

School Readiness in Oakland Unified School District

2013 Assessment — District Results



RESEARCH STUDY FUNDED BY:

FIRST 5



**INTERAGENCY CHILDREN'S
POLICY COUNCIL**

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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, and project management. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the many individuals listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Participating Oakland Unified School District Schools and Teachers

Schools	Teachers
Allendale Elementary	Emma Coufal
Brookfield Elementary	Emily Ann Flores
	Luz Zurita
Carl B. Munck Elementary	Faustena Byrd-Linarex
Community United Elementary	Dana Parsons
	Dolores Mora-Mejia
East Oakland Pride Elementary	Celia Goetz
Esperanza Elementary	Dolores Beleche
Franklin Elementary	Tania Llambelis
Futures Elementary	Melisa Aiello-Been
	Monica Valerian
Garfield Elementary	Linda Pitts
	Pamela Mullen
Greenleaf Elementary	Katherine Gibson
Howard Elementary	Colleen Shepherd
Laurel Elementary	Grace Tso
Manzanita Community	Marian Marx
Markham Elementary	Brenda Theodore
New Highland Academy	Emily Blossom
Sankofa Academy	Kei Swensen
Sequoia Elementary	Elena Njemanze

Study Summary

Background

In 2013, First 5 Alameda County and ICPC commissioned an assessment of the school readiness levels of new kindergarten students for the fifth consecutive year. Participating districts in the 2013 assessment included Alameda County Office of Education, Alameda Unified, Dublin Unified, Emery Unified, Castro Valley Unified, Fremont Unified, Hayward Unified, Livermore Valley Joint Unified, New Haven Unified, Newark Unified, Oakland Unified, Pleasanton Unified, San Lorenzo Unified, and San Leandro Unified School Districts. Among the Oakland Unified (OUSD) participants, 21 teachers from 17 different schools took part in the assessment.

The assessment included three measures completed by teachers and parents of entering kindergarten students. Teachers indicated each of their students' proficiency levels on 24 readiness skills. Parents completed one survey that asked them to provide information about children's family environments, as well as basic demographic and background information, and a brief second survey of the child's early care and education experiences. Please note that the information presented in this report describes the students and families assessed; techniques were used to make the sample representative of the District in terms of race/ethnicity, but because of sample limitations, the findings are not fully generalizable to the District.

Findings

Research Question	Conclusion	Data Highlights
1. How do OUSD readiness levels compare to levels county-wide?	Slightly Lower Overall readiness score: 3.18	For each individual readiness skill, children were scored on a scale from <i>Not Yet</i> (1) to <i>Proficient</i> (4). OUSD students' overall readiness score was slightly lower than that of children in the County as a whole (3.24). Their readiness levels were highest in the <i>Self-Care & Motor Skills</i> domain and they were lowest in <i>Kindergarten Academics</i> .
2. What proportion of OUSD students are strong on all domains of school readiness?	40%	Forty percent of the assessed OUSD students entered kindergarten classrooms at or near proficiency across all four <i>Basic Building Blocks</i> of readiness (<i>Self-Care & Motor Skills, Self-Regulation, Social Expression, and Kindergarten Academics</i>). Forty-five percent of students across the County (45%) fit this readiness profile (i.e., strong across all domains).
3. What child and family characteristics are related to school readiness in the County?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child health/well-being • Age • No special needs • Not an English Learner • Gender (female) • Race/ethnicity (Asian) • Preschool • Maternal education • Received info about school readiness 	Analyses conducted at the county level reveal that several child and family characteristics significantly relate to school readiness. The strongest associations were between readiness and child health/well-being (being alert, well-fed, and healthy), age (being older), and not having any special needs.

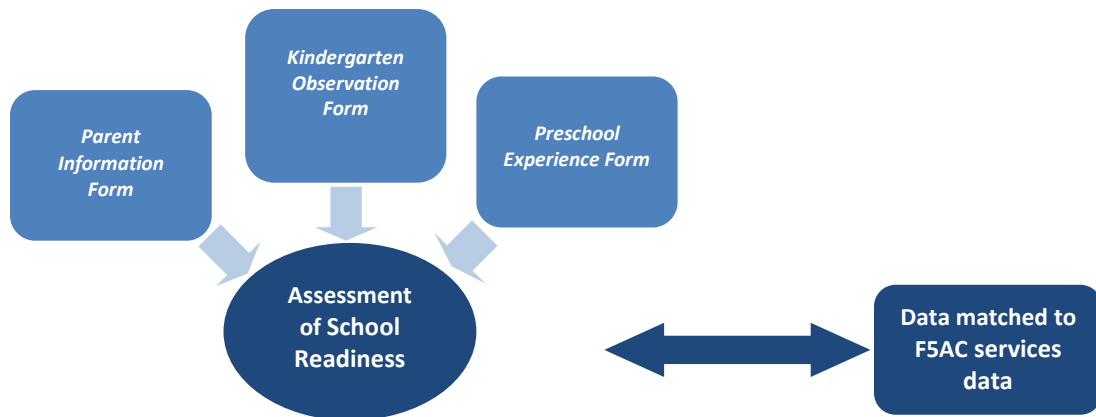
Study Overview

Children’s school readiness levels at kindergarten entry play an important role in children’s later success in school. 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 three school districts in Alameda County. Assessments were again conducted in 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2013, with the study expanding to additional schools and districts in each subsequent year. Participants in the 2013 assessment included students from 14 districts, producing a larger sample that improved its representativeness of the County as a whole. Participating kindergarten teachers were trained to assess their students’ readiness skills and instructed to distribute surveys to the students’ parents. The comprehensive readiness assessment involved the completion of the following forms:

- The *Kindergarten Observation Form*, which teachers use to assess children’s readiness skills;
- A *Parent Information Form (PIF)*, which parents complete to provide information about children’s family environments and basic demographic and socioeconomic information; and
- A *Preschool Experience Form (PEF)*, which asks parents to indicate what preschool and child care experiences the child had in the year prior to kindergarten entry.

Additional data came from F5AC’s services database to examine the participation of children in the assessment in F5AC programs and services.

Figure 2. Sources of Information to Assess the Readiness of Incoming Kindergarten Students



This short report summarizes key Fall 2013 findings for participating teachers, students, and families in the Oakland Unified School District. Seventeen out of the 70 elementary schools in the District are represented here. Seventy-nine percent of parents agreed to have their child take part in the study, and of those, 91 percent also returned a parent survey. In all, Oakland Unified students represented 363 of the 1,696 participants (21%) in the county-wide sample.

