Meeting the Challenge: Maryland's Early Learning Response to COVID-19

EARLY LEARNING SNAPSHOT

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MARCH

INITIAL SCHOOL CLOSURES

On March 12, 2020, Dr. Karen Salmon and Governor Larry Hogan announced a two-week school closure (through 3/27/20) for all public schools.

CLOSURES EXTEND TO CHILD CARE

On March 26, 2020, the school building closure was extended through April 24, 2020. During this time, virtual learning was offered in each school system. In addition, the state mandated an indefinite closure of child care facilities.

APRIL

EPCC BEGINS

On March 30, 2020, registered child care providers began offering care for children of essential personnel only (EPCC).

SCHOOL CLOSURES EXTENDED

On April 17, 2020, the announcement was made to continue the mandatory school closures through May 15, 2020.

Meeting the Challenge: Maryland's Early Learning Response to COVID-19

Educators, students, and families will never forget how the world changed in March 2020. While the true impact of COVID-19 has not yet been realized, Maryland's early learning leaders, providers, and families quickly shifted to virtual instruction and launched protective measures to ensure safe child care. The first confirmed positive COVID-19 case in Maryland was identified at the end of March. At that point, Governor Larry Hogan and State Superintendent Dr. Karen Salmon had already made the determination to close schools for two weeks. What followed was an immediate and unprecedented switch to universal online learning throughout the state for the remainder of the school year. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the educational landscape in Maryland and caused a dramatic shift in the early learning community.

Due to the virtual start of the school year in all local school systems, it was not possible to appropriately administer the state Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in the fall of 2020-2021. Instead of reporting on kindergarten readiness, we chose to take this opportunity to find out how the early learning community responded to the impacts of the pandemic. For the purposes of this document, Maryland's early learning community includes young children and their families, local school systems, licensed child care providers and state and local agencies, Maryland's Infants and Toddlers Program, Judy Centers, nonprofit organizations, and many more.

For many years, Ready At Five has reported on the state of school readiness in Maryland. This year, we too had to adapt. What follows is our effort to document the unprecedented response to COVID-19 among Maryland's early care and education systems. To gather this information, Ready At Five sent a survey to early learning administrators in each school district in early November. The survey asked questions about PreK and kindergarten over three time periods spanning the two school years impacted by the pandemic to date: Spring (March 30-May 31), Summer (June 1-August 31), and Fall (September 1-November 1) of 2020. Unless otherwise noted, information in this publication regarding local responses was gathered from this survey. Ready At Five also sent out an anonymous survey to child care providers. For more information regarding Maryland's Statewide response to COVID-19 and specific plans for reopening schools, please refer to *Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery* and *Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education*.

MAY

GRANTS AVAILABLE

On April 24, 2020, MSDE made grant payments of $2,000 available to child care programs participating in the EPCC program. Programs used grant funds to purchase PPE and cleaning supplies.

SCHOOLS CLOSED

On May 6, 2020, all public schools buildings were closed for the remainder of the school year.

EXPANDED CHILD CARE

On May 15, 2020, EPCC programs were allowed to expand capacity to include children of workers in newly reopened businesses who could self-pay.

> "We didn't allow fear of the unknown to keep us from serving our families."

CHILD CARE CENTER DIRECTOR, QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

As the pandemic unfolded nationwide, state governments were tasked with ensuring the health and safety of their citizens, including children, teachers, and other early care and education staff. It was essential for Maryland to respond proactively to the crisis. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) worked in conjunction with the Governor's Office and the Maryland Department of Health to minimize risk by closing school buildings and child care programs. Once it became clear that schools would not be reopening for in-person instruction for the remainder of the school year, local school systems (LSSs) were asked to develop reopening plans that relied on community health metrics and input from health professionals, school leaders, teachers, staff, and parents, to determine the best methods for safely and responsibly bringing teachers and children back to school.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Statewide changes of this magnitude meant that stakeholders from all areas of learning and development needed to be part of the discussion. To help engage and inform these important groups, MSDE convened a series of workgroups and committees, consisting of the following:

- Local school system superintendents
- Assistant superintendents for instruction
- Directors of special education services
- Career and technical education staff
- Student services
- Coordinators of counseling
- Advocates
- Membership associations

> "We are a small community and we have truly come together."

KAREN KARTEN, SOMERSET COUNTY EARLY LEARNING SUPERVISOR

These workgroups provided important insights about the complexities of implementing plans at the local level. Smaller workgroups were formed to deal with practical matters and logistics related to continuity of learning, high school graduation requirements, attendance policies, grading and reporting, child care, and supporting children with special needs and English learners. Recommendations from these groups helped state leaders "restore, reconstruct, and re-design education" even as LSSs were making their own determinations about returning to school.[1]

LOCAL EDUCATION RECOVERY PLANS

Each local school system quickly mobilized to finalize and share their reopening plans with MSDE and the State Board of Education by the state's deadline of August 14, 2020. Metrics from state and local health departments along with CDC guidance were used to design the plans. Each LSS also created a local stakeholder group that was representative of the school community to help weigh in on important decisions. LSSs were tasked with ensuring their virtual learning content was aligned with the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards and Framework. The LSS plans were required to reflect the state-level equity requirements and to continue to meet IDEA requirements for students receiving special services.

More practical and immediate matters specific to COVID-19 were also addressed in each local plan. School systems were required to outline their communication plans, how they would transport students, their processes for isolating ill students or staff, their cleaning and disinfecting practices, and coordination with the local health department. Details included new safety protocols

[1]Maryland State Department of Education. (2020). *Maryland together: Maryland's recovery plan for education.* http://marylandpublicschools.org/newsroom/Documents/MSDERecoveryPlan.pdf

for materials and cleaning, shared objects, physical barriers and the environment, masking requirements, water systems, communal spaces, ventilation, and food service.

Within these plans, LSSs had to think creatively about the best ways to support all students while maintaining a safe environment and creating contingency plans to ensure continuous instruction in the event of a rise in community infection. Maryland's school systems responded to the challenge and weighed important factors that could impact decisions, including equity and technology issues, the impacts of prolonged closure on mental health, and the need to prioritize the return of students receiving special services to in-person learning as quickly as possible. School systems implemented strategies including hybrid learning (a combination of in-person and virtual instruction), rotating schedules, small groups, synchronous and asynchronous virtual learning, and other methods of restructuring that would allow for distancing and safety measures to remain in place.

NUTRITION SERVICES

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP), administered by the United States Department of Agriculture, reimburses the cost of meals served in participating schools as long as the meals meet nutritional requirements.[2] Over 30 million school children a year are served through the NSLP. In Maryland schools alone, that number is almost 400,000 students.[3] With schools closed across the country, many children and families faced food insecurity during an already stressful time. In Maryland, the MSDE Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs (OSCNP) worked with local school systems to meet the increasing need in all of Maryland's communities by offering "Grab-N-Go" meals that could be picked up at convenient sites. Between April 1 and September 30, local school systems; private and residential schools; child, adult, and family day care centers; and other local agencies served almost 33,000,000 total meals through more than 4,500 sites during the time that schools were closed for in-person instruction.[4]

[2]Economic Research Service. (2020, October 1). National School Lunch Program. USDA. https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/child-nutrition-programs/national-school-lunch-program

[3]MSDE Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs. Local Education Agencies School Year 2018-2019 Official Number of Students Approved for Free and Reduced-Price and Percent of Enrollment by Agency as of October 31, 2018.

[4]Information provided by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs, Office for School Effectiveness.

