Many of you have heard me talk about the tradition of the Maasai people in greeting one another and asking, “How are the children?” It acknowledges the high value that they place on their children’s well-being and the belief that the primary responsibility of society is the well-being of its children.

In Maryland, one way we measure our children’s well-being is to look at the data from the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). While the data can tell us how children perform on various indicators across literacy, math, social-emotional development and physical well-being, it’s really a reflection of the “readiness” of our communities, families, schools, and early childhood programs to prepare children for the future. Perhaps we need to be asking, “And how are we doing?” This year, the state held steady at 47% of the students demonstrating readiness to engage in the kindergarten curriculum, although many local jurisdictions showed real progress.

Research has shown that the most critical years for brain development are from prenatal to age five. We know that many children in Maryland face obstacles and barriers that impede their optimal learning and development. Communities experiencing adversity - caused by such factors as generational poverty, chronic opioid addiction, domestic and neighborhood violence, institutional and cultural racism, and a lack of equitable resources - may not have the capacity to provide the kind of positive learning environments that result in happy, healthy and successful families and children. Last spring, Maryland conducted a comprehensive statewide needs assessment, including 18 town hall meetings across the state, 17 regional focus groups, and several surveys. Some of the key findings were –

- Many Marylanders experience limited access to early childhood education services, especially vulnerable families including families of children with special needs, families of English learners, immigrant families, low-income families and families living in rural areas;
Families struggle to navigate the early childhood system, and parents often do not know about programs and services available to them, including critical mental health services; and

Early education professionals experience access barriers to teacher preparation and professional development programs which leads to a shortage of a qualified workforce across the state.

Based on these and other results from the needs assessment, the state is finalizing its five-year prenatal-to-age-eight strategic plan to ensure that families, communities, and our schools and early childhood programs have the resources they need to support our children’s success. We have already begun making progress. We doubled the income level eligibility of families to receive child care scholarships. This year, the scholarship provider reimbursement rate increased to the 30th percentile, and next year it is set to rise to the 60th percentile, providing more families resources to better afford the high cost of child care. The state invested over $75 million in PreK this year, and Governor Hogan has pledged an additional $100 million for our mixed-delivery system PreK for 3- and 4-year-olds next year. These investments mean better outcomes for children and are a down payment to a brighter future for Maryland.

Readiness does matter, but readiness means that our communities, schools, and early childhood programs are ready to support families and children to ensure they thrive. This is the most important thing we can do!

KAREN B. SALMON, PH.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Counting on Community

Every day, Maryland's young children head to schools, Head Start programs, child care centers, family home providers, parks, and playgrounds, ready for new learning experiences. They are exploring their communities. They are a part of their communities. They are also relying on their communities to be safe and nurturing environments in which to grow. From the shore to the mountains, in cities and on farmland, Maryland’s communities must be ready to do their part to support families and schools.

Every jurisdiction in Maryland has its own set of unique characteristics, but they all share something in common: a sense of togetherness and solidarity. Communities also share challenges, and many of those challenges impact the well-being of all of the members of a community, including its youngest citizens. The National Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, in partnership with cities across the country, identifies a set of neighborhood indicators that can be tracked to measure the health and wellness of a community, including data on population and demographics, housing, health, crime, workforce development, education, art and culture, and measures to promote sustainability.1 The interaction between these important measures paints a picture of a community’s fitness, which in turn impacts a family’s ability to support learning and development so children arrive at school ready to succeed.

Poverty has been consistently shown to have a significant impact on school readiness.2 Issues of poverty are widespread throughout Maryland, not only in our cities, but also our rural areas and suburbs. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, 32% of young children in Maryland live in households that are considered low-income (twice the federal poverty level), and 14% live in households at or below the federal poverty level.3 These families may be struggling with food insecurity, unstable housing, or lack of employment. Communities with high poverty levels often have increased crime and a lack of affordable and accessible resources. Families in these communities can often feel like they are swimming against the tide in an effort to get ahead. Research has shown that the consequences of poverty are long-lasting and wide-reaching. Children growing up in these households may have lower educational outcomes, more chronic diseases (that can impact their ability to successfully participate in schooling), and more trauma and mental health concerns, and these effects can last into adulthood.4

The good news is that many communities in Maryland are shining a light on the systemic issues surrounding children in poverty and identifying ways to address these obstacles to success for families and young children. School systems are beginning to recognize that implementing a two-generation approach - supporting healthy family members - impacts a child’s success is school and in life.

The road to school readiness begins even before birth. It begins with ensuring that parents and families have the prenatal and postnatal resources and support they need to be their child’s first, and most valuable, teachers.5 Communities are not just asking, “Are our children ready for school?” They are asking, “Is our community ready for our children?”

MARYLAND STATEWIDE

Emerging: 21%
Approaching: 47%
Demonstrating: 32%

47% DEMONSTRATE READINESS

15% OF KINDERGARTENERS ARE ENGLISH LEARNERS
22% OF KINDERGARTENERS ARE DIRECT CERTIFIED
9% OF KINDERGARTENERS HAVE IDENTIFIED DISABILITIES

Overall READINESS

Domain AVERAGE SCALE SCORE

- Social Foundations: 273/298
- Language & Literacy: 268/298
- Mathematics: 267/298
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: 276/293

Race/Ethnicity DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS

Kindergarten Enrollment
- 31% African American
- <1% American Indian
- 6% Asian
- 21% Hispanic/Latino
- <1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 6% Two or More
- 36% White

Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness
- 42% African American
- 41% American Indian
- 56% Asian
- 26% Hispanic/Latino
- 30% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 53% Two or More
- 60% White

Subgroup DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS

- Children Without Disabilities: 50%
- English Fluent Children: 52%
- Children Who Are Not Direct Certified: 50%
- Children With Disabilities: 19%
- English Learner Children: 18%

Prior Care EXPERIENCE & READINESS

- Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience
- Child Care Center: 13%
- Family Child Care: 3%
- Head Start: 3%
- Home/Informal**: 7%
- Non-Public Nursery: 20%
- PreK: 13%

- Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness
- Child Care Center: 62%
- Family Child Care: 36%
- Head Start: 36%
- Home/Informal**: 70%
- Non-Public Nursery: 45%
- PreK: 66%

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.

Gap estimates have been rounded for this publication.
Measuring Readiness

Assessments are one of the most valuable tools we have to determine how our learners are faring and to plan for instruction to meet individual students’ needs. Using data to inform decision-making is associated with greater academic success, and allows the state to monitor progress, helps teachers make instructional decisions, and informs local district policies. To better achieve these goals, Maryland uses Ready for Kindergarten (R4K): Maryland’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System, a single coordinated system for measuring the knowledge, skills, and behaviors and identifying the needs of young children. R4K has two components:

- The Early Learning Assessment (ELA) measures the progress of learning in young children, 36-72 months, across nine levels in seven domains. This voluntary formative assessment is available at no cost for all of Maryland’s licensed programs, and is in use in hundreds of child care programs, Head Start programs, and public PreK classrooms throughout the state.
- The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) is a developmentally appropriate assessment tool administered to incoming public-school kindergarteners that relies on selected 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. Administered by kindergarten teachers at the start of the school year, the KRA looks at the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to be successful in kindergarten.

Each year, the Maryland State Department of Education releases the compiled statewide and jurisdictional data on overall kindergarten readiness, as well as average scale scores in each domain and overall readiness for student populations by gender, race/ethnicity, and prior care setting, and for students receiving special services, including children with disabilities, English learners, and students who are direct certified.

There are three different levels of school readiness indicated by the KRA:

- **Demonstrating Readiness:** A child demonstrates the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare them for curriculum based on the kindergarten standards.
- **Approaching Readiness:** A child exhibits some of the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare them for curriculum based on the kindergarten standards.
- **Emerging Readiness:** A child displays minimal foundational skills and behaviors that prepare them for curriculum based on the kindergarten standards.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools made the decision to administer the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to all kindergarten students in the fall of 2019 so that teachers and school leaders would have accurate and comprehensive readiness data on all kindergarten students. Teachers and school leaders use this data to plan for and deliver responsive, differentiated instruction to all students, especially those that entered kindergarten at the emerging readiness level.

