

Stanislaus County
School Readiness Evaluation
2007-2008

Part 1: Services and Outcomes

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Executive Summary

School Readiness (SR) in Stanislaus County

Stanislaus County currently funds 10 School Readiness sites, representing 7 unique school districts. Cycle 1 programs were in their fourth or fifth year of operation at the time of the 2007-2008 assessments, while Cycle 2 programs were in their first or second year.

School Readiness projects in Stanislaus County were designed to respond to the needs of the community and to be in synchrony with the priorities of the school district. They differ greatly from one another, even though all conform to the five essential and coordinated elements specified by First 5 California.

A comparison of Stanislaus County Kindergarten Readiness scores with statewide data on at-risk children illustrates the challenges faced by SR programs in Stanislaus County. Most children entering SR schools lack the communication skills, learning experiences, and emotional/social skills they need to succeed in school. Children entering low-performing schools in Stanislaus County are even more at risk for failure than their counterparts in other counties.

The School Readiness Program Evaluation

The Stanislaus County SR Program Evaluation began in August, 2003. Since that time, children entering Kindergarten classes at each school linked to a School Readiness program have been invited to participate. Participants are tracked through sixth grade to compare the academic and social development of children who attend schools with SR programs to the development of a baseline sample of children who attended participating schools before SR programs were available.

When this report was written, there were 3,134 children in the Stanislaus County SR Evaluation database. The 2007-2008 Kindergarten sample consisted of 519 students from 10 schools with active SR programs. About half of these children speak Spanish at home, and about one third had no preschool experience.

Services to Children and Families

Health related services: Utilization of health services improved among children entering SR schools in 2007-2008; almost all Kindergarten children received health checks within 12 months of beginning school. However, the percentage of children receiving behavior/emotional checks remained relatively low. There was a notable decline in attendance at safety/health programs over the past year, with much of the decline occurring at established Cycle 1 programs.

Parent/family support services: Participation in adult activities remained low among families of the 2007-08 Kindergarten cohort. The one service that was used by families most often at SR sites was parenting classes. Adult education was nearly nonexistent at most SR sites in the Stanislaus County.

Early Child Education (ECE) services: ECE was a challenge for SR sites in 2007-2008. There was no change in the percentage of children with preschool experience, and participation in parent-child classes remained low. Attendance at preschool literacy fairs/presentations was limited, and utilization of free books programs declined from the previous year. The sole improvement in ECE services was an increase in the number of students attending transition programs, which was especially evident in Cycle 2 programs.

Recommendations

1. SR sites in Stanislaus County should ensure that children showing early behavior problems are screened and receive services as needed.

2. SR sites in Stanislaus County should make adult education (ESL or vocational training) a high priority for the coming year.
3. The Children and Families Commission should collaborate with other stakeholders to increase the availability of quality preschool experiences for Stanislaus County children.
4. SR sites in Stanislaus County should ensure that pre-literacy experiences are made available to families with children 3-5.

School Readiness Program Outcomes 2007-2008

Health checks: Across all SR sites, 74.5% of children received health checks in all four areas (physical, vision, hearing, and dental) last year. This represents an increase from the previous year, and was primarily due to increased health screenings among English learners.

Mental health support: With a few exceptions, SR sites in Stanislaus County did not perform well in providing mental health support, with only 19.4% of the most recent cohort receiving one or more behavioral services. Very few children without preschool experience received behavioral services.

Parent involvement: Across all SR sites, 44.3% of parents both met the teacher and observed the Kindergarten class during the first few months of the 2007-2008 school year. Compared to 2006-2007, parent involvement declined markedly at Cunningham and Grayson Charter, but increased substantially at Richard Moon.

Home literacy environment: Daily reading combined with either singing or storytelling at least once a week was reported by 61.4% of SR families in 2007-2008, compared to 52.0% the previous year. SR sites in Stanislaus County did very well on this objective, and improvement was noted at several sites.

Kindergarten readiness: Across all categories, 32.5% of children entering Kindergarten at SR sites were seen by their teachers as ready for school, a decrease of 7.3%. Decreases were larger among children who attended preschool, and were particularly evident at California Avenue, a traditionally high performer. As in previous years, readiness scores were particularly low for children who do not speak English at home.

