

HAWAII STATE SCHOOL READINESS ASSESSMENTS

Young children are ready to have successful learning experiences in school when there is a positive interaction among the child's developmental characteristics, school practices, and family and community support.

Hawaii State Definition of Readiness

Information about the two annual Hawaii State School Readiness Assessment (HSSRA) instruments is provided in the Question and Answer format below. Approximately 70% of the elementary schools completed their first HSSRA in the 2004-05 school year, and 100% completed the HSSRA in 2008-09 and 2009-10. The composite results gave the State policy makers a baseline from which to gauge the impact of early childhood efforts on supporting successful early learning experiences in kindergarten. The Department of Education has set 100% participation as the goal for school year 2010-11

Questions and Answers

Q. What developmental domains are considered important for successful learning experiences of entering kindergarten children?

A. Five developmental domains are important. These are:

- (1) Approaches to Learning: attitudes and habits that facilitate learning
- (2) Academic Literacy and Math: knowledge of specific school concepts and skills
- (3) School Behaviors and Skills: behaviors and skills relevant to the demands of classroom and school settings
- (4) Social-Emotional Behaviors: interpersonal and emotional behaviors and attitudes
- (5) Physical Well-being: muscle control, hygiene and general physical health

Q. How are these developmental domains assessed?

A. The assessment instrument (HSSRA) relies on the kindergarten teachers' professional observation and judgment. First, the kindergarten teacher becomes familiar with the developmental domains by reading the items that illustrate them. Next, she observes the children's behaviors during the first few weeks of school and may set up activity centers for more focused observations. Finally, the kindergarten teacher records her observations on the assessment instrument, specifically the percent of her class who consistently demonstrate the behaviors, concepts or skills in each of the domains.

Q. What behaviors, concepts or skills make up each of the Domains?

A. There are a number of descriptive items within each of the five developmental domains. These items were validated, field-tested, and revised in Hawaii. Preschool and kindergarten

teachers and parents considered them to be very important to successful learning experiences in kindergarten. The descriptive items for each domain are listed in Appendix A. The Class Profile takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. Print your results after you have completed the assessment on the internet. You may then examine your class profile results by domain for immediate use. See Appendix C as one useful way to display your results.

Q. How should the results of this assessment be used by the kindergarten teacher?

A. The results give the kindergarten teacher a classroom profile that tells her what her class is ready to do. Remember the saying, “Start where the children are”? It gives her a starting point for the class upon their entry into kindergarten. The teacher may use this profile to plan her learning centers and instructional activities for the first few months of school, while she finds out more about her individual students needs and strengths.

Q. Should the assessment results be used to place children into separate classrooms for “ready” children and “not ready” children?

A. The practice of separating young children on the basis of “readiness” test scores has no research support because “readiness” involves more than children. “Readiness” is not a simple or single thing. And contrary to some beliefs, it is not solely “maturational.” Thus, an extra year or extra time does little to promote learning. In fact, the term “readiness” is complex and interactive. Our State definition of readiness recognizes its complexity and is in agreement with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

*School readiness, in the broadest sense, is about children, families, early environments, schools, and communities. Children are **not innately ready or not ready** for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school.*

Where We Stand on School Readiness, NAEYC, Maxwell & Clifford, 2004

That is why NAEYC’s position is that kindergarten entry should be based on chronological age and not on the mastery of skills. That is also why schools must be ready to help children learn.

Q. How do I know if my school is ready to help children learn?

A. A companion assessment to the kindergarten classroom profile is one that examines the readiness of the school to support young children’s successful learning. It results in a profile of a school’s policies and practices in early childhood education and was developed and field tested here in Hawaii.

Q. What areas does the “School Policies and Practices Profile” assess?

A. The school profile assessment instrument covers five areas that researchers have found important to have in place to support successful early learning experiences. These domains

- are:
- (1) Transition from home/preschool to kindergarten
 - (2) Communication with families
 - (3) Parent Involvement
 - (4) School Improvement in Early Education
 - (5) Kindergarten Classroom Practices

Q. Would you tell us more about how this School Assessment works?

A. Typically, the principal completes the school assessment instrument at the beginning of the school year. But the Kindergarten Grade Level Chair may assist the principal in completing certain areas, particularly those dealing with kindergarten classroom practices.. It is short, and takes about 10 minutes on the internet. Print your assessment responses after you have completed the assessment. You can then display the results for immediate use. (See Appendix D as a way you may want to display the results for your school.)

Q. What specific school policies and practices are assessed?

A. Descriptive items for the five areas of school readiness are described in Appendix B. The principal is given guidelines to judge how well established each practice is. To accurately complete the instrument, the principal should (a) be familiar with school documents, (b) have observed the kindergarten classrooms, and (c) have direct knowledge of how well school practices are carried out.

Q. In what ways are the results of the School Policies and Practices Profile useful?

A. The results give a school profile indicating strengths and needs in the five areas. The areas of strength should be celebrated and continued. The weak areas should be improved so that our schools are more ready to support our entering kindergarten children and their successful learning experiences. See Appendix D that has a way to display a school’s “readiness” profile grouped by the five areas into bar charts.

