
Gearing Up for Kindergarten **Project Overview & Year-End Report for 2008-2009**

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September 2009

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Executive Summary

The academic expectations of children entering kindergarten have changed a great deal from previous generations. In order to instill knowledge and self-confidence in children, parents need to be made aware of and given the correct tools to prepare their children for kindergarten. Parents are a child's first and best teachers, but many parents need and want support in their role of preparing their children for success in school. *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* provides support by improving access to information, providing preschool and parent education classes, and partnering with organizations that work with young families to ensure school readiness.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) and the NDSU Extension Service, in partnership with their statewide network of Parent Resource Centers, operated this school readiness and parent education program for its third pilot year in 2008-09. *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* is a Preschool/Parent Education opportunity for parents and their children who will be entering kindergarten in the following year. The *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program provides families with an intensive educational experience that combines preschool learning activities for pre-kindergarten children with parent education opportunities for adults. The key building blocks and objectives of the program are:

- *School Readiness for Children Entering Kindergarten*
- *Parent Education*
- *Early Awareness and Intervention*
- *Parent Involvement with Children's Learning & School*
- *Building Home-School-Community Partnerships*

In 2008-2009 the program operated at 18 sites across North Dakota with 290 families enrolled. This executive summary provides highlights of findings gathered through evaluation of the *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program's operation in fall 2008 and spring 2009.

- **Program participation – 84% of participants indicated involvement in 6 or more sessions of the program during the fall 2008 year (or first half of the program); 86% of participants in spring 2008 indicated involvement in 6 or more sessions of the program.** This is a very high rate of participation and retention in a parent education program involving parents and children.
- **General value of the program -** Participants expressed very positive feelings about the general value of the program, with **83% indicating it was very or extremely useful to them in fall 2008 and 90% saying the same thing in spring 2009.** Among participants in fall 2008, 82% said the handouts and learning activities were very useful to them while 84% responded similarly in spring 2009. Finally, all of them agreed that the information was presented well and they were treated respectfully, with those who strongly agreed they were treated well at 85% in both fall and spring.
- **General impacts of program participation -** Among participants, **51% in fall 2008 and 55% in spring 2009 indicated the program increased their knowledge of child development a lot or very much, 62% noted it increased their knowledge of healthy parenting a lot or very much (60% in spring 09), 70% felt it increased their confidence in being a good parent a lot or very much, and 52% said it increased their parenting skills a lot or very much (57% in spring 09).** Additionally, **87% felt it changed their parent behavior at least somewhat (88% in spring 09), and 94% indicated that it influenced their relationship with their child positively (95% in spring 09).**
- **Program value versus other information sources -** The results from the fall session of the program indicate that participants rated parents with children of a similar age (3.75), preschool/Head Start/child care (3.62), and their child's other parent (3.53) as the most useful sources of information for them on parenting and preparing their child for other school. However, **the Gearing Up for Kindergarten class and materials were rated higher than all other sources with a mean score of 3.98, indicating that participants felt the class was more useful to them regarding parenting and school readiness than any other information source assessed.** The results from the spring session of the program were similar, with **participants rating the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program even higher at a mean score of 4.12, substantially higher than any other information source assessed.**
- **Impacts on parental practices -** Participants were asked to answer questions about their specific activities as parents in a number of areas, both before and after participating in the program. Participants noted **small to moderate changes in 12 of the 18 parental practices related to school readiness that were measured, with all of the changes showing positive increases in a particular parental practice (e.g., more actively discussing a story with children or engaging in more active play with a child).** These changes **suggested incremental improvement in key aspects of parental involvement and guidance, and the increases that occurred in parents' efforts with their children in specific areas were typically three to four times higher than would be expected to occur** due to random chance. This is a good indicator that the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program is having a positive impact.
- **Increases in children's school readiness as described by parents -** Among 52 indicators of school readiness assessed by parents regarding their children, **significant differences were**

measured on 39 of the 52 indicators between fall 2008 and spring 2009. This means that 75 percent of the indicators for school readiness showed positive growth in children participating in Gearing Up for Kindergarten. In analyzing all increases, the findings suggest growth in five primary areas: (1) social skills and positive interaction with others; (2) ability to function more independently and learn actively in a guided environment; (3) development of specific pre-academic skills or knowledge that applies to a school setting (knowing the alphabet and numbers, etc.); (4) ability to express themselves through art and hands-on creative activities; and (5) ability to manage emotions and adapt in a new environment.

- **School knowledge of parents and children** - For both parents and children, indicators of school knowledge showed significant increases in preparation and knowledge for the school experience. For pre-kindergarten children, the percentage who had visited a school or kindergarten classroom increased by 24%, those who met a kindergarten teacher at their prospective school increased 19%, and those who meet peers they will be with in kindergarten increased nearly 19%. For parents, the percentage who had visited a school or kindergarten classroom increased 18%, those who had met a kindergarten teacher at their child's prospective school increased 17%, and those meeting other parents who will have children in kindergarten increased 8%.
- **Children's comfort and familiarity with school** - For children in the program, among 8 indicators of comfort level and familiarity with school, significant differences were measured on 7 of the 8 indicators between fall 2008 and spring 2009. Findings showed that children became more familiar with kindergarten routines and expectations, more comfortable with the school environment, more comfortable separating from parents, and more curious and excited about beginning school.
- **Parent comfort and familiarity with school** - For parents involved in Gearing Up for Kindergarten, significant differences were measured on 5 of the 8 indicators regarding comfort level and familiarity with school between fall 2008 and spring 2009. Findings showed that parent became more familiar with kindergarten routines and expectations for their child, more comfortable interacting with school personnel, more aware of their child's behavior with peers, and more aware of the ability level of kindergarten children.
- **Increases in children's school readiness as described by teachers** - Among 39 indicators of school readiness rated by teachers on a scale of 1 to 3, significant differences were measured on 28 of the 39 indicators between fall 2008 and spring 2009. This means that 72 percent of the indicators for school readiness that were rated by teachers showed positive growth in children participating in Gearing Up for Kindergarten. In analyzing all significant increases in the findings, the findings suggest growth in five primary areas: (1) social skills and positive interaction with others; (2) ability to function more independently and learn actively in a guided environment; (3) development of specific pre-academic skills and knowledge regarding language and literacy; (4) development of specific pre-academic skills and knowledge regarding math and science; and (5) ability to express themselves through art and hands-on creative activities.
- **Qualitative feedback on outcomes for parents in the program** – Parents who participated in the program shared a variety of comments that highlighted positive impacts in three areas:

- ***More Time and Active Involvement with Children***
 - It's a good learning program. Useful information and doing the learning activities with my child is fun!! I like learning with my child and what I learn from this helps me to understand how to help her learn better.
 - This program has been an incredible blessing to me and my son. I absolutely love the chance to play educational games with just him and I really need the parenting advice and encouragement that is given. I was also very thankful for the child care for my other kids. Thank you!!
- ***Improved Parenting Efforts in Specific Areas***
 - I found the discipline techniques very useful – using positive reinforcement and avoiding the word “don’t.”
 - I am more interactive when I read to him. Many of my parenting beliefs and behaviors have been affirmed, which has helped me to be more confident.
 - I try to focus more on catching him being good. I try to use everyday experiences more to teach math and literacy.
- ***Increased Awareness of Child's Specific Needs***
 - This is an awesome program – I think it is something that every family with a child entering kindergarten could benefit from participating in. It allowed me to see which skills my son has mastered versus needs work on for school readiness.
 - This class was offered at a difficult time our family was facing, just recently learning we had a special needs child. This class was very beneficial for our child, providing some stability for all of us and assuring us with what we will need to face with the youngest child in our family.
 - This program was absolutely what our family needed! It was great to take the time to focus on my son's development. I truly needed encouragement as a parent and this helped us focus on helping our son. He can't wait for kindergarten now.
- **Qualitative feedback on outcomes children in the program** – Parents who participated in the program shared a variety of comments that highlighted positive benefits for children in three areas:
 - ***Increased Social Confidence and Positive Peer Interactions***
 - My child is very shy. Through this program she was able to spend time with the kindergarten teachers. She thoroughly enjoyed the program.
 - Good social experience – improvement in social skills since beginning of program. Good introduction to classroom setting – we're working on transitions.
 - ***Improved Pre-Academic Skills in Reading, Math and Other Subjects***
 - This was her night. No siblings. She was exposed to a classroom, a teacher, and other children. She learned socialization and improved some of her academic skills. She loves to write 5's now and doesn't get frustrated.
 - He wants to learn to read now. His self-confidence is so much better because he had his own important meeting to go to and I had one-on-one time with him.
 - ***Greater Awareness and Comfort with School Routines and Expectations***

- He is becoming familiar with the classroom atmosphere. It is a great learning experience for him – both mentally and socially.
- He is getting more prepared to start kindergarten and will know what to expect when he does start school and he won't be so shy. He knows what school time is about and how to follow directions.
- His social skills have improved. His fine motor skills have improved. I feel that he is more prepared to start school and he will know what to expect next year.

The findings from the assessment process concerning changes in parenting and in children's social, emotional, cognitive, and practical abilities related to school readiness show that many changes are occurring for children and families enrolled in the *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program. Many significant changes are occurring that strengthen parental knowledge and practices and move children toward greater school readiness. These findings indicate that the program has a number of positive impacts on children and their school readiness, and that it is making a strong contribution to the well-being of children, families and schools in North Dakota.

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The academic expectations of children entering kindergarten have changed a great deal from previous generations. In order to instill knowledge and self-confidence in children, parents need to be made aware of and given the correct tools to prepare their children for kindergarten. Parents are a child's first and best teachers, but many parents need and want support in their role of preparing their children for success in school. *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* has provided valuable and much-needed support by improving access to information, providing preschool and parent education classes, and partnering with organizations that work with young families to ensure programs focus on early literacy.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) and the NDSU Extension Service, in partnership with their statewide network of Parent Resource Centers, have operated this school readiness and parent education program for its third pilot year in 2008-09. *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* is a Preschool/Parent Education opportunity for parents and their children who will be entering kindergarten in the following year.

Curriculum Development and Description

The *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program provides families with an intensive educational experience that combines preschool learning activities for pre-kindergarten children with parent education opportunities for adults. The curriculum has been piloted and refined over a three-year period to develop a high-quality educational program. The Preschool Education curriculum consists of a flexible, adaptive set of parent-child learning and activity sessions. The Parent

Education curriculum consists of a series of structured educational sessions that focus on child development, school readiness, and healthy parenting.

The Preschool Education curriculum centers on learning and activity sessions for parents and children. Parents and children participate in 45-minute sessions at different learning stations with activities that are designed to address knowledge and skills in math, science, reading/literacy, sensory awareness, motor ability, imagination, and social-emotional ability. Parents and children then spend 10 minutes in a preschool-style “circle time” for reading. Children then spend the remainder of the session in additional preschool learning activities that are planned by the program facilitators using the curriculum guide. The curriculum for the parent-child activity sessions was developed/ compiled by Sharon Query, Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Development (NDSU Extension Service); Mandi McFadden, Gearing Up for Kindergarten Coordinator (NDSU Extension Service); and Sharon Rostad, Parent Facilitator and coordinator of the District 44 (ND) preschool program. Each site has two contracted facilitators for the child and parent sessions, as well as a classroom assistant, who are providing training and support in the program.

The Parent Education curriculum consists of 16 lesson modules designed to be adapted to the program model used for any specific site using the *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program. Typically, the program model has been delivered in two 8-session split semesters (fall and spring sessions), a single 16-session program (spring prior to kindergarten), or a single 10-session program. Parent education lesson modules were adapted from the research-based curriculum *Bright Beginnings for Young Children*, developed by Dr. Sean Brotherson of the NDSU Extension Service, and other available parent education topics. Also, parent/child take-home activities and handouts were written by Parents as Teachers and adaptations for New Americans were developed by Even Start. Learning topics for the initial 8 lesson modules in the parent education curriculum include: (1) Orientation and Getting Ready for Kindergarten, (2) Parenting Styles, (3) Brain Development in Infancy and Early Childhood, (4) Raising a Reader & Early Literacy, (5) Choosing Effective Discipline Techniques, (6) Being Media Wise, (7) Developing Responsibility and Self-Help Skills, and (8) Importance of Sleep. Learning topics for the subsequent 8 lesson modules in the parent education curriculum include: (9) Learning Styles and School Readiness, (10) Children and Temperament, (11) Early Literacy and Math Skills, (12) Social & Emotional Development, (13) Nurturance and Prevention Tools, (14) Children and Nutrition, (15) Children and Safety, and (16) A Parent’s Role in School Success. Objectives for each lesson module in the series are outlined below.