Literacy skills: Across the county, 58.4% of 2007-2008 SR children demonstrated emerging or established skills in Kindergarten, almost the same as last year (59.4%). Whereas 69.6% of English speakers scored at or only slightly below grade level, only 48.1% of English learners were. However, more English learners with preschool experience scored at grade level in 2007-2008. Grayson Charter – which has the highest percentage of English learners in the SR evaluation – experienced a small decline from the previous year but continued its trend of strong literacy scores.

Positive social skills: The proportion of children who demonstrated good social skills in the classroom appeared to fall over the last year; across all groups, 45.9% scored well in 2006-2007, but only 37.0% did so this year. However, the decline was not county-wide. One of the largest groups in the sample decreased substantially and three other schools actually showed improvement.

Control of negative behavior: Overall, the percentage of children showing good control of negative behavior in the classroom remained steady this year. However, results varied across schools. Improvement was evident at four sites.

Recommendations:

5. SR sites should increase mental health screenings, especially for families whose children do not attend preschool.
6. SR sites should ensure that all families meet their Kindergarten teacher before the first day of school and observe the Kindergarten classroom in operation at least once.

7. The County School Readiness Coordinator should lead an effort by all SR sites to develop and implement strategies to improve Kindergarten entry competencies and pre-literacy skills of English learners who do not attend preschool.
8. California Avenue Elementary should investigate factors contributing to its decline in Kindergarten readiness and take immediate action to counteract them.
9. SR sites that are currently struggling with literacy development among English learners should consider the practices adopted by Grayson Charter.
10. SR sites that are experiencing a high percentage of behavioral problems should consider the practices adopted by Richard Moon.

I. School Readiness in Stanislaus County

Background

The California First 5 School Readiness (SR) Initiative strives to improve the ability of families, schools, and communities to prepare children to enter school ready to succeed. The California Children and Families Commission adopted the *National Education Goals Panel* (NEGP) definition of school readiness; Stanislaus County has been promoting improvement in three areas as its school readiness projects become established.

School Readiness Improvement Areas

- ✓ Children’s readiness for school
- ✓ Schools’ readiness for children
- ✓ Family and community supports and services that contribute to children’s readiness for success in school

School Readiness projects in Stanislaus County were designed to respond to the needs of the community and to be in synchrony with the priorities of the school district. They differ greatly from one another, even though all conform to the five essential and coordinated elements specified by First 5 California.

In Cycle 1 of the SR Initiative (2002-2006), five districts were awarded funding to serve children and families in neighborhoods surrounding 13 elementary schools. Each district designed a unique program that met its community needs and provided support in each of the five coordinated and essential elements. Stanislaus County’s five SR programs were developed separately across a one-year span. One district (Modesto) discontinued its association with the SR Initiative at the end of the 2005-2006 academic year, but students already enrolled in the evaluation continued to participate in assessment activities.

District	Years in Operation	School(s)
Chatom	1	Chatom
Keyes	2	Keyes
Modesto*	3	Bret Harte, Burbank, Kirschen, Marshall, Orville Wright, Robertson Road, Shackelford, Tuolumne
Newman-Crows Landing	2	Von Renner
Patterson	5	Grayson Charter
Riverbank	5	California Avenue
Turlock	1	Rio Altura
	4	Osborn, Wakefield
Waterford	2	Cunningham
	4	Richard Moon

* Recruitment of new participants from Modesto ended after 2005-2006.

Growth in SR Programs

In 2006, Cycle 2 of the SR Initiative began, adding three districts and five schools to the program. Some sites provided services immediately by sponsoring summer transition programs, and other sites began offering services the next academic year. Table 1, above, shows the number of years the SR programs serving each school had been in operation at the time of the 2007-2008 assessments.

Stanislaus County Children At-Risk

Children served by Stanislaus County SR programs are at risk for not succeeding in school. They come from families that struggle with poverty, lack of employment opportunities and health care, language difficulties, and low educational attainment. In Year 1, the first year of SR funding (2003-2004 or 2004-2005 for Cycle 1 districts, 2006-2007 or 2007-2008 for Cycle 2 districts), the percent of children within each district who were ready for school at Kindergarten entry ranged from 4.8% to 50.0%, with a median of 25.5%.

