
Countdown to Kindergarten

Ready to Learn

Project Overview & Year-End Report for 2006-2007

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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. *Ready to Learn* and *Countdown to Kindergarten* have provided valuable and much needed support by improving access to information, providing a preschool and parent education classes, and partnering with organizations that work with young families to ensure programs focus on early literacy. The program is designed after a successful program in District 44 in Abercrombie, ND.



The NDSU Extension/ Region V Parenting Resource Center has offered *Ready to Learn*, a parent education opportunity for parent of three to four year olds and *Countdown to Kindergarten*, a Preschool/Parent Education opportunity for parents and their children who will be entering kindergarten in a year.

Program Description

Countdown to Kindergarten

Countdown to Kindergarten is a prevention-focused parent and family education program designed to facilitate child development and school readiness. The program was developed and is administered by the Region V Parent Resource Center in Fargo, ND, under the direction of the NDSU Extension Service and in collaboration with Fargo, West Fargo, and Northern Cass Public Schools; SENDCAA Head Start; and Parents as Teachers. Funding for the program is supported by the United Way of Cass-Clay.

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.). Currently, the program operated in its pilot year (2006-2007) at five specific sites, including West Fargo, Jefferson Elementary, Head Start, Madison Elementary, and Northern Cass Elementary, with 86 families enrolled. There was also a site within the Even Start program with Fargo Public Schools, with 23 families enrolled. The program will expand to Kindred-Davenport, Kennedy Elementary and Charism next fall.

Recruitment

Recruitment brochures were developed and distributed through a variety of cooperation agencies including, Head Start, Fargo Public Schools, Northern Cass public Schools, and West Fargo

Public Schools, Child Care Resource & Referral, Cass County Social Services, WIC, public libraries, and child care settings. The Forum published an article and the Parent Resource Center newsletter carried information for both semesters.

Countdown Enrollment/Attendance (# of families)

Site	Fall	Spring	Total families (unduplicated)	% Attendance
Madison	11	13	13	74%
Jefferson	13	13	17	87%
West Fargo	17	18	22	88%
Head Start	13	15	17	89%
Northern Cass	14	15	17	84%
Even Start	23	23	23	n/a
Total	91	97	109	



Participants are involved in two eight-week parent education sessions, one in fall 2006 and one in spring 2007. 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 (topics include guidance, media, importance of sleep, temperament, nutrition, brain development, and parenting styles). 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.

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 age appropriate activities, developmental stages and brain development.



On site childcare and refreshments were offered at each site. The program is facilitated by 20 preschool and parent facilitators and five classroom assistants who are students at NDSU and MSUM. The curriculum was developed by NDSU Extension staff, Even Start developed material for New American families, and Parents as Teachers developed weekly take home activities. Evaluation instruments were developed with the NDSU CDFS department.

Ready to Learn



Ready to Learn was offered as a three session series in the fall and again in the spring for parents of three year olds focusing on brain development, raising a reader, literacy development, playing to learn, etc. The audience was recruited in the same manner as the parents of four year olds. The sessions were held at the same sites with an additional parent facilitator. These sessions gave an extra boost for the parents to begin age appropriate activities with their children, as they look ahead to beginning school in two years. It will also serve as a great recruitment

piece for them to participate with their child in *Countdown to Kindergarten* the following year.

Ready to Learn Enrollment (# of families)

Site	Fall	Spring	Total families unduplicated
Madison	0	4	4
Jefferson	4	4	4
West Fargo	9	9	9
Head Start	2	2	2
Northern Cass	2	0	2
Total	17	19	21

Attachments:

- *Forum* article
- Countdown recruitment brochure
- Ready to Learn recruitment brochure

Curriculum Description

The parent education sessions were designed around the research based curriculum *Bright Beginnings*, developed by NDSU Extension, with parent/child take home activities written by Parents as Teachers and adaptations for New Americans developed by Even Start. Topics for the parent education sessions included: Getting Ready for Kindergarten, Brain Development in Infancy and Early Childhood, Assisting Your Child's Social Development, The Magic of Reading with Young Children, Media Wise, Guidance & Discipline, Developmental Stages, Responsibility, Sleep, Nutrition, Young Children and the Importance of Play, Self Help Skills, Understanding Young Children's Physical Development, Young Children and Emotional Intelligence, Learning Styles, and Temperament.

The curriculum for the child and parent sessions were developed/ compiled by Sharon Query, Extension Agent/ Parent Resource Coordinator and Sharon Rostad, Parent Facilitator and coordinator of the District 44 preschool program. They trained and supported each of the contracted program facilitators. Each site had three contracted facilitators for the child and parent sessions, as well as a classroom assistant. The compilation of the curriculum, handouts, and take home parent/child activities occurred the first year of the grant.

Countdown to Kindergarten

Fall Session Objectives

Session 1- Orientation

- Parents will meet and interact with other parents.
- Parents will understand ground rules.
- Parents will gain an understanding of *Countdown to Kindergarten* program.

Session 2- Parenting Styles

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

Session 3- Brain Development

- 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- 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 Objectives

Session 1 – Learning Styles/ 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- 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/ Math

- 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- Guidance and Discipline Tools

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

Session 6- 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- 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- 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.

