

# School Readiness in San Lorenzo Unified School District

2013 Assessment — District Results



RESEARCH STUDY FUNDED BY:



INTERAGENCY CHILDREN'S  
POLICY COUNCIL  
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**Figure 1. Participating San Lorenzo Unified School District Schools and Teachers**

Schools	Teachers
Bay Elementary	Kelly Archibald
Colonial Acres Elementary	Carmella Bongiorno
	Alberto Nodal
Corvallis Elementary	Margie Penderanda
	Kirsten Hynds
Del Rey Elementary	Flower Sawyer Brown
Grant Elementary	Tracy Cooper
	Angela Cattin
Hesperian Elementary	Yvonne Schaff
	Claudia Correa
Hillside Elementary	Cheryl Mosier
	Ann Villegas
Lorenzo Manor Elementary	Kathy Rolefson
	Fluer McJilton
	Frances Perez
	Cyndi Liang

# 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 San Lorenzo Unified (SLZUSD) participants, 15 classrooms from eight 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. Several sampling and statistical techniques were used to make the sample representative of the District in terms of race/ethnicity and to make the findings generalizable to the District as a whole.

## Findings

Research Question	Conclusion	Data Highlights
1. How do SLZUSD readiness levels compare to levels county-wide?	<b>Slightly lower</b>  <b>Overall readiness score: 3.20</b>	For each individual readiness skill, children were scored on a scale from <i>Not Yet</i> (1) to <i>Proficient</i> (4).  SLZUSD students' overall readiness score (3.20) 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 &amp; Motor Skills</i> domain and they were lowest in <i>Kindergarten Academics</i> .
2. What proportion of SLZUSD students are strong on all domains of school readiness?	<b>44%</b>	Forty-four percent of the assessed San Lorenzo Unified students entered kindergarten classrooms at or near proficiency across all <i>Basic Building Blocks</i> of readiness ( <i>Self-Care &amp; Motor Skills, Self-Regulation, Social Expression, and Kindergarten Academics</i> ).  Nearly the same proportion 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"> <li>• <b>Child health/well-being</b></li> <li>• <b>Age</b></li> <li>• <b>No special needs</b></li> <li>• <b>Not an English Learner</b></li> <li>• <b>Gender</b> (female)</li> <li>• <b>Race/ethnicity</b> (Asian)</li> <li>• <b>Preschool</b></li> <li>• <b>Maternal education</b></li> <li>• <b>Received info about school readiness</b></li> </ul>	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.

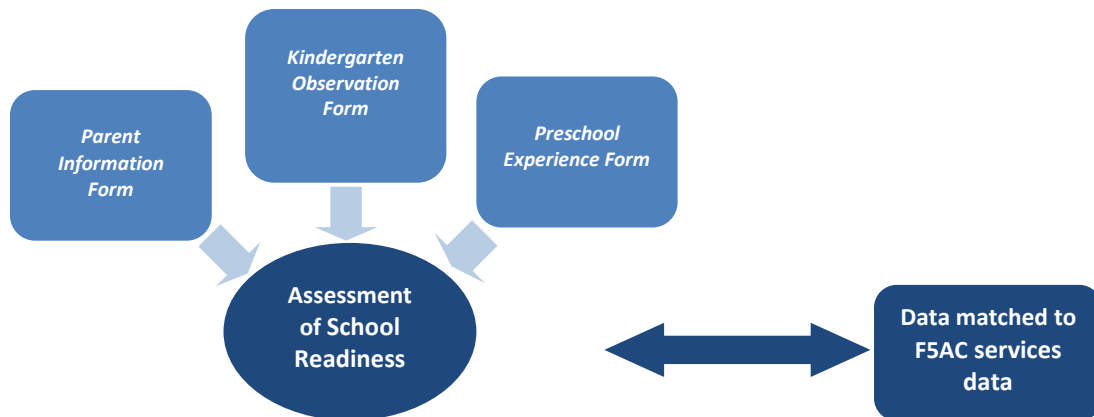
# Study Overview

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 San Lorenzo Unified School District. Eight out of the nine elementary schools in the District are represented here. Eighty 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, San Lorenzo Unified students represented 283 of the 1,696 participants (17%) in the county-wide sample.

**Figure 3. Who Completed the Study?**

<b>Data</b>	<b>San Lorenzo Unified sample</b>	<b>Alameda County sample (14 districts)</b>
Number of schools participating in 2013 school readiness assessment	8	64
Number of participating classrooms	15	90
Number of children in these classrooms	354	2,105
Number of KOFs returned	283	1,696
Parent consent rate	80%	81%
Number of PIFs that were matched to a KOF	257	1,586
Parent PIF response rate (# PIFs received/ # consents)	91%	94%
Parent PEFs that were matched to a KOF	253	1,524

The sections that follow summarize the demographics, early care experiences, family environments, and readiness levels the San Lorenzo 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 on the students and families assessed. However, techniques were used to make the sample look similar to the San Lorenzo School District student population in terms of racial/ethnic background and make the findings generalizable to the District population<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> These techniques included drawing a random sample of schools from the District and weighting the data according to the racial/ethnic make-up of the District population.