Q. How do I find out the results of both assessments?

A. The results are posted by school on Accountability Resource Center Hawaii (ARCH) at <http://arch.k12.hi.us> and click on HSSRA. You may also contact the Good Beginnings Alliance or the Hawaii State Department of Education (Evaluation/Student Support Services) about HSSRA. NAEYC (naeyc.org) and HAEYC (haeyc.org) websites have useful resources.

**Classroom Profile
Five Developmental Domains of HSSRA with Descriptive Items**

1. Approaches to Learning

- Tries hard and **persists**
- Appears interested in the world – **curious**
- Shows **interest** in books and print
- Shows **eagerness to learn** by observing, asking questions, exploring new things

2 A. Academic – Literacy Concepts and Skills

- Knows names and sounds of more than 3 **letters**
- Uses **symbols**, scribbles or letter-like form to “write words”
- Shows familiarity with how **books work**
- **Communicates** ideas and describes things using phrases and sentences

B. Academic – Math Concepts and Skills

- Can **count** a set of 5 objects
- Is able to **sort and classify** objects
- Knows **names** of more than 3 numerals
- Recognizes and can duplicate simple **patterns**

3. School Behaviors and Skills

- Is able to follow classroom **routines**
- Needs minimal support to **adjust to new** people and routines
- Is **independent** in caring for self and own belongings
- Is able to **listen** for about 15 minutes

4. Social Emotional Behaviors

- **Works** and **plays well** with others
- Shows **satisfaction** in accomplishments
- **Expresses emotion** through appropriate actions and words
- Is **respectful** of others

5. Physical Well Being

- Comes to school **well rested**, fed, and alert
- Practices **personal hygiene** –washes hands after toilet and before eating
- Shows **large muscle** control
- Shows **small muscle** control

Indicate the proportion of class who consistently display the characteristic or skill using the following options: 1= almost none 2=about 25% 3=about 50% 4 about 75% 5 =almost all

School Profile

Five Domains of HSSRA School Policies and Practices with Descriptive Items

1. Transition from Home/Preschool to Kindergarten

The school has ...

- A written transition **plan** that is fully **implemented**.
- Special **orientation or visitation** for incoming kindergarten children and families before school begins.
- **Systematic procedure** between home/school or preschool/kindergarten **to provide information** as to strengths and needs of entering kindergarten children.

2. Communication with Families

The school ...

- Uses **multiple approaches** to communicate with families, such as home visits, newsletters, phone calls, parent workshops, etc.
- Communicates information **about child development and learning, opportunities for parent involvement, support agencies in the community**.

3. Parent Involvement

The school . . .

- Has a **variety** of ways to have parents **involved**, such as classroom volunteers, special events, telephone trees, helping with fundraising, etc.
- Holds on-going **parent workshops** on child development and learning.
- Has a well-developed **family literacy** program.

4. School Improvement in Early Education

The school . . .

- Regularly **evaluates early education curriculum and practices** based on current best practices.
- Provides teachers with the opportunities for **professional development in early childhood education**.

The school principal ...

- Assigns teachers with **early childhood education background** to teach kindergarten.

