Revolutionizing professional development and learning for early childhood educators

Kindergarten Readiness Fact Sheet

There is a broad evidence base to support play as a necessary ingredient in order for young children to grow, develop, and thrive in school and in life. Further, there is substantial evidence regarding the uniqueness of the early years, particularly in terms of the increased variability of when children obtain skills, and the interrelatedness of developmental areas.

Today’s early educators, however, feel as though they must decide between meeting “high expectations” and following “developmentally appropriate practices.” Early educators feel a push to teach academic skills and ignore other critical areas of development, such as social-emotional learning, in order to ensure children are ready for Kindergarten.

As the early childhood community continues to grapple with what we mean by readiness, aims to standardize expectations while personalizing instruction, and debates whether we should teach or play...perhaps we’ve asked the wrong set of questions, and that these questions have forced us to think in terms of “either-or.” Perhaps, the answers we seek come when we think in terms of “and-both.”

Quotes for Discussion by Stakeholders

“Promoting social-emotional and character development of children is, paradoxically, the best opportunity for innovation in education. It is accessible, feasible, sensible, cost-effective, within our grasp, and supported by evidence.” – Maurice Elias

"Our schools will not improve if we continue to focus only on reading and mathematics while ignoring the other studies that are essential elements of a good education. Schools that expect nothing more of their students than mastery of basic skills will not produce graduates who are ready for college or the modern workplace." - Diane Ravitch

"...a focus on self-regulation and executive functions in school readiness research does not supplant or take precedence over a focus on acquired knowledge of letters and numbers. If anything, it supports and expands the focus on acquired knowledge" (Blair & Raver, 2015, p 721). "...such an understanding of self-regulation development informs understanding of how children may arrive at school with very different profiles of self-regulation capabilities and also the best ways to structure learning opportunities for children to support self-regulation" (Blair & Raver, 2015, p. 716).
More Resources and Readings

Developmentally Appropriate Practice and the Common Core State Standards: Framing the Issues
- The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

Common Core and DAP: Seeking clarity
- Kyle Snow, Ph.D, Director, Center for Applied Research, National Association for the Education of Young Children

The Common Core State Standards are not a curriculum
- Dorothy Strickland, NIEER Distinguished Research Fellow

Is the Common Core Developmentally Appropriate?
- Public access television show

Several articles by The Alliance for Childhood, who aims to promote policies and practices that support children's healthy development, love of learning, and joy in living.
- http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/

Kindergarten Readiness Tests Wasting Valuable Teaching Time
- neaToday

Beyond the Classroom: Is the ‘kindergarten cram’ doing more harm than good for our kids?
- Laurie Futterman

Joy: A Subject Schools Lack
- Susan Engal, The Atlantic
  "You can force a child to stay in his or her seat, fill out a worksheet, or practice division. But you can’t force a person to think carefully, enjoy books, digest complex information, or develop a taste for learning. To make that happen, you have to help the child find pleasure in learning—to see school as a source of joy."
An Examination of Frameworks for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Reflected in State K-12 Learning Standards: Helping advance the effective use of data to inspire practice in SEL

- “Looking across states at the most common priorities and approaches, we found that 11 (78.57%) connected their standards with academics, 11 (78.57%) connected their standards explicitly to career/workforce readiness and 12 states also connected to school climate and culture (though not the same 10 states). Eight states (57.14%) connected their standards explicitly to mental health and/or trauma. Five states (35.71%) connected their SEL standards to a whole child approach with four of 14 states also connecting to Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS). Three states (21.43%) connected to Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) and only two (14.29%) to character development. Kansas, New York, and Tennessee seem to be the most comprehensive in their efforts to connect to these strategic priorities and approaches.” (2019, p. 10-11)

State Level Perspective on Kindergarten Readiness

- Slutzky & DeBruin-Parecki, 2019
  - “Early research involved parents and teachers rating the importance of a fixed set of child-level indicators of readiness; findings suggested that these stakeholders agree about the importance of noncognitive features such as young children’s health, communication skills, and approach to learning but disagree about the role of academic skills and knowledge.”

Kindergarten Readiness Starts Prenatally

- NICHQ President and CEO Scott D. Berns, MD, MPH, FAAP
  - “We need to remember that it’s the prenatal space, even earlier than the birth to 3 space, that helps give children the best start on kindergarten readiness.” (2019)

“Noam Chomsky [video] “The assessment itself is completely artificial. It’s not ranking teachers in accordance with their ability to help develop children who will reach their potential . . . It’s turning us into individuals who devote our lives to achieving a rank.”

Visit kristiepf.com for additional services, resources, supports, or information.