# Student Characteristics

The average age of students in the San Lorenzo Unified School District Fall 2013 readiness assessment sample<sup>2</sup> was 5.38 years old (about 5 years and 4 months). Four percent of students were identified as having a diagnosed special need, while another five percent of students were suspected to have a special need by their teacher or parent, but had not yet been formally diagnosed<sup>3</sup>.

**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	54%	52%
Girls	47%	48%
Age at kindergarten entry		
Between 4 1/2 and less than 5	17%	15%
At least 5 and less than 5 1/2	46%	46%
At least 5 1/2 and less than 6	34%	36%
6 and older	3%	2%
Special needs status		
Has special needs	4%	5%
Teacher or parent suspects special need (not yet diagnosed)	5%	7%
Does not have special needs	91%	88%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

Note: Sample size=282-283. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

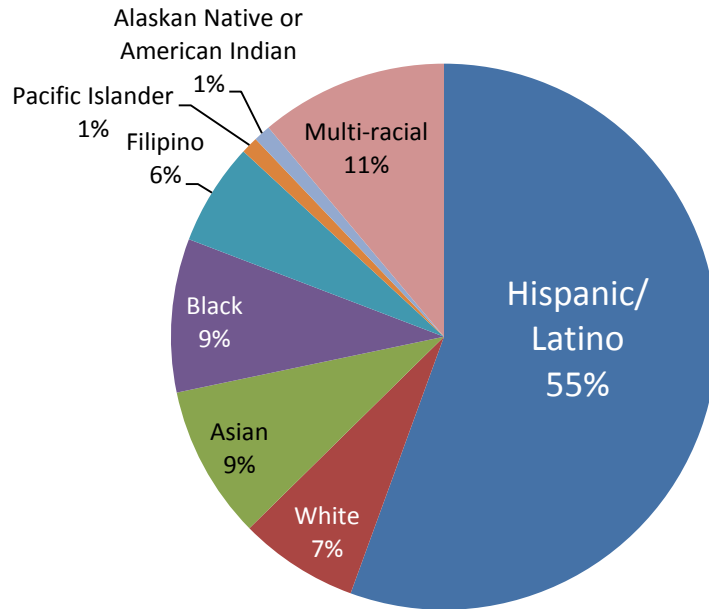
Students in the San Lorenzo Unified sample were predominately Hispanic/Latino (55%), but there were also many students of mixed racial/ethnic background (11%). The next largest racial groups were black and Asian (9% each), followed by white (7%) and Filipino (6%). Relative to the District kindergarten population, there were fewer Hispanic/Latino, Asian, black, and white students in the sample (the District population was 58% Hispanic/Latino, 13% Asian, 11% black, and 9% white). On the other hand, a much larger proportion of the sample was identified as mixed race/ethnicity (only 2% of the population district-wide was of mixed race/ethnicity).

<sup>2</sup> Please note that although weights were applied to school readiness analyses to make the sample look similar to the SLZUSD 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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=283. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Teachers from eight schools in the San Lorenzo Unified School District took part in the study. The ethnic/racial backgrounds of the sampled students varied from one school to another. The student samples at nearly all schools were majority Hispanic/Latino, but the Hispanic/Latino student population was particularly large at Colonial Acres (80%) and Hesperian (69%). About one-quarter of the students at Del Rey were white, while black students made up 37 percent of the population at Hillside. At Corvallis, one-fifth of the sample was Asian and another fifth was multi-racial. Other racial/ethnic groups made up less than 20 percent of the students sampled at the San Lorenzo Unified schools in the study.

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

Race/Ethnicity	School							
	Bay	Colonial Acres	Corvallis	Del Rey	Grant	Hesperian	Hillside	Lorenzo Manor
Hispanic/Latino	44%	80%	31%	59%	42%	69%	37%	60%
Asian	13%	4%	22%	18%	14%	2%	0%	7%
Caucasian/White	6%	4%	6%	24%	16%	2%	3%	5%
African American/Black	0%	4%	6%	0%	7%	10%	37%	5%
Multi-racial	19%	4%	22%	0%	14%	5%	13%	12%
Filipino	19%	0%	9%	0%	7%	10%	0%	9%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	2%	3%	0%
Alaskan Native or American Indian	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

Note: Sample size=16-58. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Fifty-five percent of San Lorenzo Unified students in the sample were English Learners (similar to the proportion of students in the full District population). Colonial Acres and Hesperian had the highest percentage of English Learners (76% and 64%, respectively), while Grant and Hillside had the lowest percentages (35% and 33% respectively). At all other schools, at least 50 percent of students were English Learners.