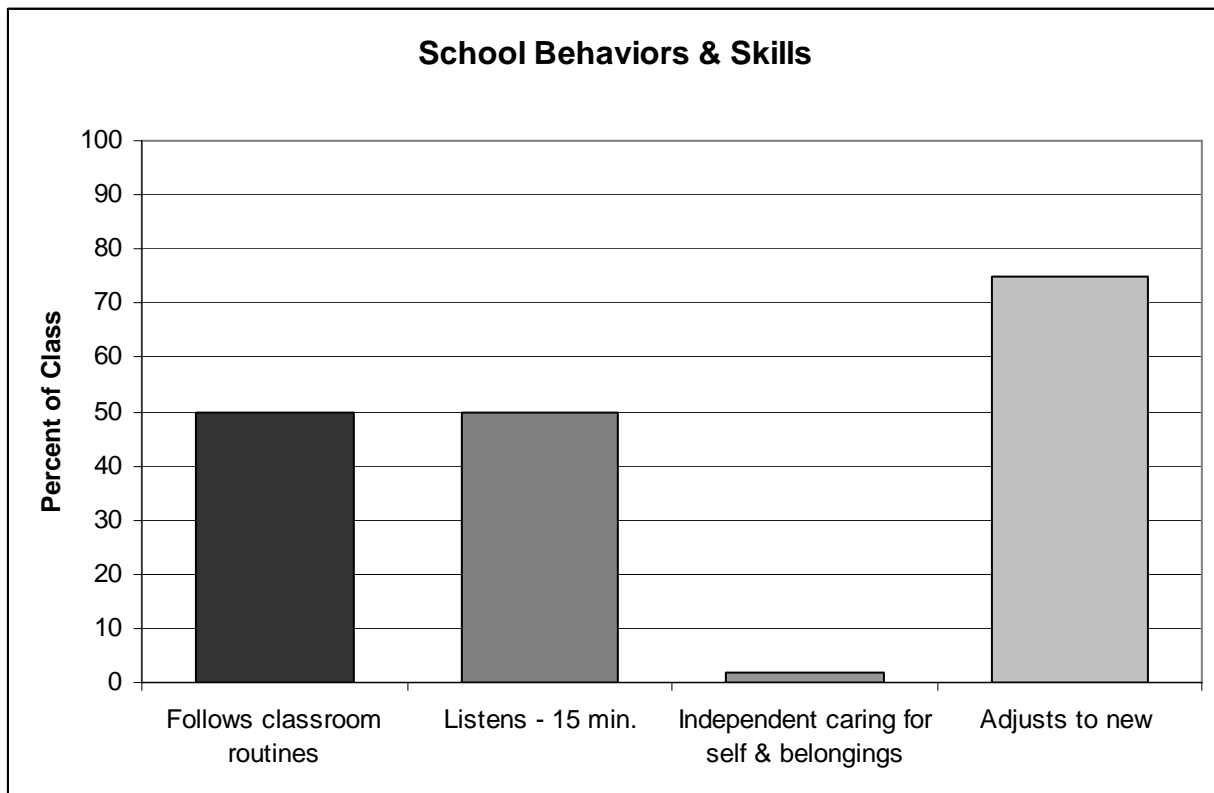
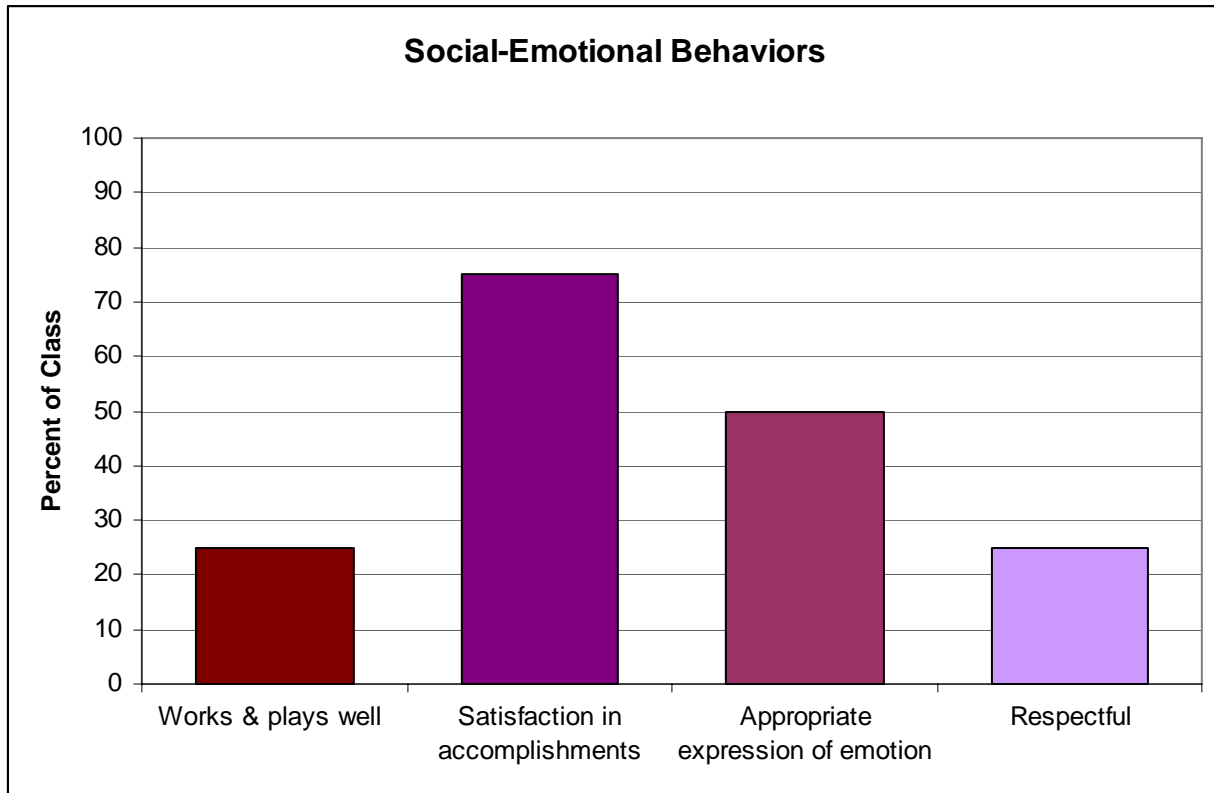
5. Kindergarten Classroom Practices

