E3: Quality Pre-K Matters

Kindergarten Readiness in Central Texas

As part of the Central Texas region's Blueprint for Educational Change™, school districts, community early childhood education providers, community organizations, regional experts, and local workforce boards committed to meeting the goal: **All Children Enter Kindergarten School Ready**. An E3 Alliance-led coalition collaborated almost two years to develop the state's first student-centered, multi-competency guide to school readiness, *Ready, Set, K!* This guide provides specific instructional practices and developmental interventions for Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers, and serves to measure and understand school readiness for Central Texas Kindergarteners.

Compelling Data

Since 2010, E3 Alliance has annually conducted the most comprehensive multi-dimensional, student-centered assessment of Kindergarten Readiness ever in the state. Five years of data gave insight into the factors that are associated with school readiness overall as well as what factors are associated with greater school readiness for our students.
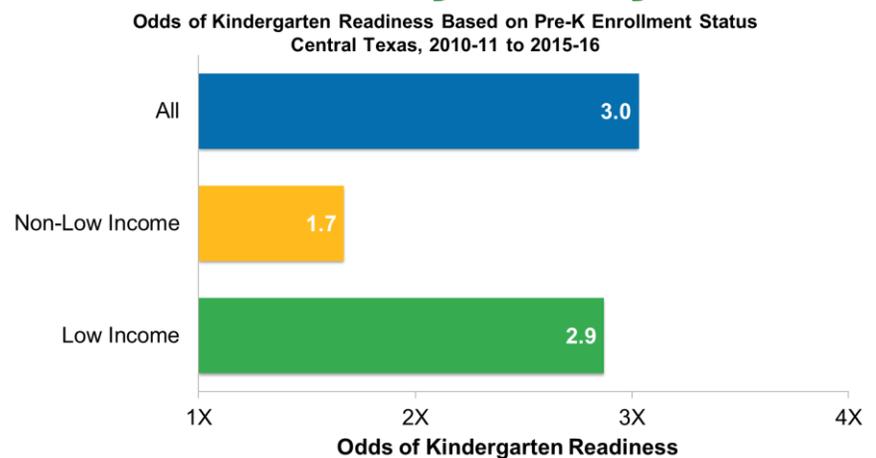
Child Outcomes Related to Income

Six years of data from the Kindergarten Readiness Study indicates that **family income level is a strong predictor of readiness**; with children in low income homes less likely to be ready for Kindergarten. When adjusting for income level, boys are less likely to be ready than girls, and Hispanic and Black children are less likely to be ready than White or Asian children. When adjusting for income level, overall readiness does not differ by language spoken at home, but English Language Learners are less ready in the language and communication readiness component.

Children with Pre-K Experience More Likely To Be Ready For School

Both low income and non-low income children who attend public or private Pre-K are significantly more likely to be ready for school when they enter Kindergarten than children who stayed at home or with a relative. In fact, when accounting for income and gender in a logistic regression analysis, **Kindergarten students who attended Pre-K were three times more likely to be ready for school**. This presents a dual agenda for the region: the need to support enrollment in Pre-K, especially for our poorest students, and the need to improve the quality and consistency of Pre-K instructional practice of public and private providers to ensure all children get the most out of this critical system.

Low Income Kindergartners with Pre-K Experience Almost 3 Times as Likely To Be Ready for School

Odds of Kindergarten Readiness Based on Pre-K Enrollment Status
Central Texas, 2010-11 to 2015-16

| Category	Odds of Kindergarten Readiness
All	3.0
Non-Low Income	1.7
Low Income	2.9

E3 Alliance analysis of *Ready,Set,K!* weighted data; odds ratios (as relative risk) from logistic regression by income status with Pre-K enrollment (Public & Private) and gender as predictors