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

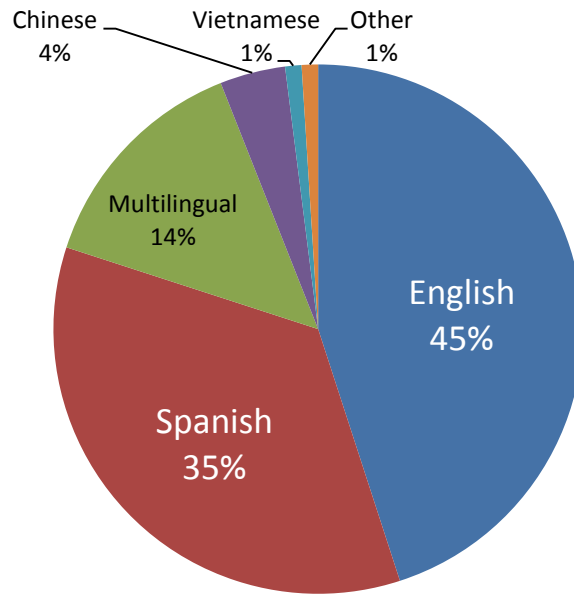
	District	School							
		Bay	Colonial Acres	Corvallis	Del Rey	Grant	Hesperian	Hillside	Lorenzo Manor
English Learner	<b>55%</b>	56%	76%	56%	50%	35%	64%	33%	59%
Not English Learner	<b>45%</b>	44%	24%	44%	50%	65%	36%	67%	41%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

Note: Sample sizes=16-58 (schools), 282 (district). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

English was the preferred language of 45 percent of the students, while 35 percent of students spoke Spanish as their preferred language. Another 14 percent spoke more than one language at home.

**Figure 8. Sampled Students' Preferred Language**



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

Note: Sample size=283. 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-seven percent of students were cared for by a parent (either alone or in combination with other child care sources). A little more than half of the students (55%) 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 31% and 6% of the sample, respectively)<sup>4</sup>.

**Figure 9. Sampled Students' Early Care Experiences**

Type of Child Care Arrangements	Percent of students
Parent provided usual child care	67%
Relative, neighbor, babysitter, or nanny	31%
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)	55%

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

Note: Sample sizes (from top to bottom): 272, 269, 275, 275. Percentages sum to more than 100 because more than one source of care could be selected.

The majority of students in the San Lorenzo Unified sample (55%) 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

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

12 percent of mothers had earned an associate’s degree and 11 percent held a bachelor’s or advanced degree.

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

<b>Mother’s Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Percent of students</b>
Less than high school	10%
High school diploma	39%
Some college	29%
Associate’s degree	12%
Bachelor’s degree	10%
Advanced degree	1%
<b>Family Income</b>	<b>Percent of students</b>
Under \$15,000	21%
\$15,000-\$34,999	34%
\$35,000-\$49,999	16%
\$50,000-\$74,999	17%
\$75,000-\$99,999	6%
\$100,000 or more	5%

Source: Parent Information Form (2013).

Note: Sample sizes (from top to bottom)=248, 240. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

# School Readiness of San Lorenzo Unified Students

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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

San Lorenzo Unified students' readiness scores are displayed below according to five *NEGP* categories<sup>5</sup>:

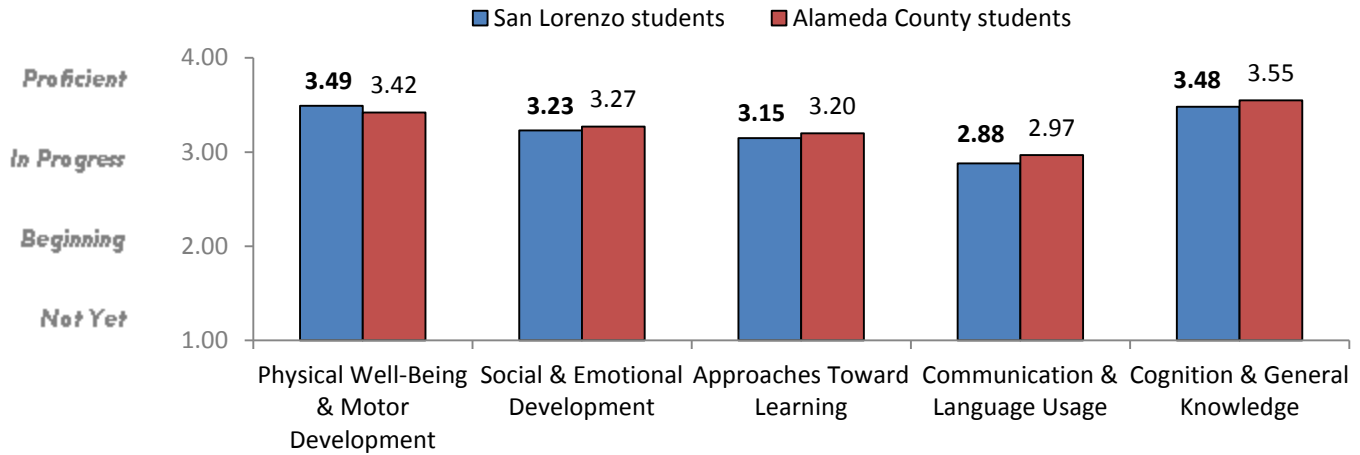
- *Physical Well-Being & Motor Development* (e.g., physical coordination, fine motor skills)
- *Social & Emotional Development* (e.g., controlling impulses, working and playing cooperatively with peers)
- *Approaches Toward Learning* (e.g., attention, attitude toward learning, participation in class)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

As the figure shows, San Lorenzo Unified students were particularly strong in the *Physical Well-being & Motor Development* domain, but demonstrated some needs in their *Communication & Language Usage* skills.