Figure 3. Who Completed the Study?

Data	Oakland Unified sample	Alameda County sample (14 districts)
Number of schools participating in 2013 school readiness assessment	17	64
Number of participating classrooms	21	90
Number of children in these classrooms	457	2,105
Number of KOFs returned	363	1,696
Parent consent rate	79%	81%
Number of PIFs that were matched to a KOF	330	1,586
Parent PIF response rate (# PIFs received/ # consents)	91%	94%
Parent PEFs that were matched to a KOF	327	1,524

The sections that follow summarize the demographics, early care experiences, family environments, and readiness levels the Oakland Unified students participating in the assessment. This summary also includes information from the county-wide study describing the child and family factors that were found to have the strongest associations with high levels of readiness at kindergarten entry.

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 is based only on the students and families assessed. Although techniques¹ were used to make the sample look similar to the Oakland School District student population in terms of racial/ethnic background, the results are not fully generalizable to the District due to sample limitations.

¹ The data were statistically weighted according to the racial/ethnic make-up of the District population.

Student Characteristics

The average age of students in the Oakland Unified School District Fall 2013 readiness assessment sample² was 5.28 years old (about 5 years and 3 months). Six percent of students had been diagnosed with a special need, while another eight percent of students were suspected to have a special need by their teacher or parent, but had not yet been formally diagnosed³.

Figure 4. Sampled Students' Sex, Age, and Special Needs

Student Characteristics	Percent of students in District sample	Percent of students in County sample
Sex		
Boys	52%	52%
Girls	49%	48%
Age at kindergarten entry		
Between 4 1/2 and less than 5	24%	15%
At least 5 and less than 5 1/2	41%	46%
At least 5 1/2 and less than 6	32%	36%
6 and older	3%	2%
Special needs status		
Has special needs	6%	5%
Teacher or parent suspects special need (not yet diagnosed)	8%	7%
Does not have special needs	85%	88%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

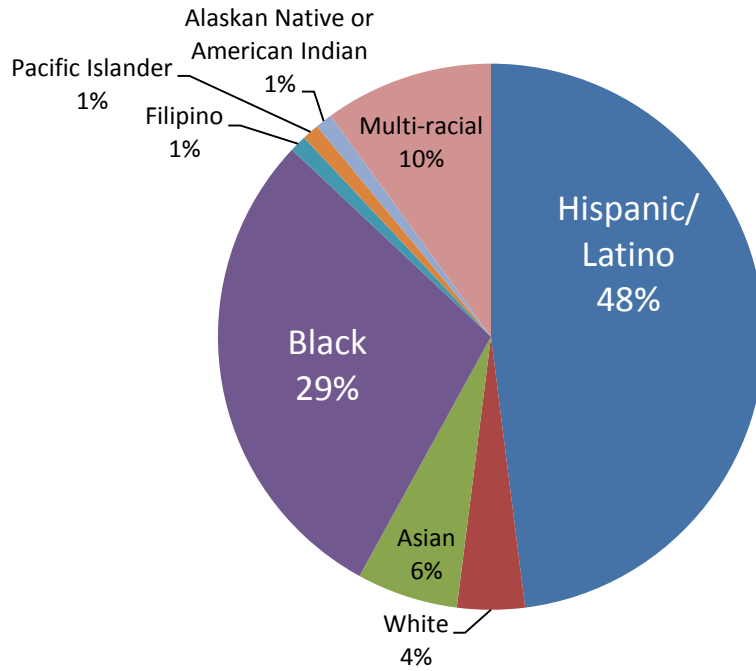
Note: Sample size=361-363. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Hispanic/Latino students comprised the largest racial/ethnic group in the Oakland Unified student sample (48%). Twenty-nine percent of students were black, 10 percent were multi-racial, and six percent were Asian. The sample had larger proportions of Hispanic/Latino and black students compared to the District population overall (the District kindergarten population was 44% Hispanic/Latino and 26% black). Conversely, the sample had much smaller percentages of white and Asian students relative the full District population (12% of students district-wide were Asian, while 13% were white).

² Please note that although weights were applied to school readiness analyses to make the sample look similar to the OUSD student population, demographic and family background data presented in this section of the report reflect the characteristics of students and families in *the sample*, not the District population.

³ Parents were asked whether the child had a special need that had been diagnosed by a professional, while teachers were asked whether the child had an IEP or designated special need. If the child did not have a diagnosed special need or IEP, parents and teachers were asked to indicate whether they believed the child had a special need.

Figure 5. Sampled Students' Race/Ethnicity



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

Note: Sample size=363. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Teachers from 17 schools in the Oakland Unified School District took part in the study. The ethnic/racial backgrounds of the sampled students varied from one school to another. The following schools had a majority of Hispanic/Latino students: Brookfield, Community United, East Oakland Pride, Esperanza, Garfield Greenleaf, and New Highland. The samples at several other schools were majority black: Munck, Howard, Sankofa, and Markham. With the exception of East Oakland Pride and Esperanza, which had no black students, all schools had large populations of black students.

Figure 6. Sampled Students' Race/Ethnicity, by School

School	Hispanic/Latino	Asian	Caucasian/White	African American/Black	Multi-racial	Filipino	Pacific Islander	Alaskan Native or American Indian	Other
Allendale	39%	4%	13%	30%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Brookfield	76%	0%	0%	14%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Munck	0%	0%	6%	71%	12%	6%	0%	6%	0%
Community United	74%	3%	0%	16%	5%	0%	0%	3%	0%
E. Oakland Pride	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Esperanza	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Franklin	47%	11%	0%	32%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Futures	39%	4%	0%	39%	18%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Garfield	55%	27%	0%	15%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%
Greenleaf	74%	0%	5%	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Howard	22%	0%	0%	61%	6%	11%	0%	0%	0%
Laurel	25%	38%	0%	25%	6%	0%	0%	0%	6%
Manzanita	43%	0%	0%	29%	29%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Markham	21%	0%	0%	50%	14%	0%	14%	0%	0%
New Highland	79%	0%	0%	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sankofa	0%	0%	8%	77%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sequoia	0%	15%	30%	10%	35%	10%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

Note: Sample size=7-38. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Forty-four percent of Oakland Unified students in the sample were English Learners (a somewhat smaller proportion than the 47% of students district-wide who were English Learners). East Oakland Pride and Esperanza had the highest percentage of English Learners (100% and 83%, respectively), while Munck and Sequoia had the lowest percentage (6% and 0%, respectively).