> "The community has pulled together and the staff has been extraordinarily resilient and creative at meeting the present level of need."
>
> DR. KELLY MURRAY HALL, CHIEF OF EQUITY, ENGAGEMENT, AND EARLY ACCESS AT ST. MARY'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Early Learning Programs

As the nation reeled from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a growing awareness of the importance of high-quality child care. It became clear that no state could function without a plan in place to provide child care to the children of essential personnel, including frontline health care workers, delivery drivers, grocery store clerks, and pharmacy personnel. Maryland quickly mobilized to create the Essential Personnel Child Care (EPCC) and Essential Personnel School Age (EPSA) programs, allowing child care programs and local youth-serving organizations that could meet certain staff/child ratios and enforce strict cleaning and protective strategies to reopen and provide care for children of essential personnel. Essential personnel were defined as "employees whose duties are of such a nature as to require the employee to report for work or remain at the work site to continue agency operations during an emergency situation."[5] The State of Maryland, recognizing the critical role that child care plays in any recovery plan, put funding in place to cover the cost of care for these children in approved sites. Prior to the pandemic, there were over 7,800 licensed center-based or family child care providers serving children throughout Maryland. By March 30, 2020, just two weeks after shutdowns began and only one week from mandated statewide child care closures, there were 2,258 newly designated EPCC providers offering care to children of essential personnel. The number of available EPCC child care providers doubled by mid-June to 4,697. The state continued to make progress toward recovery, and by March 30, 2020, all programs were allowed to reopen with reduced capacity. By early November, there were over 6,600 licensed providers in operation statewide.

[5]State of Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, https://health.maryland.gov/ohr/Documents/tk-admin/Essential%20Employee%20definition%20on%20letterhead.pdf

Family and center-based child care programs faced significant challenges when dealing with the pandemic and its effects. Programs that opened to serve children of essential personnel had to meet increased restrictions on the number of children and staff allowed. Providers had to encourage children to wear masks and practice social distancing, modify the environment to create additional spaces for small groups, and increase their health and safety procedures. The costs associated with these mandated requirements, along with sharp decreases in tuition revenue, created significant economic challenges for the providers. They also struggled with widespread shortages of available personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies that were necessary to operate safely. Additionally, as COVID-19 cases increased over time, providers needed to develop concrete plans for communicating with families and staff and addressing instances when children showed signs of illness.

The MSDE Office of Child Care in the Division of Early Childhood responded to the need by identifying potential avenues of support. In addition to covering tuition costs for essential personnel and supporting programs with grant funding, the Office of Child Care provided guidance to providers about safely operating during the pandemic. Licensing specialists reviewed health and safety guidelines with providers who signed assurances that the guidelines would be followed prior to opening. An online health and safety module was developed to help providers gain a thorough understanding of how to protect their children, staff, and families. Resources for families and providers were posted online, and regional virtual roundtable sessions were held for providers. In addition, the Office of Child Care leadership held weekly listening sessions to get a better sense of how COVID-19 was impacting providers and their families in different communities, and to provide guidance for safely moving forward.

"Child care is finally being recognized as the essential resource that it is, not just to parents, but to children."[6]

Child care providers had their own sets of obstacles to address, including managing their personal health and safety and that of their families. Providers who participated in EPCC or reopened as the state relaxed guidelines were faced with the financial realities of reduced enrollment and changes in capacity, as well as increased costs associated with purchasing PPE and cleaning supplies and increasing staff to allow for social distancing.

"Staff were willing to support families and each other. Families were supportive and willing to follow new safety protocols."

CHILD CARE PROVIDER, MONTGOMERY COUNTY

[6]Mauskopf, S. (2020, December 02). *It's about time: Valuing child care in a post-pandemic world*. https://www.inc.com/sara-mauskopf/its-about-time-valuing-child-care-in-a-post-pandemic-world.html

PROVIDER VOICES

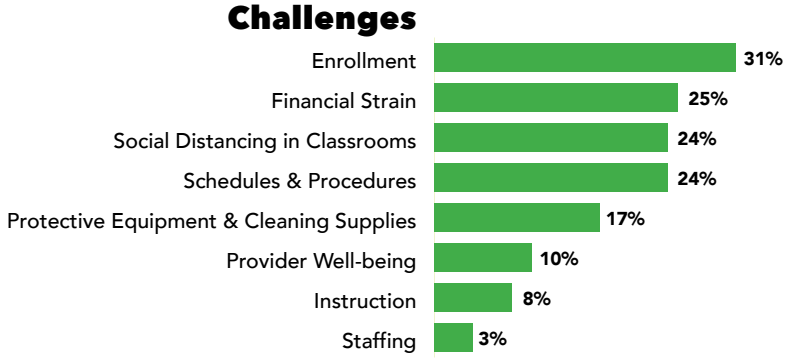
To better understand the experiences of child care providers in Maryland, Ready At Five distributed an online survey through *Tidbits*, a monthly e-newsletter from MSDE Division of Early Childhood that reaches over 70,000 recipients, including many child care providers. Participation was completely voluntary, and no incentives were offered for completion. Sixty-four providers from 15 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions completed the survey. Approximately 36% were from center-based child care programs, 55% were from family child care programs, 9% were from other settings.

Program closures were highly problematic for providers, especially in the early days of the pandemic. In the Spring of 2020, approximately 40% of respondents reported program closures. However, programs adapted quickly. By the following Fall, only 5% reported ongoing closings. Many providers who responded to our survey offered child care services for essential workers through EPCC (63%) or EPSA (16%). During periods of virtual schooling, parents often leaned on child care providers to supervise children during virtual learning. Just over half (54%) of the providers who responded to our survey provided supervision of virtual learning as a service at their child care centers/homes.

We asked providers to describe the greatest challenges they encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic. The most frequently mentioned challenges were reduced enrollment and financial strain. Providers noted that even when centers were open and complying with safety guidelines, many parents chose to keep children at home, which greatly impacted enrollment and income. Providers noted that it was difficult to get young children to maintain appropriate social distance and to wear masks (if over age 2). Getting sufficient cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment to keep programs open was also a major hurdle. Stores were sold out of common cleaning products like bleach and disinfecting spray, and there was a national shortage of medical-grade masks.

The responses from the child care provider survey indicated that lower enrollment and the increased communication between programs and families felt like a true collaboration, and providers believed that these challenges helped them to "bond with the parents a little more."[7] Providers noted that both they and their families had to remain flexible as ever-changing health metrics meant that statewide recommendations changed frequently, and many noted that these changes required the strength and resilience of their staff. Many providers stepped in to offer support and supervision for older children participating in virtual learning, alleviating the burden from families who needed to be at work. As one provider stated, "We will survive and thrive through anything."

[7]Ready At Five. (2020). *2020 child care providers survey*. https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CCProv2020



OUTREACH TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Many local school systems indicated that they reached out to child care providers in their jurisdictions. In some school systems, Judy Centers took the lead to provide curricular materials and supplies for remote learning. In Carroll County, for example, providers were invited to participate in a meeting to gather feedback about technology needs in an effort to learn about challenges and remove barriers. In Washington County, child care providers were invited to participate in professional development on technology and curriculum. In Anne Arundel and Allegany Counties, providers were active participants in conversations about needs, next steps, and possible future learning arrangements.

Keeping All Families Engaged

Research shows that family engagement is a consistent predictor of student achievement.[8] When schools closed and children began learning virtually from home, it became even more important to engage parents and families in their children's education. Through social media and a robust online presence, the Maryland Family Engagement Coalition encouraged families to talk about equity, race, and diversity by sharing a list of relevant children's books and hosting "Wednesday Watch Parties" where families participated in fun online learning activities.

HEAD START

Maryland's Head Start community also stepped in to help support families during the transition to virtual learning. Head Start programs include parent representation on the Policy Council, and these meetings were able to continue online. Programs maintained regular contact with families through email, text, and phone calls. Activities and resources were shared on social media pages, along with direct provision of food, formula, diapers, and learning materials through pick-ups and porch drop-offs. Staff continued to help families access necessary medical and dental screenings and services and to prepare and enhance health and safety practices to get ready for reopening.

The Judy Center in Harford County developed the "Make a Meal Monday" program to provide families with information, ideas, and recipes for healthy, affordable food options. Families could join online as meals were prepared and share their creations through web conferences.

