

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

46% OF KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS ARE SCHOOL READY

For the second consecutive year, less than half of Central Texas kindergarteners were school ready according to data from Ready, Set, K!, a measure developed by the E3Alliance with the help of experts from across the region. In 2016, 46% of Central Texas kindergarteners arrived school ready, compared to 56% in 2012.

The E3 Alliance works with a weighted sample of Central Texas kindergarten classrooms to test student's social-emotional development, emerging literacy, language and communication, and math skills during the first 9 weeks of kindergarten.

COMPARISON OF KINDERGARTEN READINESS BY INCOME LEVEL

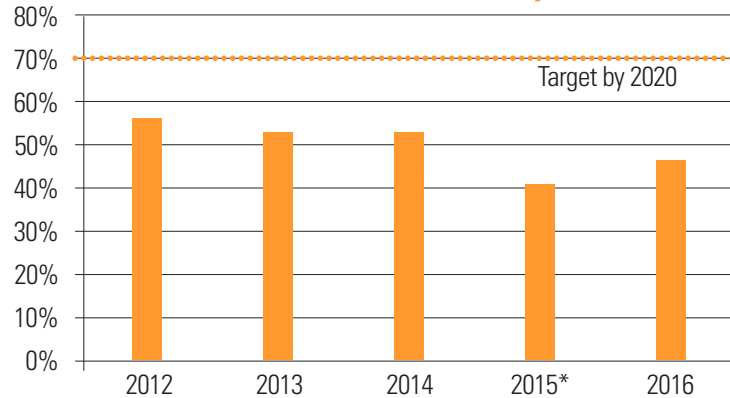
The greatest disparity in school readiness occurs by income. 28% of low-income kindergarteners were school ready in 2016, compared to 63% of children from moderate and high-income families. The gap in school readiness by income appears to have widened in 2016. Children from wealthier families are more than twice as likely to be school ready than their low-income peers.

PRE-K HELPS TO CLOSE THE GAP

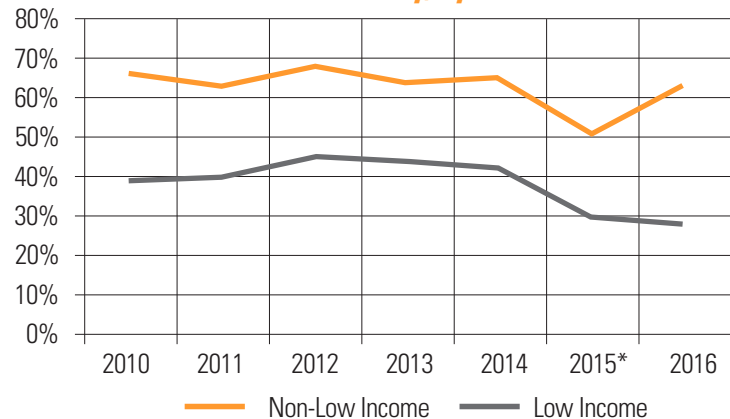
Only three-fourths of eligible children attend public Pre-K in Central Texas, according to research from the E3 Alliance. Half-day public Pre-K is available to children who have limited English proficiency, are economically disadvantaged, have an active duty military parent, or are homeless.

Children who attend pre-kindergarten programs are more likely to enter kindergarten school ready than children who did not attend Pre-K. In 2016, 45% of children who attended Pre-K were ready for school, compared to 36% of children who did not attend Pre-K.

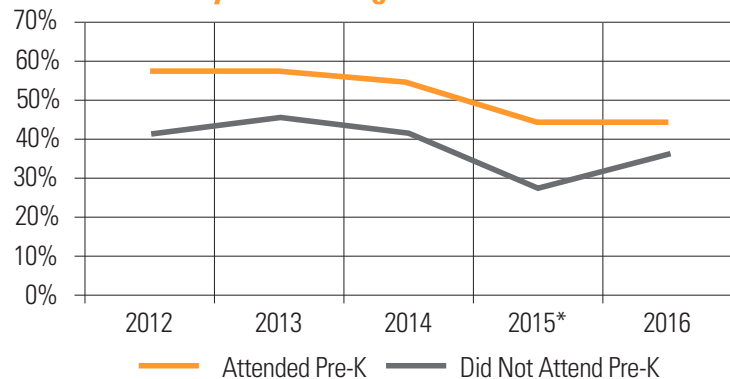
Percent of Central Texas Children Who are School Ready