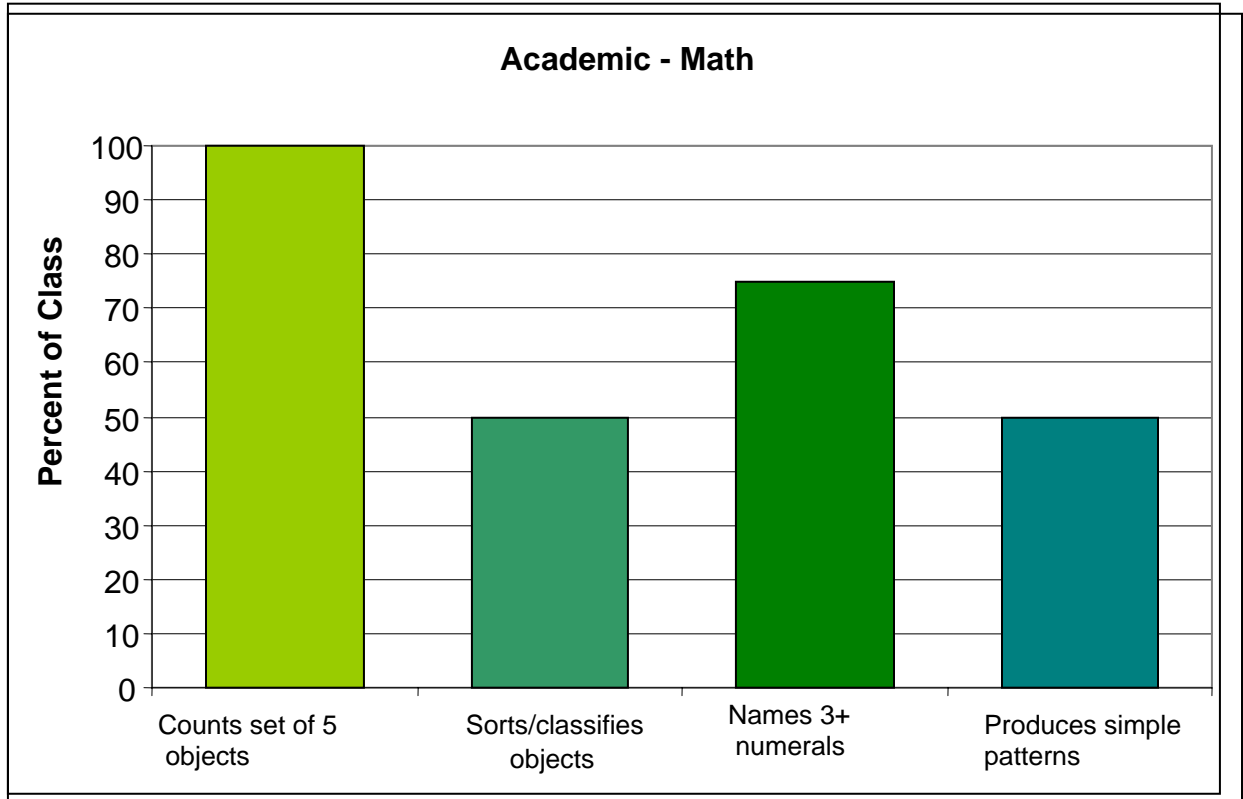
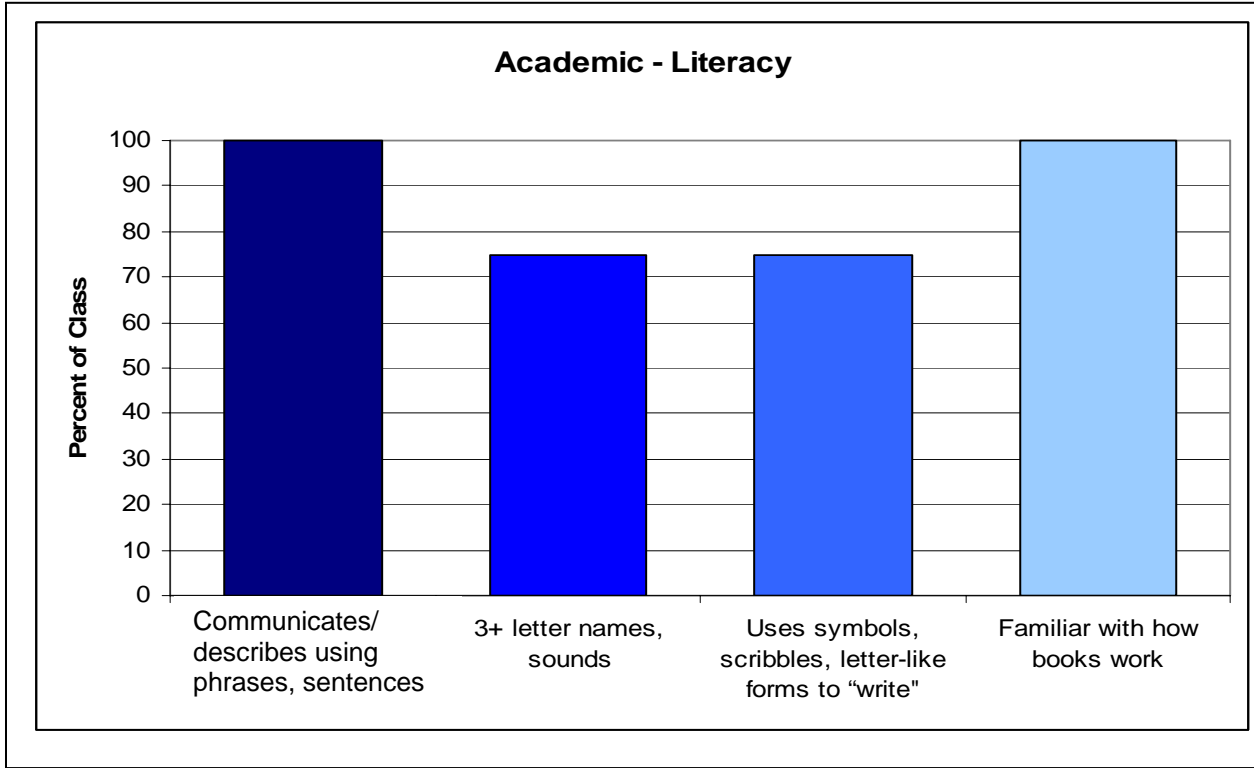
The daily schedule has...