Ready to Learn

Fall Objectives

Session One - Orientation

- Parents will meet and interact with other parents.
- Parents will understand ground rules.
- Parents will gain an understanding of *Ready to Learn* program.
- Parents will understand the developmental expectations and stages of three year olds.

Session Two - Brain Development in Infancy and Early Childhood

- Parents will understand how a child's brain develops.
- Parents will learn brain-building practices.

Session Three - The Magic of Reading with Young Children

- Parents will gain an understanding of the value of reading in assisting a child's development.
- Parents will learn guidelines for reading with young children.

Spring Objectives

Session One - Physical Development

- Parents will gain an understanding of the development of muscles and related motor skills.
- Parents will learn strategies to assist children in physical development.

Session Two - Assisting Your Child's Social Development

- Parents will identify developmental milestones in social development.
- Parents will learn strategies for assisting a child's social development.



Session Three - Play's the Thing!

- Parents will understand the stages and purposes of play.
- Parents will learn how adults can enhance a child's play.

Attachments:

- Example of parent education outline for Fall Session Five
- "Instruction Manual" examples
- Handout example
- Parent Child activity example
- Table of Contents for preschool activities
- Examples of individual preschool activities

Evaluation Strategies for the Countdown to 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 the 2006-2007 pilot year of the program provides results gathered from the entire year of the program's operation in fall 2006 and spring 2007. These results were developed using feedback gathered from program participants through three different evaluation tools. These tools are briefly summarized below. The project report is divided into three sections presenting results derived from each aspect of the evaluation process.

Overall Program Evaluation – Single Retrospective Form

The first aspect of the evaluation process for the Countdown to Kindergarten project was accomplished by gathering participant information through the Single Retrospective Form, a brief parent survey that focuses 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 twice, once at the end of the fall 2006 program and once at the end of the spring 2007 program. The findings are presented for both the fall and spring aspects of the program separately.

Practical Parent Assessment for School Readiness

A second aspect of the evaluation process for the Countdown to 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 Countdown to 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. Parents were asked to complete this assessment in the fall at the beginning of the program and also in the spring 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 Countdown to 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.

Behavior Assessment System for Children (2nd ed.), Parent and Teacher Rating Scales

The final aspect of the evaluation process for the Countdown to Kindergarten project focused on parent and teacher ratings of a child's social and emotional behavior in key areas. The evaluation tool selected for this was the Behavior Assessment System for Children (2nd ed.), or BASC-2, which is a highly regarded measure that allows children to be evaluated in comparison to national norms for children in their similar age group. It is a diagnostic tool used in the evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of developmental, learning, and behavioral disorders in children. It is multidimensional in that it measures numerous aspects of behavior and personality, including positive (adaptive) as well as negative (clinical) dimensions. Both parents and teachers were asked to complete the assessment tool twice for each child, once in the fall at the start of the program and once in the spring 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 both parental and teacher perspectives. Thus, the tool allows both parents and teachers to provide feedback on a child that enables them to:

- Highlight areas of positive growth and development in a child (adaptive skills)
- 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 national norms (typical patterns) for children in a similar age group

Again, a personalized report was created for each child that explained the assessment and included both the parent and teacher ratings in key areas for fall and spring. This personalized report for a specific child is based on ratings of the child's behavior by both parents and teachers using the BASC-2 Parent Rating Scales (PRS) and Teacher Rating Scales (TRS) forms. It provides a graphical presentation of scores on a scale for each area assessed, a comparison of scores in fall and spring, and additional information about common childhood behavioral and emotional problems.

We are determining more specific findings from the BASC-2 Parent Rating Scales (PRS) and Teacher Rating Scales (TRS) as part of the ongoing evaluation at this time.

I. Overall Program Evaluation Results for Countdown to Kindergarten

Basic Characteristics of Program Participants

A total sample of 59 participants from all five program sites completed the program evaluation survey in fall 2006. In spring 2007, 50 participants completed the second round of the survey. Participant numbers for each site in fall 2006 included Head Start (N = 11), Jefferson Elementary (N = 12), Madison Elementary (N = 10), Northern Cass Elementary (N = 15) and West Fargo (N = 11). Total enrollment for fall 2006 was 69 families, so the response rate to the survey was 85.5%. Demographic characteristics of participants in spring 2007 were highly similar to those recorded for fall, so are not reported here. Selected demographic characteristics of individuals participating in the program in fall 2006 who completed the survey are listed below.

- **Gender** – 78% women, 22% men
- **Age** – Average of 33.8 years; parents ranged in age from 24 to 49 years of age
- **Number of children** – Average of 2.29 children per parent
- **Location** – 78% live in an urban setting; 22% in a rural or farm/ranch setting (3.4%)
- **Family status** – Married (93.2%); Single (never married) (5.1%); cohabiting (1.7%)
- **Employment status** – Full-time employment (64.4%); employed 26-39 hours a week (10.2%); employed less than 25 hours a week (8.5%); not seeking outside employment (11.9%); other (5.1%)
- **Education level** – Some high school (1.7%); high school/GED (6.8%); some college (22%); 2-year college degree (22%); 4-year college degree (44.1%); master's degree or higher (3.4%)
- **Racial or ethnic background** – Caucasian (96.6%); Native American (1.7%); African American (1.7%)
- **Program participation** – 89.9% of participants indicated involvement in 6 or more sessions of the program during the fall 2006 year; 88% of participants in spring 2007 indicated involvement in 5 or more sessions of the program during spring 2007

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, and the value of specific topics addressed in the program. In each table, findings are included to each question for both the fall 2006 and the spring 2007 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 2006 (F06) or spring 2007 (S07).

