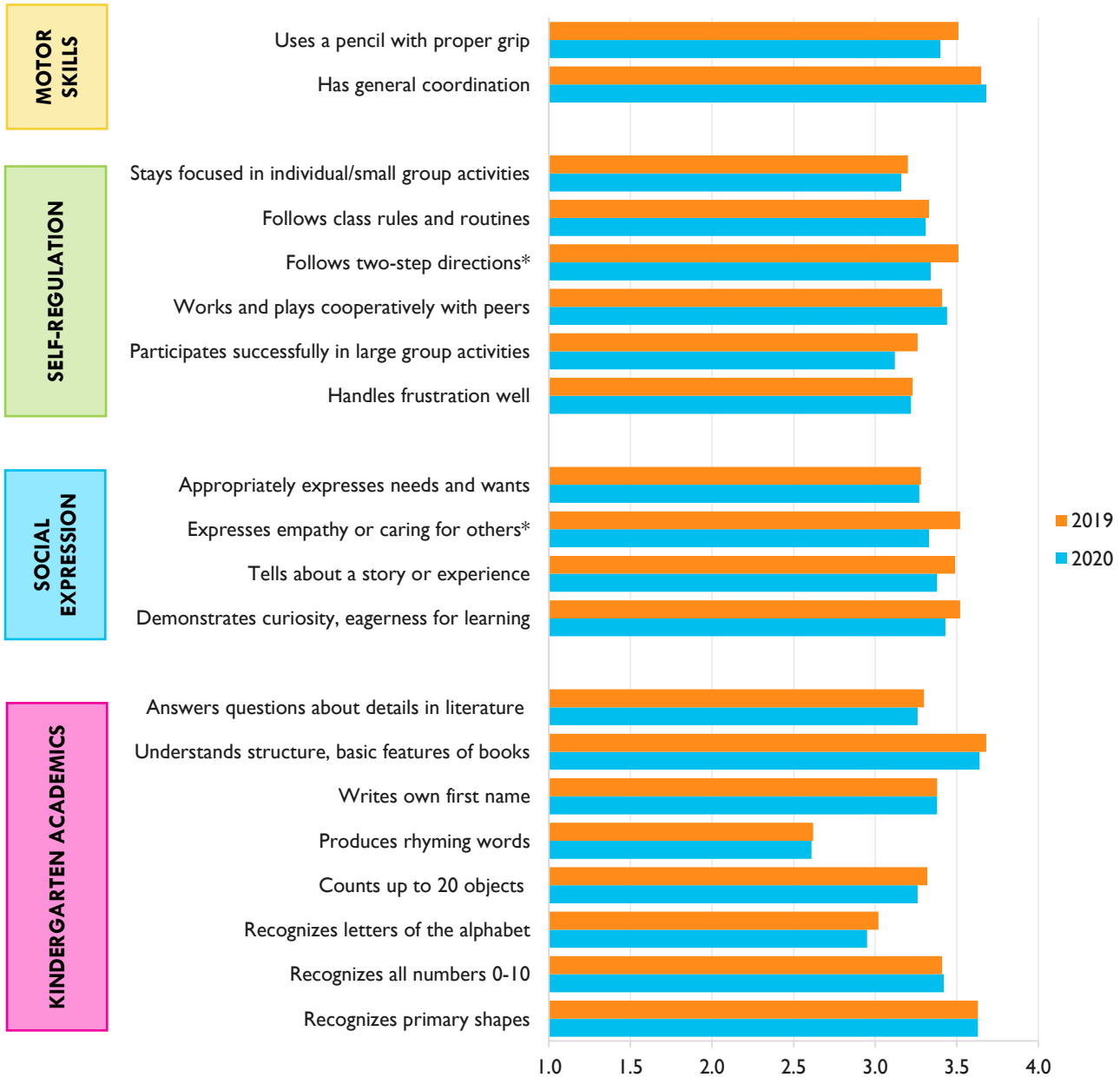


Appendix

School Readiness Assessment Sample, by School

	2019		2020	
	Number of Classrooms	Number of Students	Number of Classrooms	Number of Students
Chief Charlo School	3	61	4	55
DeSmet School	1	12	1	7
Franklin School	N/A	N/A	3	42
Hellgate Elementary	3	53	4	57
Lewis & Clark School	N/A	N/A	1	14
Lowell School	3	47	2	31
Rattlesnake Elementary	2	33	N/A	N/A
Seeley Lake Elementary	1	13	N/A	N/A
St. Joseph Elementary	2	25	1	15
Sunset School	1	2	1	2
Woodman School	1	5	1	9
Online Academy	N/A	N/A	N/A	55
Total	**17**	**251**	**18**	**287**

Students' Proficiency Levels, by School Readiness Skill



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019, 2020).

Note: N=240-251(2019); N=216-232 (2020). Scores range from 1 (Not Yet) to 4 (Proficient). Scores were omitted for students for whom language barriers were a concern. *Differences statistically significant between 2019 and 2020, $p < .05$.

Location of Child's Primary Residence

Child's Zip Code

	2020
59801	4%
59802	33%
59803	23%
59808	34%
59823	1%
59847	3%
59868	2%

Source: Parent Information Form (2020).
Note: N=150. Zip Code not collected in 2019.