PATRICIA SAYNUK, EARLY CHILDHOOD COORDINATOR, ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Local school systems choose to administer the assessment in one of the following ways:

**Census Administration:** The KRA is administered to all incoming kindergarteners. Assessing all children provides rich data about every student's knowledge, skills, and abilities. This allows teachers to use the information from the KRA to identify learning needs and inform all families about specific ways in which they can support their child’s learning.

**Sample Administration:** The KRA is administered to an identified random sample of students in each classroom. In jurisdictions electing to complete a sample administration, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) determines the minimum sample size to ensure that the data accurately represents the results for their kindergarten population as well as the demographics of each school system's kindergarten enrollment. Some of these jurisdictions also elected to perform a limited census by assessing all students in specific schools, including schools with Judy Centers, students in Title 1 schools, and schools with Preschool Development Grant classrooms.

In 2019-2020, 18 jurisdictions chose to capture readiness information on all of their incoming kindergarteners, four more than last year, assessing 65% of all entering kindergarteners. This is an increase from 2018-2019, when only 39% of entering kindergarteners were assessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LSS</th>
<th>CENSUS</th>
<th>SAMPLE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>SAMPLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Arundel County</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>SAMPLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore City</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore County</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll County</td>
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<td>SAMPLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecil County</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>SAMPLE</td>
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<td>Charles County</td>
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<td>Dorchester County</td>
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<td>Howard County</td>
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<td>Kent County</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Washington County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wicomico County</td>
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<td>SAMPLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester County</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>SAMPLE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The KRA is an extremely helpful tool, as it looks at multiple domains of a child’s development. As a kindergarten teacher, I find that getting a snapshot of a child's social emotional development and physical well-being to be very informative. The assessment is a tool that provides me and my colleagues with a snapshot of the strengths and areas of growth a student begins kindergarten with, and provides us with a map to dig deeper and foster growth within the whole child.

**JULIA ALLAN, HOWARD COUNTY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CENSUS ADMINISTRATION</th>
<th>LIMITED CENSUS OR SAMPLE ADMINISTRATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides individual student-level data on all kindergarteners that teachers can use to make classroom instructional decisions</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides jurisdictions with a snapshot of overall readiness of students entering kindergarten</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides all parents with information about their child's readiness and ways to support skill building</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides jurisdictional leaders with information that can help them make policy and curriculum decisions</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Importance of Measuring Readiness

Maryland is one of nearly 40 states using assessment tools to measure children’s readiness for success in kindergarten. States measure readiness to gain insight into the quality and availability of early learning opportunities. This information can help communities determine how well families and their early learning programs are preparing children for success in kindergarten, and can provide valuable insights into the ways in which early learning programs, school systems, and organizations can work together to meet families’ additional needs. Schools use the KRA data to meet the needs of students, guide professional development opportunities for teachers, inform strategic planning initiatives, target resources and support, and improve the transition processes for children entering kindergarten from a variety of prior care settings.

The KRA data is also a tool for teachers to help them make instructional and grouping decisions, to provide targeted support and interventions to certain students, and to communicate with parents about their child’s readiness for school. Additionally, school systems can use KRA data to help create curricular and instructional plans to support children who were emerging or approaching readiness upon entering kindergarten as they progress through the elementary grades, in preparation for increasingly rigorous academics. Research studying the correlation between the 2014 KRA and the 2017 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) shows a startling relationship between the scores on both assessments. About 90% of the children scoring “emerging” grade reading, more than half of students scoring “emerging” were in the lowest PARCC readiness band (did not meet expectations). In contrast, about 60% of and math assessments. While a correlation study cannot tell us why we see this relationship, it is a powerful call for districts to dig into their data and assess the kinds of support emerging children need beginning in kindergarten.

CYNTHIA FREED, CARROLL COUNTY

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School Readiness in Maryland
Statewide KRA Data

Continued Growth, Continued Need

Teachers used the KRA tool to assess 65% of the more than 65,000 children who entered Maryland’s kindergarten classrooms in school year 2019-2020. This percentage represents the total number of kindergarteners assessed in local school systems, including census and sample administration.

The KRA 2019-2020 data show:

• 47% of Maryland's kindergarteners demonstrate readiness, entering kindergarten classrooms fully prepared to participate in the kindergarten curriculum, unchanged from 2018-2019 (47%), which was an increase over 2017-2018 (45%).
• The majority of kindergarteners, 53%, do not demonstrate all of the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to be successful when entering school.
• 32% are “approaching” readiness, and will benefit from personalized instruction based on their individual strengths and needs.
• 21% of kindergarteners are “emerging” readiness, and will require targeted supports or interventions to be successful in kindergarten. The percentage of children considered “emerging” readiness is almost unchanged from 2018-2019 (20%), representing a significant number of children still at risk of not catching up to their peers.

Of the more than 65,000 children that entered Maryland’s kindergarten classrooms in school year 2019-2020, 22% are direct certified, indicating that they reside in households that are economically disadvantaged. Fifteen percent are English learners, and 9% have an identified disability. It’s critical to ensure all children, especially those with one or more of these risk factors, have access to high-quality early childhood educational experiences to give them the best start.

Maryland State Department of Education. KRA data is based on the number of children assessed for reporting (65% of kindergarteners). Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

As identified through KRA; see page 13 for more information on direct certification.
Domain Performance

The KRA assesses children’s performance in four domains: Social Foundations, Language & Literacy, Mathematics, and Physical Well-being and Motor Development. By looking holistically at each of these interrelated domains, the KRA is able to provide a snapshot of each child’s readiness to successfully participate in the kindergarten curriculum.

Understanding Scale Scores

Scale scores provide a picture of a child’s overall readiness, while also giving jurisdictions information comparing a child’s score with the state scale score average. Reporting domain readiness in this way provides jurisdictions with the ability to look for incremental improvements over time as scale scores are more sensitive to change.

Students across the state received the highest average scores in Physical Well-being and Motor Development and Social Foundations, and the lowest average scores in Language and Literacy and Mathematics. This is consistent with 2018-2019, the first year that scale scores were reported. It is important to note that Physical Well-being and Motor Development and Social Foundations are assessed solely through observation, while Language and Literacy and Mathematics are a mix of observation and performance-based assessments.
The 2019-2020 KRA data show:

- 13 jurisdictions scored above the statewide average.
- 14 jurisdictions improved their scores from 2018-2019. Caroline and Cecil Counties increased their scores by at least 10% over the previous year.
- 10 jurisdictions had overall readiness scores that were lower than the previous year.
- 11 jurisdictions scored below the statewide average for demonstrating readiness. Almost 33,000 kindergarteners live in one of these jurisdictions—50% of all kindergarteners in the state.
Research demonstrates that girls perform better than boys in both language and literacy and math when assessed prior to kindergarten. This research is consistently borne out in Maryland’s KRA data, where girls outperform boys in all domains upon kindergarten entry. These gaps begin to close throughout elementary school, and by the time children are in late elementary school, males outperform girls. Understanding these differences can help jurisdictions and teachers create opportunities to build these skills prior to entering kindergarten, and to plan for instruction that could address gaps that may appear in later grades.

The 2019-2020 KRA data show that boys continue to lag behind girls in all domains:
- 53% of female kindergarteners demonstrate readiness, compared with 41% of males.
- Upon kindergarten entry, girls outperform boys in every domain, with the greatest difference in Social Foundations.

**REAdINESS By GENDER**

**REAdINESS By RACE/ETHNICITY**

Of the more than 65,000 kindergarteners in Maryland, 31% are African American and 21% are Hispanic. African American and Hispanic children consistently face some of the largest readiness gaps. While looking at scores by race/ethnicity does not necessarily account for the impact of poverty on school readiness, children of color are more likely to experience poverty, and to feel the educational, social, and societal impacts of poverty.

The 2019-2020 KRA data indicate:
- 42% of African American kindergarteners demonstrate readiness, compared with 60% of White kindergarteners.
- 26% of Hispanic kindergarteners demonstrate readiness; a 34-percentage point gap between Hispanic children and White children.

