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Remarks for the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative Press Audio Conference Call for the release of *Getting Ready: Findings from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative*

To Improve Education Outcomes

Ready or Not?

As states work to improve educational outcomes – and ensure that all children read proficiently by fourth grade – it is critically important that we take action well before a child enters kindergarten.

We Can't Wait

Research shows that too many young children enter kindergarten with physical, social, emotional and cognitive deficits that could have been minimized or eliminated through early intervention.

Studies show that at least half of the educational achievement gaps between poor and non-poor children already exist at kindergarten entry.

We Know What Works

Today we know more than ever before about how young children develop and about how to best support early learning. This report builds on the research base on early childhood development as well as the experience of 17 states.

Value of Tracking Progress and Getting Results

We know that there is incredible value in setting specific goals and tracking progress – there have been major gaps in the measures available between infancy and the fourth grade reading scores.

This is the first time that a critical mass of states have gotten together to develop a set of measures that start at birth and address all aspects of young children's development.

The new report, *Getting ready: Findings from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative*, shows how identifying indicators of school readiness and tracking progress on those measures can lead to more effective policies and investments in early childhood.

Core Indicators

This report highlights 23 “core” (or critical) indicators that can be used to measure how well states meet the needs of young children and families.

- These indicators are comprehensive and include indicators related to children, families, communities, schools, and services.
- These indicators also address the multiple dimensions of school readiness – including physical health, literacy and social emotional development.

The core indicators are based on the child development research and the experiences of 17 states. They are meant to be used as a framework to inform policy investments that improve outcomes for the youngest children and their families.

Other Key Points

While policy makers may recognize the importance of early learning and school readiness, they also need measurable indicators that enable them to track progress.

The 23 measures focus on children’s readiness for school, school’s readiness for children, and the capacity of families and communities to provide developmental opportunities for young children.

The regular tracking of school readiness indicators enables policymakers and community leaders to identify areas most in need of intervention, track the results of investments, and monitor trends over time.

The goal of the school readiness indicators initiative in the 17 states was to develop indicators not just for data’s sake, but to inform and influence policy decisions to improve school readiness.