School Readiness in Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District

2010 Assessment — District Results

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- Thelma Fones, ELD/Bilingual Program Specialist.

- First 5 staff members who helped with designing and implementing the 2010 Alameda County school readiness assessment project, including Melissa Luc, Chris Hwang, and Erin Hill Freschi.

Of course, this assessment would not be possible without the support of the participating kindergarten teachers who generously gave their time and energy to help us better understand the skills of the children entering their classrooms. These teachers dedicated ample time to a training, student observations, project management, and questionnaire completion. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the many individuals listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. **Participating Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District Schools and Teachers**

Schools	Teachers
Smith Elementary	Shirley Shaw
	Erin Summers
	Leslie Williams
	Rita Khoury
Marylin Avenue Elementary	Karen Woodward
	Maria Ramirez
	Debbie Anderson
	Jan Bachtold
	Lori Olsen
Croce Elementary	Lynda Helms
	Elise Allen

Study Summary

Background

In 2010, First 5 Alameda County commissioned an assessment of the school readiness levels of new kindergarten students for the third consecutive year. Participating districts in the 2010 assessment included Berkeley, Castro Valley, Emery, Hayward, Livermore Valley Joint, Oakland, Pleasanton, and San Lorenzo Unified School Districts. Among the Livermore Valley Joint Unified (LVJUSD) participants, 11 teachers from three different schools took part in the assessment.

The assessment included four measurement instruments completed by teachers and parents of entering kindergarten students. Teachers indicated each of their students' proficiency levels on 24 readiness skills and they reported how smoothly students had transitioned into kindergarten. Parents completed a survey that asked them to provide information about children's early care and family environments, as well as basic demographic and background information. Finally, teachers completed a survey about their beliefs about the skills children need for school. Please note that the information presented in this report describes the students and families assessed; findings might not be the same for students in the district who were not part of this study.

Findings

Research Question	Conclusion	Data Highlights
1. Are LVJUSD children ready for school?	**Yes.** **Overall readiness score: 3.31**	For each individual readiness skill, children were scored on a scale from *Not yet* (1) to *Proficient* (4). Average scores for each of 4 *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness range from 1 to 4. Scores were high on all domains. Across all readiness dimensions, LVJUSD students scored the same or slightly above students in the county-wide assessment sample.
2. Are LVJUSD students meeting their teachers' expectations for readiness at kindergarten entry?	**Mostly.** **72% at/above expected levels of proficiency**	On their teacher survey, LVJUSD teachers indicated the level of proficiency they thought students should have to be "school ready" at kindergarten entry. A large proportion of the LVJUSD students (72%) were meeting or exceeding teachers' expected proficiency levels for overall readiness. On *Kindergarten Academic* skills, 83 percent of students were at or above teachers' expected proficiency levels. The biggest gap between teacher expectations and students' skills was in *Self-Regulation,* where 61 percent of students met or exceeded their teachers' expectations.
3. What skills do LVJUSD teachers think are: Most important for kindergarten entry? Easiest to impact? Most time-consuming?	**Most important:** Basic self-help/self-care skills **Easiest to impact:** Counts 10 objects **Spend the most time:** Recognizes letters	Teachers selected 5 readiness skills that they felt were: (1) most important to have at kindergarten entry; (2) easiest to impact during the school year; and (3) where they spent the most time during the school year. *Self-Care & Motor Skills* and *Self-Regulation* skills were chosen by teachers as the most important. Skills related to *Kindergarten Academics* were selected as being the easiest to impact and, along with *Self-Regulation* skills, requiring the most time during the kindergarten school year.

Study Overview

Children's school readiness levels at kindergarten entry have been increasingly recognized as playing an important role in children's later success in school. In late 2000, Applied Survey Research (ASR) was commissioned to develop research materials and a protocol to conduct assessments of Bay Area students' levels of readiness for school. The project resulted in the creation of a new tool to measure school readiness, which balanced and met two (sometimes competing) needs: (1) the need for a high-quality, valid, and reliable instrument to measure readiness levels; and (2) the need for a tool that was simultaneously "teacher-friendly" and sensitive to the measurement challenges inherent in a typical kindergarten classroom setting.

The *Kindergarten Observation Form (KOF)* was first implemented in San Mateo County in 2001, and since that initial assessment, readiness assessments have also been conducted in Santa Clara County, Lake County (Illinois), San Francisco County, Marin County, Santa Cruz County, and throughout the network of providers in the Los Angeles Unified Preschool (LAUP). To date, approximately 30,000 students have been measured using the *KOF.*

In Fall 2008, First 5 Alameda County (F5AC) commissioned ASR to conduct its first assessment of the school readiness levels of new kindergarten students in a small set of three school districts in Alameda County. Assessments were again conducted in 2009 and 2010, with additional school and districts taking part in each subsequent study.[1] Participants in the 2010 assessment included students from eight districts: Berkeley, Castro Valley, Emery, Hayward, Livermore Valley Joint, Oakland, Pleasanton, and San Lorenzo Unified School Districts. Participating kindergarten teachers were trained to conduct the readiness assessment, which included completion of the following forms:

- The *Kindergarten Observation Form (I and II),* in which teachers assess children's readiness skills and the smoothness of their transition to kindergarten, respectively;

- A *Parent Information Form (PIF*), which parents complete to provide information about children's early care and education experiences prior to kindergarten, family environments, and basic demographic and socioeconomic information; and

- The *Teacher Survey on Importance of Readiness Skills,* which measures teachers' beliefs about readiness and the skills required for successful transition to kindergarten.