Fall Session (Session I) Objectives

Session 1 - Orientation & Getting Ready for Kindergarten

- Parents will meet and interact with other parents.
- Parents will understand ground rules.
- Parents will gain an understanding of the *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program.

Session 2 - Parenting Styles

- Parents will understand how their parenting style directly impacts their children’s behavior.

Session 3 - Brain Development in Infancy and Early Childhood

- Parents will gain a basic understanding about brain development in young children.

- Parents will gain knowledge about their role in their child’s brain development and success.

Session 4 - Raising a Reader & Early Literacy

- Parents will understand the importance of reading to their kids.
- Parents will learn new and exciting ways to encourage reading in their kids.

Session 5 - Choosing Effective Discipline Techniques

- Parents will recognize that it is normal for children to test limits.
- Parents will identify discipline techniques that are ineffective and explain why they are ineffective.
- Parents will develop skills for positive discipline.

Session 6 – Being Media Wise

- Parents will be able to re-evaluate the rules they have set on media and how it affects their children.
- Parents will be able to help their children find other activities besides television or computer.
- Parents will understand ways to limit media exposure.

Session 7 - Developing Responsibility & Self Help Skills

- Parents will understand the importance of their child being able to do things for themselves like zipping their coat and backpack, using the restroom, and putting on their own boots.
- Parents will understand their role in developing responsibility in their children and some techniques to use.

Session 8 - Importance of Sleep

- Parents will understand the link between their child’s misbehavior and missing sleep.
- Parents will recognize and mediate factors occurring throughout the day and evening that interfere with their child’s sleep.
- Parents will utilize information about their child’s temperament to decrease tension during the day and at bedtime.
- Parents will plan and carry out effective bedtime routines.

Spring Session (Session II) Objectives

Session 1 – Learning Styles and School Readiness

- Parents will become reoriented with the program.
- Parents will understand the importance of knowing their and their child’s learning style.
- Parents will discuss things to consider when contemplating school readiness.

Session 2 - Children and Temperament

- Parents will learn the meaning of temperament and the importance of understanding it.
- Parents will understand that their child’s behavior is affected by their temperament.
- Parents will learn techniques in dealing with their child’s specific temperament.

Session 3 – Early Literacy and Math Skills

- Parents will understand the importance of engaging their children in learning in “everyday” activities.
- Parents will learn new and exciting ways to encourage math skills in their children.

Session 4 – Social & Emotional Development

- Parents will understand social development in young children and its importance to their growth and well-being.
- Parents will understand emotional development in young children and its importance to their growth and well-being.

Session 5 – Nurturance and Prevention Tools

- Parents will identify strategies for managing conflict and teaching responsibility.
- Parents will identify strategies for teaching natural and logical consequences.

Session 6 – Children and Nutrition

- Parents will understand their role in feeding a well-nourished child.
- Parents will understand ways to encourage their child to consume healthy foods.

Session 7 – Children and Safety

- Parents will understand the importance of having children use booster seats and sitting in the back seat.
- Parents will understand the importance of having the entire family understand fire escape routes in their house.
- Parents will understand the importance of having and wearing properly fitted bike helmets.

Session 8 – A Parent’s Role in School Success

- Parents will understand their role in their child’s success in school.
- Parents will learn effective techniques for getting involved in their child’s school and approaching concerns.
- Parents will gain ideas for encouraging success at school.

Program Description

Gearing Up for Kindergarten

Gearing Up for Kindergarten is a prevention-focused parent and family education program designed to facilitate child development and school readiness. The program focuses on engaging families with a child entering kindergarten in the next 1-2 years. The key building blocks and objectives of the program are:

- ***School Readiness for Children Entering Kindergarten***
- ***Parent Education***
- ***Early Awareness and Intervention***
- ***Parent Involvement with Children’s Learning & School***
- ***Building Home-School-Community Partnerships***

The program was developed by the NDSU Extension Service at North Dakota State University and the Region V Parent Resource Center (NDSU Extension Service) in Fargo, ND, in collaboration with Fargo, West Fargo, and Northern Cass Public Schools; and SENDCAA Head Start. Funding for the program development and original implementation in Cass County, ND came from the United Way of Cass-Clay. Funding from the North Dakota State Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) for additional sites across North Dakota was added in the 2007-2008 school year.

The goals of the program are:

- Children participating in Countdown to Kindergarten will show significant progress in being prepared to be successful in cognitive, social, emotional and physical domains as they enter kindergarten.
- Parents will become more active in their child's development prior to entering kindergarten.
- Parents will increase their knowledge of child development, school readiness, and healthy parenting.
- Parents will increase their intent to be involved in their child's schooling and build linkages with the school system.

Family Recruitment and Program Sites

Recruitment brochures designed to inform families about the program were developed and distributed through a variety of cooperating agencies, including Head Start, Public Schools, Child Care Resource & Referral agencies, Social Services, WIC, public libraries, and child care settings. News releases were published in local newspapers and the Parent Resource Center newsletters carried information for both semesters. Several sites were identified by the ND Parent Involvement Center (NDPIRC) based in Minot. The NDPIRC targeted schools that did not meet the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria as defined by the federal government.

Targeted sites are intended to facilitate recruitment of participant families more likely to need assistance with preparing children for school achievement (new immigrant families, economically challenged families, etc.). In 2008-2009 the program operated at 18 sites with 290 families enrolled:

Cass County:

- Kindred/Davenport Elementary, Davenport
- Jefferson Elementary, Fargo
- Kennedy Elementary, Fargo
- Madison Elementary, Fargo
- Nokomis Child Care Center, Fargo
- SENDCAA Head Start, Fargo (2)
- Northern Cass Elementary, Hunter
- Mayville/Portland, Mayville
- Kindergarten Center, West Fargo

Other North Dakota Sites:

- Ashley, ND
- Heart River Elementary, Dickinson
- LaMoure, ND

- Fort Lincoln Elementary, Custer Elementary - Mandan
- Roosevelt Elementary, Mandan
- Sunnyside Elementary & AFB, Minot
- Eight Mile Elementary, Trenton
- Wilkinson Elementary, Williston
- Lewis & Clark Elementary, Williston

Program Implementation

Participants were involved in one of three primary program models used to implement the program. They attended either two 8-week parent education sessions, one in the fall of 2008 and one in the spring of 2009, a continuous 15-week session in spring 2009, or a 10-week session in spring 2009. The hour and a half sessions begin with 45 minutes of parent-child interaction activities focused on math, reading, sensory, science, art and imaginary play. The parents then separate for parent education (see list of topics). The children, with a preschool facilitator and classroom assistant, have circle time and other preschool activities. The child activities focus on sharing, getting along with others, listening, taking turns, responsibility, and cognitive and literacy skills.

All children have been enrolled in *Imagination Library*, if they had not already done so. The families are able to check out a library book that they return the following week. On-site child care and refreshments were offered at each site. The program is facilitated by a team at each program site that includes preschool and parent facilitators, as well as classroom assistants. The curriculum was developed by NDSU Extension staff, with enhancements by Even Start for New American families, and Parents as Teachers for weekly take home activities. Evaluation instruments were developed by the NDSU Extension Service with consultation from faculty in the Department of Child Development and Family Science at NDSU.

Program Participation

During the 2008-2009 year of operation in the *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* program in North Dakota, pre-kindergarten children and their families participated at 18 sites throughout the state. Support for the program was funded by the ND Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) and the United Way of Cass-Clay, as well as local support from schools and other organizations. This section of the report provides a brief summary of program participation at the respective program sites across the state of North Dakota in the 2008-09 year, as well as the type of program model each site implemented.

Program Type – Continuous Session of 16 Weeks (16 weeks Spring 2009)

Program Site	Site Funder	Total # of Families	Sessions Attended	Attendance Percentage
Minot, ND	ND-PIRC	26	302/390	77.4%

Program Type – Short Session of 10 Weeks (10 weeks Spring 2009)

Program Site	Site Funder	Total # of Families	Sessions Attended	Attendance Percentage
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Edgeley (Ashley), ND	ND-PIRC (4 sessions only)	8	27/32	84.4%
LaMoure, ND	ND-PIRC	12	95/120	79.2%
Mandan – Fort Lincoln site	ND-PIRC	25	143/250	57.2%
Williston – Lewis & Clark site	ND-PIRC	6	34/60	56.7%
Total	4 sites (1 4-session only)	51	299/462	64.7%

Program Type – Split Session of 16 Weeks (8 weeks Fall 2008/8 weeks Spring 2009)

Program Site	Site Funder	Total # of Families (unduplicated)			Attendance Percentage	
		Fall	Spring	Total	Fall	Spring
Dickinson, ND	ND-PIRC & United Way	21	19	21	73.8%	87.5%
Williston, ND	ND-PIRC	20	16	25	75%	56.3%
Mandan – Roosevelt site	ND-PIRC	13	9	17	66.3%	73.6%
Mayville-Portland	ND-PIRC	8	6	8	89.1%	47.6%
Cass County – Northern Cass	United Way of Cass-Clay	22	25	29	76.1%	69.5%
Cass County – Kindred-Davenport	ND-PIRC	22	20	27	75.6%	70.6%
Cass County – Nokomis site	ND-PIRC	8	9	13	89%	58.3%
Cass County – West Fargo site	United Way of Cass-Clay	16	18	23	88.2%	85.4%
Cass County – Madison site	United Way of Cass-Clay	11	8	14	85.2%	78.1%
Cass County – Kennedy site	United Way of Cass-Clay	14	12	14	89.2%	87.5%
Cass County – Jefferson site	United Way of Cass-Clay	7	5	7	85.7%	87.5%
Cass County –	United Way of	5	3	5	72.5%	75%

Head Start South	Cass-Clay					
Cass County – Head Start Central	United Way of Cass-Clay	9	3	10	86.1%	50%
Total	18 Total Sites 6 PIRC sites 7 United Way sites	176	153	213	79.6%	73.3%

* Number of Families in Full Sessions (Split) = 116

* Number of Families in Partial Sessions (Split) = 97

- Fall - 60

- Spring - 37

* Total Number of Families in Sixteen Sessions – All = 142

* Number of Families in 10 Sessions – All = 51

* Total Families Served = 290

Evaluation Strategies for the Gearing Up for Kindergarten Project

A variety of evaluation strategies are being used to assess progress in meeting the program's objectives and the development of children and families who participate. This project report for 2008-2009 (third year of the program) provides results gathered from the entire year of the program's operation in fall 2008 and spring 2009. These results were compiled using feedback gathered from program participants through three different evaluation tools. These tools are briefly summarized below. The project report is divided into sections presenting results derived from each aspect of the evaluation process. It should be noted that this report summarizes key aspects of the data available for analysis, while further ongoing studies and analysis continue to be conducted.

Overall Program Evaluation – Pre and Post Program Forms

The first aspect of the evaluation process for the Countdown to Kindergarten project was accomplished by gathering participant information through using a traditional pre and post-program survey. Participants completed a brief parent survey that focused on program perceptions and impacts. This brief survey tool provides information on basic demographics of program participants, parent perceptions of the general value and impacts of the program, their perceptions on the value of specific topics in the program, and perceived impacts of the program on parent participants. This survey was offered to parents four times, once at the beginning and end of the first 8 weeks of the program, and also at the beginning and end of the second 8 weeks of the program. Modified surveys were used for the 10-session program. The findings are presented for both the first and second halves of the program separately.

Practical Parent Assessment for School Readiness (PPASR)

A second aspect of the evaluation process for the Gearing Up for Kindergarten project focused on gathering parent perceptions of their child's level of performance on a variety of indicators of school readiness. This evaluation tool was developed specifically for the Gearing Up for Kindergarten project, and is titled the Practical Parent Assessment for School Readiness. Children were rated on a 5-point scale by their parents in six key areas of development related to

school readiness. Additionally, parents were asked to rate themselves on a number of key parenting practices related to preparing children for school. On the survey, 52 items focused on children's school readiness and 18 items on parenting practices. Additionally, parents completed 18 items about their child and 18 items about themselves that focused on school knowledge and familiarity. Parents were asked to complete this assessment at the beginning of the program and also at the end of the program. This approach allows for comparison of parent perceptions of a child's readiness in key areas over time that may be affected by program participation.

A personalized report was developed for each child who participated in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program, which allowed parents to see how they rated children in key areas and also a comparison of their child's scores to the overall average score of children in the program. This report was provided so that parents and teachers could have practical feedback specific to a child that could be used in discussing further needs regarding school readiness.

