

# School Readiness in San Lorenzo Unified School District

2010 Assessment — District Results



RESEARCH STUDY FUNDED BY:



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Figure 1. **Participating San Lorenzo Unified School District Schools and Teachers**

Schools	Teachers
Corvallis	Kirsten Hynds
Grant	Julie Henderson
	Kathy Hutchinson
Colonial Acres	Yolanda Arredondo
Del Rey	Lisa Rheinheimer
Hillside	Dora Rios
	Kathleen LaCome
	Ann Villegas
Bay	Noelle Sanhueza
	Geraldine Whitmore
	Theresa Lewis
Dayton	Denise Landry
	Janice Hansson
	Tracy Cooper

# Study Summary

## Background

In 2010, First 5 Alameda County commissioned an assessment of the school readiness levels of new kindergarten students for the third consecutive year. Participating districts in the 2010 assessment included Berkeley, Castro Valley, Emery, Hayward, Livermore Valley Joint, Oakland, Pleasanton, and San Lorenzo Unified School Districts. Among the San Lorenzo Unified (SLZUSD) participants, 14 teachers from 7 different schools took part in the assessment.

The assessment included four measurement instruments completed by teachers and parents of entering kindergarten students. Teachers indicated each of their students' proficiency levels on 24 readiness skills and they reported how smoothly students had transitioned into kindergarten. Parents completed a survey that asked them to provide information about children's early care and family environments, as well as basic demographic and background information. Finally, teachers completed a survey about their beliefs about the skills children need for school. Please note that the information presented in this report describes the students and families assessed; findings might not be the same for students in the district who were not part of this study.

## Findings

Research Question	Conclusion	Data Highlights
1. Are SLZUSD children ready for school?	<p><b>In most areas</b></p> <p><b>Overall readiness score: 3.30</b></p>	<p>For each individual readiness skill, children were scored on a scale from <i>Not yet</i> (1) to <i>Proficient</i> (4). Average scores for each of 4 <i>Basic Building Blocks</i> of readiness range from 1 to 4.</p> <p>SLZUSD student scores scored strong in most domains, with slightly lower readiness levels in <i>Kindergarten Academics</i> than among students in the county-wide sample.</p>
2. Are SLZUSD students meeting their teachers' expectations for readiness at kindergarten entry?	<p><b>Mostly.</b></p> <p><b>72% at/above expected levels of proficiency</b></p>	<p>On their teacher survey, SLZUSD teachers indicated the level of proficiency they thought students should have to be "school ready" at kindergarten entry.</p> <p>A large proportion of the SLZUSD students (72%) were meeting or exceeding teachers' expected proficiency levels for overall readiness. Eighty-two percent of the students were at or above teachers' expected proficiency levels on <i>Self-Care &amp; Motor Skills</i>. The biggest gaps between teacher expectations and student scores were in <i>Self-Regulation</i> and <i>Kindergarten Academics</i>.</p>
3. What skills do SLZUSD teachers think are: Most important for kindergarten entry? Easiest to impact? Most time-consuming?	<p><b>Most important:</b> Self-help/self-care tasks</p> <p><b>Easiest to impact:</b> Uses small manipulatives</p> <p><b>Spend the most time:</b> Ability to stay focused</p>	<p>Teachers selected 5 readiness skills that they felt were: (1) most important to have at kindergarten entry; (2) easiest to impact during the school year; and (3) where they spent the most time during the school year.</p> <p>Skills from three different readiness domains emerged as being important for kindergarten entry. The use of small manipulatives and several <i>Kindergarten Academics</i> skills were perceived as easiest to impact. Several <i>Self-Regulation</i> skills were among the skills that took up the most classroom time.</p>

# Study Overview

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Children’s school readiness levels at kindergarten entry have been increasingly recognized as playing an important role in children’s later success in school. In late 2000, Applied Survey Research (ASR) was commissioned to develop research materials and a protocol to conduct assessments of Bay Area students’ levels of readiness for school. The project resulted in the creation of a new tool to measure school readiness, which balanced and met two (sometimes competing) needs: (1) the need for a high-quality, valid, and reliable instrument to measure readiness levels; and (2) the need for a tool that was simultaneously “teacher-friendly” and sensitive to the measurement challenges inherent in a typical kindergarten classroom setting.

The *Kindergarten Observation Form (KOF)* was first implemented in San Mateo County in 2001, and since that initial assessment, readiness assessments have also been conducted in Santa Clara County, Lake County (Illinois), San Francisco County, Marin County, Santa Cruz County, and throughout the network of providers in the Los Angeles Unified Preschool (LAUP). To date, approximately 30,000 students have been measured using the *KOF*.

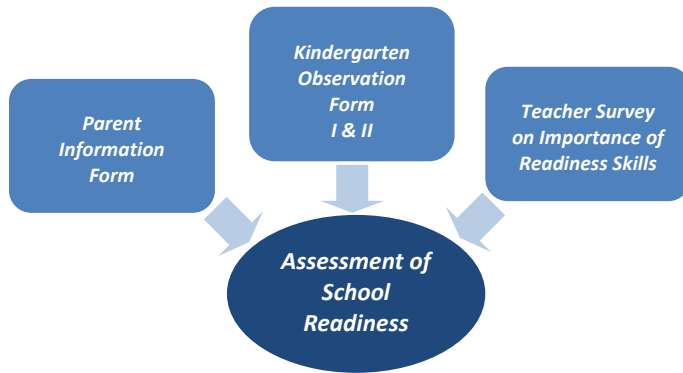
In Fall 2008, First 5 Alameda County (F5AC) commissioned ASR to conduct its first assessment of the school readiness levels of new kindergarten students in a small set of three school districts in Alameda County. Assessments were again conducted in 2009 and 2010, with additional school and districts taking part in each subsequent study.<sup>1</sup> Participants in the 2010 assessment included students from eight districts: Berkeley, Castro Valley, Emery, Hayward, Livermore Valley Joint, Oakland, Pleasanton, and San Lorenzo Unified School Districts. Participating kindergarten teachers were trained to conduct the readiness assessment, which included completion of the following forms:

- The *Kindergarten Observation Form (I and II)*, in which teachers assess children’s readiness skills and the smoothness of their transition to kindergarten, respectively;
- A *Parent Information Form (PIF)*, which parents complete to provide information about children’s early care and education experiences prior to kindergarten, family environments, and basic demographic and socioeconomic information; and
- The *Teacher Survey on Importance of Readiness Skills*, which measures teachers’ beliefs about readiness and the skills required for successful transition to kindergarten.

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive description of the 2010 School Readiness Assessment method and results, please see the forthcoming report “School Readiness in Alameda County: Results of the Fall 2010 Assessment.”

Figure 2. **Sources of Information to Assess the Readiness of Incoming Kindergarten Students**



This short report summarizes key Fall 2010 findings for participating teachers, students, and families in the San Lorenzo Unified School District. A summary of the completion metrics for the district follows. Seventy-one percent of parents agreed to have their child take part in the study; of those, 95 percent returned a parent survey. In all, San Lorenzo Unified students represented 262 of the 1,394 participants (19%) in the county-wide sample.

Figure 3. **Completion Metrics – Alameda County School Readiness Assessment**

<b>Data</b>	<b>San Lorenzo Unified sample</b>	<b>Alameda County sample (8 districts)</b>
Total number of elementary schools with kindergarten students in district	9	143
Number of schools participating in 2010 school readiness assessment	7	43
Number of participating classrooms	14	81
Number of children in these classrooms	368	1,838
Number of KOFs returned	262	1,394
Parent consent rate	71%	76%
Number of PIFs that were matched to a KOF	250	1,264
Parent PIF response rate (# PIFs received/ # consents)	95%	91%

The sections that follow include a brief summary of who the San Lorenzo Unified students participating in the assessment were, what their school readiness levels were found to be, and what the participating teachers believed about school readiness. While reading through this summary, it is important to keep in mind that schools and teachers participated in the readiness study voluntarily, which means that the information presented in this report describes only the students and families assessed. **As a result, although the data may hint at the broader picture of readiness district-wide, the findings cannot be extrapolated to the district-level population as a whole.**

## Student Characteristics

Forty-seven percent of participants in the San Lorenzo Unified School District Fall 2010 readiness assessment were boys and 53 percent were girls. The average age of students was 5.24 years old (just under 5 years and 3 months). Hispanic/Latino students were the largest racial/ethnic group in the sample, comprising 51 percent of students. Eight percent of students were identified as having special needs; another 2 percent of students were suspected to have a special need by their teacher or parent, but had not been formally diagnosed as having special needs.

Figure 4. **Students' Sex, Age, Race/Ethnicity, and Special Needs**

Student Characteristics	Percent of students
Sex	
Boys	47%
Girls	53%
Age at kindergarten entry	
Between 4 1/2 and less than 5	29%
At least 5 and less than 5 1/2	49%
At least 5 1/2 and less than 6	22%
6 and older	1%
Race/ethnicity	
Hispanic/Latino	51%
Asian	15%
African American	8%
Caucasian	17%
Pacific Islander	2%
Multi-racial	6%
Other	2%
Special needs status	
Has special needs	8%
Teacher or parent suspects a special need (not [yet] identified by a professional)	2%
Does not have special needs	90%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Sample size =262,261,237,261 respectively. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Seven schools were represented in the San Lorenzo Unified sample. For five out of the seven schools, Hispanic/ Latino students were the most highly common racial/ethnic group.



Figure 5. **Students' Race/Ethnicity by School**

Ethnicity	School						
	Corvallis	Grant	Bay	Colonial Acres	Del Rey	Hillside	Dayton
Hispanic/Latino	25%	34%	39%	100%	69%	71%	27%
Asian	31%	15%	28%	--	0%	5%	27%
African American	0%	10%	3%	--	0%	19%	7%
Caucasian	38%	22%	17%	--	31%	2%	27%
Pacific Islander	0%	2%	0%	--	0%	0%	7%
Multi-racial	6%	15%	14%	--	0%	2%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%	--	0%	2%	7%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Sample size =16,41,36,20,16,63,45 respectively. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Just over half (53%) of the San Lorenzo Unified students are English Learners. As Figure 6 shows, 45 percent spoke English as their primary language, and 39 percent spoke Spanish as their primary language.

Figure 6. **Student Language Variables**

Children's Language	Percent
English Learner	53%
Not an English Learner	47%
Primary language	
English	45%
Spanish	39%
Chinese/ Mandarin/ Cantonese	10%
Punjabi/Hindi	<1%
Filipino or Tagalog	4%
Vietnamese	1%
Other language	<1%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Sample size =256 and 261. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

When broken down by school, Colonial Acres had the highest percentage of English Learners (95% of assessed students).

Figure 7. **English Learner Status by School**

	School						
	Corvallis	Grant	Bay	Colonial Acres	Del Rey	Hillside	Dayton
English Learner	52%	40%	56%	95%	22%	67%	42%
Not an English Learner	48%	60%	44%	5%	78%	33%	59%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Sample size =21,45,41,20,18,63,53. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Children in the district had spent time in a range of early care settings in the year prior to starting kindergarten. Two-thirds of students (68%) had received their usual child care from a parent (alone or in combination with other sources), and about one-fifth of the students (21%) had been cared for by a relative or neighbor. Preschool attendance by San Lorenzo Unified students was relatively low; less than half of the students (44%) attended a licensed preschool or childcare center.