The disparities in school readiness exist for African American and Hispanic kindergarteners across all domains, representing significant achievement gaps:

**READINESS BY GENDER**

**READINESS BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latino</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Two or More</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollments</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- African Americans scored an average of 5 points lower in Language and Literacy (268) compared to White kindergarteners (273), and 7 points lower in Mathematics (266 points compared to 273 points).
- Hispanic children (259) scored an average of 14 points lower than White kindergarteners (273) in Language and Literacy and 15 points lower in Mathematics (258 points compared to 273 points).

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READINESS FOR CHILDREN RECEIVING SPECIAL SERVICES

READINESS BY INCOME

Household Income Impacts School Readiness

Children living in poverty are less likely to demonstrate foundational literacy and math skills in PreK than children who are not living in impoverished households, putting them at a disadvantage from the very start. But capturing data on the numbers of children and families who are facing the social and educational impacts of poverty has always been a challenge and a priority for school systems. In prior years, the KRA data was reported based on the number of children in each jurisdiction who were receiving Free and Reduced Meals (FaRMS). The FaRMS numbers were used as an estimate of the numbers of children who are living in low-income households. This year, based on guidance from the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), MSDE has chosen to report data on the number of children in kindergarten who are “direct certified.” Direct certification allows jurisdictions to identify eligible children based on a household’s use of other services, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or if a child is homeless, or a migrant, runaway, or foster child. The household income requirements for direct certification are lower than FaRMS requirements. This means that the number of children being reported as direct certified will be lower than children reported as coming from low-income households in previous years, and therefore, the data should not be compared. Direct certification status does not represent all children who are living in poverty because not all eligible families access these services.

Recent changes in federal policy have discouraged some families, in particular, immigrant families, from seeking this assistance. Using direct certification data may underrepresent the actual number of children from families at this income level.

In 2019-2020, 3 jurisdictions, Baltimore City, Dorchester, and Somerset Counties, participated as a whole school system in the USDA’s Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). In several other school systems, one or more individual schools are also participating in the CEP. The CEP allows high-poverty jurisdictions, or parts of jurisdictions, to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications and is based off of the direct certification numbers.

High-quality early childhood educational experiences may help address achievement gaps, especially when families are provided with a variety of social and family supports to help improve their circumstances. But first, it’s essential to know where these families are, and who is most impacted. Identifying the numbers of young children living in poverty is complicated by the fact that even families living several times above the federal poverty level of $25,750 (for a family of four) may still struggle to meet basic financial obligations but would not meet the threshold to be included in the data.

In 2019-2020, more than 14,000 kindergarteners (22%) were direct certified.

• In the 11 jurisdictions with readiness scores lower than the statewide average, 7 had higher than the statewide average number of children who are direct certified.
• In the 13 jurisdictions scoring above the statewide average for readiness, 7 had lower than the statewide average number of children who are direct certified.

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Children who are direct certified are more likely to need interventions or supports to do kindergarten work than their peers: 34% of kindergarteners who are direct certified demonstrate readiness, compared with 50% of kindergarteners who are not direct certified. This represents a 16-percentage point gap along income lines. Of the children who are direct certified, 29% were identified as “emerging readiness,” requiring considerable support to do kindergarten work, compared with 19% of children who are not direct certified.

Young children who are direct certified are less likely to demonstrate readiness in language and literacy and math than children who are not direct certified:

- Kindergarteners who are direct certified have an average scale score of 263 in Language and Literacy, compared to an average scale score of 269 for peers who are not direct certified.
- In Mathematics, there was a 7-point difference in the average scale scores between kindergarteners who are direct certified and those who are not direct certified.
- Children who are direct certified have an average scale score of 269 in Social Foundations compared to 274 for children who are not direct certified, a 5-point gap in a developmental area that is critical for future success.

**ENGLISH LEARNERS AND SCHOOL READINESS**

Multilingual students, or those who speak a language other than English at home, remain one of the fastest growing populations of public-school enrollment. Children who are English learners are more likely to live in low-income households than children who are fluent in English, an additional risk factor for academic success. In the 2019-2020 school year, there were over 93,000 English learners in Maryland’s public schools, with over half of these students in the elementary grades. English learners are present in every jurisdiction in Maryland. In 6 jurisdictions, English learners make up 10% or more of the kindergarten population, (25% or greater in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties).

Since 2011, Maryland has been a member of the WIDA Consortium, joining other states in accessing tools, information, and resources for supporting and instructing English learners. To improve outcomes for the youngest English learners, Maryland is working with WIDA to implement Early Years, WIDA’s evidence-based program of professional learning tools and resources designed to support educators of children who are multilingual, simultaneously developing language in both English and their home language. These resources provide educators with insights into the unique needs and characteristics of children who are multilingual, and can help increase statewide capacity to support this growing population of English learners.

- 18% of Maryland’s English learners demonstrate the foundational skills and behaviors that are essential for kindergarten success, compared with 52% of English fluent kindergarteners. This represents a 34-percentage point gap between English learners and their English fluent peers.
- On average, English learners lag behind their English fluent peers in reading and mathematics, scoring an average scale score of 255 in Language and Literacy, compared with 270 for English fluent kindergarteners, and 255 in Mathematics compared to 269 for English fluent kindergarteners.

---

**NOT DIRECT CERTIFIED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Social Foundations</th>
<th>Language &amp; Literacy</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Physical Well-Being &amp; Motor Development</th>
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<tr>
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**DIRECT CERTIFIED**

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<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Social Foundations</th>
<th>Language &amp; Literacy</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>ENGLISH FLUENT</strong></td>
<td>274.17</td>
<td>269.18</td>
<td>268.75</td>
<td>276.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENGLISH LEARNER</strong></td>
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<td>262.29</td>
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READINESS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

All children deserve the educational services they need to reach their full potential. These rights for young children with disabilities are protected by state and federal laws because they may face risk factors for success at an early age. Providers of high-quality early care and education programs foster an environment that supports the specific needs of children with disabilities. In addition, early childhood educators can provide information about screening and early intervention services for children and families who may benefit.

Children with disabilities should receive services in their “natural environment,” which for young children may be an early childhood program that engages children with their typically developing peers. These inclusive learning opportunities support meaningful access to an early childhood curriculum, and allow for important social interactions with peers, which can improve outcomes for children with disabilities and benefits children with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. Maryland’s efforts to improve equity are intended to increase the numbers of children with disabilities participating in high-quality, inclusive early learning experiences prior to kindergarten.

In the fall of 2019, 6,050 Maryland kindergarteners (9%) received special education and related services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in their kindergarten classrooms. On average, children with disabilities are less ready than their peers without a disability: 19% of kindergarteners with a disability demonstrate readiness, compared with 50% of their non-disabled peers, representing a 31-percentage point difference. The achievement gap has lessened from 2018-2019 (32-percentage point difference), but this still represents a significant difference, and indicates that there is much work to be done to ensure that children with disabilities are given all available opportunities to succeed.

Average Domain Scale Score by Disability Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Status</th>
<th>Average Domain Scale Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children Without Disabilities</td>
<td>274.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children With Disabilities</td>
<td>255.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Reading by Prior Care

Maryland’s Mixed Delivery System

Maryland’s children enter kindergarten with a variety of prior care experiences based on their needs, the needs of their families, and the available programs in their communities. In Maryland, this variety of formal early care experiences represents a robust mixed-delivery system, consisting of private and public-school based care, Head Start and Early Head Start, licensed family child care homes and child care centers and faith-based and community-based programs. This mixed delivery system offers the advantage of being able to meet a wider range of family needs, while providing access to multiple options. However, many children are still entering kindergarten with no formal early learning experiences.

Importance of Prior Care

High-quality early learning experiences can have a positive impact on a child’s school readiness and future success in school, and this is especially important for children with disabilities, children who are English learners, and children who live in low-income households. Attending a high-quality early learning program can lead to improved educational outcomes and increased behavioral and social competencies. Additionally, programs that are designed to also support parents and families can improve outcomes for the entire family.

