



Educating Maryland's children depends on quality experiences in the early years. That's where it starts. Ready At Five's leadership in school readiness is essential in making the early years matter.

Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools,
Maryland State Department of Education

investing in the early years

School readiness pays rich dividends, both for our children's lives and for our communities.

- **Educational Dividends.** Children who enter kindergarten with high levels of readiness are more likely to succeed academically, right up into high school. According to an MSDE preliminary study, children who are documented as "fully" school-ready in kindergarten are eight times more likely to get an "advanced" ranking on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) in reading and mathematics than those who start kindergarten with significant skill deficiencies.
- **Economic Dividends.** Not only does investing in children's school readiness generate the workforce Maryland depends upon, but economist Arthur Rolnick has shown that an investment in early care and education earns a 16% financial rate of return for a community--through fewer grade retentions, reduced need for special education, lower dropout and criminal activity rates, and a higher likelihood that a child will grow up to be a productive employee and taxpayer.

It is clear: becoming school-ready is a crucial launching pad for doing well in school and throughout life.

History

- Ready At Five was created as a statewide public-private partnership in 1992 in response to the 1st National Education Goal - All children will enter school ready to learn. In 1997, the MBRT Foundation became Ready At Five's fiscal agent. In 2002, a MBRT Board Resolution made Ready At Five a Board-designated Program of the MBRT.
- Ready At Five is the only organization in Maryland focused solely on ensuring that all Maryland children enter school ready to succeed. We are viewed as an expert on young children.
- Ready At Five was instrumental in the impressive 29-point increase in the school readiness of kindergarten children over the past 8 years.
- Ready At Five and MBRT are working to achieve meaningful, measureable and systemic educational improvements and foster student achievement across the entire age spectrum.

Strategy Statement

Ready At Five helps ensure that school readiness is elevated for all Maryland children through engaged families, quality early care and education experiences, supportive communities and increased understanding of the benefits of investing in early care and education.

Strategic Priorities

Working at the national, state, jurisdictional and community levels, Ready At Five accomplishes its mission through four strategic priorities:

1. Synthesize and communicate Maryland school readiness data and national research to inform and prioritize early care and education practice, policy and investment decisions.
 - Produce *Getting Ready* publications to analyze and report data to influence practices and policies
 - Convene School Readiness Symposia to help early education leaders use research and best practices to improve program content, curricula, and policies
2. Identify, create and transfer innovative practices and resources to improve the quality of early care and education experiences for all Maryland children.
 - Learning Laboratories pioneer effective practices in early care and education, including parent-child Learning Parties, professional development – Institutes for Early Educators, curricula development, and student enrichment programs
3. Generate public awareness and engage constituents around human, social and economic benefits of investments in early care and education and school readiness.
 - Facilitate a School Readiness Business Leaders Network
 - Produce Parents Matter publications to support parents as their children's first teachers
 - Utilize a variety of communication channels and media, including a multi-lingual website of best practices
4. Collaborate with stakeholders to help ensure that all Maryland children have the experiences and support necessary to enter school ready to succeed.
 - Promote alignment and smooth transitions between early care and education programs and public schools
 - Influence early care and education practices and policies
 - Partner with institutions of higher education and MSDE to create an Early Care and Education Leadership Institute



Organizational Information

About Ready At Five

- Data-driven organization that invests in what works; programs build the capacity of and collaboration among First Teachers (parents, early educators and Pre-K and kindergarten teachers and administrators), making immediate school readiness improvements, as well as ensuring long-term academic gains among select cohorts of young children.
- Utilizes Social Solutions' Efforts to Outcome (ETO) evaluation software to track the effectiveness of its programs and its impact on learning.
- Staffing - 3 full time staff
 - Executive Director and Executive Assistant
 - Program Director as of July 7, 2010
 - Use consultants/specialists for specific projects and assignments
- 2010 budget - \$620,000

Funding Sources

- Public dollars (Federal, state and local gov't) - 45%
- Foundations - 23%
- Corporate - 20 %
- Other revenue – Events, Publication sales, Individual gifts – 12%

Executive Leadership Committee

Louis R. Cestello, Chair
Regional President, Greater Baltimore
PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.

Dr. Andrés Alonso
CEO, Baltimore City Public Schools
Represented by Kerry Whitacre Swarr, Executive Assistant to the CEO

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