



2019
**SCHOOL
READINESS**

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT OF FINDINGS FROM THE FALL
ASSESSMENT IN

YUBA COUNTY

In partnership with



Prepared by



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Acknowledgements

This first-ever study of kindergarten readiness across Yuba County would not have been possible without the commitment and engagement of many individuals.

The First 5 Yuba County team included Ericka Summers, Executive Director, and Robin Timoszyk, Program Specialist, who led efforts to secure commitments from school and district partners to participate in the study. Thank you to the First 5 Yuba Commissioners for their endorsement and support of this study.

We also wish to thank the following teachers for their dedication of time and effort to make this study possible:

School	Teacher Name
Camptonville	Marcy Manross
Lone Tree	Melissa Jensen Corrine Garcia Kimberley Weiss Carrie Valdespino
Wheatland Charter	Cheyenne Morrow
YES Charter	Tracey Fuschich



Headline Findings

Data Highlights

School Readiness

- ▶ 64% of kindergartners were *Fully Ready* for kindergarten across all domains of readiness (*Self-Regulation, Social Expression, and Kindergarten Academics*), whereas 24% were ready in one or two domains, and 12% were *Not Ready* in any of these domains
- ▶ Higher readiness was significantly and independently predicted by:
 - Child well-being (not appearing hungry at school)
 - Not having a special need
 - Being older
- ▶ Readiness was also associated with less screen time, receiving more kindergarten readiness information, higher resilience, and lower caregiver stress

Demographic/ Socioeconomic Profile

- ▶ 54% of the children were White, 29% were Hispanic/Latino, 10% were multiracial, and 5% were black
- ▶ 35% of families earned less than \$50,000 per year, and 16% of mothers had no more than a high school education

Child Health and Well-Being

- ▶ 99% of children had medical insurance and a regular doctor; 90% of children had a regular dentist; 18% had experienced a toothache
- ▶ Over one in five children demonstrated well-being concerns (i.e., they were tired, hungry, or sick) on at least some days
- ▶ 14% of children had a diagnosed special need; three-quarters of these children were receiving professional help
- ▶ Close to nine in 10 parents said it was at least somewhat true that their child adjusts well to changes in routine, calms him or herself when upset, and stays calm when faced with a challenge

Early Childhood Education

- ▶ 81% of children had formal early childhood education experience, including licensed preschool, family child care, or Transitional Kindergarten

Family Activities, Routines, and Preparation for Kindergarten

- ▶ Over three-quarters of families told stories/sang songs together and read together at least four days per week
- ▶ 42% of children had more than the recommended one hour of screen time on weekdays, but 81% of children had more than one hour of screen time on weekends
- ▶ Over nine in 10 parents reported receiving at least one type of information about preparing for kindergarten prior to school entry
- ▶ 55% of families had participated in a program sponsored by First 5 Yuba; these families engaged in activities with their children more frequently and did more to help prepare for the kindergarten transition

Introduction

Purpose of the Assessment

Measuring school readiness at kindergarten entry helps communities assess how prepared children are for the transition to school as well as determine the environmental or individual factors that contribute to readiness. It is critical to measure readiness and identify the conditions and supports that lead to higher readiness because it is a strong predictor of later academic achievement and school adjustment (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000; Welsh et al., 2010).



Funded by First 5 Yuba County, this report presents the results of the first-ever formal kindergarten readiness assessment conducted in the county. The goals of this study are to:

- ▶ Understand how prepared children in Yuba County are for kindergarten entry; and
- ▶ Understand the factors that influence readiness, particularly those factors that are considered “malleable,” such as participation in specific programs or services (quality preschool, parenting classes, etc.) or family practices at home, like reading with the child.

First 5 Yuba hopes to use the results to better understand how it can impact parent engagement and kindergarten readiness through program and policy and to deepen relationships with other entities in the county who also support children’s success in school.

Sample

This study is the result of a significant collaboration between First 5 Yuba and school districts, principals, and teachers to gather data on kindergarten readiness. First 5 Yuba began outreach efforts with superintendents and principals in the spring of 2019. Ultimately, 102 kindergarten students were assessed from 7 classes in 4 schools.

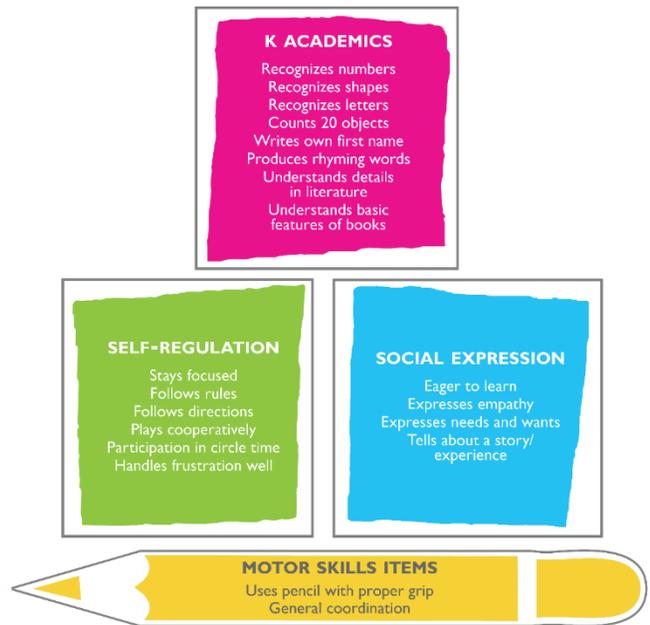
Figure 1. Number of Kindergarten Classrooms and Students Assessed in Fall 2019

School	Number of Classes Assessed	Number of Students Assessed
Camptonville	1	7
Lone Tree	4	66
Wheatland Charter	1	20
YES Charter	1	9
TOTAL	7	102

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019). Note: 17 TK students were not included in the analyses.

Methods Used to Assess Kindergarten Readiness

The tool used to assess kindergarten readiness in Yuba County was the Kindergarten Observation Form (KOF), a validated assessment that includes 20 skills that have been shown to statistically predict third grade academic achievement. This tool has been used in 15 other California counties as well as in other states. Teachers completed the KOF within the first few weeks of the 2019-20 school year by rating student proficiency levels on each of 20 kindergarten readiness skills, using a scale from 1 (*Not Yet* demonstrating the skill) to 4 (*Fully Proficient* on the skill). These readiness skills comprised three *Building Blocks* – *Self-Regulation*, *Social Expression*, and *Kindergarten Academics*. A fourth area includes two items related to fine and gross motor skills, which serve as a foundation for these *Building Blocks*.



