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SCHOOL READINESS DEFINITION

“Responsibility for school readiness lies not with children, but with the adults who care for them and the systems that support them,” (National Governors Association, 2005., p. 29)

School readiness is a multi-dimensional construct that goes beyond the skills, knowledge, and disposition of children as they enter kindergarten. Children are *eligible* for school when they have reached the chronological age established by the state, as described on page 1; however, school *readiness* is achieved through a combination of efforts involving children, families, schools, communities, and the state.

**READY CHILDREN** show an eagerness to explore, discover, engage, and learn. They demonstrate interest and abilities in all dimensions of early learning and development: social and emotional development; language development; cognition and general knowledge; physical well-being and motor development; and approaches toward learning. Children are unique individuals, who do not develop at the same time or in the same way. Therefore, school readiness should be viewed as a continuum of behaviors rather than an inflexible or narrow set of proficiency skills. Any age-eligible child who is eager to attend kindergarten should be deemed “ready.”

**READY FAMILIES** recognize their role as their child’s first and most stable teacher and advocate while understanding their child’s current level of development. Families ensure a safe and consistent environment, promote good health, provide steady and supportive relationships, and understand their relationship with the school system to ensure a smooth transition.

**READY SCHOOLS** provide a welcoming and accepting environment for all and have professional educators who consistently advance growth and achievement for students with diverse backgrounds, experiences and abilities while working in partnership with families and communities.

**READY COMMUNITIES** include businesses, faith-based organizations, early childhood service providers, community groups, and local governments collaborating to support schools and children’s long-term success by providing families access to information, affordable services, and high-quality early learning opportunities.

**READY STATES** play a crucial part in supporting communities, schools, and families through developing appropriate policies; providing adequate funds; ensuring access to high-quality early development and learning opportunities; preparing and retaining a world-class early childhood workforce; ensuring an infrastructure to coordinate services, including data systems for accountability and demonstrating political leadership to make school readiness a state priority.

*Adapted from National Governors Association. 2005. Building the foundation for bright futures: Final report of the NGA Task Force on School Readiness. Washington, DC: Author*

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