

Carroll County K–6 School Survey Summary Brief

Opportunities for Improving School Readiness

Prepared by Carroll County United Childhood Readiness and Success Team



INTRODUCTION – The Carroll County United Childhood Readiness and Success Team conducted an elementary school questionnaire during the 2010/2011 school year. The survey contained questions about early childhood learning, Kindergarten “readiness”, tracking children’s school progress, and goal setting as well as volunteerism and community involvement. All of the schools in Carroll County were invited to contribute. This summary contains information from 14 of the 15 elementary schools in Carroll County. **The full report can be found at CarrollCountyUnited.org.**

SUMMARY BRIEF – The early learning landscape looks very different from one area of the county to another and is influenced by factors such as local resources as well as varying approaches to early learning. In particular, there is a wide variation in the percentage of students ready for Kindergarten in the county from 50% to 90+%. Likewise there are wide variations in the percentage of students coming to school with some sort of pre–school experience, ranging from 49% to 100%. **(Note: Because there is not a common definition of “Kindergarten Readiness” nor common screening tools used across our schools, we urge caution in making hard comparisons from one school to another.)**

Schools use a wide–variety of tools to assess or screen incoming Kindergarten children. Most of the time that information is compiled at the classroom or school level (not the district level) and is most frequently used to place a child in a particular classroom or identify whether the child might need or qualify for supportive services.

Preparing children for Kindergarten is not a specific expectation of public schools, except for the students who are enrolled in public pre–school programs. However, many schools do offer some sort of resource such as hand–outs to parents on Kindergarten screening days or “step–up” days. In Carroll County one school offers Kindergarten readiness workshops for parents and another school offers a 3–day K–readiness summer program to prepare students before school begins.

The community–based organizations most frequently cited as helping to prepare children for Kindergarten are the local libraries and various pre–school or childcare programs.

Though this question was not specifically asked, it is noted that there appears to be a trend of more schools offering a full–day Kindergarten program.

SOME OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE SCHOOL READINESS

- Consider adopting a common definition of Kindergarten Readiness among early childhood educators and public schools.
- Bring early childhood educators, Kindergarten teachers, community organizations and parents together to explore ways to work together to increase the percentage of children coming to school “ready to learn. “
- Train those working with parents how to coach parents to support their child’s learning.