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<sup>5</sup> 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 279-283 San Lorenzo 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.<sup>6</sup>

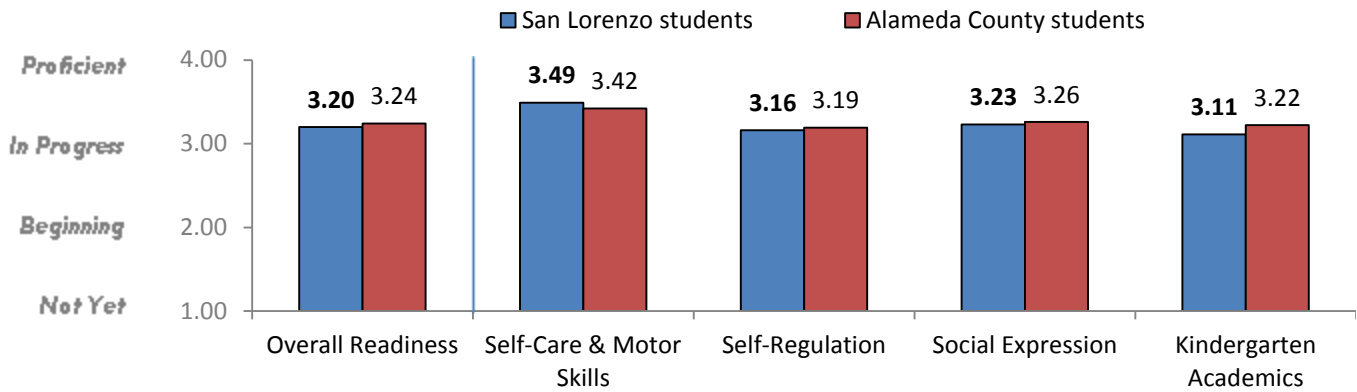
- *Self-Care & Motor Skills* (skills needed for taking care of one's basic needs or skills showing fine/gross motor coordination)
- *Social Expression* (skills related to interacting with adults and other children)
- *Self-Regulation* (basic emotion regulation and self-control skills needed to be able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

Readiness levels among San Lorenzo Unified students were highest in *Self-Care & Motor Skills* and they were lowest in *Kindergarten Academics*. Overall, readiness levels were slightly lower in San Lorenzo than in the County as a whole, but San Lorenzo students performed better than their peers county-wide on *Self-Care & Motor Skills*.