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

Question	Not Useful	Slightly Useful	Some what Useful	Very Useful	Extremely Useful
Overall value of the program to me:	--	1.7% (F06)	25.4% (F06)	49.2% (F06)	23.7% (F06)
	--	--	24% (S07)	46% (S07)	30% (S07)
Handouts and activities provided to me in this program were:	--	1.7% (F06)	20.3% (F06)	50.8% (F06)	27.1% (F06)
	--	2% (S07)	22% (S07)	44% (S07)	32% (S07)
	NA	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Information presented in a clear and helpful manner:	--	--	--	47.5% (F06)	52.5% (F06)
	--	--	--	42% (S07)	58% (S07)
I was treated in a respectful manner:	--	--	--	22% (F06)	78% (F06)
	--	--	--	12% (S07)	88% (S07)

Participants expressed positive feelings about the program thus far, with 73% indicating it was very or extremely useful to them in fall 2007 and 76% saying the same thing in spring 2007. Among participants in fall 2006, 78% said the handouts and learning activities were very useful to them while 76% responded similarly in spring 2007. Finally, all of them agreed that the information was presented well and they were treated respectfully, with those who strongly agreed they were treated in a respectful manner going from 78% to 88% between fall and spring.

General Impacts of the Countdown to Kindergarten Program

Parents described largely positive general impacts as a result of participating in the first portion of Countdown to 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 and knowledge as parents. A detailed 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 2006 and spring 2007, they responded as follows: (1) increased knowledge of child development (3.46 in fall 06, 3.56 in spring 07); (2) increased knowledge of healthy parenting (3.53 in fall 06, 3.50 in spring 07); (3) increased confidence in being a good parent (3.51 in fall 06, 3.62 in spring 07); (4) increased parenting skills (3.36 in fall 06, 3.46 in spring 07); (5) changed behavior as a parent (3.22 in fall 06, 3.28 in spring 07); and (6) influenced the relationship with your child (3.42 in fall 06, 3.46 in spring 07).

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	--	6.8% (F06)	49.2% (F06)	35.6% (F06)	8.5% (F06)
	--	12% (S07)	36% (S07)	36% (S07)	16% (S07)
Increase your knowledge of healthy parenting	--	6.8% (F06)	40.7% (F06)	45.8 (F06)	6.8% (F06)
	--	14% (S07)	40% (S07)	28% (S07)	18% (S07)
Increase your confidence in being a good parent	--	6.8% (F06)	44.1% (F06)	40.7% (F06)	8.5% (F06)
	--	14% (S07)	36% (S07)	24% (S07)	26% (S07)
Increase your skills as a parent	--	10.2% (F06)	49.2% (F06)	35.6% (F06)	5.1% (F06)
	--	14% (S07)	44% (S07)	24% (S07)	18% (S07)
Change your behavior as a parent	1.7% (F06)	15.3% (F06)	45.8% (F06)	33.9% (F06)	3.4% (F06)
	--	20% (S07)	48% (S07)	16% (S07)	16% (S07)
Influence your relationship with your child	--	11.9% (F06)	39% (F06)	44.1% (F06)	5.1% (F06)
	--	16% (S07)	42% (S07)	22% (S07)	20% (S07)

In general, participating parents indicated very positive impacts from being involved in Countdown to Kindergarten. For example, **the percentage of participants indicating that the program “very much” impacted their parenting in different areas generally increased three to four times between fall 2006 and spring 2007.**

Among participants, 44% in fall 2006 and 52% in spring 2007 indicated the program increased their knowledge of child development a lot or very much, 52.6% noted it increased their knowledge of healthy parenting a lot or very much (46% in spring 07), 49% felt it increased their confidence in being a good parent a lot or very much, and 41% said it increased their parenting skills a lot or very much. Additionally, 83% felt it changed their parent behavior at least somewhat and 88% indicated that it influenced their relationship with their child positively. These overall findings were nearly identical in both fall 2006 and spring 2007, except with the increases noted above in the high impact category.

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 that they participated in 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 2006 session (see Table 3) and the spring 2007 session (see Table 4).

In fall 2006, the **most highly rated session was on reading with children** (3.90) while the least valued was on the importance of sleep (3.10); however, all were rated as at least somewhat to very useful for participants in the program. The ratings for each specific topic covered in the fall 2006 session are listed below in Table 3.

Table 3: Value of Specific Topics in Countdown to Kindergarten Program (Fall 2006)

Question Please rate the following class topics in the CTK program	Overall Mean Score from 1 (not useful) to 5 (extremely useful)
Countdown to Kindergarten Orientation	3.51
Parenting Styles	3.75
Brain Development	3.58
Raising a Reader	3.90
Choosing Effective Discipline Techniques	3.80
Media Wise	3.66
Developing Responsibility and Self Help Skills	3.59
Importance of Sleep	3.10

In spring 2007, the **most highly rated session was on child safety** (4.04), and six 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 2007 session are listed below in Table 4.