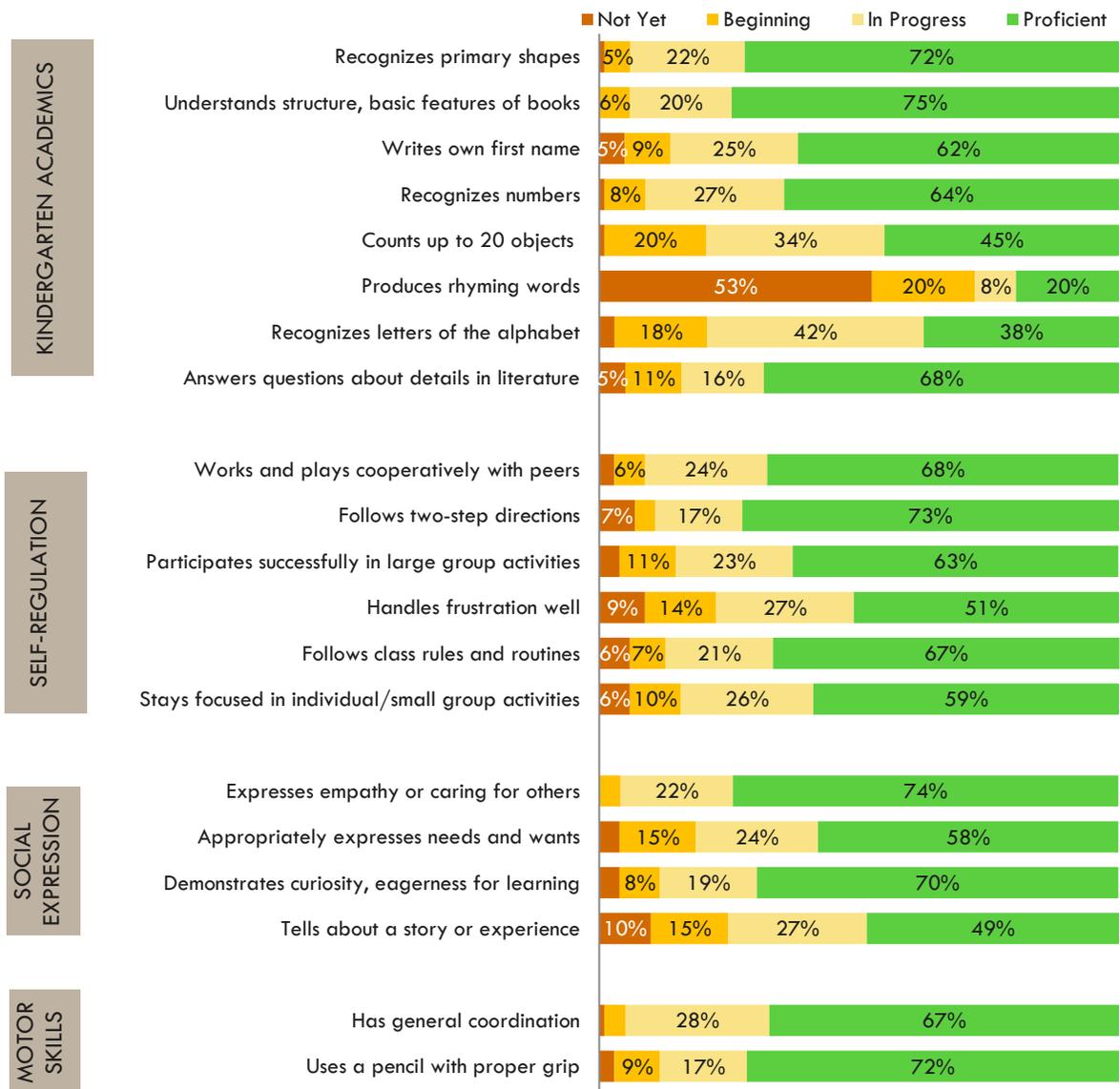
To complete the portrait of children’s readiness for kindergarten, the Parent Information Form (PIF) was also administered. This survey was completed by 93 parents (91% of the sample), and it gathered data about child demographics, family background, parenting activities, family stressors, and child care experiences.

This report first presents data on the overall school readiness of kindergartners in Yuba County, as well as their performance within the three domains of readiness (*Self-Regulation*, *Social Expression*, and *Kindergarten Academics*). We then analyze the factors that are uniquely associated with school readiness outcomes, particularly focusing on factors that are amenable to intervention. Finally, we present a portrait of the sample on demographic characteristics, family environments, and pre-kindergarten experiences, before summarizing the results and the study’s implications.

Kindergarten Readiness

Teachers in the assessment rated children’s readiness skills on a 4-point scale, ranging from 1 (*Not Yet*) to 4 (*Proficient*). Children were most likely to be proficient in understanding the structure and basic features of books, following two-step directions, and expressing empathy or caring for others, but least likely to be proficient in recognizing letters of the alphabet, counting, and producing words that rhyme (note that rhyming is an advanced skill that is not expected at kindergarten entry; therefore, scores on this item are not included in overall readiness scores).

Figure 2. Students’ Proficiency Levels Across 20 School Readiness Skills



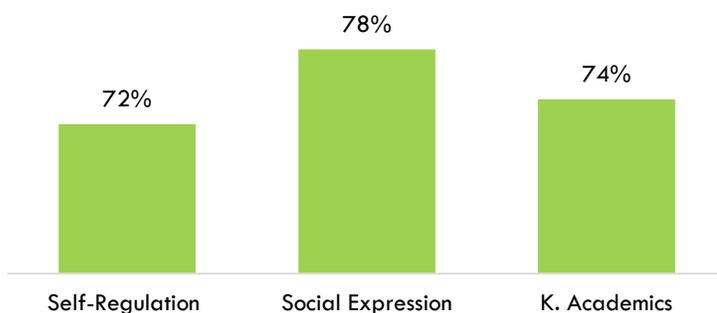
Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019). N=102. Note: Scores range from 1 (Not Yet) to 4 (Proficient). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Proportions of less than 5% are not labeled.

Children’s Overall Readiness for Kindergarten

Across large longitudinal studies involving the KOF, researchers found that an average readiness score of 3.25 out of 4.00 is the threshold above which about 70% of children will be reading at grade level by third grade; below 3.25, only about 15% of children will be proficient readers at third grade (e.g., Applied Survey Research, 2017). Therefore, 3.25 is the benchmark above which children assessed on the KOF are considered “ready” for kindergarten.

To determine how ready children in Yuba County were for kindergarten, children’s scores on the readiness items within each domain were averaged. The figure below shows the percent of students who had a score of 3.25 or higher within each of the *Building Blocks*. Close to three-quarters of the students were ready in the areas of *Self-Regulation* (72%) and *Kindergarten Academics* (74%), while 78% were ready in *Social Expression*.

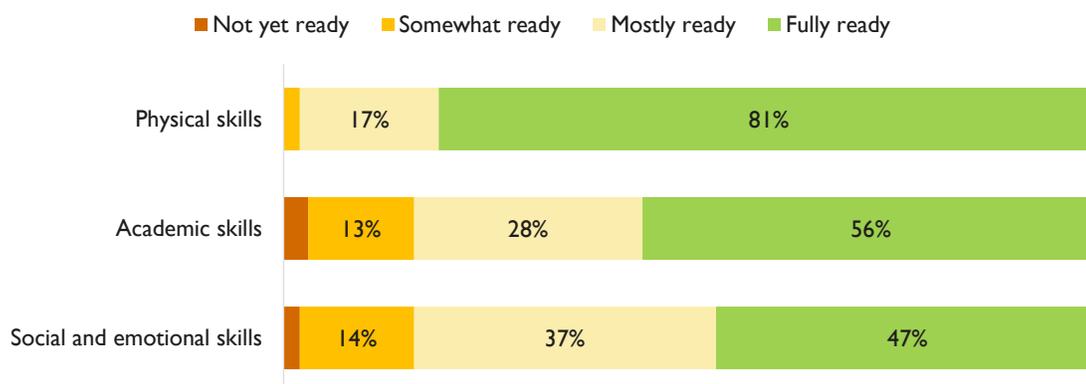
Figure 3. Percent of Children Ready for Kindergarten, by Building Block



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019). N=102.

In addition to capturing teachers’ perceptions of readiness, we asked caregivers to rate their own child’s readiness for kindergarten on a four-point scale from “not yet ready” to “fully ready.” The vast majority of caregivers felt that their children were well-developed in physical skills (81%), but just 56% said their children were fully ready academically, and 47% said they were fully ready social-emotionally.

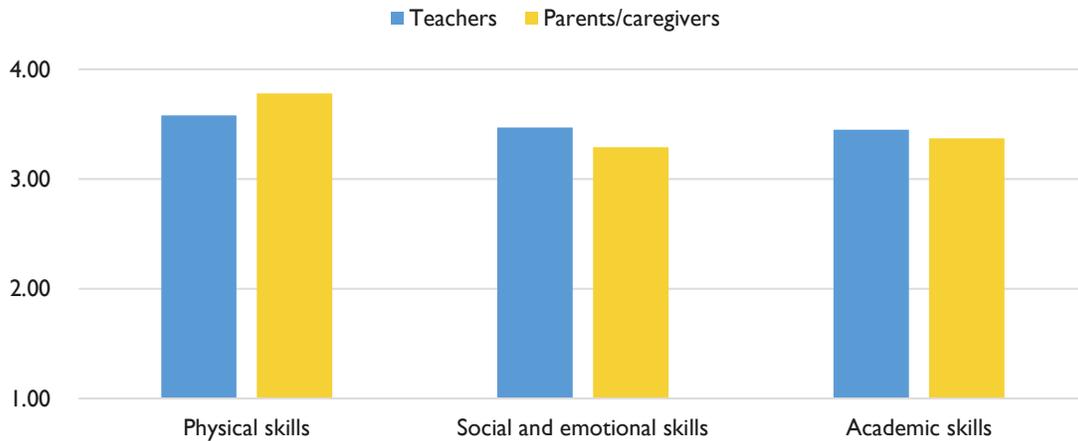
Figure 4. Readiness Perceived by Caregivers, by Domain



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=93.

The methods for rating children’s readiness differed between caregivers and teachers, but we compared the average scores each rater gave children in the areas of physical skills, social and emotional skills, and academic skills. Although caregivers rated children’s readiness higher than teachers in physical skills, teachers gave children higher ratings in social-emotional and academic skills.