JUDY CENTER EARLY LEARNING HUBS

Maryland's Judy Center program began in 2000 to provide support and create opportunities for families of children from birth to age 5 as they prepared for and entered kindergarten. There are currently 60 Judy Centers located in Title I schools throughout the state. Having already established relationships with families, the Judy Centers were uniquely positioned to meet the challenges caused by COVID-19. Even though school buildings were closed, the Judy Centers found creative ways to safely and remotely provide materials, resources, and support to their communities including the following:

- School readiness kits for toddlers and PreK students
- "Learn-at-Home" family engagement kits
- Classroom materials and manipulatives for PreK and K students to assist with virtual learning
- PPE for providers and families
- Virtual playgroups and provision of supplies and materials for participating families
- Materials and technology to child care providers to support children's virtual learning
- Virtual tutoring for students
- Virtual professional development for child care providers and teachers
- Technology for families who lacked access to virtual learning
- Supplemental meals and nutrition
- Books and reading materials to support home libraries

[8]Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. https://sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf

FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS

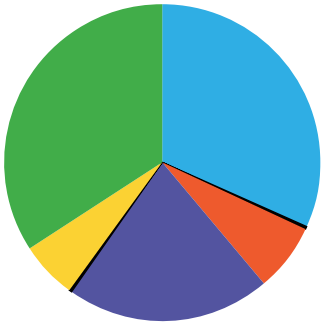
Maryland's 24 Family Support Centers (FSCs), located in 14 jurisdictions throughout the state, provided important functions to families impacted by the pandemic. Programs that were typically offered face-to-face, including home visiting, and parenting, GED, and ESOL classes, quickly shifted to virtual formats. Many families also benefited from referrals to local food resources and health and employment workshops. During the pandemic, FSCs were active in meeting the needs of families and young children:

- FSC staff delivered bags of food to families from local food pantries and other partners each week;
- Several staff served on referral lines and assisted with referrals for food and other resources;
- FSCs developed virtual instructional programming for their teen and adult parent classes including, virtual support groups and online programming in English as a second language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and General Educational Development (GED);
- Centers delivered parent/child activity bags once per week to enrolled families as well as their neighbors to support recruitment efforts;
- Some FSCs provided teen and adult parents with Chromebooks, tablets, and hotspots to facilitate their virtual classes to stay connected to the Center;
- FSCs provided health and employment workshops on-line;
- Partners provided students (with no equipment or internet access at home) with Chromebooks and hotspots:
- Virtual home visits were provided to families;
- Staff led drive-by graduation ceremonies, complete with cake, banners, and meals to participants attending high school programs in the FSC;
- Virtual story-time activities were conducted with children, which included reading and acting out stories;
- FSCs provided materials and supplies to families so they could engage in learning and development activities with their children as well as virtual trips to zoos and museums; and
- FSCs offered mental health consultations to parents, children, and staff.

2020-2021 Public School Demographics and Enrollment

The 2020-2021 demographics for kindergarten enrollment remain relatively unchanged from the prior school year, as do the percentages of the kindergarten population that qualify for special services, including children with disabilities and English learners.

Public School Kindergarten Demographics and Enrollment



2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

African American	32%
American Indian	<1%
Asian	7%
Hispanic/Latino	21%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<1%
Two or More	6%
White	34%

Maryland's families certainly felt the impact of the pandemic on all aspects of their lives. Parents who were considered essential workers sometimes found themselves locating child care during a period of limited capacity, while parents who were able to transition to working from home often had to work and care for children. And parents statewide became part of the virtual learning community as every local school system began the school year online. These challenges would have been difficult on their own but combined with rising unemployment rates and the health threat posed by COVID-19, many families in Maryland had to deal with multiple and competing priorities, often having financial impacts. Statewide, the percentage of students who were direct certified (identified by local school systems as qualifying for free and/or reduced price meals based on a household's use of other services[9]), increased from 22% in 2019-2020 to 29% in 2020-2021.[10]

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES	10%
ENGLISH LEARNERS	17%
DIRECT CERTIFICATION	29%

Additionally, some families may have decided to follow their school system's processes for formally waiving enrollment and chosen to home school this school year, or to enroll their child in a private or parochial school offering in-person or hybrid instruction. In fact, most local school systems showed a decrease in kindergarten enrollment.

Overall, statewide enrollment in the public school system PreK and kindergarten classrooms was lower in 2020-2021 than it was in 2019-2020.

	2019-2020	2020-2021
PUBLIC SCHOOL PREK[11]	32,182	23,609
PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN	66,012	58,810

[9]Services include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or if a child is homeless, a migrant, runaway, or foster child.

[10]Direct certification status does not represent all children who are living in poverty because not all eligible families access these services. Access to these services may also have been impacted by COVID-19 closures or delays.

[11]PreK enrollment numbers include only PreK classrooms in public schools.

In the 2020-2021 school year, kindergarten enrollment was down almost 10%, while public school PreK enrollment was down significantly more, at almost 27%. While it's common to see enrollment fluctuate slightly from year to year, the effects of the pandemic may have impacted enrollment for some school systems or families.

Results of the 2020 Maryland Early Learning Administrators' Survey

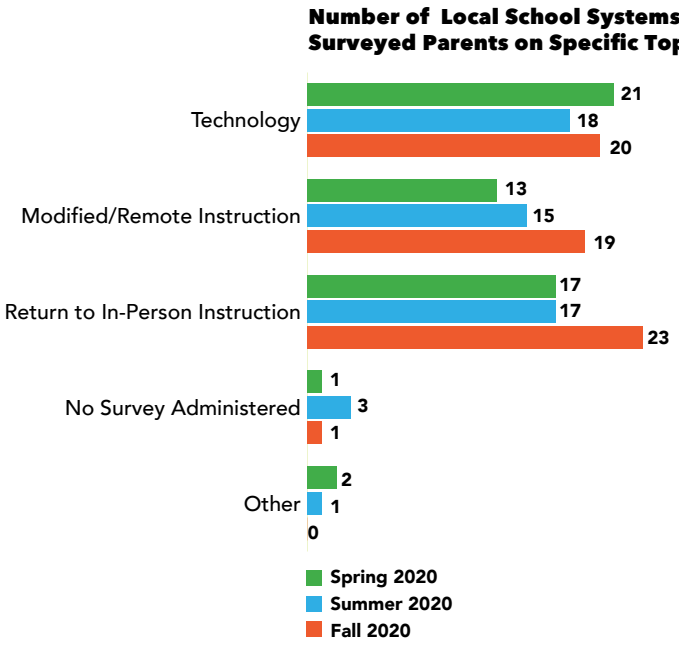
Each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions provided a response to the survey.

EFFORTS TO SOLICIT PARENT FEEDBACK

In order to deliver appropriate support, it was critical for jurisdictions to gather feedback from parents and families to learn more about their needs and concerns. Online surveys were a popular means of collecting such feedback. We asked early learning administrators to report whether their jurisdictions surveyed PreK and kindergarten parents about their needs and preferences related to various distance learning topics. All but one jurisdiction reported soliciting parent feedback through online surveys. The chart on page 13 shows the number of jurisdictions that reported soliciting family feedback on specific topics.

"Out of necessity, the learning curve for adapting new skills was steep and many adjustments were made in a short amount of time and along the way to continuously respond to the existing ongoing successes and challenges within our community."

PAM MEYERS, SUPERVISOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, CARROLL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Respondents from the jurisdictions that surveyed parents indicated that they conducted these surveys to gather information on specific topics, including available technology and possible return to in-person instruction. Many jurisdictions surveyed parents on multiple occasions.