Table 4: Value of Specific Topics in Countdown to Kindergarten Program (Spring 2007)

Question Please rate the following class topics in the CTK program	Overall Mean Score from 1 (not useful) to 5 (extremely useful)
Learning Styles and School Readiness	3.86
Child Temperament	3.38
Early Literacy and Math Skills	3.62
Social and Emotional Development	3.86
Guidance and Discipline Tools	3.78
Nutrition and Children	3.88
Child Safety	4.04
Parent's Role in School Success	3.82

Perceived Impacts of Countdown to 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 Countdown to Kindergarten program. 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. The activities that parents were asked about link to things that they were learning about in the Countdown to Kindergarten program, and so the items asked about were slightly different in the fall 2006 and spring 2007 sessions.

It is important to note three things in explaining this portion of the Countdown to Kindergarten interim evaluation. First, the method used with parents to get their perceptions was what is called a “retrospective” evaluation, in which they rate themselves at the current time and also, looking back to their actions before the program, rate themselves according to where they were at that time. This makes it easier to gather the information than in using a traditional “pre” and “post” approach, and some argue this lets them make a more accurate perception of themselves, but others would disagree. 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 since there is no control group of other parents not receiving this program that is also being evaluated at the same time, it cannot be said with certainty that perceived impacts of the program are due to participation in Countdown to Kindergarten. It can reasonably be assumed, however, that any differences measured are likely (though not certain) to occur due to participation in Countdown to 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 “now, 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 for both the fall 2006 and spring 2007 sessions of the program, followed by brief discussion points regarding the findings.

Fall 2006 Session – Perceived Impacts on Parents

Findings from the fall 2006 session of Countdown to Kindergarten are reported below in Table 5.

Table 5: Perceived Impacts on Parenting of Countdown to Kindergarten (Fall 2006)

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. Deal well with the personal impacts of being a parent.	3.95	4.12	.17	Yes
2. Pay attention to factors that affect my growing child.	3.98	4.37	.39	Yes
3. Avoid anger or harshness in the parenting style I use with my child.	3.58	4.05	.475	Yes
4. Hold, hug, and snuggle with my child.	4.75	4.80	.05	No
5. Give my child a variety of activities and learning experiences.	4.12	4.49	.37	Yes
6. Talk, laugh, sing, and converse with my child.	4.46	4.64	.19	Yes
7. Read with my child each day.	4.41	4.56	.15	Yes
8. Discuss contents of a book or story with my child.	3.90	4.34	.44	Yes
9. Am patient in realizing my child tests limits as he or she grows.	3.73	4.24	.51	Yes
10. Focus on using positive discipline or guidance with my child.	3.75	4.25	.51	Yes
11. Set and enforce rules to guide my child's use of media.	3.81	4.22	.41	Yes
12. Help my child find other activities besides watching TV or using a computer.	4.00	4.39	.39	Yes
13. Assist my child in practicing self-care skills (like using the toilet, zipping coat, etc.).	4.08	4.32	.24	Yes
14. Give my child choices in small areas and guide those choices.	4.12	4.32	.20	Yes
15. Understand the link between my child's sleep and their behavior.	4.15	4.32	.17	Yes
16. Set and follow a structured bedtime routine with my child each night.	4.20	4.41	.20	Yes

The findings show, based on the statistical analysis, that **participants experienced significant differences in 15 of the 16 parental practices related to school readiness** as a likely result of their participation in the Countdown to Kindergarten program. There are several important points to make as a result of these findings:

- Participants noted **small to moderate changes in 15 of the 16 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 helping a child find other activities besides watching TV).

- The findings showed significant differences in parental practices for participants before and after their participation in Countdown to Kindergarten. These changes included **seven small increases of .20 or less in a specific practice, 1 increase between .20 and .35 in difference, and 8 larger increases of .35 or higher in specific parental practices.**
- The **largest eight differences** for participants occurred in the following areas: **being patient with a child who tests limits (.51), focusing on using positive discipline approaches (.51), avoiding anger or harshness with a child (.475), discussing contents of a book or story with children (.44), setting and enforcing rules to guide media usage (.41), helping children find activities besides use of TV or computers (.39), paying attention to factors that affect child development (.39), and giving children a variety of learning experiences (.37).**
- 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 Countdown to Kindergarten program is having a positive impact.
- The **findings suggest that the Countdown to Kindergarten has made a good first step 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 first set of findings from participants in the Countdown to Kindergarten was generated as a result of involvement in the fall 2006 session of the program. The findings suggest a positive first step to the program's beginnings in terms of its initial impact on parents who are involved. Follow-up evaluation in the spring 2007 portion of the program indicates further development in the program. Results are shared below.

Spring 2007 Session – Perceived Impacts on Parents

Findings from the spring 2007 session of Countdown to Kindergarten are reported below.

