

Howard County

Ready for Kindergarten (R4K)

In school year 2014-2015, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) launched Ready for Kindergarten (R4K): Maryland's Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System to align with the State's more rigorous PreK-12 College and Career-Ready Standards. R4K is a developmentally appropriate assessment system for young children that builds on the success of the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR), which was the statewide assessment tool in use from 2001 to 2013.

R4K articulates what we expect young children to know and do upon kindergarten entry in order to be on the path of academic success. R4K has two components:

- An Early Learning Assessment (ELA) measures the progress of learning in young children, 36 to 72 months (3 to 6 years old), across nine levels in seven domains.
- A Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). The KRA is a developmentally appropriate observational and assessment tool that is administered to incoming public school kindergarteners. It measures the school readiness of each child in four domains: Language & Literacy, Mathematics, Social Foundations, and Physical Well-Being & Motor Development.



Measuring Kindergarten Readiness

At the start of each school year, teachers use the KRA tool, which relies on developmentally appropriate performance tasks and observations of children's work and play, to measure specific skills and behaviors that children bring with them to school and should have mastered prior to entering kindergarten. The data provide vital information about the status of kindergarten readiness statewide and in each jurisdiction. It helps teachers and families learn about each child's strengths and areas where more support and practice is needed. The data inform classroom instruction and guide the future actions of early childhood programs, school leaders, community leaders, and policy makers.

Kindergarten readiness levels are identified as:

- **Demonstrating Readiness** – a child demonstrates the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for curriculum based on the kindergarten standards.
- **Approaching Readiness** – a child exhibits some of the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for curriculum based on the kindergarten standards.
- **Emerging Readiness** – a child displays minimal foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for curriculum based on the kindergarten standards.

Children whose readiness skills and behaviors are "approaching" and/or "emerging" require differentiated instruction, targeted assistance, or interventions to be successful in kindergarten.

The Time Is Now: Make It Count

Too many children are coming to school unprepared to succeed in kindergarten. MSDE and its stakeholders across the state are committed to improving kindergarten readiness and supporting the needs of young children, but we need the help of all jurisdictional leaders, policy makers, schools, early care and education programs, and families to make this happen.



Developed in partnership with and support from the Maryland State Department of Education.

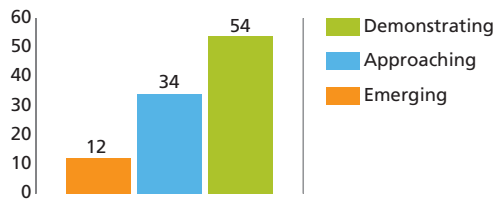
Visit www.ReadyAtFive.org for Readiness Matters 2016: statewide publication, statewide issue brief and PowerPoint, customized jurisdictional issue briefs and PowerPoints, information for families, and a business brief. Scan here to see more jurisdictional data:



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Kindergarten Readiness



Population Data U.S. Census Bureau, 2013

Children < 5 (age 0-4) 17,970

Public School Demographics

Maryland Department of Education, School Year 2015-2016

Kindergarten Students 3,638

Kindergarten Ethnicity

- American Indian (45% demonstrate readiness) 0.3%
- Asian (54%) 22.5%
- African American (41%) 21.1%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (69%) 0.4%
- White (65%) 38.3%
- Hispanic (35%) 11.2%
- Two or More Races (62%) 6.3%

Kindergarteners by Subgroup

- Children with Disabilities (25%) 8.5%
- English Language Learners (22%) 12.5%
- Free/Reduced Priced Meal Status (30%) 22.1%

PreK Students: Age 4 & 5 (47%)

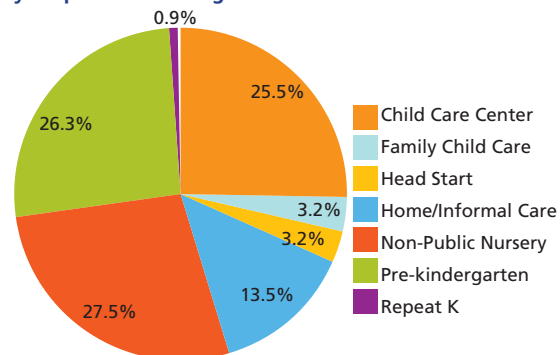
- Full-Day Program 25.7%
- Half-Day Program 74.3%

Source: Maryland State Department of Education. The numbers listed above in parenthesis indicate the percent of kindergarteners assessed that demonstrate readiness; an (*) indicates that there are fewer than 5 students in this cohort. The PreK enrollment data reflect only the children served in public school settings. It does not include children participating in community-based PreK programs (e.g. child care facilities, Head Start), which are funded by a federal PreK expansion grant and an annual State match. Data presented may not total 100% due to rounding.

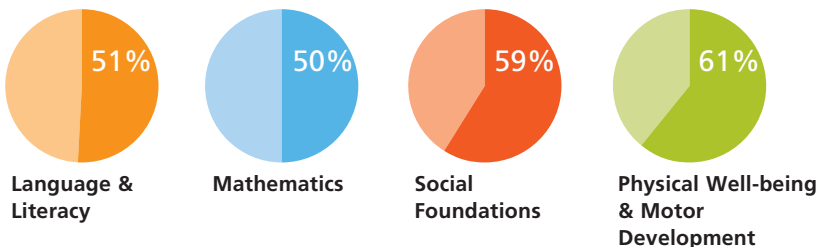
Prior Care Data

Prior Care Enrollment**

26% of the County's children were enrolled in PreK the year prior to Kindergarten.



Demonstrating Readiness by Domains of Learning



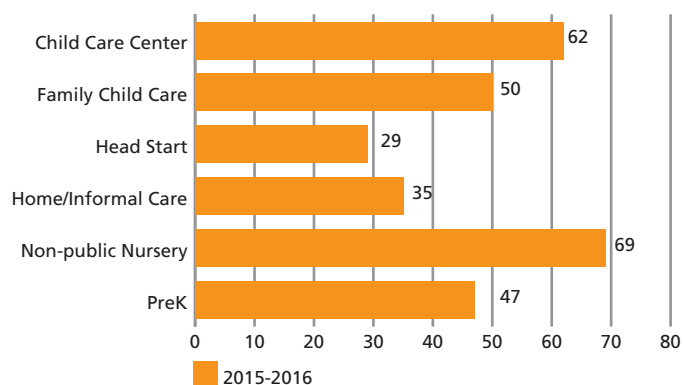
Achievement Gap Data

Children from three subgroups continue to enter school without the skills and behaviors needed to succeed in kindergarten and may require more instructional support or targeted interventions. As a result, there are achievement gaps between children from these subgroups and kindergarteners as a whole.

Status	Percentage	Gap
Disability Status		
25% Children w/ Disability		31 pts
56% Children w/o Disability		
Language Status		
22% English Language Learners		36 pts
58% English Proficient		
Income Status		
30% Children from Low-Income Households		30 pts
60% Children from Mid- to High-Income Households		

Demonstrating Readiness by Prior Care

47% of kindergarteners previously attending PreK programs demonstrate readiness and are within 7 points of their County peers (54%).



**Prior Care Enrollment denotes the early care & education setting of children, as reported by parents, the year prior to kindergarten (i.e. school year 2014-2015). Some prior care settings have enrollment criteria. For example, Head Start and public PreK serve children from low-income households and children with disabilities—two subgroups that have consistently had significantly lower school readiness than Maryland kindergarteners as a whole, and that are considered at risk.