Teacher Assessment of School Readiness, Teacher Rating Scale (TASR)

The final aspect of the evaluation process for the Gearing Up for Kindergarten project focused on teacher ratings of a child's school readiness in key areas. The evaluation tool selected for this was the School Entry Profile, which we re-titled the Teacher Assessment of School Readiness (TASR), which is a highly regarded measure that allows children to be evaluated regarding their school readiness in several domains with key indicators. This instrument was added to the evaluation process based on participant and facilitator feedback from the first 2 years.

Teachers were asked to complete the assessment tool twice for each child, once at the start of the program after they had come to know the child and once at the end of the program. Filling out the assessment twice allows for comparison of a child's scores over a range of time and also from the teacher's perspective. Thus, the tool allows teachers to provide feedback on a child that enables them to:

- Highlight areas of positive growth and development in a child related to school readiness
- Identify potential areas of perceived concern regarding a child's development, learning or behavior
- Assess a child's perceived development and behavior in relation to established domains of development important to early learning and school readiness

I. Overall Program Evaluation Results for Gearing Up for Kindergarten

Basic Characteristics of Program Participants

A total sample of 168 participants from 14 of the 18 Gearing Up for Kindergarten program sites completed the pre-program and post-program evaluation survey in fall 2008 or when the first 8-week session began. Participants from the four 10-session sites were not included in this analysis. In spring 2009, 126 participants from 14 sites completed the second round of the survey.

Total enrollment for the first half of the program was 202 families, so the response rate to the first program survey was 83.1%. Total enrollment for the second half of the program was 179 families, so the response rate to the second program survey was 70.4%. Demographic characteristics of participants in spring 2009 were highly similar to those recorded for fall, so are not reported here. Selected demographic characteristics of individuals participating in the first half of the program in fall 2008 who completed the survey are listed below.

- **Gender** – 85% women, 15% men
- **Age** – Average of 32.6 years; parents ranged in age from 23 to 52 years of age
- **Number of children** – Average of 2.36 children per parent
- **Location** – 64% live in an urban setting; 36% in a rural or farm/ranch setting (5.4%)
- **Family status** – Married (87%); Single (never married) (4.2%); separated/divorced (3.6%); remarried (2.4%); cohabiting (3%)
- **Employment status** – Full-time employment (60.7%); employed 26-39 hours a week (14.3%); employed less than 25 hours a week (6%); not seeking outside employment (15.5%); other (3.6%)
- **Education level** – High school/GED (11.9%); some college (11.3%); 2-year college degree (23.8%); 4-year college degree (42.9%); master's degree or higher (10.1%)
- **Racial or ethnic background** – Caucasian (94.6%); Native American (.6%); Hispanic (1.2%); Asian (1.2%); African American (1.2%); other (1.2%)
- **First child to enter kindergarten** – 57% yes; 43% no
- **Child care** – No child care (3%); 6 hrs/wk or less (14.9%); 6-12 hrs/wk (12.5%); 12-20 hrs/wk (8.3%); 20 hrs/wk or more (61.3%)
- **Gender of participating child** – 58.3% male, 41.7% female
- **Program participation** – 84% of participants indicated involvement in 6 or more sessions of the program during the fall 2008 year (or first half of the program); 86% of participants in spring 2008 indicated involvement in 6 or more sessions of the program.

Overall Value of the Program

Participants were asked to respond to a series of questions about their perceptions of the program as a whole and some of its effects on them. The tables below report participant feedback regarding the overall program, specific impacts of the program, the value of specific topics addressed, and value of the program compared to other sources of information. In each table, findings are included to each question for both the fall 2008 (or first half) and the spring 2009 (or second half) portions of the program (each an 8-week cycle of the program).

Where necessary, tables have been separated to include profiles of participant responses during both the fall and spring portions of the program. However, where possible the participant responses for both program portions have been included in the same table, and the responses are marked as to whether they indicate the findings for fall 2008 (F08) or spring 2009 (S09).

The first table, Table 1, highlights responses of participants in general to the program and its value to them as well as the quality of their experience.

Table 1: General Value of Countdown to Kindergarten Program (2008-09)

Question	Not Useful	Slightly Useful	Some what Useful	Very Useful	Extremely Useful
Overall value of the program to me:	--	2.4% (F08)	14.3% (F08)	60.7% (F08)	22.2% (F08)
	--	.8% (S09)	9.4% (S09)	52.3% (S09)	37.5% (S09)
Handouts and activities provided to me in this program were:	.6% (F08))	1.2% (F08)	16.2% (F08)	62.3% (F08)	19.8% (F08)
	--	1.6% (S09)	14.1% (S09)	54.7% (S09)	29.7% (S09)
	NA	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Information presented in a clear and helpful manner:	--	--	1.8% (F08)	38.3% (F08)	59.9% (F08)
				38.3% (S09)	61.7% (S09)
I was treated in a respectful manner:	--	--	--	15% (F08)	85% (F08)
				14.1% (S09)	85.9% (S09)

Participants expressed positive feelings about the program thus far, with 83% indicating it was very or extremely useful to them in fall 2008 and 90% saying the same thing in spring 2009. Among participants in fall 2008, 82% said the handouts and learning activities were very useful to them while 84% responded similarly in spring 2009. Finally, all of them agreed that the information was presented well and they were treated respectfully, with those who strongly agreed they were treated well at 85% in both fall and spring.

Impacts of Program Participation

Parents described positive impacts as a result of participating in the first portion of Gearing Up for Kindergarten. The set of evaluation questions reported here were intended to assess how parents felt about the general impact of the program on their overall parenting capacity and knowledge as parents. A detailed frequency analysis of the findings is shared in Table 2 below.

The average mean scores regarding how the program impacted participants in each of these areas were given on a scale between 1 and 5, with higher scores indicating a more positive impact of the program (scale of 1 = not at all to 5 = very much). For parents who completed the overall program evaluation in fall 2008 and spring 2009, they responded as follows: (1) increased knowledge of child development (3.54 in fall 08, 3.70 in spring 09); (2) increased knowledge of healthy parenting (3.68 in fall 08, 3.77 in spring 09); (3) increased confidence in being a good parent (3.77 in fall 08, 3.86 in spring 09); (4) increased parenting skills (3.52 in fall 08, 3.68 in spring 09); (5) changed behavior as a parent (3.33 in fall 08, 3.52 in spring 09); and (6) influenced the relationship with your child (3.72 in fall 08, 3.70 in spring 09).

Table 2: General Impacts of Countdown to Kindergarten Program

Question Overall how much, if at all, did this program:	Not at All	A Little Bit	Some what	A Lot	Very Much
Increase your knowledge about child development	1.2% (F08)	6.6% (F08)	41.3% (F08)	38.9% (F08)	12% (F08)
	--	5.5% (S09)	39.1% (S09)	35.9% (S09)	19.5% (S09)
Increase your knowledge of healthy parenting	--	7.2% (F08)	31.1% (F08)	48.5% (F08)	13.2% (F08)
	--	4.7% (S09)	35.2% (S09)	39.1% (S09)	21.1% (S09)
Increase your confidence in being a good parent	--	6% (F08)	24.6% (F08)	56.3% (F08)	13.2% (F08)
	.8% (S09)	3.1% (S09)	27.3% (S09)	46.9% (S09)	21.9% (S09)
Increase your skills as a parent	--	9% (F09)	38.9% (F08)	43.1% (F08)	9% (F08)
	.8% (S09)	5.5% (S09)	36.7% (S09)	39.1% (S09)	18% (S09)
Change your behavior as a parent	.6% (F08)	12.6% (F08)	47.3% (F08)	32.3% (F08)	7.2% (F08)
	--	11.7% (S09)	44.5% (S09)	24.2% (S09)	19.5% (S09)
Influence your relationship with your child	.6% (F08)	5.4% (F08)	31.7% (F08)	45.5% (F08)	16.8% (F08)
	.8% (S09)	4.7% (S09)	43% (S09)	26.6% (S09)	25% (S09)

In general, participating parents indicated very positive impacts from being involved in Gearing Up for Kindergarten. For example, **the percentage of participants indicating that the program impact was “a lot” or “very much” in a variety of areas generally held near or above 50 percent for both sessions of the program across all sites.**

Among participants, 51% in fall 2008 and 55% in spring 2009 indicated the program increased their knowledge of child development a lot or very much, 62% noted it increased their knowledge of healthy parenting a lot or very much (60% in spring 09), 70% felt it increased their confidence in being a good parent a lot or very much, and 52% said it increased their parenting skills a lot or very much (57% in spring 09). Additionally, 87% felt it changed their parent behavior at least somewhat (88% in spring 09), and 94% indicated that it influenced their relationship with their child positively (95% in spring 09). These overall findings were largely similar in both sessions of the program evaluated (fall 2008 and spring 2009), except for a few minor differences.

Value of Specific Topics to Parents

Participants were also asked to rate the usefulness of different class topics on a scale of 1 to 5, ranging from 1=not useful to 5=extremely useful. The perceived value of specific class sessions helps to provide insight into what topics may be most helpful to parents relative to the issue of school readiness. The findings for class topics are provided for both the fall 2008 session (first half of program - see Table 3) and the spring 2009 session (second half of program - see Table 4).

In fall 2008 or the first session of the program, the **most highly rated sessions were on parenting styles (3.74), brain development (3.53), and effective discipline (3.53)**; however, all sessions were rated as at least somewhat to very useful for participants in the program. The ratings for each specific topic covered in the fall 2008 session are listed below in Table 3.

Table 3: Value of Specific Topics in Gearing Up for Kindergarten Program (Fall 2008)

Question Please rate the following class topics in the GUK program	Overall Mean Score from 1 (not useful) to 5 (extremely useful)
Gearing Up for Kindergarten Orientation	3.28
Parenting Styles	3.74
Brain Development	3.53
Raising a Reader	3.46
Choosing Effective Discipline Techniques	3.53
Media Wise	3.00
Developing Responsibility and Self Help Skills	3.35
Importance of Sleep	3.34

In spring 2009, the **most highly rated sessions were on social and emotional development (4.0), learning styles and school readiness (3.98), and child temperament (3.84)**, and four of eight topics were rated very highly at 3.75 or above. It seems clear that participants valued the specific topics they learned about and gained value from the learning experience. The ratings for each specific topic covered in the spring 2009 session are listed below in Table 4.

Table 4: Value of Specific Topics in Gearing Up for Kindergarten Program (Spring 2009)

Question Please rate the following class topics in the GUK program	Overall Mean Score from 1 (not useful) to 5 (extremely useful)
Learning Styles and School Readiness	3.98
Child Temperament	3.84
Early Literacy and Math Skills	3.57
Social and Emotional Development	4.00
Nurturance, Guidance and Prevention Tools	3.53
Nutrition and Children	3.74
Child Safety	3.59
Parent's Role in School Success	3.66

Value of Program Versus Other Sources of Information

Participants in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program were asked to rate the usefulness of various sources of information for them in learning about parenting their young child and preparing him/her to be ready for school. The information sources were rated on a scale of 1 to 5, ranging from 1=not at all useful to 5=very useful. This process for evaluating perceptions of the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program was added this year. It provides a clear sense of how participants rate the value of their program participation as compared to other sources of information on parenting and school readiness. A higher rating means that participants found that information source to be more highly useful to them. Participant ratings of each information source, assessed in both sessions of the program, are included below in Table 5.

Table 5: Value of Specific Information Sources on Parenting and School Readiness (Fall 2008 & Spring 2009)

Question Please rate how useful each of the following sources of information has been for you on parenting and school readiness	Overall Mean Score from 1 (not useful) to 5 (very useful)	
	Information Source	First Session (Fall 08)
a. Your parents	3.33	3.52
b. Your child's other parent	3.53	3.56
c. Friends	3.35	3.52
d. Parents with children of a similar age	3.75	3.82
e. School	3.27	3.56
f. Preschool, Head Start or child care	3.62	3.84
g. Books, magazines or newspapers	3.37	3.27
h. Internet	3.04	3.05
i. <i>Gearing Up for Kindergarten</i> class and materials	3.98**	4.12**
j. Other	--	--

** Highest ranking

The results from the fall session of the program indicate that participants rated parents with children of a similar age (3.75), preschool/Head Start/child care (3.62), and their child's other parent (3.53) as the most useful sources of information for them on parenting and preparing their child for other school. However, the Gearing Up for Kindergarten class and materials were rated higher than all other sources with a mean score of 3.98, indicating that participants felt the class was more useful to them regarding parenting and school readiness than any other information source assessed. The results from the spring session of the program were similar, with participants rating the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program even higher at a mean score of 4.12, substantially higher than any other information source assessed. The other sources rated in the spring which were somewhat close were preschool/Head Start/child care (3.84) and parents with children of a similar age (3.82).