PREPARING FOR THE NEW NORMAL

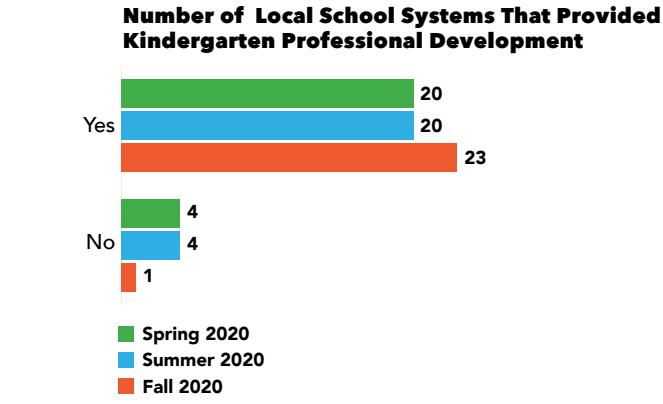
As months passed without a return to in-person instruction for all, school systems and providers had to create plans to design virtual learning opportunities to meet the needs of all students. To make this transition successful, school systems also had to consider teachers, students, and their families.

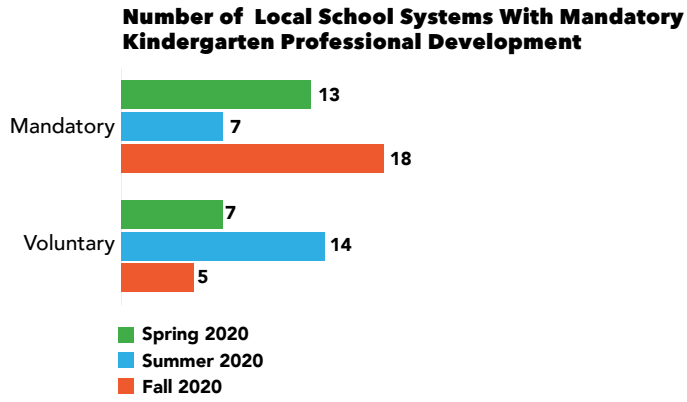
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A system of sustained virtual learning meant that teachers required professional development from both a technical and pedagogical standpoint. Many jurisdictions provided this over the summer and into the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

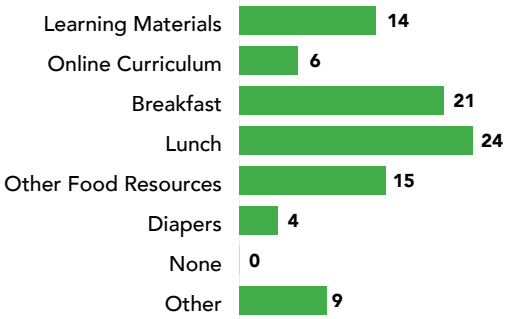
Teachers who participated in professional development were given additional tools and resources to help them revise their learning plans to support virtual delivery, and to better understand the learning management systems and platforms that school systems use to communicate with students and families.

Many jurisdictions chose to make this professional development mandatory to ensure that each teacher had the opportunity to develop necessary skills to thrive in a virtual teaching environment.





Number of Local School Systems That Provided Resources Over the Summer



More than half of all school systems offered professional development over the summer in preparation for the upcoming school year.

SUMMER

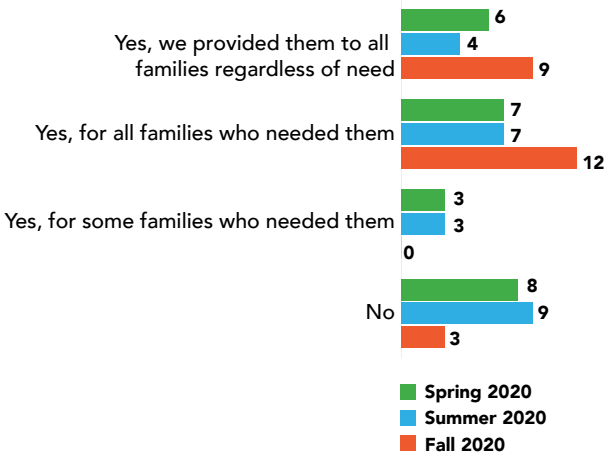
The summer offered additional opportunities for school systems to support families and child care providers. More than half of jurisdictions report reaching out to local child care providers over the summer to share ideas, provide much-needed resources, and to enhance collaboration between programs and providers.

In addition to connecting with local providers, school systems also coordinated with local health departments, nonprofit organizations, parent-teacher associations, faith-based programs, and other community organizations to provide needed resources, such as diapers, meals, learning materials, access to online tools, and cleaning supplies to families.

TECHNOLOGY FOR VIRTUAL LEARNING

Appropriate technology is critical to successful implementation of virtual learning, and Maryland, like many other states, has a patchwork of network availability. Not all households have access to high-speed internet services or the financial ability to pay for those services. School systems recognized the inequities these technology gaps presented and worked to try to address these needs starting in March. Initially, many school systems provided learning materials both online and via paper packets picked up or mailed from the school. Over the summer and into the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, school systems worked to acquire and distribute technology including Chromebooks, tablets, and mobile internet "hotspots" to families in need.

Number of Local School Systems that Provided Computers/Laptops to Kindergarten Students



School systems carried much of the burden to cover these additional technology costs. Some school systems were able to utilize Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding, while others used a combination of existing technology funds, Title 1 funds, partnerships with local utility companies and internet service providers, and grant funding.

While providing hotspots helped to address the needs of some families, the challenge still remains in many of Maryland's rural regions, where internet is limited or simply unavailable. In Somerset County, school buildings "boosted" their WiFi signals so that families could access the internet from school grounds, and also outfitted several buses to create mobile hotspots for families to access for downloads.

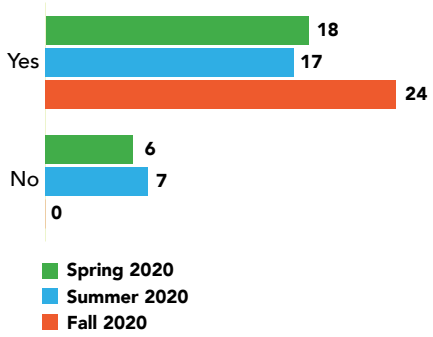
RETURN TO SCHOOL

For many families, having young children at home meant dramatic changes to their daily schedules and impacts on the ability to work outside the home. These impacts can be felt disproportionally; women and people without college degrees were more likely to have suffered a job loss during the pandemic, possibly associated directly with a decline in the area of employment, lack of child care, or other reasons.[12] State and local leaders recognize the need to bring children back into the school buildings as quickly as possible, while also balancing concerns about spreading the COVID-19 virus. As of November 1, 2020, nineteen school systems chose to bring students back for some type of in-person instruction.[13]

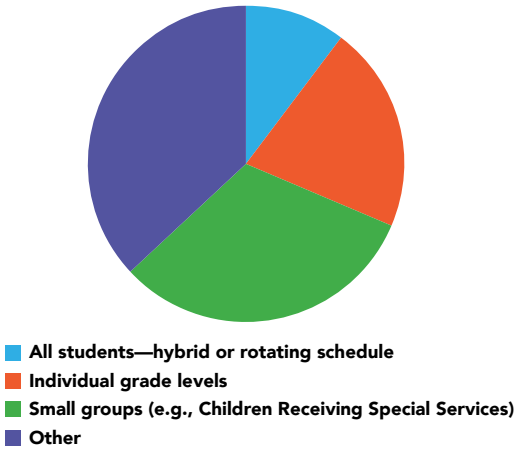
Some school systems chose to offer in-person instruction to all students on a rotating hybrid basis, while other school systems focused on specific grade levels or small groups, including children who are English learners, children with disabilities, or children with little or no access to online instruction at home.

> "We can overcome any challenge to work together to ensure our students have learning materials, internet, and technology."
>
> MELISSA EILER, SUPERVISOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD, WICOMICO COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Number of Local School Systems That Provided Internet or Hotspots to Kindergarten Families



Types of In-Person Instruction* (Fall 2020)



*In-person instruction could refer to any grade level.