In 2006, First 5 California published the results of Kindergarten evaluations in SR schools statewide using a modified version of the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP).¹ The report calculated the percent of children rated as having emerging or established skills on all questions within the domains described to the right.

Data were collected from 11,263 Kindergarten children in 123 SR schools in 2003, 2004, and 2006. More than half (56%) of the children spoke Spanish at home and 62% had regularly attended a preschool or center-based child care program. In that study, 23% to 46% of all children had fully or almost mastered all of the developmental skills and behaviors measured for each of the four domains.

The demographic profile of Stanislaus County SR children is similar to that in the statewide study; in the first year of SR funding for each district, 54.2% of the sample spoke Spanish at home and 60.8% had preschool experience. Yet, in three of the four domains, Stanislaus County children lagged well behind other at-risk children in the state. Only in one domain, cognition and general knowledge, did the Stanislaus County sample perform better than others in the state.

Desired Results Domains

- **Cognition and General Knowledge** questions target age-appropriate school skills, concepts and information (e.g., ordering objects, using numbers, reading skills, and writing).
- **Emotional Well-Being and Social Competence** questions pertain to personal well-being and skills that allow a child to participate appropriately in classroom activities (e.g., self-control, taking turns, following directions, and developing friendships).
- **Positive Approaches to Learning** questions assess attributes that constructively involve children into learning (e.g., curiosity, creativity, and persistence).
- **Communicative Skills** questions focus on age-appropriate understanding and use of oral and written language in expressing thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Table 2: Comparison of Stanislaus County with Statewide Results

Domain	Stanislaus County SR Year 1	Statewide 2004-2006	Difference
Cognition/General Knowledge	42.9%	28%	14.9%
Communicative Skills	13.2%	33%	-19.8%
Positive Approaches to Learning	29.3%	40%	-10.7%
Emotional/Social Competencies	25.5%	38%	-12.5%

These data illustrate the challenges faced by SR programs in Stanislaus County. Historically, most children entering SR schools lack the communication skills, learning experiences, and emotional/social skills they need to succeed in school. Children entering low-performing schools in Stanislaus County are at even greater risk for failure than their counterparts in other counties.

¹ In Stanislaus County, Kindergarten evaluations utilize a related tool, the Adapted Desired Results Developmental Profile (ADRDP), which is shorter. Since both forms have demonstrated high inter-item correlations (alpha = .95 and above), Stanislaus County scores can be compared to statewide norms in 2006. However, since the ADRDP has fewer questions per area, it is statistically easier to score a 3 or 4 on all questions. This could result in a slight inflation of ADRDP scores when compared to the statewide norms.

Evaluation Finishes Year 5

The Stanislaus County SR program Evaluation began in August of 2003. Since that time, incoming Kindergarten classes at each school linked to a School Readiness program have been invited to participate. The consent rates for the evaluation were initially 62.5%, but now typically average 75%-80%.

Children whose parents give permission are assessed for Kindergarten competencies, social skills, and pre-literacy skills. Participants are tracked through sixth grade to compare the academic and social development of children who attend schools with SR programs to the development of a baseline sample of children who attended participating schools before SR programs were available. About 80%-85% of the children who entered the evaluation in Kindergarten are successfully tracked through first grade, and 70%-75% are successfully tracked through third grade. (No children have reached sixth grade yet.) When this report was written, there were 3,134 children in the Stanislaus County SR Evaluation database. The assessments tools used to evaluate these children are detailed in Appendix A.

Kinder Cohort 2007-2008

The Year 5 Kindergarten sample consisted of 519 students from 10 schools, representing 7 districts with active SR programs. More than half of the children (52.4%) speak Spanish at home and 38.4% had no preschool experience. The greatest numbers of children came from Riverbank and Turlock (see Table 3). The sample was almost evenly split between boys (52%) and girls (48%).