Figure 8. **Students' Early Care Experiences**

Type of Child Care Arrangements	Percent of students
Parent provided usual child care	68%
Relative or neighbor	21%
Babysitter or nanny	6%
Licensed care in someone's home (teacher or parent report)	6%
Licensed preschool or childcare center (e.g., Head Start, State Preschool, private – teacher or parent report)	44%

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I and Parent Information Form (2010).

Note: Percentages are based on a sample sizes 238,238,238, 204,257 . Percentages sum to more than 100 because more than one source of care could be selected

# School Readiness of San Lorenzo Unified Students

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This section describes the readiness skills that students in San Lorenzo Unified School District possessed as they entered kindergarten in Fall 2010. Students' skills are presented for each of the 24 readiness skills and according to two approaches that classify the skills into broader readiness dimensions, as follows<sup>2</sup>:

(1) skill groupings that align with the *National Education Goals Panel (NEGP)*, which has defined five dimensions of development and skills that are critical to a child's readiness for school: *Physical Well-Being & Motor Development, Social & Emotional Development, Approaches Toward Learning, Communication and Language Usage, and Cognition & General Knowledge*. In different communities throughout the country, these *NEGP* dimensions of readiness have become the foundation for the development of school readiness measurement tools attempting to quantify children's school readiness.

(2) skill groupings that correspond to four skill dimensions called the *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness, which have been defined by patterns of associations between skills that have been consistently observed across administrations of the *Kindergarten Observation Form*.

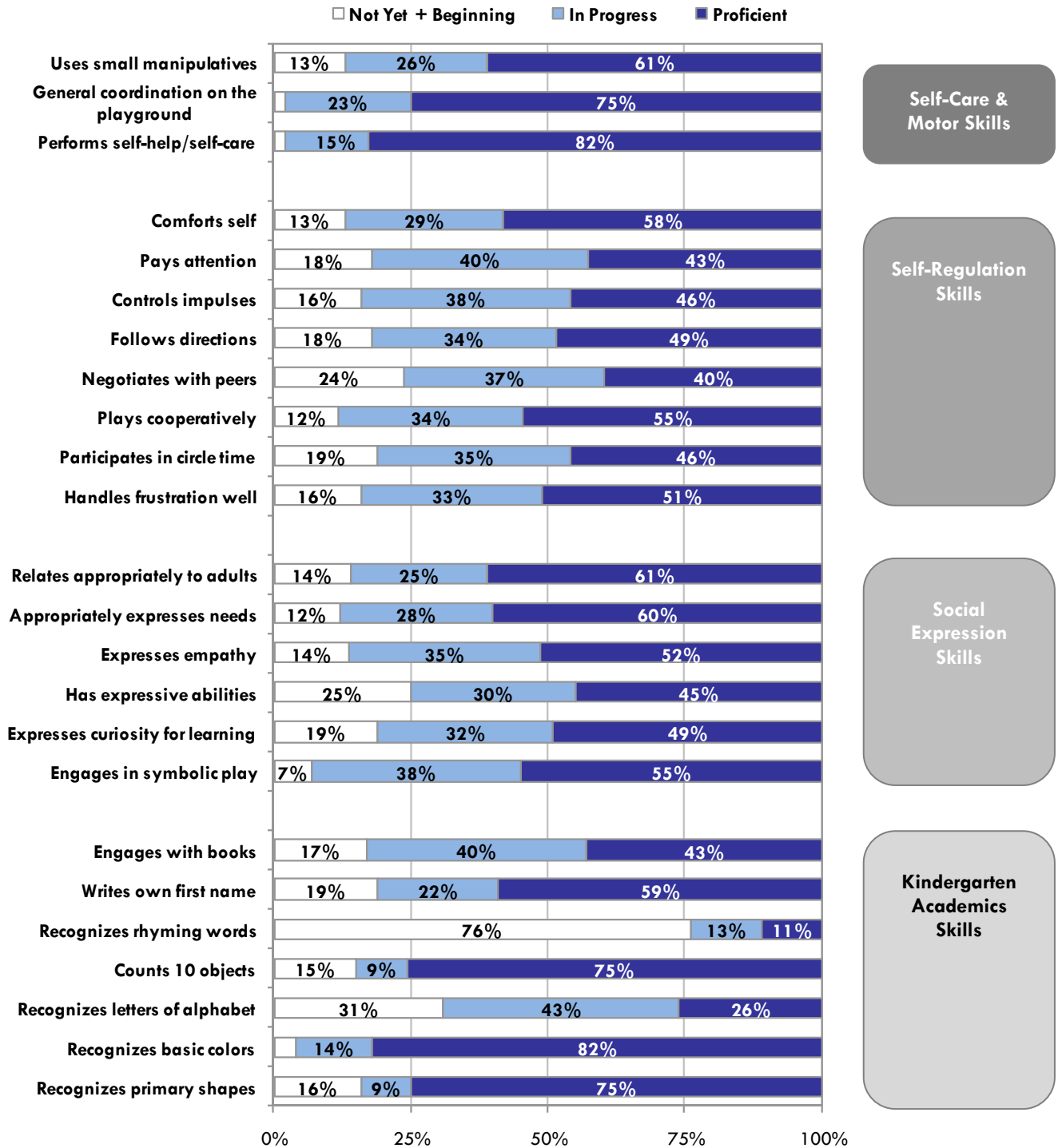
In addition, students' skills are presented in the context of what readiness levels teachers believe are necessary for successful transition into kindergarten. Finally, recognizing that there are identifiable readiness patterns of strengths and needs among entering kindergarten students, four "readiness portraits" are described.