[12]Adams-Prassl, A., Boneva, T., Golin, M., & Rauh, C. (2020). Inequality in the impact of the coronavirus shock: Evidence from real time surveys, *Journal of Public Economics*, 189, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2020.104245

[13]Due to increasing COVID-19 numbers statewide, not all school systems continued in-person instruction after November 1, 2020.

Assessing Maryland's Early Learners

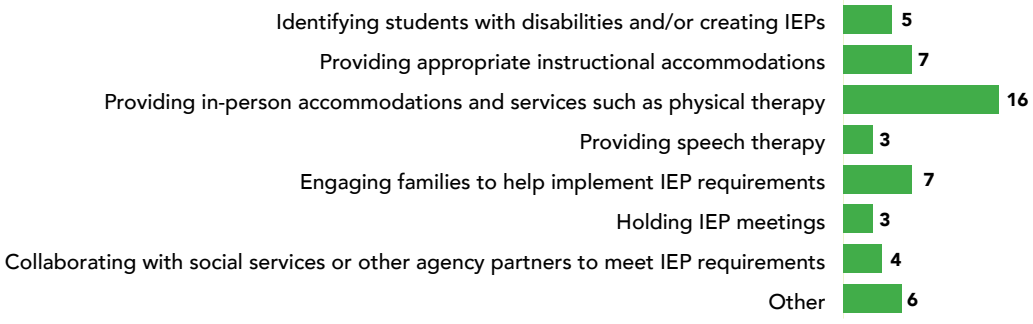
Each year, the state reports the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) results for the state and for each jurisdiction. The KRA is a developmentally appropriate assessment tool traditionally administered to incoming public-school kindergarteners that relies on direct response items, performance tasks, and observations of children's work and play to measure specific skills and behaviors across four learning domains: language and literacy, mathematics, social foundations, and physical well-being and motor development. KRA scores provide insight into school readiness across subgroups and demographic groups, and provide valuable information to kindergarten teachers, families, and school leaders. While the KRA was not administered this school year, many school systems continued to prepare for upcoming administration by providing training to their new and returning teachers. After transitioning to an all-virtual training, 334 new teachers and 1,362 returning teachers successfully completed the KRA training assessment.

Although school systems have begun the school year virtually, assessing and evaluating student readiness and growth is still a critical component of early learning practices. Many school systems, Head Start programs, and child care centers are using the Early Learning Assessment (ELA) to measure the progress of learning in young children aged 36–72 months, across nine levels in seven domains. The ELA is a formative assessment tool aligned to the KRA as part of Ready 4 K: Maryland's Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System. The ELA helps inform teachers and providers about the progress and development of individual children and provides valuable information about what children need to know and be able to do to grow in multiple domains of learning. Teachers and providers can use the ELA to assess children in-person and virtually. Since July, 477 new teachers or providers have been trained to use the ELA, and approximately 6,588 public school students and 1,948 child care and Head Start students have been assessed on the ELA. This information will be particularly valuable as one source of data when looking at long-term academic implications of the pandemic.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL SERVICES

One of the biggest challenges facing educators during COVID-19 is the continued need to coordinate with families of children receiving special services, including English learners and children with disabilities. Many of the services provided to these students are typically offered in a face-to-face setting. In addition to the legal requirements regarding service provision for children with disabilities, educators recognized that for students receiving special services, it is especially important to maintain consistency and to be able to collaborate across agencies, with families, and within the school system. Local school systems reported some of the most common barriers to serving students with disabilities during COVID-19.

Number of Local School Systems Identifying Barriers



Child care providers are partners in supporting children with disabilities; in fact, over 60% of providers who responded to the survey indicated that they currently serve children with disabilities.[14] Some respondents found providing "adequate help" to children with disabilities to be a challenge. To assist with meeting legal requirements and the educational needs of children with disabilities, the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) provided technical assistance bulletins and other resources to help local school systems develop plans to support continuity of learning, use of technology to provide virtual or distance learning, recovery planning, evaluation/assessment, and individualized intervention and specially designed instruction for children with disabilities. To continue providing services identified on IFSPs and IEPs, Local Infants and Toddlers Programs (LITPs) and local school systems responded by shifting to virtual and distance learning to prioritize the health and safety of children, their families, and providers. Some local programs were able to provide a small number of in-person services for certain populations, when it was possible to do so safely. While facing these challenging times, early intervention service providers tapped into their own experiences adapting to a telehealth model while still using their coaching and support skills. During the pandemic, preschool special education coordinators reported that they saw an increase in family engagement as teachers and providers embraced virtual coaching strategies. While concerns about children going unidentified are valid, DEI/SES reported that new referrals have been steadily increasing since May, and they have developed a public awareness campaign to inform and assure families that early intervention and preschool special education services are open, available, and safe for children and families.

ENGLISH LEARNERS

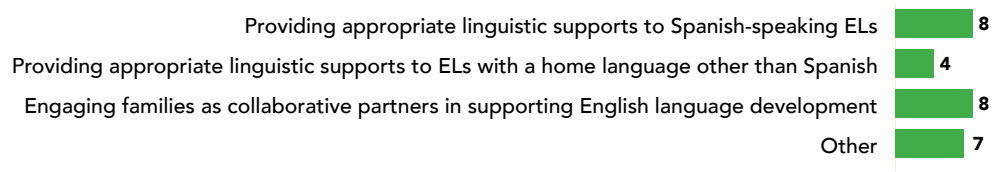
School systems begin screening children in kindergarten to determine if they need support to develop proficiency in the English language. This year's kindergarten population includes 17% English learners. This means 9,809 young students are possibly in need of additional supports to participate in learning activities and to continue to develop their own dual-language skills. Virtual learning for English learners can be particularly challenging, especially for young children, who often need assistance at home to navigate through an online learning environment and can struggle if families are not able to understand the language.[15] Maryland's local school systems shared some of their struggles in providing supports to English learners in PreK or kindergarten during school closures.

To address some of these concerns, school systems used several different strategies to continue to meet the needs of these students and their families, including specific resources for distance learning, materials in the home language, and consultations with EL specialists to assist in instructional planning. One local school system noted an unanticipated positive effect of the switch to distance learning; in Howard County, educators took advantage of eLearning platforms to provide instructions and parent support in multiple languages, thereby supporting access for all learners.

[14]Ready At Five. (2020). *2020 child care providers survey*, https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CCProv2020

[15]Robertson, K. (2020). *Distance learning for ELLs: Colorín Colorado guide*. Colorín Colorado. https://www.colorincolorado.org/guide/distance-learning-ell

Number of Local School Systems Identifying Barriers



Challenges and Opportunities

As Marylanders adjusted to life during a pandemic, local school systems worked to provide continuity of learning for all students, providing rapid professional development opportunities and responding to the needs of their families and communities. There were certainly challenges along the way. School systems had to determine how to balance developmentally appropriate practices for young children with the limitations of virtual learning. Early educators who were accustomed to a "hands-on, multisensory approach to learning" had to find new ways to engage students through the internet. There were often difficulties contacting and staying in communication with families or supporting students and families as they learned how to access, or even connect to, virtual learning. For teachers, learning how to effectively design and deliver instruction online, while also managing their own circumstances, created additional stressors. Resources were often limited or unavailable, so teachers and administrators had to make decisions and modifications to meet the needs of their communities. Even school systems that had returned to partial in-person instruction had to manage social distancing requirements while still providing ways for children to safely learn together. The most significant challenge, shared by respondents in many jurisdictions, was the need to quickly find solutions to new problems and assist families in meeting their own basic needs, while also keeping students engaged in learning.

But new challenges can lead to new opportunities, and local school systems met the challenges head on. Educators and administrators developed innovative solutions to provide families with learning materials, internet access, and technology. Teachers collaborated with peers, reached out to experts, and built new partnerships to help develop innovative ways of educating young children. Teachers and families were flexible, generous, and resilient. Through their collective efforts, Maryland's early learning community has remained strong in the face of great uncertainty and will continue to work together to support young children and their families.