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

<sup>7</sup> 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**



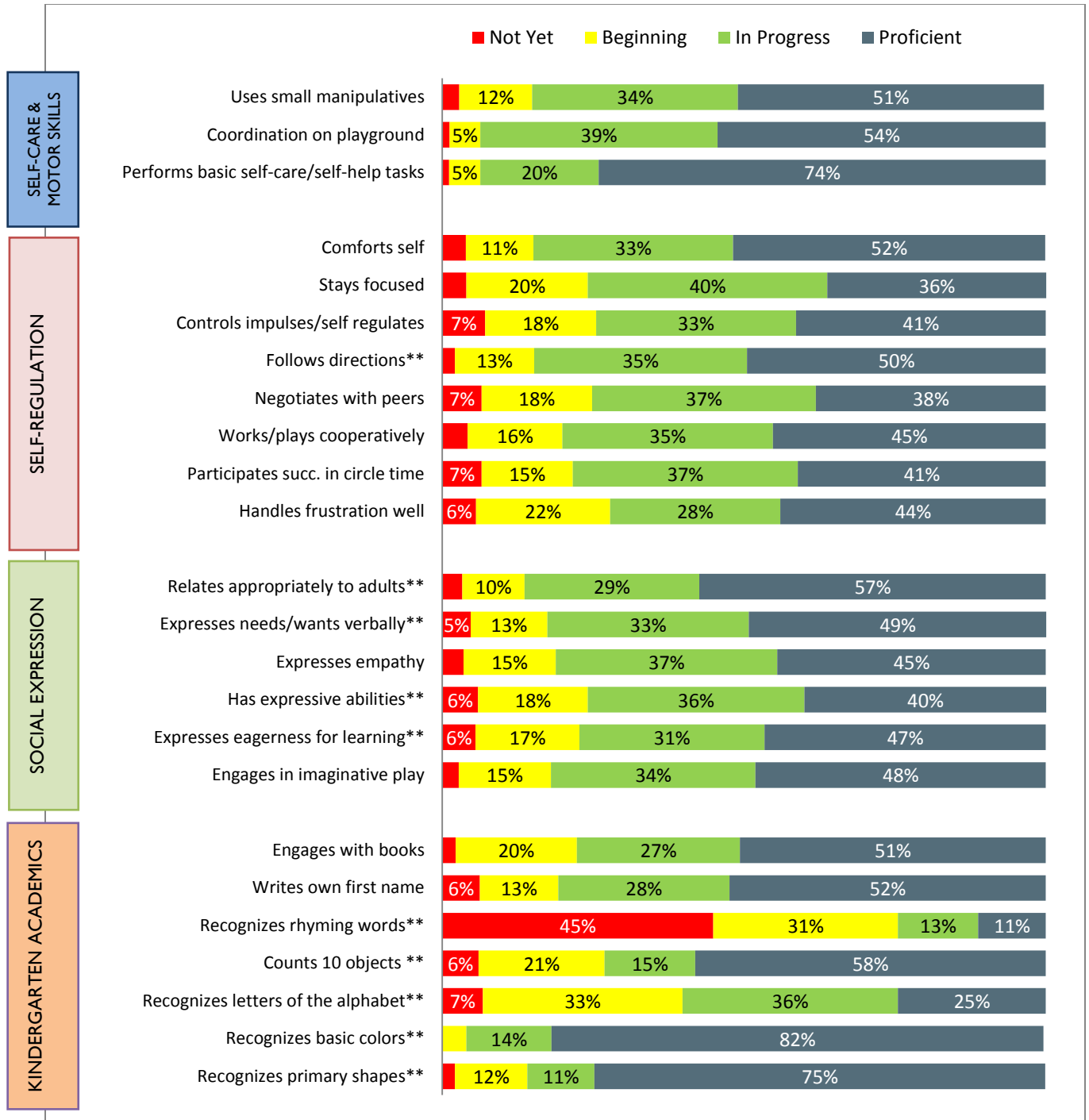
Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

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 279-283 San Lorenzo 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, recognizing basic colors, and recognizing primary shapes. In contrast, relatively few children were proficient at recognizing rhymes and letters of the alphabet.