Early learning experiences provide young children with the knowledge and abilities they need to be ready for kindergarten. Maryland uses information provided by parents at kindergarten registration to identify the settings children were in the year prior to entering school. To help better understand the relationships between prior care and school readiness, and to more accurately represent children’s early learning experiences, in 2019-2020 parents were given the option of identifying more than one prior care setting.

- Despite the benefits of formal early education opportunities, approximately 30% of children were in informal friend, family or neighbor care in the child’s home the year prior to entering kindergarten.

The KRA data demonstrate that 51% of children enrolled in formal early learning settings (regardless of setting or combination of settings) demonstrated readiness, compared to 36% of their peers who were at home or in informal care the year prior to kindergarten.

**Prior Care Experience & Readiness**

![Graph showing percentage of children in different care settings and their readiness](image)

Early childhood programs in Maryland use the Early Learning Assessment (ELA) to measure the progress of learning in young children, and then share the results with parents.

Children Study Their World (CSW) is an early childhood curriculum for 4-year-olds, based on principles of project-based inquiry and driven by evidence-based practices that build teacher capacity and support successful implementation. The CSW curriculum provides educators with a variety of meaningful themes and activities that are engaging and continuously enriching their understanding of the world around them. The program has provided means, as an educator, with rich literature the children enjoy and both whole group and small group activities that allow me to have meaningful interactions with my students, while collecting the data needed to help see both their strengths and areas that need support.

**MARIANNE UNTERREINER, CECIL COUNTY**

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**ASSESSMENT**

In order to ensure that all children are provided with learning activities that meet their own individual needs, high-quality programs have a process of ongoing assessment using a variety of methods, and use those results to inform their practices and to communicate regularly with other educators and with parents. Many early childhood programs in Maryland use the Early Learning Assessment (ELA) to measure the progress of learning in young children, and then share the results with parents.
PreK Is an Integral Part of the Mixed Delivery System

The state and its 24 local school systems continue to make strategic investments to improve access to publicly-funded PreK programs by increasing availability in both public school classrooms and in community-based programs. In 2018-2019, Maryland’s publicly-funded PreK programs served more than 27,900 children, either half-day or full-day, who entered kindergarten in 2019-2020. Thirteen jurisdictions served at least 50% of children in publicly-funded PreK, and 20 jurisdictions offered a full-day option for some or all PreK children.

The 2019-2020 KRA data show that attending a publicly-funded PreK program makes a difference. Children enrolled in these PreK programs the year prior to kindergarten are better prepared for school than those in home or informal care the year prior to starting kindergarten (45% in full-day PreK demonstrate readiness, compared with 36%).

- 49% of children attending a publicly-funded PreK program attended full-day.
- Four school systems (Baltimore City, Garrett, Kent, and Somerset Counties) offer universal PreK to all four-year-olds. Three of these school systems (Garrett, Kent, and Somerset) exceeded the statewide average for demonstrating readiness.

Teachers were able to integrate the ELA into their existing routines in order to identify their students’ learning needs and plan individualized instruction that improved students’ skills, knowledge, and behaviors across school readiness domains. This continuous improvement process played an important role in the increase of our special education KRA results.

WINDY PHILLIPS, COORDINATOR OF INSTRUCTION/SPECIAL EDUCATION, WORCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Overall Readiness

- **Allegany County**
  - Demonstrating: 50% in 2018-2019, 47% in 2019-2020
  - Approaching: 33% in 2018-2019, 32% in 2019-2020
  - Emerging: 18% in 2018-2019, 21% in 2019-2020

- **Maryland**
  - Demonstrating: 50% in 2018-2019, 47% in 2019-2020
  - Approaching: 33% in 2018-2019, 32% in 2019-2020
  - Emerging: 18% in 2018-2019, 21% in 2019-2020

**50% DEMONSTRATE READINESS**

- **<1% OF KINDERGARTENERS ARE ENGLISH LEARNERS**
- **46% OF KINDERGARTENERS ARE DIRECT CERTIFIED**
- **10% OF KINDERGARTENERS HAVE IDENTIFIED DISABILITIES**

**Domain AVERAGE SCALE SCORE**

- Social Foundations: 298 (274 for Allegany, 273 for Maryland, Scale Score 298)
- Language & Literacy: 298 (269 for Allegany, 268 for Maryland, Scale Score 298)
- Mathematics: 298 (268 for Allegany, 267 for Maryland, Scale Score 298)
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: 293 (275 for Allegany, 276 for Maryland, Scale Score 293)

**Race/Ethnicity DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS**

- Kindergarten Enrollment:
  - 4% African American
  - <1% American Indian*
  - 1% Asian
  - 2% Hispanic/Latino
  - <1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*
  - 9% Two or More
  - 84% White

- Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness:
  - 36% African American
  - 67% Asian
  - 46% Hispanic/Latino
  - 43% Two or More
  - 51% White

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

**Subgroup DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS**

- Children Without Disabilities: 52%
  - English Fluent Children*: 50%
  - Children Who Are Not Direct Certified: 58%
  - -18% Children With Disabilities: 24%

**PARENT-REPORTED Prior Care Experience**

- % Enrolled Last SY:
  - Child Care: 3%
  - Family Child Care: 4%
  - Head Start: 2%
  - Home/Informal**: 3%
  - Non-Public Nursery: 1%
  - PreK: 9%

- **Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.**

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed. Gap estimates have been rounded for this publication.
Overall Readiness

- Anne Arundel: 46% for 2018-2019, 47% for 2019-2020
- Maryland: 36% for 2018-2019, 32% for 2019-2020

46% DEMONSTRATE READINESS

9% OF KINDERGARTENERS ARE ENGLISH LEARNERS

12% OF KINDERGARTENERS ARE DIRECT CERTIFIED

10% OF KINDERGARTENERS HAVE IDENTIFIED DISABILITIES

Domain AVERAGE SCALE SCORE

- Social Foundations: 275 (Maryland), 273 (Scale)
- Language & Literacy: 267 (Maryland), 268 (Scale)
- Mathematics: 266 (Maryland), 267 (Scale)
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: 276 (Maryland), 276 (Scale)

Race/Ethnicity DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS

- Kindergarten Enrollment:
  - African American: 34%
  - American Indian: <1%
  - Asian: 14%
  - Hispanic/Latino: 44%
  - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 28%
  - Two or More: 33%
  - White: 51%

- Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness
  - 43% of Kindergarteners are Direct Certified

Subgroup DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS

- Children With Disabilities: 48% (Anne Arundel), 49% (Maryland)
- Children Who Are Not Direct Certified: 48% (Anne Arundel), 48% (Maryland)
- English Learner Children: 17% (Anne Arundel), 17% (Maryland)

PARENT-REPORTED Prior Care Experience

- 1% enrolled in child care, 12% in family child care, <1% in Head Start, <1% in Home/Informal, 43% in non-public nursery, 5% in PreK

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day informal care is excluded.
## Overall Readiness

- **37%** demonstrate readiness

## 37% Demonstrate Readiness

### Demographics & Readiness

- **11%** of kindergarteners are English learners.
- **50%** of kindergarteners are direct certified.
- **9%** of kindergarteners have identified disabilities.