The following pages provide insight into the ways each jurisdiction has worked to support families, teachers, and communities during this crisis.

Allegany County

514
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
600 ↓	514

Spring Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [ ] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [ ] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [ ] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [ ] Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

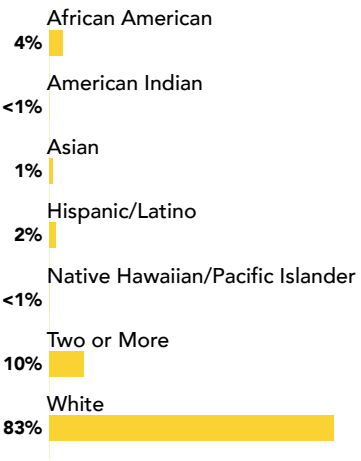
As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

52%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

12%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

0%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



In Allegany County, we discovered "high levels of commitment to families, sharing of personal talents to benefit the collective group, resilience, and perseverance."

Anne Arundel County

5,348
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020		2020-2021
6,306	↓	5,348

Spring Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [ ] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [ ] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [ ] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [ ] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

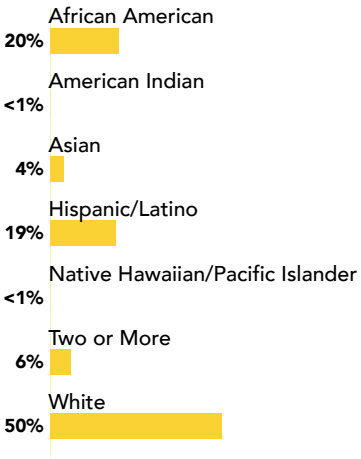
Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

22%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

10%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

12%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

Baltimore City

5,703
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
6,137 ↓	5,703

Spring Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [ ] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [ ] Additional Food Supplies
- [x] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [ ] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [ ] Additional Food Supplies
- [x] Diapers
- [ ] Learning Materials
- [ ] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [ ] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

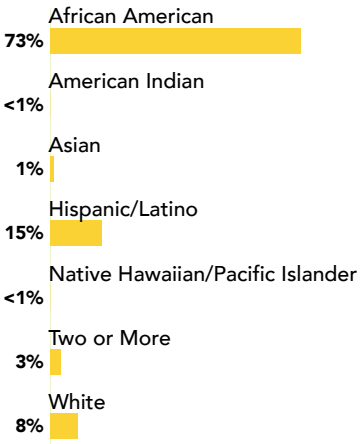
Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [ ] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [ ] Return to In-Person Instruction

59%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

8%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

12%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



"Our early learning teachers went above and beyond for families."

As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✗

Baltimore County

7,412
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
8,195 ↓	7,412

Spring Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [x] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [ ] Paper Packets or Materials
- [x] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [ ] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [ ] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [ ] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [ ] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

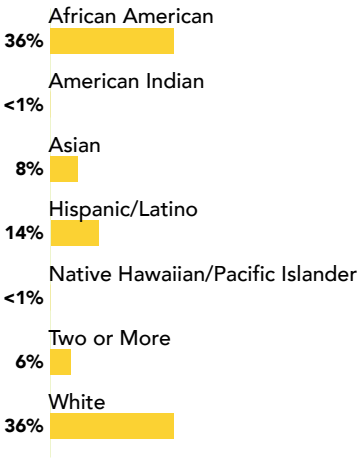
As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✗

38%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

11%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

13%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Baltimore County teachers were "flexible and willing to come together to meet the needs of students and teachers."

Calvert County

941
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
1,079 ↓	941

Spring Learning Resources
- ☑ Live Virtual Instruction
- ☑ Recorded Virtual Instruction
- ☑ Electronic Packets or Materials
- ☑ Paper Packets or Materials
- ☑ Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- ☑ Live Virtual Instruction
- ☑ Recorded Virtual Instruction
- ☑ Electronic Packets or Materials
- ☑ Paper Packets or Materials
- ☑ Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- ☑ Breakfast
- ☑ Lunch
- ☑ Additional Food Supplies
- ☑ Diapers
- ☑ Learning Materials
- ☑ Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- ☑ Breakfast
- ☑ Lunch
- ☐ Additional Food Supplies
- ☑ Diapers
- ☑ Learning Materials
- ☑ Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- ☑ Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- ☑ Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- ☑ Technology
- ☐ Modified/Remote Instruction
- ☑ Return to In-Person Instruction

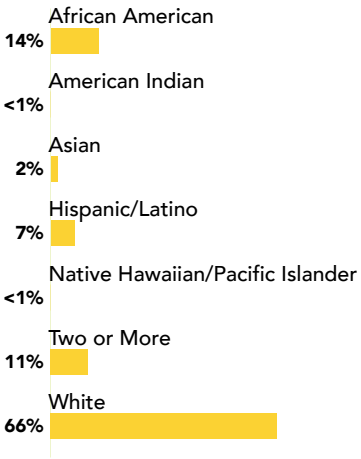
Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- ☑ Technology
- ☑ Modified/Remote Instruction
- ☑ Return to In-Person Instruction

19%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

12%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

2%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Calvert County implemented an "open door policy" for child care providers to reach out for support as needed.

As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ☑

Caroline County

400
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
390 ↑	400

Spring Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [ ] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [ ] Return to In-Person Instruction

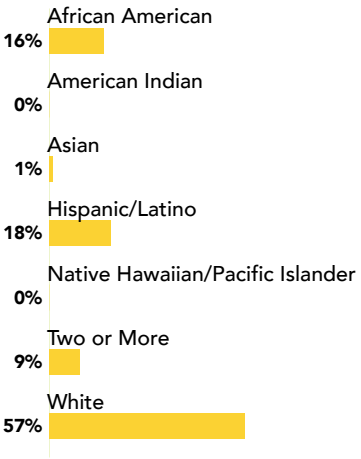
Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

41%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

7%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

11%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

Carroll County

1,779
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
1,843	1,779

Spring Learning Resources
- [ ] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [ ] Additional Food Supplies
- [x] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [ ] Additional Food Supplies
- [x] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

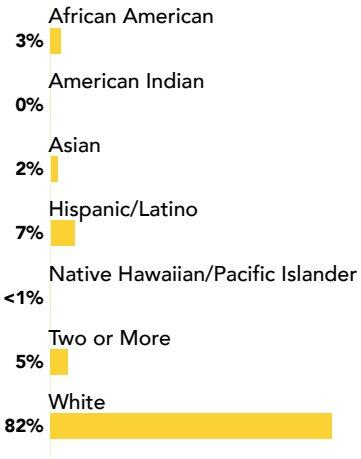
As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

13%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

9%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

3%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



In Carroll County, there was a "collaborative effort between parents, community agencies, and the school system to identify and remove barriers."

Cecil County

983
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
1,022 ↓	983

27%
of Kindergarteners are Direct Certified

13%
of Kindergarteners have Identified Disabilities

3%
of Kindergarteners are English Learners

Spring Learning Resources
- ☐ Live Virtual Instruction
- ☑ Recorded Virtual Instruction
- ☑ Electronic Packets or Materials
- ☑ Paper Packets or Materials
- ☐ Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- ☑ Live Virtual Instruction
- ☑ Recorded Virtual Instruction
- ☐ Electronic Packets or Materials
- ☑ Paper Packets or Materials
- ☐ Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- ☑ Breakfast
- ☑ Lunch
- ☑ Additional Food Supplies
- ☐ Diapers
- ☑ Learning Materials
- ☑ Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- ☑ Breakfast
- ☑ Lunch
- ☑ Additional Food Supplies
- ☐ Diapers
- ☐ Learning Materials
- ☑ Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- ☐ Outreach to Child Care Providers

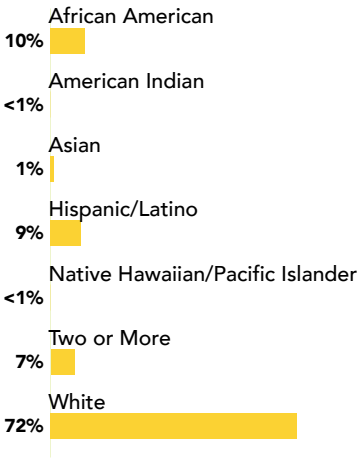
Fall Outreach
- ☑ Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- ☑ Technology
- ☐ Modified/Remote Instruction
- ☐ Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- ☐ Technology
- ☑ Modified/Remote Instruction
- ☑ Return to In-Person Instruction

As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ☑

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Cecil County supported child care providers through a virtual learning training session developed by the Maryland Family Network and the Abilities Network.