Table 6: Perceived Impacts on Parenting of Countdown to Kindergarten (Spring 2007)

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. Know my own and my child's learning style.	3.14	4.28	1.14	Yes
2. Explore issues to consider related to my child's school readiness.	3.12	4.30	1.18	Yes
3. Understand how my child's behavior is affected by his or her temperament.	3.18	4.10	.92	Yes
4. Use appropriate techniques in dealing with my child's temperament.	3.16	4.08	.92	Yes
5. Engage my child in learning in "everyday" activities.	3.64	4.32	.68	Yes
6. Encourage the development of math skills in my child in daily activities.	3.38	4.12	.74	Yes
7. Am attentive and understanding with my child's social and emotional abilities.	3.68	4.34	.66	Yes
8. Practice social skills with my child including sharing, taking turns, and not interrupting.	3.92	4.44	.52	Yes
9. Encourage my child to think on his or her own.	3.70	4.34	.64	Yes
10. Use natural and logical consequences with my child during discipline.	3.78	4.32	.54	Yes
11. Support my child in eating healthy foods.	4.00	4.40	.40	Yes
12. Take steps in providing healthy food choices to my child.	3.98	4.46	.48	Yes
13. Have my child use booster seats while driving in the car.	4.76	4.88	.12	No
14. Teach my children to understand fire escape routes in our home.	2.54	3.78	1.24	Yes
15. Have my child wear properly fitted bike helmets.	3.98	4.38	.40	Yes
16. Understand my role in my child's success at school.	4.04	4.56	.52	Yes
17. Plan on getting involved in my child's school.	4.04	4.50	.46	Yes

The findings for the spring 2007 session indicate, based on the statistical analysis, that **participants experienced significant differences in 16 of the 17 parental practices related to school readiness** as a likely result of their participation in the Countdown to Kindergarten program. There are several important points to make as a result of these findings:

- Participants noted **moderate to large changes in 16 of the 17 parental practices related to school readiness that were measured, with all of the changes showing positive increases in a particular parental practice** (e.g., using appropriate techniques in dealing with a child's temperament or providing healthy food choices to a child).
- The findings showed significant differences in parental practices for participants before and after their participation in Countdown to Kindergarten. These changes included **10 substantive increases of between .40 and .70 in a specific practice, and 6 large increases of .75 or higher in specific parental practices.**
- The **six largest differences** for participants occurred in the following areas: **teaching children to understand fire escape routes (1.24), exploring issues related to school readiness (1.18), knowing one's own and a child's learning style (1.14), understanding how temperament affects a child's behavior (.92), using appropriate techniques in dealing with a child's temperament (.92), and encouraging the development of math skills helping (.74).**
- The significant differences documented during spring 2007 tended to be larger than those documented for fall 2006 in the program. An **additional ten parental practices that showed moderate changes included being attentive to a child's social and emotional abilities (.66), using reasonable consequences during discipline (.54), and planning to get involved in the child's school (.46).**
- The increases **that occurred in parents' efforts with their children in specific areas were typically five to eight times higher than would be expected to occur** due to random chance, and so this is a very good indicator that the Countdown to Kindergarten program is having a positive impact.
- The **findings suggest that the Countdown to Kindergarten has made a good first step in developing 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 Countdown to 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.”

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, since there is no comparison group at present for this year’s program of Countdown to Kindergarten, we do not know if 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? Several things, actually.

- 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 2006 and once in spring 2007 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 43 children were rated by parents in the Countdown to Kindergarten in both the fall and the spring. 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 Countdown to 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 2006), completing group scores (spring 2007), and difference scores (difference in the average group scores, or means) for each item.

The difference scores indicate progress (or lack thereof) that has occurred for children on average in the group between fall 2006 and spring 2007. The table indicates whether there is a “significant” difference between the scores, which may be due to program participation, individual growth, or other factors. What do we find?

Table 7: Learning and Exploration – School Readiness Scores

Question My Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2006 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2007 (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.	4.33	4.56	.23	Yes
2. Works with hands in putting together puzzles or building with blocks.	4.40	4.44	.04	No
3. Explores the environment and participates in new opportunities.	4.09	4.30	.21	No
4. Learns and recites familiar songs, nursery rhymes, finger plays or stories.	4.58	4.49	-.09	No
5. Enjoys participating in small groups to play games or do learning activities.	4.12	4.40	.28	Yes
6. Draws and uses art to express ideas or feelings.	3.70	3.88	.18	No
7. Is able to work independently on a task (painting, picking up clothes, etc.)	4.07	4.42	.35	Yes
8. Likes to work at solving problems.	3.58	3.74	.16	No
9. Is persistent when solving problems.	3.33	3.58	.25	No

Table 8: Physical Skills and Abilities – School Readiness Scores

Question My Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2006 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2007 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
10. Holds a pencil or crayon with fingers (not fist).	4.47	4.86	.39	Yes
11. Can button, snap or zip pants or coat.	4.16	4.49	.33	Yes
12. Moves easily from place to place when walking.	4.86	4.98	.12	No
13. Creates things using hands and paper, crayons, scissors, etc.	4.42	4.65	.23	No
14. Is able to cut with scissors.	4.60	4.79	.19	No
15. Can catch or pick up a rolled or thrown soft ball.	4.58	4.63	.05	No
16. Shows large motor skills, such as hopping, skipping, running, jumping or throwing	4.81	4.88	.07	No

Table 9: Friends and Social Interaction – School Readiness Scores

Question My Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2006 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2007 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
17. Shares with other children (such as toys, crayons, etc.)	4.14	4.47	.33	Yes
18. Works or plays cooperatively with friends.	4.23	4.42	.19	No
19. Listens in a group situation.	4.21	4.37	.16	No
20. Takes turns with others.	4.14	4.35	.21	No
21. Remembers and follows simple directions in playing games.	4.16	4.30	.14	No
22. Enjoys talking to or playing with other children.	4.44	4.60	.16	No
23. Gets along without quarreling or fighting.	4.00	4.21	.21	No
24. Understands and follows rules that are explained.	4.02	4.30	.28	Yes
25. Understands how to enter into talking or play with other kids.	3.81	4.14	.33	Yes
26. Tries to solve problems with friends.	3.35	3.81	.46	Yes