Figure 5. Average Kindergarten Readiness Scores, by Rater



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019), Parent Information Form (2019). N=93-102.

Studies also suggest that development in multiple readiness domains is essential for later school success (e.g., Hair et al., 2006). Therefore, we analyzed the proportion of children who were ready in all three domains of the KOF. Students were considered *Fully Ready* for kindergarten if they scored at or above 3.25 out of 4.00 on all three *Building Blocks*; *Partially Ready* if they scored at or above 3.25 in one or two *Building Blocks*; and *Not Ready* if they did not have scores at or above 3.25 in any of the three *Building Blocks*. Using these criteria, 64% of the kindergarten students assessed in Yuba County were *Fully Ready* for kindergarten. Another 24% were *Partially Ready*, and 12% were *Not Ready*.

Figure 6. Percent of Children Ready for Kindergarten, Across Building Blocks

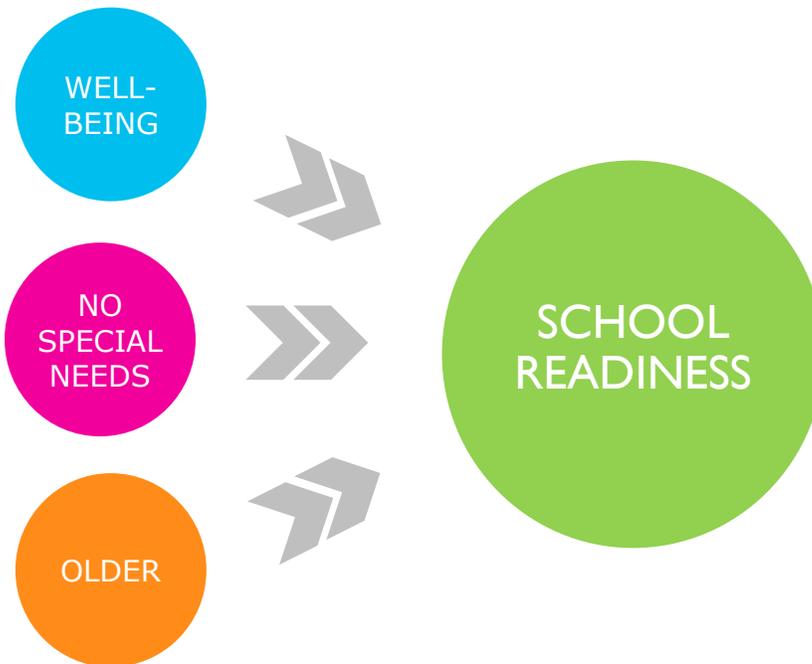


Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019). N=102.

What Factors are Independently Associated with Kindergarten Readiness?

A stepwise regression model was used to determine the factors that have an *independent* association with kindergarten readiness in Yuba County, over and above the influence of other related factors. Children’s overall readiness scores were used as the outcome. All variables correlated with readiness were first entered into the regression and then only significant variables were kept in the final model. Three factors, shown in the figure below, were found to be significantly and independently associated with school readiness: well-being (i.e., not coming to school hungry, according to their teachers), not having a special need, and being older.

Figure 7. Key Predictors of Overall School Readiness (in Order of Strength)



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019), Parent Information Form (2019). N=102. The overall model accounted for 38% of variance ($R^2 = .38$) with three factors.

WELL-BEING

The strongest predictor of kindergarten readiness was **child well-being**. Those children who were perceived by their teachers to have health and well-being issues, particularly appearing hungry, had readiness levels that were lower than their peers without well-being concerns.

NO SPECIAL NEEDS

The second strongest predictor of readiness was the presence of **special needs**. Children who were typically developing had higher school readiness scores than children with special needs.

OLDER

The third strongest predictor of kindergarten readiness was age. Children who were **older** were more likely to be ready for kindergarten than children who were younger.

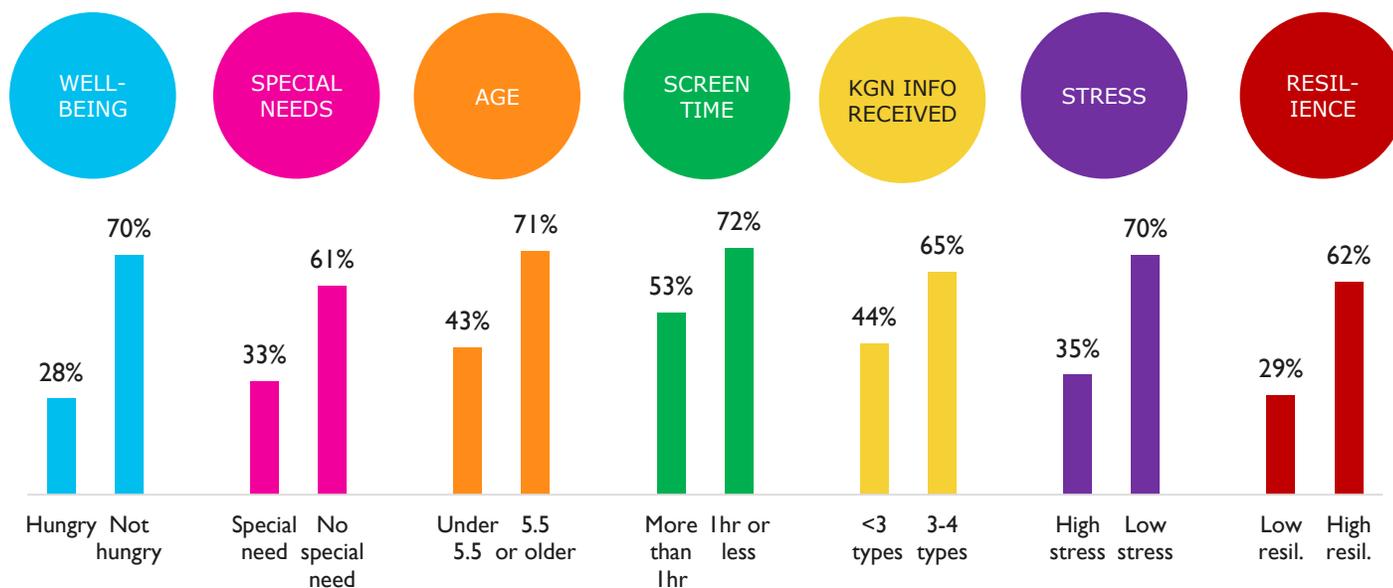
Although the following variables did not account for variability in school readiness above and beyond these three main predictors, four additional characteristics and experiences were strongly linked to school readiness:

- Less weekend **screen time** (e.g., watching TV, playing video games, and using a phone or tablet);
- Receiving more **kindergarten readiness information** (e.g., information about how to help their child prepare for kindergarten);
- Lower levels of **stress** reported by caregivers (i.e., concerns about health, money, work, food, and relationships); and
- Higher levels of **resilience** (i.e., parent perception regarding the child’s ability to adjust to changes in routine and remain calm when challenged).

Readiness Levels by Key Factors

The chart below shows how readiness levels differed on each of the significant predictors and correlates of readiness. For example, seven in 10 children who came to school well-fed were proficient or nearly proficient across all *Building Blocks* of readiness (i.e., *Fully Ready*), whereas only 28% of children who were hungry on at least some days were *Fully Ready*.

Figure 8. Percent of Children Fully Ready, by Significant Predictors and Correlates

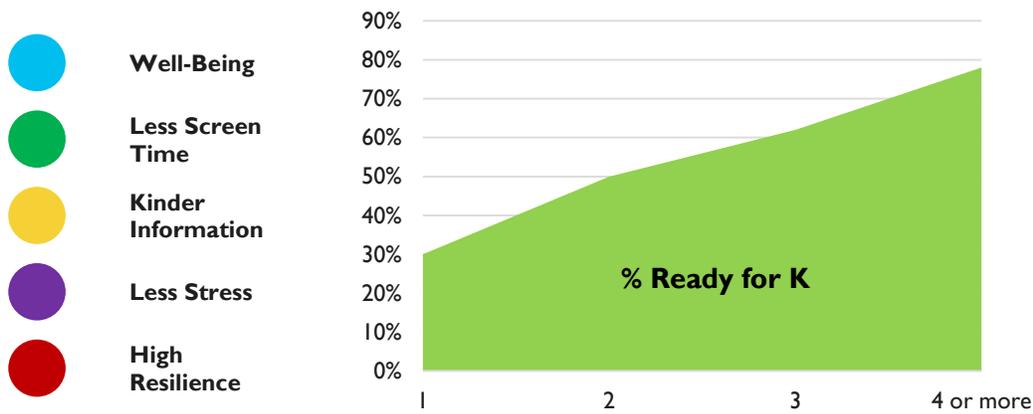


Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019), Parent Information Form (2019). N=93-102. Chi-square differences are statistically significant at $p < .05$.