Charles County

1,609
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
1,733 ↓	1,609

Spring Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [ ] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [ ] Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

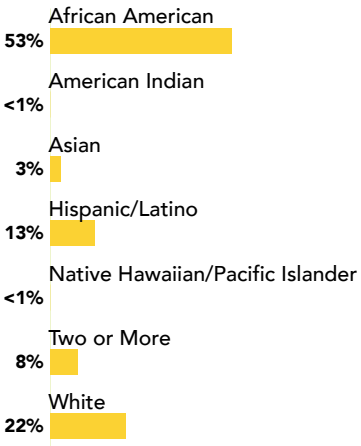
As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✗

20%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

9%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

2%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



In Charles County, early educators "met with local child care providers to give assistance with how to navigate online platforms and support students during instruction."

Dorchester County

282
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
340 ↓	282

Spring Learning Resources
- [ ] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [ ] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

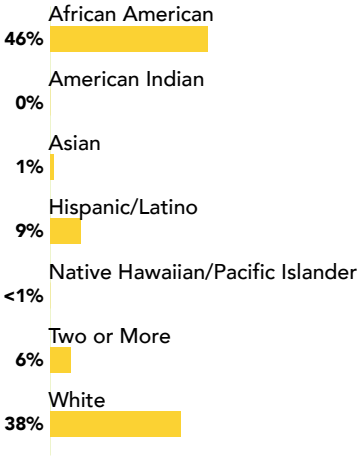
Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

58%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

6%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

3%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

Frederick County

2,796
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020		2020-2021
3,073	↓	2,796

Spring Learning Resources
- [ ] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [ ] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [x] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [ ] Return to In-Person Instruction

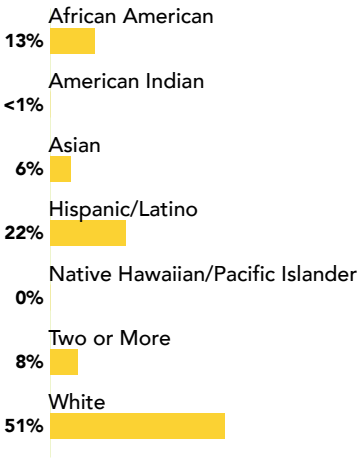
Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

17%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

10%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

12%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

Garrett County

257
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
267	257

Spring Learning Resources

- [ ] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources

- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [ ] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources

- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [ ] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources

- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach

- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach

- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians

- [x] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians

- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

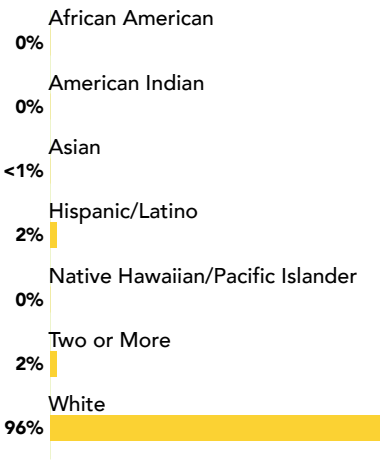
As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

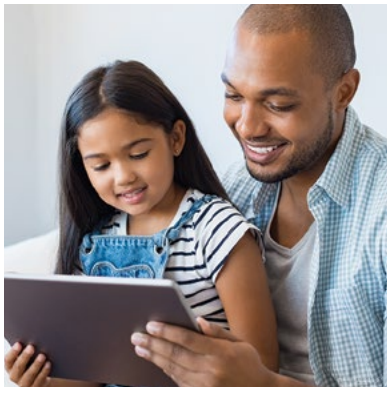
33%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

5%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

0%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity





Harford County

2,713
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
2,814 ↓	2,713

Spring Learning Resources
- ☐ Live Virtual Instruction
- ☐ Recorded Virtual Instruction
- ☑ Electronic Packets or Materials
- ☑ Paper Packets or Materials
- ☐ Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- ☑ Live Virtual Instruction
- ☑ Recorded Virtual Instruction
- ☑ Electronic Packets or Materials
- ☑ Paper Packets or Materials
- ☐ Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- ☑ Breakfast
- ☑ Lunch
- ☑ Additional Food Supplies
- ☐ Diapers
- ☑ Learning Materials
- ☑ Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- ☑ Breakfast
- ☑ Lunch
- ☑ Additional Food Supplies
- ☐ Diapers
- ☑ Learning Materials
- ☑ Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- ☑ Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- ☑ Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- ☑ Technology
- ☑ Modified/Remote Instruction
- ☑ Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- ☑ Technology
- ☑ Modified/Remote Instruction
- ☑ Return to In-Person Instruction

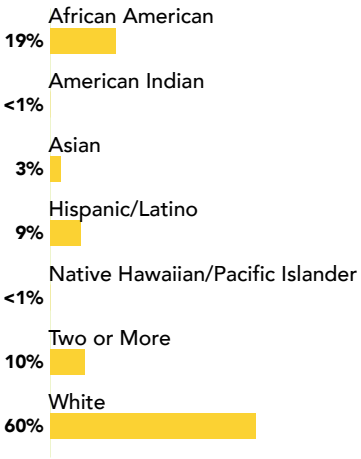
As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ☑

24%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

9%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

3%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Harford County offered learning support centers for families who preferred access to in-person instruction or needed access to technology. Hybrid instruction was offered for small groups and limited small group activities.

Howard County

3,603
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
3,962 ↓	3,603

Spring Learning Resources
- [ ] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [x] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [x] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [ ] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [ ] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

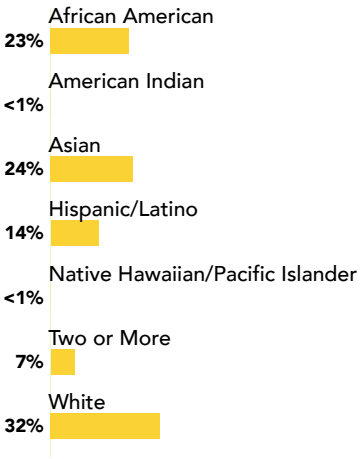
As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

13%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

10%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

12%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Through this experience, Howard County early educators discovered strengths such as collaboration, adaptability, and advocacy.

Kent County

126
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
134 ↓	126

Spring Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

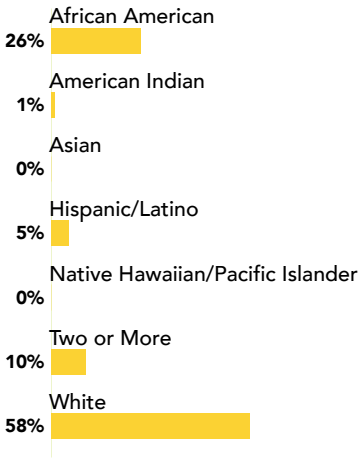
Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [ ] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

54%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

15%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

3%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



In Kent County, early educators showed an "ability to think out of the box and be flexible in an ever-changing situation."