Child's Neighborhood in Missoula

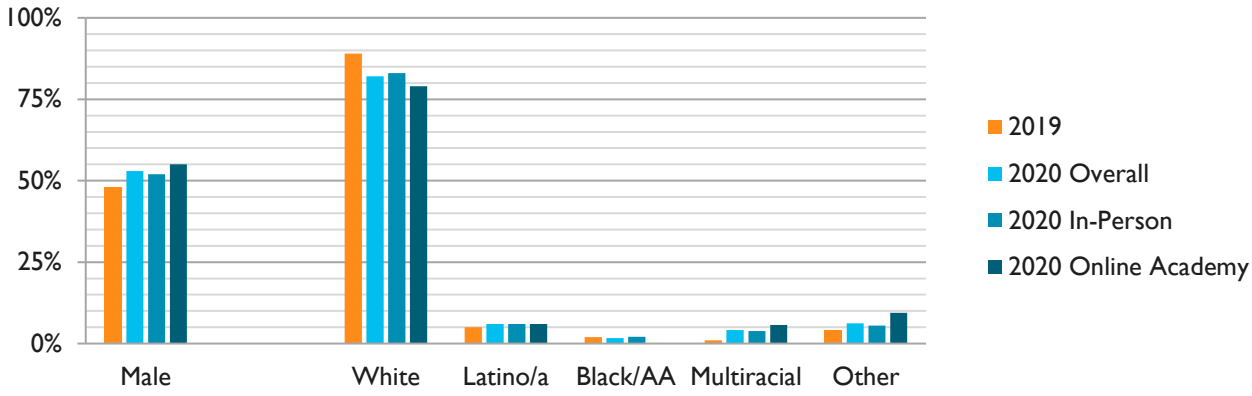
	2019	2020
Captain John Mullen	7%	6%
East Missoula	N/A	1%
Farviews/Pattee Canyon	1%	5%
Franklin to the Fort	1%	16%
Grant Creek	7%	2%
Heart of Missoula	2%	2%
Lewis and Clark	1%	7%
Lower Rattlesnake	3%	1%
Miller Creek	5%	7%
Moose Can Gully	17%	14%
Northwide/Westside	23%	13%
Riverfront	0%	1%
River Road	0%	2%
Rose Park	2%	2%
South 39th St	0%	4%
Southgate Triangle	0%	1%
University District	1%	1%
Upper Rattlesnake	12%	1%
Unknown	18%	14%

Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=139 (2019), N=212 (2020).

Where possible, the charts on the following pages compare characteristics of children and families in the 2019 Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) to the characteristics of all participants in the 2020 KEA, those who attended classes in person in the fall of 2020, and those who were enrolled in the Missoula County Public Schools Online Academy.

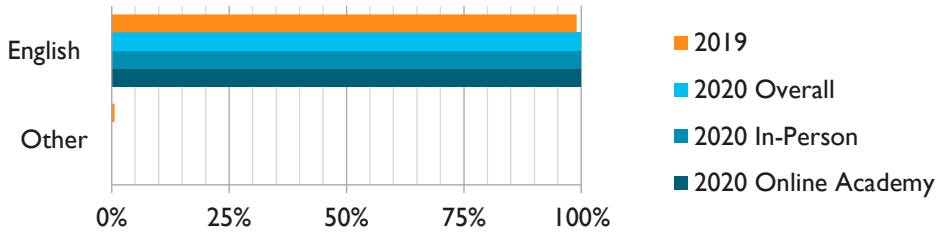
Child and Family Demographics

Students' Gender and Race/Ethnicity



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019, 2020), Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=244-249 (2019), N=290-291 (2020 Overall), N=236-237 (2020 In-Person), N=53-55 (2020 Online Academy).

Language Spoken Most Often at Home



Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=165 (2019), N=225 (2020 Overall), N=172 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy).

Students' Age

	2019	2020 Overall	2020 In-Person	2020 Online Academy
Under 5.5 years*	37%	46%	47%	44%
At least 5.5 and less than 6 years	46%	43%	42%	50%
6 years and older	17%	10%	11%	6%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019, 2020), Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=243 (2019), N=289 (2020 Overall), N=237 (2020 In-Person), N=52 (2020 Online Academy). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. *Differences statistically significant between 2019 and 2020, $p < .05$.

Maternal Educational Attainment

	2019	2020 Overall	2020 In-Person	2020 Online Academy
Less than High School	0%	1%	1%	0%
Some High School	2%	2%	2%	2%
High School Diploma	14%	15%	15%	13%
Some College	14%	23%	24%	21%
Associate's Degree	14%	7%	8%	4%
Bachelor's Degree	30%	30%	32%	25%
Advanced Degree	27%	22%	18%	36%

Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=161 (2019), N=225 (2020 Overall), N=172 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

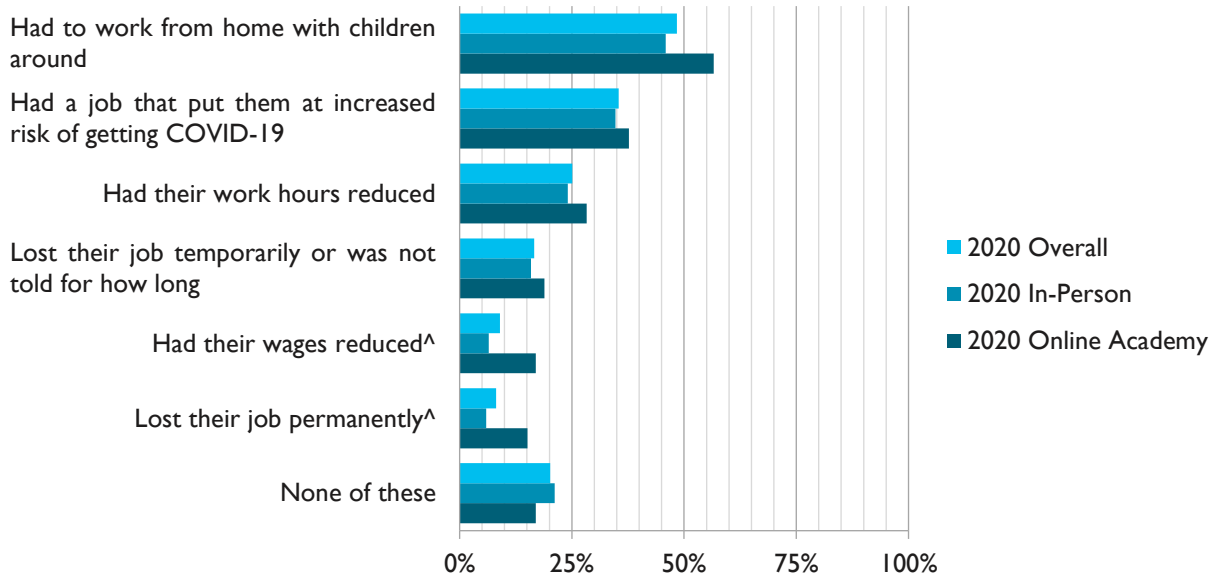
Family Income

	2019	2020 Overall	2020 In-Person	2020 Online Academy
Under $15,000	6%	7%	7%	10%
$15,000-$34,999	12%	19%	19%	20%
$35,000-$49,999	17%	11%	12%	8%
$50,000-$74,999	20%	20%	20%	20%
$75,000-$99,999	16%	15%	15%	16%
$100,000 or more	29%	27%	27%	28%

Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=109-161 (2019), N=219 (2020 Overall), N=168 (2020 In-Person), N=51 (2020 Online Academy). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

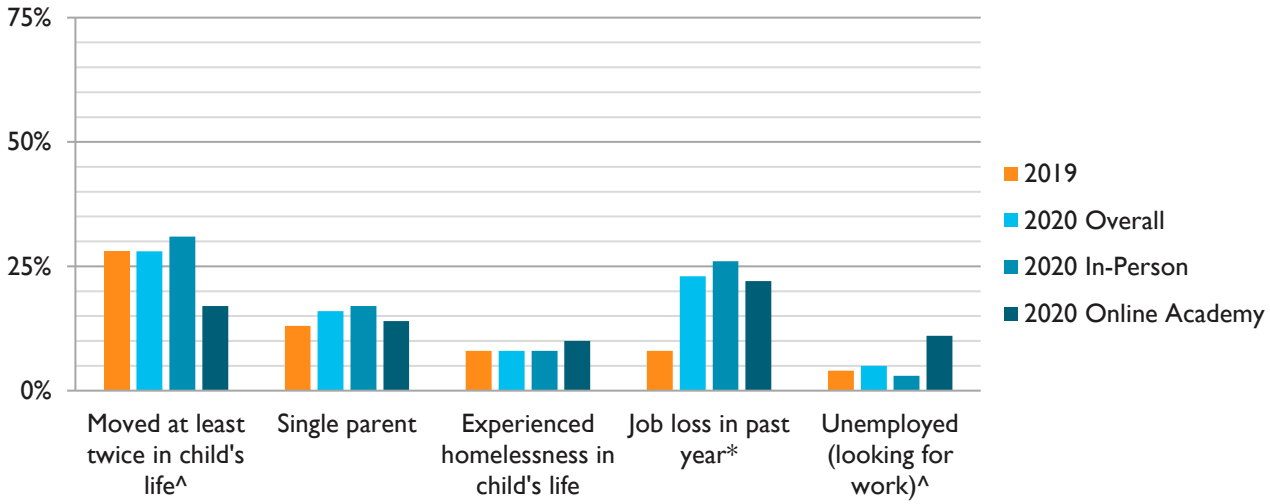
Family Stress and Support

Impact of COVID-19 on Family Income and Employment



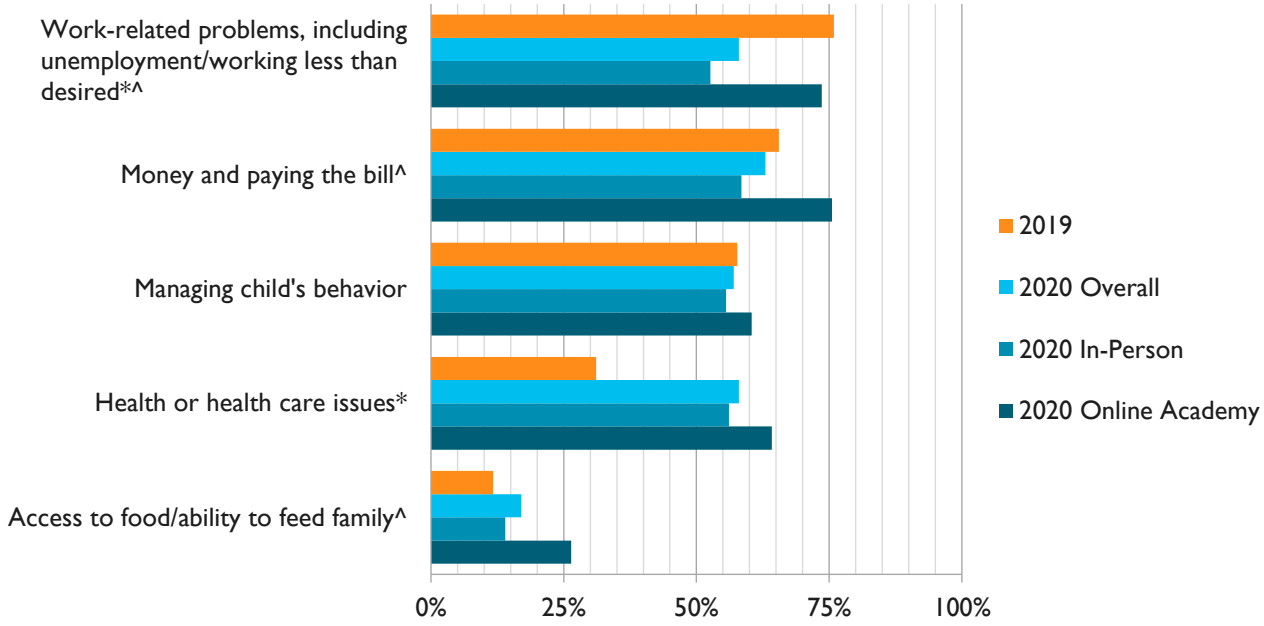
Source: Parent Information Form (2020).
Note: N=223 (2020 Overall), N=170 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy). ^Differences statistically significant between in-person and online group, p < .05.

