



THE SUCCESSFUL KIDS IN PRE-K PROJECT (SKIPP) PHASE II:

An Assessment of Los Angeles Universal Preschool Students' Progression Toward School Readiness

Fall 2008 – Spring 2009



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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

In Spring 2008, Los Angeles Unified Preschool (LAUP) contacted Applied Survey Research to determine if ASR's *Kindergarten Observation Form (KOF)* could serve as an appropriate measure to gauge the extent to which children in LAUP-supported programs gained the essential skills needed to be school-ready. Specifically, LAUP was seeking a short, easy-to-use, assessment tool that would be content-relevant to LAUP providers, comprehensive in its capture of important school readiness dimensions, developmentally-appropriate, psychometrically sound, and able to show progress in the readiness skills that mattered to LAUP.

In partnership with LAUP, ASR made minor modifications to the *KOF* in Spring 2008 and renamed this version of the tool as *Student Observation Form (SOF)*. ASR then conducted a small pilot study with the *SOF* among seven LAUP providers and their students to gather preliminary data as to whether the *SOF* could possibly meet LAUP's assessment needs. The LAUP providers in that pilot study deemed the tool, relevant, easy to implement, useful, valuable, and developmentally-appropriate.

In the following Fall of 2008 and Spring 2009, ASR implemented the assessment among a broader sample of LAUP providers. The goal of this broader roll-out was two-fold: 1) to gain an understanding of how well the assessment procedure works with a larger, more representative group of providers, and 2) to determine how well the *SOF* measures children's school readiness throughout the LAUP school year.

In this report, ASR presents the results of the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 assessment to answer the following research questions:

1. What was the level of school readiness observed amongst children entering LAUP programs in Fall 2008?
2. Were there any floor or ceiling effects in operation in Fall 2008?
3. Was the *SOF* sensitive enough to capture key skill differences among LAUP children in Fall 2008?
4. What was the level of school readiness observed amongst children exiting LAUP programs in Spring 2009?
5. How did children's school readiness skills change from Fall 2008 to Spring 2009?
6. Were there differences in Fall 2008 to Spring 2009 outcomes among LAUP students?

KEY FINDINGS

The figure below summarizes the answers to the study’s primary research questions.

Figure 1: **Conclusions and Data Highlights by Primary Research Question**

Research Question	Conclusion	Data Highlights
1. What was the level of school readiness observed amongst children entering LAUP programs in Fall 2008?	Overall Readiness Score: 3.22	For each individual readiness skill, LAUP children were scored on a scale from <i>Not yet</i> (1) to <i>Proficient</i> (4). Average scores for each <i>Basic Building Block</i> can also range from 1 to 4. The scores for overall readiness – as well as three of the <i>Basic Building Blocks</i> – are between the <i>In progress</i> (3) and <i>Proficient</i> (4) levels. Similar to what ASR has seen with county-wide assessments in Northern California; scores are highest in the <i>Self-Care & Motor Skills</i> area (3.51) and lowest for <i>General Knowledge</i> (2.98). LAUP children – as well as children who have participated in ASR’s several kindergarten readiness assessments – tend to score better on <i>Social Expression</i> skills (3.27) than on <i>Self-Regulation</i> skills (3.14).
2. Were there any floor or ceiling effects in operation in Fall 2008?	No	For almost all of the skills, few children were scored at the <i>Not yet</i> level of proficiency, and ceiling effects were not a problem. Although data were skewed toward the <i>Proficient</i> rating across some skills, these skills tended to be less advanced. On more advanced skills, far fewer children scored at the <i>Proficient</i> level.
3. Was the SOF sensitive enough to capture key skill differences among LAUP children in Fall 2008?	Yes	The SOF is sensitive enough to capture differences among groups known to differ in their readiness. Results of the Fall 2008 study showed the following readiness differences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Girls outscore boys on most dimensions; – Older children are more proficient across the readiness skills than are younger children; – Scores of Non-ELL children are higher than scores of ELL children.
4. What was the level of school readiness observed amongst children preparing to exit LAUP programs in Spring 2009?	Overall Readiness Score: 3.71	By the Spring assessment, across all <i>Basic Building Block</i> areas of readiness, children were scoring very close to <i>Proficient</i> levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Self-Care & Motor Skills</i> (3.88) – <i>General Knowledge</i> (3.64) – <i>Social Expression</i> skills (3.78) – <i>Self-Regulation</i> skills (3.67)
5. How did children’s school readiness skills change from Fall 2008 to Spring 2009?	Children showed significant improvement across all Basic Building Blocks of Readiness	Children’s scores improved from fall to spring in assessments of language development, English proficiency, and in all <i>Basic Building Block</i> areas of readiness. The greatest gains in readiness scores were made in the area of <i>General Knowledge</i> , where scores increased by an average of 0.65 points on the 1-4 proficiency scale.

Research Question	Conclusion	Data Highlights
<p>6. Were there differences in Fall 2008 to Spring 2009 outcomes among LAUP students?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Girls continue to outscore boys on most dimensions; - Older children outscore younger children, although younger children made greater gains between fall and spring assessments; - In the spring, the performance gap between ELL and non-ELL children closed considerably, with the only significant difference in the area of General Knowledge. - The percentage of children who demonstrated near-proficiency across all building blocks (Combined Proficient) increased from 41% in the fall to 72% in the spring.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LAUP

The majority of children in this sample left LAUP preschools ready for success in kindergarten and beyond.

The average readiness scores for children in the study significantly increased from fall to spring, and were between the *In Progress* and *Proficient* levels at the end of the preschool year. In addition, the percentage of children who scored between the *In Progress* and *Proficient* levels across all readiness skills (students who were “Combined Proficient”) increased from 41% in the fall to 72% in the spring. A previous study that followed children from the beginning of kindergarten to 5th grade found that children who scored between the *In Progress* and *Proficient* levels across all readiness skills at the beginning of kindergarten performed significantly better on English and Math California Standards Tests (CSTs) in third, fourth, and fifth grades than did children who scored less well (ASR, 2008). Given the implications for later academic success, LAUP plans to investigate this finding further.

The performance gap between English Language Learners and Non-English Language Learners closed considerably for this sample of LAUP children.

In the spring, the performance gap between ELL and non-ELL children closed for three of the four building blocks. The only remaining significant difference was in the area of General Knowledge. The fall-to-spring gains made by ELLs exceeded those made by non-ELLs in all building block areas, especially in the area of General Knowledge, even though the average score for ELLs is still significantly lower in this area. An earlier study of LAUP children conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (2009) found that children who spoke Spanish-only had larger fall-to-spring gains in rapid letter naming and social skills as compared to their English-only peers. In addition, children who spoke a language other than Spanish or English (“Other Language”) exhibited larger fall-to-spring gains in receptive and expressive English vocabulary, social skills, and gross motor skills when compared to their English-only peers. Taken together, the findings from these two reports illustrate the dramatic increase in skills experienced by ELLs during the preschool year. These findings also highlight the need for further research to investigate potential links between preschool and the large gains made by English Language Learners.

More research is needed to explore the relation between preschool experience and kindergarten readiness.

As stated earlier, LAUP initiated this study in order to understand how well the *SOF* assessment procedure worked with LAUP preschool providers, and how well the *SOF* measured children’s school readiness throughout the LAUP school year. While we can say that the children in this study left their LAUP classrooms with a solid tool kit of the skills needed to be ready for kindergarten and beyond, we cannot say that preschool causes higher readiness scores. An experimental research design is needed to answer questions about the causal link between preschool and school readiness. Future studies may also examine which student, school, and family variables are independently associated with readiness scores above and beyond their associations with other variables.

SUMMARY

As mentioned above, LAUP is seeking a child outcome measure that will meet several critical criteria. The results of the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 assessment on a matched set of 364 LAUP children indicate that the *Student Observation Form* is fulfilling these criteria. Because not all of the 90 providers sampled were able to participate in this project, the sample from whom these data were gathered is not generalizable to the overall LAUP population, though it is large enough (N=364) and has findings consistent with the Spring 2008 pilot that we feel the findings are likely representative of what we would find with a larger sample.

In terms of being a **measure that can assess key school readiness skills** of LAUP children, results of the Fall 2008 assessment of 437 LAUP children found overall readiness scores to be between the *In Progress* and *Proficient* levels. The average level of readiness increased from Fall to Spring, indicating the children left LAUP supported programs with a solid tool kit of the skills needed to be school-ready when they enter kindergarten a few months later. Simply said, the *SOF* detected change in skill levels throughout the LAUP school year.

A good measure is one that is **developmentally-appropriate** to the population being assessed. As was found in the initial Spring/Summer 2008 pilot study, floor and ceiling effects were not observed, in that the skills measured by the *SOF* were neither too advanced nor too basic for the population served by LAUP.

A good measure should also show itself to be **psychometrically -sound** in the new setting in which it is being tested. As has been observed in ASR's past studies with this instrument, in this pilot, the *SOF* (KOF) demonstrated good known groups validity, in that it proved sensitive enough to capture differences in skills amongst known groups, such as girls vs. boys, and older vs. younger students. Secondly, the *SOF* (KOF) again revealed very strong levels of internal consistency and standard deviations well within the acceptable range, indicating that despite the heterogeneity of teachers and children using or being assessed with the instrument, the instrument continues to be highly reliable.

Introduction

The goal of Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) is to make high-quality preschool available to every 4-year-old child in Los Angeles County, with the intent to help those children leave the program ready for success in school. However, the lack of a universal assessment tool across the LAUP network has made it difficult for LAUP to describe the school readiness skills of children attending LAUP preschools.

In Spring 2008, Los Angeles Unified Preschool (LAUP) contacted Applied Survey Research to determine if ASR's *Kindergarten Observation Form (KOF)* could serve as an appropriate measure to gauge the extent to which children in LAUP-supported programs gained the essential skills needed to be school-ready. Specifically, LAUP was seeking a short, easy-to-use, assessment tool that would be content-relevant to LAUP providers, comprehensive in its capture of all important school readiness dimensions, developmentally-appropriate, psychometrically sound, and able to show progress in the readiness skills that mattered to LAUP.

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Methodology

SAMPLE

The sample was designed to match the distribution of providers in the LAUP network, in terms of:

- Family Child Care;
- Private Center – Non-Profit;
- Private Center – For Profit; and
- Public Center.

Using LAUP’s database of providers, ASR drew a random sample that was stratified by provider type and that was representative of the larger universe of LAUP providers by other key characteristics such as provider enrollment size, years of early childhood education experience of teachers, and ethnicity of teachers. Finally, the sample was large enough to be generalizable with a margin of error of +/- 4%. Fulfilling this random sample was contingent on a strong provider participation rate, with assessments conducted on a sufficient number of children from different provider environments.

In reality, because some of the sampled providers did not participate, fewer children were assessed. Therefore, the study’s findings apply to the providers and children who participated in the study, but the findings may not generalize to the broader LAUP network.

RECRUITMENT

Once the sample of providers was drawn, LAUP proceeded with recruitment by contacting providers and attempting to obtain their agreement to participate in the study. When it became evident that the provider participation rate was lower than anticipated, a reserve sample of 50 additional providers was drawn by ASR. The reserve sample was also designed to match the distribution of providers by provider type.

Of the sample of 100 providers selected to participate in the study, LAUP staff attempted to obtain agreement from **90** providers. Ultimately, **24** providers agreed to participate in the pilot study for a participation rate of 27 percent. An additional 17 providers declined to participate in the study, and 46 were not responsive to recruitment efforts. The 17 providers who declined to participate provided the following explanations for their non-participation: *too busy/overwhelmed* (N=7); *using another assessment* (N=6); *not a good time to participate* (N=3) and *other* (N=1). Of the six providers who said they were using another assessment, four cited the DRDP as their assessment tool. Three providers did not participate in the spring assessment, resulting in **21** providers.

An analysis of the results of LAUP’s recruitment efforts revealed differences in the inclination of providers to participate, by provider type: a greater percentage of Family Child Care providers targeted actually agreed to participate in the study than did Center providers (48% versus 20%). Consequently, when compared the distribution of provider types across the LAUP network, FCC providers are slightly overrepresented in the resulting sample of providers in the study.