Students' scores on the 24 readiness skills are shown in Figure 9 that follows.

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<sup>2</sup> A "crosswalk" of how the 24 skills map onto each of the two readiness classifications is included as Appendix 1.

Figure 9. Students' Proficiency Levels Across 24 School Readiness Skills



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Percentages are based on 222-261 students. Don't know/ Not observed responses are not included. Percentages less than 5% are not labeled. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Students’ top five readiness strengths and challenges are presented below. San Lorenzo Unified students came into school strongest on abilities related to *Self-Care & Motor Skills* and *Kindergarten Academics*. The skills they were still developing also related to *Kindergarten Academics*, including recognizing rhyming words and recognizing letters of the alphabet.

Figure 10. **Students’ Top Five Readiness Strengths**

<b>Top five strengths</b>	<b>Basic Building Block</b>	<b>Students’ average score (out of four possible)</b>
1. Performs basic self-help/self-care tasks	Self-Care & Motor Skills	3.80
2. Recognizes basic colors	Kindergarten Academics	3.76
3. Has general coordination on the playground	Self-Care & Motor Skills	3.73
4. Can count 10 objects correctly	Kindergarten Academics	3.54
5. Recognizes primary shapes	Kindergarten Academics	3.54

Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Scores are based on 243-262 students.

Figure 11. **Students’ Top Five Readiness Challenges**

<b>Top five challenges</b>	<b>Basic Building Block</b>	<b>Students’ average score (out of four possible)</b>
1. Can recognize rhyming words	Kindergarten Academics	1.84
2. Recognizes letter of the alphabet	Kindergarten Academics	2.88
3. Negotiates with peers to resolve conflict	Self-Regulation	3.03
4. Has expressive abilities	Social Expression	3.12
5. Stays focused/pays attention during activities	Self-Regulation	3.20

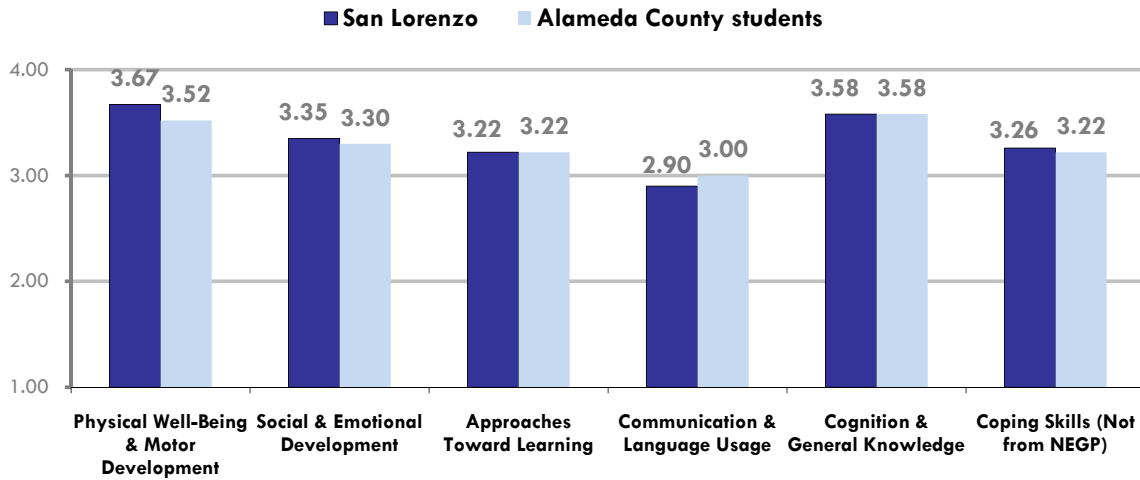
Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Scores are based on 234-261 students.

The 24 readiness skills can be further grouped according to different categories of readiness. Two of the ways that readiness dimensions have been described are presented here, including: (1) five developmental domains identified by the *NEGP*; and (2) a data-driven sorting of readiness skills, called the *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness.

In Figure 12, San Lorenzo Unified students’ readiness scores are displayed according to five *NEGP* categories, with an additional category (not part of the *NEGP*) comprising a “coping skills” dimension. As the figure shows, San Lorenzo Unified students scored highest on *Physical Well-Being & Motor Development*, and their lowest scores were in skills related to *Communication & Language Usage*.

Figure 12. **Students' Proficiency across the Five *NEGP* Readiness Dimensions**



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Scores are based on 248-262 San Lorenzo Unified students and 1,350-1,379 county-wide students.

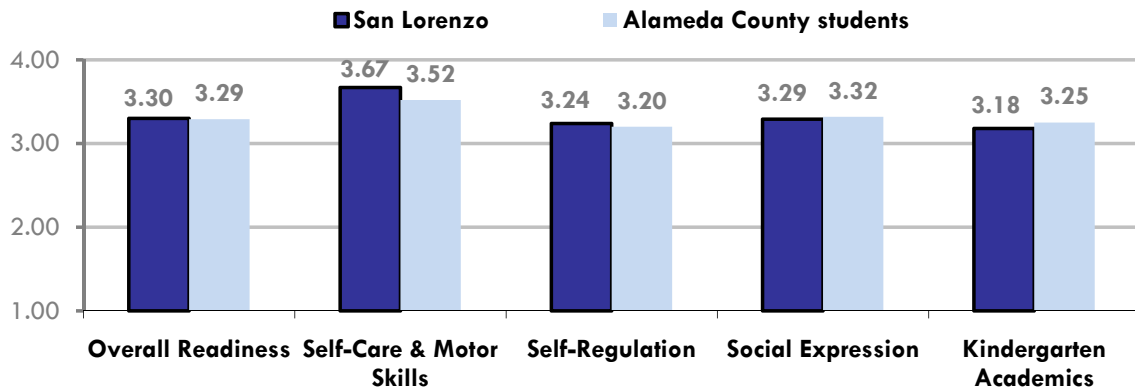
Statistical exploration of children's performance across 24 readiness skills revealed that skills reliably sorted into an alternate readiness skills framework, which has been labeled the four *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness:<sup>3</sup>