Effect of Malleable Assets

Although some of the significant predictors of readiness were demographic in nature, the study found that readiness was also associated with characteristics and experiences that are amenable to change. More specifically, readiness was linked to child well-being, child resilience, parents having received more kindergarten readiness information, less screen time, and less caregiver stress. The chart below illustrates the cumulative effect of these five malleable factors on readiness, demonstrating that children with a greater number of assets were significantly more likely to be *Fully Ready* for kindergarten.

Figure 9. Percent Fully Ready, by Number of Malleable Assets



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019), Parent Information Form (2019). N=86. Relationship between assets and readiness statistically significant at $p < .05$.

Participation in First 5 Yuba Programs

This study also sought to investigate whether there was a relationship between participation in First 5 Yuba services and kindergarten readiness or other factors that might be related to readiness. As seen below, 50 children, or about half of students in the Fall 2019 sample, had participated in First 5 Yuba programs.

Figure 10. Participation in First Five Yuba Programs, 2019

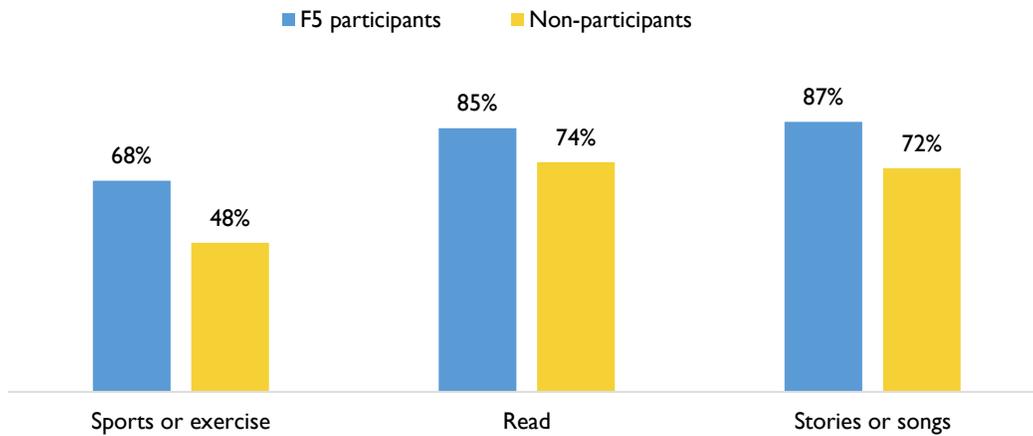
	Number of Students
Any First 5 Yuba program participation	50
OPUD Pool	45
Camptonville 1, 2, 3 Grow	5
Playzeum	4
Yuba County Library Story Time	3
Happy Toothmobile Dental Van	3
YCOE Behavioral Consultation	2
No First 5 Yuba program participation	41
TOTAL	91

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form, Parent Information Form (2019). The sum of participants is greater than 50 because children could participate in multiple programs. No child participated in Family SOUP or Marysville Joint USD School Readiness.

Although we did not find significant differences in the kindergarten readiness levels between First 5 Yuba-linked children and other children in the sample, families participating in one or more First 5 programs read, sang songs or told stories, and played sports or exercised with their children, more frequently than

other families.¹ For example, 68% of First 5 families played sports or exercised with their children at least four days per week, compared to just 48% of other families.

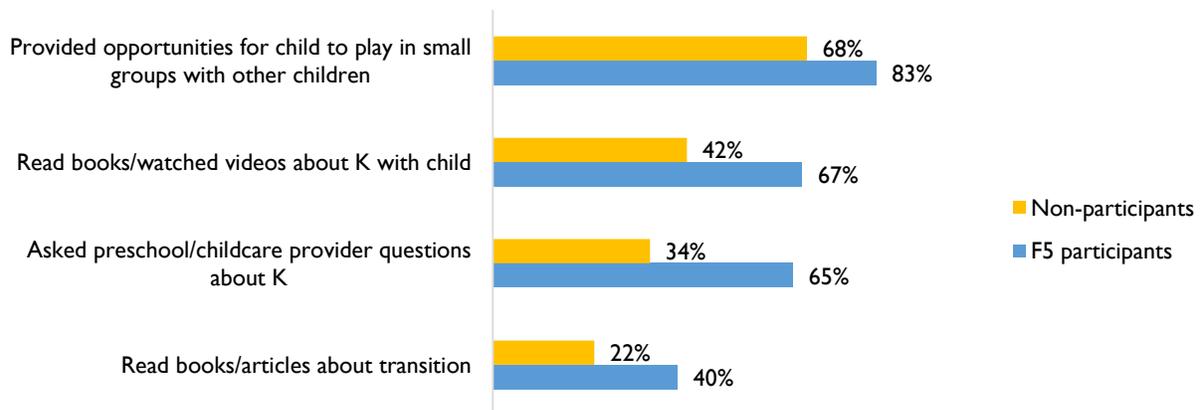
Figure 11. Percent of Families Engaging in Activity 4+ Days/wk, by F5 Participation



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=110. Statistically significant at $p < .05$ for stories/songs; marginally significant at $p < .10$ for sport/exercise and reading.

First 5-connected families also were more likely than other families to engage in kindergarten preparation activities, like reading about the kindergarten transition and asking their child care or preschool provider questions about kindergarten.

Figure 12. Percent of Families Engaging in Kindergarten Preparation Activities, by F5 Participation

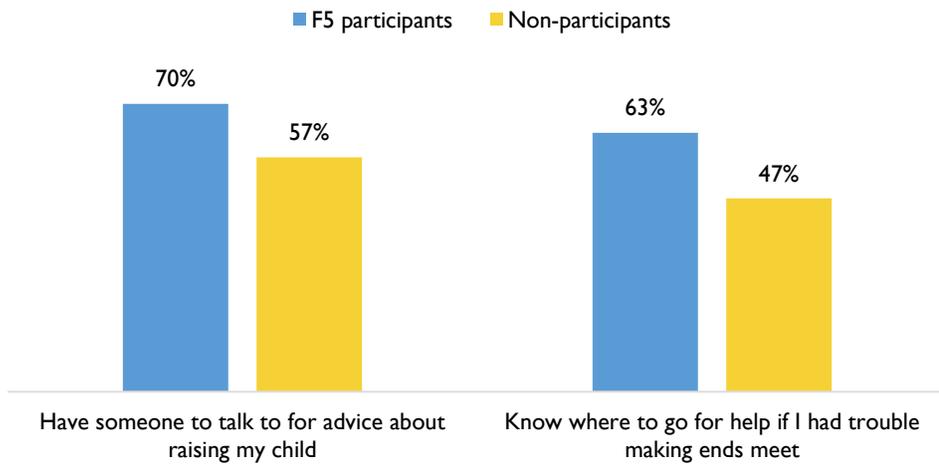


Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=110. Statistically significant at $p < .05$.

Finally, among lower income families (i.e., those earning less than \$75,000 per year), First 5 participants were more likely to say they had someone to turn to for advice and knew where to go for help making ends meet.

¹ To maximize the sample size for these analyses, we included families with children in kindergarten or TK.

Figure 13. Percent of Low-Income Families Reporting Support, by F5 Participation



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019). N=73. Data reflect percent reporting “Definitely true” to the statement. Marginally significant at $p < .10$.



Profile of Children and Families in Yuba County

In this section we present a profile of participants in the 2019 Yuba County School Readiness Assessment, including data on demographics, family activities, family stressors, child health, and child exposure to early childhood education (ECE).

Demographic and Socioeconomic Profile

There were slightly more boys than girls in the sample, and 50% of children were at least 5 ½ years old at the time of the assessment. Age was significantly associated with school readiness, with younger children exhibiting lower readiness levels than their peers.