Table 3: Number of Students Per District

District	Number	Percent
Chatom Union	62	11.9
Keyes Union	59	11.4
Newman-Crows Landing Unified	56	10.8
Patterson Unified	34	6.6
Riverbank Unified	125	24.1
Turlock Unified	142	27.4
Waterford Unified	41	7.9
Total	519	

II. Services to Children and Families

The SR Evaluation captures information about 23 services that are provided directly by, or are accessed through, one or more SR programs in Stanislaus County. A list of these services is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Services Tracked through SR Evaluation

Health Related Services	Parent/Family Support	Early Childhood Education (ECE)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical health checks/services Vision checks/services Hearing checks/services Dental checks/services Behavior/emotional checks Home visits for health care Nutritional classes Health care classes Safety programs Health fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult education Family counseling Father/male involvement programs Parenting classes Vocational education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preschool Free book programs Home visits for ECE Parent-child classes Kindergarten enrichment programs Literacy fairs/presentations Pre-literacy programs Summer transition programs

Health Related Services

A very high proportion of children entering SR schools in 2007-2008 received health services within 12 months of the beginning of school. Health and vision checks increased substantially over the previous year as Cycle 2 programs moved into full operation. Health care continues as one of the primary strengths of Stanislaus County SR programs.

However, the percentage of children receiving behavior/emotional checks remained relatively low, despite the demonstrated results of early intervention in resolving behavior problems. Increasing the proportion of children and families receiving such services is important to improving the classroom environment.

Safety and health programs are also of concern, as these participation in these programs declined markedly over the past year. Much of the decline occurred at established Cycle 1 sites.

Table 5: Health Related Services 2006 vs. 2007

	2007-2008	2006-2007	Change
Physical health checks/services	95.6%	81.8%	13.8%
Vision checks/services	92.6%	80.1%	12.5%
Hearing checks/services	90.6%	85.0%	5.6%
Dental checks/services	85.2%	76.4%	8.8%
Nutritional classes	24.4%	21.0%	3.4%
Behavior/emotional checks	18.8%	26.8%	-8.0%
Safety programs	10.1%	25.9%	-15.8%
Health fairs	7.6%	15.4%	-7.8%
Home visits for health care	4.9%	31.2%	1.7%
Health care classes	3.2%	9.3%	-6.1%

Parent/Family Support Services

Participation in family support services remained low, despite the growing need for such services in the current economic climate. The only service used by families at most sites was parenting classes. The rate of participation in these classes in 2007-2008 was unchanged from the previous year.

Family support is one of the essential and coordinated elements of SR programs. In 2007-2008, the only sites offering adult education activities were California Avenue, Cunningham Elementary, and Osborn Elementary.

Table 6: Parent/Family Support Services 2006 vs. 2007

	2007-2008	2006-2007	Change
Adult education	6.4%	5.1%	1.3%
Family counseling	3.0%	3.4%	-0.4%
Father/male programs	7.7%	6.8%	0.9%
Parenting classes	23.8%	23.7%	0.1%
Vocational education	2.3%	2.9%	-0.6%

Early Childhood Education Services

Providing early childhood education opportunities to all children continues to be a challenge for Stanislaus County SR programs. Preschool opportunities are limited in some school districts, and high mobility interrupts the early education of some children. As a consequence, many SR projects opt for intervention in the 6 months before Kindergarten.

Preschool attendance remained unchanged from the previous year, and parent-child classes remained low. The only improvement in ECE services over the previous year was in the number of students attending transition programs. This improvement was especially marked in Cycle 2 programs.

Other means of reaching children aged 3-5 also declined since last year. Attendance at literacy fairs/presentations was limited in all districts other than Turlock, and fewer schools utilized free books programs in 2007-2008 than in the preceding year. The only sites in which a substantial number of children received free books were California Avenue and Keyes Elementary.

Table 7: Early Childhood Education Services 2006 vs. 2007

	2007-2008	2006-2007	Change
Preschool	61.6%	63.3%	-1.7%
Summer transition programs	45.8%	30.2%	15.6%
Free book programs	38.9%	58.0%	-19.1%
Pre-literacy programs	20.1%	23.2%	-3.1%
Literacy fairs/presentations	14.7%	24.9%	-10.2%
Home visits for ECE	9.1%	12.7%	-3.6%
Parent-child classes	4.5%	12.7%	-8.2%
Kindergarten enrichment programs	12.9%	12.8%	0.1%

Recommendations

- 1) SR sites in Stanislaus County should ensure that children showing early behavior problems are screened and receive services as needed.
- 2) SR sites in Stanislaus County should make adult education (ESL or vocational training) a high priority for the coming year.
- 3) The Children and Families Commission should collaborate with other stakeholders to increase the availability of quality preschool experiences for Stanislaus County children.
- 4) SR sites in Stanislaus County should ensure that pre-literacy experiences are made available to families with children aged 3-5.