- *Self-Care & Motor Skills*
- *Social Expression*
- *Self-Regulation*
- *Kindergarten Academics*

Figure 13 that follows shows students' readiness according to the four *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness. Readiness levels among San Lorenzo Unified students were highest in *Self-Care & Motor Skills* and lowest in *Kindergarten Academics*.

<sup>3</sup> A procedure called factor analysis is used to determine what readiness dimensions are represented by the data.

Figure 13. **Students' Proficiency across Four *Basic Building Blocks* of Readiness**



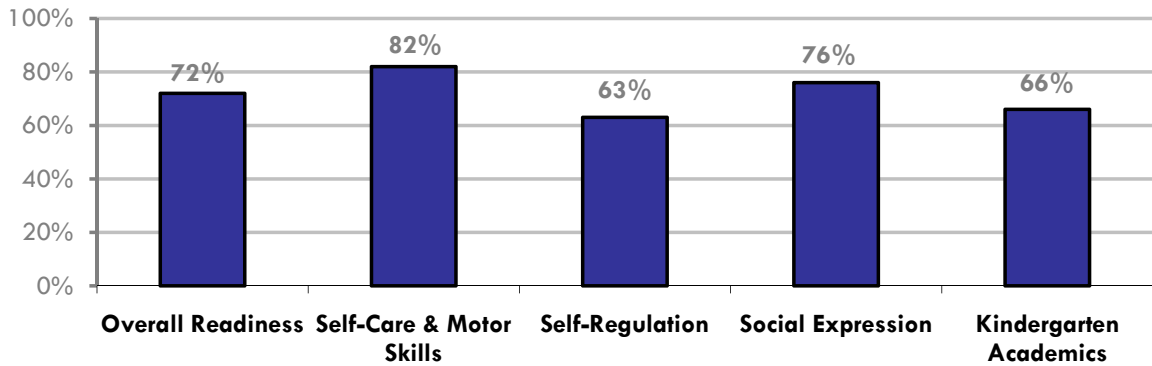
Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Scores are based on 262 San Lorenzo Unified students and 1,373-1,379 county-wide students.

Although knowing these readiness levels is instructive for understanding relative strengths and needs of students – as well as how San Lorenzo Unified students compare with other students in the county – they do not address the question of how ready is “ready enough” for school. To provide some context for understanding students’ readiness levels, as part of the teacher survey they completed, participating San Lorenzo Unified teachers were asked to indicate the level of proficiency that they believed children should have on each of the 24 assessed skills in order to be school-ready. (More information on the results of those surveys can be found in the section that follows.) These ratings were compiled for the four *Basic Building Blocks* readiness dimensions and the percentage of children who met or exceeded those levels of proficiency was computed. The figure that follows presents the percentage of students who met or exceeded the average levels of readiness that San Lorenzo Unified teachers believed they should have to be ready for school.

Overall, 72 percent of the students assessed in the San Lorenzo Unified classrooms were at or above the readiness levels their teachers thought they should have at kindergarten entry. The largest percentage of students were prepared (according to teachers’ perceptions) on *Self-Care & Motor Skills* (82% were at or above skill levels teachers felt were needed for kindergarten); the largest gap in actual versus desired levels of readiness occurred in *Self-Regulation* skills, in which only 63 percent of students were at the average skill level teachers felt they needed for success in kindergarten.

Figure 14. **Percentage of Children Meeting or Exceeding the Readiness Levels Teachers Felt They Needed for a Successful Transition**



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

Note: Percentages are based on 262 San Lorenzo Unified students. Percentages are based on students meeting the average expectations of all San Lorenzo Unified teachers, rather than each student's own teacher.

Children also exhibited different patterns of readiness strengths and challenges. For a more detailed look at different patterns of readiness, children were sorted into one of four *Readiness Portraits* based on their pattern of proficiency across the readiness skills.<sup>4</sup> The dark shading in Figure 15 shows where children in each of the four portraits are at or near proficiency on the associated skills.

<sup>4</sup> Children were sorted into one of the four *Readiness Portraits* via a data-driven technique called cluster analysis.