Family Risk Factors



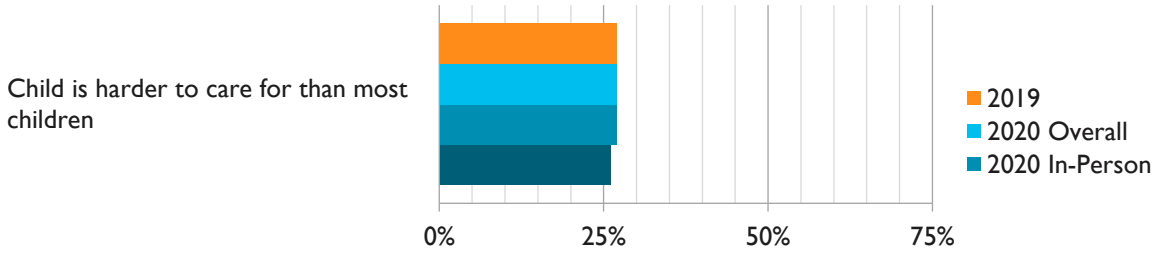
Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=159-163 (2019), N=219-223 (2020 Overall), N=168-171 (2020 In-Person), N=50-53 (2020 Online Academy). *Differences statistically significant between 2019 and 2020, p < .05. ^Differences statistically significant between in-person and online group, p < .05. Homelessness included staying temporarily with friends or family, in a hotel or motel, in a shelter or transitional housing program, or in a public place, due to economic hardship.

Percent of Families Reporting Family and Domestic Concerns



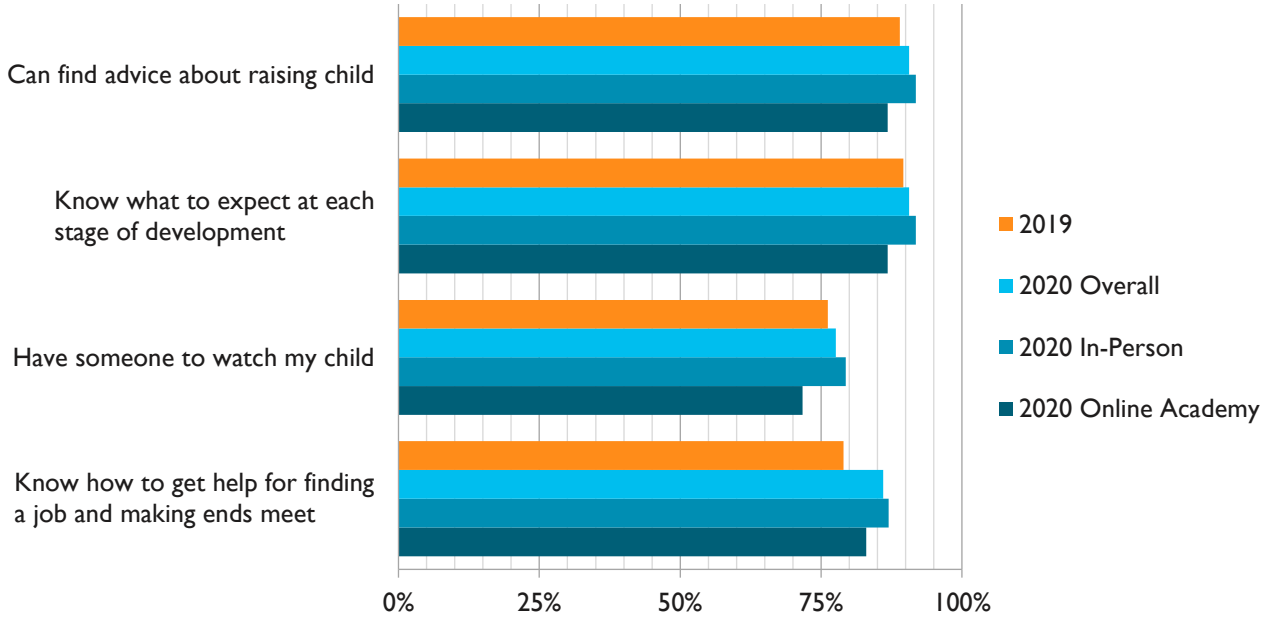
Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=161-162 (2019), N=224 (2020 Overall), N=171 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy). *Differences statistically significant between 2019 and 2020, p < .05. ^Differences statistically significant between in-person and online group, p < .05. Reflects percent who marked "a little", "moderately", or "very" concerned.

Percent of Caregivers Reporting Parenting Stress



Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=164 (2019), N=223 (2020 Overall), N=170 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy). Reflects percent who marked "sometimes", "often", or "almost always".

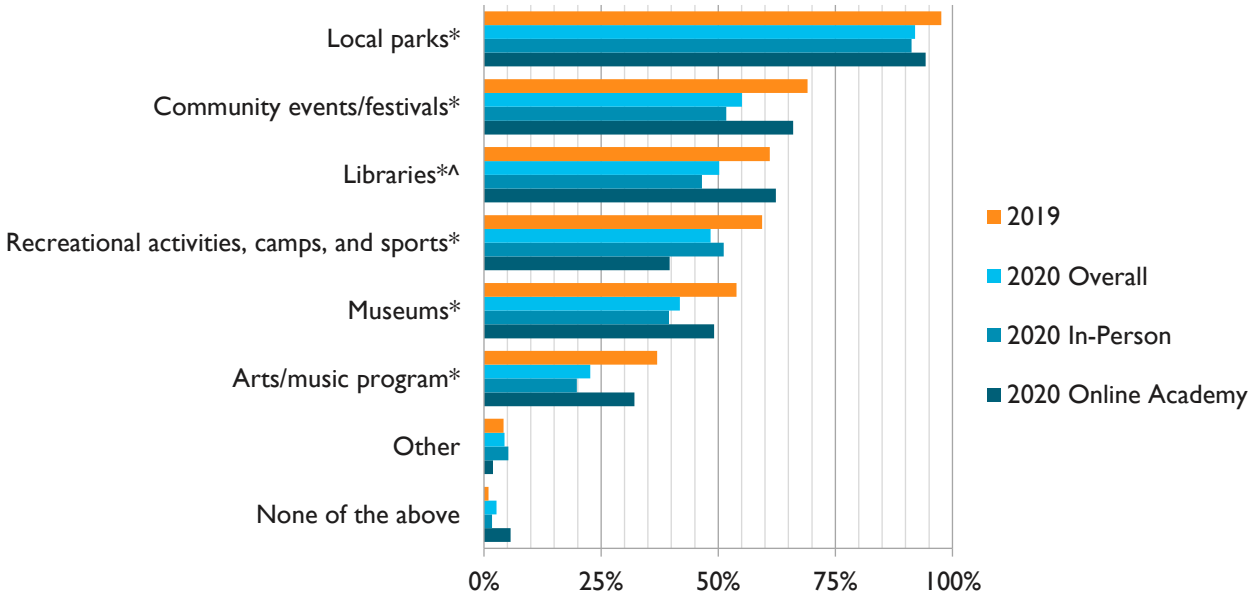
Percent of Caregivers with Parenting Support and Knowledge



Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=161-164. N=221-223 (2020 Overall), N=168-170 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy). Reflects percent who marked "somewhat true" or "definitely true".