Perceived Impacts of Gearing Up for Kindergarten on Participants

Participants were also asked to answer questions about their specific activities as parents in a number of areas, both before and after participating in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. Parents responded to 18 questions regarding their parental practices that link with healthy parenting and school readiness. These activities by parents are linked with assisting children toward school readiness in a variety of areas.

By assessing the parents' perceptions of their activities with children both before and after the program, it is possible to gain a sense of whether the program may have an impact on them. It is important to note three things in explaining this portion of the Gearing Up for Kindergarten evaluation. First, the method used with parents to get their perceptions was a traditional pre and post-program assessment of their behaviors in various aspects of parenting. Second, since the parents rate themselves it is likely that they may rate themselves higher in these parenting activities than others might rate them. Finally, the scores they use to rate themselves are on a 1 to 5 scale, with answers ranging from "hardly ever" (1) to "sometimes" (3) to "almost always" (5). It is also important to note that we also studied a control group of other parents not receiving this program that is also being evaluated at this time. Those results are not yet available but will be examined in the near future. It cannot currently be said with certainty that perceived impacts of the program are due to participation in Gearing Up for Kindergarten. It can reasonably be assumed, however, that any differences measured are likely (though not certain) to occur due to participation in Gearing Up for Kindergarten.

The scores received by parents were calculated as average scores, or mean scores, on the scale from 1 to 5. The average scores for each area of parenting from "before participation" were compared with the average scores from "after participation." The two scores were compared statistically to measure whether there was a significant difference before and after participation in the program, and if the difference was likely to be due to the program itself rather than random chance (in this case, it is called a "paired sample T-test analysis").

Findings are presented in Table 6 for the participants who completed a full session of the program. The findings show, based on the statistical analysis, that **participants experienced significant differences in 12 of the 18 parental practices related to school readiness** as a likely result of their participation in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. There are several important points to make as a result of these findings:

- Participants noted **small to moderate changes in 12 of the 18 parental practices related to school readiness that were measured, with all of the changes showing positive increases in a particular parental practice** (e.g., more actively discussing a story with children or engaging in more active play with a child).
- The findings showed significant differences in parental practices for participants before and after their participation in Gearing Up for Kindergarten. These changes were **small to moderate increases between .15 and .30 in specific parental practices, suggesting incremental improvement in key aspects of parental involvement and guidance.**
- Participants typically rated themselves quite highly already on most indicators of parenting linked to school readiness. The average beginning scores showed that most parents felt they performed most of these practices well, usually rating between "often" and "almost always" on the scale of performance. This means that most participants already perceive themselves as well-adjusted in their parenting efforts and there is minimal opportunity for change.

Table 6: Perceived Impacts on Parental Practices of Gearing Up for Kindergarten (2008-09 Program)

Question As a Parent, I:	Before Participation (Mean Score)	Now, After Participation (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
1. Give my child a variety of activities and learning experiences.	4.13	4.38	.25	Yes
2. Do arts and crafts, puzzles or other hands-on activities with my child.	3.91	4.20	.29	Yes
3. Get down and actively play with my child.	3.97	4.21	.24	Yes
4. Go walking, swimming or do other physical activities with my child.	4.02	4.23	.21	Yes
5. Provide my child with hands-on materials, such as crayons and paper, scissors, play dough, etc.	4.42	4.65	.24	Yes
6. Give my child opportunities to be physically active (tumbling, playing at the park, dancing, playing ball, etc.).	4.31	4.54	.24	Yes
7. Arrange for my child to play with other children his or her age.	3.71	3.93	.22	Yes
8. Talk with my child about how to get along with others even when they have a disagreement.	4.18	4.21	.03	No
9. Assist my child to begin play or interact with other children.	3.78	3.92	.14	No
10. Read with my child each day.	4.39	4.47	.08	No
11. Discuss contents of a book or story with my child when we read.	4.13	4.35	.22	Yes
12. Talk, laugh, sing, and converse with my child.	4.79	4.78	-.01	No
13. Respond quickly to my child's cues for attention (crying, questions).	4.32	4.50	.19	Yes
14. Help my child identify feelings such as sadness or fear.	4.31	4.35	.04	No
15. Discuss with my child how to handle feeling sad or upset.	4.18	4.35	.17	Yes
16. Teach my child self-care skills such as brushing teeth, using the toilet, etc.	4.67	4.72	.05	No
17. Provide my child with regular routines at home.	4.42	4.59	.18	Yes
18. Work together on simple chores.	4.11	4.41	.30	Yes

- The **largest six differences** for participants occurred in the following areas: **working together on simple chores (.30), doing arts and crafts or other hands-on learning activities with children (.29), giving children a variety of learning experiences (.25), engaging with children actively in play (.24), providing children with hands-on materials for play (.24), and giving children opportunities to be physically active (.24).**
- The increases **that occurred in parents' efforts with their children in specific areas were typically three to four times higher than would be expected to occur** due to random chance, and so this is a good indicator that the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program is having a positive impact.
- The **findings suggest that Gearing Up for Kindergarten has made good progress in assisting parents and influencing them in a positive manner to behave in ways that will help their children toward school readiness and positive development.**

This set of findings from participants in Gearing Up for Kindergarten was generated as a result of involvement in the 2008-09 session of the program at Gearing Up for Kindergarten sites in North Dakota. The findings suggest the program has positive impacts on parents who are involved and aids them in making incremental improvements in parenting practices that link to school readiness.

Additional Findings with Parental Practices

In addition to specific parental practices that were examined, parents were also asked about parenting knowledge and efforts connected to the content of the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. During the first session of the program, parents were assessed on 16 items associated with the educational content of the program. During the second session of the program, parents were assessed on 17 items associated with the educational content of the program.

The findings from this portion of the analysis are presented in brief and again the following points apply: (1) Participants typically rated themselves highly already on most items and so there was limited opportunity for change to occur in their measurements; (2) The method used to assess participant ratings was a traditional pre- and post-program assessment to compare their two scores at the beginning and end of program participation; (3) The scale used to allow participants to rate themselves was a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being low and 5 being high.

The scores received by parents were calculated as average scores, or mean scores, on the scale from 1 to 5. The average scores for each area of parenting from “before participation” were compared with the average scores from “after participation.” The two scores were compared statistically to measure whether there was a significant difference before and after participation in the program, and if the difference was likely to be due to the program itself rather than random chance (in this case, it is called a “paired sample T-test analysis”).

Findings which illustrate significant differences are presented for both the fall 2008 and spring 2009 sessions of the program, followed by brief discussion points regarding the findings. Only two items from the fall session illustrated significant change, while 8 of 17 items showed significant change in the spring session. The significant findings are highlighted in Table 7, followed by some brief discussion points.

Table 7: Additional Parenting Impacts – Gearing Up for Kindergarten (2008-09)

Question As a Parent, I:	Before Participation (Mean Score)	Now, After Participation (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
Fall Session - 2008				
1. Read with my child each day.	4.25	4.47	.22	Yes
2. Discuss contents of a book or story with my child.	3.99	4.20	.21	Yes
Spring Session - 2009				
1. Know my own and my child’s learning style.	3.81	4.17	.36	Yes
2. Understand how my child’s behavior is affected by his/her temperament.	4.12	4.26	.14	Yes
3. Engage my child in learning in “everyday” activities.	4.12	4.32	.20	Yes
4. Encourage the development of math skills in my child in daily activities.	3.73	3.93	.20	Yes
5. Am attentive and understanding with my child’s social and emotional abilities.	4.08	4.23	.15	Yes
6. Use natural and logical consequences with my child during discipline.	4.02	4.16	.14	Yes
7. Teach my children to understand fire escape routes in our home.	3.21	3.49	.28	Yes
8. Have my child wear properly fitted bike helmets.	3.85	4.06	.21	Yes

The findings show, based on the statistical analysis, that **participants experienced significant differences in 10 of the 33 items of parental knowledge and behavior linked to program content**, as a likely result of their participation in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. There are several points to make as a result of these findings:

- Participants noted **small to moderate changes in a variety of additional areas of parental knowledge and behavior related to school readiness that were measured.**
- The findings showed significant differences in parental practices for participants before and after their participation in Gearing Up for Kindergarten. Again, these changes were **small to moderate increases between .15 and .35 in specific parental practices, suggesting incremental improvement in key aspects of parental involvement and guidance.**

- Assessing the conceptual areas in which parents seem to respond most to the program in initiating changes with their children, the following areas seem to reflect such changes the most: (1) Increased understanding of children and key developmental issues (temperament, etc.) that affect their growth; (2) Increased efforts to facilitate learning opportunities and activities for children on a daily basis; (3) Increased involvement in learning activities such as play, hands-on learning, and reading; (4) Increased attentiveness to a child's social and emotional experiences and development; and (5) Increased facilitation of academic readiness skills such as reading, math, routines, and hands-on learning.
- The increases **that occurred in parents' efforts with their children in specific areas were typically two to five times higher than would be expected to occur** due to random chance, and so this is a good indicator that the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program is having a positive impact.
- The **findings suggest that Gearing Up for Kindergarten has established a good foundation and a sound program that assists parents and influences them in a positive manner. Parents who are involved in the program tend to indicate changes that may help them behave in ways that will help their children toward school readiness and positive development.**

II. Parental Assessment of Children’s School Readiness

Practical Parent Assessment for School Readiness

One of the identified goals for the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program is that participating children will show significant progress in being prepared to be successful in cognitive, social, emotional, physical and practical domains as they enter kindergarten. To get a sense of where parents perceived their children to be in regard to school readiness, a brief assessment tool was developed called the Practical Parent Assessment for School Readiness (PPASR). This short survey asks parents to rate their children on a 5-point scale in six key areas of development related to school readiness (a total of 52 items). Parents are asked to rate how their child typically thinks and behaves for each item. The range of responses that parents can give in rating their children goes from 1 to 5, with 1 = “hardly ever,” 2 = “once in a while,” 3 = “sometimes,” 4 = “often,” and 5 = “almost always.”

In addition, this year a new section of evaluation was added to the process which examined both parent and child feelings and experiences related to school knowledge and familiarity. Parents were asked to assess their child’s familiarity with school, peers, and routines, as well as their feelings and comfort level in varying aspects of the school-related experience. Similarly, parents rated themselves also on familiarity with school, teachers, and routines, as well as comfort level and familiarity with school personnel and routines. These questions were asked either on a “yes/no” basis or a response scale of 1 to 4, with 1 = not at all to 4 = to a great extent.

Understanding What the Current PPASR Assessment Process Shows

Several important points should be made about using the findings from this assessment tool and process to gauge children’s progress.

- First, the PPASR is a newly developed instrument and so understanding of how well it allows parents to gauge a child’s school readiness across different areas is just emerging.
- Second, the PPASR encourages parents to think of their children’s development of skills on a continuum, not as either-or categories of development. This allows for tracking a sense of progress over time.
- Third, the level of growth or change that can be tracked in a given child’s development, or for a group of children, depends on where a parent rates the child in the beginning (pre-test). If parents already rate their children very highly on indicators of school readiness at the beginning (e.g., parent says the child is already at “5” on “can sort things into basic groups by color, shape, etc.”), then the scale cannot reveal further growth for that child (there is no “room” left on the scale for growth).
- Fourth, it is a common characteristic for parents to rate their children highly on varying measures of development.
- Fifth, usage of a comparison group for this year’s program of Gearing Up for Kindergarten will allow us, once the findings are complete, to assess whether a similar group of children without the program would show similar results or changes in their parental scores regarding school readiness.
- Sixth, children in their early years between ages 3 and 5 are already developing on a continuous basis, and so it is somewhat difficult to know whether changes are due to participation in the program, predictable patterns of normal growth over time, or other factors (involvement with new friends, going to child care, etc.).

So, with all of those beginning points, what does the parental assessment of school readiness allow us to know?

- We can determine at what level parents in the program area rate their children to begin with in six key areas related to school readiness. We can also assess any variation in these ratings by age of the child, education of the parent, or other potentially important factors.
- We can determine whether parental ratings show a perceived change in children's school readiness over time while participating in the program, and how great those changes are that do occur.
- We can prepare a feedback report for parents that shows their rating of a child on specific items related to school readiness, and how their rating compares to the overall ratings of children in the group (as well as the child's individual scores over time).
- We can examine whether particular categories of school readiness showed greater changes than others over time.

