

Gearing Up for Kindergarten – Preparing Children for School Success



2013-14 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 Cass County Sites Fargo, ND in 2013-14:

- Participating families at Cass County GUK sites met in weekly sessions in the fall of 2013 and spring of 2014.
- The number of participant families per school district Fargo=58 families, West Fargo=55, Central Cass=34, Northern Cass=26, Kindred=25, Nokomis=27, Oak Grove Lutheran Elem=26.
- A total of 251 families participated in the program.

Impacts on Parents

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

- **General program value** – 77.4% of parents indicated the program was very or extremely useful to them.
- **General impacts of program participation** – Among participants, 89% noted it increased their knowledge of healthy parenting a lot or very much, while 82% 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 (3.86 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*:

- *“Topics have made me more self-aware of my actions and what an impact they have on further down the road.”*
- *“She gets nervous in new situations. I hope this helped to ease her into a new environment. She was able to see her school, meet some kids. It really is a great program! Thank you all!!”*
- *“More comfortable with our K center. Less anxiety.”*
- *“Excited for kindergarten. Awareness and exposure to the environment she will be in next year, ideas on what the day and classrooms are like.”*
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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 18 of the 19 indicators during the 2013-14 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, nearly 47,000 children between ages 0 and 5 are preparing for their entry into school and needing to gain knowledge and skills for success. Last year 9,503 children entered Kindergarten of which 8,575 were in public schools.