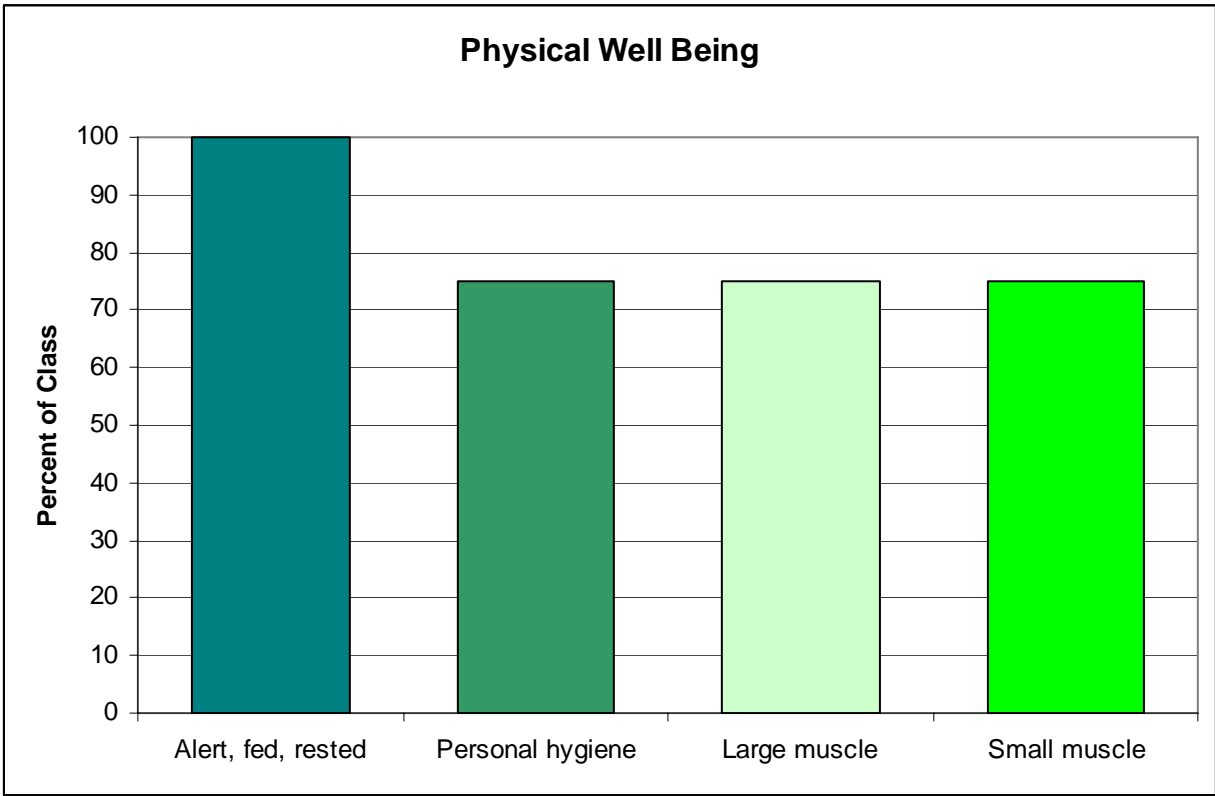
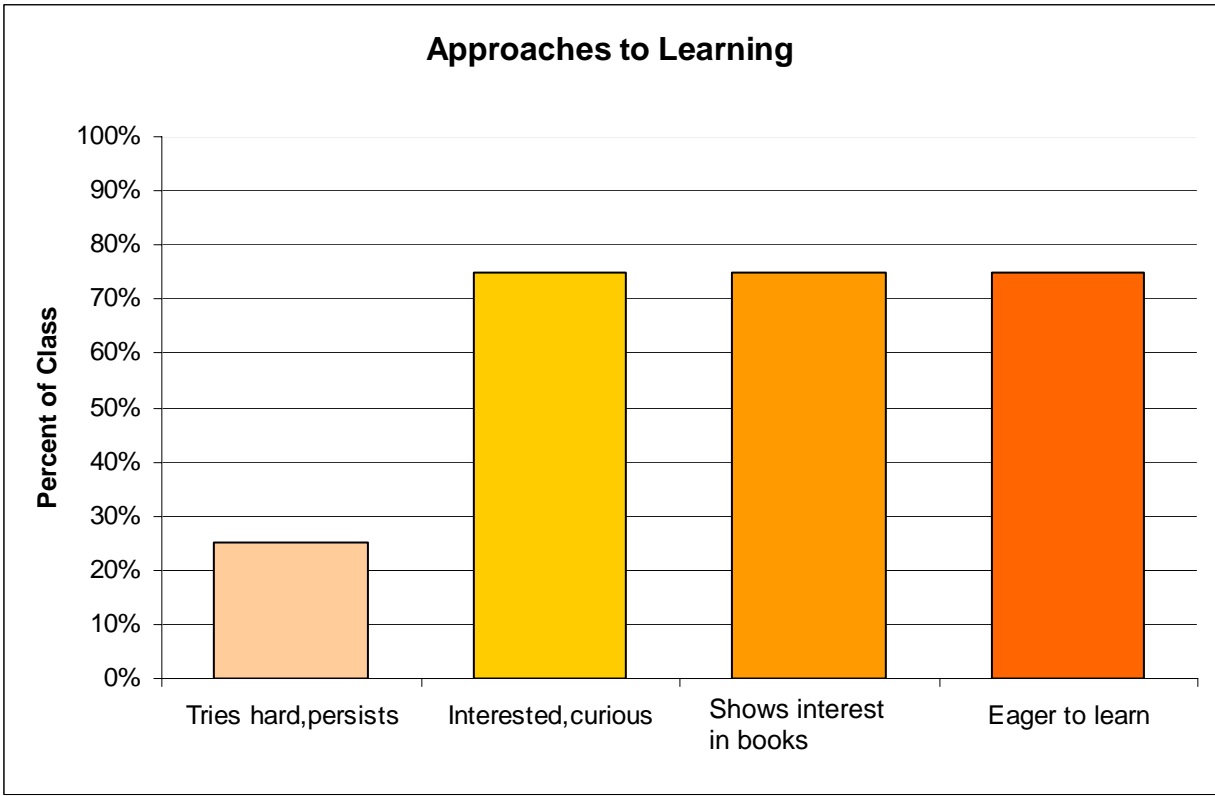
- **Variety** of hands-on activities from which children may **choose**.
- Balance between **teacher directed** and **child-initiated activities**.
- Balance between **active** and **quiet activities**.
- Balance between **large group, small group, and individual activities**.