Participants in the PPASR Assessment

Participation in the Practical Parent Assessment of School Readiness required that parents fill out the PPASR survey twice, once in fall 2008 and once in spring 2009 during the program. Only those parents who filled out a PPASR assessment for their child at both times were included in the analysis. A total sample of 101 children were rated by parents in the Countdown to Kindergarten in both the fall and the spring (this sample represents a response rate of approximately 71% of participating children). Demographic characteristics were similar to those previously reported.

Each parent received a PPASR Report Sheet that highlighted their individual child's score on each item and the comparison score for the entire group. A single example of a PPASR Report Sheet is included at the end of this section (with no identifying information) to show how the findings from this process were used to provide individualized feedback to parents with children in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. These report sheets are meant to facilitate insight, reflection and discussion for parents and teachers on school readiness for a child. The score given for a child on each specific item was designated as either "developing" (score of 1 or 2), "partly proficient" (3), "proficient" (4), and "advanced" (5).

Findings on Parental Perceptions of Children's School Readiness

The key areas of school readiness selected for assessment by parents were: (1) *Learning and Exploration* (cognitive); (2) *Physical Skills and Abilities* (physical); (3) *Friends and Social Interaction* (social); (4) *Knowing the Basics* (academic); (5) *Feelings and Families* (emotional); and (6) *Health, Fitness and Practical Skills* (practical). Six tables are included below, one of which covers each dimension, and there are beginning group scores (fall 2008), completing group scores (spring 2009), and difference scores (difference in the average group scores, or means) for each item. The data collection and analysis for this important section of the evaluation was the most rigorous yet completed on this project.

The difference scores indicate progress (or lack thereof) that has occurred for children (as perceived by parents) on average in the group between fall 2008 and spring 2009. The table indicates whether there is a "significant" difference between the scores, which may be due to program participation, individual growth, or other factors.

Table 8: Learning and Exploration – School Readiness Scores

Question My Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2008 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
1. Is curious and asks questions to learn more about the topic.	4.45	4.49	.04	No
2. Works with hands in putting together puzzles or building with blocks.	4.50	4.64	.15	Yes
3. Explores the environment and participates in new opportunities.	4.02	4.34	.32	Yes
4. Learns and recites familiar songs, nursery rhymes, finger plays or stories.	4.31	4.52	.22	Yes
5. Enjoys participating in small groups to play games or do learning activities.	3.95	4.33	.38	Yes
6. Draws and uses art to express ideas or feelings.	3.67	4.15	.48	Yes
7. Is able to work independently on a task (painting, picking up clothes, etc.)	4.11	4.26	.15	No
8. Likes to work at solving problems.	3.54	3.75	.21	Yes
9. Is persistent when solving problems.	3.49	3.70	.22	Yes

Table 9: Physical Skills and Abilities – School Readiness Scores

Question My Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2008 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
10. Holds a pencil or crayon with fingers (not fist).	4.66	4.80	.14	Yes
11. Can button, snap or zip pants or coat.	4.27	4.52	.26	Yes
12. Moves easily from place to place when walking.	4.92	4.82	-.10	No
13. Creates things using hands and paper, crayons, scissors, etc.	4.55	4.66	.11	No
14. Is able to cut with scissors.	4.59	4.76	.17	Yes
15. Can catch or pick up a rolled or thrown soft ball.	4.57	4.69	.12	No
16. Shows large motor skills, such as hopping, skipping, running, jumping or throwing	4.76	4.85	.09	No

Table 10: Friends and Social Interaction – School Readiness Scores

Question My Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2009 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
17. Shares with other children (such as toys, crayons, etc.)	3.93	4.35	.42	Yes
18. Works or plays cooperatively with friends.	3.99	4.34	.35	Yes
19. Listens in a group situation.	4.04	4.33	.29	Yes
20. Takes turns with others.	3.81	4.30	.49	Yes
21. Remembers and follows simple directions in playing games.	4.0	4.36	.36	Yes
22. Enjoys talking to or playing with other children.	4.34	4.53	.20	Yes
23. Gets along without quarreling or fighting.	3.75	4.08	.33	Yes
24. Understands and follows rules that are explained.	3.99	4.21	.22	Yes
25. Understands how to enter into talking or play with other kids.	3.88	4.16	.28	Yes
26. Tries to solve problems with friends.	3.41	3.93	.52	Yes

Table 11: Knowing the Basics – School Readiness Scores

Question My Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2008 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference?
27. Is familiar with books and enjoys having others read to him.	4.76	4.88	.12	Yes
28. Tries to learn/use new words.	4.48	4.61	.14	No
29. Is able to speak and communicate thoughts, needs and feelings in a way others understand.	4.37	4.61	.25	Yes
30. Is familiar with (or able to recognize) letters of the alphabet.	4.21	4.64	.43	Yes
31. Is familiar with (or able to recognize) numbers between 1 and 10 (or higher).	4.19	4.76	.57	Yes
32. Is able to do counting, understanding of basic numbers (adding items together, etc.)	4.08	4.46	.38	Yes
33. Can sort things into basic groups, (such as by color, shape, things that match, etc.)	4.59	4.88	.29	Yes
34. Is creative in asking questions or trying to solve problems.	4.13	4.47	.34	Yes

Table 12: Feelings and Families – School Readiness Scores

Question My Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2008 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
35. Feels loved and supported from family members at home.	4.88	4.91	.03	No
36. Spends time away from me in a variety of settings (child care, friend's house) without too much anxiety.	4.36	4.50	.14	No
37. Can identify his or her feelings (such as sad, happy, angry).	4.37	4.52	.16	Yes
38. Can talk about how others might feel.	4.0	4.24	.24	Yes
39. Manages feelings, such as anger or frustration, without hurting or being mean to others.	3.67	4.04	.37	Yes
40. Can adapt to new situations within a reasonable period and feel comfortable.	3.99	4.23	.24	Yes
41. Regularly shares how he/she is feeling with me or other adults.	4.0	4.25	.25	Yes
42. Appreciates getting to know new people or friends through time.	4.07	4.41	.34	Yes

Table 13: Health, Fitness and Practical Skills – School Readiness Scores

Question My Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2008 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
43. Independently uses basic self-care skills, such as brushing teeth, using the toilet, washing hands, etc.	4.66	4.67	.01	No
44. Eats a variety of snacks and foods.	4.48	4.50	.02	No
45. Is active and enjoys physical movement.	4.79	4.83	.04	No
46. Can recite his or her name, parents' names and contact information (address, phone number).	3.12	3.69	.57	Yes
47. Is able to understand location and get him or herself from one place to another (walk to a friend's house, ride a bike to the playground, etc.).	3.62	3.84	.23	No

48. Has experience with following a routine at home, child care or preschool (such as bedtime routine, lunch routine, etc.).	4.52	4.72	.20	Yes
49. Is aware of who to contact if he or she needs help.	3.83	4.22	.39	Yes
50. Has experience using school-related supplies, such as pencils, paper, markers, backpack, etc.	4.74	4.85	.11	Yes
51. Is able to put on clothes (coat, shoes, etc.), and take care of belongings (book, etc.).	4.54	4.69	.15	Yes
52. Assists with simple household chores and is able to complete them with guidance.	4.37	4.59	.23	Yes

These six tables summarize the findings from the Gearing Up for Kindergarten project for the 2008-09 year on perceived changes in children’s school readiness on specific items. A number of important points emerge as a result of these findings:

- Currently, parents of children in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program **routinely rate their children very highly on most indicators of school readiness.** This means that there is somewhat limited room for change to be indicated across specific items. For example, the average beginning score on every item (all 52 items) was in the direction of the Proficient (3 or higher) or Advanced (4 or higher) category. Only 16 of 52 items had a beginning average score below 4, and the remainder were all average beginning scores above 4.
- **Small to moderate gains were noted for many indicators of school readiness in children. These gains are likely due to a combination of participation in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program, normal processes of child development, and other contributing factors. Other indicators showed no or limited evidence of change. Sometimes this was due to the fact that the children were already perceived as highly developed on that indicator, while on others there was change but it was not enough to reach statistical significance. However, the wide-ranging evidence of growth in children’s specific domains of development related to school readiness is highly encouraging and evidence of program success.**
- Among 52 indicators of school readiness, **significant differences were measured on 39 of the 52 indicators between fall 2008 and spring 2009. This means that 75 percent of the indicators for school readiness showed positive growth in children participating in Gearing Up for Kindergarten. Positive increases occurred on indicators in all six of the school readiness categories.**
- These findings showed significant differences in parental perceptions of children’s school readiness from the beginning of the program to the end of the program on 39 indicators. These changes included **22 small to moderate increases between .10 and .30, 14 substantive increases between .30 and .50, and 3 significant increases of .50 or higher on specific items of school readiness.**

- The **15 largest significant differences for children** (as perceived by parents) occurred in the following areas:
 - **Ability to recite family names and contact information (.57)**
 - **Familiarity with numbers (.57)**
 - **Trying to solve problems with friends (.52)**
 - **Taking turns with others (.49)**
 - **Drawing and using art to express ideas or feelings (.48)**
 - **Familiarity with letters of the alphabet (.43)**
 - **Sharing with other children (.42)**
 - **Awareness of who to contact in case of a need for help (.39)**
 - **Ability to count and do basic numbers (.38)**
 - **Enjoyment of participation in small group learning and activities (.32)**
 - **Ability to manage feelings of anger and frustration (.37)**
 - **Following directions that are given (.36)**
 - **Working or playing cooperatively with friends (.35)**
 - **Creativity in asking questions or solving problems (.34)**
 - **Appreciation for getting to know others (.34)**

- In analyzing all increases over .20 or higher (whether significant or not), **the findings suggest growth in five primary areas: (1) social skills and positive interaction with others; (2) ability to function more independently and learn actively in a guided environment; (3) development of specific pre-academic skills or knowledge that applies to a school setting (using a pencil, knowing the alphabet and numbers, awareness of personal contact information, etc.); (4) ability to express themselves through art and hands-on creative activities; and (5) ability to manage emotions and adapt in a new environment.**

- Assessing the six domains of development related to school readiness that are examined in the evaluation process, while all domains have specific items that demonstrate change after program participation, the areas that show the greatest impact as a result of the program are: **(1) Child Learning and Exploration; (2) Positive Peer Interactions and Social Development; (3) Knowing the Basics and Pre-Academic Skills; (4) Emotional Development and Management; and (5) Practical Awareness and Self-Care Skills.**

The findings from the assessment process concerning changes in children’s social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and practical abilities related to school readiness show that many changes are occurring for children enrolled in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. Parents largely rate their children as already doing well in most categories, and some significant changes are occurring that move children toward greater school readiness. These findings indicate that the program likely has a number of positive impacts on children and their school readiness.

An example of the PPASR Report Sheet that was created for feedback from the program to parents concerning their children is included as an appendix (see Appendix A). It highlights the specific indicator for school readiness, the child’s rating by the parent in either the fall or spring, the child’s perceived level of performance, and the comparison score of the entire Gearing Up for Kindergarten group as a whole.

Findings on School Knowledge and Familiarity

Since parental involvement in children’s learning and children’s preparation for school are key objectives in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program, an element was added to the evaluation process in the 2008-09 year that asked parents to respond regarding their and their child’s knowledge and familiarity with school expectations, routines, and relationships.

Parents were asked to assess their child’s familiarity with school, peers, and routines, as well as their feelings and comfort level in varying aspects of the school-related experience. Similarly, parents rated themselves also on familiarity with school, teachers, and routines, as well as comfort level and familiarity with school personnel and routines. Five of these questions were asked on a “yes/no” basis and 8 questions were answered on a response scale of 1 to 4, with 1 = not at all to 4 = to a great extent. There were 13 items asked of the parent and 13 items asked regarding the parent’s perception of the child. The findings related to this aspect of the program evaluation are provided in Tables 14-17.