### Subgroup

- Children Without Disabilities: 59%
  - Children With Disabilities: 16%
  - English Learner Children: 15%
  - English Fluent Children: 40%
- Children Who Are Not Direct Certified: 59%
  - 35%: Children Who Are Direct Certified

### Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Kindergarten Enrollment</th>
<th>Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

## Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience

### % Enrolled Last SY

- **Child Care**: <1%
- **Family Child Care**: <1%
- **Head Start**: 6%
- **Home/Informal**: 8%
- **Non-Public Nursery**: <1%
- **PreK**: <1%

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.**

## Administration Method: Census

- **6,137 Kindergarteners**: 71% in PreK
- **100% Kindergarteners Assessed by KRA**
Overall Readiness

48% Demonstrate Readiness

12% of kindergarteners are English learners
27% of kindergarteners are Direct Certified
11% of kindergarteners have identified disabilities

Domain Average Scale Score

Social Foundations
Language & Literacy
Mathematics
Physical Well-Being & Motor Development

KRA Score

Race/Ethnicity Demographics & Readiness

Kindergarten Enrollment
Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness

Subgroup Demographics & Readiness

Children Without Disabilities
Children With Disabilities
Children Who Are Not Direct Certified

Children English Fluent
Children English Learner
Children Who Are Direct Certified

Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience

% Enrolled Last SY

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.
Overall Readiness

- 51% are demonstrating readiness
- 47% are approaching readiness
- 32% are emerging

Demographics & Readiness

- 2% of kindergarteners are English learners
- 13% of kindergarteners are direct certified
- 9% of kindergarteners have identified disabilities

Subgroup Demographics & Readiness

- Children without disabilities: 54%
- Children with disabilities: 23%
- English fluent children*: 52%
- Children who are not direct certified: 53%
- Children who are direct certified: 6%

Race/Ethnicity Demographics & Readiness

- African American: 46%
- American Indian*: 1%
- Asian*: 1%
- Hispanic/Latino*: 6%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*: 1%
- Two or More: 38%
- White: 54%

Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience

- 4% child care
- 18% family child care
- 1% Head Start
- 15% home/informal
- 4% non-public nursery
- 5% PreK

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.
**Caroline County**

**Race/Ethnicity**

**DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS**

- **Overall Readiness**: 55%
  - Demonstrating: 47%
  - Approaching: 32%
  - Emerging: 21%

- **Kindergarten Enrollment**: 390
  - 2018-2019: 273
  - 2019-2020: 298

- **Kinder gardeners assessed by KRA**: 100%
  - Demonstrated Kindergarten Readiness: 53%
  - English Learners: 24%
  - Identified Disabilities: 9%

**Domain AVERAGE SCALE SCORE**

- Social Foundations: 278
  - Maryland: 273
  - Scale: 298
- Language & Literacy: 270
  - Maryland: 268
  - Scale: 298
- Mathematics: 269
  - Maryland: 267
  - Scale: 298
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: 293
  - Maryland: 280
  - Scale: 293

**Subgroup DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS**

- Children Without Disabilities: 57%
  - English Fluent Children: 61%
  - Children Who Are Not Direct Certified: 6%
- Children With Disabilities: 36%
  - English Learner Children: 24%
  - Children Who Are Direct Certified: -37%

**Gap estimates have been rounded for this publication.**

**Race/Ethnicity DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS**

- African American: 13%
- American Indian*: 1%
- Asian*: 1%
- Hispanic/Latino: 18%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*: <1%
- Two or More: 9%
- White: 58%

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

**Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience**

- **% Enrolled Last SY**
  - Child Care: 1%
  - Family Child Care: 5%
  - Head Start: <1%
  - Home/Informal**: <1%
  - Non-Public Nursery: 12%
  - PreK: 70%

*Half Day Informal care is excluded.

**Administration Method: Census**

**Demo Estimate Unpublished in 2019-2019**

**Maryland Estimated Enrolled in 2019-2019**
Overall Readiness

59% Demonstrate Readiness

2% of kindergarteners are English learners

11% of kindergarteners are direct certified

9% of kindergarteners have identified disabilities

Subgroup Readiness

Children Without Disabilities: 63%
Children With Disabilities: 29%

Children Who Are Not Direct Certified: 62%
Children Who Are Direct Certified: 38%

Domain Average Scale Score

Social Foundations: 278 (Maryland), 273 (Scale)
Language & Literacy: 273 (Maryland), 293 (Scale)
Mathematics: 277 (Maryland), 276 (Scale)
Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: 279 (Maryland), 276 (Scale)

Race/Ethnicity

Kindergarten Enrollment

- African American: 33%
- American Indian: 3%
- Asian: 6%
- Hispanic/Latino: 6%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 1%
- Two or More: 8%
- White: 77%

Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness

- 59% of kindergarteners demonstrate readiness
- 47% approaching readiness
- 28% emerging readiness

Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience

- Child Care: 25%
- Head Start: 11%
- PreK: 20%

% Enrolled Last SY

- Half Day: 8%
- Full Day: 92%

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day informal care is excluded.
Overall Readiness

- Cecil County 2018-2019: 44%
- Cecil County 2019-2020: 47%
- Maryland 2018-2019: 36%
- Maryland 2019-2020: 32%

Children Without Disabilities:
- Cecil County 2018-2019: 47%
- Cecil County 2019-2020: 36%
- Maryland 2018-2019: 50%
- Maryland 2019-2020: 50%

Children With Disabilities:
- Cecil County 2018-2019: 26%
- Cecil County 2019-2020: 20%
- Maryland 2018-2019: 26%
- Maryland 2019-2020: 21%

Children Who Are Direct Certified:
- Cecil County 2018-2019: 48%
- Cecil County 2019-2020: 46%
- Maryland 2018-2019: 48%
- Maryland 2019-2020: 36%

Children Who Are Not Direct Certified:
- Cecil County 2018-2019: 50%
- Cecil County 2019-2020: 54%
- Maryland 2018-2019: 52%
- Maryland 2019-2020: 64%

Race/Ethnicity

- African American: 31%
- American Indian*: 3%
- Asian: 8%
- Hispanic/Latino: 8%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*: 8%
- Two or More: 7%
- White: 48%

Children Enrolled in PreK:
- Overall: 298
- African American: 28%
- American Indian*: 2%
- Asian: 9%
- Hispanic/Latino: 8%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*: 8%
- Two or More: 5%
- White: 42%

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day informal care is excluded.

Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience

- Child Care: 11%
- Family Child Care: 4%
- Head Start: 1%
- Home/Informal**: 4%
- Non-Public Nursery: 5%
- PreK: 33%

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.
**Overall Readiness**

- **44%** Demonstrating Readiness
- **3%** English Learners
- **23%** Directly Certified
- **9%** Identified Disabilities

**Domain Average Scale Score**

- Social Foundations: 274 (Charles), 273 (Maryland), 298
- Language & Literacy: 268 (Charles), 268 (Maryland), 298
- Mathematics: 266 (Charles), 267 (Maryland), 298
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: 276 (Charles), 276 (Maryland), 293

**Race/Ethnicity**

- African American: 39%
- American Indian*: 3%
- Asian: 44%
- Hispanic/Latino: 39%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*: 9%
- Two or More: 52%
- White: 53%

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

**Subgroup Demographics & Readiness**

- Children Without Disabilities: 46% (Charles), 45% (Maryland), -26%
- English Fluent Children: 45% (Charles), 47% (Maryland), -31%
- Children who are Direct Certified: 47% (Charles), 34% (Maryland), -13%

**Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience**

- Child Care: 11% (Charles), 1% (Maryland), 24%
- Head Start: 1% (Charles), 4% (Maryland), 18%
- Home/Informal**: 30% (Charles), 2% (Maryland), 52%
- Non-Public Nursery: 2% (Charles), 3% (Maryland), 53%

**Notes**

- Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.

