

How Can Schools Involve Family and Community Members in Supporting a Child's Readiness for School? (Module 3)

Online version available at <http://www.sedl.org/learning>

Worksheet Module 3

This document is intended to be used with the CD version for Module 3. For additional information and directions, consult the text only version available on CD 2.

Defining Child Readiness

How would you define child readiness?

- Is it helping children learn to read and write before they enter school?
- Is it helping children learn to socialize with other children?
- Is it helping children learn specific skills, like tying their shoes or using a fork?

*Take a moment to consider your experiences with preparing your own children for school or the children of others. **Based on these experiences, how would you define child readiness?***

Record your answer in the box below.

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Myth or Reality?

To investigate readiness more deeply, let's begin by exploring a few common assumptions about child readiness. Each of the following statements is either a myth or a reality about the impact of child readiness on school success.

For each statement,

- Check the **Myth** box if you think the statement is a *myth* and then read the explanation below your choice.
- Check the **Reality** box if you think the statement is a *reality* and then read the explanation below your choice.

Economic status has the most significant impact on a child's readiness for school.

Myth ?

You are right—economic status is not the greatest impact. In reality, the greatest single impact is a mother's support and expectation for her children's success in school.

For example, children who are raised with the belief and corresponding expectation that they will do well in school are commonly more successful academically than children who have been raised with little belief of success and no expectation that they should or can do well.

Reality ?

While economic status can have a great impact on student performance in the early grades, it is actually the mother who has the greatest impact on a child's future school success.

For example, children who are raised with the belief and expectation that they will do well in school, are commonly more successful academically than children who have been raised with little belief of success and no expectation that they should and can do well.

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Children need to enter kindergarten with basic literacy skills that can support ready recognition of letters or words in order to be academically successful as they move through the early grades.

□ Myth ?

You are right—while many successful children have reading skills when they enter kindergarten, it is not just an ability to read words or sounds that is important. It is a child's readiness to talk about what happens in a story or what a section of text means that makes the most significant difference.

For example, children with a well-developed vocabulary can more readily communicate their understanding and comprehension of the text than a child with a limited vocabulary. In fact, children who have a larger vocabulary are generally more successful readers than children with small vocabularies. Typically, children with larger vocabularies have been read to more often and have regular conversations with adults.

□ Reality ?

It is true that many successful readers begin reading at an early age. However, it is not just an ability to read words or sounds that is important. It is a child's readiness to talk about what happens in a story or what a section of text means that makes the most significant difference.

Children with a well-developed vocabulary can more readily communicate their understanding and comprehension of the text than children with a limited vocabulary. For example, children who have a larger vocabulary are generally more successful readers than children with small vocabularies. Typically, children with larger vocabularies have been read to more often and have regular conversations with adults.

Lack of readiness can be quickly addressed through rigorous instruction and curriculum.

□ Myth ?

You are right—while rigorous instruction and curriculum can have a significant impact on student performance, it also may not be effective enough in the long term if children start public school too far behind. That is why preschool interventions are so important. If needed interventions do not occur at the preschool level, some children may never catch up.

For example, children who fall behind more than 2 academic years are unlikely to catch up to their peers. That is why it is so important to address student needs as early as possible.

□ Reality ?

Unfortunately, this is often not the case. When students begin the school year significantly behind academically, they tend to continue to fall behind each year rather than catch up. Each year their lack of progress multiplies until finally they fall so far behind that they have almost no chance of catching up.

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Developing Ideas

So what can you do? Take a few moments to think about actions you or others in your community have taken to address child readiness. **Do they align with any of the actions described in the previous frames?**

Consider your school community. **What ideas do you have about providing additional support for child readiness by increasing family and community involvement efforts?**

Record your answer in the box below.

Take a moment to consider each of the four types of support. Before you continue, take a moment to review what you have recorded earlier on this sheet.

As you have worked through this module, you have gained new experiences and knowledge about how schools can support child readiness by increasing family and community involvement. With this experience and knowledge in mind, would you like to change any of the ideas you recorded earlier?

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Developing Ideas

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With this experience and knowledge in mind, would you like to change any of the ideas you recorded earlier?

Record your answer in the box below.

Where to Begin

Keeping what you have written in mind, choose one type of support you feel would be a good match to the needs of your school community and the ideas you have recorded on your Worksheet.

Why have you chosen this type of support as your first step?

Record your answer in the box below.

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Who to Involve

Now that you know what you would like to do and why it is important, consider who needs to be involved in further planning. **Who are the best resources to involve in this effort?**

List either the names and positions of individuals or the names of roles or representative members who need to be involved in this effort **and** what contributions you think they can make to the effort. Record your answer in the box below.

In addition to the people you have just listed, **what are the resources needed for this effort?**

Use the box below to record your answer.