Table 14: Children in Gearing up for Kindergarten – School Knowledge

My child:	Beginning of Program		End of Program	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
1. Has visited the school or kindergarten classroom.	38.2%	61.8%	14.5%	85.5% (+23.7)
2. Has met a kindergarten teacher at the school he/she will attend.	62.7%	37.3%	43.5%	56.5% (+19.2)
3. Knows how he/she will get to and from school.	34.3%	65.7%	18.8%	81.2% (+15.5)
4. Knows where he/she will go before and after school.	36.3%	63.7%	31.9%	68.1% (+4.4)
5. Has met peers who will be in kindergarten at the same school.	43.1%	56.9%	24.6%	75.4% (+18.5)

Table 15: Parents in Gearing up for Kindergarten – School Knowledge

As a parent, I:	Beginning of Program		End of Program	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
1. Have visited the school or kindergarten classroom.	29.4%	70.6%	11.6%	88.4% (+17.8)
2. Have met a kindergarten teacher at the school my child will attend.	49%	51%	31.9%	68.1% (+17.1)
3. Know where my child will go before and after school.	13.7%	86.3%	15.9%	84.1% (-2.2)
4. Have met other parents who have children or will have children in kindergarten.	23.5%	76.5%	15.9%	84.1% (+7.6)
5. Have discussed going to kindergarten with my child.	10.8%	89.2%	8.7%	91.3% (+2.1)

Table 16: Children in Gearing Up for Kindergarten – School Comfort and Familiarity

Question My Child:	Beginning of Program Fall 2008 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
6. Is excited about beginning kindergarten.	3.42	3.62	.20	Yes
7. Is familiar with the routines and expectations that exist in kindergarten (raising hands, etc.).	2.67	2.91	.25	Yes
8. Is comfortable with the environment of the school setting.	3.14	3.45	.31	Yes
9. Talks positively about going to kindergarten.	3.36	3.55	.19	Yes
10. Is comfortable interacting with peers of a similar age who will be in kindergarten.	3.38	3.57	.19	Yes
11. Is comfortable separating from me as a parent.	3.30	3.54	.24	Yes
12. Is comfortable participating in a group with other children.	3.33	3.48	.15	No
13. Is curious about school and the experiences he/she will have there.	3.39	3.58	.19	Yes

Table 17: Parents in Gearing Up for Kindergarten – School Comfort and Familiarity

Question As a parent, I:	Beginning of Program Fall 2008 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
6. Am excited about my child beginning kindergarten.	3.57	3.74	.17	Yes
7. Am familiar with the routines and expectations for children that exist in kindergarten.	3.41	3.58	.17	Yes
8. Am comfortable with being in a school setting.	3.75	3.80	.04	No
9. Am comfortable interacting with school personnel or teachers.	3.67	3.80	.13	Yes
10. Have a good idea of how my child acts with peers in a group setting.	3.39	3.64	.25	Yes
11. Understand the general ability level of the average kindergartner.	3.30	3.59	.29	Yes
12. Am curious about school and the experiences that he/she will have there.	3.70	3.72	.03	No
13. Am comfortable leaving my child in the care of others.	3.51	3.61	.10	No

These four tables summarize the findings on reported changes regarding school knowledge, comfort level and familiarity for both children and parents in Gearing Up for Kindergarten. Several substantial changes emerged in these findings:

- For both parents and children, **indicators of school knowledge showed significant increases in preparation and knowledge for the school experience. For pre-kindergarten children, the percentage who had visited a school or kindergarten classroom increased by 24%, those who met a kindergarten teacher at their prospective school increased 19%, and those who meet peers they will be with in kindergarten increased nearly 19%. For parents, the percentage who had visited a school or kindergarten classroom increased 18%, those who had met a kindergarten teacher at their child's prospective school increased 17%, and those meeting other parents who will have children in kindergarten increased 8%.**
- For children in the program, among 8 indicators of comfort level and familiarity with school, **significant differences were measured on 7 of the 8 indicators between fall 2008 and spring 2009. Findings showed that children became more familiar with kindergarten routines and expectations, more comfortable with the school environment, more comfortable separating from parents, and more curious and excited about beginning school.**
- For parents involved in Gearing Up for Kindergarten, **significant differences were measured on 5 of the 8 indicators regarding comfort level and familiarity with school between fall 2008 and spring 2009. Findings showed that parent became more familiar with kindergarten routines and expectations for their child, more comfortable interacting with school personnel, more aware of their child's behavior with peers, and more aware of the ability level of kindergarten children.**

III. Teacher Assessment of Children’s School Readiness

Teacher Assessment for School Readiness

An important objective for the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program is that participating children will show significant progress in being prepared to be successful in cognitive, social, emotional, physical and practical domains as they enter kindergarten. In addition to the perceptions of parents, the program evaluation for 2008-09 also included an independent evaluation by the child’s preschool facilitator/teacher in the program.

This aspect of the evaluation focused on teacher ratings of a child’s school readiness in key areas. The evaluation tool selected for this was the School Entry Profile, which we re-titled the Teacher Assessment of School Readiness (TASR), which is a highly regarded measure that allows children to be evaluated regarding their school readiness in several domains with key indicators. This instrument was added to the evaluation process based on participant and facilitator feedback from the first 2 years. Teachers were asked to complete the assessment tool twice for each child, once at the start of the program after they had come to know the child and once at the end of the program. Filling out the assessment twice allows for comparison of a child’s scores over a range of time and also from the teacher’s perspective. Thus, the tool allows teachers to provide feedback on a child that enables them to:

- Highlight areas of positive growth and development in a child related to school readiness
- Identify potential areas of perceived concern regarding a child’s development, learning or behavior
- Assess a child’s perceived development and behavior in relation to established domains of development important to early learning and school readiness

The seven domains assessed in the Teacher Assessment for School Readiness included (1) *Symbolic Development* (4 items – creativity, etc.), (2) *Communication* (13 items – language, literacy, etc.), (3) *Mathematical/Physical Knowledge* (6 items), (4) *Working with Others* (7 items – social skills, etc.), (5) *Learning to Learn* (9 items – learning, emotions, etc.), (6) *Physical Development* (4 items), and (7) *Conventional Knowledge* (8 items – basic pre-academic skills, practical knowledge, etc.). The first five domains and their corresponding items were rated by teachers on a 3-point scale ranging from 1 = “not yet/almost never” to 3 = “almost always.” The last two domains were rated using simple “yes/no” response options.

Understanding Findings from the TASR Assessment of School Readiness

Several important points should be made about using the findings from this assessment tool and process to gauge children’s progress.

- First, the TASR is a carefully developed research instrument and so results from it tend to be valid and reliable. It allows trained pre-school teachers/facilitators to gauge a child’s school readiness across seven different areas.
- Second, the TASR allows for tracking a sense of progress over time. The level of growth or change that can be tracked in a given child’s development, or for a group of children, depends on where a teacher rates the child in the beginning (pre-test). If teachers already rate a child very highly on indicators of school readiness at the beginning, then the scale cannot reveal further growth for that child (there is no “room” left on the scale for growth).
- Third, usage of a comparison group for this year’s program of Gearing Up for Kindergarten will allow us, once the findings are complete, to assess whether a similar group of children

without the program would show similar results or changes in their scores regarding school readiness.

- Fourth, children in their early years between ages 3 and 5 are already developing on a continuous basis, and so it is somewhat difficult to know whether changes are due to participation in the program, predictable patterns of normal growth over time, or other factors (involvement with new friends, going to child care, etc.).

However, the teacher assessment of school readiness does allow us to do the following:

- We can determine at what level teachers operating the program perceive children to be at in several key areas related to school readiness. We can also assess any variation in these ratings by age of the child, gender of the child, or other potentially important factors.
- We can determine whether teacher ratings show a perceived change in children's school readiness over time while participating in the program, and how great those changes are that do occur.
- We can examine whether particular categories of school readiness showed greater changes than others over time.

Participants in the TASR Assessment

Participation in the Teacher Assessment of School Readiness required that preschool teachers/facilitators fill out the TASR survey for each child twice, once in fall 2008 and once in spring 2009 during the program. Only those children who had a TASR assessment completed at both times were included in the analysis. A total sample of 87 children were assessed by teachers in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program in both the fall and the spring (this sample represents a response rate of approximately 89% of participating children who were administered the assessment – not all sites used the assessment). Demographic characteristics were similar to those previously reported.

Findings on Teacher Ratings of Children's School Readiness

The key areas of school readiness assessed by teachers were: (1) *Symbolic Development* (4 items – creativity, etc.), (2) *Communication* (13 items – language, literacy, etc.), (3) *Mathematical/Physical Knowledge* (6 items), (4) *Working with Others* (7 items – social skills, etc.), (5) *Learning to Learn* (9 items – learning, emotions, etc.), (6) *Physical Development* (4 items), and (7) *Conventional Knowledge* (8 items – basic pre-academic skills, practical knowledge, etc.). Seven tables (Tables 18-24) are included below, one of which covers each dimension, and there are beginning group scores (fall 2008), completing group scores (spring 2009), and difference scores (difference in the average group scores, or means) for each item. For the last two tables, the scores represent percentages and simple percentage changes.

The difference scores indicate progress (or lack thereof) that has occurred for children (as perceived by preschool facilitators in the program) on average in the group between fall 2008 and spring 2009. The table indicates whether there is a “significant” difference between the scores, which may be due to program participation, individual growth, or other factors. Again, in Tables 18-22 the scores are represented on a scale between 1 and 3, with higher scores indicating greater preparation or readiness on a specific item.

Table 18: Symbolic Development – Teacher School Readiness Scores

Question This Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2008 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
1. Takes part in interactive play with others.	2.56	2.76	.20	Yes
2. Creates or responds to music.	2.48	2.61	.13	Yes
3. Uses art to convey feelings and ideas.	2.45	2.61	.16	Yes
4. Talks about his or her creations.	2.46	2.62	.16	Yes

Table 19: Communication – Teacher School Readiness Scores

Question This Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2008 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
1. Uses language to communicate ideas, feelings, questions, or to solve problems.	2.59	2.64	.06	No
2. Uses language to pretend or create.	2.54	2.72	.18	Yes
3. Responds to questions.	2.61	2.71	.10	No
4. Follows directions.	2.56	2.68	.12	No
5. Shows interest in reading and books.	2.62	2.74	.12	No
6. Exhibits book-handling skills.	2.55	2.76	.21	Yes
7. Identifies letters in the alphabet.	2.44	2.71	.28	Yes
8. Recognizes that there is a relationship between letters and sounds.	2.20	2.47	.28	Yes
9. Recognizes that written spellings represent spoken words.	2.20	2.40	.21	Yes
10. “Reads” simple books.	1.90	2.21	.31	Yes
11. Scribbles with intended meaning.	2.45	2.64	.19	Yes
12. Uses some letters in writing.	2.25	2.61	.36	Yes
13. Recognizes first name in print.	2.72	2.94	.22	Yes

Table 20: Mathematical/Physical Knowledge – Teacher School Readiness Scores

Question This Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2009 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
1. Writes some numbers.	2.20	2.55	.36	Yes
2. Determines “same,” “more than” and “less than” by comparing.	2.24	2.51	.26	Yes
3. Shows understanding of sequence of daily events.	2.32	2.77	.45	Yes
4. Classifies objects used in daily experiences or identifies similarities and differences.	2.48	2.68	.20	Yes
5. Makes one-to-one correspondence.	2.48	2.79	.31	Yes
6. Experiments with objects to produce effects.	2.48	2.77	.29	Yes

Table 21: Working with Others – Teacher School Readiness Scores

Question This Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2008 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference?
1. Uses adults as resources.	2.68	2.75	.07	No
2. Initiates conversation with familiar adults.	2.55	2.67	.12	No
3. Works cooperatively with others in a give-and-take manner.	2.53	2.67	.14	Yes
4. Uses peers as resources.	2.25	2.51	.26	Yes
5. Shares resources with others.	2.56	2.72	.16	Yes
6. Shows sensitivity and respect for others.	2.52	2.74	.22	Yes
7. Suggests appropriate solutions to conflicts.	2.29	2.30	.01	No

Table 22: Learning to Learn – Teacher School Readiness Scores

Question This Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2008 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2009 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
1. Shows curiosity and interest.	2.77	2.86	.09	No
2. Explores and tries new things.	2.67	2.75	.08	No
3. Takes responsibility for belongings.	2.51	2.68	.17	Yes
4. Makes choices.	2.60	2.75	.15	Yes
5. Stays focused and productive while playing/working independently.	2.60	2.69	.09	No
6. Stays focused and productive while playing/working in a group.	2.45	2.59	.14	Yes
7. Shows pride in accomplishments.	2.76	2.91	.15	Yes
8. Copes with frustration and failure.	2.37	2.40	.03	No
9. Talks about what he or she is learning.	2.43	2.59	.16	Yes

Table 23: Physical Development – Teacher School Readiness Scores

This Child typically:	Beginning of Program		End of Program	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
1. Is physically active.	1.1%	98.9%	1.1%	98.9% (--)
2. Demonstrates gross motor skills.	1.1%	98.9%	1.1%	98.9% (--)
3. Demonstrates fine motor skills.	3.4%	96.6%	5.7%	94.3% (-2.3)
4. Appears to be healthy.	--	100%	--	100% (--)