As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

Montgomery County

10,709
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
11,519 ↓	10,709

Spring Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [x] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [ ] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [ ] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

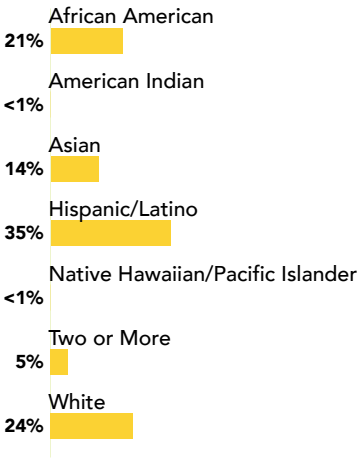
Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

16%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

11%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

31%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✗

Prince George's County

8,942
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
10,008 ↓	8,942

Spring Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [ ] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [ ] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [ ] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [ ] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

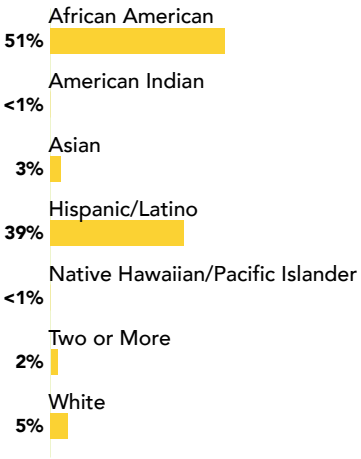
As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✗

33%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

10%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

32%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



In Prince George's County, educators used an "innovative implementation of lessons on the system's cable TV station for those families without internet access or devices."

Queen Anne's County

485
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
516 ↓	485

Spring Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [ ] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [ ] Learning Materials
- [ ] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [ ] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [ ] Return to In-Person Instruction

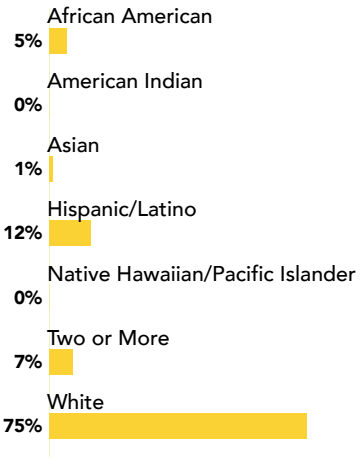
Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

20%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

11%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

8%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

St. Mary's County

833
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
1,252 ↓	833

Spring Learning Resources
- [ ] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [x] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [ ] Paper Packets or Materials
- [x] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

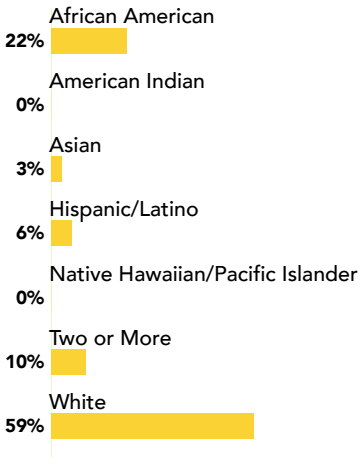
As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

25%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

8%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

2%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Somerset County

215
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
214	215

Spring Learning Resources
- [ ] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [ ] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [x] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [x] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

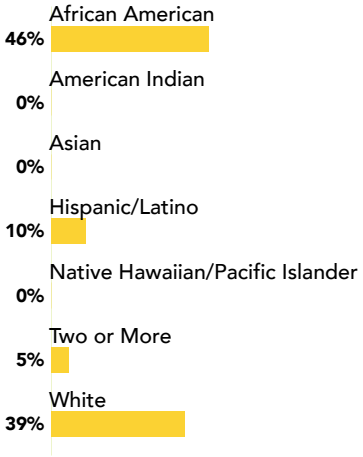
As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

62%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

6%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

5%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



We are a small community and we have truly come together. Staff has worked hard to make sure that children are well fed. The Judy Center has provided additional supports and resources for our youngest learners and their families.

Talbot County

283
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
315 ↓	283

Spring Learning Resources
- [ ] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [ ] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

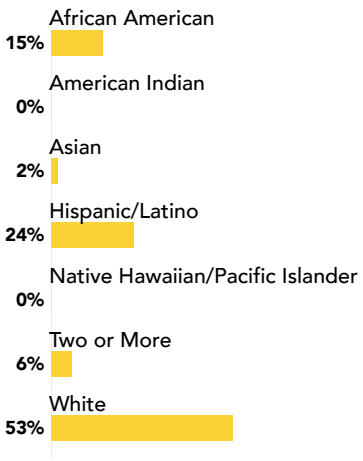
As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

34%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

10%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

16%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



In Talbot County, hybrid in-person instruction was offered to families with internet connectivity issues and children with disabilities in September. Families had the option of hybrid in-person instruction starting in October.

Washington County

1,464
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
1,627 ↓	1,464

Spring Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [ ] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

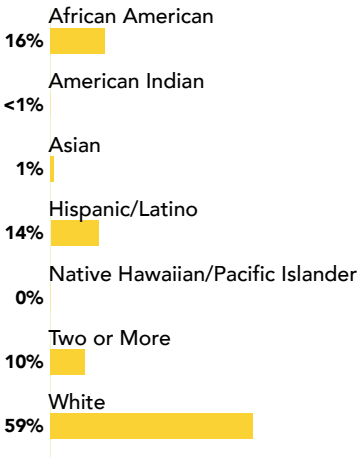
As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

35%
of Kindergarteners are Direct Certified

11%
of Kindergarteners have Identified Disabilities

4%
of Kindergarteners are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



Teachers strive for perfection. This has challenged them because it's difficult to do everything at the level they prefer. As much as we can honor those on the front lines doing this great work, the better!

Wicomico County

970
KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
1,174 ↓	970

Spring Learning Resources
- [ ] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [x] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources
- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [ ] Paper Packets or Materials
- [x] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [x] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources
- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [x] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach
- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [ ] Return to In-Person Instruction

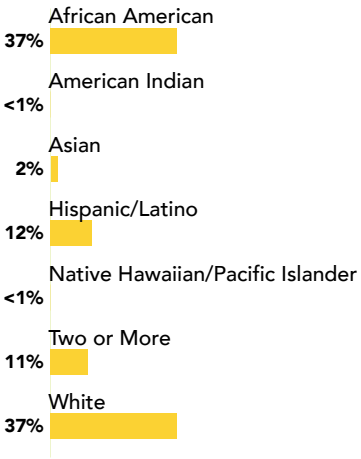
Outreach to Parents/Guardians
- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

46%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

5%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

12%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

Worcester County

410

KINDERGARTENERS

How do the kindergarten enrollment numbers look compared to 2019-2020?

2019-2020	2020-2021
460	410

Spring Learning Resources

- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [x] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Fall Learning Resources

- [x] Live Virtual Instruction
- [ ] Recorded Virtual Instruction
- [x] Electronic Packets or Materials
- [x] Paper Packets or Materials
- [ ] Access to Online Materials

Spring Household Resources

- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [x] Community Referrals or Resources

Fall Household Resources

- [x] Breakfast
- [x] Lunch
- [x] Additional Food Supplies
- [ ] Diapers
- [x] Learning Materials
- [ ] Community Referrals or Resources

Spring Outreach

- [ ] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Fall Outreach

- [x] Outreach to Child Care Providers

Outreach to Parents/Guardians

- [x] Technology
- [x] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

Outreach to Parents/Guardians

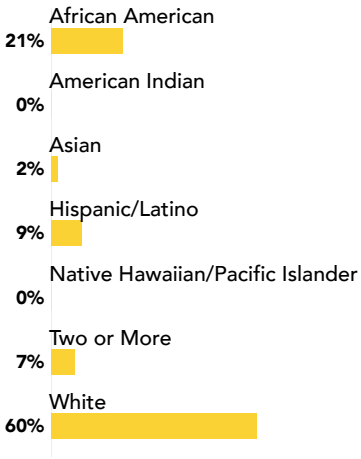
- [ ] Technology
- [ ] Modified/Remote Instruction
- [x] Return to In-Person Instruction

38%
of Kindergarteners
are Direct Certified

11%
of Kindergarteners
have Identified Disabilities

3%
of Kindergarteners
are English Learners

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity



As of November 1st, have any students returned to school? ✓

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