

School Readiness in Georgia

Children entering kindergarten with school readiness skills are more likely to experience **academic success** and better **lifetime well-being** than their peers.¹

What is School Readiness?

A child's readiness for school includes:²



Detection and appropriate care for potential physical or mental disabilities



Emerging social and interpersonal skills



Evident early literacy and language skills



Possession of a general knowledge about the world

School readiness is influenced by a child's development, family, community, schools, and the services to which they have access.

Children from low-income families, whose parents did not graduate high school, or do not speak English at home are **less likely** to have readiness skills.³ Environmental exposures, such as health, financial strain, conflict, and neighborhood safety, impact a child's future opportunities – including school readiness and grade promotion.⁴ Multiple studies of pre-k programs, including Georgia's Pre-K, show that **participation in pre-k can greatly improve school readiness skills**, particularly in high-risk populations.⁵

Georgia's Commitment to School Readiness

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) administers several programs to increase early readiness skills so students can enter kindergarten ready to learn, including:

Georgia's Pre-K Program

MORE THAN 2 MILLION

students have been served by Georgia's Pre-K Program since it began in 1992.⁶

Children in Georgia's Pre-K program showed significant growth across all learning domains, including:⁸



Math skills



Language and literacy skills



Social-emotional skills

Evaluations have found that children enrolled in the Georgia Pre-K program:⁷

- ✓ Are more prepared for kindergarten compared to four-year-olds in other forms of care.
- ✓ Have increased cognitive development and improved educational outcomes in later grades.

Dual language learners in Georgia's Pre-K program showed growth across all skills in English and most skills in Spanish.⁹

Summer Transition Programs^{10, 11, 12}

DECAL offers both Rising Kindergarten and Rising Pre-K Summer Transition programs as additional supports for high-risk students, including:

387 classes at **294** program sites



6-week intensive summer program



Child's family must be **at or below 85% of the state median income**



A **transition coach** is in each class to help families



Low student-to-teacher ratio

Sources for School Readiness in Georgia

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- 2 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "Georgia's Pre-K Program Content Standards." Accessed July 14, 2022. http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/Content_Standards.pdf.
- 3 "Children's School Readiness in the ECLS-K: Predictions to Academic, Health, and Social Outcomes in First Grade." Accessed July 14, 2022. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0885200606000640>.
- 4 Pressler, E., Cybele Raver, C. Friedman-Krauss, A., Roy, A. "The Roles of School Readiness and Poverty-Related Risk for 6th Grade Outcomes." Accessed July 14, 2022. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5111797/>.
- 5 Brookings Institution and Duke University. "The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects." Accessed July 14, 2022. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED574393.pdf>.
- 6 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, professional communication, February 2023.
- 7 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "Children's Outcomes and Classroom Quality from Pre-K through Kindergarten Findings from Year 2 of Georgia's Pre-K Longitudinal Study." Accessed July 14, 2022. <https://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/GAPreKEvalLongitudinalYr2ExSum.pdf>.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, professional communication, June 2022.
- 11 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "Summer Transition Program - Rising Kindergarten FAQ." Accessed July 14, 2022. http://decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/STP_FAQ.pdf.
- 12 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "Summer Transition Program - Rising Pre-Kindergarten FAQ." Accessed July 14, 2022. http://www.decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/STP_PK_FAQ.pdf.