Figure 7. Sampled Students' English Learner Status, by School

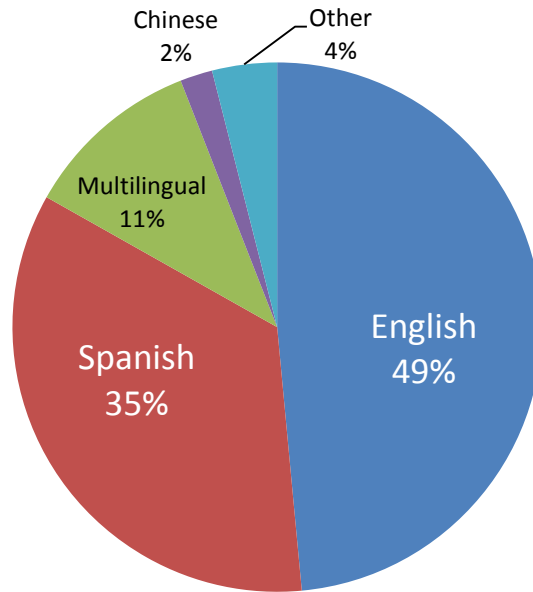
School	English Learner	Not English Learner
Allendale	46%	55%
Brookfield	68%	32%
Munck	6%	94%
Community United	66%	34%
E. Oakland Pride	100%	0%
Esperanza	83%	17%
Franklin	26%	74%
Futures	29%	71%
Garfield	41%	59%
Greenleaf	74%	26%
Howard	17%	83%
Laurel	69%	31%
Manzanita	29%	71%
Markham	14%	86%
New Highland	68%	32%
Sankofa	8%	92%
Sequoia	0%	100%
District	44%	55%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

Note: Sample sizes=7-38 (schools); 361 (district). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

English was the preferred language of 49 percent of the students, while Spanish was the preferred language for 35 percent of the sample. Another 11 percent spoke more than one language at home.

Figure 8. Sampled Students' Preferred Language



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

Note: Sample size=362. 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. Sixty percent of students were cared for by a parent (either alone or in combination with other child care sources). Fifty-eight percent of students had attended a licensed child care center or preschool, including Head Start, state-funded, private, or other licensed program. Informal care from an adult other than the parent (e.g., relative or babysitter) and licensed home care were less common in the District (utilized by 23% and 6% of the sample, respectively)⁴.

Figure 9. Sampled Students' Early Care Experiences

Type of Child Care Arrangements	Percent of students
Parent provided usual child care	60%
Relative, neighbor, babysitter, or nanny	23%
Licensed care in someone's home (teacher or parent report)	6%
Licensed preschool or childcare center (e.g., Head Start, State Preschool, private – teacher or parent report)	58%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013), Parent Information Form (2013), Preschool Experience Form (2013).

Note: Sample sizes (from top to bottom): 348, 345, 352, 353. Percentages sum to more than 100 because more than one source of care could be selected.

Over three-quarters of students in the Oakland Unified sample (78%) came from families making under \$35,000 and the mothers of most children in the sample had no more than a high school diploma. Just

⁴ Teachers were also asked about whether child participated in Transitional kindergarten (TK), but because of inconsistent responses to this item, data for TK are not reported.

eight percent of mothers had earned an associate's degree, while nine percent held a bachelor's or advanced degree.

Figure 10. Mother's Education and Family Income of Sampled Families

Mother's Educational Attainment	Percent of students
Less than high school	16%
High school diploma	42%
Some college	25%
Associate's degree	8%
Bachelor's degree	5%
Advanced degree	4%
Family Income	Percent of students
Under \$15,000	42%
\$15,000-\$34,999	36%
\$35,000-\$49,999	11%
\$50,000-\$74,999	5%
\$75,000-\$99,999	1%
\$100,000 or more	5%

Source: Parent Information Form (2013).

Note: Sample sizes (from top to bottom)=309, 316. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

School Readiness of Oakland Unified Students

This section describes the readiness skills that students in the district possessed as they entered kindergarten in Fall 2013. Kindergarten teachers rated students on 24 skills using a four-point scale that ranged from *Not Yet* (child does not yet demonstrate the skill, knowledge, or behavior; cannot perform without assistance) to *Proficient* (child demonstrates skill, knowledge, behavior consistently and competently; performs independently). As mentioned previously, the data presented in this section were adjusted so that the sample reflected the District population in terms of racial/ethnic background.

Domains of Readiness

The 24 readiness skills can be grouped according to different categories of readiness. Two of the ways that readiness dimensions have been described are presented here: (1) five developmental domains identified by the *National Education Goals Panel*; and (2) a sorting of readiness skills into four *Basic Building Blocks*, which overlap with, but are distinct from the *NEGP* domains.

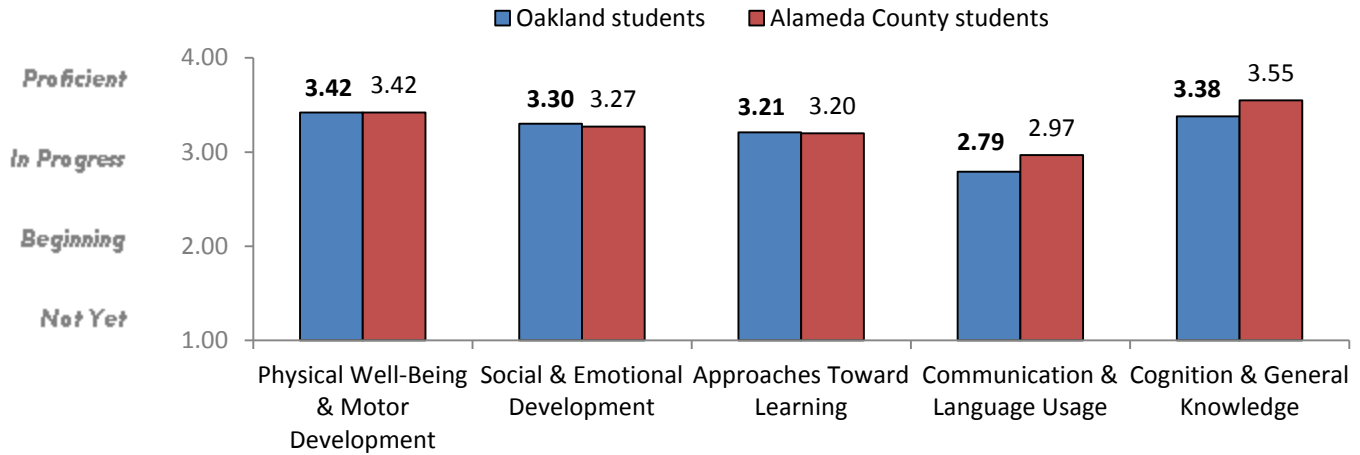
NEGP Domains

Oakland Unified students' readiness scores are displayed below according to five *NEGP* categories⁵:

- *Physical Well-Being & Motor Development* (e.g., physical coordination, fine motor skills)
- *Social & Emotional Development* (e.g., controlling impulses, working and playing cooperatively with peers)
- *Approaches Toward Learning* (e.g., attention, attitude toward learning, participation in class)
- *Communication & Language Usage* (e.g., verbal expression, letter recognition)
- *Cognition & General Knowledge* (e.g., counting, recognizing colors and shapes)

As the figure shows, Oakland Unified students were strong in most domains of readiness, with particular strengths in *Physical Well-Being & Motor Development* and some needs in their *Communication & Language Usage*.

⁵ See Appendix 1 for crosswalk of *KOF* items with *NEGP* domains.

Figure 11. Students' Proficiency across the Five *NEGP* Readiness Dimensions

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

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 356-362 Oakland Unified students and 1,673-1,694 county-wide students.

Basic Building Blocks

Statistical exploration of children's performance across 24 readiness skills revealed that skills reliably sorted into a readiness skills framework, which has been labeled the four *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness.⁶

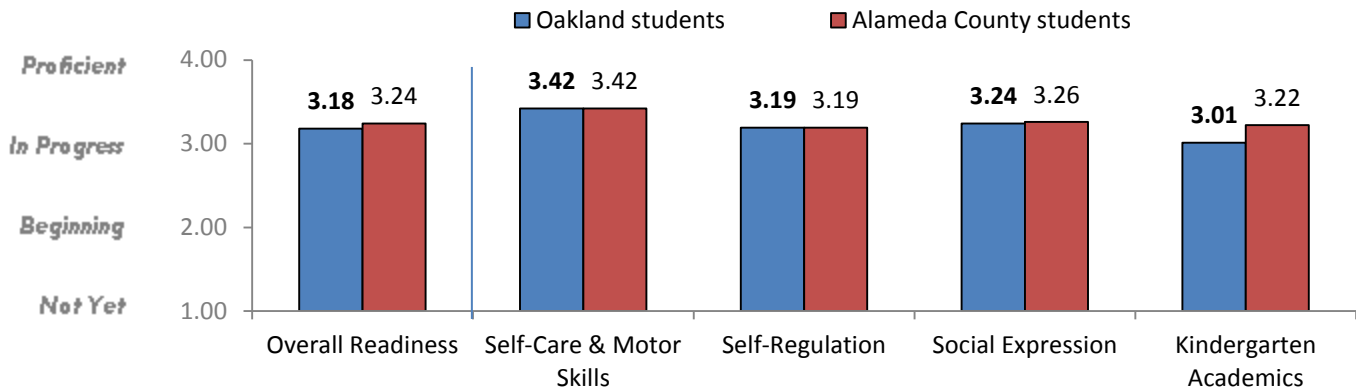
- *Self-Care & Motor Skills* (skills needed for taking care of one's basic needs or skills showing fine/gross motor coordination)
- *Social Expression* (skills related to interacting with adults and other children)
- *Self-Regulation* (basic emotion regulation and self-control skills needed to be able to perform well in the classroom)
- *Kindergarten Academics* (skills that are more academic in nature, such as writing, counting, and identifying shapes and colors)⁷

Readiness levels among Oakland Unified students were highest in *Self-Care & Motor Skills* and they were lowest in *Kindergarten Academics*. Overall, readiness levels were slightly lower in Oakland than in the County as a whole, but students in Oakland had average scores in *Self-Care & Motor Skills* and *Self-Regulation* that were identical to those of students county-wide.

⁶ A procedure called factor analysis is used to determine what readiness dimensions are represented by the data.

⁷ Longitudinal research has shown that entering kindergartners who had a combination of high scores in both *Kindergarten Academics* and *Self-Regulation* were particularly likely to be performing at grade level on their ELA and Math third grade CSTs three and a half years later.

Figure 12. Students' Proficiency across Four *Basic Building Blocks* of Readiness



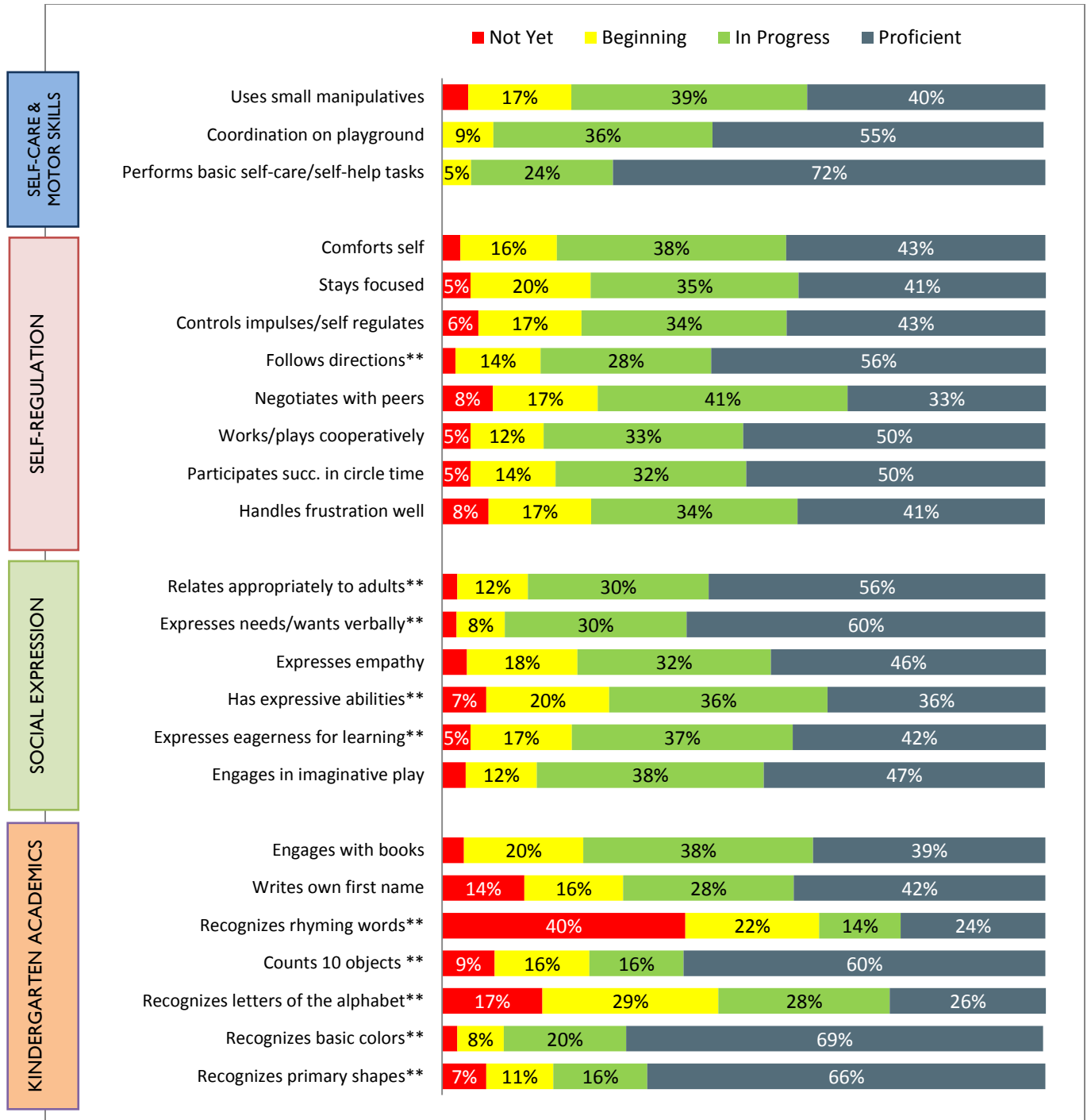
Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