**Figure 13. San Lorenzo Unified Students' Proficiency Levels Across 24 School Readiness Skills**

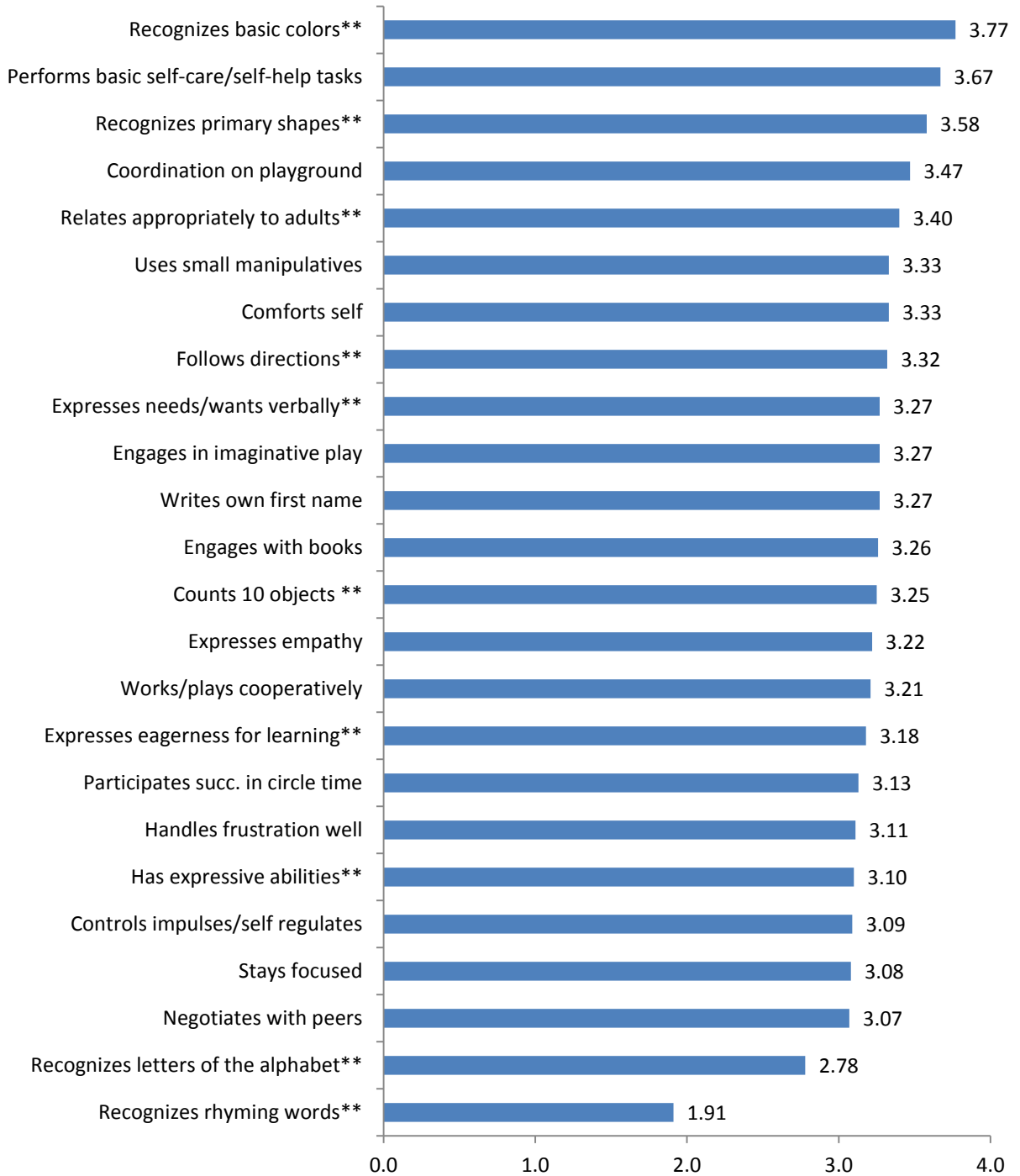


Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013). Sample size=249-283. Note: Scores range from 1 (Not yet) to 4 (Proficient). Proportions of less than 5% are not labeled. \*\* Language-dependent item: Scores were omitted for students for whom language barriers were a concern.

Students' average readiness levels are presented below. San Lorenzo Unified students entered kindergarten strongest on *Self-Care & Motor Skills*, relating appropriately to adults (*Social Expression*), and recognizing basic colors and shapes (*Kindergarten Academics*). The skills they were still developing included recognizing rhyming words and recognizing letters (*Kindergarten Academics*) and several *Self-Regulation* skills.