Rating Scale: 1=Not yet/Beginning 2=Informal/Depends on individuals 3= Well established/ Institutionalized

Sample of Classroom Profile – Five Developmental Domains

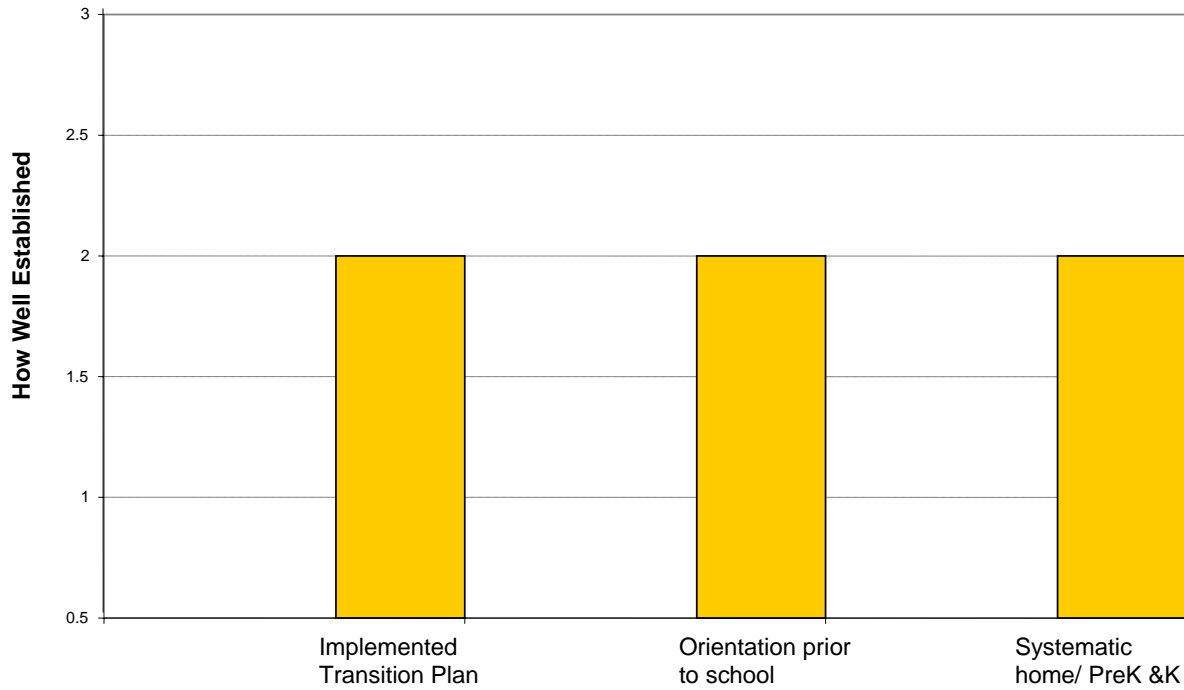