Table 10: Knowing the Basics – School Readiness Scores

Question My Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2006 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2007 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference?
27. Is familiar with books and enjoys having others read to him.	4.81	4.88	.07	No
28. Tries to learn/use new words.	4.53	4.63	.10	No
29. Is able to speak and communicate thoughts, needs and feelings in a way others understand.	4.65	4.65	.00	No
30. Is familiar with (or able to recognize) letters of the alphabet.	4.30	4.70	.40	Yes
31. Is familiar with (or able to recognize) numbers between 1 and 10 (or higher).	4.60	4.77	.17	No
32. Is able to do counting, understanding basic numbers (adding items together, etc.)	4.28	4.51	.23	No
33. Can sort things into basic groups, (such as by color, shape, things that match, etc.)	4.79	4.88	.09	No
34. Is creative in asking questions or trying to solve problems.	4.07	4.37	.30	Yes

Table 11: Feelings and Families – School Readiness Scores

Question My Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2006 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2007 (Mean Score)	Significant Difference Score	Is there a significant difference in this area?
35. Feels loved and supported from family members at home.	4.91	4.95	.05	No
36. Spends time away from me in a variety of settings (child care, friend's house) without too much anxiety.	4.26	4.51	.25	Yes
37. Can identify his or her feelings (such as sad, happy, angry).	4.58	4.56	-.02	No
38. Can talk about how others might feel.	4.12	4.16	.04	No
39. Manages feelings, such as anger or frustration, without hurting or being mean to others.	3.88	4.09	.21	Yes
40. Can adapt to new situations within a reasonable period and feel comfortable.	4.02	4.23	.21	No
41. Regularly shares how he/she is feeling with me or other adults.	4.28	4.35	.07	No
42. Appreciates getting to know new people or friends through time.	4.21	4.37	.16	No

Table 12: Health, Fitness and Practical Skills – School Readiness Scores

Question My Child Typically:	Beginning of Program Fall 2006 (Mean Score)	End of Program Spring 2007 (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.	4.58	4.77	.19	Yes
44. Eats a variety of snacks and foods.	4.42	4.49	.07	No
45. Is active and enjoys physical movement.	4.86	4.91	.05	No
46. Can recite his or her name, parents' names and contact information (address, phone number).	3.40	3.81	.42	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.).	3.86	4.14	.28	No
48. Has experience with following a routine at home, child care or preschool (such as bedtime routine, lunch routine, etc.).	4.56	4.74	.18	No
49. Is aware of who to contact if he or she needs help.	3.91	4.19	.28	No
50. Has experience using school-related supplies, such as pencils, paper, markers, backpack, etc.	4.70	4.81	.11	No
51. Is able to put on clothes (coat, shoes, etc.), and take care of belongings (book, etc.).	4.58	4.74	.16	No
52. Assists with simple household chores and is able to complete them with guidance.	4.35	4.44	.09	No

These six tables summarize the findings from the Countdown to Kindergarten project currently available 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 Countdown to Kindergarten program **routinely rate their children very highly on most indicators of school readiness**. This means that there is often 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 9 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 almost every indicator of school readiness in children. These gains are likely due to a combination of participation in the Countdown to Kindergarten program, normal processes of child development, and other contributing factors.**
- **Among 52 indicators of school readiness, significant differences were measured on 15 of the indicators between fall 2006 and spring 2007. 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 15 indicators. These changes included three small increases of .25 or less on a specific indicator, 7 minimal increases between .25 and .35 on particular items, and 5 larger increases of .35 or higher on specific items of school readiness.**
- **The largest nine differences for children (as perceived by parents) occurred in the following areas: trying to solve problems with friends (.46), ability to recite family names and contact information (.42), familiarity with letters of the alphabet (.40), holding a pencil or crayon with fingers (.39), ability to work independently on a task (.35), ability to button or snap or zip pants or coat (.33), sharing with other children (.33), understanding how to enter into play or talking with other kids (.33), and creativity in asking questions or solving problems (.30).**
- **In analyzing all increases over .20 or more (whether significant or not), the findings suggest growth in three primary areas: (1) social skills and positive interaction with others; (2) ability to function more independently in a guided environment; and (3) development of specific skills or knowledge that apply to a school setting (using a pencil, knowing the alphabet, awareness of personal contact information, etc.).**

The findings from the assessment process concerning changes in children's social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and practical abilities related to school readiness show that changes are occurring for children enrolled in the Countdown to 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. As with the parent education portion of the program, these findings indicate that the program has launched with a positive beginning in its possible 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 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 Countdown to Kindergarten group as a whole.

Qualitative Feedback from Parents about Countdown to Kindergarten

As we look at the difference that Countdown to Kindergarten has made, we asked parents a number of response questions. Some of their answers are shared below:

What have you been led to do differently as a parent as a result of Countdown?

- We have made an effort to read at least one book a day.
- A lot of these activities we now do at home and I understand the rationale behind them.