Percent of Central Texas Children Who are School Ready, by Economic Status



Percent of Central Texas Children Who are School Ready, by Pre-Kindergarten Attendance



COLLABORATIVE PLANNING EFFORTS



SCHOOL READINESS ACTION PLAN:

Lead Agency: United Way for Greater Austin

Full-Time Coordinator: Yes

For the past seven years, United Way for Greater Austin has led a coalition of early childhood advocates, experts, parents, service providers and business leaders to put together an ambitious School Readiness Action Plan (SRAP), aimed at changing the landscape of care for our youngest community members. This plan is a strategic effort to invest in the future of our community, with the goal of increasing the number of school-ready children to 70 percent by 2018.

The SRAP Leadership Team includes the following organizations:

Austin Community College
Austin ISD
Austin Public Health
Child Inc.

Children's Optimal Health
City of Austin Early Childhood Council
Community Advancement Network
E3 Alliance

KLRU
Literacy Coalition of Central Texas
Manor ISD
United Way for Greater Austin

Workforce Solutions Capital Area
Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC)
Travis County Health & Human Services

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS CONTRIBUTING TO IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL READINESS ACTION PLAN

READY FAMILIES:

Family Support Network (FSN): Convened by UWATX, participants are service providers who deliver family support services outside of the formal care and education system (e.g., home visiting, evidence-based parent education classes). In addition to working on the Ready Families SRAP goal, this group works on coordination, collaboration, and resources sharing.

Ready Families Collaborative (RFC): A nine agency collaborative, funded by the City of Austin, to coordinate and secure additional resources for family support services. The agencies share utilization data and referral systems so that more families may be served and so that the delivery of services is more timely and effective.

PREVENTATIVE HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:

Trauma Informed Care Consortium (TICC): Led by Austin Child Guidance Center, TICC is made up of a variety of professionals and organizations in Central Texas that work with children - mental health clinicians, school personnel, medical/nursing professionals, occupational/physical therapists, law enforcement, and juvenile justice professionals. The consortium meets quarterly to network, share information, and coordinate trainings.

Kids Living Well (formerly Children and Youth Mental Health Planning Partnership): The Children and Youth Mental Health Planning Partnership is a planning body comprised of dedicated and experienced professionals who work together to promote the mental health of Travis County children and youth by raising awareness about behavioral health issues impacting children, youth and families and strengthening relationships among social service providers, health providers, and local school districts.

Note: The collaborations in this section are not specific to children ages 0 to 6 or specifically associated with SRAP.



READY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION:

Quality Child Care collaborative (QC3): Convened by Workforce Solutions Capital Area, this leadership team is dedicated to improving the accessibility and quality of child care, particularly for low-income families. Participants include child care funders and planners.

Pre-K Quality Workgroup: This work group is convened by E3 Alliance to address issues important to local Pre-K efforts and to determine the best way to measure public school Pre-K quality. Membership primarily includes school district representatives.

E3 Goal 1 Team: Convened by E3 Alliance, this group of community champions takes a comprehensive look at early childhood education, particularly as it interfaces with the Central Texas Pre-K-12 school system.

READY COMMUNITIES:

Early Childhood Council (ECC): The ECC convenes work groups to identify opportunities to improve conditions for families with young children through changes in public policy, coordination across systems, and engagement of community stakeholders.

Success by 6 (SB6) Early Childhood Stakeholders: Co-convened by United Way, City of Austin, and Travis County, this group meets quarterly and is open to anyone interested in local early childhood efforts. At meetings, members share information, network, and work together to advance the School Readiness Action Plan for Austin/Travis County.



BIG WINS

TO IMPROVE KINDERGARTEN READINESS

Growth in Three-Year-Olds Receiving Pre-K Services:

Over the last two years, nearly 1,600 Travis County three-year-olds have receiving Pre-K services through Austin ISD and Manor ISD during the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years – a significant increase in programming for the youngest preschool-aged children in our community. Research indicates that 2-years of Pre-K have stronger and longer impacts on young children, so this uptick in service levels will have long-term, positive education implications for our region.

