

Gearing Up for Kindergarten – Preparing Children for School Success



2015-16 Site Report for

Cass County Sites, Fargo, ND

Understanding the Need

- Children entering kindergarten already show a wide range of skill levels as they begin school. One of two children (48 percent) show some challenges entering kindergarten. School readiness assists children at the kindergarten level to avoid falling behind their peers or struggling to achieve success in school.
- School readiness refers to the development of social and emotional skills, basic literacy and math skills, and other life skills important for school success.
- Research on school readiness indicates that assisting children to achieve optimal growth between ages 0 and 5 helps them to achieve school success in elementary school and later years.

Local Program Participation

Gearing Up for Kindergarten operated as follows at program sites in Cass County during 2015-16:

- Participating families at Cass County GUK sites met in weekly sessions in the program year of 2015-16.
- The number of participant families per school district: Fargo=74 families, West Fargo=63, Central Cass=45, Northern Cass=16, Kindred=32, Nokomis=13, Oak Grove Lutheran=33.
- A total of 276 families participated in the program.

Impacts on Parents

Parents reported the following impacts through involvement in *Gearing Up for Kindergarten*:

- **General program value** – 68.5% of parents indicated the program was very or extremely useful to them.
- **General impacts of program participation** – Among participants, 94% noted it increased their knowledge of healthy parenting a lot or very much, while 87% indicated it influenced their relationship with their child positively.
- **Value of program versus other sources** – Participants rated the *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* class and materials (4.03 out of 5) higher than all other sources (10 total) in being useful to them regarding parenting and school readiness.

Parent Comments and Feedback at Cass County Sites

The following comments represent parent feedback shared at Cass County sites following participation in *GUK*:

- *“He has become more comfortable sharing in a group and looks forward to doing his homework .”*
- *“She is not nervous about kindergarten. I think without it she would have been.”*
- *“I liked the parent/kid interactions at the beginning. You need to stop and do those things with your kids. Take the time and its neat to see their little minds at work.”*
- *“Yes, listen and understand more versus a totalitarian/traditionalist parenting rule!”*

Impacts on Children – School Readiness

Research identified the following impacts for children through involvement in *Gearing Up for Kindergarten*:

- **Increases in children’s school readiness as described by parents** – Among 19 indicators of school readiness assessed by parents regarding their children, significant increases were measured on all of the 19 indicators during the 2015-16 program year.
- **Increases in child knowledge and skills occurred in:**
 - 1) Social skills and positive interaction with others
 - 2) Ability to function more independently and learn in a guided environment
 - 3) Development of specific pre-academic skills or knowledge (knowing the alphabet, numbers, etc.)
 - 4) Ability to express themselves through art and hands-on creative activities
 - 5) Ability to manage emotions and adapt in a new environment.

Contact and Further Details

For more information regarding the program, please see www.ag.ndsu.edu/gearupkindergarten



In North Dakota, over 50,000 children between ages 0 and 5 are preparing for their entry into school and needing to gain knowledge and skills for success. Last year 9,878 entered Kindergarten, of which 9,033 were in public schools .