Figure 15. **Four Readiness Portraits**

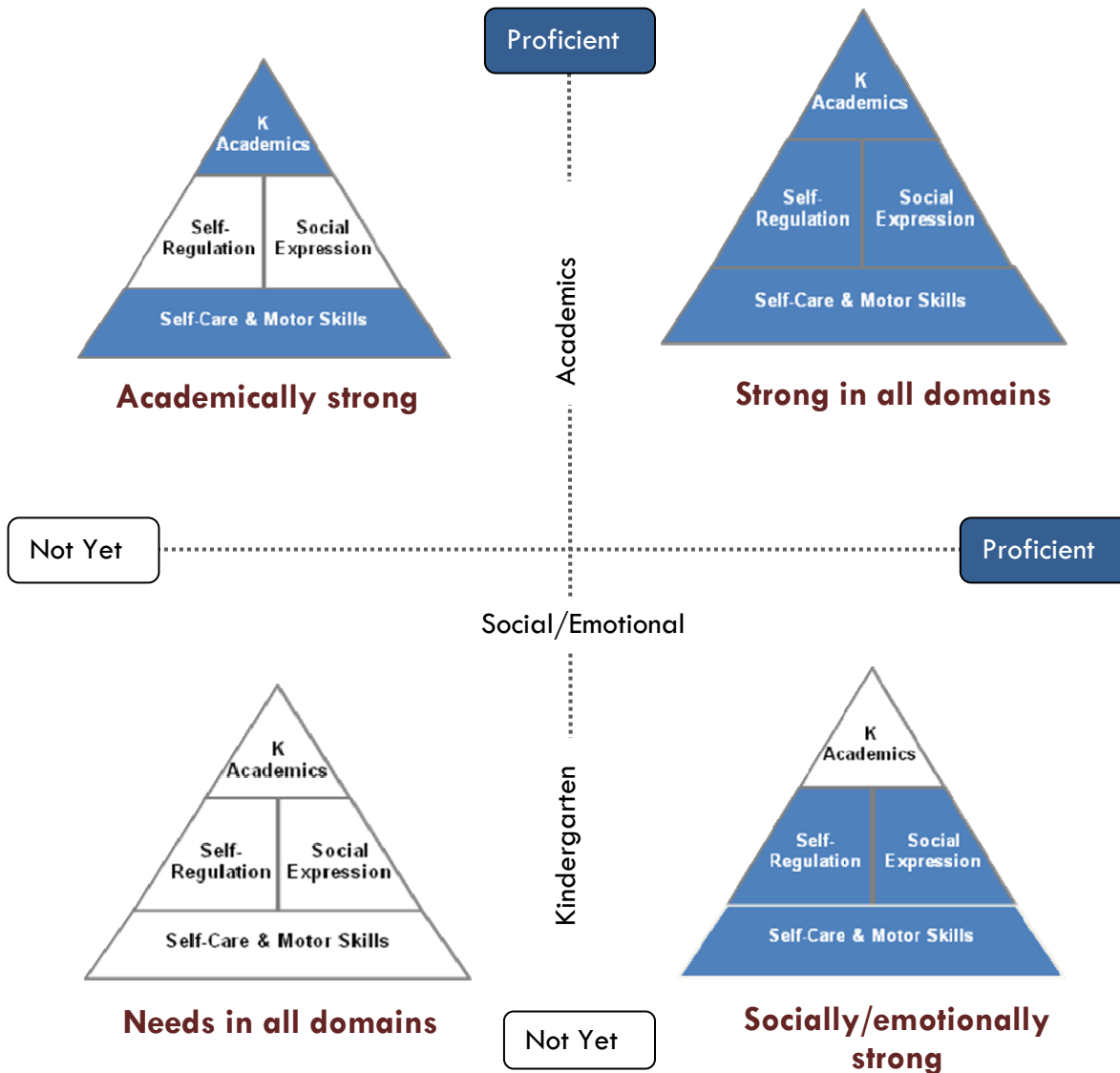


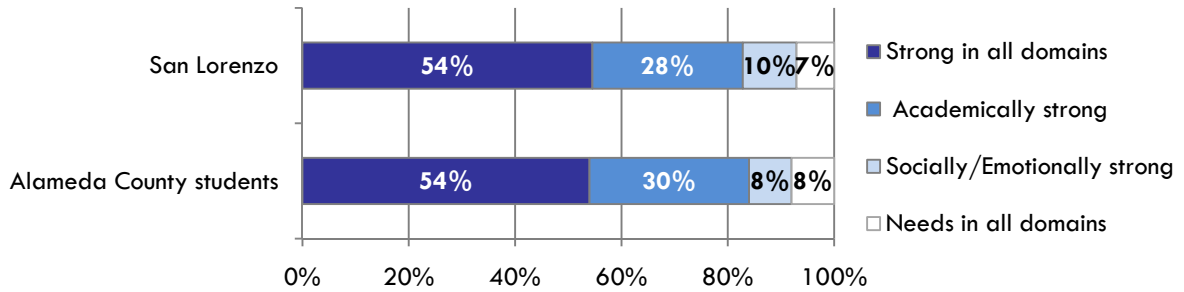
Figure 16 on the following page shows the percentage of San Lorenzo Unified and county-wide students who sorted into each of the four *Readiness Portraits*.

- *Strong in all domains:* More than half (54%) of assessed San Lorenzo Unified students entered kindergarten classrooms strong across all four *Basic Building Blocks* of readiness (corresponding to the pattern of readiness displayed in the upper right quadrant of Figure 15).
- *Needs in all domains:* Seven percent of students had significant readiness needs across all four skill domains. These students had not yet learned – or were just beginning to learn – almost all of the 24 readiness skills (lower left quadrant of Figure 15).

- *Academically strong*: Consistent with the readiness pattern shown in the upper left of Figure 15, 28 percent of San Lorenzo Unified students entering kindergarten had strong skills in their early academics (and *Self-Care & Motor Skills*) but demonstrated some challenges in the social-emotional areas of readiness.
- *Socially/emotionally strong* : Ten percent of San Lorenzo Unified students were well-equipped on the social-emotional dimensions of readiness, but they had needs in the realm of *Kindergarten Academics* – learning their letters, numbers, shapes, and colors (lower right quadrant of Figure 15).

Comparisons with the full sample of students assessed county-wide show that San Lorenzo Unified had roughly similar percentages of students in each of the four readiness portraits as in the county-wide sample.

Figure 16. **Prevalence of Four Portraits of Students' Readiness**



Source: Kindergarten Observation Form I (2010).

