

# Making Decisions Count for Children

The Kansas School Readiness Initiative

# Purpose

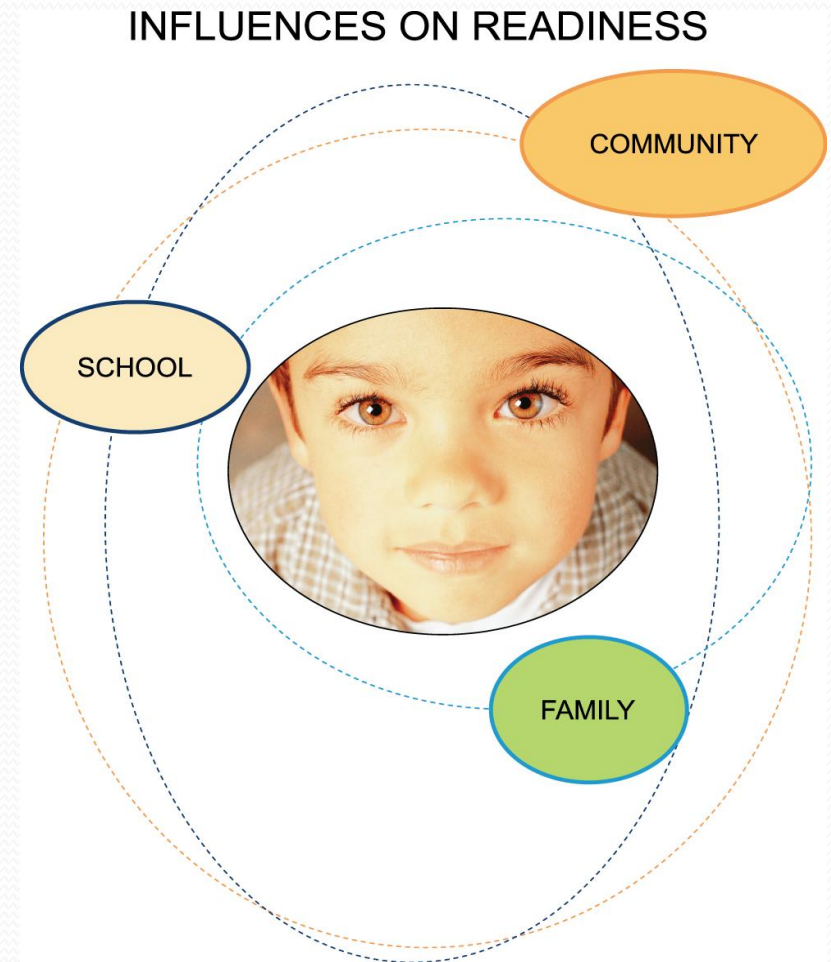
- To create a coordinated and comprehensive longitudinal data system
- Allow state- and community-level decision making on behalf of young children's healthy development and school readiness
- To be informed by valid and reliable data

# Background

- KSDE has been collecting child assessment data on the school readiness of entering kindergartners for over 5 years.
- Results from the Kansas Early learning Inventory (KELI) a general indication of the readiness level of Kansas kindergartners.
- The political need to demonstrate accountability for public dollars and a strong desire to promote program quality, demonstrate program effectiveness, and support families and teachers in their efforts.