Table 24: Conventional Knowledge – Teacher School Readiness Scores

This child typically:	Beginning of Program		End of Program	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
1. Tells first and last name.	5.7%	94.3%	4.6%	95.4% (+1.1)
2. Knows first and last names of an adult family member.	20.7%	79.3%	16.1%	83.9% (+4.6)
3. Knows age.	4.6%	95.4%	1.1%	98.9% (+3.5)
4. Knows birth date.	60.9%	39.1%	32.2%	67.8% (+28.7)
5. Recognizes some basic shapes.	5.7%	94.3%	1.1%	98.9% (+4.6)
6. Identifies basic colors.	6.9%	93.1%	1.1%	98.9% (+5.8)
7. Counts by rote to 10.	16.1%	83.9%	3.4%	96.6% (+12.7)
8. Recognizes and names some numbers to 10.	17.2%	82.8%	3.4%	96.6% (+13.8)

These seven tables summarize the findings from the Gearing Up for Kindergarten project for the 2008-09 year on teacher's perceived changes in children's school readiness on specific items. The following points can be made from the findings:

- As with parents, teachers in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program **routinely rate pre-kindergarten children quite highly on most indicators of school readiness.** This suggests that most children are already developing quite well in their preparation for the school experience. It also means that there is somewhat limited room for change to be indicated across specific items.
- **The findings on school readiness of children across several domains are quite similar to the parent-rated findings for children in the program. These findings from an independent second source of assessment for children on school readiness reaffirm and strengthen the findings as provided by parents of children. Small to moderate gains were noted for many indicators of school readiness in children. These gains are likely due to a combination of participation in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program, normal processes of child development, and other contributing factors. Other indicators showed no or limited evidence of change. Sometimes this was due to the fact that the children were already perceived as highly developed on that indicator, while on others there was change but it was not enough to reach statistical significance. However, the wide-ranging evidence of growth in children's specific domains of development related to school readiness is highly encouraging and evidence of program success.**
- Among 39 indicators of school readiness rated by teachers on a scale of 1 to 3, **significant differences were measured on 28 of the 39 indicators between fall 2008 and spring 2009. This means that 72 percent of the indicators for school readiness that were rated by teachers showed positive growth in children participating in Gearing Up for**

Kindergarten. Positive increases occurred on indicators in all five of the school readiness categories using this rating scale.

- These findings showed significant differences in teacher perceptions of children’s school readiness from the beginning of the program to the end of the program on 28 indicators. These changes included **23 small to moderate increases between .10 and .30, and 5 substantive increases between .30 and .50.**
- The **12 largest significant differences for children** (as perceived by teachers) occurred in the following areas:
 - **Shows understanding of sequence of daily events (.45)**
 - **Writes some numbers (.36)**
 - **Uses some letters in writing (.36)**
 - **“Reads” simple books (.31)**
 - **Makes one-to-one correspondence (math) (.31)**
 - **Experiments with objects to produce effects (.29)**
 - **Identifies letters in the alphabet (.28)**
 - **Recognizes that there is a relationship between letters and sounds (.28)**
 - **Determines “same,” “more than” and “less than” by comparing (.26)**
 - **Uses peers as resources (.26)**
 - **Shows sensitivity and respect for others (.22)**
 - **Recognizes first name in print (.22)**
- For children in the program, **indicators of school readiness related to physical development showed little or no change (not surprising as no room existed for change) while indicators related to practical knowledge showed a few substantive increases. For pre-kindergarten children, the percentage who knew their birth date increased by 29%, those who recognized basic shapes or colors increased 4.5 to 6%, and those who were able to count by rote to 10 or recognize and name some numbers from 1 to 10 increased between 13 and 14%.**
- In analyzing all significant increases in the findings, **the findings suggest growth in five primary areas: (1) social skills and positive interaction with others; (2) ability to function more independently and learn actively in a guided environment; (3) development of specific pre-academic skills and knowledge regarding language and literacy; (4) development of specific pre-academic skills and knowledge regarding math and science; and (5) ability to express themselves through art and hands-on creative activities.**

These findings regarding changes in children’s social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and practical abilities related to school readiness show that many changes are occurring for children enrolled in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. While teachers indicate children are already doing well in most categories, there are also many significant changes occurring that move children toward greater school readiness. These findings indicate that the program likely has a number of positive impacts on children and their school readiness.

IV. Parent Feedback on Gearing Up for Kindergarten

In addition to the detailed information gathered from participants in Gearing Up for Kindergarten, a final and important aspect of the program evaluation involved gathering feedback through having parents respond to open-ended questions about the program. In the post-program surveys, parents were asked to respond to the following three questions:

- Is there anything you would like to share from your participation in this program? What, if anything, have you been led to do differently as a result of Gearing Up for Kindergarten?
- How has your child benefited from attending Gearing Up for Kindergarten?
- What do you like most about the program?

Parents were able to respond to each question and share their thoughts, experiences, and feelings related to their participation in the program with their child. The first question allowed parents to share feedback on *outcomes from their experience as a parent in the program*. The second question allowed parents to share feedback on *outcomes for their child as a result of participation in the program*. Finally, the third question allowed parents to describe *most useful or helpful elements of the program that were important to them*.

Qualitative feedback provides a different kind of view of how participants reacted to and experienced the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. The responses are more descriptive, personal and wide-ranging. We conducted a brief thematic analysis of the main response categories that were shared by participants and have selected a variety of responses for each question that highlight the responses of participants. Not all participant comments are selected here for purposes of brevity; however, it is interesting to note that of all the written comments there was nothing negative written about the program or its influence.

Qualitative Feedback from Parents about Gearing Up for Kindergarten

As we examined the difference that Gearing Up for Kindergarten has made for participants and their children, we asked parents a number of response questions. Some of their answers are shared below to highlight key categories that emerged in the analysis of their responses.

What have you been led to do differently as a parent as a result of Gearing Up for Kindergarten?

More Time and Active Involvement with Children

- I find myself trying to spend one-on-one time with each of my kids – to teach them something new at their level. Tried to be even more patient.
- I enjoyed the parent/child activities. It gave me new ways to interact with my child.
- It's a good learning program. Useful information and doing the learning activities with my child is fun!! I like learning with my child and what I learn from this helps me to understand how to help her learn better.
- I appreciate the fact that the parents are involved in the program. It gives me special time to spend with my child alone.
- This program has been an incredible blessing to me and my son. I absolutely love the chance to play educational games with just him and I really need the parenting advice and encouragement that is given. I was also very thankful for the child care for my other kids. Thank you!!
- It gave lots of ideas for activities to try with my son. Helps me be more creative in finding new activities.
- I really enjoyed the homework. The reading material and projects to do with my child. They were a great learning and bonding experience. Yes, ways of getting involved with the school and helping her learn.
- I liked this program. It's made little moments into teachable moments, and ways of teaching math, etc. in daily activities.

Improved Parenting Efforts in Specific Areas

- As a parent I have learned to give my child more choices and let her make her own decisions. She loves making choices.
- I found the discipline techniques very useful – using positive reinforcement and avoiding the word “don't.”
- This program gives useful suggestions and I have tried a few that have helped with discipline.
- I have limited my child's use of the television.
- I do ask a lot more questions when reading.
- I am more interactive when I read to him. Many of my parenting beliefs and behaviors have been affirmed, which has helped me to be more confident.
- Yes, I changed my evening routine so my child did not watch her evening show right before bed. This has helped her to fall asleep faster.
- I really benefited from the “Importance of Sleep” – that has really improved my daughter's behavior.
- I have been taught to be a better parent in this program and how to treat my children better.
- I really watch how I have a short temper with my child and use alternate ways of discipline.
- Pay closer attention to my son's behavior and activities.
- Started a smart discipline chart – working well.
- I have been more aware of my discipline style. I was quick to anger, but now think about how to handle situations calmly.
- I try to focus more on catching him being good. I try to use everyday experiences more to teach math and literacy.

- Take more advantage of everyday activities to promote learning.
- We discussed fire escapes and what to do in case of a fire; make sure her seat belt is locked when it is fastened.
- I have worked with my child more. We do “math” now and phonics – things I wouldn’t have done before.
- I’ve tried different techniques at dinner time to encourage them to try new foods that I learned here.

Increased Awareness of Child’s Specific Needs

- We have a better understanding of his personality in new situations (and his comfort level), and also of what will be expected of him in school and how he might handle those expectations.
- Being in the classroom with my son has given me the opportunity to see where he is at and treat him more as a young child than a baby.
- Learned to accept that my boys will all be different in temperament, learning styles, etc. – don’t compare!
- This has been a wonderful program for us to see if my daughter is socially ready for kindergarten. This has opened my eyes to other options as a parent.
- I’ve really enjoyed learning myself and being able to observe my child interact with peers and teachers.
- It’s a good program. I liked the topics, they helped me think about what my child needs for school.
- We attended last spring for our oldest child, and have 2 more coming the next 2 years. This class has been very informational and our instructors are absolutely the best. The class is definitely a beneficial program, our girls have learned very much, and are very excited to get to come to school like their big sisters.
- I think the best part is the orientation for the kids to the school environment and getting them involved in activities with other children and teachers.
- This class has given us a better understanding of our child and his growth and how we can work together.
- Really appreciated the temperament session and learning styles – hope my son’s teachers know this information. We will talk about school, drive by, and will play on the playground this summer to help become comfortable.
- To understand that each child is an individual. Each child learns at his or her own level and has his/her own learning style. As a parent, I try to actively involve my children in learning through everyday activities.
- This has been a very good program – it got me thinking and understanding child development better.
- I am more sensitive to my child’s temperament and learning abilities.
- This is an awesome program – I think it is something that every family with a child entering kindergarten could benefit from participating in. It allowed me to see which skills my son has mastered versus needs work on for school readiness.
- This class was offered at a difficult time our family was facing, just recently learning we had a special needs child. This class was very beneficial for our child, providing some stability for all of us and assuring us with what we will need to face with the youngest child in our family.
- This program was absolutely what our family needed! It was great to take the time to focus on my son’s development. I truly needed encouragement as a parent and this helped us focus on helping our son. He can’t wait for kindergarten now.

How has your child benefited from Countdown to Kindergarten?

Increased Social Confidence and Positive Peer Interactions

- Learned to be a little more independent. Opened up more to people that he was not that familiar with before.
- He went from being really shy to talking and playing with the other kids.
- She has more confidence.
- Yes, he was helped a lot – he did not want to attend in the first weeks and now does not want to miss for any reason.
- Being with other children, learning to go from one thing to the next in activities. He has just seemed to come out of his shell more with teachers, etc.
- More mature, better communication skills with kids of similar age.
- Improved social skills.
- Less shy, more confident.
- He has become more confident and able to separate from parents.
- Learning to be around others and participating in the activities.
- I can definitely see more independence and a drive to become independent.
- She's been able to get acquainted with other kids she will be going to class with in kindergarten.
- Socially it has been very good for him. He is more confident.
- He became more confident in what he knows and to try new activities. He also became more excited about school.
- He is more interested in reading and loves attending and meeting new friends.
- I have seen more confidence in him in the learning environment and also in being left with strangers.
- He has become more outgoing and gotten used to being apart.
- My child is very shy. Through this program she was able to spend time with the kindergarten teachers. She thoroughly enjoyed the program.
- Good social experience – improvement in social skills since beginning of program. Good introduction to classroom setting – we're working on transitions.

Improved Pre-Academic Skills in Reading, Math and Other Subjects

- My son looks forward to going to school now. He has become a little better with reading and writing letters.
- He has time alone with mom. He feels important to have his own meeting. He really likes the science. The teachers are great and really work to know each kid individually. My son is kind of shy, but will open up and talk to the teachers. I hope he will continue this behavior.
- Social skills, hands-on training, new ideas and games, mental challenges. They love the thought of going to school and they feel very important. Thank you!
- This was her night. No siblings. She was exposed to a classroom, a teacher, and other children. She learned socialization and improved some of her academic skills. She loves to write 5's now and doesn't get frustrated.
- He's gotten a little more practice in areas like letter recognition and writing.
- He wants to learn to read now. His self-confidence is so much better because he had his own important meeting to go to and I had one-on-one time with him.
- He loves organized learning and group activities. He is truly "geared up" for kindergarten.

