



Vermont Head Start Association



Vermont Head Start Association **School Readiness Goals**

Beliefs

The Vermont Head Start Association representing all 14 counties across the state of Vermont strives to prepare all children to be ready for school and experience success as lifelong learners.

We as the Vermont Head Start community believe all children have the potential to be ready for school with the support of families, community and school.

- We believe children are creators, thinkers, movers, feelers and doers.
- We intentionally plan opportunities to shape children's experiences in the areas of social emotional, cognitive, language, and physical development based upon the unique and special contributions of each child.
- We believe that when parent, family and community engagement practices are systematically integrated in programs, children transition to kindergarten ready to learn.

Goals

In collaboration with the Vermont early childhood community we have identified the following goals as indicators of school readiness success:

Social Emotional Development: Children will develop the skills necessary to foster secure attachments with adults, maintain healthy relationships, regulate behavior and emotions, and develop a healthy concept of personal identity. A solid base of emotional security and social competence enables children to participate fully in learning experiences and form positive relationships with teachers and peers.

Approaches to Learning: Children will develop a sense of wonder: a willingness to participate, persistence in their efforts and the ability to connect past learning to new situations.

Literacy/Language Development: Children will increase their language and communication skills by engaging in meaningful experiences that require them to effectively express their ideas and feelings, listen, and understand others. Children will understand basic concepts about books or other printed materials, the alphabet, and letter sound relationships.

Physical Health and Development: Children will develop early health habits to support physical well-being, use of their bodies, muscle control, and appropriate nutrition, exercise, hygiene and safety practices.

Cognitive Development: Children will utilize background knowledge to influence their understanding of memory, classifications, problem solving, language, literacy, and mathematics.

Strategies

In preparing young children for kindergarten, we strive to provide an early education experience that is based on sound child development principles regarding how children grow and learn. We achieve these school readiness goals by:

- Engaging families in recognizing that parents are the primary educators of their children and collaborating with them at home visits and parent/teacher conferences in the process of individualizing for their child.
- Employing all elements of the *Vermont Early Learning Standards, Head Start Performance Standards, and Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*.
- Providing evidence-based play curriculum, *Creative Curriculum*, individualizing for each child.
- Fostering intentional teaching.
- Promoting safe and healthy environments.
- Using the home as a learning environment.
- Incorporating family and community culture and values.
- Working with Early Head Start families and family child care providers to begin building the foundation upon which school readiness sits. Families are helped to become observers of their children; are linked with community resources and other families with children of similar ages; and are provided with current information about child development. Family child care providers receive support and are linked with community resources to build their knowledge, skills and practice.
- Continuing to contribute to finalizing the infant and toddler early learning guidelines, *First Steps: Guiding the Development and Learning of Vermont's Infants and Toddlers*.
- Promoting activities that build upon the Agency for Children and Families, Offices of Head Start and Child Care document titled, *A Guide to Effective Consultation with Settings Serving Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families: Core Knowledge, Competencies, and Dispositions*, which was a product of a collaborative Region I work group (e.g. Early Head Start, Head Start, state experts, child care, etc.).
- Contributing to future efforts to develop an infant & toddler credential based on the early learning and consultation guidelines.
- Partnering with LEAs for Act 62- Universal Pre-K.
- Using the results of the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment outcomes to: note trends programmatically and plan accordingly via the T/TA plan and Self-Assessment; plan for large and small groups as well as individualize for children; and to purchase instructional materials for the classroom.
- Reviewing this plan annually and updating as necessary.

Process

During the spring of 2011, a sample of early educators from around the state completed a VT Head Start Kindergarten Readiness Survey to share the knowledge and skills they felt were most important for a child to be ready for kindergarten. The survey included all 34 indicators outlined in the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework* in the domains of Physical Development and

Health, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Logic and Reasoning, Language Development, Literacy Knowledge and Skills, Mathematic Knowledge and Skills, Scientific Knowledge and Skills, Creative Arts Expression, and Social Studies Knowledge and Skills. Participants were asked to choose their top five choices. Surveys were completed by 44 people working with pre-k age children, 145 kindergarten teachers, and 2 people working with first grade or above. The 191 surveys include representation from all 14 counties in Vermont (Addison 12, Bennington 11, Caledonia 5, Chittenden 49, Essex 4, Franklin 17, Grand Isle 3, Lamoille 10, Orange 4, Orleans 20, Rutland 7, Washington 22, Windham 12, and Windsor 15).

