

What Leads to School Readiness?

In Kentucky, we believe that the early years are the most important years. This means that we believe in the value of investing in our youngest children so that we can ensure the future of our youngest citizens.

Many aspects of a child's life lead to school readiness. Early experiences can help a child to be more prepared to be ready to grow, ready to learn and ready to succeed.



Ready to Grow - Ready to Learn - Ready to Succeed

What does School Readiness mean?

In Kentucky, school readiness means that each child enters school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the child's success.

We Must Work Together to Achieve School Readiness

Families, early care and education providers, school staff and community partners must work together to provide environments and developmental experiences that promote growth and learning to ensure that all children enter school eager and excited to learn.

The indicators that are included in Kentucky's school readiness definition represent the hopes and aspirations for incoming kindergarten students, not the expectations. Children develop at different rates, not every child will have mastered all of the skills and behaviors listed below at the beginning of a primary program. School readiness skills and behavior are not to be used to determine school eligibility. In Kentucky, all children who meet the legal age requirement are entitled to enter public school.

The five developmental areas for school readiness are:

- Approaches to learning
- Health and Physical well being
- Language and communication development
- Social and emotional development
- Cognitive and General knowledge



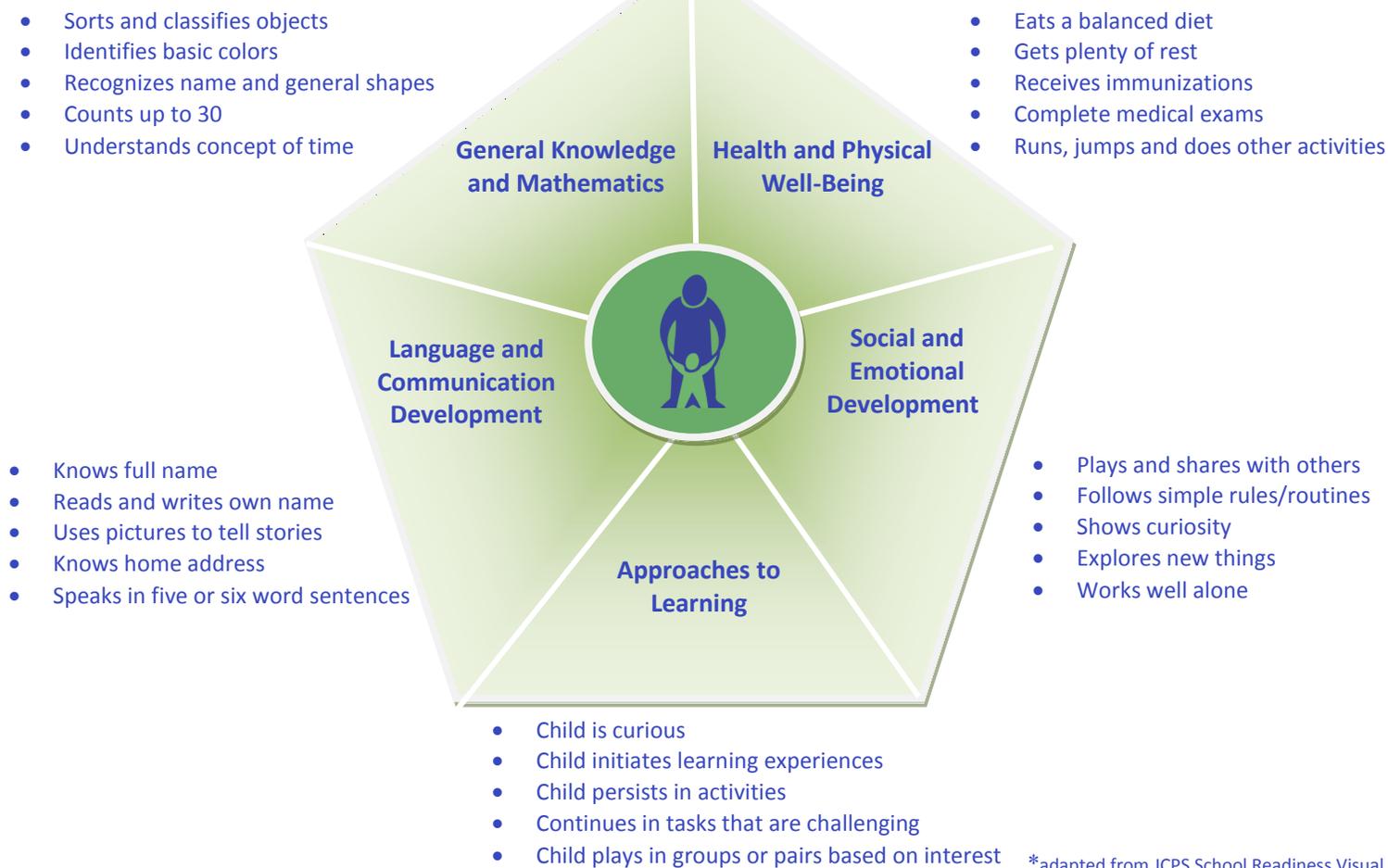
Kentucky schools will soon be using a common kindergarten entry screener to determine a child's readiness for school in the five developmental areas listed above. However, like previously mentioned, the screener will not be used to determine whether a child is eligible to attend kindergarten.