III. SR Program Outcomes 2007-2008

Stanislaus County Desired Outcomes

Stanislaus County School Readiness (SR) projects are united by a common set of desired outcomes, even though the strategies used to achieve them may vary from school to school. Table 8 presents those outcomes and the indicators currently used by the SR evaluation team to assess performance.

This chapter compares outcomes to the previous year across the county and within groups based on language and preschool attendance. In addition, individual SR schools are cited for notable improvement or decline.

Table 8: Stanislaus County Outcomes and Indicators

Outcomes	Outcome indicators
Health checks	The percent of children having <u>all</u> health checks completed prior to Kindergarten (e.g., physical, health, vision, and hearing)
Mental health support	The percent of families who received family counseling <u>or</u> whose child had a behavior/mental health assessment.
Parent involvement	The percent of parents who met the teacher before the first day of school <u>and</u> observed at least once during the first 2 months of Kindergarten
Home literacy environment	The percent of families who read every day <u>and</u> sing or tell stories several times a week
Kindergarten readiness	The percent of children whose average ADRDP score was in the “almost mastered” or “fully mastered” range
Literacy skills	The percent of children whose average DIBELS score was in the “emerging” or “established” range
Positive social skills	The percent of children whose teachers rated them as “often” or “very often” engaging in positive social behavior
Control of negative behavior	The percent of children whose teachers rated them as “never” or only “sometimes” engaging in negative emotion behaviors

Health Checks

Overall, health screenings were strong for SR projects in Stanislaus County. Across all sites last year, 74.5% of children received health checks in all four areas (physical, vision, hearing, and dental), compared to 67.1% the previous year. This increase in health screenings was seen primarily among children

who were English learners. The net effect of the increase was to bring the screening percentage for English learners much closer to the percentage for English speakers than was the case in 2006-2007.

Screening rates were higher than average at SR sites linked to California Avenue, Richard Moon, Osborn, and Von Renner elementary schools, while health screenings were performed least often at the Keyes, Grayson Charter, and Wakefield sites.

Table 9: Health Checks by Preschool and Language

		2007-2008	2006-2007	Change
No Preschool	English Speakers	71.7%	73.8%	-1.9%
	English Learners	69.8%	57.3%	12.5%
Preschool	English Speakers	77.6%	73.0%	4.6%
	English Learners	75.2%	63.5%	11.7%

Mental Health Support

With a few exceptions, SR sites in Stanislaus County did not provide sufficient mental health supports. Mental health services (behavior checks and counseling) declined slightly over the past year, with 19.4% of families in the most recent cohort receiving one or the other service, compared to 29.5% in 2006. The decline occurred primarily in families whose children attended preschool, as very few other children who did not attend preschool received mental health services.

Richard Moon Elementary was a visible exception in the mental health area, with 59.0% of families there receiving mental health support. Other Cycle 1 schools served only about 22%-35% of the Kindergarten class, while the percentage was much lower at Grayson Charter (7.4%). At most Cycle 2 schools, fewer than 18% of families received mental health support, with virtually no services received by children at Chatom Elementary.

Table 10: Mental Health Support by Preschool and Language

		2007-2008	2006-2007	Change
No Preschool	English Speakers	5.4%	7.5%	-2.1%
	English Learners	3.5%	3.7%	-0.2%
Preschool	English Speakers	28.5%	43.5%	-18.0%
	English Learners	28.0%	44.9%	-19.1%

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement in the Kindergarten classroom is not as high as it should be in Stanislaus County. Across all SR sites, 44.3% of parents both met the teacher and observed the Kindergarten class during the first few months of school in 2007-2008. This is only a 1.9% decrease from the previous year, but the year-to-year changes varied dramatically from one district to another. Notable declines in parent involvement occurred at Cunningham and Grayson Charter Elementary Schools, mostly among families whose children did not attend preschool. By contrast, parent involvement increased substantially at Richard Moon Elementary.