The Vermont Head Start Education Managers, with assistance from the Vermont Department of Education and the Vermont Head Start Training Center, analyzed the survey data and developed the Vermont Head Start School Readiness Goals based on the results (see attached table). The seven Vermont Head Start programs will adopt and include in their annual reapplication to the Office of Head Start, these four school readiness goals as we provide early education services to young children in preparing them for success in kindergarten and beyond. Other data sources including but not limited to child outcomes, program self-assessment and community needs assessment will be used by each individual Head Start grantee to develop additional goals unique to their programs. Programs will use the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool as the method for assessing progress toward school readiness goals.

The school readiness goals outlined in this document align with Vermont's Kindergarten Readiness Indicators. Since 2000, Vermont has gathered information on the readiness of children entering kindergarten by surveying kindergarten teachers about the "readiness" of their students within the first six to ten weeks of school. The "Ready Kindergarteners Survey" consisted of 28 items within the domains of Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Communication, Cognitive Development, and Physical Health and Development. This effort to measure school readiness in kindergarten children has been a collaborative project of the Vermont Department of Education and the Agency of Human Services.

References and Resources

Vermont Early Learning Standards

Off to Kindergarten Booklet

Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework

GPS Planner (OHS summit)

OHS – National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

VT Head Start Education Managers

VT Head Start Policy Councils

VT Head Start Association

VT Department of Education

VT Head Start Early Childhood Specialists

VT Head Start Collaboration Office

Top Choices Among Vermont Educators for Children to be Ready for School 1

Ranking	Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework Indicators	# of Responses	Percentage 2	Domain
1	Social Relationships	139	14.42%	Social Emotional Development
2	Emotional & Behavioral Health	103	10.68%	Social Emotional Development
3	Self-Regulation	93	9.65%	Social Emotional Development
4	Initiative & Curiosity	74	7.68%	Approaches to Learning
5	Cooperation	73	7.57%	Approaches to Learning
6	Expressive Language	60	6.22%	Language Development
7	Persistence & Attentiveness	55	5.71%	Approaches to Learning
8	Receptive Language	53	5.50%	Language Development
9	Self Concept & Self Efficacy	48	4.98%	Social Emotional Development
10	Book Appreciation & Knowledge	40	4.15%	Literacy Knowledge & Skills
11	Fine Motor Skills	30	3.11%	Physical Development & Health
12	Phonological Awareness	28	2.90%	Literacy Knowledge & Skills
13	Alphabet Knowledge	23	2.90%	Literacy Knowledge & Skills
14	Gross Motor Skills	22	2.28%	Physical Development & Health

1 Results from the 2011 Vermont Head Start Kindergarten Readiness Survey

2 The percentage was calculated by the # responses for each indicator/964 total responses. 191 people completed the survey (44 working with pre-k; 145 kindergarten teachers; and 2 teachers working with first grade or above). Respondents were asked to choose five (955). Some selected more than five.

Ranking	Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework Indicators	# of Responses	Percentage 2	Domain
15	Physical Health Status	20	2.07%	Physical Development & Health
16	Number Concepts & Quantities	18	1.87%	Mathematics Knowledge & Skills
17	Reasoning & Problem Solving	18	1.87%	Logic & Reasoning
18	Self, Family & Community	16	1.66%	Social Studies Knowledge & Skills
19	Conceptual Knowledge of the Natural & Physical World	11	1.14%	Science Knowledge & Skills
20	Early Writing	9	0.93%	Literacy Knowledge & Skills
21	Print Concepts & Conventions	8	0.83%	Literacy Knowledge & Skills
22	Creative Movement & Dance	8	0.83%	Creative Arts Expression
23	Number Relationships & Operations	4	0.41%	Mathematics Knowledge & Skills
24	Health Knowledge & Practice	3	0.31%	Physical Development & Health
25	Art	3	0.31%	Creative Arts Expression
26	Symbolic Representation	3	0.31%	Logic & Reasoning
27	People & the Environment	2	0.21%	Social Studies Knowledge & Skills
28	Geometry & Spatial Sense	0	0.00%	
29	Measurement & Comparison	0	0.00%	
30	Patterns	0	0.00%	
31	Scientific Skills & Method	0	0.00%	
32	Drama	0	0.00%	
33	Music	0	0.00%	
34	History & Events	0	0.00%	
	TOTAL	964	100.52%	