- I have tried different parenting techniques.
- We limit TV time – now turn it off during meal times.
- It inspired us to use the library.
- I try to have more patience, my child needs to make mistakes to learn
- Everything was great, would like to try changing to an earlier bedtime, we have a great routine, I just think it would be wise to get her on an earlier schedule
- I have tried to be more patient and not so quick to get upset. I have learned how important it is to read with your children and to ask them questions
- Giving my child choices & decisions rather than choosing for them and not giving them options really works great
- The program is wonderful. It is great to meet with other parents and see how much the kids have in common.
- More consistency between parents in regards to discipline and media
- Time spent together doing activities is far more rewarding than sitting around the T.V.
- Just getting together each week was fun for us as a family. My husband and I do limit our television use more than before
- I listen to my child more. I avoid outbursts of anger and try to understand why behavior and environment co-exist and affect each other
- Not worry about the messiness of activities just see the wonderful outcome for her
- Much more observant about TV time!
- I've learned to focus more on what my children view in the media, limit exposure and explain things they might not understand.
- I learned a lot and found the information very helpful. I was happy to learn new ways for my child to learn self-help skills.
- I think I am more patient and try to understand his behavior better. It was refreshing to know others have the same problems.
- I think this is a great introduction. The kids have a better idea of what to expect and parents learn what is expected, what to work on, and how to help our children. It really made me think about my parenting style/skills.
- After our discussion on discipline and consequences I make more of an effort to be consistent and logical in my parenting. I appreciate the helpful “reminders” of things we can do to better understand and help our children succeed.
- It was an enjoyable, non-threatening environment, I believe I am more patient with my son now and take more time to explain things to him, teach him about our everyday world.
- The program has reassured me of my child's readiness and level of development. I also see situations differently and try to help my child learn more from his environment.
- Really good program. Nice to talk with other parents about discipline and learning new techniques. We had an excellent teacher (Sarah) who was very knowledgeable and gave good examples of the different topics we discussed.
- I am really glad that this was offered and that I attended. I discipline a little differently and go about nutrition differently.
- My concerns were confirmed with the child's safety portion. I ended up putting my oldest son into a booster seat (which overall went well). I also learned the appropriate servings for our children.
- I do more reading and math with my child.
- It was great to be able to join this group as a family. I give and take a little more time with Jesse than before.
- Child safety, fire drills, additional schoolwork type activities get her to do more on her own.

- It was great for me and Addy, we both made friends and I think as important as friends are in school for the child, knowing the parents of those kids are equally important for the parents!

How has your child benefited from Countdown to Kindergarten?

- This program was so wonderful – I can see that my child has gained confidence and looks forward to beginning school.
- This program was very beneficial for my son. He no longer feels the need to cling to me in new situations. He has developed self-confidence with interacting with others in new or different situations.
- Takes anxiety away about Kindergarten – he feels he is a student at the school already and is more excited about learning.
- Our child is way more comfortable with going to school.
- For my child it was a great introduction so that he feels comfortable coming to the kindergarten center this fall.
- This program was so wonderful. I can see that my child has gained confidence and looks forward to beginning school. I learned so much and feel much less pressure as a parent. Thank you!

What did you like most about the program?

- The program is wonderful – it is great to meet with other parents.
- The way the teachers interact with the parents and children.
- How excited my child is for school night – she loves it and I enjoy learning to be a better parent.
- Parents having time to learn (and relearn) things about child development.
- Spending one on one time with my child.
- Onsite child care is wonderful – couldn't have participated without it.
- The activities with the parents and children were so fun - we did a lot of activities we otherwise would not have been able to do. It was great to have this time set aside each week to focus on our son in such a positive way.
- I thought it was organized very well. My kids loved coming.
- Seeing my child's enthusiasm about the program
- The way the teachers interact with the parents as well as the children
- The subject matter is helpful
- The variety of activities for children
- Always a positive experience. We all enjoy learning and there is always more opportunity to learn.
- The learning activity centers and parent group discussions- learning from others.
- The opportunity to learn new things and meet new people
- The non-judgmental kind approach
- My daughter has come a long way just in the past few months, she enjoyed coming here. She knows this is to help prepare for kindergarten, so I think she feels real important having the chance to come
- It was fun to get together with everyone on such an important topic (our kids).
- I think this was a great program for children going into school. We had a lot of fun and it was a great experience to be with other parents learning and sharing together.
- Helpful tips to listen and cope with behavior.
- The activities my child and I did together in the classroom. Having three children it's nice to have one on one with my daughter. She felt special that on Monday night we got to go to

school for her. The free on-site day care is wonderful. If it wasn't available we would not have been able to participate.