Figure 2: **Distribution of Sample by Provider Type**

Provider Type	Fall 08 Sample of Participating Providers		LAUP Network of Providers	
	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency
FCC	58%	14	41%	124
Private Center - Non Profit	8%	2	16%	48
Private Center - Profit	4%	1	11%	34
Public Center	29%	7	32%	99
Total	100%	24	100%	305

Source: Applied Survey Research sample records, and LAUP Provider Data Set, 2008

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The readiness assessment consisted of the two instruments listed below.

- The *Student Observation Form (SOF)* 2008 is a version of the Kindergarten Observation Form (KOF) that has been modified for LAUP. The KOF is a readiness instrument first developed in San Mateo County and is now used extensively in Northern California. The form has strong content validity, strong construct validity, shows strong results on early tests for criterion validity (California Reading and Literature Project literacy assessment), has consistent known groups validity, and has strong predictive validity (highly correlated with the 3rd grade California Standards Tests in reading and math) and it has a high degree of internal consistency. The form also provides for the collection of key demographic characteristics and the assessment of important skills and attributes that students need to successfully transition into school. (See Appendix A.)
- The *Teacher Survey* 2008 is a brief, self-administered provider survey. It contains a set of questions to gather provider opinions about the assessment training, information about curricula and other assessment tools used in the classroom, and additional comments about the assessment process. (See Appendix B).

IMPLEMENTATION

Providers were asked to complete the *SOF* for every student in their classroom. Before student observations commenced, providers sent home to every LAUP parent a Parent Letter, Parent Consent Form, and Study Summary. A passive consent process was utilized such that parents were asked to sign and return the *Parent Consent Form* only if they did not want data collected on their children. Figure 4 provides a summary of the number of LAUP sites that participated in the fall assessment, the number of children at these sites, and the parent consent rate. Three providers did not participate in the spring assessment, resulting in 21 providers and 73 fewer children assessed in the spring than in the fall (N=364).

Figure 3: **Summary of Site Participation and Parental Consent, Fall 2008**

	Total
Number of providers who participated	24
Number of LAUP children assessed	437
Parent consent rate	97%
Number of teachers completing <i>Teacher Survey 2008</i>	32

PSYCHOMETRIC PERFORMANCE OF THE *STUDENT OBSERVATION FORM*

Children were assessed across 24 readiness skills. These readiness skills can be reliably sorted into the four *Basic Building Blocks* categories depicted in Figure 5. The results of the reliability analysis – Cronbach’s alpha coefficients – are also contained in the table below. Typically, scales are considered reliable if Cronbach’s alpha coefficients are .70 or higher (George & Mallery, 2003; Nunnally, 1978; Welch & Comer, 1988).

Figure 4: **Items Comprising the Basic Building Blocks of Readiness, Fall 2008 and Spring 2009**

Basic Building Blocks of Readiness	Individual Skills	Cronbach’s alpha Fall 2008	Cronbach’s alpha Spring 2009
Self-Care & Motor Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, buttons, zippers, etc 2. Has general coordination on playground (kicking balls, running, climbing) 3. Performs basic self-help / self-care tasks (toileting, eating, washing hands) 	.82	.77
Self-Regulation Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Comforts self with adult guidance (e.g., goes to quiet area when upset; identifies emotion s/he is feeling) 5. Stays focused / pays attention during activities 6. Controls impulses and self-regulates (is not disruptive of others or class) 7. Follows one- to two-step directions 8. Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance (e.g., engages in problem-solving) 9. Works and plays cooperatively with peers (takes turns and shares, helps others) 10. Participates successfully in circle time (listens, focuses, sits still, engages) 11. Handles frustration well (e.g., does not act out, asks for help, does not withdraw/ become unresponsive) 	.93	.92
Social Expression	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver (converses with, seeks help from) 13. Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language 14. Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying) 15. Has expressive abilities (tells about a story or experience in response to a prompt) 16. Expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning (tries new activities, asks questions) 17. Engages in symbolic / imaginative play with self or peers (plays house, fire station) 	.92	.88

Basic Building Blocks of Readiness	Individual Skills	Cronbach's alpha Fall 2008	Cronbach's alpha Spring 2009
General Knowledge	18. Recognizes the letters of the alphabet (note: out of sequence, may be CAPs, lowercase or combination) 19. Writes own first name (spelling and writing all letters correctly) 20. Can recognize rhyming words (" 'Rug' rhymes with 'Bug.' Does 'Shoe'? Does 'Jug'?") 21. Engages with books (knows where a book starts, associates print with storyline, pretends to read) 22. Can count 10 objects correctly ("Please give Maria 5 crayons" or "Please put 10 blocks in the basket") 23. Recognizes primary colors (Crayola basic 8: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, and black) 24. Recognizes primary shapes (circle, triangle, square)	.82	.79
Overall		.95	.94

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009

Findings

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN ASSESSED IN FALL 2008

- A total of 437 children were assessed in this study – 194 boys, 213 girls, and 30 children whose teachers did not record their gender.
- Children ranged in age from 3 years and 11 months to 5 years and 4 months, with an average age of about 4 ½.
- About half of the children assessed attended a public center (52%); over one-third of children attended a family child care center (37%). The remaining children attended either a for-profit or not-for-profit private center.
- Children from many different cities were included in the sample, including Baldwin Park, Commerce, El Monte, Huntington Park, Los Angeles, Lake Elizabeth, Lakewood, Lancaster, Pasadena, Pomona, Van Nuys, West Hollywood, Whittier, and Wilmington.
- Children represented a wide variety of ethnicities, with the majority being Latino (66%) (See Figure 6).

Figure 5: **Ethnic Distribution of Sample, Fall 2008**

Ethnicity	Percent	Frequency
Hispanic / Latino	66%	283
Caucasian/White	11%	48
Multi-racial	9%	39
Asian	6%	26
Black	6%	24
Pacific Islander	1%	3
Alaskan	<1%	1
Other	1%	3
Total	100%	427

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008

Note: There was missing data for an additional 10 children on this dimension.

- 54 percent of children assessed participated in a morning-only preschool session, 28 percent participated in an afternoon-only session, and the remainder (18%) participated in both morning and afternoon sessions.
- One-third of the children assessed had attended another child care or preschool site prior to enrolling in the LAUP program (33%).
- Slightly more than one-third of the children assessed attend child care or preschool in addition to the 3.5 hours funded by LAUP (36%).

- Most children spend about 18 hours a week in the LAUP providers' classrooms (44%). Thirteen percent of children spend 10 hours or less in these classrooms, whereas on the opposite end of the spectrum, 12 percent of children spend 40 hours or more in these classrooms. Although LAUP only funds half-day preschool (17.5 hours a week), some LAUP preschools are full-day and fund the other portion of the day with alternative sources of funding.
- Providers judged almost all of their children to be well-rested (97%) and well-fed (98%).
- Twenty-three children (5%) were flagged as having diagnosed special needs, an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and/or an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)¹.
- The type of special need was recorded for 14 of these children – according to their teachers, most of these children had speech delays or other language-issues (N=12). One child was diagnosed with autism, and the remaining child had a physical disability.

LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

According to teacher report, English was the primary language of the majority of children involved in the assessment (55%). Thirty-nine percent of children primarily speak Spanish, one percent are equally fluent in English and Spanish, with the remaining children speaking other languages like Vietnamese, Cantonese, or Tagalog.

Figure 6: **Primary Languages of Children Assessed, Fall 2008**

Primary Language	Percent	Frequency
English	54%	234
Spanish	38%	168
Vietnamese	1%	6
English & Spanish	1%	6
Cantonese	1%	4
Tagalog	1%	4
Other	1%	6
Total	100%	428

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008

Note: A primary language was not specified for 9 children.

To give LAUP an overall view of children's language development, providers were asked "How well does this child use his or her primary language?" As seen in Figure 8, many children were judged to be "advanced" in their primary language development (42%), with most of the remainder judged to be "on track" (54%). Just four percent of children were deemed "definitely delayed". (We should note that less than half of the "definitely delayed" children were diagnosed with speech-related special needs, suggesting that a formal developmental assessment is still needed for several children.)

¹ Note that inclusion or exclusion of these children did not appreciably change the overall mean readiness scores.

Figure 7: Teacher Perceptions of Language Development, Fall 2008

Assessment of Language Development	Percent	Frequency
Definitely delayed	4%	16
On track	52%	220
Advanced	40%	170
Total	100%	406

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008

Note: Providers did not complete this item for 31 additional children in the sample.

For those children whose primary language was NOT English, teachers were asked to describe children’s facility with English. According to teachers, the majority of non-native English-speakers speak English well and are almost always easy to understand (56%). Just four percent of non-native English-speakers were judged to have no English skills at all.

Figure 8: Teachers’ Reports of English Proficiency Among Non-Native English-Speakers, Fall 2008

English Proficiency	Percent	Frequency
Speaks English well and is almost always easy to understand	49%	94
Speaks some English, but is not always easy to understand	23%	45
Speaks a few English words	23%	44
No English skills at all	5%	9
Total	100%	192

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008

Note: This table is based on children whose primary language was NOT English.

In Fall 2008, very few teachers reported problems communicating with children: for 99% of the children, teachers reported that they were able to communicate with the child well enough to complete all assessment items. Eighty-nine percent of children were assessed in their primary language.

RESEARCH QUESTION #1: WHAT WAS THE LEVEL OF SCHOOL READINESS OBSERVED AMONGST CHILDREN ENTERING LAUP PROGRAMS IN FALL 2008?

Performance Across the Individual Skills

Figure 10 shows the percentage of children scoring at the *Not yet*, *Just beginning*, *In progress*, and *Proficient* levels across all 24 readiness skills. Figure 11 shows the average score for each item, which can range from 1 (*Not yet*) to 4 (*Proficient*).

The highest numbers of children are proficient in the following six skills, which include skills in the *General Knowledge* cluster, as well as *Self-Care & Motor Skills*:

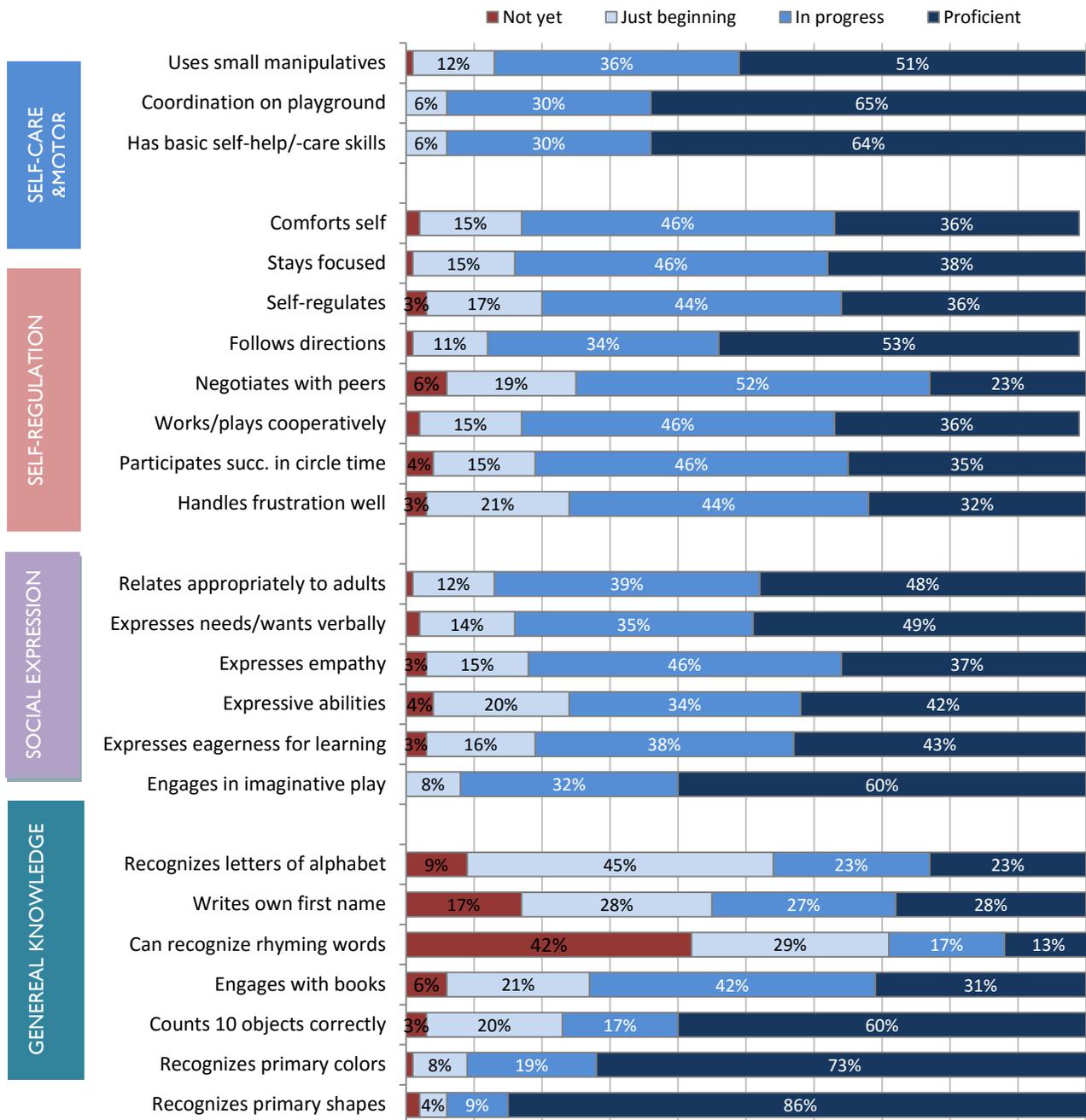
- Recognizes primary shapes (86% at the Proficient level)
- Recognizes primary colors (73%)
- Coordination on the playground (65%)
- Basic self-help/self-care skills (64%)
- Engages in imaginative play (60%) and Counts 10 objects correctly (60%)

Far fewer children are proficient in the following five areas. In fact, the highest percentages of children score at the *Not yet* level on these skills, which are largely in the *General Knowledge* area:

- Can recognize rhyming words (42% at the Not yet level)
- Writes own first name (17%)
- Recognizes letters of the alphabet (9%)
- Engages with books (6%)
- Negotiates with peers (6%)

The following percentages are based on the fall sample. Sample sizes vary (405-437) due to required skips of questions where teachers do not speak child's primary language. Findings of less than 3% are not labeled.

Figure 9: Percentage of Children at Each Proficiency Level Across Readiness Skills, Fall 2008



Source: Student Observation Form, 2008.

Note: Percentages are based on 405 - 437 children. Findings of less than 3% are not labeled.

The following percentages are based on the fall sample. Sample sizes vary (405-437) due to required skips of questions where teachers do not speak the child’s primary language.

Figure 10: Average Scores for Individual Readiness Skills, Fall 2008

Individual Skills	Fall 2008
1. Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, buttons, zippers, etc	3.36
2. Has general coordination on playground (kicking balls, running, climbing)	3.59
3. Performs basic self-help / self-care tasks (toileting, eating, washing hands)	3.57
4. Comforts self with adult guidance (e.g., goes to quiet area when upset; identifies emotion s/he is feeling)	3.16
5. Stays focused / pays attention during activities	3.20
6. Controls impulses and self-regulates (is not disruptive of others or class)	3.13
7. Follows one- to two-step directions	3.40
8. Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance (e.g., engages in problem-solving)	2.92
9. Works and plays cooperatively with peers (takes turns and shares, helps others)	3.16
10. Participates successfully in circle time (listens, focuses, sits still, engages)	3.12
11. Handles frustration well (e.g., does not act out, asks for help, does not withdraw/ become unresponsive)	3.05
12. Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver (converses with, seeks help from)	3.34
13. Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language	3.31
14. Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying)	3.17
15. Has expressive abilities (tells about a story or experience in response to a prompt)	3.15
16. Expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning (tries new activities, asks questions)	3.21
17. Engages in symbolic / imaginative play with self or peers (plays house, fire station)	3.51
18. Recognizes the letters of the alphabet (note: out of sequence, may be CAPs, lowercase or combination)	2.60
19. Writes own first name (spelling and writing all letters correctly)	2.66
20. Can recognize rhyming words (“ ‘Rug’ rhymes with ‘Bug.’ Does ‘Shoe’? Does ‘Jug’?”)	2.01
21. Engages with books (knows where a book starts, associates print with storyline, pretends to read)	2.98
22. Can count 10 objects correctly (“Please give Maria 5 crayons” or “Please put 10 blocks in the basket”)	3.33
23. Recognizes primary colors (Crayola basic 8: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, and black)	3.64
24. Recognizes primary shapes (circle, triangle, square)	3.78

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008. Note: Means can range from 1 (Not yet) to 4 (Proficient).

Basic Building Blocks Scores

For each individual readiness skill, children were scored on a scale from *Not yet* (1) to *Proficient* (4). Average scores for each *Basic Building Block* can also range from 1 to 4. As Figure 12 below shows, scores for overall readiness are between the *In progress* (3) and *Proficient* (4) levels. The pattern of average scores is similar to what ASR has seen with county-wide assessments in Northern California; scores are highest in the *Self-Care & Motor Skills* area (3.51) and lowest for *General Knowledge* (2.98). Similar to findings for children in Northern California, LAUP children tend to score better on *Social Expression* skills (3.27) than on *Self-Regulation* skills (3.14).

Figure 11: Average Scores Across the Basic Building Blocks of Readiness, Fall 2008

Basic Building Blocks of Readiness	Sample Size	Average Score	Standard Deviation
Overall Readiness	437	3.22	.55
Self-Care & Motor Skills	436	3.51	.57
Self-Regulation	435	3.14	.65
Social Expression	435	3.27	.67
General Knowledge	437	2.98	.66

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008

Note: Average scores range from 1 (indicating a score of "Not yet") to 4 (indicating a score of "Proficient").

RESEARCH QUESTION #2: WERE THERE ANY FLOOR OR CEILING EFFECTS IN OPERATION IN FALL 2008?

The SOF assesses a wide range of skills that tap various components of school readiness. These skills range in complexity from performing basic self-care tasks to writing their first name. During the Fall 2008 pilot study, ASR assessed the presence of floor and ceiling effects in the process of determining whether the *SOF* was appropriate for use with LAUP children. Floor effects would occur if the skills were too advanced for the population of LAUP children, as seen by large proportions of children scoring at the *Not yet* level of proficiency. Ceiling effects would occur if the skills were too elementary for the population of LAUP children, as seen by large proportions of children scoring at the *Proficient* level. In the pilot study, there were no floor effects, as few children scored at the *Not yet* level of proficiency. If anything, pilot study data were skewed toward the *Proficient* rating across many skills, which was not too surprising given that LAUP children were (by definition) enrolled in an early learning program.

Were There Any Floor Effects?

Again, floor effects were not present for the *SOF*. For most skills, few children scored at the *Not yet* level of proficiency. On just two skills did a fair portion of children score at the bottom of the scale – *Writes own first name* (17%) and *Can recognize rhyming words* (42%). These two skills are among the most advanced in the assessment, however, and so it is not surprising that relatively more children were score at the *Not yet* level on these two items. (See Figure 10).

Were There Any Ceiling Effects?

Among this broader sample of LAUP children, ceiling effects were not a problem. Although data were skewed toward the *Proficient* rating across some skills (e.g., *Has basic self-help / self-care skills*, *Recognizes primary colors*, and *Recognizes primary shapes*), these skills tended to be less advanced. On more advanced skills (e.g., *Can recognize rhyming words*, *Recognizes letters of alphabet*), far fewer children scored at the *Proficient* level. The variability shown for most items indicates that the scale is appropriate for this population, capturing a range of proficiency-levels. (See Figure 10).

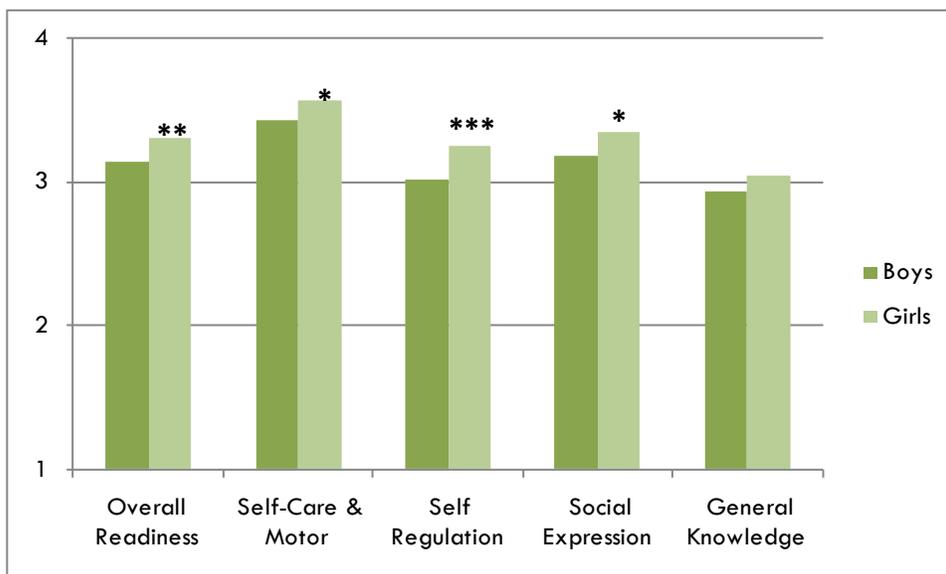
RESEARCH QUESTION #3: WAS THE SOF SENSITIVE ENOUGH TO CAPTURE KEY SKILL DIFFERENCES AMONG LAUP CHILDREN IN FALL 2008?

In its many county-wide assessments in Northern California, ASR typically finds that some types of children tend to outscore other types of children across the readiness skills. This is evidence of the instrument’s known groups validity. The initial Spring/Summer 2008 pilot study, as well as this larger study in Fall 2008, demonstrated that the *SOF* is sensitive enough to capture key skill differences among groups of LAUP children who would be expected to differ in their readiness for kindergarten. In this section of the report we examine readiness differences between girls and boys, older and younger children, and English-speakers and non-English speakers to ensure that the *SOF* is an instrument sensitive to these known differences.

Girls vs. Boys

As ASR typically finds, girls outscored boys on almost all dimensions. These differences emerged among LAUP children, as well. Consistent with the Spring/Summer 2008 pilot study, this fall girls scored higher overall, as well as on *Self-Care & Motor Skills*, *Self-Regulation*, and *Social Expression*. The only dimension for which LAUP girls and boys were equally prepared (as was also true in the pilot study) was *General Knowledge*. Again we see that the *SOF* was sensitive enough to capture differences among groups known to differ on readiness.

Figure 12: Readiness Differences Between Girls and Boys, Fall 2008



Source: Student Observation Form, 2008

Note: Boys N=192-194; girls N=213. Average scores range from 1 (indicating a score of “Not yet”) to 4 (indicating a score of “Proficient”). T-tests were run for each *Basic Building Block* dimension (and for readiness overall), and significant results are noted with a star. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.005$, *** $p < 0.001$

Older vs. Younger Children

Across numerous assessments, ASR finds that older children are more proficient across the readiness skills than are younger children. This is true for LAUP children, as well. There were significant correlations between children’s ages (as of the assessment date) and all *Basic Building Blocks*, as shown in the Figure 14 below.

Figure 13: Correlations Between Age and Readiness Levels, Fall 2008

Basic Building Blocks	Correlation with Age	Significance
Overall Readiness	.30	$p < 0.001$
Self-Care & Motor Skills	.24	$p < 0.001$
Self-Regulation	.26	$p < 0.001$
Social Expression	.25	$p < 0.001$
General Knowledge	.29	$p < 0.001$

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008

Note: N= 422-424. Age as of assessment date ranged from 3.97 to 5.29 years. Average readiness scores ranged from 1 (indicating a score of “Not yet”) to 4 (indicating a score of “Proficient”).