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 356-362 Oakland Unified students and 1,673-1,694 county-wide students.

Student Performance on Each Readiness Skill

The proportion of students in the district receiving each rating for the 24 readiness skills is shown in the figure on the following page. The figure also illustrates how readiness skills sorted into the *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness. A high proportion of students were proficient on self-help and self-care skills (72%), recognizing basic colors (69%), and recognizing primary shapes (66%). In contrast, relatively few children were proficient at recognizing rhymes (24%) and recognizing letters of the alphabet (26%).

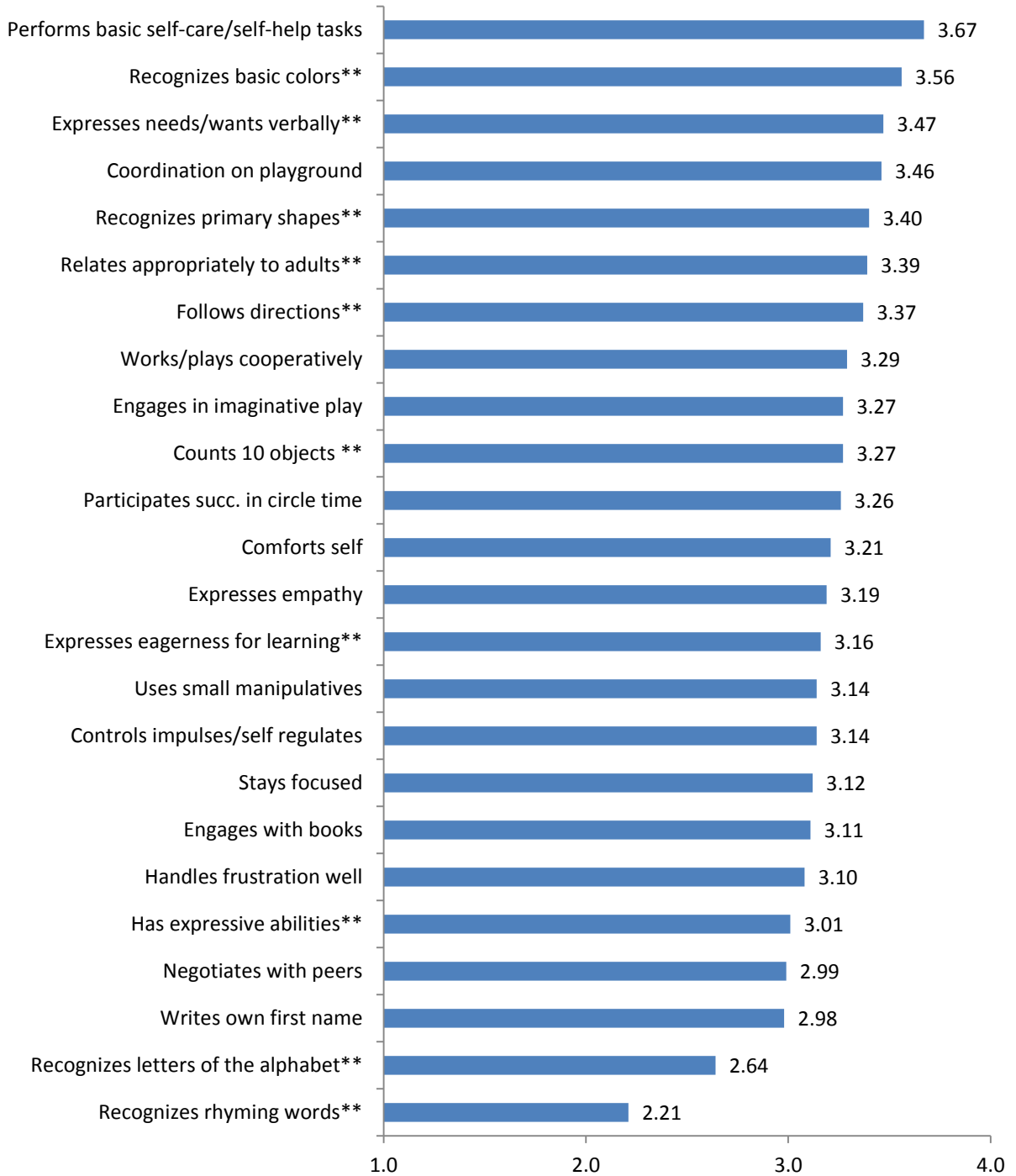
Figure 13. Oakland Unified Students' Proficiency Levels Across 24 School Readiness Skills



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013). Sample size=312-362. Note: Scores range from 1 (Not yet) to 4 (Proficient). Proportions of less than 5% are not labeled. ** Language-dependent item: Scores were omitted for students for whom language barriers were a concern.