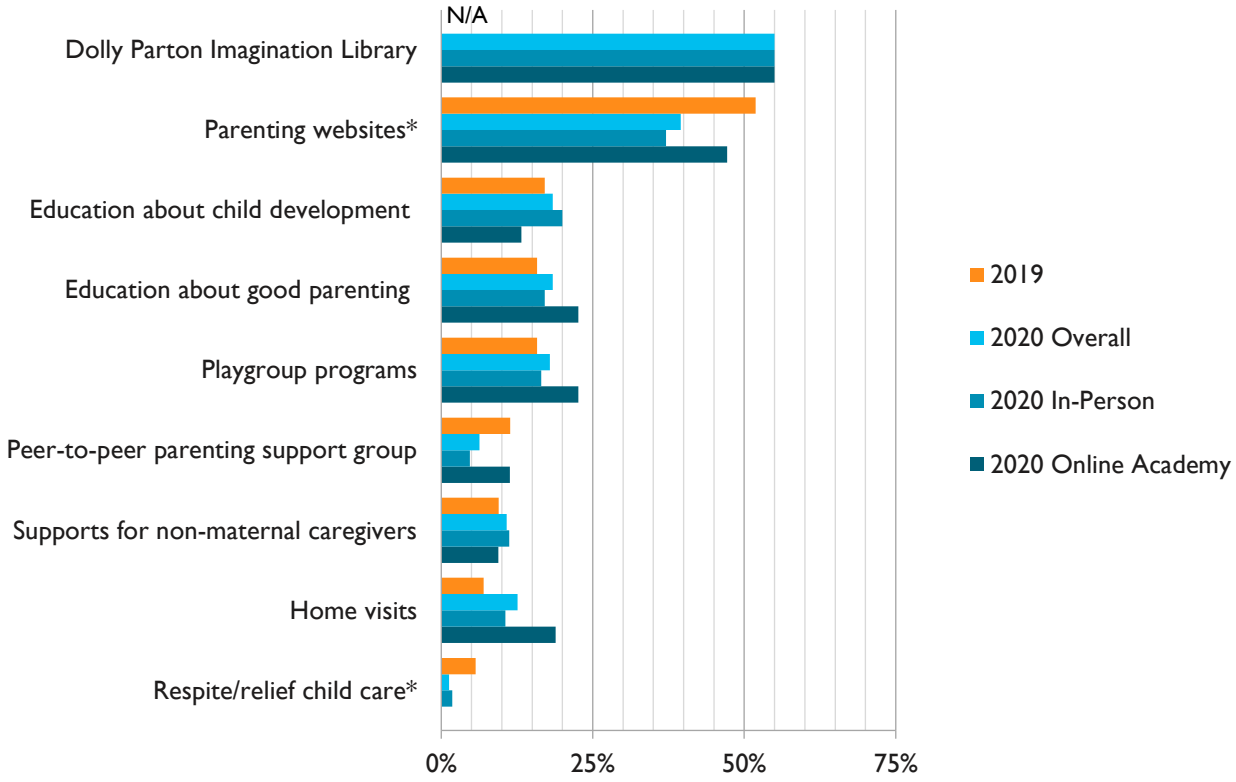
Use of Services and Resources

Percent of Families Using Community Resources



Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=165 (2019), N=225 (2020 Overall), N=172 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy). *Differences statistically significant between 2019 and 2020, $p < .05$. ^Differences statistically significant between in-person and online group, $p < .05$.

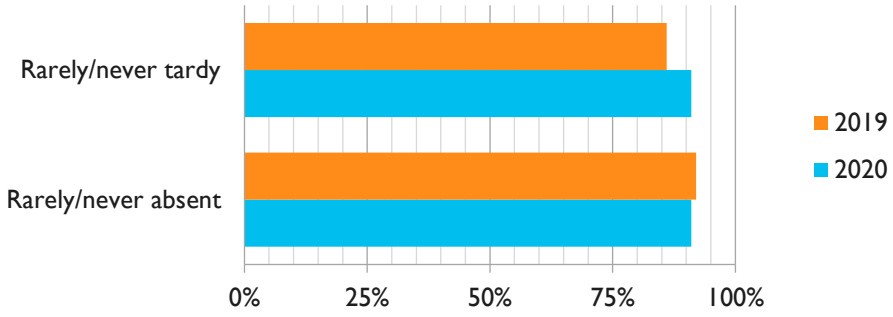
Percent of Families Using Parenting Programs, Services, and Supports



Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=158 (2019), N=223 (2020 Overall), N=170 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy). *Differences statistically significant between 2019 and 2020, p < .05. N/A: Dolly Parton Imagination Library was not on the 2019 survey.

Attendance Concerns

Frequency of Attendance Concerns



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=249 (2019), N=229-232 (2020 In-Person). Data not available for Online Academy.

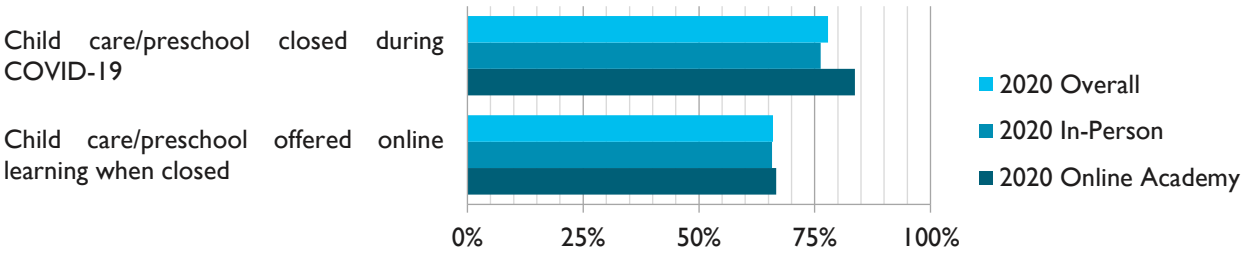
Preschool and Other Early Care Experiences

