

Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI): Determining Readiness



Kindergarten is an important touchpoint in a child’s academic career. The more that families and schools know about a child’s abilities early on, the greater the impact they can have on a child’s performance throughout school.

Developing an Appropriate Definition of Readiness. Often, the question is whether a child is ready for kindergarten, however, a better question would be whether kindergarten is ready for that child. Readiness should be flexibly and broadly defined,¹ taking into account multiple components including:

- A child’s comprehensive set of skills (cognitive and non-cognitive);
- The teacher’s and school’s ability to meet the needs of all children. This includes a focus on reflective practice (learning environment, pedagogy, school structures);
- The family’s readiness to share information and advocate for their child; and
- The community’s readiness to provide services to ensure positive learning environments.

School readiness involves more than just an individual child. School readiness, in the broadest sense, is about children, families, early environments, schools, and communities. **Children are not innately ready or not ready for school.** Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school.²

The Kindergarten Entry Inventory is designed NOT as a high stakes tool, but as a tool for focusing this multi-tiered definition of readiness.	
For children:	The KEI offers a comprehensive snapshot of a child’s skill levels.
For teachers and schools:	Results of the KEI can help teachers and school staff reflect on their policies and practices at the child, classroom, building, and district levels.
For families:	The KEI offers families a language to contribute to the teacher’s and school’s understanding of their child; to talk about their child’s abilities (strengths and weaknesses); and to share in the learning process.
For communities:	KEI information can be reviewed to understand community needs focused on development of child skills, school practices and policies, as well as access to supports and resources.

For more information on the KEI, visit www.education.pa.gov.

¹ National Association for the Education of Young Children Position Statement on School Readiness, www.naeyc.org/about/positions/pdf/psready98.pdf.

² Maxwell, K., & R.M. Clifford. 2004. Research in review: school readiness assessment. *Young Children* 59 (1): 42-46.

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