Students' average readiness levels are presented below. Oakland Unified students entered kindergarten strongest on basic self-care tasks (3.67; *Self-Care & Motor Skills*), recognizing basic colors (3.56; *Kindergarten Academics*), and expressing their needs (3.47; *Social Expression*). The skills they were still developing included recognizing rhyming words (2.21), recognizing letters (2.64), and writing their own name (2.98; all three are in the *Kindergarten Academics* domain).

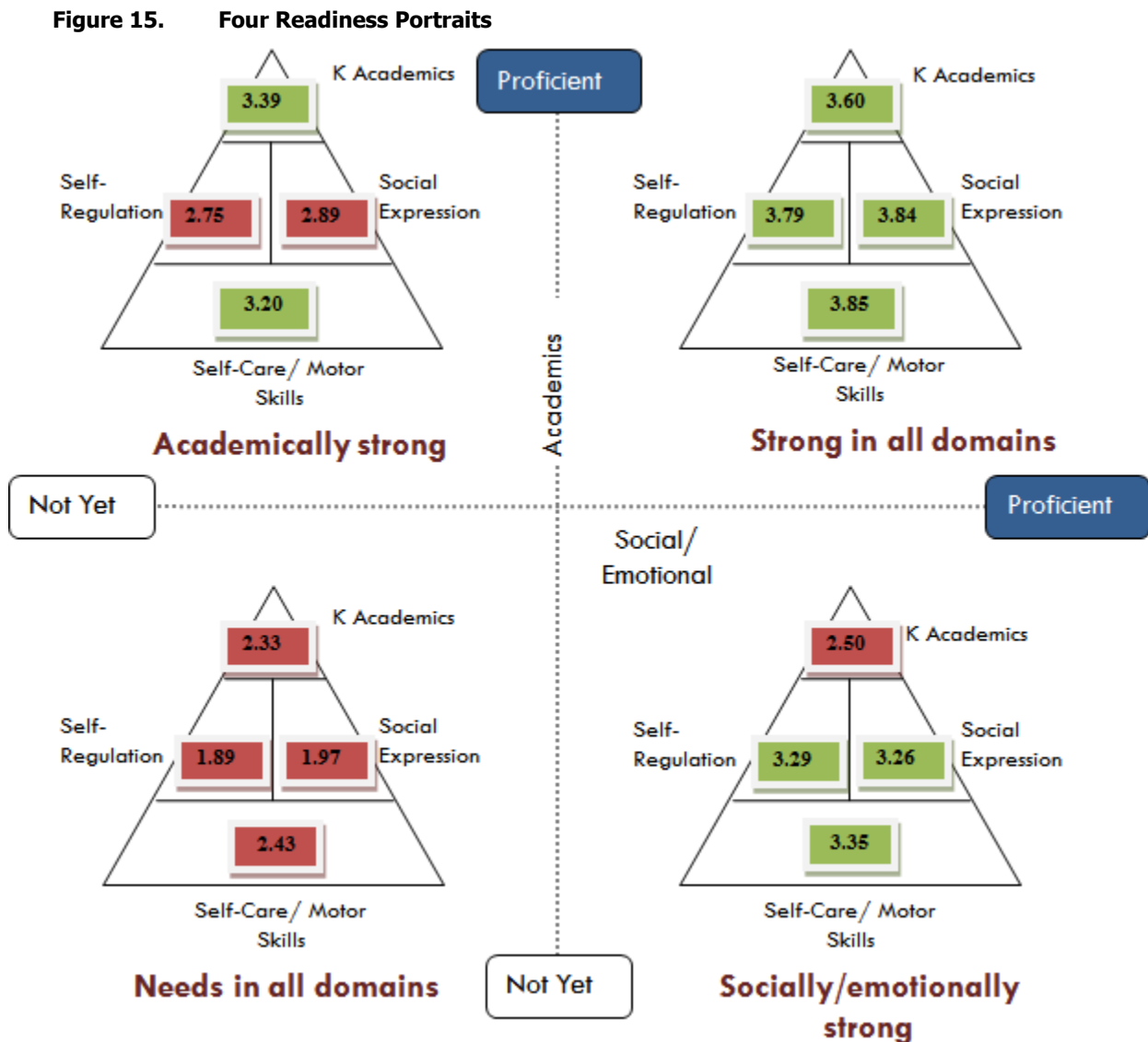
Figure 14. Oakland Unified Students' Average Readiness Levels



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013). 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 312-362 students. ** Language-dependent item: Scores were omitted for students for whom language barriers were a concern.

Readiness Portraits

For a more detailed look at different patterns of readiness, children were sorted into one of four Readiness Portraits based on their relative strengths and needs on the four domains of readiness (e.g., some children were strong academically, but had needs in the social-emotional domains, while others exhibited the opposite pattern).⁸ The green shading in the following figure shows where children in each of the four portraits are at or near proficiency on the associated skills. Within the green and red boxes are the average domain scores for students in the County in each portrait.



The next figure shows the percentage of Oakland Unified students who sorted into each of these four *Readiness Portraits*.

- *Strong in all domains*: Forty percent of the assessed Oakland Unified students entered kindergarten classrooms at or near proficiency across all four *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness

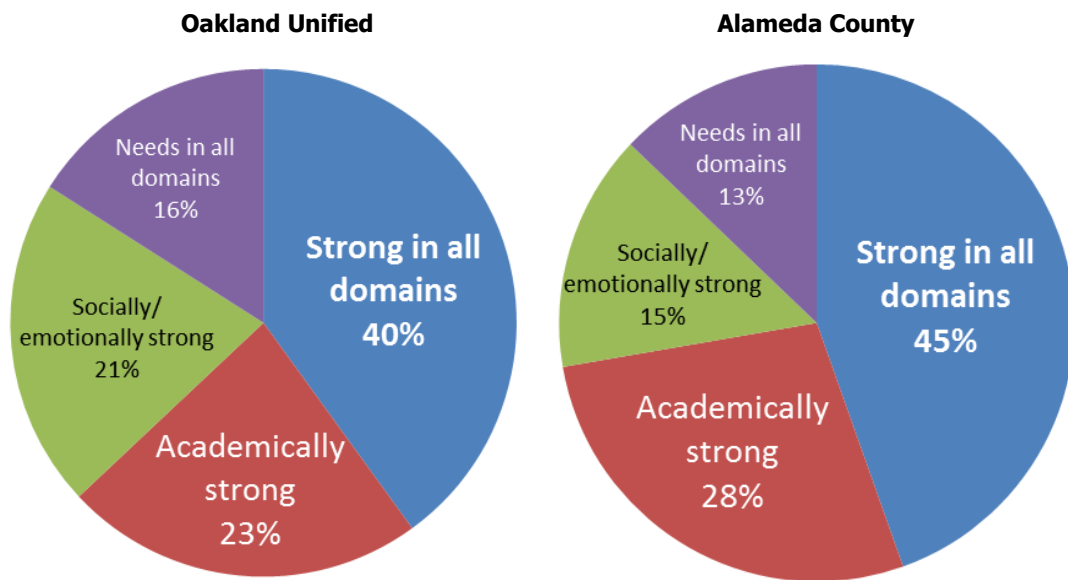
⁸ Children were sorted into one of the four *Readiness Portraits* via a data-driven technique called cluster analysis.

