

# **READINESS MATTERS** **Families Matter**



## **Is Your Child Ready for Success in Kindergarten?**

As a parent or family member, you play a critical role in your child's readiness for school. From the day your child is born, you are helping to develop the academic, social, physical, and emotional skills that will stay with your child throughout his or her life.

Studies show that children who demonstrate readiness at kindergarten entry are more likely to have long-term school success. Unfortunately, less than half of Maryland's entering kindergarteners demonstrate the foundational knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to fully participate in the kindergarten curriculum.

## **How is Readiness Determined?**

Kindergarten readiness – the knowledge, skills and behaviors that enable your child to fully participate and succeed in school – sets the stage for future learning. Readiness for school is one of the most important factors in your child's academic success.

When your child starts school, the teacher may use the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) to look at what your child knows and is able to do in four areas:

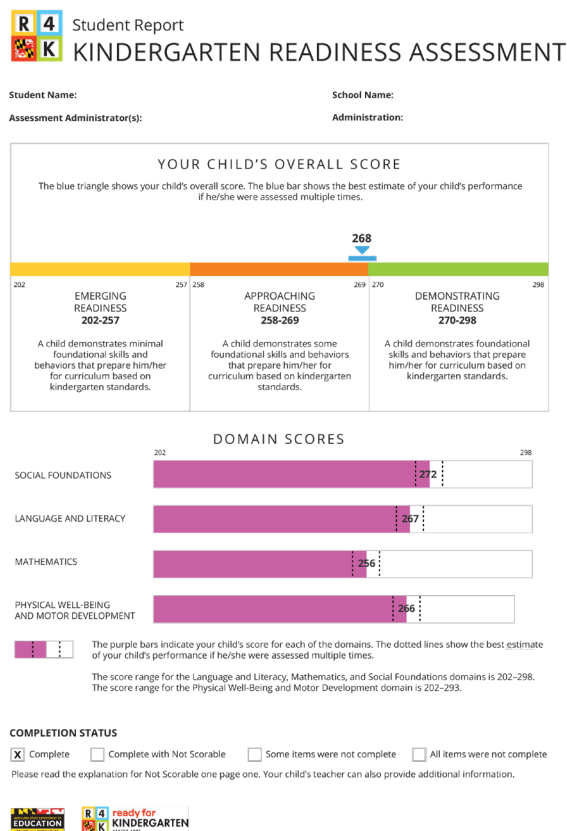
**Language & Literacy.** Talking and listening to adults and other children. Speaking clearly. Understanding stories. Identifying letters and some letter sounds. Writing some letters and numbers.

**Math.** Naming numbers. Counting. Sorting things by color and shape. Putting things in order. Copying patterns.

**Social Foundations.** Getting along with others. Making Friends. Following rules, routines, and multi-step directions. Handling emotions. Staying on task. Solving problems.

**Physical Well-being & Motor Development.** Running, jumping, climbing, and playing ball. Buttoning a shirt or zipping up a jacket. Using scissors. Drawing. Writing numbers and letters. Using good health and safety skills.

The KRA uses teacher observations of daily activities and age-appropriate tasks to understand how well your child is prepared for the kindergarten curriculum and what supports may be needed.



## **What Do the Results Mean?**

Students who **Demonstrate Readiness** have mastered key content, skills, and behaviors and are prepared for kindergarten.

Children assessed as **Approaching Readiness** have some of the skills that kindergarteners need to fully participate in the kindergarten curriculum. Children with **Emerging Readiness** demonstrate very few of the skills and behaviors needed for kindergarten.

Children with approaching or emerging readiness may require targeted or substantial supports to succeed in kindergarten.