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[1]   For a comprehensive description of the 2010 School Readiness Assessment method and results, please see the forthcoming report "School Readiness in Alameda County: Results of the Fall 2010 Assessment."

Figure 2.   Sources of Information to Assess the Readiness of Incoming Kindergarten Students
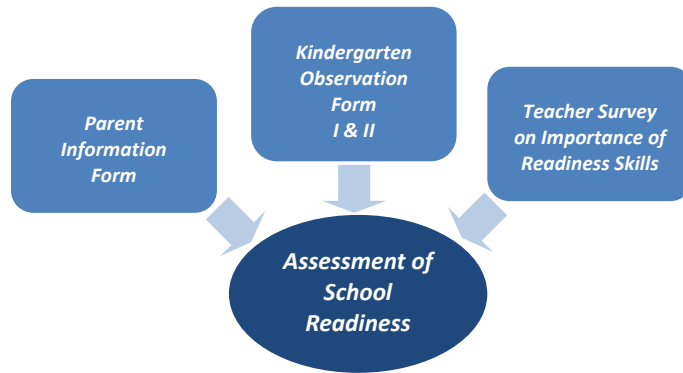
This short report summarizes key Fall 2010 findings for participating teachers, students, and families in the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District. A summary of the completion metrics for the district follows. Eighty-five percent of parents agreed to have their child take part in the study, and of those, 90 percent also returned a parent survey. In all, Livermore Valley Joint Unified students represented 201 of the 1,394 participants (14%) in the county-wide sample.

Figure 3.   Completion Metrics – Alameda County School Readiness Assessment

Data	Livermore Valley Joint Unified sample	Alameda County sample (8 districts)
Total number of elementary schools with kindergarten students in district	11	143
Number of schools participating in 2010 school readiness assessment	3	43
Number of participating classrooms	11	81
Number of children in these classrooms	236	1,838
Number of KOFs returned	201	1,394
Parent consent rate	85%	76%
Number of PIFs that were matched to a KOF	181	1,264
Parent PIF response rate (# PIFs received/ # consents)	90%	91%

The sections that follow include a brief summary of who the Livermore Valley Joint Unified students participating in the assessment were, what their school readiness levels were found to be, and what the participating teachers believed about school readiness. While reading through this summary, it is important to keep in mind that schools and teachers participated in the readiness study voluntarily, which means that the information presented in this report describes only the students and families assessed. **As a result, although the data may hint at the broader picture of readiness district-wide, the findings cannot be extrapolated to the district-level population as a whole.**

Student Characteristics

Fifty percent of participants in the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District Fall 2010 readiness assessment were boys and 50 percent were girls. The average age of students was 5.31 years old (just under 5 years and 4 months). Caucasian students were the largest racial/ethnic group in the sample, comprising 46 percent of students. Seven percent of students were identified as having special needs; another 4 percent of students were suspected to have a special need by their teacher or parent, but had not been formally diagnosed as having special needs.

Figure 4. Students' Sex, Age, Race/Ethnicity, and Special Needs

Student Characteristics	Percent of students
Sex	
Boys	50%
Girls	50%
Age at kindergarten entry	
Between 4 1/2 and less than 5	19%
At least 5 and less than 5 1/2	51%
At least 5 1/2 and less than 6	29%
6 and older	1%
Race/ethnicity	
Hispanic/Latino	38%
Asian	7%
African American	0%
Caucasian	46%
Pacific Islander	2%
Multi-racial	7%
Other	1%
Special needs status	
Has special needs	7%
Teacher or parent suspects an as-yet-undiagnosed special need	4%
Does not have special needs	90%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Sample size =201,196,198, 201, respectively. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Teachers from three schools in the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District took part in the study. Of these three, Marylin Elementary had a much higher population of Hispanic/ Latino students (71%) compared to the other two schools (19% and 13%). The data for Smith and Croce Elementary schools showed a higher population of Caucasian students (62% and 67%, respectively).

Figure 5.   Students' Race/Ethnicity by School

Race/Ethnicity	School		
	Smith	Marylin	Croce
Hispanic/Latino	19%	71%	13%
Asian	11%	4%	3%
Caucasian	62%	18%	67%
Pacific Islander	1%	1%	5%
Multi-racial	6%	6%	10%
Other	1%	0%	3%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Sample size =81,78, 39, respectively. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Thirty-eight percent of Livermore Valley Joint Unified students in the sample were English Learners. As Figure 6 shows, 60 percent of students spoke English as their primary language. Spanish was the primary language of 31 percent of the students.

Figure 6.   Student Language Variables

Children's Language	Percent
English Learners	38%
Not English Learner	62%
Primary language	
English	60%
Spanish	31%
English and Spanish	3%
Chinese/ Mandarin/ Cantonese	1%
Punjabi or Hindi	1%
Filipino or Tagalog	1%
Farsi or Dari	1%
Other language	2%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Sample size = 198. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

When broken down by school, Marylin Elementary had the highest percentage of English Learners (71%), compared to 19 percent and 15 percent at the other two elementary schools.