Table 11: Parent Involvement by Preschool and Language

		2007-2008	2006-2007	Change
No Preschool	English Speakers	37.0%	58.7%	-21.7%
	English Learners	32.9%	36.7%	-3.8%
Preschool	English Speakers	55.2%	50.4%	4.8%
	English Learners	43.8%	41.2%	2.6%

Home Literacy Environment

With a few exceptions, SR sites in Stanislaus County did very well in providing home environments that foster literacy development, and improvement was noted in this area at several sites. Daily reading combined with either singing or storytelling

at least once a week was reported by 61.4% of SR families in 2007-2008, compared to 52.0% the previous year. However, this practice was more common among English-speaking families than among families of English learners, and the countywide improvement was observed primarily among English speakers. More than 80% of families met the standard at Keyes and Osborn Elementary schools.

Table 12: Parent Involvement by Preschool and Language

		2007-2008	2006-2007	Change
No Preschool	English Speakers	60.9%	50.8%	10.1%
	English Learners	54.1%	50.6%	3.5%
Preschool	English Speakers	70.3%	53.4%	16.9%
	English Learners	59.2%	53.5%	5.7%

Kindergarten Readiness

Across all categories, 32.5% of children entering Kindergarten at SR sites were rated by their teachers as ready for school. This represents a 7.3% decrease from the previous year’s average. The decline was most pronounced for students who attended preschool.

The school readiness disadvantage for English learners that was noted in previous years was evident again this year. Only 19%-22% of children in this group were rated by their teachers as ready for school. This trend may be partly explained by teachers basing their ratings not just on academic and behavioral skills, but also on the language spoken by each child. However, this potential artifact is not sufficient to account for the observed readiness deficit among English learners.

Table 13: Readiness by Preschool and Language

		2007-2008	2006-2007	Change
No Preschool	English Speakers	40.4%	45.5%	-5.1%
	English Learners	19.0%	23.5%	-4.5%
Preschool	English Speakers	47.0%	55.2%	-8.2%
	English Learners	22.0%	30.9%	-8.9%

Kindergarten readiness differed across schools, as did the decline in readiness from the previous year. Performance on the ADRDP was not related to the funding cycle. For example, Richard Moon (a Cycle 1 school) had the highest percentage of children rated as ready for school, but Rio Altura (a Cycle 2 school) was a close second. The failure of Cycle 1 schools to outperform Cycle 2 schools – despite having SR programs in place for 4 or 5 years – does not necessarily indicate poor outcomes of Cycle 1 SR programs. Economic and social factors, including the language spoken at home, differ among schools.

Kindergarten readiness at Osborn Elementary increased dramatically this year, bringing it to the middle of the school rankings after 4 years of low performance. Most other schools showed a small to moderate decline in performance, but a strong decline was visible at California Avenue, a traditional high performer.

Literacy Skills

Across the county, 58.4% of 2007-2008 SR children demonstrated emerging or established literacy skills in Kindergarten, almost the same as last year (59.4%). The majority of English speakers scored well on the literacy assessments, especially if they had preschool experience. However, most English learners did not score as well, and a large decline was evident among those who did not attend preschool. On a positive note, English learners with preschool experience showed experienced sizeable competency gains this year.

Table 14: Literacy Skills by Preschool and Language

		2007-2008	2006-2007	Change
No Preschool	English Speakers	65.8%	67.2%	-1.4%
	English Learners	42.6%	58.1%	-15.5%
Preschool	English Speakers	72.2%	74.1%	-1.9%
	English Learners	51.6%	41.5%	10.1%

As with Kindergarten readiness, performance on the DIBELS was not related to the funding cycle. The weakest performance was found at Rio Altura and at Von Renner, which are both Cycle 2 schools. However, Chatom, another Cycle 2 school, showed excellent literacy scores, as did Richard Moon and Grayson Charter, which are Cycle 1 schools. Grayson’s performance is particularly notable, as more than 80% of the children there are English learners – a higher percentage than all other schools in the SR evaluation.