- Spending one on one time with my daughter without her siblings.
- For my child to become adjusted to the teachers, classroom and surroundings of kindergarten.
- Great activities for the children to learn and also give them info on what to expect when they start school.
- Child/parent interaction at beginning of class.
- It's nice to have the interaction between parent and child at the beginning. It helped my daughter comfortable with the situation and it was good quality time spent with her.
- Time to get to know if she is ready or if I am ready to let her go.
- It takes away the anxiety-or unknown -for my son regarding Kindergarten. He feels he is a student at the school already and is more excited about the learning.
- Our child got way more comfortable with going to school! Being with the kids!
- The exposure they gave the kids to other kids in their age group, the classroom, and the teachers. Also, meeting other parents with pre-school age kids.
- I really like that it gives the child an opportunity to meet new kids that will go to school with them, meet teachers and be in a school environment.
- It exposed my child to new social settings in order for her to be comfortable when beginning Kindergarten. Meeting the parents of other children and discussing the topics learned.
- The interaction and discussion with other parents and for children-new ideas and new friends!
- The skills kindergartners are expected to know before the start of school, and upon completion of kindergarten.
- The openness, being able to talk about your child and know that other people are having struggles and failures along with our family
- Spending quality one on one time with my child and also the info was great!
- The friendly staff - very good with the kids (and parents) helpful answered questions. Ideas from games, discipline- inspired us to use the library.
- The getting use of Kindergartenfor the kids and reinforcing information for parents.
- It's set up like kindergarten and in the kindergarten center. Good practice for them for rules and social skills.
- Very supportive to both parents and children. Great environment.
- Interaction with other parents. Creative activities and social interactions for my child.
- Great way to meet other parents and discuss parenting styles, tips, etc. Helped me realize what an impact I can have on my child's behavior. Thank You.
- It was fun for both my son and myself. It provided a great opportunity for me to spend time with him, away from distractions.
- Very easy and comfortable. The facilitators were terrific.
- How parents can learn more about the many topics we use as parents everyday.
- Spending time with your kid and interacting with them on a different level than everyday life.
- That my child and I each got our different time, my learning time and her fun time.
- I thought it was quality time to prepare my son for the school atmosphere. It was beneficial to hear other inputs from the parents.
- Even if you are already aware of some of the information presented, reinforcement and reminders are a good thing. As well, input from other parents is always helpful.
- Safety-booster seats and fire safety.
- The approach - it's smart (parent ed. while school activities for kids).

- Getting to meet other parents my child will go to school with. See how he will do with teacher-classroom setting.
- I like that the parents are there to learn too. Not just dropping off the kids and going off to do their own thing.
- Interaction with other parents. My child enjoyed the interaction with other children.
- I just believe it was a great learning experience for children entering school - she was pretty worried about school before the program and now she is very excited to get to go to school.
- We loved the time we got to spend with our daughter doing fun activities. It was a time she got us all to herself. On-site day care was fabulous.
- Interactions with other parents, safety topic and group discussions.
- It gives a good example of what kindergarten might be like - Good practice. It's also nice that it is at their Kindergarten Center. Thank you for sibling care! We could then focus on our kindergarten child.
- A chance to come to school and meet new future classmates. Learn about West Fargo Schools.
- Getting more comfortable with the Kindergarten Center and the aspect of going to school.
- Bobbie Jo has been wonderful explaining all of our many questions. Alexa started out the fall crying at separation time and now eagerly stays with her new friends. This has been extremely beneficial to her and myself in preparation for kindergarten. Thanks, and thank you for the sibling care.
- Learning what is expected of your child when they enter kindergarten.
- I learned some interesting topics. I liked the togetherness with my child. Getting familiar with the early childhood center and for my children to be around other children. It was nice that they offered childcare for my younger child.
- Great program - I'll recommend to others!

Even Start Family Literacy – Countdown to Kindergarten

A total of 23 families received services through the Even Start Family Literacy Program collaborative venture with Countdown to Kindergarten. The Countdown to Kindergarten curriculum was integrated into the parent education component and the intergenerational learning activities offered onsite to participating families.

Almost all children participating in the program are English language learners representing a broad cultural spectrum. Their families resettled to Fargo from a variety of countries including Columbia, Sudan, Somalia, Liberia, Iraq, Laos, and Bosnia. Some families also arrived in our area from Texas and have a Spanish speaking background. The need for English acquisition, vocabulary building and pre-academic skill development is very evident in the population. While participating in the Even Start/Countdown to Kindergarten Program children demonstrated gains in their ability to follow a routine and listen to direction. They are acquiring English as a spoken language and have improved in their ability to cooperate and participate in the Early Childhood classroom. Formal assessments completed at the end of the school term included the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Third Edition (PPVT III) for children aged 3-5 and the PALS pre-K for children 4-5. All children asses on these instruments made gains. The PPVT III results reflected large gains in vocabulary. On the PALS Pre-K assessment, children knew an average of 7 uppercase letters on their Fall assessment, by Spring, the average was 19 letters. These skills are building blocks for future learning.

Parents participating in the program learned how to support their children's learning. They proudly report their children know more English and have learned color words and their ABC's.

They are reading with their children everyday and are earning books to use at home. One mother reported her daughter is learning how to share and get along with others. As all parents they are proud of the gains they see in their children and feel they are able to support that growth.

Attachments:

- Logic Model
- Outcome Measurement Framework
- BASC-2 – Parent Rating Scale
- BASC-2 – Teacher Rating Scale
- BAASC-2 Parent Feedback and Report Sheet
- BASC-2 graph
- Practical Parent Assessment for School Readiness (PPASR)
- PPSAR Report Sheet
- PPSAR II Report Sheet
- Single Retrospective Form
- Single Retrospective Form II

Budget Report

Attachments:

- Original submitted budget
- Budget narrative
- Actual Yearly budget for Year One
- Actual yearly budget for Year One – monthly reporting

Year Two Budget and Plans

Attachments:

- Year Two Proposed Budget
- Year Two Proposed Budget Narrative