Figure 7. **English Learner Status by School**

	School		
	Smith	Marylin	Croce
English Learner	19%	71%	15%
Not English Learner	81%	30%	85%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Sample size =83, 78, 40 respectively. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Children in the district had spent time in a range of early care settings in the year prior to starting kindergarten. For 71 percent of students, a parent served as the child's usual source of child care. A large percentage of students (80%) had attended a licensed child care center or preschool, including Head Start, state-funded, private, or other licensed program.

Figure 8. **Students' Early Care Experiences**

Type of Child Care Arrangements	Percent of students
Parent provided usual child care	71%
Relative or neighbor	16%
Babysitter or nanny	11%
Licensed care in someone's home (teacher or parent report)	4%
Licensed preschool or childcare center (e.g., Head Start, State Preschool, private – teacher or parent report)	80%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I and Parent Information Form (2010).

Note: Percentages are based on the following sample sizes:.177,177,177,193,195. Percentages sum to more than 100 because more than one source of care could be selected.

School Readiness of Livermore Valley Joint Unified Students

This section describes the readiness skills that students in Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District possessed as they entered kindergarten in Fall 2010. Students' skills are presented for each of the 24 readiness skills and according to two approaches that classify the skills into broader readiness dimensions, as follows[2]:

>(1) skill groupings that align with the *National Education Goals Panel (NEGP)*, which has defined five dimensions of development and skills that are critical to a child's readiness for school: *Physical Well-Being & Motor Development, Social & Emotional Development, Approaches Toward Learning, Communication and Language Usage,* and *Cognition & General Knowledge.* In different communities throughout the country, these *NEGP* dimensions of readiness have become the foundation for the development of school readiness measurement tools attempting to quantify children's school readiness.

>(2) skill groupings that correspond to four skill dimensions called the *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness, which have been defined by patterns of associations between skills that have been consistently observed across administrations of the *Kindergarten Observation Form*.

In addition, students' skills are presented in the context of what readiness levels teachers believe are necessary for successful transition into kindergarten. Finally, recognizing that there are identifiable readiness patterns of strengths and needs among entering kindergarten students, four "readiness portraits" are described.

Students' scores on the 24 readiness skills are shown in Figure 9 that follows.

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[2] A "crosswalk" of how the 24 skills map onto each of the two readiness classifications is included as Appendix 1.

Figure 9.   Students' Proficiency Levels Across 24 School Readiness Skills

Legend: □ Not Yet + Beginning   ▤ In Progress   ■ Proficient

Self-Care & Motor Skills

Skill	Not Yet + Beginning	In Progress	Proficient
Uses small manipulatives	16%	34%	49%
General coordination on the playground	9%	26%	65%
Performs self-help/self-care		20%	76%

Self-Regulation Skills

Skill	Not Yet + Beginning	In Progress	Proficient
Comforts self	14%	38%	48%
Pays attention	21%	40%	40%
Controls impulses	21%	42%	37%
Follows directions	19%	28%	53%
Negotiates with peers	19%	40%	41%
Plays cooperatively	15%	33%	52%
Participates in circle time	22%	38%	40%
Handles frustration well	17%	37%	46%

Social Expression Skills

Skill	Not Yet + Beginning	In Progress	Proficient
Relates appropriately to adults	14%	35%	51%
Appropriately expresses needs	16%	27%	57%
Expresses empathy	15%	34%	51%
Has expressive abilities	24%	31%	45%
Expresses curiosity for learning	19%	39%	43%
Engages in symbolic play	14%	30%	56%

Kindergarten Academics Skills

Skill	Not Yet + Beginning	In Progress	Proficient
Engages with books	18%	40%	42%
Writes own first name	15%	28%	57%
Can recognize rhyming words	48%	12%	40%
Can count 10 objects	11%	10%	79%
Recognizes letters of alphabet	35%	31%	34%
Recognizes basic colors		13%	83%
Recognizes primary shapes	7%	10%	83%

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Percentages are based on 190-201 students. Don't know/ Not observed responses are not included. Percentages less than 5% are not labeled. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Students' top five readiness strengths and challenges are presented below. Livermore Valley Joint Unified students came into school strongest on abilities related to *Kindergarten Academics* such as knowing colors and shapes. They were also well-prepared in their *Self-Care & Motor Skills.* The skills they were still developing included rhyming and recognizing letters, as well as several *Self-Regulation* skills.

Figure 10. **Students' Top Five Readiness Strengths**

Top five strengths	Basic Building Block	Students' average score (out of four possible)
1. Recognizes basic colors	Kindergarten Academics	3.77
2. Recognizes primary shapes	Kindergarten Academics	3.74
3. Performs basic self-help/self-care tasks	Self-Care & Motor Skills	3.72
4. Can count 10 objects correctly	Kindergarten Academics	3.64
5. Has general coordination on the playground	Self-Care & Motor Skills	3.56

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Scores are based on 197-199 students.

