

Summary Kindergarten Readiness Conversation

September 27, 2011 Runnells Hall

45 total participants – 40 attendees and 5 team members gathered to discuss the issue of Kindergarten Readiness in Carroll County. Participants included early childhood educators, Kindergarten teachers, principals, superintendent, parents, librarians, and community members from across the county. Interest in improving the well-being of all children in the county was clearly evident in the lively dialogue throughout the meeting.



Open questions/possible action areas identified by participants:

- How to increase access to preschool/universal access? How cover costs?
- How to reach families that most need support?
- How to connect Kindergarten and preschool programs/educators regarding readiness and understanding what each other's programs look like in the months before and after transition. K teachers don't know who the kids are yet.
- Modify/Redefine definition of "Ready for Kindergarten". Change title?
- What are the best ways to use the "Readiness Definition" & should there be more than one version?

Observations of "key" points:

- There are varying perspectives about what Kindergarten Readiness means.
- Deep commitment to increasing the success of all children.
- Agreement that helping more children come to school ready to learn is a shared responsibility of families, schools, preschools and the community.
- Visit each other's classrooms was an idea that resonated. Share information between Kindergarten programs and early childhood.
- Grandparents are raising kids.
- Libraries are great resources (town and school)
- Different expectations of kids in different Kindergarten classrooms.

Discussion Summary. This weaves together verbal "report outs" and discussion plus the written table notes. The comments from the table notes are indicated by a "*".

Question 1 Discussion: *When you talk about the idea of Kindergarten readiness, what do you mean? In other words, what would a child who is ready for Kindergarten look like?*

Emotional Development

Use of words & communication	Excited and ready to go to school
Caring for others & self	Follow Routines
Express concerns for others & self	*Complete tasks and be proud of accomplishments
Confidence in self	
Eager/desire to learn/ happy/smiling	*Can separate from parents

* from table notes

Social Development

Socially ready	*Play with friends
Follow directions	*Share/take turns/empathy for others/relationships
Taking cues from peers	
Self-help skills (bathroom, wash hands)	*Social interaction - line, sit in circle
Sit & listen	*Respond appropriately to adults

Math

Patterning	Reaching Developmental Milestones (potty trained, sitting, waiting turns, etc.)
Follow simple sequence	Rhythm & Rhyme
Recognizing numbers and letters	*Shape recognition
Rote counting	
Numbers up to 10	

Ready Families/Children/Communities

Whole family readiness	*Schools to let pre-schools know what they expect
Families bring parental values to children's readiness	*Families who look forward to going to Kindergarten
Life experiences impact growth & development	*Rich vocabulary experiences/Parents talking to child
Community Resources	

Language/Vocabulary

Exposure to print. Read to.	*Sing alphabet
Emerging writing and drawing skills	*Print concepts - front/back of book and left to right
Emerging literacy (listening, learning)	
Own name	

Physical Development

Fine motor & Gross motor skills	*Ability to sustain a 4-6 hour day (four full day K) without too much fatigue
Physical health	
Nutrition/eaten breakfast	

Other

*Singing	Pallet - range of everything
*Curiosity	Give voice to the child
*Color recognition	*Are we talking individual children, the whole family, community, school?
Play is vital	

Question 2 Discussion

Look at the working definition of Kindergarten Readiness. Does this capture what you have heard this evening? If not, how should it be changed? Could this serve as a working definition for Carroll County? Please see the existing Working Definition, addendum 1.

All groups answered that the Working Definition for Kindergarten Readiness largely reflected what they had heard during the previous discussion. Below is feedback about possible language changes and possible additions.

Language/style Feedback

- Change Ready Families, too fancy. Aim for 5th grade reading level.
- Be more specific.
- Trouble with indicators being applied to “all” children.
- *Too black & white
- Not all criteria needs to be met to be ready
- Strong foundation for learning rather than list.
- “Each” child, “each” family, “each” school
- *Language may be too strong. Need a qualifier for some children who will never be able to do these things.

General feedback/ideas:

- Meeting face to face with families
- Emotional/Social attributes are key
- Housing kindergarten & pre-schools within schools
- No computer interaction below Kindergarten
- Consider different definition for families and school
- Community components vs. rigid definition
- Visitations between preschool and Kindergarten teachers prior to transition
- * No computer at all! Need manipulative and social experience that the computer not only cannot give but takes away from.
- *Practice with connection with each other/community/emotional/social/even spiritual/accepting diversity
- *Peaceful emphasis & expectation with each other & community & environment

Comments re: ready families & ready communities

- Teaching their children
- Ready families is difficult to get to
- Keep “Ready Families” simple – loved, fed, cared for. Reduce stress.
- Communities are not ready to support kids in quality programs – Money for preschools
- *Parents need to be taught how to work with their children
- *Home visits
- *Easily achievable for kids who’ve gone to preschool/daycare, etc.
- *Parents don’t understand their role as their child’s primary teachers. Parents think of them as being separate from school
- *Are parents more involved if their kids have had preschool? Not necessarily.
- *How would you get it to parents?
- *Add some simple activities or examples to help parents

Specific suggested additions or changes:

Possible language changes:

These suggestions are already in the document using different language.