Greater Awareness and Comfort with School Routines and Expectations

- My child is excited about kindergarten. We believe he has a better understanding of what to expect when he starts school.
- He has been allowed the opportunity to see the structure and fun activities which kindergarten has to offer.
- He is more excited about going to school – enjoys going to a big school – different than going to his small preschool.
- He has seen the support that I will give him as he goes to school. Also, learning about quiet voices and group activities.
- He loves it and can't wait for kindergarten.
- He has gotten to see what a school setting would be like and I have gotten to see how he has adjusted to being in a school setting.
- He is becoming familiar with the classroom atmosphere. It is a great learning experience for him – both mentally and socially.
- He is learning and is excited about learning.
- He is getting more prepared to start kindergarten and will know what to expect when he does start school and he won't be so shy. He knows what school time is about and how to follow directions.
- Becoming familiar with the school he will attend and the teachers. Won't be such a scary place to go.
- They were able to meet the kindergarten teachers, got to know them and got acquainted with their new classrooms.
- Our child has gotten the chance to do different activities that makes him realize kindergarten will be fun.
- It gave him the opportunity to be around new kids and a learning environment. He enjoyed the play, songs, books and snacks.
- It's good for him to be in a kindergarten setting so he will be more comfortable when he goes next year.
- She is very excited to start kindergarten in the fall. She looks forward to Gearing Up for Kindergarten more than any of her other activities during the week.
- Has had another chance to make new friends outside of day care and preschool. Understands more of what is expected of him at school and has learned classroom rules from a kindergarten teacher – just different than preschool.
- Has learned what the inside of a classroom is really like, is more prepared for kindergarten this fall.
- She feels more prepared for the classroom setting.
- I think this was a great opportunity for her to share her skills with me in addition to some one-on-one time with me. It has also provided her the opportunity to meet people and kids she'll spend time with next fall.
- His social skills have improved. His fine motor skills have improved. I feel that he is more prepared to start school and he will know what to expect next year.
- This was a great program for my son, he is now excited about going to kindergarten.
- Yes, helped his social skills and familiarity with his future school.
- Becoming familiar with classroom and the school he will attend is priceless.

What did you like most about the program?

Time Spent Together in Learning Activities with Child

- Getting to participate with my child's activities.
- I like the activities in the "center" style of learning. Many times a child will go to kindergarten and this is very difficult to concentrate on – good job!
- The time devoted to giving my child one-on-one attention during parent-child activities (first half of each session).
- The chance to interact one-on-one with my child and seeing where they are developmentally.
- I like that there are a lot of different activities that I would not have even thought of doing with my son, and that now we have more ideas of games or things to do at home.
- I like that I get to share one-on-one time with my son and that we also get to learn separately.
- The time spent with kids created by the activity at home.
- Time set out to do activities with my child, but actually it is all very helpful to us.
- One-on-one with pre-K child, providing child care for siblings is wonderful!
- Interaction one-on-one with child and other parents' input.
- One-on-one activities with my child.
- I like the portions that get my child involved.
- The times I get to spend with my child and the ideas and feedback from other parents.
- Doing activities with my child at the beginning of the class.
- Very useful topics and fun activities we can do at home.
- I love the opportunity to do activities with my son.
- Getting one-on-one time with my child. With busy lifestyles the one-on-one time is often little to none. Really enjoyed the majority of the adult sessions.
- It was something that my daughter and I enjoyed every Thursday together. It was an early evening with just mom and daughter learning together.

Preparation of Parent and Child for Kindergarten Experience

- Learning what is expected in kindergarten and what I need to work on with my child.
- It will take a lot of the anxiety away that I may have had next year when I drop him off for the first day of school.
- All the help I receive in finding out if my child is ready for kindergarten.
- It is a great introduction – not only the academics, but the kids can get familiar with teachers and school surroundings.
- I love how my child has changed from not even wanting to talk about going to school to being excited about and willing to talk about going.
- That the child gets acquainted with the kindergarten rooms and the teachers.
- Gets child acclimated to kids, classrooms and teachers.
- Allowing my child to get used to the environment and allow her to meet other kids she will go to school with.
- Your child gets to be in a kindergarten atmosphere and the activities were very fun and interesting for my child.
- Lets kids get an idea of what school is like, and how to work with other kids and a teacher.
- The fact that parents are included in the process. I like that we are geared up for kindergarten just as much as the child.
- I loved being in the classroom with my child and having the knowledge of what she will be learning in kindergarten. It was useful to learn ways that I can help make the transition easier for her.
- It prepares us both for what is expected. By seeing my son in this classroom setting I can really isolate which things to spend the summer focusing on – it isn't always the academics.

Parenting Discussion and Support

- The topics discussed were good refreshers for me as reminders and gave some new ideas how to make learning fun. I think it also gave me and my child one on one time.
- Hearing how other parents handle similar situations that I often find myself in.
- Learning better parenting skills and practicing that.
- The interaction with parents of children the same age, and the interaction my son has with other children the same age.
- The parent discussions and the educational handouts.
- Getting lots of information and hearing from other parents.
- Sharing insights with other parents.
- Being with friendly people and being able to talk and learn new things about raising children.
- Discussions among the parents on the weekly topics.
- Sharing with other parents about what parenting styles worked for them.
- Hearing the input from other parents. Finding out how they do different things with their children.
- Hearing of other parents' triumphs and struggles with their children and how they deal with it.
- Sharing ideas with parents.
- The knowledge that I learned and tools to be a better parent.
- I've enjoyed the parent class, getting to visit with other parents and learning what they do, etc.
- I liked hearing what other parents had to say and some of their challenges.
- The time for open discussion with others and the leader.
- I liked the adult interaction and sharing. Gives ideas on what to do with my own kids plus to know that I am not alone in different things that kids do.
- Feedback from other parents.
- Parent support, ideas from other parents.
- Being able to discuss with other parents.

Quality of the Program Experience

- Meal and child care provided. If child care wasn't provided, attending would be very challenging. We also appreciated having time to spend with him and then time to get together with other parents. Good structure, planning and organization.
- I like that this program helps the parent and child with a chance of adapting to kindergarten and realizing how your child has grown.
- The teachers care about my child and her developmental growth. They are helpful, prepared and organized.
- I like everything about the program.
- This program is wonderful. It is valuable to both my child and me. I love that we get to do the activities together at the start of each session.
- The instructor was very knowledgeable and confident.
- I loved how it involved us all together and also getting used to the separation. I think all who have kids going into kindergarten should go through this program.
- The information the class gave was a great help in preparing me and my child for her move to kindergarten.
- The information presented is great. The variety of activities that the kids get to do in the classroom is great.
- We had a great group of kids, parents and leaders. The program was run so well, we enjoyed our Tuesdays at Kennedy so much.

APPENDIX A

FEEDBACK REPORT PROVIDED TO PARENTS ON CHILD SCHOOL READINESS

An example of the PPASR Report Sheet that was created for feedback from the program to parents concerning their children is included on the next two pages. It highlights the specific indicator for school readiness, the child's rating by the parent in either the fall or spring, the child's perceived level of performance, and the comparison score of the entire Gearing Up for Kindergarten group as a whole.

CHILD'S IDENTIFYING CODE AND NAME

Head Start, Fargo

ITEMS	CHILD'S PERCEIVED LEVEL	INDIVIDUAL SCORE	GROUP SCORE
LEARNING AND EXPLORATION: My child			
is curious and asks questions to learn more about a topic	Proficient	4	4.29
works with hands in putting together puzzles or building with blocks	Proficient	4	4.41
explores the environment and participates in new opportunities	Proficient	4	4.09
learns and recites familiar songs, nursery rhymes, finger plays or stories	Proficient	4	4.54
enjoys participating in small groups to play games or do learning activities	Proficient	4	4.18
draws and uses art to express ideas or feelings	Developing	2	3.66
is able to work independently on a task (painting, picking up clothes)	Proficient	4	4.07
likes to work at solving problems	Partly Proficient	3	3.53
is persistent when solving problems	Partly Proficient	3	3.26
PHYSICAL SKILLS AND ABILITIES: My child			
holds a pencil or crayon with fingers (not fist)	Proficient	4	4.44
can button, snap or zip pants or coat	Partly Proficient	3	4.18
moves easily from place to place when walking	Advanced	5	4.88
creates things using hands and paper, crayons, scissors, etc.	Proficient	4	4.47
is able to cut with scissors	Proficient	4	4.63
can catch or pick a rolled or thrown soft ball	Advanced	5	4.59
shows large motor skills, such as hopping, skipping, running, jumping or throwing	Advanced	5	4.84
FRIENDS AND SOCIAL INTERACTION: My child			
shares with other children (such as toys, crayons, etc.)	Partly Proficient	3	4.07
works or plays cooperatively with friends	Proficient	4	4.19
listens in a group situation	Partly Proficient	3	4.12
takes turns with others	Proficient	4	4.00
remembers and follows simple directions in playing games	Proficient	4	4.09
enjoys talking to or playing with other kids	Proficient	4	4.49
gets along without quarreling or fighting	Proficient	4	3.97
understands and follows rules that are explained	Partly Proficient	3	3.99
understands how to enter into talking or to play with other kids	Proficient	4	3.84
tries to solve problems with friends	Partly Proficient	3	3.29
KNOWING THE BASICS: My child			
is familiar with books and enjoys having others read to him or her	Proficient	4	4.82
tries to learn and use new words	Partly Proficient	3	4.46
is able to speak and communicate thoughts, needs and feelings in a way others understand	Proficient	4	4.65
is familiar with (or able to recognize) letters of the alphabet	Proficient	4	4.24
is familiar with (or able to recognize) numbers between 1 and 10 (or higher)	Proficient	4	4.50
is able to do counting, understand basic numbers (adding items together, etc.)	Partly Proficient	3	4.15
can sort things into basic groups (such as by color, shape, things that match, etc.)	Advanced	5	4.75
is creative in asking questions or trying to solve problems	Proficient	4	4.07
FEELINGS AND FAMILIES: My child			
feels loved and supported from family members at home	Advanced	5	4.91
spends time away from me in a variety of settings(child care, friend's house) without too much anxiety	Proficient	4	4.37

ITEMS	CHILD'S PERCEIVED LEVEL	INDIVIDUAL SCORE	GROUP SCORE
can identify his or her feelings (such as sad, angry, happy)	Proficient	4	4.56
can talk about how others might feel	Proficient	4	4.13
manages feelings, such as anger or frustration, without hurting or mean to others	Proficient	4	3.84
can adapt to new situations within a reasonable period and feel comfortable	Proficient	4	4.04
regularly shares how he or she is feeling with me or other caring adults	Proficient	4	4.22
appreciates getting to know new people or friends though time	Proficient	4	4.26
HEALTH, FITNESS AND PRACTICAL SKILLS: My child			
independently uses basic self-care skills, such as brushing teeth, using the toilet, washing hands, etc.	Proficient	4	4.54
eats a variety of snacks and foods	Advanced	5	4.38
is active and enjoys physical movement	Advanced	5	4.82
can recite his or her name, parents' names and contact information (address, phone number)	Partly Proficient	3	3.50
is able to understand location and get him or herself from one place to another (walk to a friend's house, ride a bike to the playground, etc.)	Advanced	5	3.85
has experience with following a routine at home, child care or preschool (such as bedtime routine, lunch routine, etc.)	Proficient	4	4.50
is aware of who to contact if he or she needs help	Developing	2	3.88
has experience using school-related supplies, such as pencils, paper, markers, backpack, etc.	Proficient	4	4.71
is able to put on clothes (coat, shoes, etc.) and take care of belongings (book, etc.)	Proficient	4	4.54
assist with simple household chores and is able to complete them with guidance	Partly Proficient	3	4.26
AS A PARENT, I			
give my child a variety of activities and learning experiences	Proficient	4	4.09
do arts and crafts, puzzles or other hands-on activities with my child	Proficient	4	4.18
get down and actively play with my child	Proficient	4	4.25
go walking, swimming or do other physical activities with my child	Proficient	4	4.28
provide my child with hands-on materials, such as crayons and paper, scissors, play dough, etc.	Advanced	5	4.63
give my child opportunities to be physically active (tumbling, playing at the park, dancing, playing ball, etc.)	Advanced	5	4.54
arrange for my child to play with other children his or her age	Partly Proficient	3	3.75
talk with my child how to get along with others even when they have a disagreement	Proficient	4	4.34
assist my child to begin play or interact with other children	Proficient	4	3.85
read with my child each day	Partly Proficient	3	4.56
discuss contents of a book or story with my child when we read	Partly Proficient	3	4.25
talk, laugh, sing and converse with my child	Proficient	4	4.71
respond quickly to my child's cues for attention (crying, questions)	Partly Proficient	3	4.38
help my child identify feelings such as sadness or fear	Proficient	4	4.37
discuss with my child how to handle feeling sad or upset	Proficient	4	4.26
teach my child self-care skills such as brushing teeth, using the toilet, etc.	Proficient	4	4.75
provide my child with regular routines at home	Proficient	4	4.46
work together on simple chores	Proficient	4	4.21
age of the participating parent		29	34.55
number of children in the family		1	2.34
age of child for this assessment		4	4.418