Positive Social Skills

The proportion of children who demonstrated good social skills in the classroom appeared to fall over the last year, mostly among English speakers who did not attend preschool. Across all groups, 45.9% scored well in 2006-07, but only 37.0% did so this year.

However, the decline was not county-wide. One of the largest groups in the sample, California Avenue Elementary, fell 43.9%; a smaller but still noteworthy decrease also was evident at Von Renner Elementary. The percentage of children demonstrating good skills increased at Keyes, Richard Moon, and Osborn Elementary Schools.

Table 15: Social Skills by Preschool and Language

		2007-2008	2006-2007	Change
No Preschool	English Speakers	38.8%	61.1%	-22.3%
	English Learners	33.9%	36.8%	-2.9%
Preschool	English Speakers	44.8%	49.0%	-4.2%
	English Learners	33.3%	39.4%	-6.1%

Control of Negative Emotional Behavior

Overall, the percentage of children showing good control of negative behavior in the classroom remained steady this year, with 86.2% of children scoring in the good range, a 0.7% increase over the past year. However, there was a decline among English learners without preschool experience, primarily at California Avenue Elementary, an established Cycle 1 site. Improvement was evident at Grayson Charter School and Richard Moon (Cycle 1 schools) and at Keyes Elementary and Von Renner (Cycle 2 schools).

Table 16: Behavior Control by Preschool and Language

		2007-2008	2006-2007	Change
No Preschool	English Speakers	89.6%	92.5%	-2.9%
	English Learners	82.5%	92.6%	-10.1%
Preschool	English Speakers	89.5%	81.7%	7.8%
	English Learners	84.9%	82.8%	2.1%

Recommendations

- 5) SR sites should increase mental health screenings, especially for families whose children do not attend preschool.
- 6) SR sites should ensure that all families meet their Kindergarten teacher before the first day of school and observe the Kindergarten classroom in operation at least once.
- 7) The County School Readiness Coordinator should lead an effort by all SR sites to develop and implement strategies to improve Kindergarten entry competencies and pre-literacy skills of English learners who do not attend preschool.
- 8) California Avenue Elementary should investigate factors contributing to its decline in Kindergarten readiness and take immediate action to counteract them.
- 9) SR sites that are currently struggling with literacy development among English learners should consider the practices adopted by Grayson Charter.
- 10) SR sites that are experiencing a high percentage of behavioral problems should consider the practices adopted by Richard Moon.

Appendix A: Assessment Tools

The School Readiness Program Evaluation employs multiple data sources: (1) a Kindergarten readiness assessment completed by the teacher at the beginning of Kindergarten, (2) a family interview, (3) a structured test of early literacy development administered mid-year, (4) a socio-emotional skill assessment completed by the teacher mid-year, (5) a measure of life satisfaction completed by the students, and (6) standardized tests administered by participating districts. The assessment tools are described below.

Table 17: Program Evaluation Data Sources

Data source	Type of data	Grade(s)	Data collection method
Adapted Desired Results Developmental Profile (ADRDP)	Readiness to learn: Personal/social competence and effective learning skills	K	Teachers answer 24 brief questions about each student
Family Background Survey (FBS)	Access to county services; academic preparation activities in the home	K	School staff/school readiness coordinators provide data from student's records; teacher or SR staff contacts family (by phone or during a parent meeting) and asks unanswered questions about services and family life
Student Social Skills Questionnaire (SSSQ)	Emotional/social development	K, 1, 3,4,6	Teachers answer 6 brief questions about each student
Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)	Literacy	K, 1, 3,4,6	CSU Stanislaus research assistants test students in the classroom (approx. 30 minutes per student)
Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)	Feelings about family, friends, school, and living environment	4,6	Students complete, with assistance as needed.
Standardized tests	Basic academic skills	2, 3,4,6	School staff/school readiness coordinators provide data from school records

Adapted Desired Results Developmental Profile (ADRDP)

The ADRDP assesses children's readiness for Kindergarten in Stanislaus County. It asks teachers to rate children's personal and academic competencies in 24 areas important for school success. Teachers indicate whether each skill is fully mastered, almost mastered, emerging, or not yet developed. The readiness assessment by Kindergarten teachers occurs annually 6-8 instructional weeks into the Kindergarten year.