- + *Verbally* expresses wants & needs (emotional)
- + Strive for positive separation from parents – different language but same concept (emotional)
- + Recognizes letters (language/vocabulary)

Change “All Carroll County children” sentence to –

- Each Carroll County child will be ready to succeed when he or she enters Kindergarten demonstrating a variety of the following indicators.
- All Carroll County children will have a solid foundation when they enter Kindergarten based upon the following indicators

Suggested additions

*More math skills – time, year and 1–1 correspondence (math)

* Classification/sorting to (language & math)

*Follows simple oral instructions; sequence of 3 (social)

*Exposure to imagination, life experiences, sequencing games, curiosity (other)

*Eager to learn (emotional)

*Nutrition & proper diet (physical)

*Attentiveness and taking turns (social development)

*Multisensory experiences! Different textures, weights, sizes, sounds, tastes, shapes, etc. (other)

* Add New Column – Cognitive – ready to learn, rested & fed

- Intellectual curiosity
- Imagination
- Problem–solver
- Able to relate their life experience
- Memory, games, sequencing

Question 3

What are you currently doing regarding Kindergarten readiness? What would you like to be doing?

Town/school	Currently doing	Would like to be doing
Wakefield	K-screening (OT & PT) Parent Tips List Assessment Sheet Visit k-teacher, nurse, social worker K-Readiness workshop (spring), Train the Trainer by PIRC	Link to HS students for after-school (community service) Thursday Night - Family Resource Group K-Readiness workshop earlier in the year
Moultonborough	Send books home Literacy boxes in library Parents on facebook	Invite Pre-K kids and families to library Resource Ctr. Needed in Carroll Cty. for grandparents
Gov. Wentworth	Good communication among schools, preschools & Kindergarten Day Care & preschool communication Library Story time K-Registration (spring); informal	Increase library access Expand screening Give parents resources to use with kids at home. Increase funding for access for all kids
SAU 13	Intensive Screening (May) Library story-times Altrusa book bags (newborns) Believe in Books Good communication with preschools & Kindergarten Invite preschools Advocate for full day Kindergarten Pre-K with disabilities access to specialists in school	Increase marketing to parents & doctors. Grocery bags one idea.
SAU 9	Different preschools meet different needs Preschools each have different approaches Out-reach to preschools Conway area programs meet monthly (learning, communication, planning) Parent information nights	Increase education to parents Increase communication across and within same levels of programs for consistent expectations Increase outreach to families who don't send kids to preschools

Question 3 Table notes

Table A

Already doing (Wakefield)

Kindergarten screening

Kindergarten readiness workshop with parents

Want to do:

Readiness workshop earlier in the fall

Peer/preschool mentor (use hs students) provide parents

Table B

Currently doing:

Communicating with school (preschools)

- Talk to K teachers, principals
- Serve on committees together
- Try to collaborate
- K teachers have helped preschool teachers to get kids “ready”
- Preschool teachers may make special education referrals (district)

Can do or would like to do:

- Provide more funding, more accessible preschool services for all children
- Provide more thorough parent education to those who are coming to K the next year.
- Provide more thorough screening at K registration
- Give parents a “kit” or suggestions for home practice/building readiness skills ahead of K

Table C

Want to do:

- Send out books
- Literacy boxes available to families
- Resource center easily available to Carroll County families, grandparents, single parents
- Contact info through email, facebook

Table D

Preschools are all doing what they think is best of kids

Kindergarten screening for all

Kindergarten readiness

Reaching more families

Childhood Readiness & Success Team

Community definition for “kindergarten readiness”



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

Ready Children. A ready child is prepared socially, personally, physically and intellectually, consistent with current child development knowledge including the NH Early Learning Guidelines. Children develop holistically; growth and development in one area depends upon development in other areas.

Ready Families. A ready family has adults who understand they are the most important people in the child’s life and take responsibility for the child’s school readiness through direct, frequent, and positive involvement and interest in the child. Parents and other caregivers recognize their role as the child’s first and most important life-long teacher, providing steady and supportive relationships, ensuring safe and consistent environments, promoting good health, and fostering curiosity, excitement about learning, determination, and self-control.

Ready Schools. A ready school accepts all children and provides a seamless transition to a high-quality learning environment by engaging the whole community. A ready school welcomes all children with opportunities to enhance and build confidence in their skills, knowledge and abilities. Children in ready schools are led by skilled teachers, who recognize, reinforce, and extend children’s strengths and who are sensitive to cultural values and individual differences. A ready school recognizes the importance of the partnership between parents and schools.

Ready Communities. A ready community plays a crucial part in supporting families in their role as primary stewards of children’s readiness. Ready communities, including businesses, faith based organizations, early childhood service providers, community groups and local governments, work together to support children’s school and long term success by providing families affordable access to information, services, high quality child care, and early learning opportunities.

All Carroll County children will be ready to succeed when they enter kindergarten, based upon the following indicators:

Emotional Development

- Can be away from parents/family without being upset
- Follows simple rules and routines
- Expresses his/her own wants and needs
- Expresses concern for other people’s feelings

Social Development

- Gets along with others
- Understands the meaning of the word “no”
- Shares with others
- Knows basic table manners (can sit at the table and use a cup, fork and spoon)
- Participates in large and small group activities
- Listens to adults/others and follows simple instructions
- Works with others reasonably well

Physical Development and Care

- Has visited the doctor and dentist
- Can mostly dress independently, including shoes, buttons, zippers, coats and jackets
- Can meet toileting needs independently
- Can run, jump, hop and climb
- Can use pencils, crayons and scissors in some fashion

Language / Vocabulary

- Tries to write first name
- Tells the difference between print and pictures
- Prints or scribbles notes, letters and stories
- Recognizes own name in print
- Holds a book correctly
- Recognizes letters of the alphabet (upper case and some lower case)
- Listens to stories read to them
- Tells that print/words and not pictures are being read
- Uses 5-6 word sentences
- Recognizes and says simple rhymes
- Sings simple songs
- Uses language to resolve conflicts

Math

- Counts to 10
- Sorts objects by color, size or shape
- Understands simple concepts of time (example: day, night, today, tomorrow, yesterday)
- Understands up and down, over and under, and in and out