(corresponding to the pattern of readiness displayed in the upper right quadrant of the illustration above).

- *Needs in all domains:* Sixteen percent of students had significant readiness needs across all four skill domains. These students had not yet developed – or were just beginning to develop – almost all of the 24 readiness skills (lower left quadrant of the illustration).
- *Academically strong:* Twenty-three percent of Oakland Unified students entering kindergarten had strong skills in 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 (upper left quadrant of the illustration).
- *Socially/emotionally strong:* The remaining 21 percent of Oakland Unified 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 the illustration).

As can be seen in the charts below, the proportion of students in Oakland demonstrating strengths in all domains was lower than the proportion of students with this profile in county-wide. In addition, a higher proportion in Oakland demonstrated needs in all domains. On the other hand, a greater percentage of students in Oakland were strong on social and emotional skills compared to students county-wide.

Figure 16. Prevalence of Four Portraits of Students’ Readiness



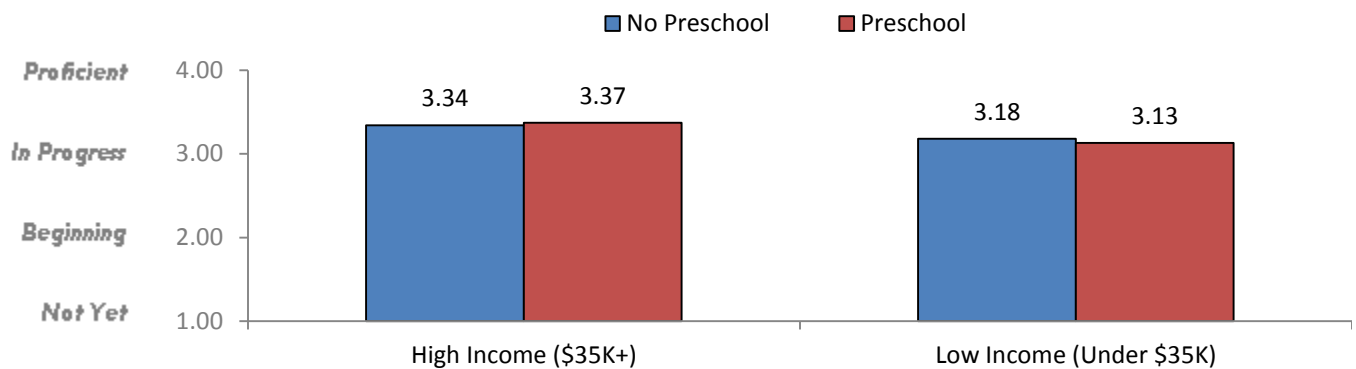
Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

Note: Proportions are based on 362 Oakland students and 1,690 county-wide students. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Average Readiness Scores by Preschool Experience in the District

The association between preschool experience and overall readiness scores among children in the Oakland sample was examined next. These analyses were conducted on low-income and high-income children separately to examine the relationship of preschool attendance and readiness apart from the influence of socioeconomic status. The overall readiness scores of children attending licensed, center-based preschool were compared to the overall scores of children who did not. Although there were some small differences in readiness scores based on pre-K experience in Oakland, score differences were not statistically significant. However, as will be discussed in the next section, we found preschool attendance to be associated with higher readiness levels at the county level, and preschool has generally predicted readiness in other research. The inconclusive findings regarding preschool and readiness within Oakland may simply be due to the limited sample or could be due to unmeasured features of the preschools these students attended (e.g., student-teacher ratio, qualifications of staff, and curriculum).

Figure 17. Readiness Score by Pre-K Experience and Income



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013), Parent Information Form (2013), Preschool Experience Form (2013). Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Sample sizes=224 (Low-Income); 82 (High-Income). ***Significant at $p < .001$; **Significant at $p < .01$; *Significant at $p < .05$

Readiness Scores across Years

The table below details the readiness scores of students in 2013 Oakland Unified readiness assessment and the performance of Oakland students in the previous assessment year. However, it should be noted that the schools and classes that participated differed from year to year and the number of students in each sample also differed. Therefore, any comparisons should be made with the understanding that the students observed may have differed in many other ways beyond their readiness skills (e.g., race/ethnicity, family background, or early educational environment).

Overall readiness scores were higher in 2013. Across both years, children were strongest in *Self-Care & Motor Skills*. Scores were lowest in *Self-Regulation* in 2011 and in *Kindergarten Academics* in 2013.

Figure 18. Average Readiness Scores across Assessments

Assessment Year	Overall Readiness	Self-Care & Motor Skills	Self-Regulation	Social Expression	Kindergarten Academics
2011	3.10	3.39	3.01	3.12	3.08
2013	3.18	3.42	3.19	3.24	3.01

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013). Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Sample sizes=362 (2013), 267(2011).