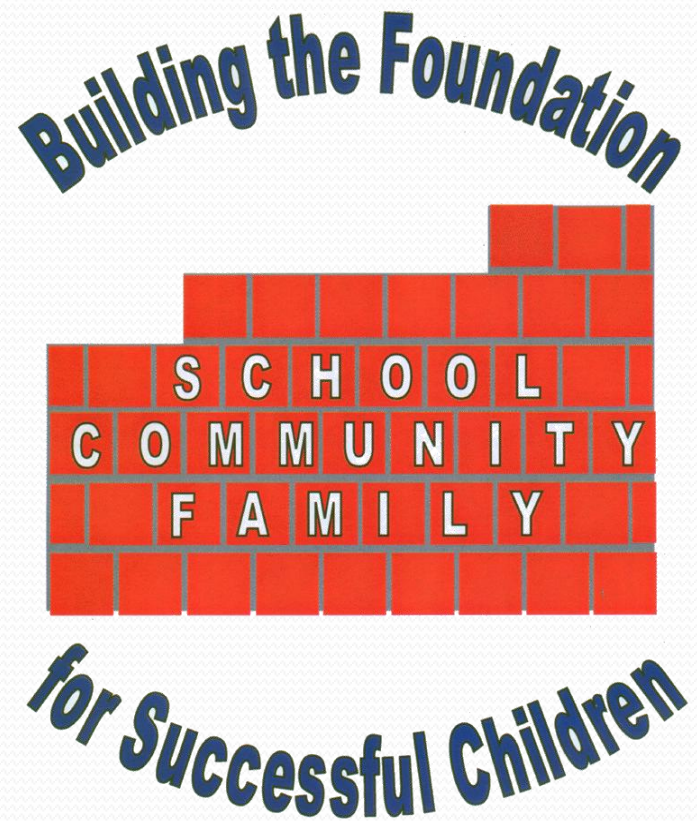
# What is School Readiness?

- Ready Families
- Ready Communities
- Ready Schools
- Ready Children



# The Kansas Vision for School Readiness

- School readiness occurs when families, schools and communities support and serve children effectively so that all children have the ability to succeed in various learning environments.



# Current Landscape

- Data to inform policy decisions as well as program, teacher, and parent decisions
- The launch of the Kansas School Readiness Data Initiative
- Implementation of the KSDE Longitudinal Data Systems grant
- The anticipation of the Early Childhood Advisory Council
- A focus on meeting the needs of all children, including subgroups of children

# Making Decisions Count for Children

- Children's learning experiences prior to the start of kindergarten are crucial to their success in school and beyond.
- Tracking student progress must begin well before kindergarten.
- Some data are available—but what questions do policy makers, practitioners, and parents have that need to be answered around the school readiness skills of young children entering Kansas kindergartens?

# The School Readiness Listening Tour

- To inform the Initiative's work, two methods of collecting policy-related questions were set up:
  - Online survey
  - Organized on-site listening tour
- Participants included:
  - individuals in programs providing direct early learning services to children, ages birth to kindergarten, and their families
  - individuals involved with supporting families' and young children's health development and well-being

# Participants: Representatives

- Public school administrators
- Special education directors
- 4 year old at-risk
- Pre-K Pilot
- Parents as Teachers
- Part C
- SICC
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Resource & referral agencies
- KAEYC
- KDEC (ECSE/EI)
- KAIMH (Mental health)
- Licensing
- Public health departments
- SRS regional offices
- KPIRC
- Families Together, INC
- Children's Cabinet
- ELCC
- Strengthening Families
- Higher Education EC Staff

# School Readiness Listening Tour

- Four sites for the on-site listening sessions
- Over 200 participants in the online survey and the on-site sessions
- Over 1,000 questions were generated
- The on-site sessions were focused on practitioners – direct services providers--while the online survey was sent to list-serves for administrators and directors. Both groups were allowed to participate in either type of response: online or on-site.

# Listening Tour questions

- What are the questions you have about the children in your programs that you would like to have answered?
- What are the questions you have about the families who use your programs that you would like to have answered?
- What are the questions you have about your program that you would like to have answered?
- What are the questions you have about the effectiveness of your practice that you would like to have answered?
- What information do you think is needed to answer your questions?

# Listening Tour Results

- Over 1,000 data-related policy questions were asked.
- Questions were organized under four topic areas
  - Children's School Readiness
  - Supporting Families' Abilities to promote School Readiness
  - Program & Community Readiness
  - Schools' Readiness
- Participation of Kindergarten teachers and parents with young children was very low. KSDE will attempt to gather their responses to the results at a later time.
- Participants asked questions that were often more personal and related to practitioner and program performance as well as program and service delivery.

