2. KINDERGARTEN STUDENT ENTRANCE PROFILE (KSEP): WHY IS SCHOOL READINESS IMPORTANT?

SCHOOL READINESS PREDICTS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

A growing body of research suggests that specific aspects of children’s readiness, as well as overall readiness, are significant predictors of subsequent academic achievement. Children who have a broad base of school readiness experience acquire complex skills more rapidly than those who do not (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2000). Participation in pre-kindergarten programs that develop students' readiness for school is associated with significant positive effects on children’s performance on cognitive tests, pre-literacy skills, math reasoning, and problem-solving abilities (Gormley, 2005). Dearing and colleagues (2009) found that high quality care that facilitated overall school readiness during early childhood resulted in reading and mathematics achievement through middle childhood years. Quality care resulting in school readiness was also identified as a moderator between low family economic status and student math and reading achievement (Dearing, McCartney, & Taylor, 2009).

DOMAINS OF SCHOOL READINESS AS PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Literature categorizes the elements of school readiness into the broad areas of cognitive readiness, social-emotional, behavioral readiness, and physical readiness (Michlea & Michalca, 2007). When examining school readiness, it is essential to evaluate elements of readiness as a whole, as well as individually. Each aspect of school readiness has a significant and unique influence on students’ subsequent achievement, and these pieces together can be used to predict later student success.

Cognitive readiness (e.g., phonological development and number sense) is an important predictor of later academic achievement. For example, early literacy skills predict later reading fluency, writing fluency, and more extensive language development (Bowman et al., 2000; Lonigan, 2006). Academic performance in the classroom is correlated highly with scores on standardized assessments for early literacy and math (Graziano, Reavis, Keane, & Calkins, 2007).

In terms of social-emotional and behavioral readiness, Ladd and colleagues (2006) identified social-emotional and behavioral characteristics at school entry as the school readiness element that most predicted school adjustment and academic progress. Children’s ability to regulate emotions improves their ability to successfully navigate through the transition to kindergarten, and acquire the necessary academic information (Graziano et al., 2007). The ability to plan, regulate, problem solve, and attend to a task in kindergarten was positively related to school achievement at the end of the first grade (Normandeau & Guay, 1998). Fostering social-emotional and behavioral readiness was found to be correlated with developing cognitive readiness in preschool students (Bierman, Torres, Domitrovich, Welsh, & Gest, 2009).

Physical readiness is another key element of school readiness and refers to the general health and well-being of a student at school entry and the physical environment the child may have been exposed to that could influence school readiness. Several broad health issues are related to a child’s learning including: nutrition, weight, hunger, physical environment, and ongoing medical conditions (Pascoe, Shaikh, Forsbis, & Etzel, 2007). Health and environmental concerns that influence a child’s physical readiness for school strongly impact a student’s cognitive, social-emotional, and behavioral readiness as well (Currie, 2005).

REFERENCES


For more information see http://web.me.com/michaelfurlong (look for KSEP link in menu)

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