Figure 11. **Students' Top Five Readiness Challenges**

| Top five challenges	Basic Building Blocks	Students' average score (out of four possible)
1. Can recognize rhyming words	Kindergarten Academics	2.62
2. Recognizes letters of the alphabet	Kindergarten Academics	2.95
3. Controls impulses and self-regulates	Self-Regulation	3.10
4. Stays focused/pays attention during activities	Self-Regulation	3.13
5. Participates successfully in circle time	Self-Regulation	3.14

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Scores are based on 197-201students.

The 24 readiness skills can be further grouped according to different categories of readiness. Two of the ways that readiness dimensions have been described are presented here, including: (1) five developmental domains identified by *NEGP*; and (2) a data-driven sorting of readiness skills, called the *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness.

In Figure 12, Livermore Valley's students' readiness scores are displayed according to five *NEGP* categories, with an additional category (not part of the *NEGP*) comprising a "coping skills" dimension.

Figure 12. **Students' Proficiency across the Five *NEGP* Readiness Dimensions**
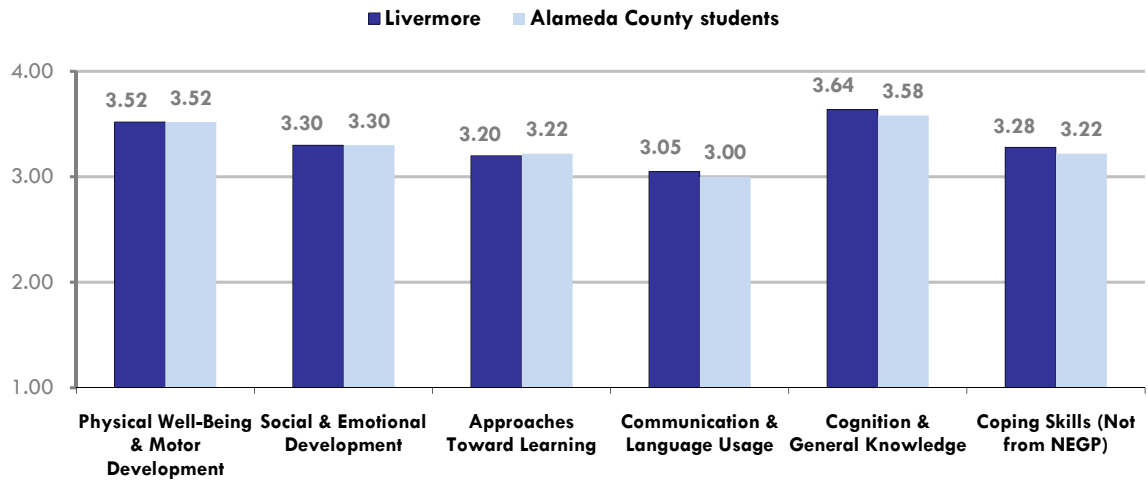
Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Scores are based on 200-201 Livermore students and 1,350-1,379 county-wide students.

Statistical exploration of children's performance across 24 readiness skills revealed that skills reliably sorted into an alternate readiness skills framework, which has been labeled the four *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness:[3]

- *Self-Care & Motor Skills*

- *Social Expression*

- *Self-Regulation*

- *Kindergarten Academics*

Figure 13 that follows shows students' readiness according to the four *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness. Readiness levels among Livermore Valley students were highest in *Self-Care & Motor Skills*, and they were lowest in *Self-Regulation*.

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[3]   A procedure called factor analysis is used to determine what readiness dimensions are represented by the data.

Figure 13. **Students' Proficiency across Four** *Basic Building Blocks* **of Readiness**
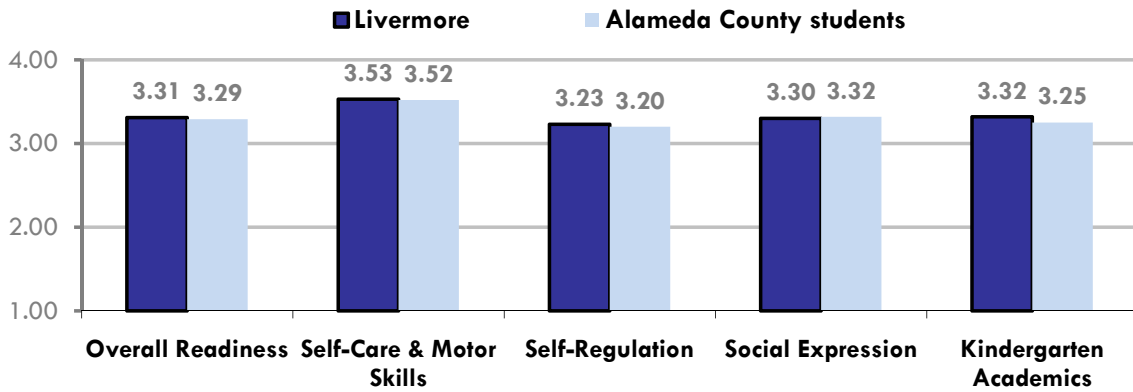

Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Scores are based on 200-201 Livermore students and 1,373-1,379 county-wide students.