**Administrative Method:** Census
DORCHESTER COUNTY

Overall READINESS

Domain AVERAGE SCALE SCORE

Race/Ethnicity DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS

Subgroup DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS

Parents-Reported Prior Care Experience

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.
Overall Readiness

- Frederick County:
  - 2018-2019: 57% Demonstrating, 47% Approaching, 32% Emerging
  - 2019-2020: 30% Demonstrating, 32% Approaching, 13% Emerging

- Maryland:
  - 2018-2019: 57% Demonstrating, 47% Approaching, 32% Emerging
  - 2019-2020: 30% Demonstrating, 32% Approaching, 13% Emerging

Domain Average Scale Score

- Social Foundations: 277 (Frederick) vs. 273 (Maryland)
- Language & Literacy: 271 (Frederick) vs. 268 (Maryland)
- Mathematics: 269 (Frederick) vs. 267 (Maryland)
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: 280 (Frederick) vs. 276 (Maryland)

Race/Ethnicity

- Kindergarten Enrollment:
  - African American: 11% (Frederick) vs. 49% (Maryland)
  - American Indian*: <1% (Frederick) vs. <1% (Maryland)
  - Asian: 6% (Frederick) vs. 63% (Maryland)
  - Hispanic/Latino: 17% (Frederick) vs. 34% (Maryland)
  - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*<1% (Frederick) vs. <1% (Maryland)
  - Two or More Subgroup: 6% (Frederick) vs. 49% (Maryland)
  - White: 59% (Frederick) vs. 66% (Maryland)

- Kindergarten Readiness:
  - Demonstrated Kindergarten Readiness: 9% (Frederick) vs. 11% (Maryland)

- English Learners: 9% (Frederick) vs. 14% (Maryland)

Subgroup Demographics & Readiness

- Children Without Disabilities: 60% (Frederick) vs. 61% (Maryland)
- Children With Disabilities: 23% (Frederick) vs. 13% (Maryland)
- English Fluent Children: 61% (Frederick) vs. 59% (Maryland)
- English Learner Children: -48% (Frederick) vs. -22% (Maryland)
- Children Who Are Not Direct Certified: 38% (Frederick) vs. 59% (Maryland)
- Children Who Are Direct Certified: 57% (Frederick) vs. 47% (Maryland)

Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience

- % Enrolled Last SY:
  - Child Care: 3% (Frederick) vs. 3% (Maryland)
  - Family Child Care: <1% (Frederick) vs. <1% (Maryland)
  - Head Start: 1% (Frederick) vs. 1% (Maryland)
  - Home/Informal**: 12% (Frederick) vs. 9% (Maryland)
  - Non-Public Nursery: 14% (Frederick) vs. 9% (Maryland)
  - PreK: 22% (Frederick) vs. 5% (Maryland)

- Half Day:
  - Child Care: 20% (Frederick) vs. 22% (Maryland)
  - Family Child Care: <1% (Frederick) vs. <1% (Maryland)
  - Head Start: 1% (Frederick) vs. 1% (Maryland)
  - Home/Informal**: 12% (Frederick) vs. 9% (Maryland)
  - Non-Public Nursery: 14% (Frederick) vs. 9% (Maryland)
  - PreK: 22% (Frederick) vs. 5% (Maryland)

- Full Day:
  - Child Care: 80% (Frederick) vs. 78% (Maryland)
  - Family Child Care: <1% (Frederick) vs. <1% (Maryland)
  - Head Start: 1% (Frederick) vs. 1% (Maryland)
  - Home/Informal**: 12% (Frederick) vs. 9% (Maryland)
  - Non-Public Nursery: 14% (Frederick) vs. 9% (Maryland)
  - PreK: 22% (Frederick) vs. 5% (Maryland)

* Fewer than 25 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

** Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.
GARRETT COUNTY

Overall Readiness

- Demonstrating: 53% (Garrett 2018-2019), 47% (Garrett 2019-2020), 53% (Maryland 2018-2019), 50% (Maryland 2019-2020)
- Approaching: 31% (Garrett 2018-2019), 32% (Garrett 2019-2020), 31% (Maryland 2018-2019), 31% (Maryland 2019-2020)
- Emerging: 16% (Garrett 2018-2019), 21% (Garrett 2019-2020), 16% (Maryland 2018-2019), 16% (Maryland 2019-2020)

53% DEMONSTRATE READINESS

0% OF KINDERGARTENERS ARE ENGLISH LEARNERS

16% OF KINDERGARTENERS ARE DIRECT CERTIFIED

9% OF KINDERGARTENERS HAVE IDENTIFIED DISABILITIES

Domain AVERAGE SCALE SCORE

- Social Foundations: 278 (Garrett), 298 (Maryland)
- Language & Literacy: 270 (Garrett), 298 (Maryland)
- Mathematics: 269 (Garrett), 298 (Maryland)
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: 278 (Garrett), 293 (Maryland)

Race/Ethnicity DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS

- African American*: 1%
- American Indian*: <1%
- Asian*: <1%
- Hispanic/Latino: 3%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*: <1%
- Two or More*: 1%
- White: 95%

DEMONSTRATE KINDERGARTEN READINESS

- Demonstrated: 38% (Garrett 2019-2020)
- Approaching: 95% (Garrett 2019-2020)
- Demonstrating: 53% (Garrett 2019-2020)

Subgroup DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS

- Children Without Disabilities: 57%, -41%
- English Fluent Children*: 53%
- Children Who Are Not Direct Certified: 57%, -22%
- Children Who Are Direct Certified: 35%

PARENT-REPORTED Prior Care Experience

- Child Care: <1%, 5%
- Family Child Care: <1%, 4%
- Head Start: <1%, 9%
- Home/Informal**: <1%, 15%
- Non-Public Nursery: <1%, 2%
- PreK: <1%, 65%

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.
30% IN PREK
2,814 KINDERGARTENERS
31% KINDERGARTENERS ASSESSED BY KRA

Overall READINESS

- 45% Demonstrating
- 47% Approaching
- 32% Emerging
- 19% Emerging

Harford 2018-2019
Harford 2019-2020
Maryland 2018-2019
Maryland 2019-2020

Domain AVERAGE SCALE SCORE

- Social Foundations
  - 271 Maryland
  - 273 Scale
  - 298 Average

- Language & Literacy
  - 268 Maryland
  - 268 Scale
  - 298 Average

- Mathematics
  - 268 Maryland
  - 267 Scale
  - 298 Average

- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development
  - 274 Maryland
  - 276 Scale
  - 293 Average

KRA Score

Race/Ethnicity DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS

- African American
- American Indian*
- Asian*
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*
- Two or More
- White

Kindergarten Enrollment
- 18% Demonstrated Kindergarten Readiness
- 9% Identified Disabilities
- 3% English Learners

- 15% Direct Certified

Subgroup DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS

- Children Without Disabilities: 45%
- Children With Disabilities: 15%
- English Fluent Children*: 47%
- Children Not Direct Certified: 29%
- Children Not Direct Certified: 18%

Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience

- 3% Child Care
- 20% Family Child Care
- 1% Head Start
- 1% Home/Informal
- 13% Non-Public Nursery
- 15% PreK

% Enrolled Last SY
- 3% Half Day
- 4% Full Day

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.

*Fewer than 25 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

**Fewer than 25 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.
Overall Readiness

- Howard County
  - 2018-2019: 57%
  - 2019-2020: 47%
- Maryland
  - 2018-2019: 30%
  - 2019-2020: 32%

Children Without Disabilities: 47%
Children With Disabilities: 30%
Children Who Are Not Direct Certified: 32%
Children Who Are Direct Certified: 13%

Percentage of Kindergarten Enrollments

- Child Care: 2%
- Family Child Care: <1%
- Head Start: 2%
- Home/Informal**: <1%
- Non-Public Nursery: 9%
- PreK: 10%

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.

Domain Average Scale Score

- Social Foundations: 276 (Howard) 273 (Maryland) 298 (Scale)
- Language & Literacy: 271 (Howard) 268 (Maryland) 298 (Scale)
- Mathematics: 270 (Howard) 267 (Maryland) 298 (Scale)
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: 279 (Howard) 276 (Maryland) 293 (Scale)

Race/Ethnicity Demographics & Readiness

- African American: 44% of Kindergarten Readiness
- American Indian: 78% of KINDERGARTENERS
- Asian: 82% of KINDERGARTENERS
- Hispanic/Latino: 62% of KINDERGARTENERS
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 35% of KINDERGARTENERS
- Two or More: 57% of KINDERGARTENERS
- White: 66% of KINDERGARTENERS

- Of Kindergarten Enrollments
  - Direct Certified: 9%
  - English Learners: 8%
  - Identified Disabilities: 9%
Overall Readiness

54% Demonstrate Readiness

9% of kindergarteners are English learners

40% of kindergarteners are Direct Certified

10% of kindergarteners have identified disabilities

Subgroup Demographics & Readiness

- Children Without Disabilities
  - 55% English Fluent Children
  - 23% English Learner Children
  - 31% Children With Disabilities
- Children Who Are Not Direct Certified
  - 69% English Fluent Children
  - 39% English Learner Children

Gap estimates have been rounded for this publication.

