

Gearing Up for Kindergarten – Preparing Children for School Success



2012-13 Site Report for
Cass County, Fargo, ND

Understanding the Need

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

Local Program Participation

Gearing Up for Kindergarten operated as follows in 11 Elementary Schools in Cass County, ND in 2012-13:

- Participating families met for 8 sessions in Fall 2012 and 8 sessions in the Spring of 2013.
- A total of 168 families participated in the program.

Impacts on Parents

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

- **General program value** – 84% of parents indicated the program was very or extremely useful to them.
- **General impacts of program participation** – Among participants, 91% noted it increased their knowledge of healthy parenting a lot or very much, while 90% indicated it influenced their relationship with their child positively.
- **Value of program versus other sources** – Participants rated the *Gearing Up for Kindergarten* class and materials (3.92 out of 5) higher than all other sources (10 total) in being useful to them regarding parenting and school readiness.

Parent Comments and Feedback at Cass County Schools

The following comments represent parent feedback shared at Cass County Schools following participation in *Gearing Up for Kindergarten*:

- *“We enjoyed 1-on-1 time with our daughter, thanks to the childcare provided.”*
- *“Discussions with the teacher and other parents. We’ve shared a lot of experiences, which has helped! The activities have helped us with ideas for learning at home.”*
- *“The children get to learn what is expected of them and get used to the idea of being a kindergartener.”*
- *“Started to understand a classroom environment and the appropriate behaviors in a classroom.”*

Impacts on Children – School Readiness

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

- **Increases in children’s school readiness as described by parents** – Among 19 indicators of school readiness assessed by parents regarding their children, significant increases were measured on all of the 19 indicators during the 2012-13 program year.
- **Increases in child knowledge and skills occurred in:**
 - 1) Social skills and positive interaction with others
 - 2) Ability to function more independently and learn in a guided environment
 - 3) Development of specific pre-academic skills or knowledge (knowing the alphabet, numbers, etc.)
 - 4) Ability to express themselves through art and hands-on creative activities
 - 5) Ability to manage emotions and adapt in a new environment.

Contact and Further Details

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



In North Dakota, nearly 47,000 children between ages 0 and 5 are preparing for their entry into school and needing to gain knowledge and skills for success. Last year 9,503 children entered Kindergarten of which 8,575 were in public schools.