Students' Early Care Experiences

	2019	2020 Overall	2020 In-Person	2020 Online Academy
Any licensed care	84%	84%	86%	76%
Early Kindergarten (school district preschool)	20%	16%	9%	14%
Head Start or other free/low cost preschool	9%	12%	14%	7%
Other licensed preschool	57%	61%	61%	60%
Licensed family child care	4%	5%	5%	4%
Short-term summer pre-K program	2%	4%	3%	7%
Family, friend, or neighbor care*	10%	17%	16%	20%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019, 2020), Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=164-226 (2019), N=226-269 (2020 Overall), N=171-214 (2020 In-Person), N=55 (2020 Online Academy). *Differences statistically significant between 2019 and 2020, $p < .05$. Percentages sum to more than 100 because more than one source of care could be selected.

Impact of COVID-19 on Child Care



Source: Parent Information Form (2020).
Note: N=147-195 (2020 Overall), N=111-152 (2020 In-Person), N=36-43 (2020 Online Academy).

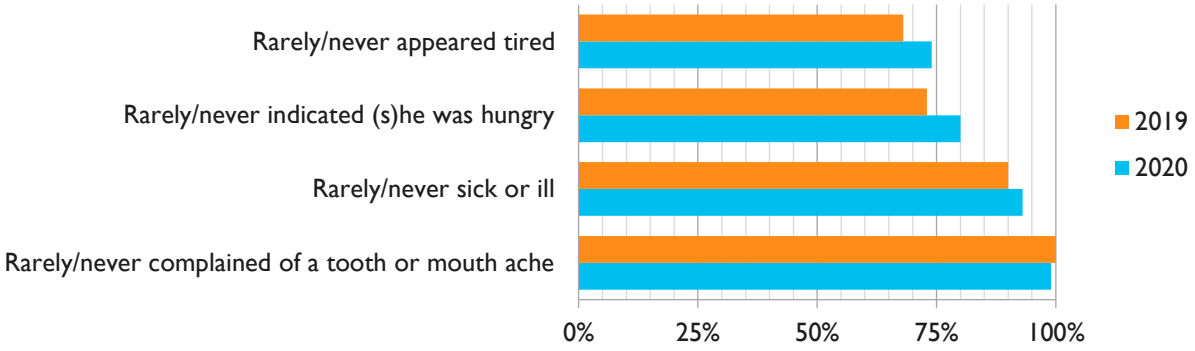
Child Health and Well-Being

Special Needs

	2019	2020 Overall	2020 In-Person	2020 Online Academy
Diagnosed with special need	14%	15%	14%	17%
Percent of children with a diagnosed special need who received professional help	86%	86%	95%	67%
Parent/caregiver or teacher suspects special need, but no diagnosis	3%	4%	5%	N/A

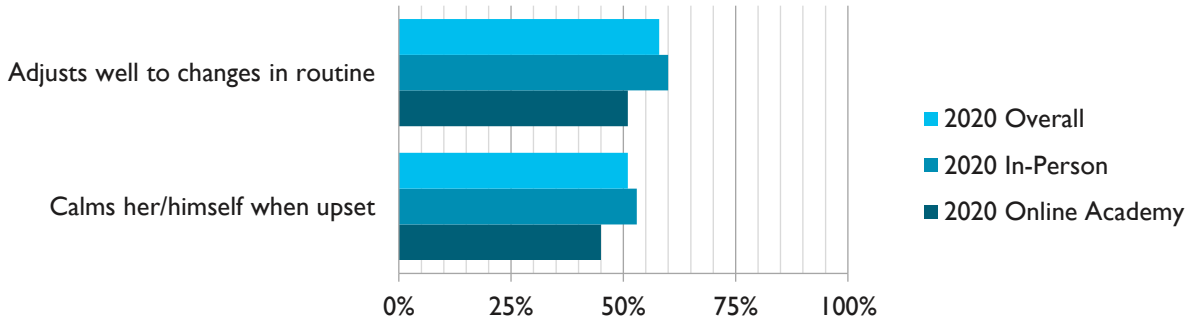
Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019, 2020), Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=216 (2019), N=290 (2020 overall), N=206-237 (2020 In-Person), N=46-53 (2020 Online Academy).

Teacher Reports of Children's Health and Well-Being



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=248-250 (2019), N=226-232 (2020 In-Person). Data not available for Online Academy.

Percent of Families Reporting High Levels of Child Resilience



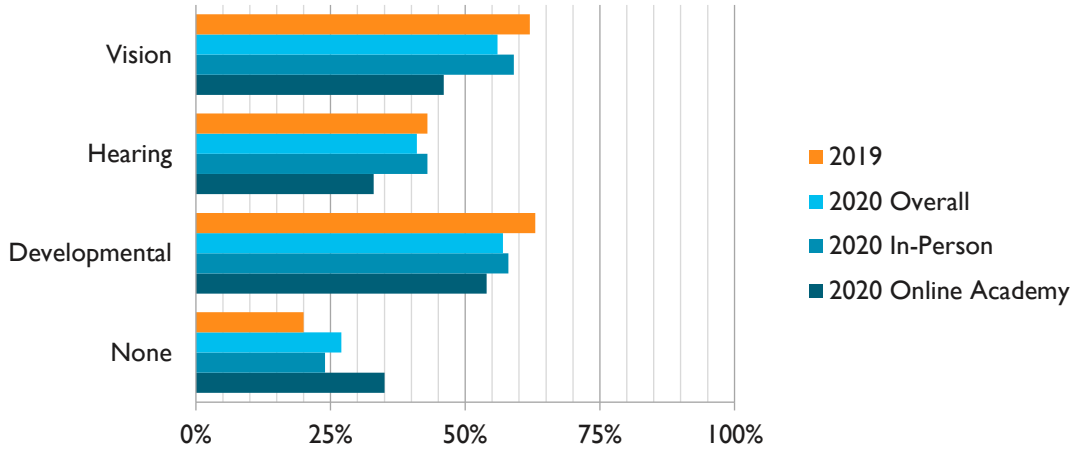
Source: Parent Information Form (2020).
Note: N=223 (2020 Overall), N=170 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy). Comparisons to 2019 not possible due to changes in the question. Reflects percent who marked "often" or "almost always".