Although knowing these readiness levels is instructive for understanding relative strengths and needs of students – as well as how Livermore Valley students compare with other students in the county – they do not address the question of how ready is "ready enough" for school. To provide some context for understanding students' readiness levels, as part of the teacher survey they completed, participating Livermore Valley Joint Unified teachers were asked to indicate the level of proficiency that they believed children <u>should</u> have on each of the 24 assessed skills in order to be school-ready. (More information on the results of those surveys can be found in the section that follows.) These ratings were compiled for the four *Basic Building Blocks* readiness dimensions and the percentage of children who met or exceeded those levels of proficiency was computed. The figure that follows presents the percentage of students who met or exceeded the average levels of readiness that Livermore Valley Joint Unified teachers believed they should have to be ready for school.

Overall, 72 percent of the students assessed in the Livermore Valley Joint Unified classrooms were at or above the readiness levels their teachers thought they should have at kindergarten entry. The largest percentage of students were prepared (according to teachers' expectations) on *Kindergarten Academics* skills; the largest gap in actual versus desired levels of readiness occurred in *Self-Regulation* skills.

Figure 14. **Percentage of Children Meeting or Exceeding the Readiness Levels Teachers Felt They Needed for a Successful Transition**
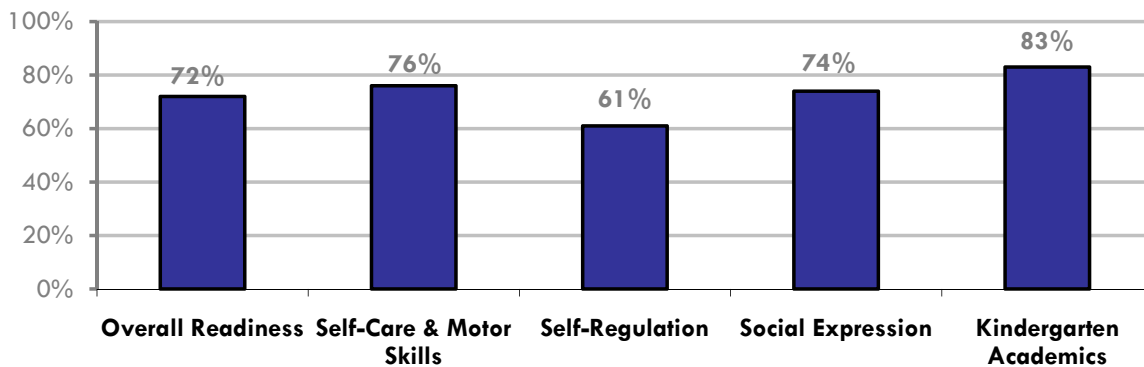
Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Percentages are based on 200-201 Livermore students. Percentages are based on students meeting the average expectations of all Livermore teachers, rather than each student's own teacher.

Children also exhibited different <u>patterns</u> of readiness strengths and challenges. For a more detailed look at different patterns of readiness, children were sorted into one of four *Readiness Portraits* based on their pattern of proficiency across the readiness skills.[4] The dark shading in Figure 15 shows where children in each of the four portraits are at or near proficiency on the associated skills.
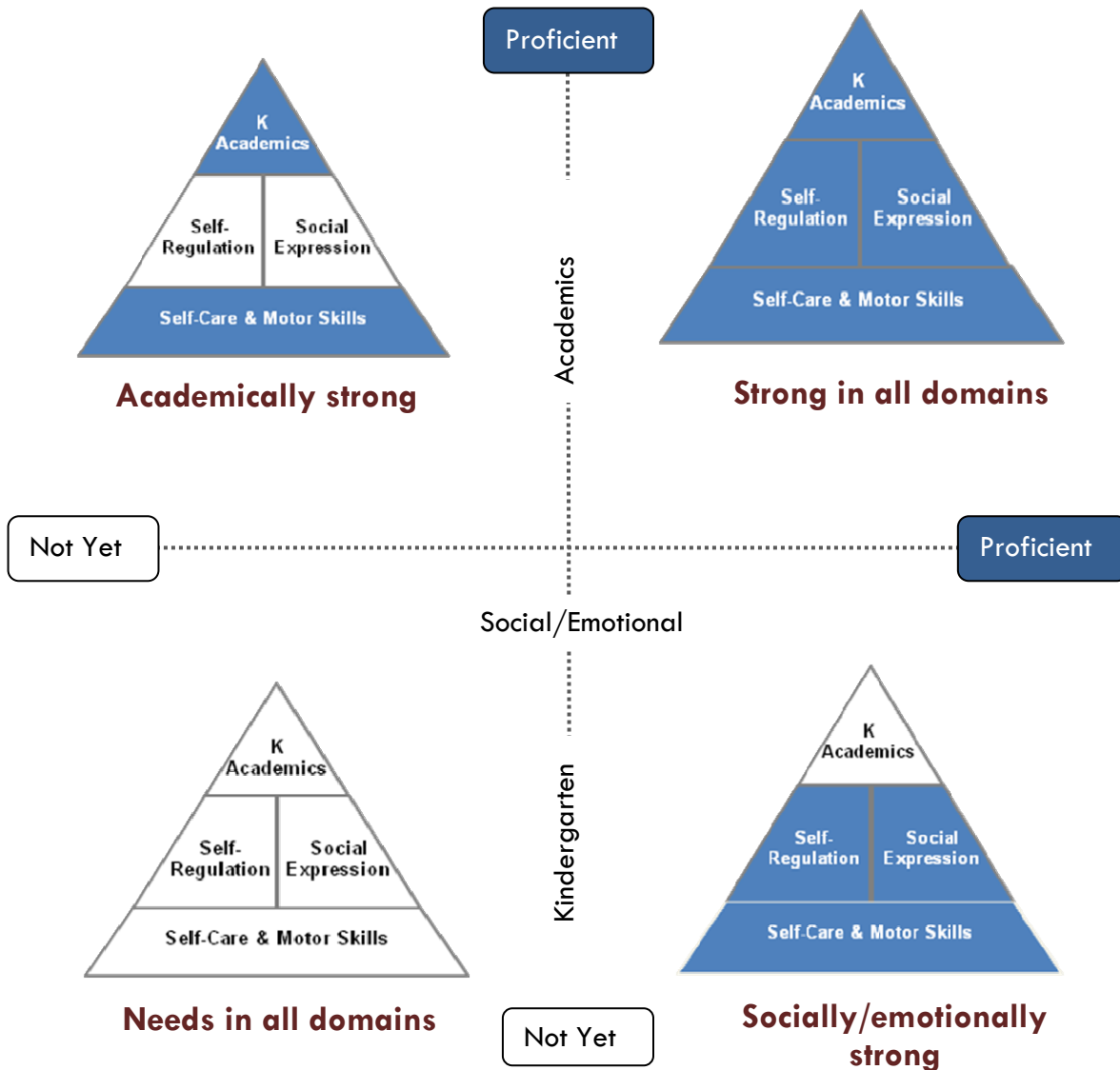
Figure 15.   Four Readiness Portraits