English-Speakers vs. Non-English Speakers

ASR also sometimes finds that children whose primary language is English are more ready for kindergarten than are children whose primary language is not English. In this assessment, English was the primary language of 240 children, whereas 188 other children spoke another primary language. Recall that in the LAUP pilot study, readiness scores for children whose primary language was English were quite similar to the scores of children whose primary language was not English for all but the *General Knowledge* area. This general pattern of results emerged in this larger study, as well. As the figure below shows, the readiness scores of children whose primary language was English was most different from their peers in the area of *General Knowledge*. Other *Basic Building Block* scores were statistically similar between the two groups.

Figure 14: Readiness Differences Between Primary Language, Fall 2008

Basic Building Blocks	Primary Language <u>Is</u> English	Primary Language is <u>Not</u> English	Significant Differences
Overall Readiness	3.26	3.17	ns
Self-Care & Motor Skills	3.53	3.49	ns
Self-Regulation	3.14	3.14	ns
Social Expression	3.29	3.24	ns
General Knowledge	3.09	2.84	$p < 0.001$

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008

Note: *Primary English-speakers* N = 240; *Primary non-English speakers* N = 118. Average scores range from 1 (indicating a score of “Not yet”) to 4 (indicating a score of “Proficient”). For six children, the primary language was noted to be English and Spanish. For the purpose of the above analysis, these children were placed in the “Primary Language Is English” group. T-tests were run for each *Basic Building Block* dimension (and for readiness overall), and results are noted in the “Significant Differences” column. The “ns” notation, which stands for “not significant,” is used when no significant differences emerged. When differences were statistically significant, the probability value is noted (e.g., $p < 0.05$).

The skill level of English speakers was further examined by identifying English language *learners* in the Fall 2008 sample. Recall in Figure 9 above that teachers rated the majority of non-native English-speakers as speaking English well and almost always easy to understand (56%). Only a small four percent of non-native English-speakers were judged to have no English skills at all.

Using proficiency levels and primary language as proxies, English language learners were identified as those who do not use English as their primary language and who also may speak “some English, but are not always easy to understand,” may only speak “a few English words” or who may have “No English skills at all.” This definition excludes as “English language learners” children who do not use English as their primary language, but whose English language skills are fairly well developed, as they are evaluated by their teachers as speaking English “well and is almost always easy to understand.” Based on this definition, 25% of the sample is identified as an English language learner, as shown in the figure below.

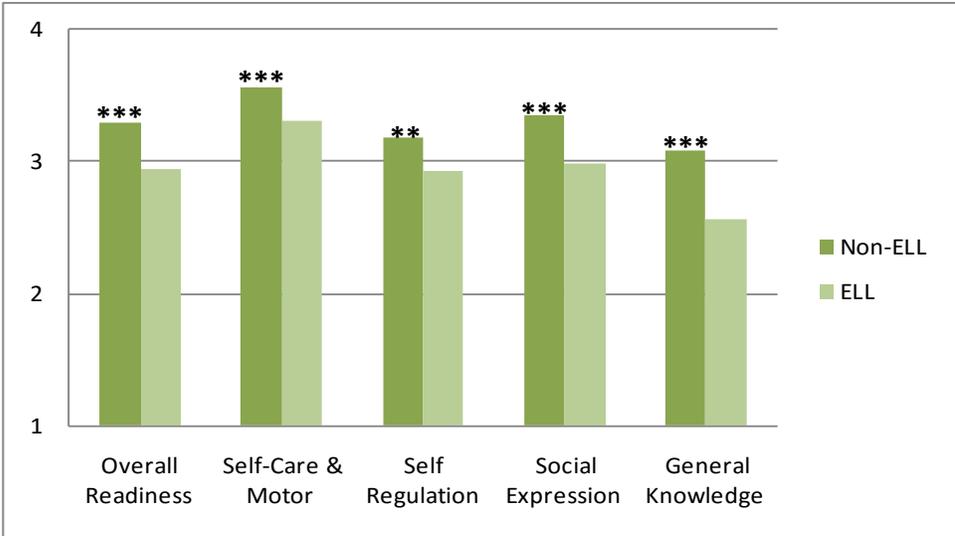
Figure 15: Frequency Distribution of English Language Learners in Fall, 2008

	Frequency	Percent
English Language Learner	97	25%
Non-English Language Learner	285	75%
Total	382	100%

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008.

When English language learners are identified, differences in readiness outcomes are more pronounced and consistent with other research that finds English learners with greater readiness challenges than non-English learners (Lee & Burkam, 2002), as depicted in Figure 16 below. Children who are not English learners scored significantly higher across all *Building Blocks* in Fall 2008.

Figure 16: Readiness Differences Between English-Learners and Non-English-Learners, Fall 2008



Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009.

Note: *English-language Learners* N = 96-97; *Non-English-language Learners* N = 285. Average scores range from 1 (indicating a score of “Not yet”) to 4 (indicating a score of “Proficient”).

*p<0.05; **p<0.005; ***p<0.001

RESEARCH QUESTION #4: WHAT WAS THE LEVEL OF SCHOOL READINESS OBSERVED AMONG LAUP CHILDREN EXITING IN SPRING 2009?

Performance Across the Individual Skills

Figure 17 shows the percentage of children scoring at the *Not yet*, *Just beginning*, *In progress*, and *Proficient* levels across all 24 readiness skills in Spring, 2009.

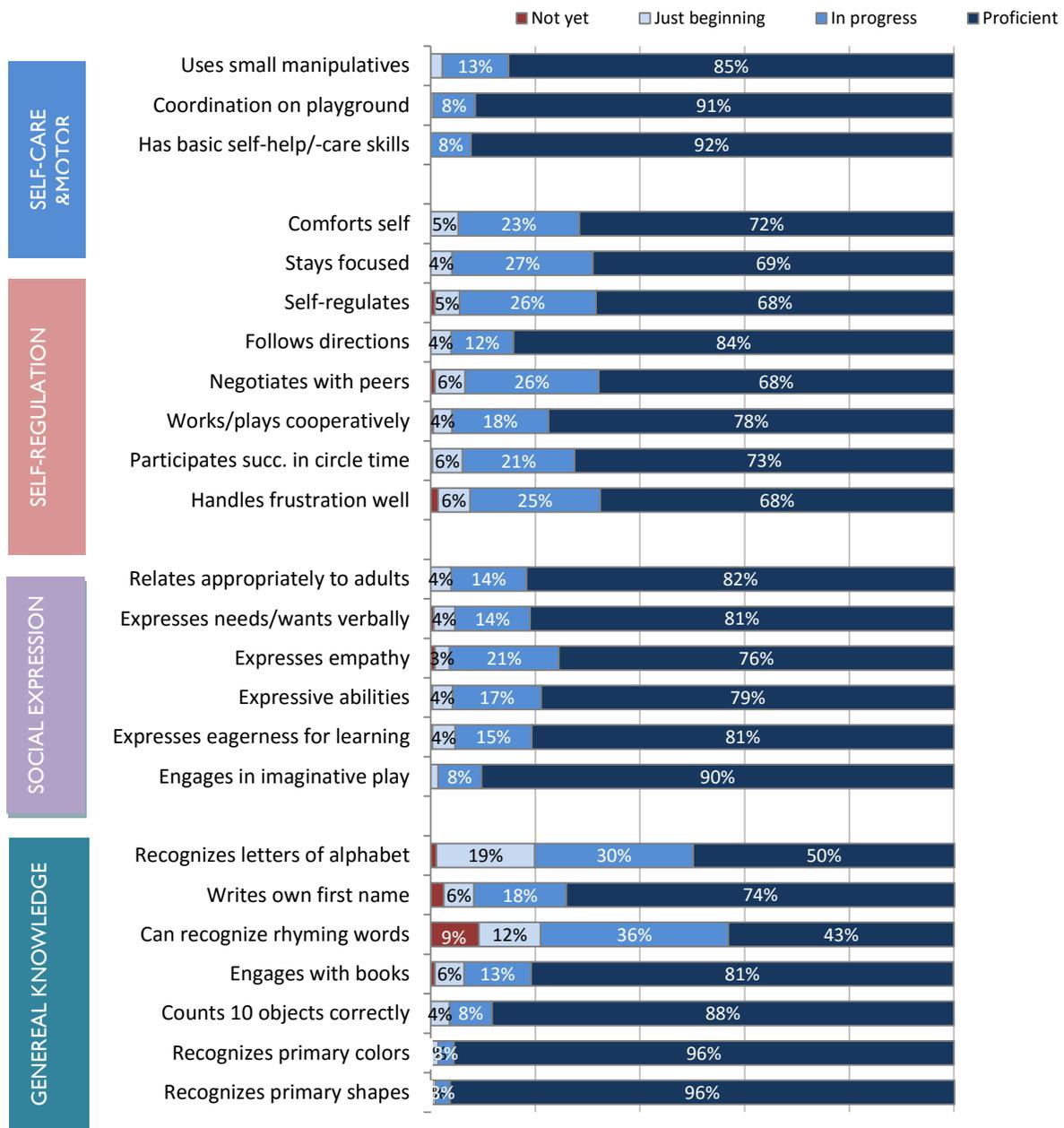
In the Spring assessment, the highest numbers of children are proficient in the following six skills, which include skills in the *General Knowledge* cluster, as well as *Self-Care & Motor Skills*:

- Recognizes primary shapes (96% at the Proficient level)
- Recognizes primary colors (96%)
- Basic self-help/self-care skills (92%)
- Coordination on the playground (91%)
- Engages in imaginative play (90%)

Very few children score at the *Not yet* level on any of the readiness skills in the Spring. However, the *Building Block* area that children seem to be challenged by the most is *General Knowledge*. The greatest number of children scoring at the *Not yet* level remains in the *Can recognize rhyming words* area (9% of children score at the *Not yet* level). As the most challenging item in the assessment, another 12% of children score at the *Just beginning* level on this item.

Recognizing letters of the alphabet is the next most challenging item, and about 20% of children score at or below the *Just beginning* level in this area.

Figure 17: Percentage of Children at Each Proficiency Level Across Readiness Skills, Spring, 2009



Source: Student Observation Form. Spring, 2009.

Note: Percentages are based on 357 - 364 children. Findings of less than 3% are not labeled.

RESEARCH QUESTION #5: HOW DID CHILDREN’S SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS CHANGE FROM FALL 2008 TO SPRING 2009?

Towards the end of the school year, teachers reassessed students using the same *Student Observation Form* that was used in the fall assessment in order to identify whether and how student outcomes changed over the school year. In the following sections, the results of analyses reported will be based on the sample of students who were present in both the fall and spring assessments, which will be referred to as the “matched sample”.

Who participated in the spring follow-up assessment?

In Fall 2008, 24 providers participated in the assessment. Three providers did not participate in the spring assessment, resulting in 21 providers and 73 fewer children assessed in the spring than in the fall (N=364). Despite the attrition between fall and spring assessments, the characteristics of the spring sample remained comparable to that of the fall sample. A total of 364 children were assessed in both the fall and the spring – 177 boys, 176 girls. Sixty-seven percent of the matched sample was identified as Hispanic/Latino, and 14% was identified as White/Caucasian. English was the primary language of the majority of children involved in the assessment (51%). Forty-three percent of children primarily speak Spanish. Figure 18 shows additional characteristics of the matched sample collected from the *Student Observation Form*.

Figure 18: Characteristics of Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 Sample

		Fall 2008	Spring 2009
Dosage	Average hours per week in class	20	21
Well-being	Children deemed to be well-rested	97%	99%
	Children deemed to be well-fed	98%	99%
Special needs	Diagnosed special need/ IEP	5%	5%

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009

Note: Dosage N=265; Well-being N=340-342; Special needs N= 349.

How did language proficiency change from fall to spring?