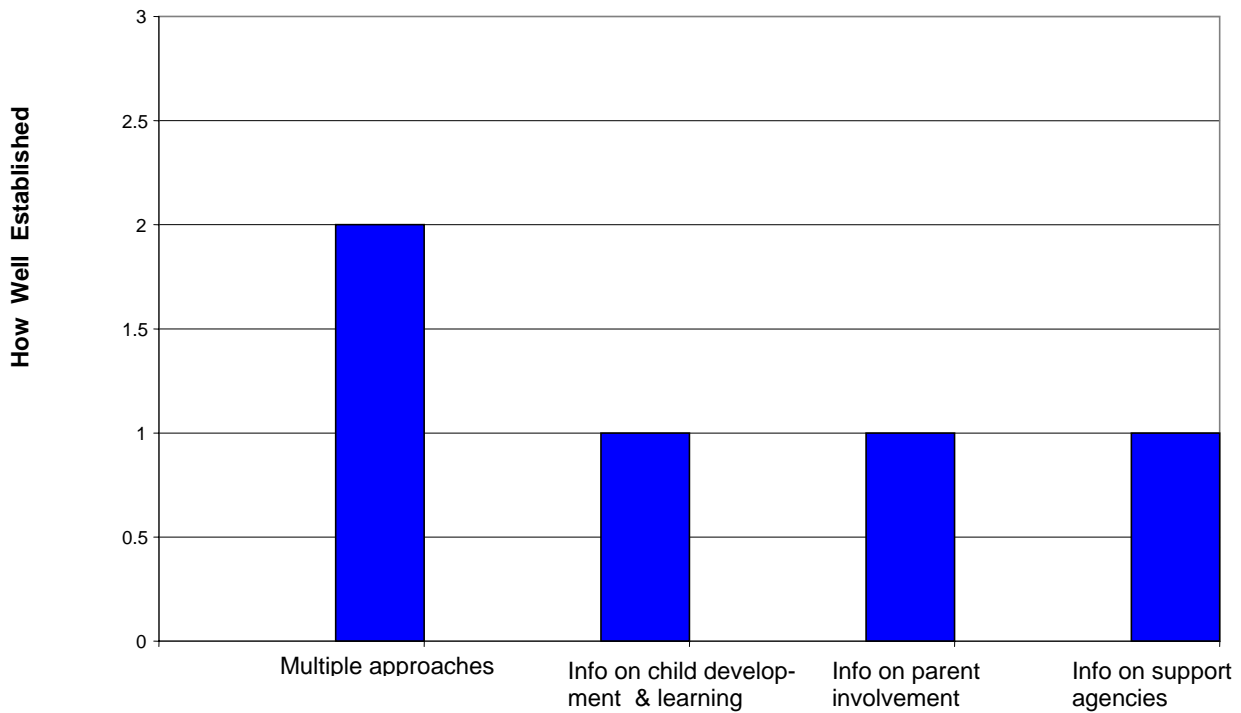


Sample of School Profile – Five Categories of School Policies and Practices

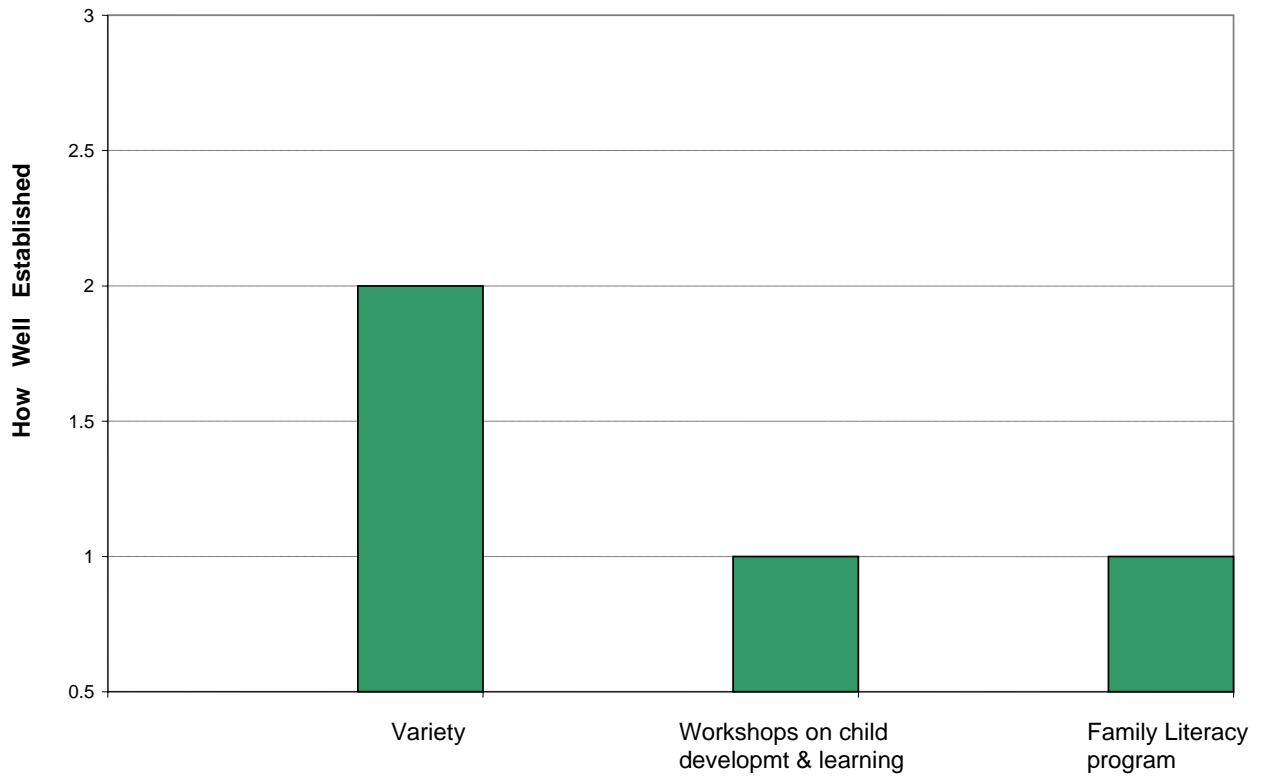