Public Pre-K Enrollment

E3 Alliance examined the relationship between districts with a full or half day Pre-K program and their Pre-K student enrollment rates. Districts with full day Pre-K programs had significantly higher rates of enrollment for eligible children (85%) as compared to districts with half day Pre-K programs (73%). Students in some of the districts with half day Pre-K were also provided wrap-around services that provide a seamless full day of services for a sub-population of students (children receiving Head Start or child care subsidy for example). Even knowing that some students received these wrap-around services, there is still a 12 percentage point gap between full and half day Pre-K enrollment rates, clearly showing that families are more likely to enroll children in districts when full day Pre-K is available. In addition, districts with a full-day program had students in attendance 5 days more per year on average compared to districts with a half day program. With this significant difference in attendance, as well as the longer instructional day, children in full day pre-k have over 370 more hours of instruction during their pre-k year on average than their peers who attend a half day program.
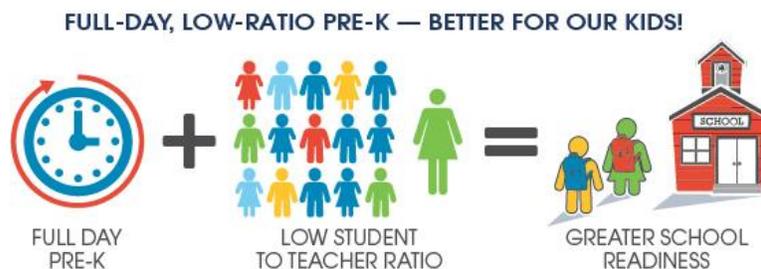
Parents More Likely to Enroll Child in Full-Day Pre-K Districts

Percent of Eligible Children Enrolled in Public Pre-K
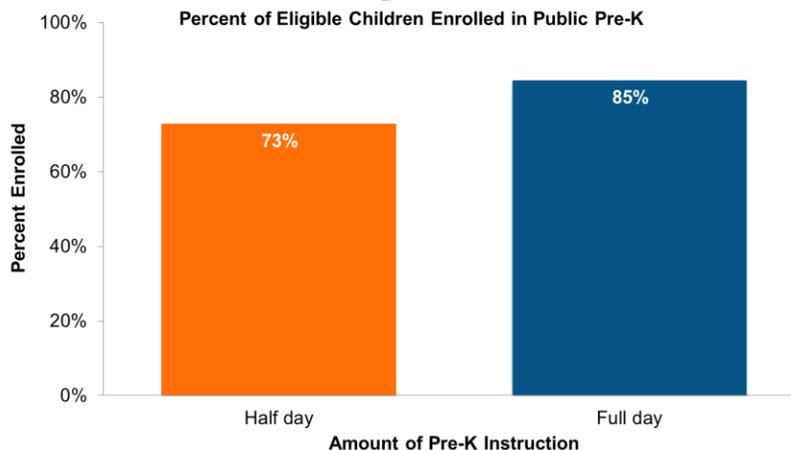
Eligible = Low Income and/or English Language Learner
Source: E3 analysis of data from the UT Austin Education Research Center, Central Texas, 2012-13

Public Pre-K Practices Correlated with Higher Readiness

E3 Alliance also examined the relationship between full or half day Pre-K for eligible students and subsequent Kindergarten readiness. Because our previous findings had suggested that districts had made budget trade-offs between full day Pre-K and low student-teacher ratios, we included both full and half day Pre-K and student-teacher ratio in this analysis. Low student-teacher ratio is defined as a district policy of 15 or fewer students per teacher and high ratio as a district policy of more than 15 students per teacher. We found that for overall readiness and for the domains of language & communication and emerging literacy & numeracy, eligible **students who had full day Pre-K *and* a low student-teacher ratio showed greater Kindergarten readiness than those who only had full-day Pre-K *or* a low student-teacher ratio, or who had neither**. It took the combination of full day Pre-K and low student-teacher ratios to see significantly greater Kindergarten readiness.

FULL-DAY, LOW-RATIO PRE-K — BETTER FOR OUR KIDS!

FULL DAY PRE-K + LOW STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIO = GREATER SCHOOL READINESS

Kindergarten Readiness Highly Predictive of Third Grade Performance

By longitudinally tracking students from Kindergarten to third grade we can see that Kindergarten Readiness is highly predictive of passing both reading and math state assessments in third grade. Kindergartens are 4 to 5 times more likely to pass their 3rd grade STAAR if they were rated as ready for school on *Ready, Set, K!* Kindergarten Readiness was more predictive of 3rd grade success than any demographic factor, such as income status or ethnicity.