In the spring, providers were again asked: “How well does this child use his or her primary language?” As the figure below shows, while four percent of children continued to be assessed as “definitely delayed”, there was a 10% increase in the proportion of students deemed “advanced” in their primary language development, such that 56% of the spring sample was “advanced” (up from 46% in the fall), with most of the remainder judged to be “on track” (41%).

Figure 19: Teacher Perceptions of Language Development, Fall 08 and Spring 09

Assessment of Language Development	Fall 2008		Spring 2009	
	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency
Definitely delayed	4%	13	3%	11
On track	50%	161	41%	132
Advanced	46%	148	56%	179

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009.

Note: N=322.

According to teachers, the majority of non-native English-speakers in their classrooms speak English well and are almost always easy to understand. In the fall assessment, this included 54% of the students. In the spring, the proportion of students speaking English well grew to 68%.

In the fall, approximately one-quarter of non-native English-speakers were judged to speak only a few English words or to have no English skills at all. By the spring, this proportion fell to only 7%.

Figure 20: Teachers’ Reports of English Proficiency Among Non-Native English-Speakers

English Proficiency	Fall 2008		Spring 2009	
	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency
Speaks English well and is almost always easy to understand	54%	102	68%	129
Speaks some English, but is not always easy to understand	21%	40	24%	45
Speaks a few English words	21%	39	7%	14
No English skills at all	5%	9	1%	2

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009.

Note: N=190. This table is based on children whose primary language was NOT English.

Figure 21 shows the average scores for each readiness skill in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009. Students showed the greatest gains in *Can recognize rhyming words*, *Writes own first name*, and *Engages with books*. The percentages are based on the fall-to-spring matched sample. Sample sizes vary (338-363) due to required skips of questions where teachers do not speak the child’s primary language.

Figure 21: Average Scores for Individual Readiness Skills, Fall 2008 and Spring 2009

Individual Skills	Fall 2008	Spring 2009
1. Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, buttons, zippers, etc	3.35	3.83
2. Has general coordination on playground (kicking balls, running, climbing)	3.59	3.90
3. Performs basic self-help / self-care tasks (toileting, eating, washing hands)	3.58	3.92
4. Comforts self with adult guidance (e.g., goes to quiet area when upset; identifies emotion s/he is feeling)	3.14	3.67
5. Stays focused / pays attention during activities	3.21	3.65
6. Controls impulses and self-regulates (is not disruptive of others or class)	3.14	3.62
7. Follows one- to two-step directions	3.41	3.81
8. Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance (e.g., engages in problem-solving)	2.91	3.62
9. Works and plays cooperatively with peers (takes turns and shares, helps others)	3.16	3.73
10. Participates successfully in circle time (listens, focuses, sits still, engages)	3.14	3.66
11. Handles frustration well (e.g., does not act out, asks for help, does not withdraw/ become unresponsive)	3.03	3.60
12. Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver (converses with, seeks help from)	3.33	3.79
13. Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language	3.32	3.79
14. Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying)	3.15	3.74
15. Has expressive abilities (tells about a story or experience in response to a prompt)	3.17	3.76
16. Expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning (tries new activities, asks questions)	3.22	3.77
17. Engages in symbolic / imaginative play with self or peers (plays house, fire station)	3.53	3.91
18. Recognizes the letters of the alphabet (note: out of sequence, may be CAPs, lowercase or combination)	2.58	3.29
19. Writes own first name (spelling and writing all letters correctly)	2.68	3.64
20. Can recognize rhyming words (“ ‘Rug’ rhymes with ‘Bug.’ Does ‘Shoe’? Does ‘Jug’?”)	1.99	3.13
21. Engages with books (knows where a book starts, associates print with storyline, pretends to read)	2.98	3.74
22. Can count 10 objects correctly (“Please give Maria 5 crayons” or “Please put 10 blocks in the basket”)	3.36	3.86
23. Recognizes primary colors (Crayola basic 8: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, and black)	3.64	3.95
24. Recognizes primary shapes (circle, triangle, square)	3.79	3.96

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009

Note: Means can range from 1 (Not yet) to 4 (Proficient). Matched sample on every item, ranging from 338-363 students. Sample sizes vary due to required skips of questions where teachers do not speak child's primary language well enough to communicate with child.

How did proficiency change across the Basic Building Blocks of Readiness from Fall 2008 to Spring 2009?

As in the fall assessment, children were scored on a scale from *Not yet* (1) to *Proficient* (4) on each individual readiness skill. Figure 22 shows that mean scores for overall readiness – as well as mean scores for each of the four *Basic Building Blocks* – increased significantly from the fall to spring assessments, indicating significant improvement among LAUP students in each of the *Basic Building Block* skills over the course of the school year.

The figure below also shows that children gained the greatest skill in the area of *General Knowledge* over the preschool school year. This is a noteworthy finding, as children began the school year scoring lowest in this area. Although this remains the lowest scoring area among the *Building Blocks*, it is important to note that students made the greatest strides in closing gaps in *General Knowledge*.

The next greatest gains were made in the area of *Self-Regulation*, followed closely by *Social Expression*. While the least improvement was shown in *Self-Care & Motor Skills*, children were most proficient in this area to begin with, so we would expect to find less drastic changes in this area.

Figure 22: Average Scores Across the Basic Building Blocks of Readiness

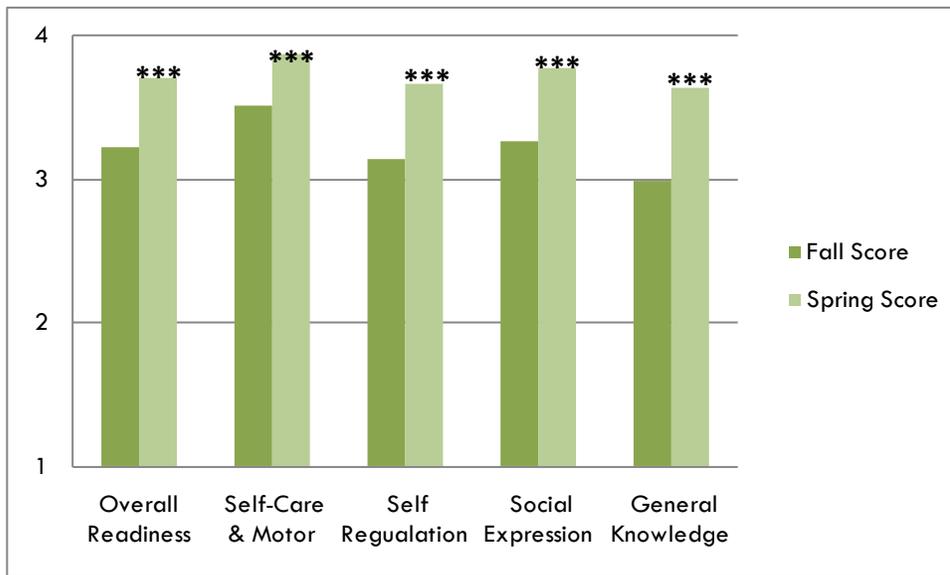
Basic Building Blocks of Readiness	Fall 2008		Spring 2009		
	Average Score	Standard Deviation	Average Score	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference
Overall Readiness	3.22	.54	3.71***	.37	+0.49
Self-Care & Motor Skills	3.51	.55	3.88***	.30	+0.37
Self-Regulation	3.14	.64	3.67***	.48	+0.53
Social Expression	3.27	.67	3.78***	.42	+0.51
General Knowledge	2.99	.64	3.64***	.43	+0.65

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009.

Note: N ranges from 363-364. Average scores range from 1 (indicating a score of “Not yet”) to 4 (indicating a score of “Proficient”). Scores are based on the sample for which data were collected in the fall and spring.

***p<0.001

Figure 23: Readiness Differences Between Fall 2008 and Spring 2009



Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009.

Note: N ranges from 363-364. Average scores range from 1 (indicating a score of "Not yet") to 4 (indicating a score of "Proficient"). Scores are based on the sample for which data were collected in the fall and spring.

*** $p < 0.001$

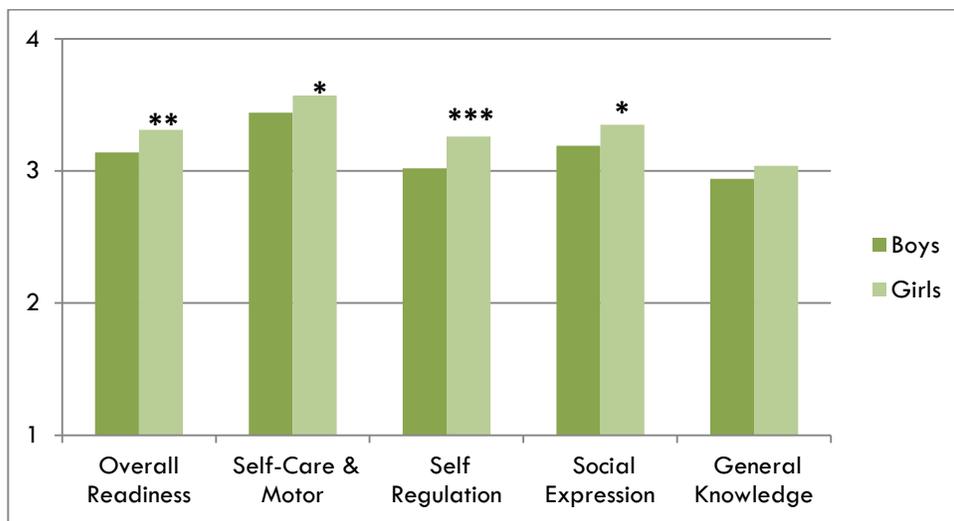
RESEARCH QUESTION #6: WERE THERE DIFFERENCES IN FALL 2008 AND SPRING 2009 OUTCOMES AMONG LAUP STUDENTS?

In this section of the report we examine readiness among girls and boys, older and younger children, and English-speakers and non-English speakers to assess variation and change in readiness across these groups.

Girls vs. Boys

In the Fall 2008 assessment, the only dimension for which LAUP girls and boys were equally prepared (as was also true in the pilot study) was *General Knowledge*. In the spring, boys and girls were equally skilled in *Self-Care & Motor Skills*, but girls outscored boys in other *Basic Building Block* areas, including *General Knowledge*.

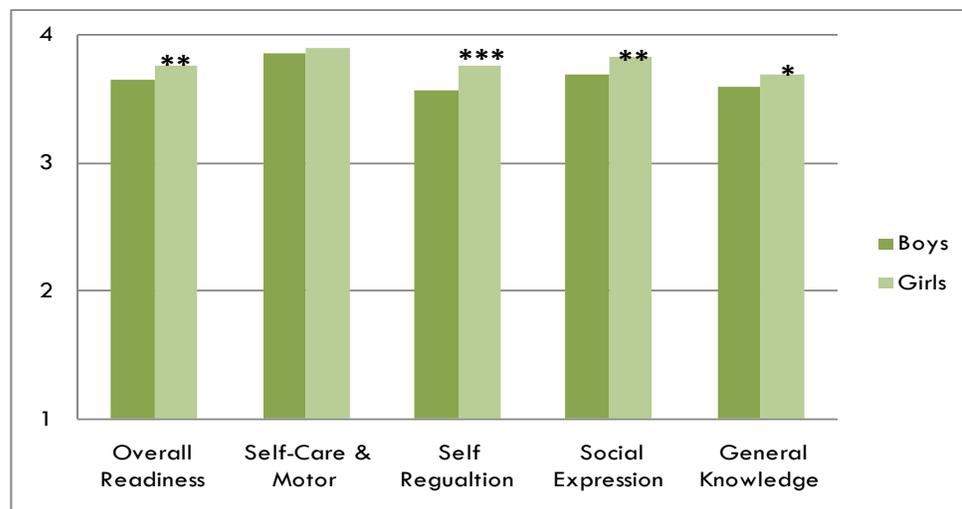
Figure 24: Readiness Differences Between Girls and Boys, Fall 2008



Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009.

Note: Boys N=177; girls N=176. Average scores range from 1 (indicating a score of "Not yet") to 4 (indicating a score of "Proficient"). *p<0.05; **p<0.005; ***p<0.001

Figure 25: Readiness Differences Between Girls and Boys, Spring 2009



Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009.