Transition from Home/Preschool to K



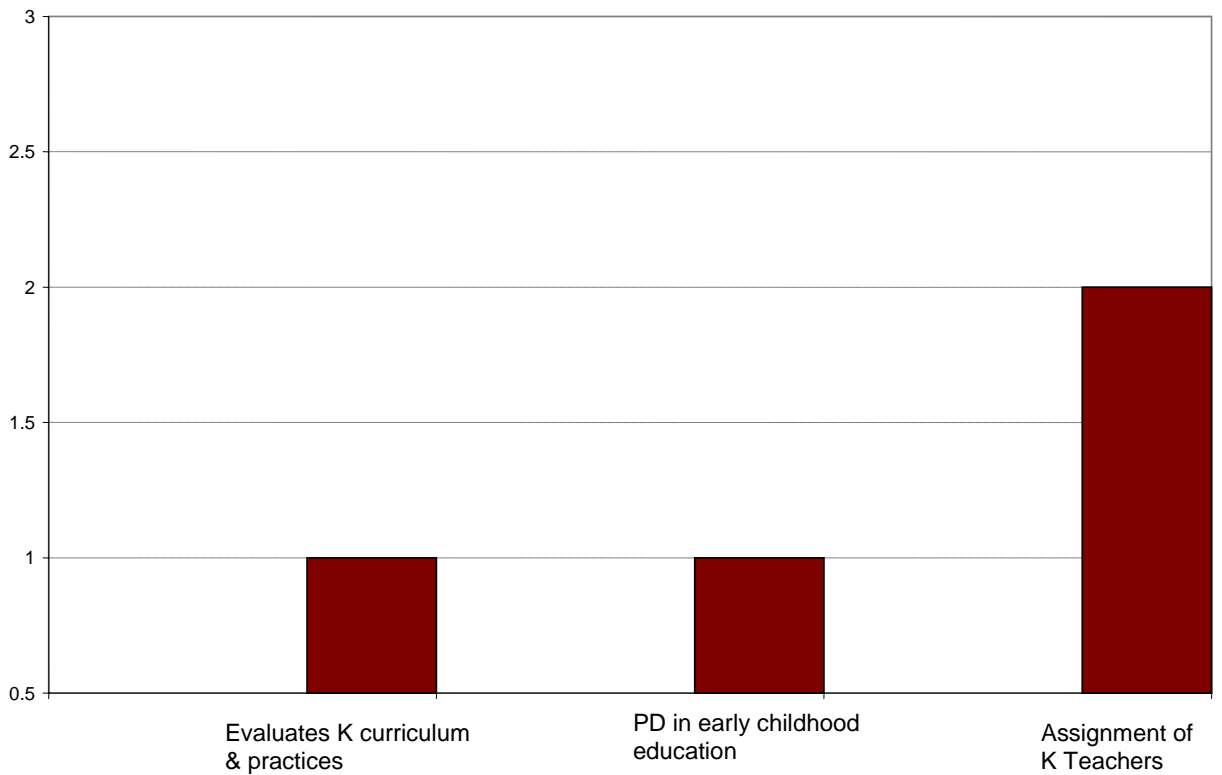
Communication with K Families



Parent Involvement



School Improvement in Early Education



Kindergarten Classroom Practices