Race/Ethnicity Demographics & Readiness

- Kindergarten Enrollment
  - 25% African American
  - <1% American Indian*
  - <1% Asian*
  - 13% Hispanic/Latino
  - <1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*
  - 5% Two or More Subgroup
  - 72% White

- Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness
  - 29%

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience

- % Enrolled Last SY
  - 84% PreK

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.
Montgomery County

Overall Readiness

- 53% Demonstrating
- 47% Approaching
- 27% Emerging

25% of kindergarteners are English learners.

11% of kindergarteners are direct certified.

10% of kindergarteners have identified disabilities.

Domain Average Scale Score

- Social Foundations: 272 (Maryland), 273 (Scale), 298
- Language & Literacy: 270 (Maryland), 268 (Scale), 298
- Mathematics: 271 (Maryland), 267 (Scale), 298
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: 276 (Maryland), 276 (Scale), 293

Race/Ethnicity

- 20% African American
- <1% American Indian*
- 13% Asian*
- 33% Hispanic/Latino
- <1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*
- 5% Two or More
- White

- 10% of kindergarteners have identified disabilities.

Subgroup

- Children Without Disabilities: 58% (Maryland), 55% (Scale)
- English Learner Children: 24% (Maryland), 33% (Scale)
- Children Who Are Not Direct Certified: 35% (Maryland), 33% (Scale)

Gap estimates have been rounded for this publication.

PARENT-REPORTED Prior Care Experience

- 11% of kindergarteners are direct certified.

- 1% Child Care
- 1% Family Child Care
- <1% Head Start
- 66% Home/Informal**
- 1% Non-Public Nursery
- 2% PreK

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half day informal care is excluded.

Maryland Scale
Overall Readiness

- **Prince George's County**
  - 2018-2019: 35% Demonstrating, 47% Approaching, 31% Emerging
  - 2019-2020: 33% Demonstrating, 32% Approaching, 31% Emerging

- **Maryland**
  - 2018-2019: 35% Demonstrating, 47% Approaching, 31% Emerging
  - 2019-2020: 33% Demonstrating, 32% Approaching, 31% Emerging

**Domain Average Scale Score**

- Social Foundations:
  - Prince George's County: 270
  - Maryland: 273
- Language & Literacy:
  - Prince George's County: 263
  - Maryland: 268
- Mathematics:
  - Prince George's County: 262
  - Maryland: 267
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development:
  - Prince George's County: 273
  - Maryland: 276

Race/Ethnicity

- **Demographics & Readiness**
  - Kindergarten Enrollment:
    - African American: 51%
    - American Indian: <1%
    - Asian: 3%
    - Hispanic/Latino: 39%
    - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: <1%
    - Two or More Subgroups: 2%
    - White: 8%
  - Kindergarten Readiness:
    - African American: 46%
    - American Indian: 36%
    - Asian: 42%
    - Hispanic/Latino: 18%
    - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 21%
    - Two or More Subgroups: 54%
    - White: 48%

Subgroup Demographics & Readiness

- English Fluently Speaking Children: 46%
- Children Who Are Not Direct Certified: 33%
- Children Who Are Direct Certified: 67%

Children Without Disabilities: 37% (14% Disabiliies, 24% English Learner Children)

Children With Disabilities: 15% (14% English Learner Children)

**Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience**

- Child Care: 1%
- Family Child Care: <1%
- Head Start: <1%
- Home/Informal**: 34%
- Non-Public Nursery: 1%
- PreK: 33%

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.**

**Gap estimates have been rounded for this publication.**
Overall Readiness

- Queen Anne's County 2018-2019: 48%
- Queen Anne's County 2019-2020: 47%
- Maryland 2018-2019: 36%
- Maryland 2019-2020: 32%

48% Demonstrate Readiness

- 9% of kindergarteners are English learners
- 16% of kindergarteners are direct certified
- 8% of kindergarteners have identified disabilities

Domain Average Scale Score

- Social Foundations: Maryland 276
- Language & Literacy: Maryland 267
- Mathematics: Maryland 266
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: Maryland 278

Race/Ethnicity Demographics & Readiness

- African American: Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness 35%
- American Indian*: 9%
- Asian*: 3%
- Hispanic/Latino: 13%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*: 8%
- Two or More: 8%
- White: 8%

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

Subgroup Demographics & Readiness

- Children Without Disabilities: 51%
- Children With Disabilities: 13%
- English Fluent Children: 52%
- English Learner Children: 7%
- Children Who Are Not Direct Certified: 51%
- Children Who Are Direct Certified: 31%

Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience

- Child Care: 15%
- Family Child Care: 4%
- Head Start: 1%
- Home/Informal**: 14%
- Non-Public Nursery: 12%
- PreK: 22%

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day informal care is excluded.
**ST. MARY’S COUNTY**

**1,252 KINDERGARTENERS**
**63% IN PREK**
**100% KINDERGARTENERS ASSESSED BY KRA**

**DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS**

- **45%** Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness
- **47%** of St. Mary’s 2018-2019 Kindergartners
- **45%** of Maryland 2018-2019 Kindergartners

- **2%** of Kindergarteners are English Learners
- **22%** of Kindergarteners are Direct Certified
- **7%** of Kindergarteners have identified disabilities

**Domain AVERAGE SCALE SCORE**

- **Social Foundations**
  - Domain Average Scale Score: 275 (Maryland) / 273 (Scale)

- **Language & Literacy**
  - Domain Average Scale Score: 268 (Maryland) / 268 (Scale)

- **Mathematics**
  - Domain Average Scale Score: 266 (Maryland) / 267 (Scale)

- **Physical Well-Being & Motor Development**
  - Domain Average Scale Score: 276 (Maryland) / 276 (Scale)

**Race/Ethnicity DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS**

- **26%** African American
- **30%** Asian
- **28%** Hispanic/Latino
- **44%** Two or More
- **53%** White

**Of Kindergarteners are Direct Certified**

**Subgroup DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS**

- **Children Without Disabilities**
  - 47% English Fluently
  - 46% English Learner

- **Children With Disabilities**
  - 16% English Fluently
  - 4% English Learner

- **Children Who Are Not Direct Certified**
  - 53% English Fluently
  - 34% English Learner

- **Children Who Are Direct Certified**
  - 19% English Fluently
  - 4% English Learner

**Race/Ethnicity DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS**

- ** children**
  - 1% African American
  - 2% American Indian*
  - 8% Asian
  - 1% Hispanic/Latino*
  - 1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*
  - 10% Two or More
  - 62% White

**% Enrolled Last SY**

- **Child Care**
  - 9%
- **Family Child Care**
  - 1%
- **Head Start**
  - 2%
- **Home/Informal**
  - 24%
- **Non-Public Nursery**
  - 5%
- **PreK**
  - 37%

**% Enrolled Last SY**

- **Half Day**
  - 5%
- **Full Day**
  - 4%

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

**Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience**

**Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness**

- **22%** of Kindergarteners are Direct Certified
- **7%** of Kindergarteners have identified disabilities

**Administration Method: Census**
**Overall Readiness**

- **63%** Demonstrate Readiness
- **47%** Approaching
- **25%** Emerging

**Domain Average Scale Score**

- Social Foundations: 279 (Maryland), 273 (Scale)
- Language & Literacy: 272 (Maryland), 268 (Scale)
- Mathematics: 271 (Maryland), 267 (Scale)
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: 281 (Maryland), 276 (Scale)

**Race/Ethnicity Demographics & Readiness**

- African American: 44%
- American Indian*: <1%
- Asian*: 1%
- Hispanic/Latino: 9%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*: <1%
- Two or More: 8%
- White: 37%

**Kindergarten Enrollment**

- African American: 55%
- American Indian*: <1%
- Asian*: 1%
- Hispanic/Latino: 60%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*: <1%
- Two or More: 56%
- White: 72%

**Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience**

- <1% Child Care
- 1% Family Child Care
- <1% Head Start
- 6% Home/Informal**
- <1% Non-Public Nursery
- <1% PreK