# Children's School Readiness: Sample questions

- How do individual programs follow up on children in their programs to see if the children learned the skills they needed?
- How do we get consistence in expectations for children entering Kindergartens across the state?
- How are children doing in third grade academically, socially, and emotionally?
- How do children with different demographics compare?

# Supporting Families': Sample questions

- How does a parent's involvement in their child's program affect the child socially, emotionally, and academically?
- How does parent knowledge about children development impact school readiness?
- Do the behaviors of families change as a results of program services? Do their children come to school better prepared?
- What do families value about school readiness?

# Program & Community Readiness:

## Sample questions

- What should an effective early learning program look like for children with disabilities?
- How can program data be collected to inform state level funding decisions?
- How can we measure 'quality' for all of our funders when everyone defines it differently?
- What is the impact of programs with varying duration and intensity?
- Which services effectively meet the needs of children and families?

# Schools' Readiness: Sample questions

- As children leave early learning programs and enter Kindergarten, will they be met by teachers and administrators actively implementing developmentally appropriate classroom activities?
- How prepared are elementary school principals to provide early childhood instructional leadership?
- What is the level of communication between 0-5 programs and the public schools?
- What level of understanding do school districts have regarding the importance of children's development and learning during early childhood to their school readiness and success in school?

# July 9, 2010: Launching the Initiative

Making Decisions Count for Children:  
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# Participants: Representatives

- Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment
- Social and Rehabilitative Services
- Legislature
- School Districts
- Child care
- Kansas Parents As Teachers Association
- Higher Education
- P-20 Council
- KACCRRRA/Child Care Aware of Kansas
- School Districts
- Researchers
- Governor's Office
- KASB
- Special Education
- Kansas State Department of Education
- Kansas State Board of Education

# Participant Interview Results

- Participants were asked to identify their questions related to:
  - Children's' school readiness
  - About families' support of their children's school readiness
  - About early learning programs
- 161 data-related policy questions were asked.
- Questions were organized under three topics with 17 super-ordinate questions reflecting the three topics.

# Children's School Readiness

1. How will children's school readiness be assessed?
2. How do children with dissimilar early learning experiences differ?
3. What is the definition of 'School Readiness'?
4. What are the early learning experiences of children in Kansas?
5. How prepare are our children for Kindergarten?

# Supporting Families' Abilities to Promote School Readiness

6. What are best practices for engaging families?
7. What are affective parent education and support practices?
8. How do families contribute to children's school readiness?
9. What is the impact of family involvement on children's school readiness?
10. How can parents be made more aware of available support services?

# Program & Community Readiness

11. What defines program effectiveness?
12. Where are the State's early learning programs?
13. How can early learning programs be made more effective?
14. How effective are Kansas early learning programs?
15. What is the status of the early learning work force?
16. What are the best investment strategies for promoting school readiness?
17. What information/data is effective in building public support?

# July 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting:

Process and results

# Agenda

- As you look to the future, why/how will data be essential to your work? (whole group)
- Identifying key policy questions related to school readiness (whole and small group)
- Prioritizing policy questions related to school readiness ( whole and small group)
- What are some necessary action steps for constructing a comprehensive, coordinated school readiness data system—short- and long-term action steps? (whole and small group)

# DRAFT Priority Questions

- How prepared are all of our children for kindergarten, as a whole and by subgroups?
- What are the most critical health, safety, and community factors that contribute to children's school readiness?
- What is the impact of family education, involvement, engagement and support services on children's school readiness?
- What are the best practices for engaging families?

# DRAFT Priority Questions

- How prepared are the States' schools for meeting the needs of entering kindergartners?
- Who are children not being served and where are they?
- What combination of early childhood experiences has the best return on investment?
- What defines program effectiveness?

# Review – Your Thoughts!

- Are there any questions that you would add to this list? Why?
- Are there any questions that you would omit from this list? Why?
- Overall, do these questions reflect what we need to know about the status of school readiness in Kansas?"

# THANK YOU!

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