



Social Impact Consultants

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to solve social problems

# *Markers that Matter: Developing Success Indicators in Early Learning and Education*

Indicators and Emerging Themes from FSG Research on Early Success  
Markers, supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

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# Child Indicators and Emerging Themes

Child-level indicators reflect the key domains of socio-emotional development, cognition and general knowledge, language development and literacy, approaches to learning, and health and physical well-being

## Indicators

- Percent of infants born weighing more than 5.5 pounds
- Percent of children with health insurance
- Percent of children who receive coordinated, ongoing, comprehensive care within a medical home
- Percent of children with age-appropriate fine motor skills
- Percent of children ages 19-35 months who have been fully immunized
- Percent of children with detected developmental delays at kindergarten entry
- Percent of children with chronic health problems at kindergarten entry
- Percent of children at kindergarten entry who can count beyond 10, sequence patterns and use nonstandard units of length to compare numbers
- Percent of children recognizing basic shapes at kindergarten entry
- Percent of children recognizing the relationships between letters and sounds at kindergarten entry
- Percent of children with blood lead levels at or below 10 micrograms per deciliter
- Percent of children who use an expanding vocabulary, speak clearly, use conventional grammar
- Percent of children with reading proficiency at the fourth grade as measured by the state's reading proficiency test
- Percent of children who demonstrate knowledge about self, including racial identity, social class, self-perceived abilities, and culture
- Percent of children who exhibit positive social behaviors when interacting with their peers
- Percent of children who regulate their own emotions and behaviors, manage feelings, follow limits and expectations, and take care of their own needs appropriately
- Percent of children who actively engage in learning activities
- Percent of children with moderate to serious difficulty following directions

## Emerging themes

- **Children's inclusive behavior of others:** The extent to which children's behavior includes other children who are different from them racially, linguistically, and culturally

## Family Indicators and Emerging Themes

Indicators of families reflect the key areas of maternal, parent, or guardian well-being, family socio-economic level; parenting practices; and family structure. *(It should be noted these indicators reflect a common but also narrow concept of family, as they relate primarily to parents and guardians.)*

### Indicators

- Percent of children living in families with income below the federal poverty threshold
- Percent of births to teens ages 15 to 17
- Percent of births to women who receive late or no prenatal care
- Percent of births to mothers with less than a grade 12 education
- Percent of mothers experiencing depression
- Percent of children in out-of-home placement (foster care) who have no more than two placements in a 24-month period
- Percent of births to unmarried women
- Percent of substantiated child abuse and neglect cases
- Percent of families reading to young children at least once a day

### Emerging Themes

- **Family, parental access to resources:** The extent to which parents or guardians actively access and engage with resources, including informational, educational, cultural, and financial
- **Family, parental levels of chronic stress:** Family conditions such as parents or guardians working multiple jobs, absence of a partner, or absence of a social network for extended periods of time
- **Family, parenting of children in culturally appropriate ways:** Parents' or guardians' beliefs and behaviors with children regarding respect, obedience, and participation in social and educational activities; parents' expectations and behaviors according to a child's gender

# Programs, Care Centers, Schools, and Family Care Indicators and Emerging Themes (1 of 2)

Indicators of childcare programs; care centers; schools; and family, friends, and neighborhood care reflect the key areas of physical environment, workforce characteristics, and care provider or teacher-child interaction.

## Indicators

- Percent of 3 to 4 year olds enrolled in a center-based early childhood care and education program
- Percent of care and education settings that have varied opportunities for children to be read books in an engaging manner in group or individualized settings at least twice a day in full day programs
- Percent of care and education settings that provide varied opportunities and materials to build an understanding of numbers, number names, and their relationship to object quantities and symbols
- Percent of care and education settings with age- and developmentally appropriate materials and equipment indoors and outdoors for children throughout the day
- Percent of care and education settings implementing validated effective curricula for social skills development
- Percent of care and education centers that provide children opportunities to develop a sense of competence and positive attitudes toward learning, such as persistence, engagement, curiosity, and mastery
- Percent of care and education settings that have an outdoor play area that is protected by fences or by natural barriers to prevent access to streets and to avoid other dangers, such as pits, water hazards, or wells
- Percent of care and education settings with an average teacher/child ratio of: 1:4 for infants, 1:6 for toddlers, 1:10 for preschoolers, and 1:12 for kindergarteners
- Percent of early childhood teachers with a bachelor's degree and specialized training in early childhood
- Percent of care and education settings with at least one staff member who has a certificate showing satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training
- Percent of care and education settings that have access to mental health consultation
- Percent of care and education settings with teaching staff who help children follow a predictable but flexible daily routine by providing time and support for transitions

## Programs, Care Centers, Schools, and Family Care Indicators and Emerging Themes (2 of 2)

Indicators of childcare programs; care centers; schools; and family, friends, and neighborhood care reflect the key areas of physical environment, workforce characteristics, and care provider or teacher-child interaction.

### Indicators (continued)

- Percent of care and education settings where teaching staff interact with children to assess their strengths and needs to inform curriculum development and individualize teaching
- Percent of care and education settings where teaching staff are active in identifying and using any teaching practices, curriculum approaches, or materials that are affirming with respect to gender, sexual orientation, age, language, ability, race, or religion
- Percent of care and education settings where teaching staff, program staff or both work as a team to implement daily teaching and learning activities including individualized family or education plans
- Percent of care and education settings that have multiple strategies to involve and support parents
- Percent of care and education settings that have a work environment for staff, including classrooms and staff rooms, that are comfortable, clean, and in good repair

### Emerging Themes

- **Programs, Care Centers, Schools, and Family Care settings exhibiting teacher-child interactions in culturally appropriate ways:** Care providers' and teachers' beliefs and behaviors with children regarding respect, obedience, participation, and time; staff expectations and behaviors according to a child's gender
- **Programs, Care Centers, Schools, and Family Care workforce characteristics, backgrounds:** Care providers' and teachers' racial and ethnic background and ability to speak in a child's home language and to engage with family and community members of children whom they are serving
- **Programs, Care Centers, Schools, and Family Care settings' inclusiveness of diversity:** The extent to which there is representativeness from diverse racial, cultural and language groups in planning and governing processes related to young children and their development

## Community Indicators and Emerging Themes

Community indicators reflect the resources and institutions found locally, and the conditions that circumscribe those resources and institutions, available to children and their families. These resources include support agencies, and the social, cultural, economic, and physical environment.

### Indicators

- Percent of families with children paying more than 30% of their income for housing
- Percent of children living in a neighborhood in which more than 20% of the population lives in poverty
- Percent of children needing and receiving emergency housing services
- Percent of children receiving child care subsidies

### Emerging Themes

- **Community and neighborhood safety:** The extent to which acts of violence occur within a neighborhood or community
- **Neighborhood stability:** The level of home ownership, lease to purchases, and long-term rental agreements in a neighborhood or community
- **Community and neighborhood food choices:** The extent to which a community has grocery stores with healthy food choices