



# What is school readiness?

## Vision

The vision adopted by the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) is

Nevada's children will be safe, healthy, and thriving during the first eight years of life, and the system will support children and families in achieving their full potential.

## A working definition of School Readiness in Nevada

Children's readiness for school is made up of multiple components and shaped by numerous factors. Improving school readiness, therefore, must address children's development of skills and behaviors as well as the environments in which they spend their time. Early childhood leaders at the state and national level agree that efforts to improve school readiness must address three interrelated components:

- Children's readiness for school
- School's readiness for children
- The capacity of families and communities to provide developmental opportunities for young children

Ultimately the goal is that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children.

School readiness is an ongoing process from the moment of birth, to prekindergarten, and through the transition into elementary school and beyond. It is the foundation defined by the intersection of two critical components: 1) children's condition to learn based on the five identified domains of learning, and 2) the school's capacity to meet the needs of all children to prepare them for future school success and the 21st century. This includes, but not limited to providing access to high quality services for all children including aligned standards and curriculum, supportive relationships, engaging environment, smooth transitions and strong family and community connections.<sup>1</sup>

There is consensus, based upon a wealth of research, that a child's readiness for school should be measured and addressed across five distinct but connected domains<sup>2</sup>:

**Physical Development and Health**--This domain covers such factors as health status, growth, and disabilities; physical abilities, such as gross and fine motor skills; and conditions before, at, and after birth.

**Social and Emotional Development**--This domain combines two interrelated components affecting children's behavioral health and learning. Social development refers to children's ability to interact with others and their capacity for self-regulation. Emotional development includes children's perceptions of themselves, their abilities to understand the feelings of other people, and their ability to interpret and express their own feelings.



<sup>1</sup> Nevada working definition from bill draft request.

<sup>2</sup> Based on findings from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative: A 17-State Partnership and reviewed Nevada School Readiness Summit, 2012.

**Approaches to Learning**--This domain refers to children’s inclination to use skills and knowledge. Key components include enthusiasm, curiosity, and persistence on tasks.

**Language and Early Literacy Development**--This domain includes communication and emergent literacy. Communication includes listening, speaking, and vocabulary. Emergent literacy includes print awareness, story sense, early writing, and the connection of letters to sounds.

**Cognition and General Knowledge**--This domain refers to thinking and problem-solving as well as knowledge about particular objects and the way the world works. Mathematical knowledge, abstract thought, and imagination are included.

The National School Readiness Indicators Initiative, “Making Progress for Young Children”, a multi-state initiative involving 17 states, developed sets of indicators at the state level to track results for children from birth through age 8. Teams also agreed on a core set of common indicators that had emerged from their efforts. Indicators were organized around components which, taken together, shape the extent to which children are prepared for school. The framework for the “Ready Child Equation” appears below.<sup>3</sup>

- **READY FAMILIES + READY COMMUNITIES + READY SERVICES + READY SCHOOLS = CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL**

Nevada’s framework revised the equation as follows:

- **READY FAMILIES +READY EDUCATORS + READY SCHOOLS + READY COMMUNITIES + READY SYSTEMS= CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SCHOOL**

Each element necessary for the outcome that “Children are Ready for School” is defined as follows:

**“Ready Families”** have adults who understand they are the most important people in the child’s life, understand age appropriate development, and support the child’s school readiness. Adults recognize their role as the child’s first and most important teacher, providing steady and supportive relationships, ensuring safe and consistent environments, promoting good health, and fostering curiosity, excitement about learning.

**“Ready Educators”** are skilled teachers, who understand age appropriate development, possess the skills to develop appropriate curriculum based on children’s development, recognize, reinforce, and extend children’s strengths and who are sensitive to cultural values and individual differences, including children with special needs.

**“Ready Schools”** accept all children and provide a seamless transition to a high-quality developmentally appropriate learning environment by engaging families and the whole community. A ready school welcomes all children and their families with opportunities to enhance and build confidence in their skills, knowledge, and abilities. Children in ready schools are led by skilled teachers as defined above.

**“Ready Communities”** play a crucial part in supporting families in their role as primary stewards of children’s readiness. Ready communities, including businesses, faith-based organizations, early childhood service providers, community groups and local governments, work together to support children's school and long term success by providing families affordable access to information, services, high-quality child care, and early learning opportunities.

**“Ready Systems”** describes the availability, quality, and affordability of proven programs that influence child development and school readiness. It also includes the degree to which public and private agencies promote policies and practices including data collection that enhance access to needed supports, information and tools that help all other components (family, educators, schools and children) be ready for children to be ready for school.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Kresslein, J. (2005). School Readiness: What Do We Know?. Public Policy and Practice, 4(2), 1-15

<sup>4</sup> Bruner, C. and Coperman, A. (2003, March). Measuring children’s school readiness: options for developing state baselines and benchmarks. A paper prepared for the State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network, pp. 1-2.