Creation of the “Child Care Continuity” Program:

Travis County, along with the City of Austin, provided funding to Workforce Solutions for a new “Child Care Continuity” program. The funding provides a case manager for parents seeking child care and fills in gaps that are inherent in the state child care subsidy system. This innovative program exposed a real need in the community. During one of its pilot years, when it was just funded by Travis County, the program helped over 250 families, with nearly 500 children, secure and/or maintain high-quality care during challenging transition times.

Creation of the Ready Families Collaborative:

In the Fall of 2015, a continuum of high-quality parent education and family support services was greatly expanded through HHS grant funding from the City of Austin. Nine agencies work together in collaboration, sharing utilization data and referral systems so that more families can be served with targeted research-based interventions at the appropriate time. In addition, the total funding for HHS social service contracts was increased, which will likely result in further expansion of programming for young families.

Austin ISD Partnerships with Child Care Centers:

AISD provided some of the Pre-K services in partnership with high-quality early childhood centers and Child Inc. Head Start. Eligible children in these partnership programs receive full-day services with the same educational quality offered in public school settings as well as the comprehensive services Head Start provides – additional screenings for health and development, family goal setting and social services.

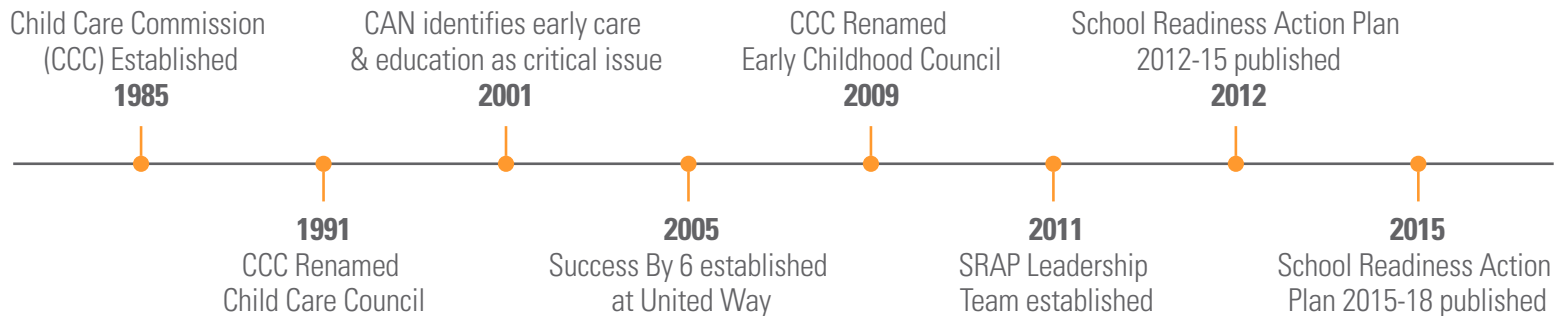
Ready, Set, K!:

Measuring Readiness: E3 Alliance led a collaborative effort to create the first student-centered standard for Kindergarten readiness in the history of the state. Ready, Set, K! provides a detailed diagnostic rubric, instructional practices, and small group and individual interventions so that Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers can assess and better serve the needs of our youngest students. Results from Ready, Set, K inform the “Ready Child” section of the School Readiness Action Plan.

Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs:

In 2017, United Way for Greater Austin (UWATX) was awarded a Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant from the State of Texas, by and through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The grant funds voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs that will serve the most vulnerable populations in Travis County. As the lead agent for the grant, UWATX will lead the community coalition work supporting community-driven approaches to enhancing maternal child health, parent child attachment, child development, child safety, family stability, and school readiness in eligible communities.

TIMELINE: EVOLUTION OF THE COLLABORATION



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO GET INVOLVED

For more information about the School Readiness Action Plan: Visit unitedwayaustin.org/srap
Contact Sue Carpenter, United Way Chief Programs Officer, Sue.Carpenter@uwatx.org