**Figure 14. San Lorenzo Unified Students' Average Readiness Levels**

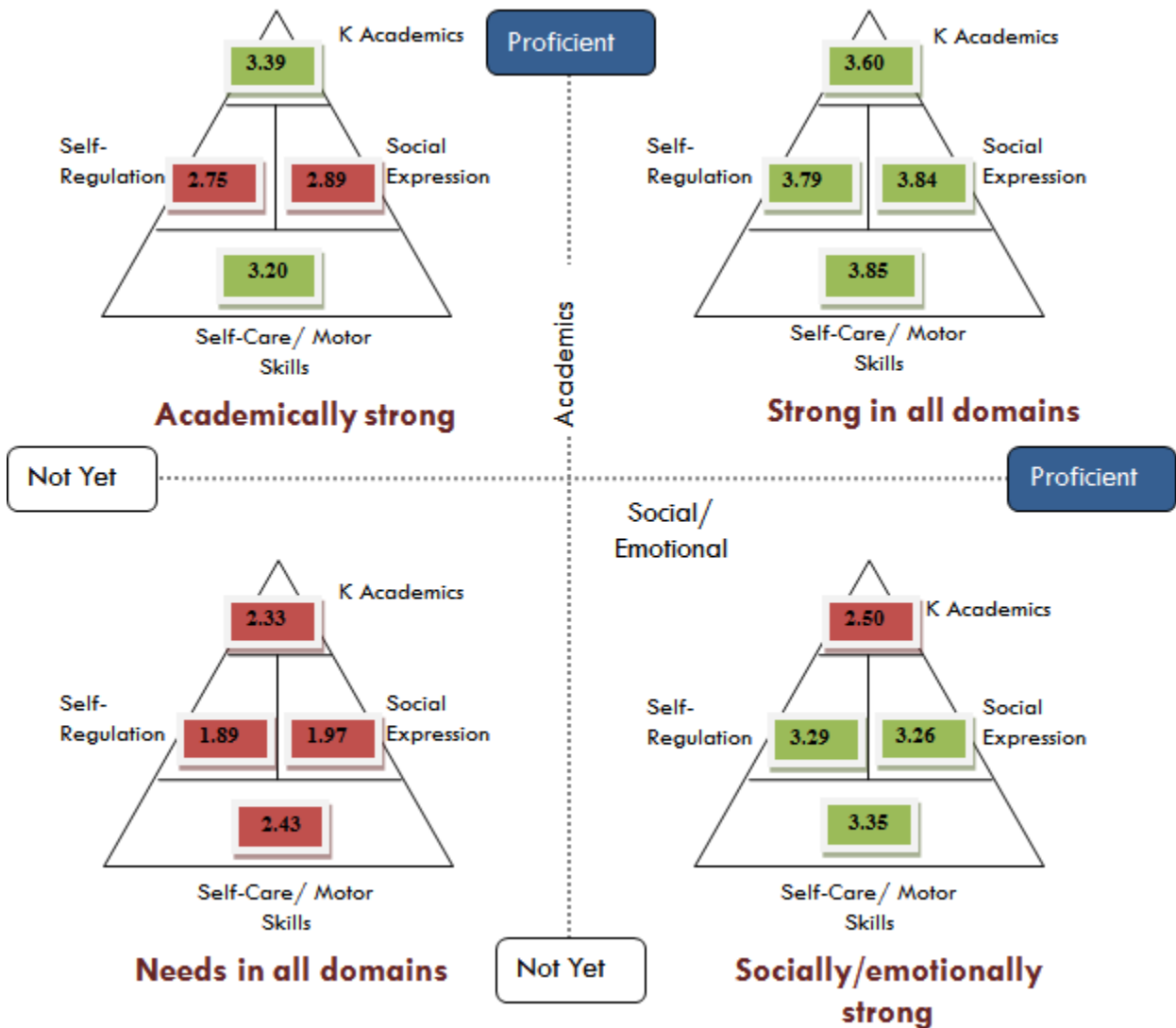


Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013). Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Scores are based on 255-282 students. \*\* Language-dependent item: Scores were omitted for students for whom language barriers were a concern.

## 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).<sup>8</sup> 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.

**Figure 15. Four Readiness Portraits**



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

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

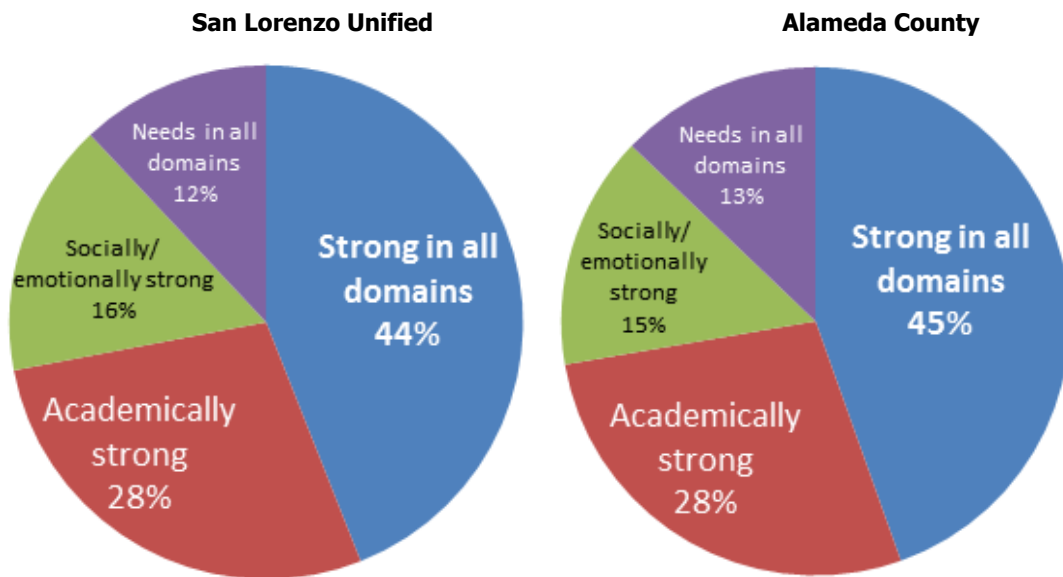
<sup>8</sup> Children were sorted into one of the four *Readiness Portraits* via a data-driven technique called cluster analysis.

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

- *Needs in all domains*: Twelve 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*: Just over one-quarter (28%) of San Lorenzo 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 16 percent of San Lorenzo 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 each profile in San Lorenzo was nearly identical to the proportion of students in each profile in county-wide.

**Figure 16. Prevalence of Four Portraits of Students' Readiness**



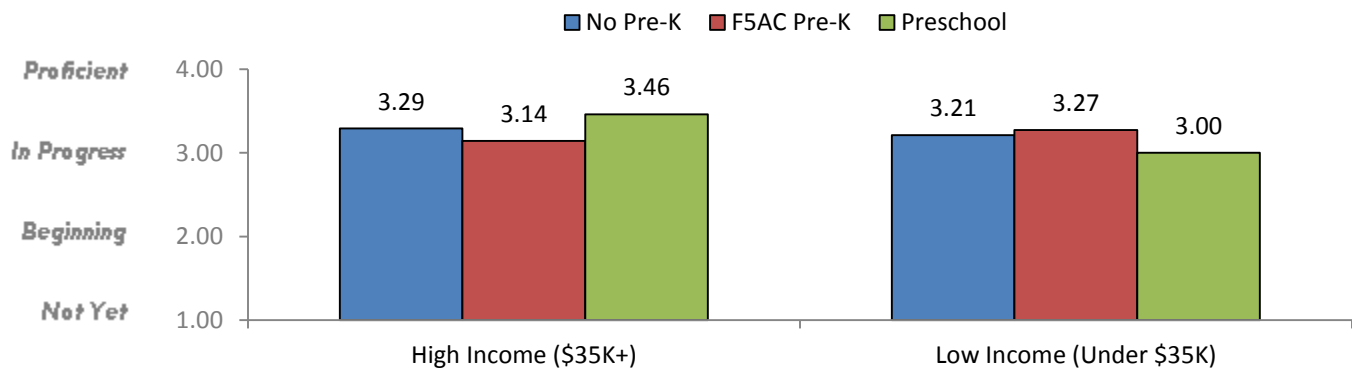
Source: Kindergarten Observation Form (2013).