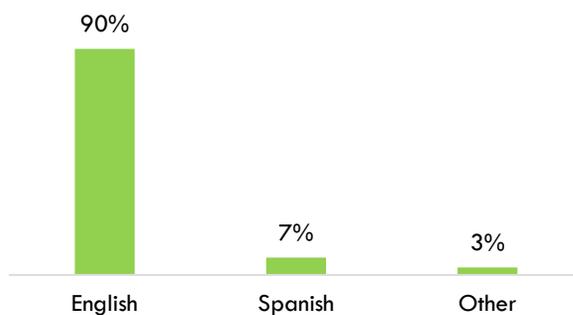
Figure 14. Characteristics of Participating Children

	Percentage
Female	46%
5.5 years and older	50%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form, Parent Information Form (2019). N=102.

The majority of children (90%) spoke only English at home, while 7% spoke only Spanish. Few children spoke other languages.

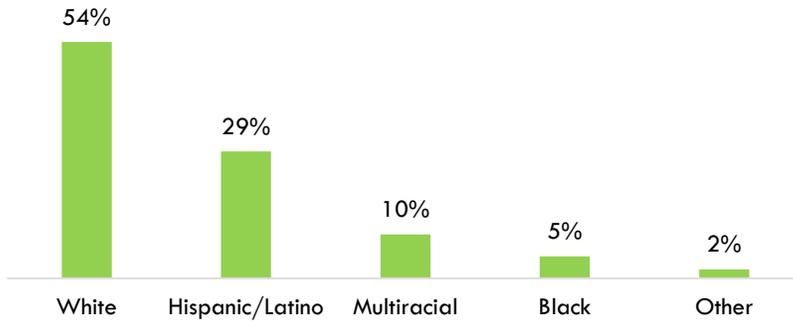
Figure 15. Home Languages of Participating Children



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=102.

About 54% of the children assessed in Fall 2019 were White, 29% were Hispanic/Latino, 10% were multiracial, 5% were Black, and 2% were another race or ethnicity.

Figure 16. Ethnicity of Participating Children



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form, Parent Information Form (2019). N=102.

The figure below displays the income levels of families who participated in the study. About 16% of students lived in households earning less than \$35,000 annually. Close to one in five (19%) families earned between \$35,000 and \$49,999, 34% earned \$50,000-\$74,999, and 31% earned at least \$75,000.

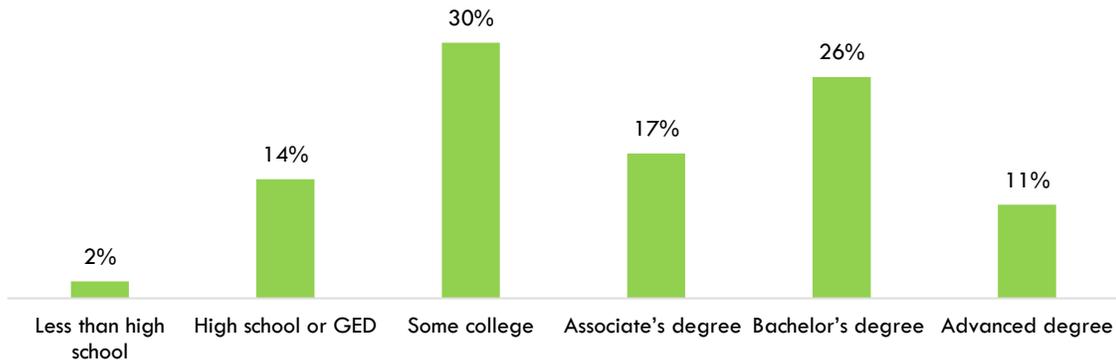
Figure 17. Household Income of Participating Families



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=90.

Approximately 2% of mothers had not completed high school, while 14% had earned a high school diploma, 30% had attended some college, and 54% had completed post-secondary education (Associate’s degree or higher).

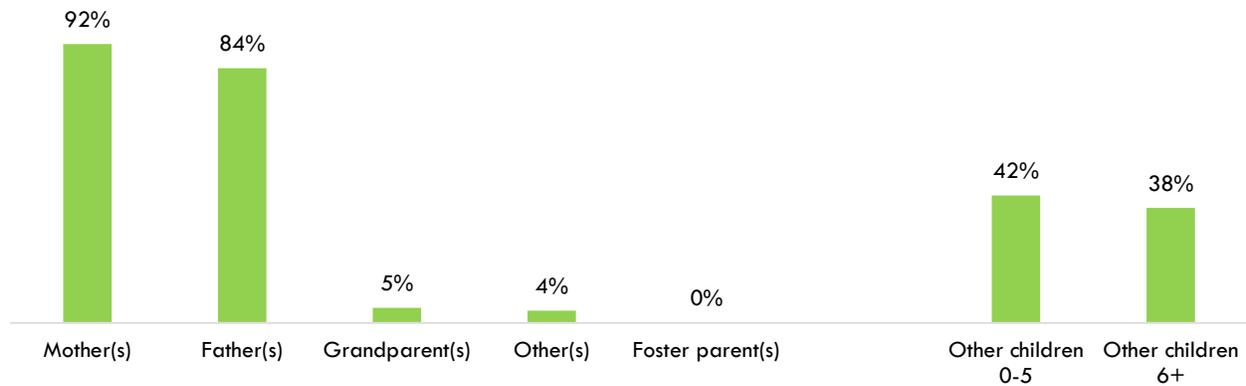
Figure 18. Highest Education Level of Students' Mothers



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=90.

One question on the PIF asked families to indicate who lived with the child in the home. Almost all students in the sample were living with their mother (92%), and 84% were living with their father. A small percentage of the students lived with their grandparent(s). Nearly three-quarters of the students were living with sibling(s), including 42% who were living with other child(ren) aged 0 to 5, and 38% who were living with other child(ren) aged 6 or older.

Figure 19. Family Members in the Home

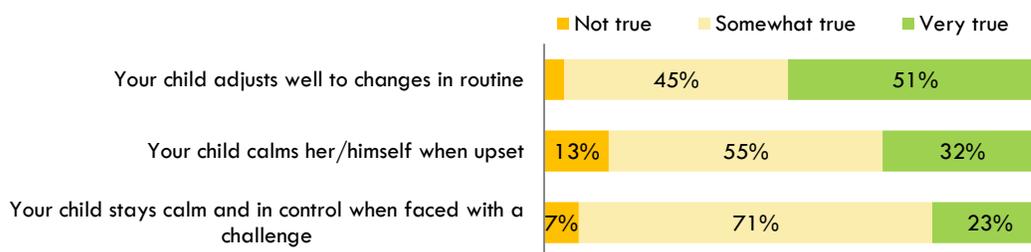


Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=91-92.

Child Resiliency

Children with higher resiliency levels tended to have higher kindergarten readiness scores. Most parents responded positively to questions about their children's resiliency. About a half of the parents (51%) said it was "very true" that their child adjusts well to changes in routine, and another 45% said this was somewhat true of their child. Close to one-quarter (23%) marked "very true" when asked if their child tended to stay calm and in control when they were faced with a challenge, and close to one-third (32%) said it was "very true" that their child calms him or herself when upset.

Figure 20. Child Resiliency

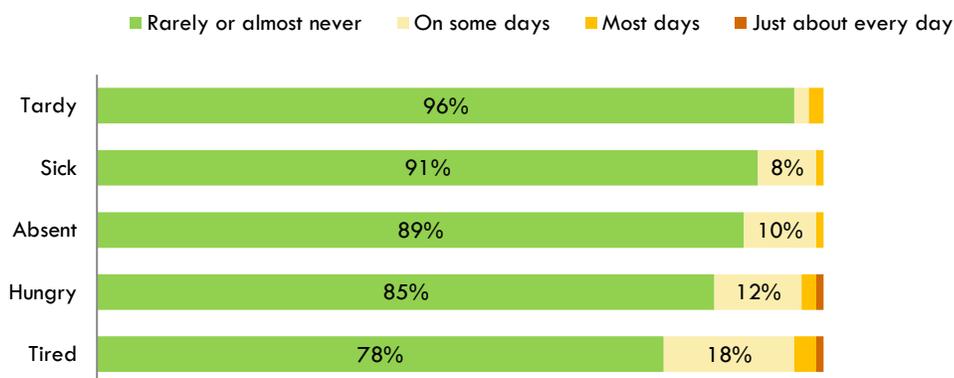


Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=93. Percentages less than 5% not labeled.

