

*School Readiness Indicators Initiative:
Making Progress for Young Children*

***Residency Roundtable –
Indicators of Cognition and Approaches to Learning***

***Scottsdale, Arizona
March 13th – 14th, 2003***

Participating States:

Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maine, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin

Purpose:

This meeting is the third in a series of small work sessions to help states make accelerated progress in selecting and/or developing school readiness indicators in priority areas. Participants include state agency data and policy staff from state departments including Education, Health, Human Services and Governor's Offices as well as state school readiness team members from child policy organizations, universities, and Head Start. The Roundtable will focus on indicators related to children's cognitive development and approaches to learning from birth to age eight. The Roundtable will also focus on achievement gaps according to race, income, and ethnicity. Indicators will reflect state investments in programs and policies for young children and families as well as child outcomes.

Definitions:

- **Cognition and General Knowledge:** This dimension includes multilateral knowledge in three broad areas of academics: reading, mathematics, and general knowledge. Cognitive development is stimulated by children's environment and experiences, which create knowledge regarding similarities, differences, and associations. It also includes knowledge about societal conventions, such as the assignment of particular letters to sounds, and knowledge about shapes, spatial relations, and number concepts. General knowledge is a child's understanding of the world around them.
- **Approaches to Learning:** This dimension refers to ways in which kindergartners approach and perform specific tasks in a variety of situations. Individual differences use of skills, knowledge, and capacities reflect children's future attitudes and approaches toward school and learning. Key components include enthusiasm, curiosity, and persistence on tasks, as well as temperament and cultural patterns and values.
- **Achievement Gap:** This term refers to disparities in achievement between economic, racial, and ethnic groups. Standardized state and national tests demonstrate unequal academic proficiency between groups of students beginning in elementary school and persisting through high school. These disparities often result in unequal academic and economic opportunities for students according to their race, class, or ethnicity.

Meeting Objectives:

- Identify issues that are critical to young children's cognitive development and approaches to learning, including family environment, community conditions, child characteristics, and service systems for young children and their families.
- Consider a set of school readiness indicators that reflect child outcomes (cognitive development of infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers and early elementary school children; young children's approaches to learning) as well as systems outcomes (disparities in achievement according to race and income, state policies and programs that affect young children and families).
- Select priority indicators to track progress in supporting the cognitive development of young children from birth to age 8.
- Identify potential data sources for indicators of the cognitive development of young children and their approaches to learning.

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The 17-state initiative is managed by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT.
www.GettingReady.org*

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Final Agenda

Thursday, March 13th, 2003

- 8:30 – 9:00** **Breakfast and Registration**
- 9:00 – 9:15** **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
Carol Kamin, Executive Director, Children's Action Alliance
Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
- 9:15 – 10:15** **State and Federal Policies: Focus on Cognition and Learning**
Jana Martella, Senior Project Associate, Council of Chief State School Officers
Ms. Martella will provide a brief background on the federal policy context for cognitive development and will facilitate a discussion among participants on emerging state policy issues.
- 10:15 – 10:30** **Update on State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network**
Charlie Bruner, Director, SECPTAN TA Network
- 10:30 – 10:45** **Break**
- 10:45 – 12:30** **Children's Development and Approaches to Learning**
Susan H. Landry, Professor of Pediatrics, University of Texas at Houston
Dr. Landry will provide a framework for understanding the research regarding child cognition and cognitive development as well as children's individual approaches to learning. Both research and practical applications will be highlighted.
- 12:30 – 1:45** **Lunch**
- 1:45 – 3:15** **The Achievement Gap: An Essential Component of Learning Indicators**
Kati Haycock, Director, The Education Trust
Ms. Haycock will share her organization's nationally acclaimed research regarding disparities in achievement between economic, racial and ethnic groups as well as successful policy recommendations for tackling this problem that is prevalent in states and communities across the country. This important research demonstrates the long-term effects of uneven cognitive development and school readiness.
- 3:15 – 3:30** **Break**
- 3:30 – 5:00** **Indicators of Young Children's Cognitive Development and Learning**
Facilitator: Catherine B. Walsh, Deputy Director, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
Participants will identify indicators of young children's cognitive development and approaches to learning. Special attention will be paid to including indicators for all children, including high-risk populations. Critical gaps in knowledge about the family factors, community conditions, service systems, and child outcomes related to these domains will be explored. Information from this session will be used to guide discussion the next day.

Friday, March 14th, 2003

8:30 – 9:00

Breakfast

9:00 – 11:30

Indicators as a Tool to Improve State Policies and Programs

Charge to the Group: Catherine B. Walsh, Deputy Director, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Using the list developed the day before, participants will prioritize indicators needed to measure progress, influence policy change, and maintain state investments in programs for young children and families, with attention to supporting the cognitive development of young children and families. The goal is to identify a priority set of indicators that could be tracked at the state level and in local communities. Potential data sources available in the states will also be identified. Participants will explore barriers to indicator development and action steps to fill gaps in knowledge.

11:30 – 12:00

Break, Check out of Hotel

12:00 – 12:30

Small Group Reports

12:30 – 1:30

Lunch, Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Participants will work to identify next steps both in their own states and as an initiative to improve data capacity to effectively communicate about the family factors, community conditions, service systems, and child outcomes that reflect the cognitive development of children from birth to age 8. Next steps to fill gaps in knowledge will be explored.

1:30

Adjourn