Why does Kentucky Screen for School Readiness?

- Inform decision-making about early childhood systems
- Identify our statewide and local challenges
- Mobilize communities
- Allow us to communicate results of our work
- To demonstrate "return on investment"
- To encourage continuous improvement

School Readiness Domains

These are some of the skills that are helpful for children to know before entering kindergarten. Kentucky recognizes that children develop and learn things at different rates and times. These are recommended skills.



The Heckman Equation

“Many major economic and social problems in American society such as crime, teenage pregnancy, dropping out of high school and adverse health conditions can be traced to low levels of skill and ability in society.

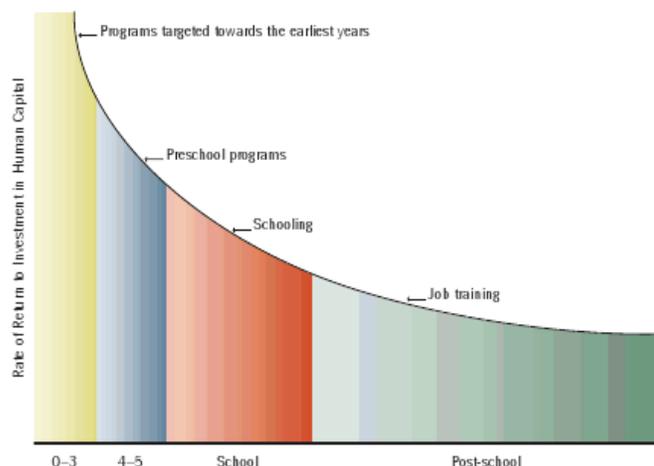
“There is growing inequality in society. The lower tail is worse off, while the upper tail is better off. In designing policies to alleviate inequality, it is important to recognize the multiplicity of abilities.

“So called “soft” skills are neither soft nor squishy. There is a lot of hard evidence on the importance of soft skills in economic and social life.

“Current public policy discussions focus on promoting and measuring cognitive ability through IQ and achievement tests and not evaluating a range of other factors that promote success in school and later in life.

“Cognitive abilities are important determinants of socio-economic success. But cognitive ability is not well understood. For example, IQ and achievement tests are often confused.

“Research tells us that Socio-emotional skills, physical and mental health, perseverance, attention, motivation, and self-confidence are also important.”



Investments Pay Off

Research of high-quality programs for low-income families shows significant positive returns on investment in reduced costs for special education and juvenile and adult services.

Current investments in the early years of life (0-5) remain small in comparison with investments later in life. Now is the time to invest.