Note: Boys N=177; girls N=176. Average scores range from 1 (indicating a score of "Not yet") to 4 (indicating a score of "Proficient"). *p<0.05; **p<0.005; ***p<0.001

There were no statistically significant differences between girls and boys in the amount of progress made between the fall and spring assessments in any of the *Building Block* areas, and both boys and girls made greatest gains in *General Knowledge*².

Older vs. Younger Children

In the fall, significant correlations were found between children’s age and all *Basic Building Blocks*, as shown in the figure below. Older children continue to score higher than younger children in the spring assessment, although the strength of the correlations is diminished. This is likely due to attenuating effects of the skills learned during the preschool school year.

Moreover, accounting for the diminishing gap between older and younger children is the significant correlation found between age and changes in readiness scores between fall and spring, such that younger children made greater gains in readiness scores across all *Basic Building Block* areas.

Figure 26: Correlations Between Age and Readiness Levels

Basic Building Blocks	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Change Scores
Overall Readiness	.32***	.21***	-.24***
Self-Care & Motor Skills	.25***	.19***	-.17**
Self-Regulation	.25***	.13**	-.21***
Social Expression	.26***	.13**	-.22***
General Knowledge	.33***	.29***	-.18**

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009.

Note: N= 357. Age as of the 2008 assessment date ranged from 3.97 to 5.29 years.

Average readiness scores ranged from 1 (indicating a score of “Not yet”) to 4 (indicating a score of “Proficient”).

p<0.05; *p<0.005

English-Learners vs. Non-English Learners

In the matched sample, 85 children were identified as English language learners, and 269 children were not English language learners.

As depicted in Figure 27 below, in the matched sample, children who are not English language learners scored significantly higher across all *Building Blocks* in Fall 2008. However, by the time children were preparing to exit preschool in the Spring, the gaps in readiness between English learners and non-English learners narrowed, and in most cases, closed.

English language learners made gains in *Self-Care & Motor Skills*, *Self-Regulation*, and *Social Expression*, such that no significant differences that were present in these areas in the Fall were detected in the Spring.

Moreover, the gains made by English learners exceeded those made by non-English learners in all *Building Block* areas, especially in the area of *General Knowledge*.

² The differences in progress made from fall to spring is measured by subtracting children’s scores in the fall from their spring scores in each area. The analyses of change between fall and spring are conducted only on those children for whom we have data for both fall and spring assessments.

Figure 27: Readiness Differences Between English-Learners and Non-English-Learners

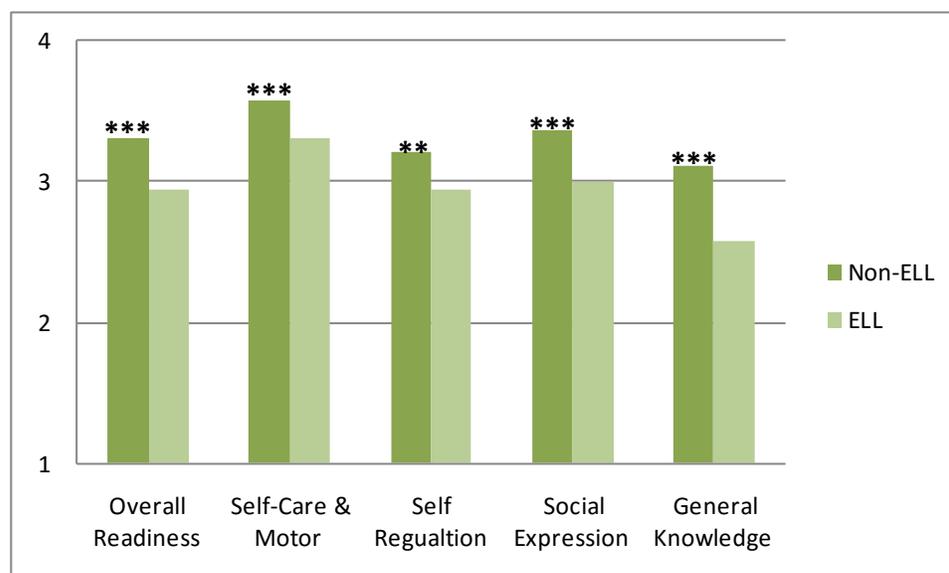
Basic Building Blocks	Fall 2008		Spring 2009			
	Non-English Learner	English Learner	Non-English Learner	Non-EL Score Change	English Learner	EL Score Change
Overall Readiness	3.31***	2.95	3.73	0.42	3.64	0.69
Self-Care & Motor Skills	3.58***	3.31	3.90	0.32	3.83	0.52
Self-Regulation	3.21**	2.94	3.66	0.45	3.66	0.72
Social Expression	3.36***	3.00	3.80	0.44	3.68	0.68
General Knowledge	3.11***	2.58	3.68*	0.57	3.64	1.06

Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009.

Note: English-language Learners N = 84-85; Non-English-language Learners N = 269. Average scores range from 1 (indicating a score of "Not yet") to 4 (indicating a score of "Proficient").

*p<0.05; **p<0.005; ***p<0.001

Figure 28: Readiness Differences Between English-Learners and Non-English-Learners, Fall 2008

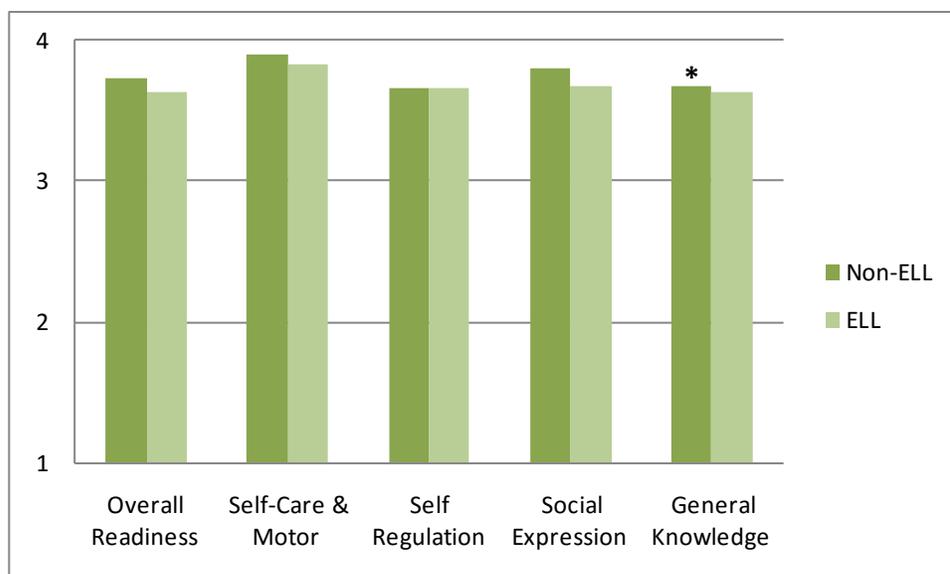


Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009.

Note: English-language Learners N = 84-85; Non-English-language Learners N = 269. Average scores range from 1 (indicating a score of "Not yet") to 4 (indicating a score of "Proficient").

*p<0.05; **p<0.005; ***p<0.001

Figure 29: Readiness Differences Between English-Learners and Non-English-Learners, Spring 2009



Source: Student Observation Form, 2008 and 2009.

Note: English-language Learners $N = 84-85$; Non-English-language Learners $N = 269$. Average scores range from 1 (indicating a score of "Not yet") to 4 (indicating a score of "Proficient").

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.005$; *** $p < 0.001$

Differences in the Distribution of Readiness Portraits

In an effort to better describe the diversity of children preparing to enter kindergarten, ASR developed a technique to identify different groupings of children based on their patterns of readiness across the *Basic Building Blocks*.

Using cluster analysis, four Readiness Portraits were developed to provide a richer understanding of readiness patterns (see Figure 9 below). This method was first applied in 2004 in Santa Clara County, and has continued to be used widely in Northern California since (including in San Mateo and San Francisco Counties).

The cluster analysis demonstrates that LAUP children sort into a pattern consistently found in other counties. However, LAUP has asked that the labels for the four clusters be adjusted slightly from previous studies. We have named the portrait clusters as follows:

- Combined Proficient
- Social Proficient
- Needs-Prep
- Factual Knowledge Proficient

Each portrait reflects a different pattern of developmental strengths and challenges, student and family background characteristics, and prevalence rates. A more detailed discussion of the attributes of each portrait follows.

Figure 30: The Four Readiness Portraits

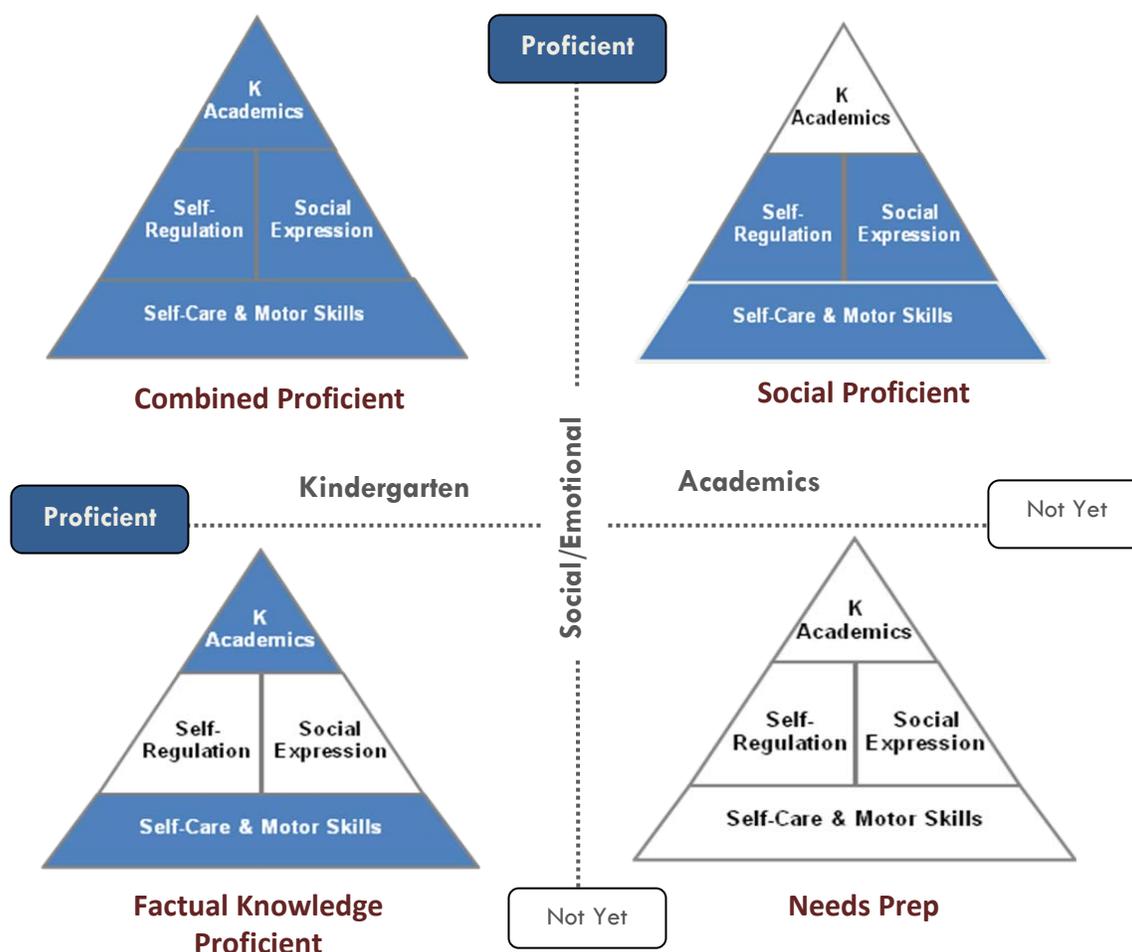
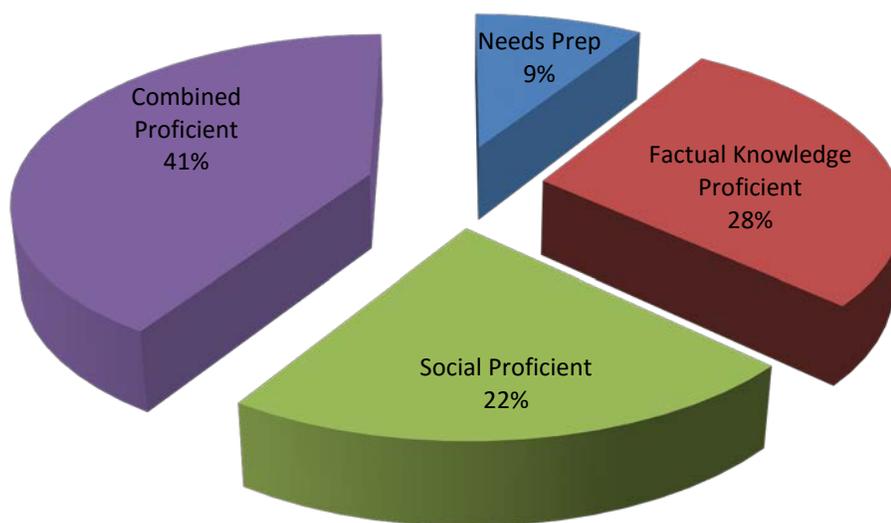