Figure 16 on the following page shows the percentage of Livermore Valley and county-wide students who sorted into each of the four *Readiness Portraits*.

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4   Children were sorted into one of the four *Readiness Portraits* via a data-driven technique called cluster analysis.

- *Strong in all domains:* Over half (57%) of the assessed Livermore Valley students entered kindergarten classrooms at or near proficiency across all four *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness (corresponding to the pattern of readiness displayed in the upper right quadrant of Figure 15).

- *Needs in all domains:* About seven percent of students had significant readiness needs across all four skill domains. These students had not yet learned – or were just beginning to learn – almost all of the 24 readiness skills (lower left quadrant of Figure 15).

- *Academically strong:* Consistent with the readiness pattern shown in the upper left of Figure 15, about one-third (32%) of Livermore Valley students entering kindergarten had strong skills in their early academics (and *Self-Care & Motor Skills*) but demonstrated some challenges in the social-emotional areas of readiness especially skills within the *Self-Regulation* dimension.

- *Socially/emotionally strong :* Five percent of Livermore Valley students were well-equipped on the social-emotional dimensions of readiness, but they had needs in the realm of *Kindergarten Academics* – learning their letters, numbers, shapes, and colors (lower right quadrant of Figure 15).

Figure 16.   **Prevalence of Four Portraits of Students' Readiness**
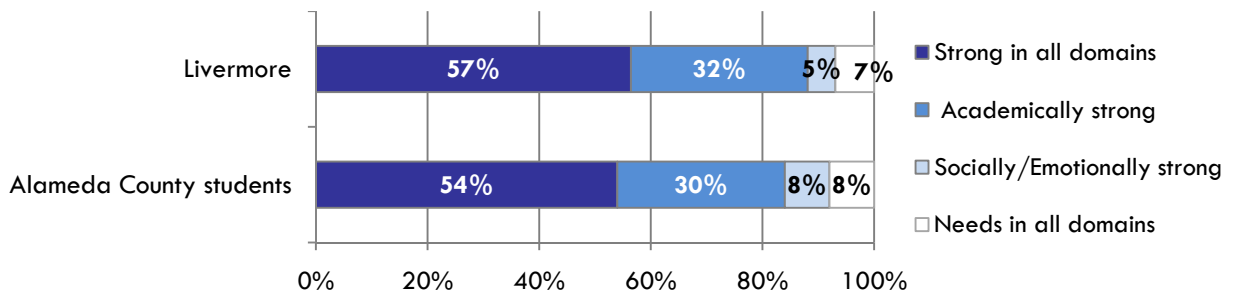
Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: This chart is based on 200 Livermore students and 1369 county-wide students.

An Overview of Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District Teacher Beliefs

The *Teacher Survey on Importance of Readiness Skills* included a number of questions asking teachers to provide their opinions about students' readiness for school – including what proficiency levels they think are required for success in school (briefly described in the previous section), as well as the skills that they think are most important for school entry, the skills they believe are easiest to impact, and on which skills they spend the most time.

Figure 17 shows the average levels of proficiency that the participating Livermore Valley Joint Unified kindergarten teachers thought their students should have when they enter school. As Figure 14 in the previous section showed, the majority of Livermore students were above these levels on all of the four *Basic Building Blocks* dimensions. The Livermore Valley teachers expected the highest proficiency on *Self-Care & Motor Skills* and the least proficiency on *Kindergarten Academics*.