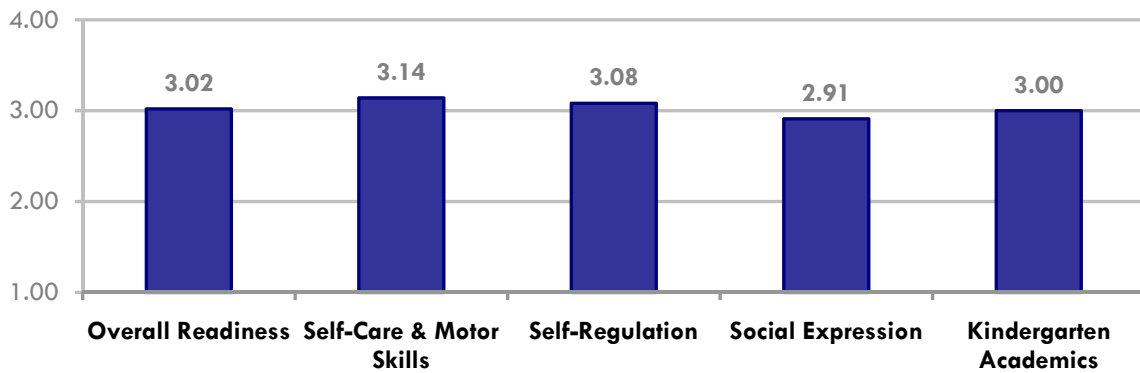
Note: This chart is based on 262 San Lorenzo Unified students and 1369 county-wide students. Percentages less than 5% are not labeled.

# An Overview of San Lorenzo Unified School District Teacher Beliefs

The *Teacher Survey on Importance of Readiness Skills* included a number of questions asking teachers to provide their opinions about students’ readiness for school – including what proficiency levels they think are required for success in school (briefly described in the previous section), as well as the skills that they think are most important for school entry, the skills they believe are easiest to impact, and on which skills they spend the most time.

Figure 17 shows the average levels of proficiency that the participating San Lorenzo Unified kindergarten teachers thought their students should have when they enter school. As Figure 14 in the previous section showed, the 72 percent of San Lorenzo Unified students were above these levels on all of the four *Basic Building Blocks* dimensions. The San Lorenzo Unified teachers expected the highest levels of proficiency on *Self-Care & Motor Skills* and the least proficiency on skills related to *Social Expression*.

Figure 17. Teachers’ Desired Levels of Proficiency on the *Basic Building Blocks* of Readiness



Source: Teacher Survey of the Importance of Readiness Skills (2010).

Note: Means can range from 1 to 4. Scale points are as follows: 1=not yet, 2=beginning, 3=in progress, 4=proficient. Means are based on 14 San Lorenzo Unified teachers.

When San Lorenzo Unified teachers were asked to choose only five skills that they believed were most important for entry into kindergarten, teachers selected *Self-Care & Motor Skills* and *Kindergarten Academics* as the most crucial for children to possess. The most important skill – selected by 12 of the 14 teachers – was children’s ability to perform basic self-help/self-care skills.

Figure 18. **Skills Most Often Selected by Teachers as One of Five Most Important for Kindergarten Entry**

School Readiness Skills	Basic Building Blocks	Number of teachers selecting
Performs basic self-help/self-care skills	Self-Care & Motor Skills	12
Writes own first name	Kindergarten Academics	8
Stays focused/pays attention during activities	Self-Regulation	7
Controls impulses and self-regulates	Self-Regulation	6
Follows one- and two- step directions	Self-Regulation	6

Source: Teacher Survey on Importance of Readiness Skills (2010).

Note: Scores are based on 14 San Lorenzo Unified teachers.

Teachers chose five skills that they believed to be the easiest for them to impact during the kindergarten year. The most commonly selected skills – each chosen by half of the teachers – were use of small manipulatives, recognizing basic colors, and engaging with books.

Figure 19. **Skills Most Often Selected by Teachers as One of Five Easiest to Impact**

School Readiness Skills	Basic Building Blocks	Number of teachers selecting
Uses small manipulatives	Self-Care & Motor Skills	7
Recognizes basic colors	Kindergarten Academics	7
Engages with books	Kindergarten Academics	7
Counts 10 objects correctly	Kindergarten Academics	6
Recognizes primary shapes	Kindergarten Academics	6

Source: Teacher Survey on Importance of Readiness Skills (2010).

Note: Scores are based on 14 San Lorenzo Unified teachers.

Finally, teachers in San Lorenzo Unified prioritized the five skills on which they spent the most class time. The top two skills – chosen by a majority of the teachers – included getting students to stay focused/pay attention (*Self-Regulation*) and recognize letters (*Kindergarten Academics*).

Figure 20. **Skills Most Often Selected by Teachers as One of Five on Which They Spend the Most Time**

School Readiness Skills	Basic Building Blocks	Number of teachers selecting
Stays focused/pays attention during activities	Self-Regulation	12
Recognizes letters of the alphabet	Kindergarten Academics	9
Follows one- and two- step directions	Self-Regulation	8
Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts, using adult guidance when appropriate	Self-Regulation	5
Participates successfully in circle time	Self-Regulation	5

Source: Teacher Survey on Importance of Readiness Skills (2010).