Figure 31 below shows the distribution of LAUP students among each of the four readiness portraits. Approximately 41% of LAUP children begin their LAUP preschool year fitting the *Combined Proficient* profile, starting that year well-rounded across the four dimensions of readiness. About 22% of students are *Social Proficient*, solid on their social-emotional skills but with some progress to make in their *Kindergarten Academics*. A slightly greater proportion of LAUP preschoolers (28%) manifest the opposite pattern of readiness and fit the *Factual Knowledge Proficient* characteristics. These children are solid in their *Self-Care & Motor* skills and their *Kindergarten Academics*, but they have needs when it comes to the social-emotional dimensions of *Self-Regulation* and *Social-Expression*. Finally, about 9 percent of children sort into the *Needs-Prep* profile; these children have readiness needs across all *Basic Building Blocks*.

Figure 31: The Four Readiness Portraits, Fall 2008

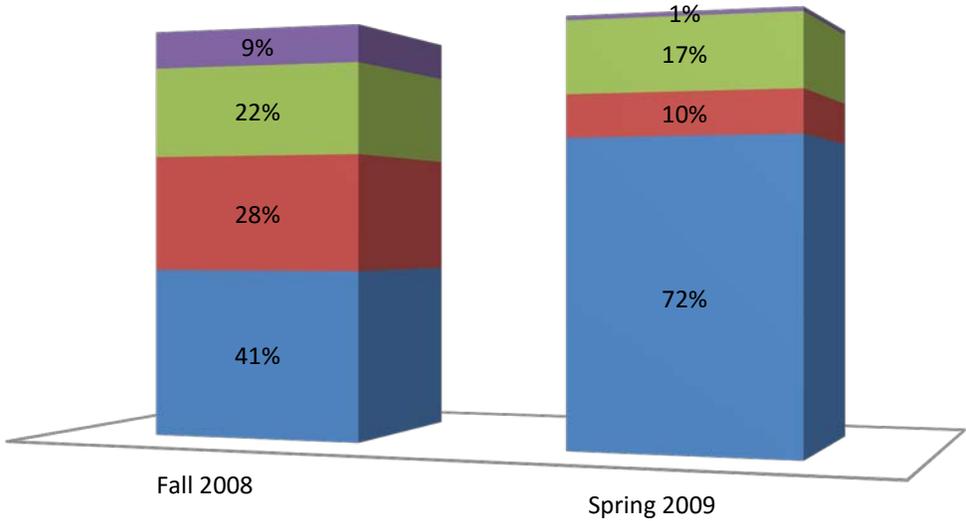


The next figure below (Figure 32) compares the distribution of LAUP students in the Fall to the distribution of students in the Spring across each of the four readiness portraits. As is illustrated in the figure, there was substantial movement into the *Combined Proficient* category. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of LAUP children in the Spring of 2009 fall into the *Combined Proficient* profile; the majority of exiting LAUP preschoolers are well-rounded across the four dimensions of readiness, as compared to 41% in the Fall.

Figure 32 also shows considerable movement out of the *Social Proficient* profile, such that in Spring, 17% of exiting preschool students are *Social Proficient* compared to 22% in the Fall. In the beginning of the year, while 28% of preschoolers fell into the *Factual Knowledge Proficient* group, by the end of the year, 10% of preschoolers fit this profile. And finally, while 9% of preschoolers exhibited a *Needs Prep* profile, in the Spring, only 1% of children preparing to exit preschool sort into the *Needs Prep* group. By and large, there was considerable movement out of the *Needs Prep* group, and considerable movement into the *Combined Proficient* category.

Figure 32: Change in The Four Readiness Portraits, Fall 2008 to Spring 2009

■ Combined Proficient ■ Factual Knowledge Proficient ■ Social Proficient ■ Needs Prep



Summary

LAUP is seeking a child outcome measure that will meet several critical criteria. The results of the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 assessment on a matched set of 364 LAUP children indicate that the *Student Observation Form* is fulfilling these criteria. Because not all of the 90 providers sampled were able to participate in this pilot, the sample from whom these data were gathered is not generalizable to the overall LAUP population. However, the sample is sizable (N=364) and findings are consistent with the Spring 2008 pilot test that we believe the reported results are likely representative of what we would find with a larger sample.

In terms of being a **measure that can assess key school readiness skills** of LAUP children, results of the Fall 2008 assessment of 437 LAUP children found overall readiness scores to be between the *In Progress* and *Proficient* levels. The average level of readiness increased from Fall to Spring, indicating the children left LAUP supported programs with a solid tool kit of the skills needed to be school-ready when they enter kindergarten a few months later. Simply said, the *SOF* detected change in skill levels throughout the LAUP school year.

A good measure is one that is **developmentally-appropriate** to the population being assessed. As was found in the initial Spring/Summer 2008 pilot study, floor and ceiling effects were not observed, in that the skills measured by the *SOF* were neither too advanced nor too basic for the population served by LAUP.

A good measure should also show itself to be **psychometrically -sound** in the new setting in which it is being tested. As has been observed in ASR's past studies with this instrument, in this pilot, the *SOF* (KOF) demonstrated good known groups validity, in that it proved sensitive enough to capture differences in skills amongst known groups, such as girls vs boys, and older vs younger students. The *SOF* (KOF) again revealed very strong levels of internal consistency and standard deviations well within the acceptable range, indicating that despite the heterogeneity of teachers and children using or being assessed with the instrument, the instrument continues to be highly reliable.

Implications

- ✓ **The majority of children in this sample left LAUP preschools ready for success in kindergarten and beyond.**

The average readiness scores for children in the study significantly increased from fall to spring, and were between the *In Progress* and *Proficient* levels at the end of the preschool year. In addition, the percentage of children who scored between the *In Progress* and *Proficient* levels across all readiness skills (students who were "Combined Proficient") increased from 41% in the fall to 72% in the spring. A previous study that followed children from the beginning of kindergarten to 5th grade found that children who scored between the *In Progress* and *Proficient* levels across all readiness skills at the beginning of kindergarten performed significantly better on English and Math California Standards Tests (CSTs) in third, fourth, and fifth grades than did children who scored less well (ASR, 2008). Given the implications for later academic success, LAUP plans to investigate this finding further.

- ✓ **The performance gap between English Language Learners and Non-English Language Learners closed considerably for this sample of LAUP children.**

In the spring, the performance gap between ELL and non-ELL children closed for three of the four building blocks. The only remaining significant difference was in the area of General Knowledge. The fall-to-spring gains made by ELLs exceeded those made by non-ELLs in all building block areas, especially in the area of General Knowledge, even though the average score for ELLs is still significantly lower in this area. An earlier study of LAUP children conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (2009) found that children who spoke Spanish-only had larger fall-to-spring gains in rapid letter naming and social skills as compared to their

English-only peers. In addition, children who spoke a language other than Spanish or English (“Other Language”) exhibited larger fall-to-spring gains in receptive and expressive English vocabulary, social skills, and gross motor skills when compared to their English-only peers. Taken together, the findings from these two reports illustrate the dramatic increase in skills experienced by ELLs during the preschool year. These findings also highlight the need for further research to investigate potential links between preschool and the large gains made by English Language Learners.

Study Limitations

- ✓ **More research is needed to explore the relation between preschool experience and kindergarten readiness.**

As stated earlier, LAUP initiated this study in order to understand how well the *SOF* assessment procedure worked with LAUP preschool providers, and how well the *SOF* measured children’s school readiness throughout the LAUP school year. While we can say that the children in this study left their LAUP classrooms with a solid tool kit of the skills needed to be ready for kindergarten and beyond, we cannot say that preschool causes higher readiness scores. An experimental research design is needed to answer questions about the causal link between preschool and school readiness. Future studies may also examine which student, school, and family variables are independently associated with readiness scores above and beyond their associations with other variables.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A –STUDENT OBSERVATION FORM 2008

Student Observation Form 2008

Provider # _____ Child # _____

Instructions

This form is intended for you to observe the various skills and attributes your LAUP students currently possess. The assessments are based on your professional observation of each child. Absolutely no individual child's information will be released by the researchers.

Complete one Observation Form **only for your LAUP students**. Children should be observed in as natural a setting as possible within their daily activities.

To complete the Observation Form, please follow these steps:

1. Please complete the child's demographic information to the right, using information from the Child Enrollment Form when indicated (and available).
2. After completing the child's demographic information, turn this page over and complete the skill and attribute checklist.
3. Please send completed forms together (FedEx envelope provided) for processing to Applied Survey Research at 991 W Hedding St., Ste.102 San Jose, CA 95126.

If you have any questions about the observation process, please call:

Angie Aguirre or Kristi Kelly
Applied Survey Research
408-247-8319

Thank you for your participation!

Child Demographic Information

1a. Today's Date: Month _____ Day _____ 1b. Teacher's last name: _____ 1c. Center/FCC name: _____

2a. Which session(s) does this child attend? a.m. only p.m. only Both a.m. and p.m.

2b. How many hours a week is this child in your classroom? _____

3a. Child's initials: First _____ Middle _____ Last _____ 3b. Child's Sex: *Male Female*

3c. Child's date of birth: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____ 3d. Child's approximate start date at your site: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

4. Did this child attend another childcare or preschool prior to enrolling in the LAUP program? (LAUP Child Enrollment Form Q11) Yes No Info not avail.

5. Does this child currently attend child care or preschool in addition to the 3.5 hours funded by LAUP? (LAUP Child Enrollment Form Q9) Yes No Info not avail.