Figure 17.   **Teachers' <u>Desired</u> Levels of Proficiency on the *Basic Building Blocks* of Readiness**
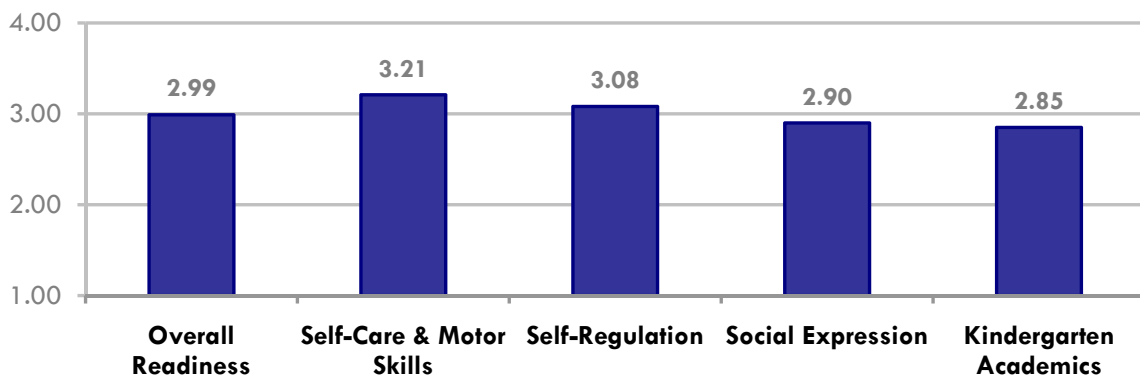
Source: Teacher Survey of the Importance of Readiness Skills (2010).

Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Means are based on 11 Livermore teachers.

When Livermore Valley teachers were asked to choose only five skills that they believed were <u>most</u> important for entry into kindergarten, self-help/self-care skills were selected by almost all of the teachers, as were controlling impulses.

Figure 18.   Skills Most Often Selected by Teachers as One of Five Most Important for Kindergarten Entry

School Readiness Skills	Basic Building Block	Number of teachers selecting
Performs basic self-help/self-care skills	Self-Care & Motor Skills	9
Controls impulses and self-regulates	Self-Regulation	8
Stays focused/pays attention during activities	Self-Regulation	5
Works and plays cooperatively with peers	Self-Regulation	3
Appropriately expresses wants and needs	Social Expression	3
Writes own first name	Kindergarten Academics	3
Recognizes letters of the alphabet	Kindergarten Academics	3

Source: Teacher Survey on Importance of Readiness Skills (2010).

Note: Scores are based on 10 Livermore teachers.

Livermore Valley teachers also chose five skills that they believed to be the easiest for them to impact during the kindergarten year. Most teachers selected skills from the *Kindergarten Academics* dimension, including counting ten objects and recognizing shapes and colors. Almost half of the teachers selected use of small manipulatives as well.

Figure 19.   Skills Most Often Selected by Teachers as One of Five Easiest to Impact

School Readiness Skills	Basic Building Blocks	Number of teachers selecting
Counts 10 objects correctly	Kindergarten Academics	8
Recognizes primary shapes	Kindergarten Academics	8
Recognizes basic colors	Kindergarten Academics	5
Uses small manipulatives	Self-Care & Motor Skills	5
Follows one- to two- step directions	Self-Regulation	3
Works and plays cooperatively with peers	Self-Regulation	3
Engages with books	Kindergarten Academics	3
Writes own first name	Kindergarten Academics	3

Source: Teacher Survey on Importance of Readiness Skills (2010) .

Note: Scores are based on 11 Livermore teachers.

Finally, teachers in Livermore Valley Joint Unified prioritized the five skills on which they spent the most class time. The majority of the teachers agreed they spent a great deal of their time on letter recognition (*Kindergarten Academics*); *Self-Regulation* skills were also selected by more than half of the teachers (controlling impulses and staying focused).

Figure 20. **Skills Most Often Selected by Teachers as One of Five on Which They Spend the Most Time**

School Readiness Skills	Basic Building Blocks	Number of teachers selecting
Recognizes letters of the alphabet	Kindergarten Academics	8
Controls impulses and self-regulates	Self-Regulation	6
Stays focused/pays attention during activities	Self-Regulation	6
Engages with books	Kindergarten Academics	5
Has expressive abilities	Social-Expression	4
Recognizes rhyming words	Kindergarten Academics	4

Source: Teacher Survey on Importance of Readiness Skills (2010)

Note: Scores are based on 11 Livermore teachers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Preschool experience is a consistently strong predictor of readiness levels among entering kindergarteners. Among the sampled Livermore Valley Joint Unified students, preschool attendance rates are higher than in many other districts, which likely contributes to the generally strong readiness levels of students, despite some district regions in which students come from families with very low income and education levels. The district and its community partners should continue to promote the availability of high-quality early education experiences for local children – and to look for new opportunities to reach out to those children who are not currently exposed to quality preschool programs prior to starting kindergarten. One example is the First 5 Summer Pre-K Program, which offers quality early childhood experience to children with no preschool or licensed childcare experience.