The questions were drawn from the *California Desired Results Developmental Profile*, a more comprehensive instrument that provides age-level performance standards for programs funded by the California Department of Education. Twenty of the 24 ADRDP items are also used by the statewide evaluation in its MDRDP instrument, thereby allowing comparisons to be made between county and state data.

The ADRDP includes questions from the preschool, Kindergarten, and first grade forms. Summary scores for each developmental theme can be calculated by assigning a score of 4 to the response "fully mastered," 3 to "almost mastered," 2 to "emerging," and 1 to "not yet developed." Because ratings for the 24 questions are typically very highly correlated, the average score is used to assess the overall development or maturity of the

child as he or she enters Kindergarten. Students whose averages are 3 or better are categorized as “ready for “school”

Family Background Survey (FBS)

The FBS is used to gather information from families about: (1) services received by the child and family during the 0-5 years, (2) the family environment, (3) literacy-building activities that occur at home, and (4) parent participation in activities at the child’s school. The researchers developed the Family Background Survey with the assistance of the School Readiness Leadership Team of Stanislaus County; several questions were drawn from the statewide SR parent interview and the California Even Start Family Literacy Performance Information Reporting System. The FBS is typically completed between the 2nd and 3rd instructional months (6th and 15th instructional weeks).

Student Social Skills Questionnaire (SSSQ)

The SSSQ is a brief survey that asks teachers to report on their children’s classroom behavior mid-year. Teachers are asked whether six social-emotional behaviors occur never, sometimes, often, or very often. The SSSQ assesses three positive behaviors (child accepts peers’ ideas for group activities, child forms and maintains friendships, and child comforts or helps other children) and three negative behaviors (child argues with others, child fights with others, and child gets angry easily) are assessed. Teachers conduct the assessments between the 4th and 6th instructional months (16th and 24th instructional weeks).

These six questions, developed by Gresham and Elliott as part of the Social Skills Rating Scale in 1990, were normed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in a longitudinal study of Kindergarten children in 1998-99. That sample included 22,782 children enrolled in public and private Kindergartens; the children were drawn from different racial/ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

Summary scores for positive and negative interaction behaviors can be calculated by assigning a score of 1 to never, 2, to sometimes, 3 to often, and 4 to very often, and then averaging the scores across the three positive or negative behaviors. Using this system, children are considered to have good social skills if their average score is 3 or 4 for positive behaviors (the behaviors are exhibited often or very often) and 1 or 2 for negative behaviors (the behaviors are exhibited never or sometimes).

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

The DIBELS (6th edition) was developed at the University of Oregon as part of a comprehensive effort to establish benchmarks for literacy development. Research assistants conduct the literacy assessments in Grades K, 1, and 3 between the 4th and 6th instructional months (16th and 24th instructional weeks), and in grades 4 and 6 immediately thereafter. During the assessment, children complete a series of timed tests to gauge their fluency in skills essential for literacy development.

Cutoff points were set by test developers to help identify children at risk of not accomplishing literacy goals. Based on these benchmarks, children are categorized into three performance groups, from low to high. Reading trajectories are established early on and students who perform poorly in Kindergarten and grade 1 are at risk for poor long-term academic outcomes. These children are in need of intensive support. Toward this end, Kindergarten teachers receive the results of the Kindergarten DIBELS assessment within 1 month of the testing. The labeling of the three groups depends on whether or not, according to the DIBELS system, the goal should have been accomplished or be emerging by the time of year the test is completed.

Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS)

The MSLSS assesses life satisfaction across five domains in children's lives: family, friends, living environment, school, and self. The written survey includes 40 items. Children are asked to respond to each item using a 4-point scale (never, sometimes, often, and almost always). Responses for each domain are averaged. Children complete the scale independently, but the assessor may read the question aloud in English as needed.

The MSLSS was developed by E. S. Huebner of the University of South Carolina to assess the positive psychological well-being of children. The initial scale was produced in 1991, with a revised version produced in 2001. Normative data are available for students in grades 3-5 and high school students. The MSLSS was pilot tested at the end of the 2007-2008 academic year.