



# Cradle to Career: READINESS

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**As a leading voice for early childhood in New York State, the Early Childhood Advisory Council coordinates the development and implementation of innovative, comprehensive and sustainable standards of high quality learning and care and family centered services so that every young child in the state has a maximum opportunity to succeed in life – right from the start.**

Success in the 21st century means accessing, evaluating and synthesizing information and using key mathematical skills to solve problems and generate new and innovative solutions to the challenges facing us today. The engaged global citizen is able to grapple with complex issues, he/she works in shades of gray, confronts problems that can only be solved by integrating ideas from multiple resources, understands a wide range of concepts, and has the interdisciplinary knowledge to access and apply them.

When children are not given the appropriate opportunities to learn, both the individual and society suffer. As compared to the full time worker with a high school degree, the individual with a four year college degree is much more likely to report being in excellent or very good health, is more likely to vote, is less likely to smoke and engage in other harmful behaviors, and earns 62% more income.<sup>1</sup>

One out of three New York children will arrive in kindergarten lacking the skills they need to succeed in school.

The first five years of a child's life lay the foundations for language, academic abilities, habits and social and emotional development. The window for change does not close after age 5, but "catch up" is costly. Worldwide more than 200 million children under 5 are failing to reach their developmental potential.<sup>2</sup>

***New York's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) knows that high quality child care helps close the achievement gap.***

There are mountains of evidence that show the correlation between early academic success, measured by literacy rates in 3rd grade, and high school achievement. Students who fail to master reading by the end of third grade often falter in the later grades and drop out before earning a high school diploma.

***A child who starts behind is likely to stay behind.***

A child's readiness for school depends on meeting his/her comprehensive needs, which include: physical and motor development; language and literacy; social and emotional development;

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approaches to learning; and cognitive development. If a child enters school with deficits in these areas, it will be difficult to catch up. In fact, as much as half of school failure may be attributable to gaps in early care and development that existed before school entry.<sup>3</sup>

Using a sample of 4,000 children, the first national longitudinal study to calculate high school graduation rates for children at different reading skills levels and with different poverty rates has found that children who don't read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers. Further, one in six children not reading proficiently in third grade fails to graduate from high school on time.<sup>4</sup>

Language proficiency is a key predictor of school success. Early literacy skills (size of vocabulary, recognizing letters, understanding letter and sound relationships) at kindergarten entry are good predictors of children's reading abilities throughout their educational careers. Language and literacy skills enable children to develop cognitive skills and knowledge and to interact effectively with peers and adults.<sup>5</sup>

Third grade is an important pivot point in a child's education, the time when students shift from learning to read to reading to learn.

*In New York in 2010, nearly half, or 45% of third graders, tested below Level 3, a basic measure of proficiency in English Language Arts.<sup>6</sup>*

In "School Readiness and Later Achievement," a widely cited 2007 study of large longitudinal data sets, University of California, Irvine, education professor Greg Duncan and his colleagues found that in a comparison of math, literacy, and social-emotional skills at kindergarten entry, "early math concepts, such as knowledge of numbers and ordinality, were the most powerful predictors of later learning."

*In mathematics, 33% of third graders in New York public schools tested below Level 3 in the 2010-2011 school year.<sup>7</sup>*

Many of these students will go on to experience significant academic difficulties, jeopardizing individual potential and compromising our society's vitality. The costs of these failures are high. The larger the gap at school entry, the harder it is to close.

When classrooms provide deep and sustained interactions with children around key mathematical ideas; integrate these interactions throughout the curriculum and use a variety of modalities (kinesthetic, visual, and verbal with adult scaffolding) for children to explore materials and engage in play with peers; then children are better positioned to master various skills linked to numeracy.<sup>8</sup>

*The State of New York's Early Childhood Advisory Council supports New York in building a comprehensive and sustainable early childhood system that ensures success for all young children.*

At the core of our work are intensive capacity building efforts to increase adult competencies related to assessing, supporting, and promoting children's language, math and reading development from birth to age 5 and to support child outcomes.

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## REFERENCES

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- <sup>2</sup> Steve Barnett, Ph.D. November 13, 2012. Investing in Early child Education and Care (ECEC), NIEER, New Jersey, Rutgers Graduate School of Education.
- <sup>3</sup> *Early Learning Left Out*, <http://www.voices.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/ELLO.pdf>.
- <sup>4</sup> Donald Hernandez (April 2011).“Double Jeopardy: How Third Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation”. New York, NY, The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- <sup>5</sup> Nonie K. Lesaux, Ph.D. (2012). *Turning the Page: Refocusing Massachusetts for Reading Success Strategies for improving children’s language and literacy development, birth to age 9.* Boston, MA: Strategies for Children.
- <sup>6</sup> Kids Count New York.
- <sup>7</sup> Kids Count New York.
- <sup>8</sup> A joint position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). Updated in 2010. *Early Childhood Mathematics: Promoting Good Beginnings.* NAEYC.