The majority of students in Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District are entering kindergarten ready for school. Most students (72%) are meeting their teachers' expectations, and 57 percent of students demonstrate strong readiness levels across all four domains of readiness. If there are needs among Livermore students, they are arguably in the development of skills that relate to *Self-Regulation*; this domain has the lowest average readiness levels and the greatest number of students who are not meeting teachers' expected proficiency levels. Information about students' patterns of readiness also suggests that nearly one-third of students are strong on academic skills, but are less prepared in social-emotional domains. To help address this:

- Prior to kindergarten, parents and early care and education providers can work on developing children's skills related to emotional regulation and self-control.

- In kindergarten, teachers and district staff can develop strategies and ensure that curricula are addressing entering students' developmental needs related to self-regulation.

The collection of school readiness assessment data can help inform and guide school and district initiatives to support children's development. Some recent examples of school readiness data informing school and community action include the following:

- Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District has used data from its previous readiness measurement of students to support applications for federal and city grants, and they intend to use this year's data (in this report and the comprehensive, county-wide report) to encourage the district to continue supporting preschool for their students.

- In San Lorenzo Unified School District, data from the 2008 and 2009 school readiness assessments have provided important evidence to support increasing the district's funding of summer pre-K programs and access to year-long preschool programs. With these data, they could justify the attention, cost, and resources for supporting preschool experiences for their underserved families.

- In Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco counties, county-wide readiness assessments conducted every 2-3 years have helped to track population-level trends in entering kindergarten students over time, in order to monitor changes in important predictors of readiness (such as preschool attendance rates) as well as student readiness levels. For Santa Clara County in particular, this has allowed them to demonstrate that focused intervention

and support for low-income families have been related to readiness improvements in this population.

- Both Santa Clara and San Mateo counties have used data they have collected on the readiness of kindergarten students to show that readiness levels – particularly in the *Kindergarten Academics* and *Self-Regulation Basic Building Blocks* – strongly predict performance on third grade standardized tests, thus further supporting the need for strong interventions that begin even before a child begins kindergarten.

- Several Bay Area school districts have used the *Kindergarten Observation Form* and a parallel preschool version of the form (the *Pre-Kindergarten Observation Form* [*P-KOF*]) to build connections between their pre-K and K-12 education systems and the providers in each. When preschool providers have used the *P-KOF* alongside kindergarten teachers using the *KOF*, this facilitates the development of a common language and set of expectations for discussing children's readiness and how providers in both systems can support it.

- One local, recently-developed, short-term pre-K program has also used findings from their student P-KOF assessments to shape their curriculum to better support the needs of their students, and they have used it as a reflective practice tool for their providers.

- Importantly, several Northern California regions have used their readiness data to develop resources for parents who have a child who will soon enter (or has recently entered) kindergarten. These resources include high-quality, easy-to-read parent handbooks organized around the four *Basic Building Blocks*. The handbooks provide information about the types of readiness skills children need and how to promote children's development of those skills at home. In addition, in response to findings that showed that families who used more local community resources had children with better readiness outcomes, one local First 5 has partnered with other organizations in their community to provide parents with passes to enrichment activities, such as the zoo, to support children's learning.

Individual districts, schools, teachers, and communities are encouraged to reflect on their own readiness findings and discuss ways that this data can help guide and inform action in their own schools and communities.

Appendix 1: Crosswalking Readiness Items from *NEGP* to *Basic Building Blocks*

Skill Items	NEGP Dimensions	Basic Building Blocks
Uses small manipulatives	Phys Well-Being/Motor Dev	Self-Care & Motor Skills
Has general coordination on the playground	Phys Well-Being/Motor Dev	Self-Care & Motor Skills
Performs self-help/self-care tasks	Phys Well-Being/Motor Dev	Self-Care & Motor Skills
Relates appropriately to adults other than parent / primary caregiver	Social & Emotional Dev	Social Expression
Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language	Social & Emotional Dev	Social Expression
Works and plays cooperatively with peers	Social & Emotional Del	Self-Regulation
Controls impulses and self-regulates	Social & Emotional Dev	Self-Regulation
Expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning	Approaches to Learning	Social Expression
Stays focused / pays attention during activities	Approaches to Learning	Self-Regulation
Follows one- to two-step directions	Approaches to Learning	Self-Regulation
Participates successfully in circle time	Approaches to Learning	Self-Regulation
Has expressive abilities	Communication & Lang	Social Expression
Recognizes the letters of the alphabet	Communication & Lang	Kindergarten Academics
Writes own name	Communication & Lang	Kindergarten Academics
Can recognize rhyming words	Communication & Lang	Kindergarten Academics
Engages with books	Communication & Lang	Kindergarten Academics
Engages in symbolic/imaginative play	Cognition & Gen'l Knowledge	Social Expression
Can count 10 objects correctly	Cognition & Gen'l Knowledge	Kindergarten Academics
Recognizes primary colors	Cognition & Gen'l Knowledge	Kindergarten Academics
Recognizes primary shapes	Cognition & Gen'l Knowledge	Kindergarten Academics
Comforts self with adult guidance	N/A	Self-Regulation
Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance	N/A	Self-Regulation
Expresses empathy or caring for others	N/A	Social Expression
Handles frustration well	N/A	Self-Regulation