Child Health and Well-Being

Child well-being is a fundamental foundation of development, and it was a significant predictor of school readiness. To measure well-being, we asked teachers to indicate the frequency with which children appeared tired, hungry, or sick, in the first few days of school. Most children did not have any of these well-being concerns, but 22% appeared tired, 15% indicated they were hungry, and 9% were sick on at least some days. Perhaps also indicative of health and well-being problems, 11% of students were absent on at least some days, and 4% were at least sometimes tardy. These well-being and attendance concerns tended to co-occur. For example, children who came to school hungry were significantly more likely to be absent frequently as well.

Figure 21. Child Well-being and Attendance



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2019). N=102. Percentages less than 5% not labeled.

Parents were asked about various aspects of their children’s health. For instance, about 4% of kindergarten students in the study had been born at a low birth weight (less than 5 lbs., 8 oz.), according to their parents. In terms of health insurance, 99% of children had some kind of health insurance, with private insurance being the most common source of coverage. Similarly, 99% of children had a regular doctor, while 90% had a regular dentist. About 18% had experienced oral health pain.



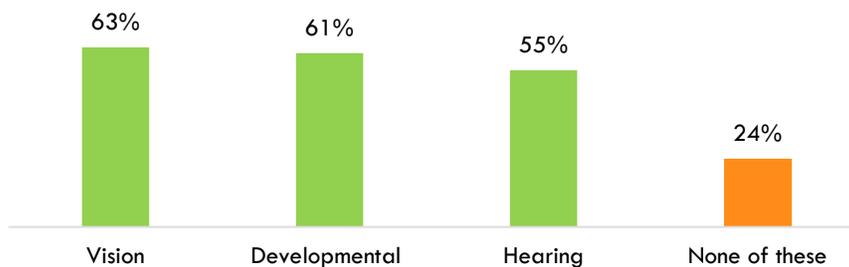
Figure 22. Child Health and Health Care

		Percentage
BIRTH WEIGHT	Less than 5 lbs, 8 oz	4%
HEALTH INSURANCE	Medi-Cal	12%
	Insurance from parent’s employer	83%
	Covered California	2%
	None of the above	1%
PRIMARY CARE	Has a regular doctor	99%
DENTAL HISTORY	Has a regular dentist	90%
	Mouth ache or toothache	18%

Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=93.

Access to a medical home is critical because it is the setting in which screenings typically occur, and health and developmental screenings are a critical precursor to early intervention. Parents in the study were asked about the kind of screenings their child may have had. As the chart below indicates, the majority of children had received screenings for vision (63%), developmental (61%), and hearing (55%) issues. However, 24% of children were reported to have had no screenings at all.

Figure 23. Health Screenings



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=93.

About 14% of children in the sample had a diagnosed special need according to their teacher or parent, and these children had significantly lower school readiness levels in the study than their typically developing peers. Children in the sample with special needs were most likely to have speech and language impairments, according to their parents. Among those parents who answered a question about treatment received, 72% (10 out of 13) reported that their child had received professional help.

Figure 24. Special Needs

	Frequency
Speech/language impairment	6
Visual or hearing impairment	5
Emotional/behavior disorder or disturbance	2
ADD/ADHD	3
Other	5

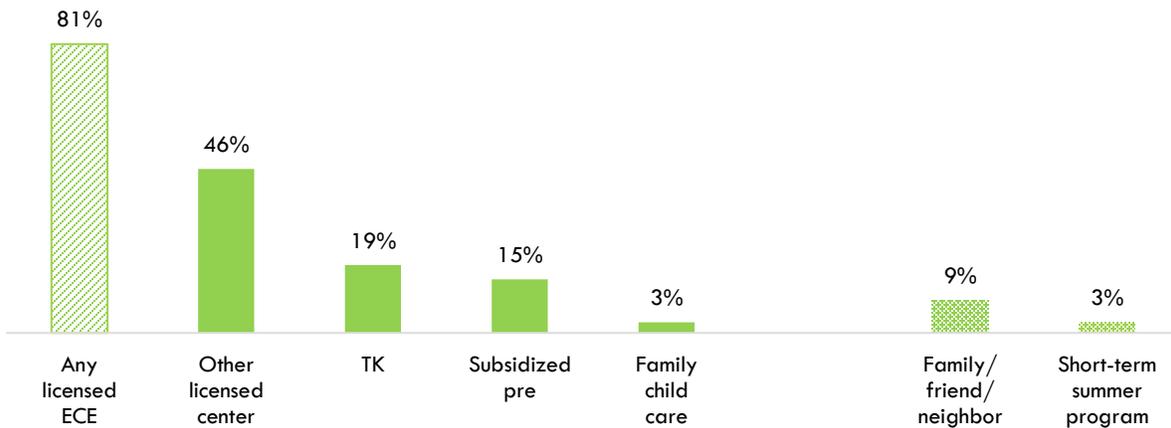
Source: Parent Information Form (2019). Children may have had more than one type of special need.

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education experiences (ECE) play a critical role in children’s readiness. Although it wasn’t a significant predictor of readiness in the current study, other research has consistently shown that children who receive high-quality formal ECE have higher school readiness; in particular, publicly funded preschool programs such as Head Start have reduced the readiness gaps between children from disadvantaged settings and their more affluent peers (Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2005). In the Yuba County school readiness sample, 81% of the children had attended licensed ECE, including Transitional Kindergarten (TK; 19%), free or low-cost preschool, including Head Start (15%), another type of center-based preschool (46%), and/or a licensed family child care home (3%). Additionally, 9% of children were cared for by family, friends, or neighbors, and 3% of the children had attended a short-term summer pre-K program.



Figure 25. Early Childhood Education Experience

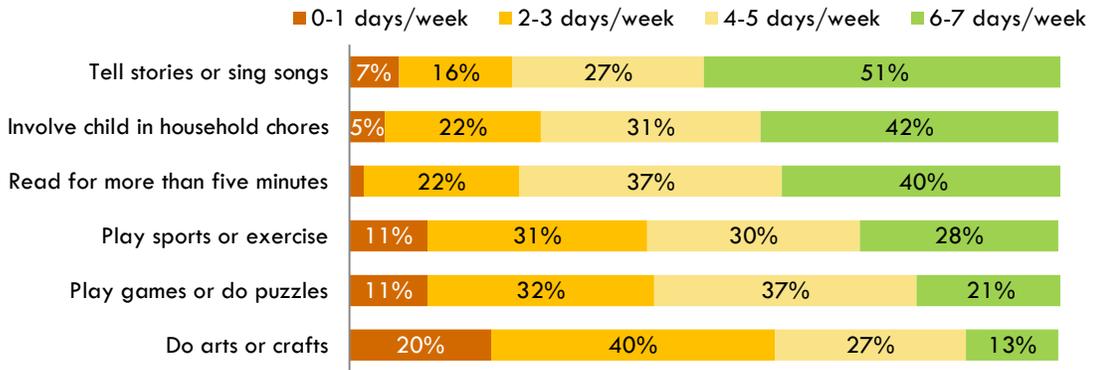


Source: Kindergarten Observation Form, Parent Information Form (2019). N=93-102. Respondents could choose multiple options.

Family Activities and Routines at Home

The chart below indicates the frequency with which Yuba County families engage in various activities with their children. A majority of the families told stories or sang songs (78%), involved their child in household chores (73%), read with their child (77%), played sports or exercised (58%), and played games or did puzzles (58%), at least four times per week. Families did arts and crafts with their children somewhat less frequently.

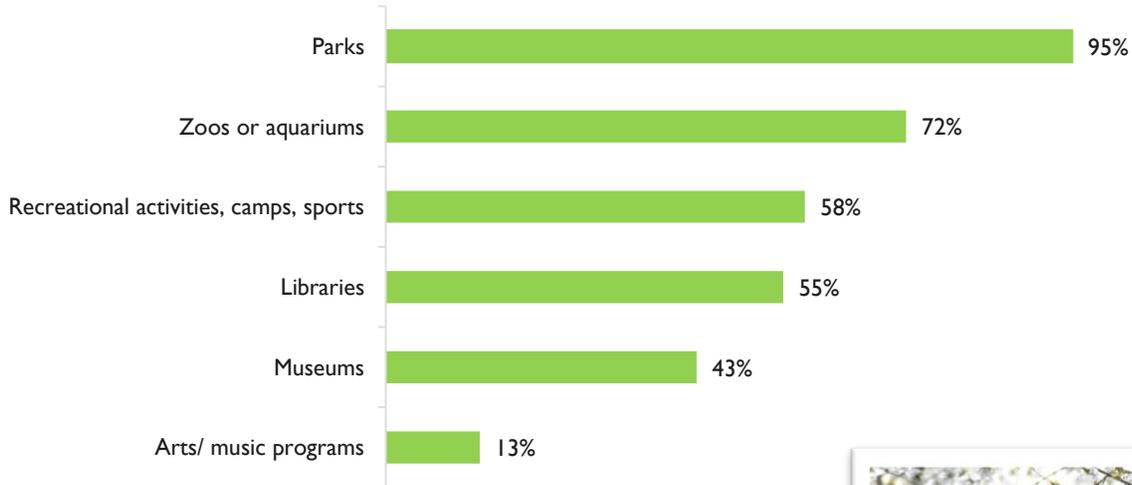
Figure 26. Frequency of Family Activities per Week



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=93. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Parents may also use external resources to enrich their children’s early experiences and engage with their children. The table below summarizes the use of such community resources among the sample. Almost all parents (95%) had visited parks in the last year. More than half of the parents had visited zoos or aquariums (72%), attended recreational activities, camps, or sports (58%), or visited a library with their child (55%). The least frequently used resources were museums (43%) and arts/music programs (13%).