**Gap**

- 6% of kindergarteners are English learners
- 60% of kindergarteners are direct certified
- 11% of kindergarteners have identified disabilities

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

**Notes**

- Gap estimates have been rounded for this publication.
- **Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.**

**Administration Method:** Census
Overall Readiness

- **43%** **Demonstrate Readiness**
- **19%** of kindergarteners are English learners
- **28%** of kindergarteners are direct certified
- **15%** of kindergarteners have identified disabilities

### Domain AVERAGE SCALE SCORE

- **Social Foundations:**
  - Talbot 2018-2019: 274
  - Talbot 2019-2020: 273
  - Maryland 2018-2019: 298
  - Maryland 2019-2020: 298
- **Language & Literacy:**
  - Talbot 2018-2019: 268
  - Talbot 2019-2020: 268
  - Maryland 2018-2019: 298
  - Maryland 2019-2020: 298
- **Mathematics:**
  - Talbot 2018-2019: 264
  - Talbot 2019-2020: 267
  - Maryland 2018-2019: 298
  - Maryland 2019-2020: 298
- **Physical Well-Being & Motor Development:**
  - Talbot 2018-2019: 275
  - Talbot 2019-2020: 276
  - Maryland 2018-2019: 298
  - Maryland 2019-2020: 298

### Race/Ethnicity DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS

- **Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness**
  - African American: 37%
  - American Indian*: 30%
  - Asian: 23%
  - Hispanic/Latino: 54%
  - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*: 50%
  - Two or More: 48%
  - White: 42%

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

### Subgroup DEMOGRAPHICS & READINESS

- **Children Without Disabilities:**
  - 48%
- **English Fluently Speaking Children:**
  - 52%
- **Children Who Are Not Direct Certified:**
  - 50%
  - 23%
  - 27%
- **Children With Disabilities:**
  - 15%
  - 8%

Gap estimates have been rounded for this publication.

### Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience

- **PreK:** 42%
  - **Child Care:** 9%
    - **Family Child Care:** 1%
    - **Head Start:** 1%
    - **Home/Informal:** 6%
    - **Non-Public Nursery:** 3%

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.
**Overall Readiness**

- Washington County:
  - 2018-2019: 44%
  - 2019-2020: 47%
  - Demonstrating: 32%, Approaching: 32%, Emerging: 24%
- Maryland County:
  - 2018-2019: 32%
  - 2019-2020: 32%
  - Demonstrating: 24%, Approaching: 21%, Emerging: 25%

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**Domain Average Scale Score**

- Social Foundations: 272 (Maryland) 298 (Scale)
- Language & Literacy: 266 (Maryland) 298 (Scale)
- Mathematics: 265 (Maryland) 298 (Scale)
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: 277 (Maryland) 293 (Scale)

**Race/Ethnicity Demographics & Readiness**

- Kindergarten Enrollment:
  - African American: 15%
  - American Indian: <1%
  - Asian: 2%
  - Hispanic/Latino: 11%
  - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*: <1%
  - Two or More: 11%
  - White: 60%

- Demonstrate Kindergarten Readiness:
  - African American: 29%
  - American Indian: 60%
  - Asian: 50%
  - Hispanic/Latino: 36%
  - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*: 46%
  - Two or More: 48%
  - White: 60%

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

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**Parent-Reported Prior Care Experience**

- Child Care: <1%
- Family Child Care: <1%
- Head Start: 7%
- Home/Informal**: 16%
- Non-Public Nursery: 3%, 5%
- PreK: 52%

**Enrollment estimates are only for children who were in half day informal care in addition to half day in the prior care setting indicated. Half Day Informal care is excluded.**

**Gap estimates have been rounded for this publication.**
**Overall Readiness**

- **43%** Demonstrating
- **47%** Approaching
- **32%** Emerging

**Race/Ethnicity**

- **36%** African American
- **<1%** American Indian*
- **3%** Asian
- **10%** Hispanic/Latino
- **<1%** Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander*
- **10%** Two or More
- **41%** White

*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.

**Child Care**

- **12%** Head Start
- **21%** Home/Informal**
- **5%** Non-Public Nursery
- **41%** PreK

**PARENT-REPORTED Prior Care Experience**

- **43%** of kindergarteners are English learners.
- **41%** are direct certified.
- **6%** have identified disabilities.
- **7%** of kindergarteners are English learners.

**Domain Average Scale Score**


**Children Without Disabilities**

- **44%** English Fluent Children
- **24%** Children With Disabilities

**Children Who Are Not Direct Certified**

- **11%** English Learner Children
- **-34%** Children With Disabilities

**Children Who Are Direct Certified**

- **10%** English Fluent Children
- **-16%** Children With Disabilities

**Gap estimates have been rounded for this publication.**

**Administration Method:** Census
Worcester County

Overall Readiness


64% Demonstrate Readiness

4% Of Kindergarteners Are English Learners

25% Of Kindergarteners Are Direct Certified

8% Of Kindergarteners Have Identified Disabilities

Domain Average Scale Score


KRA Score

Race/Ethnicity Demographics & Readiness


Subgroup Demographics & Readiness


PARENT-REPORTED Prior Care Experience


% Enrolled Last SY


*Fewer than 5 kindergarteners or less than 1% assessed.
Maryland has been a trailblazer in using data to evaluate and improve the quality of early childhood education. In 2014, MSDE — in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education, the Johns Hopkins School of Education Center for Technology in Education (JHU CTE), and WestEd — originally developed the Ready for Kindergarten assessment system, which includes the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and the Early Learning Assessment. Since that time, Maryland has led the Ready 4 Kindergarten: Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System State Collaborative to promote ongoing collaboration and improvement of the assessment. Other states who adopt the KRA and/or ELA are able to participate in this State Collaborative. Current participating partners are the Ohio Department of Education, South Carolina Department of Education, Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators, and the Indiana Department of Education. Maryland serves as a model to other states and benefits from a community of practice where school systems can share their successes and challenges.

COLLABORATION MATTERS

As part of the ongoing statewide efforts to improve quality and increase access for all young learners, Maryland developed a new early learning strategic plan to help strengthen the coordination and collaboration between federal, state, local, and community resources so that all children are given the opportunities they need to be ready for kindergarten.

GATHERING THE COMMUNITY

Hearing from voices on the ground is an essential first step in improving the quality and implementation of services. Through 18 regional town hall meetings, state and local leaders heard directly from the community about the needs of families and young children. Each of the town halls informed the direction of the strategic plan by sharing information about the availability and quality of early care and education, especially for vulnerable populations, and the barriers to accessing care; the importance of engaging and supporting families; efforts to enhance collaboration; expanding universal PreK; improving transition services between early care and school; using the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment data to inform services; and increasing workforce capacity through professional development.

SUPPORTING LOCAL EFFORTS

Each of Maryland’s jurisdictions has a local Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) to promote coordination, collaboration, efficiency, and quality improvements at the local level. Each local ECAC is comprised of representatives from school systems, the early childhood provider community, local agencies, nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders working together to bring awareness, education, and supports to children and families, as well as developing action plans that respond to the needs of the community at a local level.

LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

No true change can happen without buy-in and cooperation at the local level, which is why the state undertook a comprehensive needs assessment to listen to what providers, parents, organizational leaders, and other stakeholders identify as essential gaps or opportunities for growth. The key findings are a call to action for more investments and collaboration in the future to:

- Increase and improve access to early childhood education services, especially for vulnerable families, including families of children with special needs, families of English learners, immigrant families, low-income families, and families living in rural areas.
- Streamline the process of navigating the early childhood education system to ensure parents and families know about programs and services available to them.
- Improve coordination and collaboration between programs and communities.
- Build the early childhood workforce by supporting access to teacher preparation and professional development programs.
- Improve coordination of data systems to drive decision-making.

Maryland is committed to providing the strongest foundation possible for its youngest learners, tapping into the strengths and unique resources available in its diverse communities. Through combined efforts, and with a focus on what children really need to thrive, we can help ensure that all children are ready for success when they enter kindergarten.