Students' Access to and Use of Health Care

	2019	2020 Overall	2020 In-Person	2020 Online Academy
Has had a dental exam in the past year	93%	94%	95%	91%
Had a routine well-child checkup	N/A	94%	94%	93%

Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=163-165 (2019), N=223-224 (2020 Overall), N=170-171 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy).

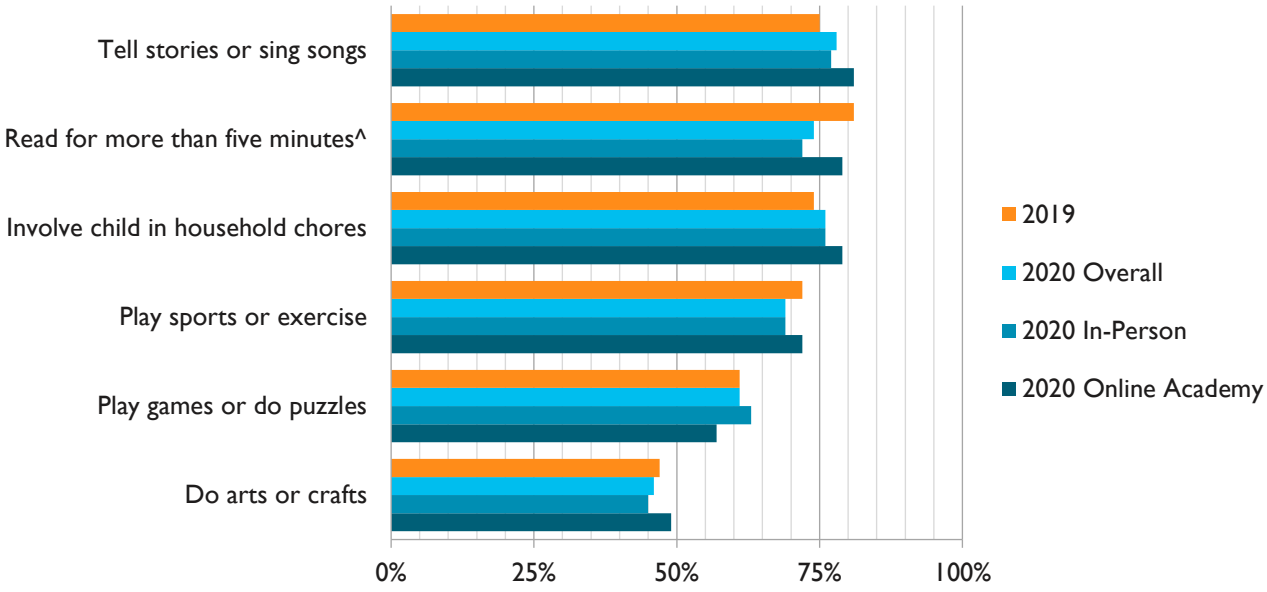
Health Screenings



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019, 2020), Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=161 (2019), N=222 (2020 Overall), N=170 (2020 In-Person), N=52 (2020 Online Academy).

Family Activities and Routines

Percent of Families Engaging in Family Activities at Least Four Days per Week



Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=163-165 (2019), N=225-226 (2020 Overall), N=172-173 (2020 In-Person), N=52-53 (2020 Online Academy).
^Differences statistically significant between in-person and online group, $p < .05$.

Students' Screen Time

	2019	2020 Overall	2020 In-person	2020 Online Academy
Weekdays*				
<1 hour	30%	18%	19%	17%
1 hour	35%	33%	34%	32%
2 hours	29%	32%	34%	26%
3 hours	5%	10%	8%	15%
4 hours	1%	4%	4%	6%
5 hours or more	1%	2%	2%	4%
Weekends				
<1 hour	11%	7%	13%	9%
1 hour	17%	21%	21%	21%
2 hours	40%	35%	28%	33%
3 hours	17%	19%	25%	21%
4 hours	11%	14%	9%	13%
5 hours or more	3%	4%	4%	4%

Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=162-165 (2019), N=223-225 (2020 Overall), N=170-172 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy). *Differences statistically significant between 2019 and 2020, $p < .05$, for percentages exposed to no more than one hour on weekdays. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

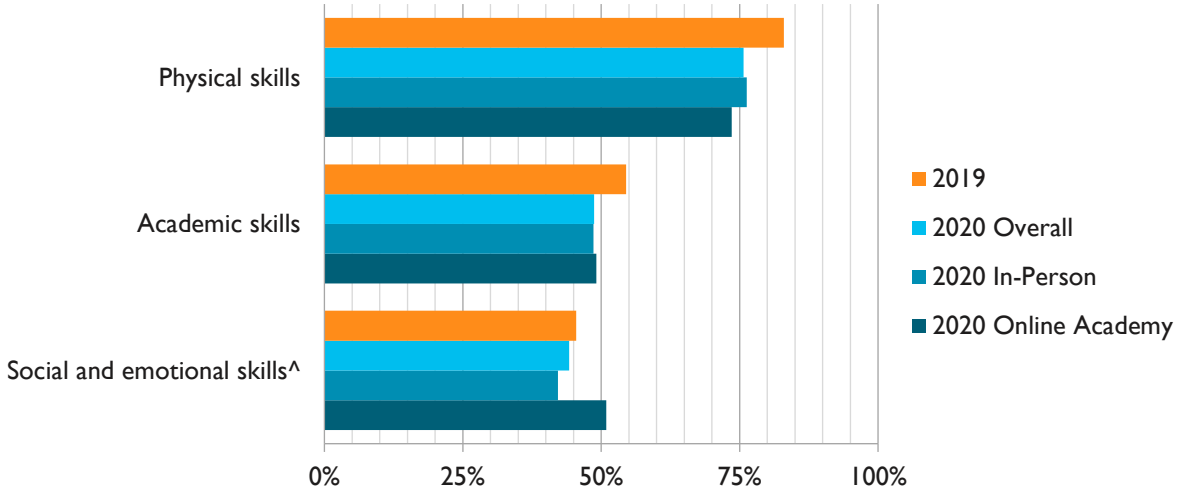
Students' Bedtime

	2019	2020 Overall	2020 In-Person	2020 Online Academy
Before 8:00 PM*	18%	16%	18%	9%
8:00 PM	36%	28%	27%	34%
8:30 PM	29%	29%	31%	25%
9:00 PM	12%	17%	16%	23%
9:30 PM	4%	4%	5%	2%
10:00 PM	1%	4%	4%	8%
11:00 PM or later	1%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=162 (2019), N=225 (2020 Overall), N=172 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy). *Differences statistically significant between 2019 and 2020, $p < .05$, for percentages with a bedtime before 9 PM. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Families' Kindergarten Transition Perceptions, Information, and Opportunities