Figure 27. Parent Use of Community Resources



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=93.

Children’s sleep behavior is closely related to their health and well-being, which is important for school readiness. Although the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP, 2016a) does not have a recommended bedtime, they suggest that children aged 3-5 sleep 10 to 13 hours each day. In the fall readiness assessment sample, 88% of children went to bed by 9:00 PM.

The AAP (2016b) also recommends that young children aged 2-5 get no more than one hour of “screen time” per day, which



includes time spent watching television or videos, using mobile devices, or playing video or computer games. We also found that children with less screen time on the weekends tended to have higher readiness levels. About 58% of children in the sample met the APA recommendations during weekdays, whereas only 19% were exposed to no more than one hour of screen time on the weekends.

Figure 28. Bedtime and Screen Time Routines

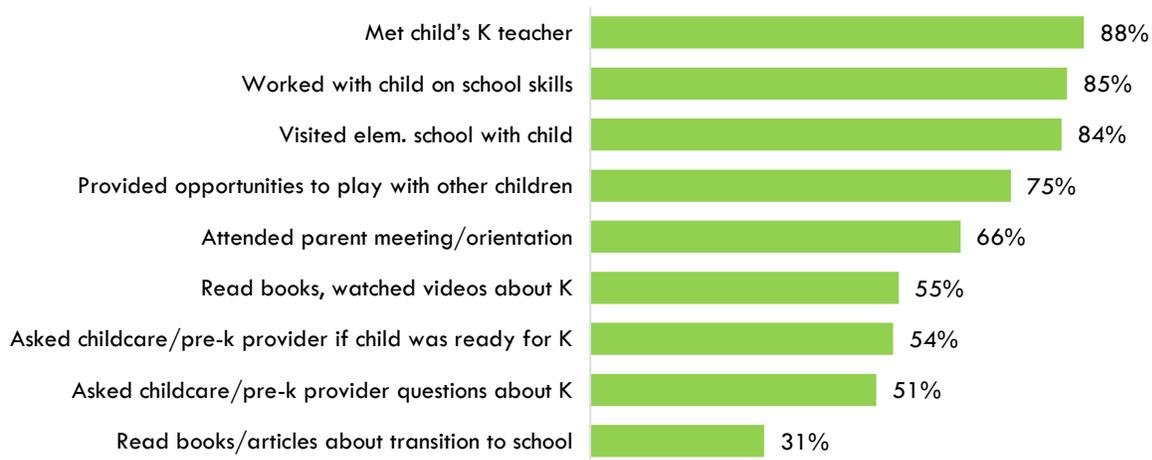
		Percentage
CHILD'S BEDTIME	Before 8:00	25%
	8:00	29%
	8:30	22%
	9:00	12%
	After 9:00	12%
CHILD'S SCREEN TIME on WEEKDAYS	Less than 1 hour	25%
	1 hour	33%
	2 hours	36%
	3 hours	4%
	4 hours	1%
	More than 4 hours	1%
CHILD'S SCREEN TIME on WEEKENDS	Less than 1 hour	4%
	1 hour	15%
	2 hours	37%
	3 hours	20%
	4 hours	18%
	More than 4 hours	5%

Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=93. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Family Support and Preparation for Kindergarten

Parents also indicated the types of activities they had engaged in to promote their child’s transition to school. The most common readiness activity reported by parents was meeting their child’s kindergarten teacher (88%), working with the child on school skills (85%), visiting the school with the child (84%), and providing opportunities for the child to play with other children (75%).

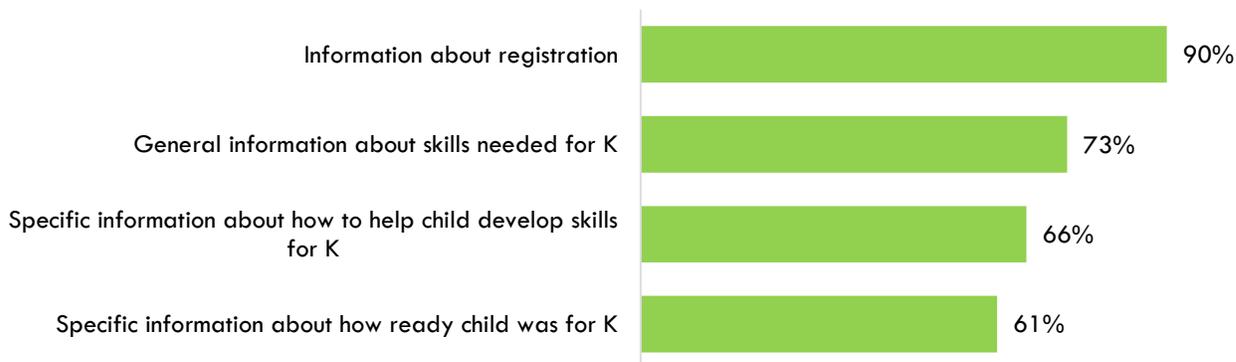
Figure 29. Parent Engagement in Kindergarten Readiness Activities



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=93.

Most parents said they received information about kindergarten prior to school entry. Receiving a greater number of types of information about the kindergarten transition was correlated with higher readiness among children in the sample. When asked what kind of information they received about kindergarten, 90% of parents said they received information about how and when to register their child for school, and 73% of parents said they received general information about the skills all children need for kindergarten. Also, 66% of parents said they received specific information about how to help their child develop the skills for kindergarten, and 61% said they received specific information about how ready their child was for kindergarten.

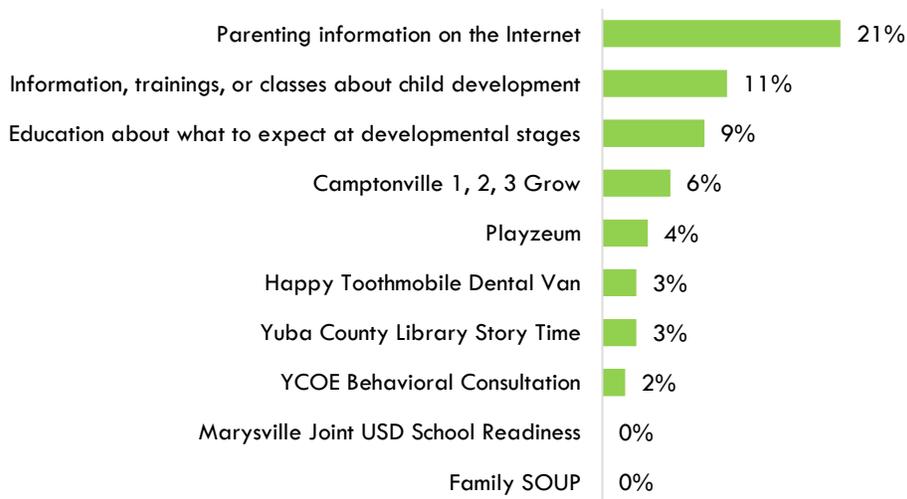
Figure 30. Information Received about Kindergarten



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=91-93.

Parents were also asked about the types of parenting services they had received, some of which are supported by First 5 Yuba. The greatest number of parents said they accessed parenting information on the Internet (21%), followed by information, trainings, or classes about child development (11%).