6. Does this child generally come to school well-rested? Yes No Info not avail.

7. Does this child generally come to school well-fed? Yes No Info not avail.

8. Does this child have any of the following: diagnosed special needs/disability/ health concern, an IEP (Individualized Education Program), and/or an IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan)? (LAUP Child Enrollment Form Q17 - 18) Yes No Info not avail.
- If yes, please specify: _____

9a. What is this child's primary language? *English Spanish Armenian Cantonese Korean Tagalog Farsi Vietnamese Other: _____*

9b. How well does this child use his or her primary language? For a child of his or her age, would you say his/her use of language is:
 Definitely delayed On track Advanced Can not determine

9c. If this child's primary language is NOT English, how would you describe this child's English skills?
 No English skills at all Speaks a few English words Speaks some English, but is not always easy to understand Speaks English well and is almost always easy to understand

10. Are you able to communicate with the child enough to complete items #4, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23, and 24 on the reverse side? Yes No **★IF NO, PLEASE DO NOT ASSESS CHILD ON STARRED ITEMS**

10a. If yes, will the child be assessed in his or her primary language? Yes No

11. Child's Primary Race/Ethnicity: (LAUP Child Enrollment Form Q5)
 Hispanic/ Latino Pacific Islander Multi-racial
 Asian Black Other: _____
 Alaskan Native or American Indian Caucasian/White (including Arabic / Middle Eastern) Don't know

Student Observation Form 2008

Proficient: Demonstrates skill, knowledge, behavior consistently and competently; **performs independently**
In Progress: Demonstrates skill, knowledge, behavior occasionally and somewhat competently; has room for improvement, needs minor or **occasional assistance**
Beginning: Child is just beginning to demonstrate skill, knowledge, behavior; needs significant or **frequent assistance**
Not Yet: Child does not demonstrate skill, knowledge, or behavior yet; **cannot perform without assistance**

<i>How would you rate this child's competency in terms of the following skills, knowledge and behaviors:</i>		NOT YET	BEGINNING	IN PROGRESS	PROFICIENT	Don't know/ Not observed	Comments / Notes	
Self-Care & Motor Skills	1. Use of small manipulatives such as crayons, paintbrush, buttons, zippers, etc.							
	2. Has general coordination on playground (kicking balls, running, climbing)							
	3. Performs basic self-help / self-care tasks (toileting, eating, washing hands)							
Self-Regulation	4. ★Comforts self with adult guidance (e.g., goes to quiet area when upset; identifies emotion s/he is feeling)							
	5. Stays focused / pays attention during activities							
	6. Controls impulses and self-regulates (is not disruptive of others or class)							
	7. ★Follows one- to two-step directions							
	8. Negotiates with peers to resolve social conflicts with adult guidance (e.g., engages in problem-solving)							
	9. Works and plays cooperatively with peers (takes turns and shares, helps others)							
	10. Participates successfully in circle time (listens, focuses, sits still, engages)							
	11. Handles frustration well (e.g., does not act out, asks for help, does not withdraw/ become unresponsive)							
	Social Expression	12. ★Relates appropriately to adults other than parent/primary caregiver (converses with, seeks help from)						
		13. ★Appropriately expresses needs and wants verbally in primary language						
14. Expresses empathy or caring for others (e.g., consoles or comforts a friend who is crying)								
15. ★Has expressive abilities (tells about a story or experience in response to a prompt)								
16. ★Expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning (tries new activities, asks questions)								
17. Engages in symbolic / imaginative play with self or peers (plays house, fire station)								
General Knowledge	18. ★Recognizes the letters of the alphabet (note: out of sequence, may be CAPs, lowercase or combination)	None	1 - 12 letters	13 - 25 letters	All 26 letters			
	19. Writes own first name (spelling and writing all letters correctly)							
	20. ★Can recognize rhyming words (" 'Rug' rhymes with 'Bug.' Does 'Shoe'? Does 'Jug'?")							
	21. Engages with books (knows where a book starts, associates print with storyline, pretends to read)							
	22. ★Can count 10 objects correctly ("Please give Maria 5 crayons" or "Please put 10 blocks in the basket")	None	1 - 5 objects	6 - 9 objects	All 10 objects			
	23. ★Recognizes primary colors (Crayola basic 8: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, brown, and black)	None	1 - 4 colors	5 - 7 colors	All 8 colors			
	24. ★Recognizes primary shapes (circle, triangle, square)	None	1 shape	2 shapes	All 3 shapes			
	25. If you observed that the child demonstrated another important readiness skill or attribute, please note here and rate:							

APPENDIX B – TEACHER SURVEY 2008

Teacher Survey 2008

Provider ID#: _____

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Successful Kids in Pre-K Project (SKIPP)! Please take a moment to complete this brief questionnaire so that we can gather your initial impressions of the assessment process and learn more about your classroom instruction.

1. Teacher Name _____ 2. Center/FCC Name _____
 3. Job Title _____

Please take a moment to tell us about the training session you just attended.

4. How clear were the trainers regarding the following:

	Not at all Clear	Somewhat Unclear	Somewhat Clear	Very Clear
How to complete the assessment for each child?	1	2	3	4
The meaning of each skill item on the Student Observation Form?	1	2	3	4
The meanings of the response options for the skill items (e.g. proficient, in progress)?	1	2	3	4
The timeline for completing the assessment tasks?	1	2	3	4
The order in which the assessment tasks should be completed (obtaining consent, assessing the children, filling out this survey)?	1	2	3	4

5. Were all of your questions answered to your satisfaction during the training?

- Yes No Didn't have a question

If No, which questions did not get answered for you? _____

6. Do you feel ready to begin the assessment once you return to your classroom?

- Yes No → *If No, why not?*

7. Do you feel that you will be able to complete the assessment within the timeframe specified in the training?

- Yes No → *If No, why not?*

8. Do you feel that you are prepared to *accurately* assess the children in your classroom?

- Yes No → *If No, why not?*

Please take a moment to tell us about the types of curricula and assessment tools you might be using in your classroom.

5. Do you use a specific curriculum or combination of curricula in your classroom?
 Yes No (skip to question 11) Don't Know (skip to question 11)

6. In the table below, please tell us about the curricula you may be using in your classroom.
 A. In **column A**, please check the curricula that you use in your classroom (check all that apply).
 B. In **column B**, please check which curriculum you consider your main curriculum (check only one).
 C. In **column C**, please check if you have been formally trained in the curriculum (check all that apply).

	A	B	C
	Curriculum Used	Main Curriculum	Formally trained in curriculum
Creative Curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High/Scope	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Montessori	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open Court Pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Does your program currently conduct developmental assessments for the children in your program?
 Yes No (skip to question 13) Don't Know (skip to question 13)

8. In the table below, please tell us about the types of assessments you may be using in your classroom.
 A. In **column A**, please check the assessment tool that you use in your classroom (check all that apply).
 B. In **column B**, please check which assessment tool you consider as your main assessment (check only one).
 C. In **column C**, please check if you have been formally trained in the assessment tool (check all that apply).

	A	B	C
	Assessment Tool(s) Used	Main Assessment Tool	Formally trained to use the Assessment Tool
The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Assessment Toolkit for Ages 3-5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Galileo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Accomplishment Profile Screening (Including E-LAP, LAP-R, and LAP-D)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please continue to the next page →

Please take a moment to share any additional comments about the assessment process.

5. Please provide suggestions for how we might improve this training.

6. Please add any additional comments below.

7. Please list a phone number where you can be reached in case we have questions about your completed assessment materials.

Daytime Phone Number: _____

Thank you! We appreciate your feedback!

APPENDIX C – PARENT LETTER 2008



November 2008

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Dear Parent,

Your child's classroom has been selected to be in the **Successful Kids in Pre-K Project (SKIPP)**. The SKIPP is a project to learn more about children's levels of readiness for school. Results from the project will allow us to better understand where LAUP children are in gaining skills for school. This information will also help LAUP students and future students succeed in school.

In this project, your child's teacher will complete a short observation form regarding your child. (The teacher will complete these forms for the other children in the class, too). Your child's information in the project is confidential.

Enclosed is a summary of the project and a consent form. If you do not wish to have your child be part of this project, please sign the consent form, and return it to your child's teacher within one week.

If you have any questions about the project, please contact Dr. Julia Love, Research and Evaluation Specialist at jlove@laup.net or (213) 416-1316.

We are excited about the "Successful Kids in Pre-K Project" and its potential for helping students succeed, and we hope you are, too. Thank you in advance for your help and participation.

Sincerely,

Julia Love, Ph.D.
Research and Evaluation Specialist



LAUP is the proud recipient of the 2007 Eureka Award from the California Council for Excellence in recognition of our organizational quality and performance excellence.

Provider # _____ Child # _____



Parent Informed Consent Form for Successful Kids in Pre-K Project

Dear Parent,

Your child’s classroom has been selected to be in a project to learn more about children’s levels of readiness for school. We are conducting this project in several LAUP centers and Family Child Care Homes. The project will help us to better understand where LAUP children are in gaining skills for school. It will also help LAUP students and future students succeed in school.

In this project, your child’s teacher will complete a short two page observation form regarding your child. (The teacher will complete these forms for the other children in the class, too). On the form, the teacher will mark how well your child can do things, such as participate in circle time, ask questions in class, count to 10, and recognize their letters.

Your child’s information in the project is confidential. Your child’s information will not be used for any diagnostic or screening purposes. We will never release your individual child’s information to anyone outside the research team without your consent. We will summarize the information for all the children in your child’s classroom and will release the results **ONLY** to your child’s school principal and his/her staff. If you would like to review the information from your child’s form, please speak with your child’s teacher.

Even though your child’s information will remain confidential, if for some reason you do not wish to have your child be part of this project, please sign the form below and return it to your child’s teacher within one week. **If you do not return this form to your child’s teacher, we will assume that you agree to have your child be included in the study.**

_____ **No, I DO NOT want my child to participate in this study.**

Please sign here: _____

Thank you for your participation!

For more information about the study, contact:
Julia Love, Ph.D., Research and Evaluation Specialist
jlove@laup.net or (213) 416-1316

APPENDIX D – STUDY SUMMARY 2008

L.A. Universal Preschool Successful Kids in Pre-K Project Study Summary

Who is conducting the research?

Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) is funding the Successful Kids in Pre-K Project. The project is jointly managed by LAUP and Applied Survey Research (ASR), a non-profit social research firm.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the readiness study is to:

1. Learn more about children's levels of readiness for school; and
2. Learn more about teachers' beliefs about school readiness, as well as their impressions of the readiness measurement tool, the Student Observation Form, described below (e.g., their ease of use and relevance to their students).

Why should we measure school readiness?

Data collected in this study will be used to improve our understanding of the school readiness strengths and challenges of children in the Successful Kids in Pre-K Project. A recently-published study of San Mateo County children that used these same school readiness measures found that children's kindergarten readiness was strongly related to their academic performance several years later; children who were more ready for kindergarten had higher English and math scores on third grade standardized tests than did children who were less ready. Knowing children's readiness levels in LAUP provider sites will ultimately help families, communities, schools, policy makers, and funders better assist children before they enter kindergarten – and perhaps long after that as well.

LAUP completed the first phase of the pilot study this past spring with a small sample of providers. Equipped with the findings from the first phase, LAUP is now ready to pilot the tool with a larger sample of providers.

What happens in the study?

There are three forms that teachers complete as part of the study. Each form is described below.

1. The **Student Observation Form**, which is based on the work of the National Education Goals Panel on school readiness, will be completed by teachers for each child in their preschool classroom. This form takes approximately 5-15 minutes to complete for each child. The bulk of this time is spent rating each child's proficiency across 24 readiness skills. This form will be completed twice – at the beginning and end of the school year.

2. The **Teacher Survey** is a brief, self-administered survey completed by teachers at the beginning of the school year. It contains a set of questions to gather teacher's initial impressions of the assessment process and to learn more about their classroom instruction.
3. A short **Assessment Feedback Questionnaire** will be completed at the end of the school year by each teacher after they have returned the Student Observation Forms for their class. This form will allow teachers to identify their beliefs about school readiness and their experiences conducting the assessments. Teachers will also be asked to evaluate the assessment tool's relevance for their preschool students and how easy it was for them to administer.

Study Timeline

When	What
October 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preschool directors in participating sites are given summary information about the study.
October 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers selected by directors to participate in the project are given summary information about the study and are asked to sign up for a <u>one-hour</u> training session.
November 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers attend a training session and receive all necessary study materials. ▪ Teachers complete the Teacher Survey after the teacher training.
November 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers distribute Parent Consent Forms and allow parents a week to decline having their child participate.
November 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers conduct student observations on students for whom they have consent using the Student Observation Form and return all completed forms to ASR (the research partner) in the provided Fed Ex envelopes.
May 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers attend a "refresher" training and receive all the necessary study materials. ▪ Teachers conduct student observations on students for whom they have consent using the Student Observation Form. ▪ After student forms are completed teachers complete the Assessment Feedback Questionnaire. Teachers return all completed forms to ASR (the research partner) in the provided Fed Ex envelopes.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

If you have questions about the study, please feel free to contact Angie Aguirre at ASR, (408) 247-8319, or Julia Love at LAUP, (213)416-1316.