Percent of Parents Reporting Child is Fully Ready, by Skill Domain



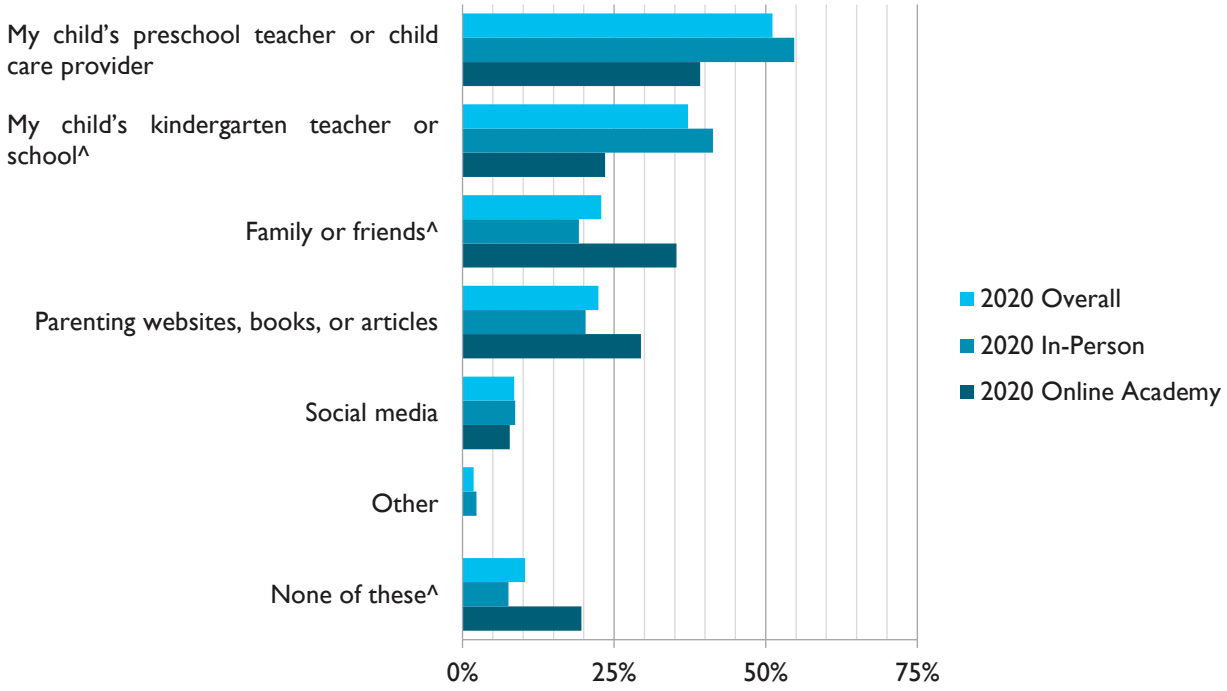
Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=165 (2019), N=226 (2020 Overall), N=173 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy). ^Differences statistically significant between in-person and online group, $p < .05$.

Receipt of Information Related to Kindergarten Transition

	2019	2020 Overall	2020 In-Person	2020 Online Academy
Information about how and when to register child for school^	80%	79%	82%	68%
Specific information about how you could help your child develop skills to be ready for kindergarten^	76%	70%	75%	55%

Source: Parent Information Form (2019, 2020).
Note: N=162-164 (2019), N=223 (2020 Overall), N=170 (2020 In-Person), N=53 (2020 Online Academy).

Sources of Information Related to Kindergarten Transition



Source: Parent Information Form (2020).

Note: N=223 (2020 Overall), N=172 (2020 In-Person), N=51 (2020 Online Academy). ^Differences statistically significant between in-person and online group, $p < .05$. Question not asked in 2019.

Endnotes

[i] This definition of readiness is based on research showing that children who demonstrate proficiency across an array of readiness dimensions are more likely to succeed academically in first grade than are those who are competent in only one or two dimensions (e.g., Hair, E., Halle, T., Terry-Humen, E., Lavelle, B., & Calkins, J. (2006). Children's school readiness in the ECLS-K: Predictions to academic, health, and social outcomes in first grade. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 21*(4), 431-454).

[ii] American Academy of Pediatrics. (2016). Media and young minds. *Pediatrics, 138*(5), e20162591; DOI: https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-2591

[iii] Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2017). *3 principles to improve outcomes for children and families*. Retrieved from https://46y5eh11fhgw3ve3ytpwxt9r-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/HCDC_3PrinciplesPolicyPractice.pdf

[iv] Yoshikawa, H., Wuermli, A. J., Britto, P. R., Dreyer, B., Leckman, J. F., Lye, S. J., Ponguta, L. A., Richter, L. M., & Stein, A. (2020). Effects of the Global Coronavirus Disease-2019 pandemic on early childhood development: Short- and long-term risks and mitigating program and policy actions. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, *223*, 188–193. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2020.05.020

[v] Acs, G., & Karpman, M. (2020). *Employment, income, and unemployment insurance during the COVID-19 Pandemic.* Washington DC: Urban Institute. Retrieved from https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/102485/employment-income-and-unemployment-insurance-during-the-covid-19-pandemic_1.pdf

CDC. (2020). *Health equity considerations and racial and ethnic minority groups*. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/race-ethnicity.html