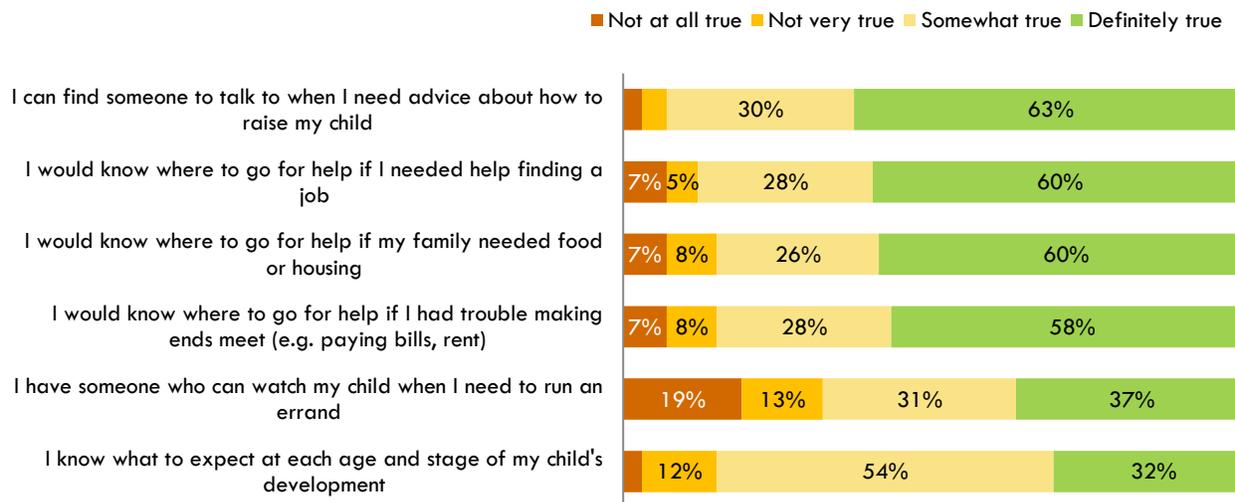
Figure 31. Parenting Resources



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=90.

Parents reported relatively high levels of parenting and basic needs support. The majority of parents said that they “definitely” have someone that they can talk to when they need advice about raising their child (63%), and are confident that they know where to go if they needed help making ends meet (58%), finding a job (60%), or accessing food or housing (60%). Parents were somewhat less likely to strongly agree that they had someone to watch their child if they needed to run an errand (37%) and say that they “definitely” know what to expect at each age and stage of child development (32%).

Figure 32. Parenting and Basic Needs Support



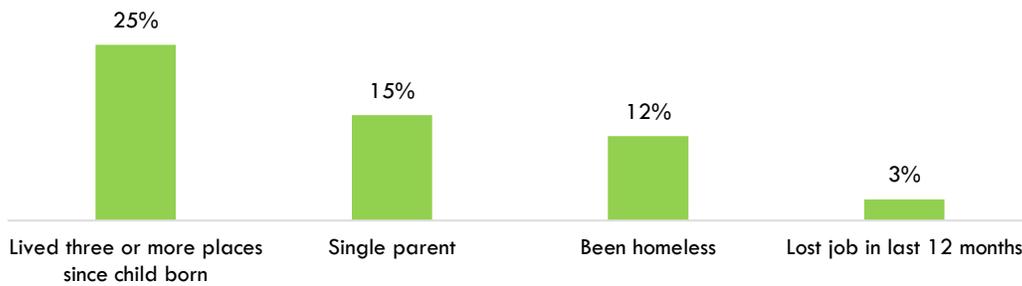
Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=93. Percentages less than 5% not labeled.

Family Risk Factors and Stress

Parents reported potential risk markers for their families as well. According to their responses, 15% of the students were being raised in single parent households. In addition, 3% of parents had lost a job in the past year. Approximately one-quarter of students had lived in at least three different places since they were born, and 12% had reportedly experienced homelessness (which could have entailed sleeping in hotels, staying with family or friends, sleeping in their car, staying in a shelter, or living on the street).



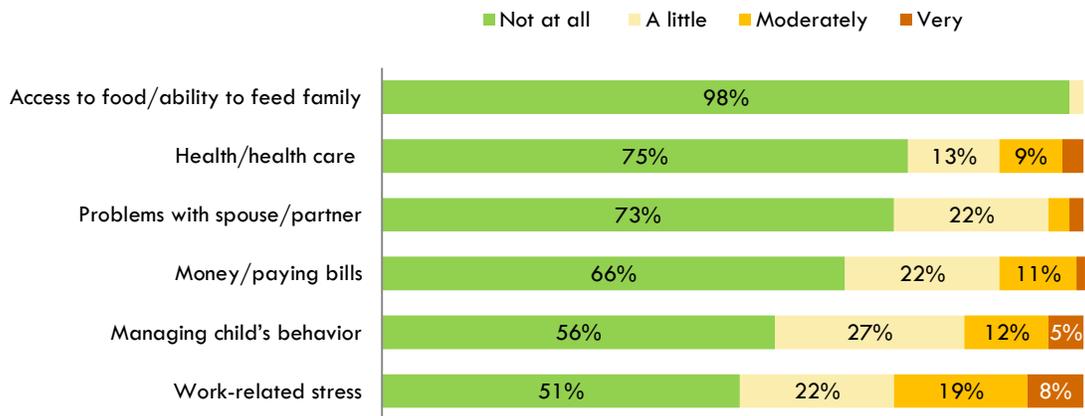
Figure 33. Family Risk Factors



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=92-93.

High levels of stress may interfere with families’ ability to support their children’s readiness, and in the current study, parents who reported high levels of stress had children with lower readiness scores. A quarter of parents (27%) were “moderately” or “very” concerned about work. For 17% of parents managing their child’s behavior was at least a moderate concern, and 13% were at least moderately concerned about money/paying bills. Parents were somewhat less concerned about health or healthcare, problems with their spouse or partner, and access to food.

Figure 34. Parent Concern about Family, Work, and Basic Needs Issues



Source: Parent Information Form (2019). N=93. Percentages less than 5% not labeled.

Summary and Implications

The 2019 Yuba County School Readiness Assessment measured the readiness levels of entering kindergarten students, developed a profile of these children and their families, and identified the strongest predictors of school readiness. The study found that **64% of entering kindergartners were Fully Ready** across all domains of readiness (*Self-Regulation, Social Expression, and Kindergarten Academics*), 12% were *Not Ready* in any domain of readiness, and the remaining 24% were ready in one or two domains. Children were most likely to be ready in the areas of *Social Expression* (especially the ability to express empathy or caring for others) and somewhat less ready in *Self-Regulation* (particularly handling frustration well) and *Kindergarten Academics* (especially knowing the alphabet).

The study also found that school readiness in Yuba County was significantly and independently predicted by being older and not having a special need as well as coming to school healthy and well-fed. Although they did not account for additional variability in kindergarten readiness above and beyond the three primary predictors of readiness, higher child resilience, receiving more kindergarten readiness information, less screen time, and less caregiver stress were also associated with higher readiness scores. Recommendations to address the correlates of readiness most amenable to intervention include the following:

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- ▶ Provide families education on how they can improve their child's health through nutrition and physical activity
- ▶ Connect eligible families to CalFresh and WIC for nutrition support

SCREEN TIME

- ▶ Educate families on the benefits of replacing screen time with healthy and enriching activities like reading and active play
- ▶ Identify and address barriers to minimizing screen time, including lack of time and stress levels among parents

KINDERGARTEN READINESS INFORMATION

- ▶ Ensure parents receive information about the kindergarten transition, including how to register and how to help their child develop kindergarten readiness skills
- ▶ Encourage early childhood providers to support families in their care by providing information and resources about what to expect and how to prepare for the transition to kindergarten

STRESS

- ▶ Connect families to basic needs, employment, and income supports to reduce stress around making ends meet
- ▶ Provide mental health and social supports to alleviate parenting and relationship stress

RESILIENCE

- ▶ Expand access to early developmental screenings and screenings for adverse childhood experiences
 - ▶ Train providers serving young children and their families on social-emotional learning and trauma-informed care
-

In addition to identifying factors linked to readiness, the study showed that **families who had been connected to a First 5 Yuba-funded service demonstrated significantly higher engagement** in family activities and kindergarten preparation relative to other families. Together with its partners across the county, First 5 Yuba is providing a crucial support for families to help them prepare children 0-5 for kindergarten and beyond. The brain grows faster in the first five years of life than at any other time, and thus investing in proven and successful programs for young children comes with a high rate of return (García, Heckman, Leaf, & Prados, 2017), significantly improving an array of health, education, and economic outcomes well into adulthood.



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