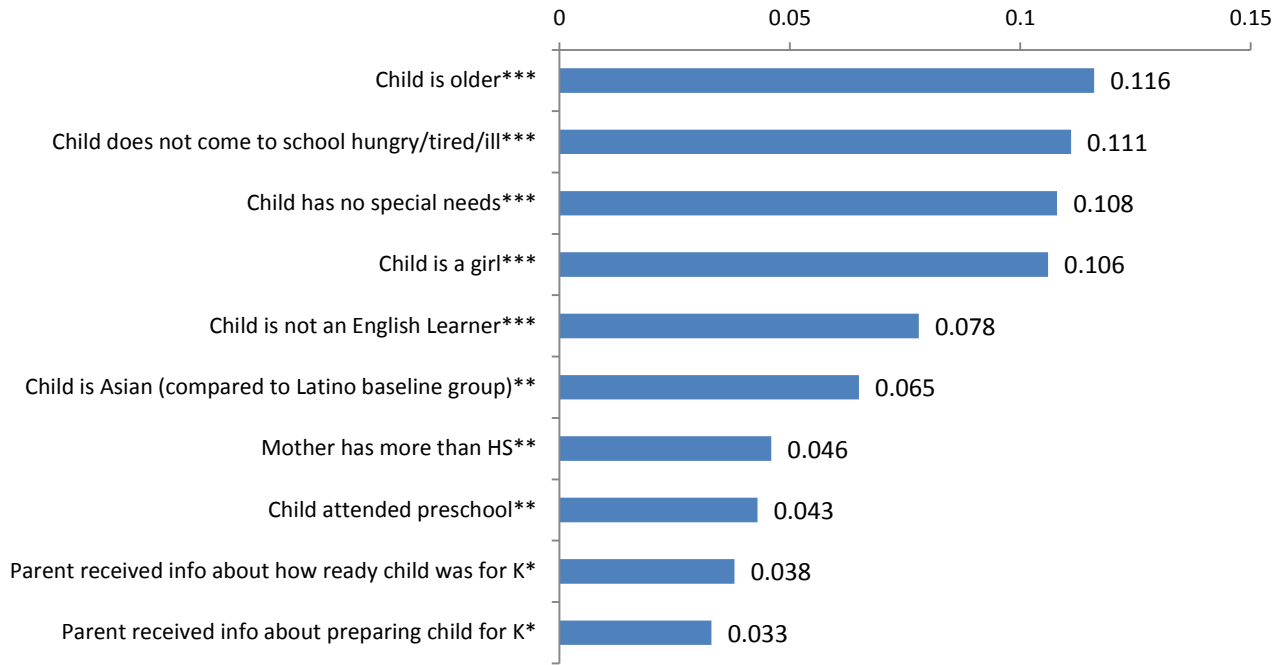
Factors Related to Alameda County Students' Readiness

In addition to examining average readiness levels and student profiles, it is useful to understand the various child and family backgrounds and experiences that are related to stronger readiness skills at kindergarten entry⁹. The figure on the following page shows the factors that have a unique and significant contribution to readiness county-wide even after holding constant various other important child and family factors. (It is important to keep in mind that these results represent findings for all students throughout the 14 districts who participated in the study and are not specific to Oakland Unified students.)

- The strongest predictor of readiness was students' **age**. Older students were more likely to be prepared for school than their younger peers, after controlling for other child and family characteristics.
- The next strongest predictor of readiness was **child well-being**. Although there were relatively few children who had such issues, those who were perceived by their teachers to be frequently hungry, tired, or ill, had readiness levels that were much lower than their peers without well-being concerns.
- As might be expected, children with **special needs** scored lower than children without any developmental concerns.
- Likewise, children entering school as **English Learners** were behind their English-speaking peers in readiness.
- **Girls** tended to be more ready for school than boys.
- **Asian** children were moderately more prepared than Hispanic/Latino children (children of other racial/ethnic backgrounds had approximately the same readiness levels as Hispanic/Latino children).
- Children whose mothers had more than a high school **education** performed better than children whose mothers had only a high school diploma or less.
- Children who attended licensed, center-based **preschool** had higher scores than children who did not (TK status was unrelated to readiness, after controlling for center-based preschool attendance).
- Readiness scores were higher among children whose parents reported **receiving information** about how prepared their child was for school and among children whose parents received information about how to help their child develop readiness skills for kindergarten.

⁹ The following variables were examined in this analysis: age at enrollment; gender; special needs status; race/ethnicity; English Learner status; child well-being (being hungry, tired, or ill); child absences or tardies; low birth weight; family income; maternal education; parents' attitudes about caring for their child; licensed, center-based preschool attendance; whether parents received information about readiness (e.g., how to help prepare their child for kindergarten); school API; instruction days at time of assessment.

Figure 19. Key Factors that Predict Overall School Readiness (in order of strength)



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013), Parent Information Form (2013), Preschool Experience Form (2013)

Note: ***Significant at $p < .001$; **Significant at $p < .01$; *Significant at $p < .05$. For a full listing of all variables entered into the model, see text. The overall regression model was significant ($p < .001$), explaining 25% of the variance in kindergarten readiness ($R^2 = .25$).

Conclusions and Discussion Questions

Main Findings

Outlined below are the main findings from the Oakland Unified School District readiness assessment:

- **Forty percent of students** in Oakland Unified School District are entering kindergarten ready for school on all domains. A somewhat larger proportion of students county-wide (45%) were *Strong in all domains*.
- The strongest readiness levels were in the *Self-Care & Motor Skills* domain and the lowest readiness levels were in the *Kindergarten Academics* domain.
- Overall students in the District demonstrated lower readiness levels than their peers in other regions of the County. Although Oakland students were behind their peers overall, they showed particular strength on several *Self-Care & Motor Skills*, recognizing basic colors, and appropriately expressing their needs and wants.
- Findings from the county-wide study of readiness suggest that districts should be aware of and monitor factors such as student and family well-being and pursue early identification and support for students with special needs, as these factors are strongly associated with readiness levels.
- Districts should also be aware of those factors they cannot impact, but that nonetheless help them understand the readiness levels of their current and future kindergartners, such as children's age and English Learner status.
- As in previous years, the current study found a strong link between preschool attendance and kindergarten readiness at the county level. However, the impact of preschool on readiness can vary depending on features like quality and duration of participation. Districts should advocate for preschool access and quality to ensure their entering kindergartners are prepared to succeed academically and socially.

Discussion Questions

Finally, we include questions prompted by the study findings to stimulate discussion around efforts to support student readiness in the District:

- Across several years of readiness assessments, we consistently find that readiness levels among entering kindergartners are lowest in the self-regulation and kindergarten academics domains. How might this finding inform classroom approaches in the first weeks of school?
- Some of the new Common Core skills are captured in this readiness assessment, such as rhyming words and identifying letters of the alphabet, but others will require new assessments. What other Common Core skills should be measured at kindergarten entry?

- Older children and children who have attended preschool tend to have higher readiness skills than their peers. How might we use these findings to support interventions for younger children prior to or at kindergarten entry?
- When parents received information about improving school readiness, their children demonstrated higher readiness scores. What kinds of resources might be provided to parents who have a child who will soon enter (or has recently entered) kindergarten to help them support their child's readiness skills?

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 basic 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