Note: Proportions are based on 282 San Lorenzo 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 San Lorenzo 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 attending a F5AC-sponsored Pre-K program and to children without any pre-K. Although there were some small differences in readiness scores in San Lorenzo based on pre-K experience, none of these differences was 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 San Lorenzo 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), ECChange database. 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=139 (Low-Income); 101 (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 San Lorenzo Unified readiness assessment and the performance of San Lorenzo students in previous years. 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 (from a low of 262 students in 2010 to a high of 340 in 2011). Therefore, any comparisons should be made with the understanding that the students observed in each year 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 highest in 2011 and lowest in the current year. Across all years, children were strongest in *Self-Care & Motor Skills* and tended to have challenges in *Kindergarten Academics* and *Self-Regulation*.

**Figure 18. Average Readiness Scores across Assessments**

Assessment Year	Overall Readiness	Self-Care & Motor Skills	Self-Regulation	Social Expression	Kindergarten Academics
2010	3.30	3.67	3.24	3.29	3.18
2011	3.32	3.53	3.23	3.34	3.30
2013	3.20	3.49	3.16	3.23	3.11

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=283 (2013), 340 (2011), 262 (2010).

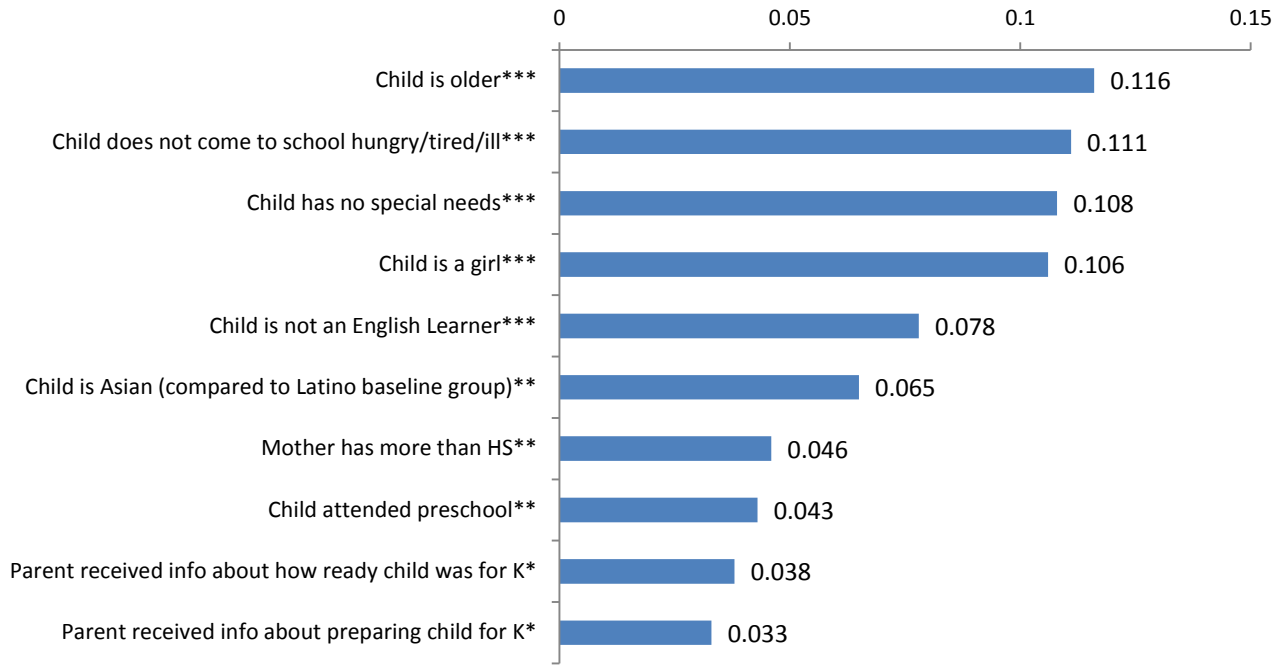
## Factors Related to Alameda County Students' Readiness

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 entry<sup>9</sup>. 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 San Lorenzo 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.
- 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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

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## Main Findings

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

- **Forty-four percent of students** in San Lorenzo Unified School District are entering kindergarten ready for school on all domains. A similar 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 readiness levels that were similar, but slightly lower than those of their peers in other regions of the County. On the other hand, *Self-Care & Motor Skills* were actually stronger among students in San Lorenzo Unified than among students county-wide.
- 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