



# COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS PACESETTER CINCINNATI/NORTHERN KENTUCKY

## Category: School Readiness

The Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky region has employed a number of programs and strategies to ensure that all children are ready for kindergarten. Spearheaded by United Way Success By 6®, local partners in the City of Cincinnati, seven counties and nine school districts have focused on connecting the dots along the early childhood continuum to demonstrate that children who participate in evidence-based home visiting and enroll in high-quality early childhood education programs have an increased likelihood of being ready for kindergarten and to be reading on grade level by the end of third grade.

Every Child Succeeds (ECS), a home visitation program created by Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, targets first-time, at-risk mothers of children age 3 and younger. More than 90 percent of children in ECS are developmentally on track, and 90 percent of first-time mothers who "graduate" from ECS plan to enroll their children in early childhood education programs. Assessment information is uploaded from ECS to a shared data system to enable tracking child outcomes across select early childhood programs.

Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky recognize that quality early childhood education increases the chance that children will be ready for kindergarten. Programs in the region conduct regular assessments of preschool children to monitor language, early literacy and other areas of development. Providers use data from these assessments to meet each child's needs. Of 499 preschoolers assessed in 2010 in the city, the number who were "very delayed" decreased from 15.6 percent to 7.2 percent, the number of "average" children increased from 52.5 percent to 58.3 percent and the number of "advanced" children jumped from 7.6 percent to 15.4 percent. Children in the "average" range had an average score of 22.9 on the Ohio Kindergarten Readiness Assessment–Literacy, and those who were "advanced" had an average score of 26.4. The local benchmark for readiness is a score of 19.

As a result of the area's efforts and collaboration with local partners and community members, the number of Cincinnati public school students considered to be kindergarten-ready increased by 14.2 percent from 2010 to 2012. Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky plan to expand their use of meaningful data systems to continue to monitor and improve school readiness rates in the area.

## STRATEGIES

- Implemented a shared data system to track outcomes across selected early childhood programs
- Reduced the number of "very delayed" children from 15.6 percent to 7.2 percent
- Implemented the Every Child Succeeds home visitation program, which ensured that 90 percent of children were developmentally on track
- Increased the number of kindergarten-ready children by 14.2 percent in Cincinnati public schools