Note: Scores are based 14 San Lorenzo Unified teachers.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

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There are some positive messages about readiness levels in San Lorenzo Unified. More than half of students have readiness strengths across the full spectrum of readiness skills, and almost three-fourths are meeting the average readiness levels that their teachers feel are needed for success in kindergarten. A large portion of these students are doing well, despite having fairly low preschool attendance rates. In this sample, only 44 percent of students had attended preschool or licensed center-based care, as compared to 61 percent of the county-wide sample. The stronger-than-expected school readiness levels (given lower preschool rates) may in part be due to the high percentages of students from this region who participated in the First 5 Summer Pre-K program – an additional 21 percent of the sample took part in the F5AC Summer Pre-K program. The district and its community partners should continue to promote the availability of high-quality early education experiences like these for local children – and to look for new opportunities to reach out to those children who are not currently exposed to quality preschool programs prior to starting kindergarten.

There are some needs as well with this group of students. Longer-term preschool experience has been particularly strongly linked to improvements in the types of *Kindergarten Academics* skills on which some San Lorenzo Unified students have needs. In addition, according to teachers, San Lorenzo Unified students have the greatest needs in developing skills that relate to *Self-Regulation*; this domain has the greatest percentage of students who are not meeting teachers' expected proficiency levels. To help address this:

- Prior to kindergarten, parents and early care and education providers can work on developing children's skills related to emotional regulation and self-control.
- In kindergarten, teachers and district staff can develop strategies and ensure that curricula are addressing entering students' developmental needs related to self-regulation.

The collection of school readiness assessment data can help inform and guide school and district initiatives to support children's development. Some recent examples of school readiness data informing school and community action include the following:

- In this district, data from the 2008 and 2009 school readiness assessments have provided important evidence to support increasing the district's funding of summer pre-k programs and access to year-long preschool programs. With these data, San Lorenzo Unified could justify the attention, cost, and resources for supporting preschool experiences for their underserved families.
- Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District has used data from recent readiness studies to support their applications for federal and city grants, and they intend to use the data to encourage the district to continue supporting preschool for their students.
- In Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco counties, county-wide readiness assessments conducted every 2-3 years have helped to track population-level trends in entering kindergarten students over time, in order to monitor changes in important predictors of readiness (such as preschool attendance rates) as well as student readiness levels. For Santa Clara County in particular, this has allowed them to demonstrate that focused intervention

and support for low-income families have been related to readiness improvements in this population.

- Both Santa Clara and San Mateo counties have used data they have collected on the readiness of kindergarten students to show that readiness levels – particularly in the *Kindergarten Academics* and *Self-Regulation Basic Building Blocks* – strongly predict performance on third grade standardized tests, thus further supporting the need for strong interventions that begin even before a child begins kindergarten.
- Several Bay Area school districts have used the *Kindergarten Observation Form* and a parallel preschool version of the form (the *Pre-Kindergarten Observation Form [P-KOF]*) to build connections between their pre-K and K-12 education systems and the providers in each. When preschool providers have used the *P-KOF* alongside kindergarten teachers using the *KOF*, this facilitates the development of a common language and set of expectations for discussing children’s readiness and how providers in both systems can support it.
- One local, recently-developed, short-term pre-K program has also used findings from their student P-KOF assessments to shape their curriculum to better support the needs of their students, and they have used it as a reflective practice tool for their providers.
- Importantly, several Northern California regions have used their readiness data to develop resources for parents who have a child who will soon enter (or has recently entered) kindergarten. These resources include high-quality, easy-to-read parent handbooks organized around the four *Basic Building Blocks*. The handbooks provide information about the types of readiness skills children need and how to promote children’s development of those skills at home. In addition, in response to findings that showed that families who used more local community resources had children with better readiness outcomes, one local First 5 has partnered with other organizations in their community to provide parents with passes to enrichment activities, such as the zoo, to support children’s learning.

Individual districts, schools, teachers, and communities are encouraged to reflect on their own readiness findings and discuss ways that this data can help guide and inform action in their own schools and communities.

## Appendix 1: Crosswalking Readiness Items from *NEGP* to *Basic Building Blocks*

Skill Items	NEGP Dimensions	Basic Building Blocks
Uses small manipulatives	Phys Well-Being/Motor Dev	Self-Care & Motor Skills
Has general coordination on the playground	Phys Well-Being/Motor Dev	Self-Care & Motor Skills
Performs self-help/self-care tasks	Phys Well-Being/Motor Dev	Self-Care & Motor Skills
Relates appropriately to adults other than parent / primary caregiver	Social & Emotional Dev	Social Expression
Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language	Social & Emotional Dev	Social Expression
Works and plays cooperatively with peers	Social & Emotional Del	Self-Regulation
Controls impulses and self-regulates	Social & Emotional Dev	Self-Regulation
Expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning	Approaches to Learning	Social Expression
Stays focused / pays attention during activities	Approaches to Learning	Self-Regulation
Follows one- to two-step directions	Approaches to Learning	Self-Regulation
Participates successfully in circle time	Approaches to Learning	Self-Regulation
Has expressive abilities	Communication & Lang	Social Expression
Recognizes the letters of the alphabet	Communication & Lang	Kindergarten Academics
Writes own name	Communication & Lang	Kindergarten Academics
Can recognize rhyming words	Communication & Lang	Kindergarten Academics
Engages with books	Communication & Lang	Kindergarten Academics
Engages in symbolic/imaginative play	Cognition & Gen'l Knowledge	Social Expression
Can count 10 objects correctly	Cognition & Gen'l Knowledge	Kindergarten Academics
Recognizes primary colors	Cognition & Gen'l Knowledge	Kindergarten Academics
Recognizes primary shapes	Cognition & Gen'l Knowledge	Kindergarten Academics
Comforts self with adult guidance	N/A	Self-Regulation
Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance	N/A	Self-Regulation
Expresses empathy or caring for others	N/A	Social Expression
Handles frustration well	N/A	Self-Regulation