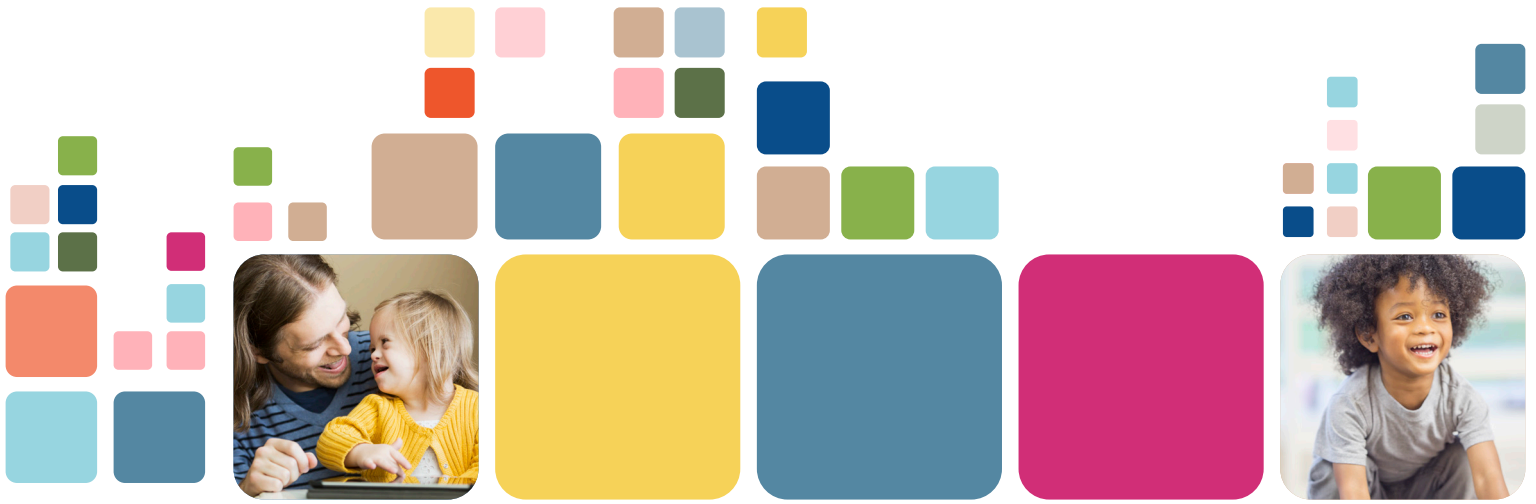
## **What Is the Individual Student Report?**

If the teacher used the KRA, your child's readiness for school is described in the Individual Student Report (ISR). See example above. Your child receives an overall readiness score and an average score for each domain.

Use this report to start a discussion with the teacher about your child's strengths and areas for improvement. Ask:

- What are my child's strengths?
- In what areas does my child need support?
- What can we do at home to build my child's knowledge and skills?

If your child was not assessed using the KRA, be sure to talk with your child's teacher during the parent-teacher conferences about his/her kindergarten readiness and ask similar questions to those listed above.



## How Will My Child's Teacher and School Use the Results?

The KRA gives your child's teacher important information about his/her knowledge, skills, and behaviors at the beginning of the year. It also helps the teacher design activities to support your child's learning and identify if supports or interventions are needed to help your child be successful. The results also give your elementary school and school district important information to improve teaching and learning.

## How Can I Help My Child?

**Read.** Set a special time for reading every day: nap time, after-dinner time, or bedtime. Choose books that help your child learn new words, count or sort objects. Read books with simple sequences of events, and talk with your child about what happens first, next, and last in the story.

**Talk & Listen.** Include your child in conversations. Share favorite memories. Make up stories. Ask your child questions. Listen closely to the answers and be interested! Say nursery rhymes. Play rhyming games.

**Create.** Make up songs and sing them. Listen to music. Put on a play or a puppet show. Draw with chalk on the sidewalk. Develop a dance. Pretend that a paper tube is a telescope. Make a skyscraper with empty boxes and tape or glue. Build a quiet hideaway under a table using blankets or sheets – encourage your child to pretend it's a house, a space ship, or a boat.

**Explore.** Dig in a sandbox. Go to the playground. Take walks or bike rides with your child and talk about what you see.

**Play.** Give your child chances to play, both alone, with you, and with others. Build with blocks. Do easy puzzles. Play simple board or card games.

**Be Active.** Run. Jump. Play tag or hide & seek. Make an obstacle course with things to go over, under, through, and around.

**Eat Healthy.** Have regular times for meals and snacks. Eat healthy foods yourself as an example for your child.

**Enroll Your Child in a High-Quality Early Childhood Program.** Children with these experiences consistently start kindergarten more ready for success.

## What Else Can I Do?

### Be Engaged in your Child's Education:

- Volunteer in your child's school or early learning program.
- Get Ready At Five's ParentTips and sign up for our newsletter at [www.readyatfive.org](http://www.readyatfive.org)
- Visit your local library or museums. Participate in programming for parents and young children.

### Advocate for Kindergarten Readiness.

Tell your child's Principal, the School Superintendent or your Maryland legislative representatives that the KRA and the ISR gives you, teachers, and other parents/families important information that will help children succeed in school.

## Learn More

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High-quality early experiences lay the groundwork for a child's lifelong success.



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**Ready At Five**  
5520 Research Park Drive  
Suite 150  
Baltimore, MD 21228-4791  
Phone: 410/788.5725  
Email: [info@readyatfive.org](mailto:info@readyatfive.org)  
Website: [www.readyatfive.org](http://www.readyatfive.org)



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