



Kindergarten Individual Development Survey
Every Illinois Child Ready for Kindergarten

2022-23 School Year

Illinois Kindergarten Individual Development Survey Report



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Overview of KIDS

Kindergarten teachers across Illinois have been using the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) for several years to screen their students' development and readiness for kindergarten. KIDS was designed to enhance the understanding of children's developmental readiness for kindergarten among teachers, administrators, families, and policymakers. KIDS directs teachers to observe and record students' skills, knowledge, and behaviors on 14 metrics that are aligned with the [Illinois Early Learning and Developmental Standards](#), [Illinois Early Learning Standards-Kindergarten](#), and the [Illinois Learning Standards](#) for [English Language Arts](#), [Mathematics](#), and [Science](#). Each domain contains multiple measures, and each measure consists of a progression of developmental levels typical for kindergarten-aged children. The areas of social-emotional development, language and literacy, and mathematics are key to long-term success.

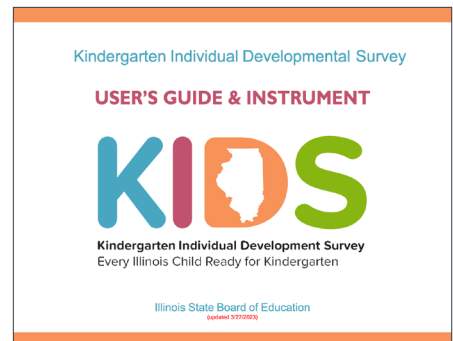
The **14 State Readiness Measures** are organized into **four learning domains** associated with **three developmental areas**:

14 STATE READINESS MEASURES	4 KEY LEARNING DOMAINS	3 KEY DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS
<p>Curiosity and Initiative in Learning (ATL-REG 1)</p> <p>Self-Control of Feelings and Behavior (ATL-REG 2)</p> <p>Engagement and Persistence (ATL-REG 3)</p>	<p>Approaches to Learning & Self-Regulation (ALT-REG)</p> <p>Assesses a child's development of persistence, curiosity, and ability to self-regulate.</p>	<p>Social and Emotional Development (ALT-REG/SED)</p>
<p>Relationships and Social Interactions with Familiar Adults (SED 3)</p> <p>Relationships and Social Interactions with Peers (SED 4)</p>	<p>Social and Emotional Development (SED)</p> <p>Assesses a child's development of feelings, behavior, and relationships with nurturing adults and peers.</p>	
<p>Communication and Use of Language (Expressive) (LLD 3)</p> <p>Reciprocal Communication and Conversation (SED 4)</p> <p>Comprehension of Age-Appropriate Text (LLD 6)</p> <p>Phonological Awareness (LLD 8)</p> <p>Letter and Word Knowledge (LLD 9)</p>	<p>Language and Literacy Development (LLD)</p> <p>Assesses a child's progress in developing foundational language and literacy skills by observing communication, conversation, awareness of text, and letter and word knowledge. These skills can be demonstrated in any language and in any mode of communication.</p>	<p>Language and Literacy Development (LLD)</p>
<p>Classification (COG: MATH 1)</p> <p>Number Sense of Quantity (COG: MATH 2)</p> <p>Number Sense of Math Operations (COG: MATH 3)</p> <p>Shapes (COG: MATH 6)</p>	<p>Math (COG:MATH)</p> <p>Assesses a child's number sense, knowledge of shapes, and ability to classify objects through observation, exploration of people and objects, and objects and concepts.</p>	<p>Math (COG:MATH)</p>

Completing the KIDS involves two straightforward steps. The first step is observing and documenting student behavior. This observation occurs in the first 40 days of kindergarten instruction as students engage in their daily activities, such as playing, doing schoolwork, engaging in conversations, and following directions. Importantly, these observations occur without disrupting the regular classroom routine. Educators use a variety of documenting techniques like anecdotal notes, photographs, work samples, etc. The teacher is the primary collector of evidence, but other staff (teaching assistants, volunteers, reading specialists, social workers, PE instructors, etc.) and even family members can collect and share evidence with the teacher of record.

Observations should occur over time in a typical setting, within the first 40 days of instruction. Those typical settings can be in the classroom or home. However, a teacher who has been trained on KIDS and is consistently in class with the students will make the final decisions on ratings based on the observations and will enter the data.

The second step involves analyzing the student's behavior using the evidence collected for the required 14 measures. Teachers who have received KIDS training and are consistently present in class with the students make the final rating decisions based on the collected evidence. The student's level of readiness is determined by how consistently they demonstrate the expected skill, behaviors, or knowledge over time and in various situations or settings. If a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Service Plan enrolls in their public school, the case conference team should meet to determine if KIDS is appropriate based on the needs of the student. A teacher may note that a child cannot be rated for a specific metric. Any missing ratings necessitate an exemption reason, which must be supported by relevant documentation. Lastly, a teacher reviews all the entries in the online tool to ensure that all fields are complete. See [KIDS User's Guide & Instrument](#).



KIDS has an important role in Illinois' understanding of student progress. Statewide implementation began in fall 2017 after five years of pilot testing that involved more than 50,000 children across selected districts. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) enhanced data transparency in 2020 by adding all available KIDS data to the Illinois Report Card. The administration of KIDS was codified in both rule and law by fall of 2021. See the [School Code](#). In October 2022, ISBE introduced the Equity Journey Continuum, an informative tool designed to facilitate conversations about narrowing gaps in student achievement, opportunities, and supports in three areas: student learning, learning conditions, and elevating educators. KIDS measures kindergarten readiness, one of 10 data elements within the student learning area of the Equity Journey Continuum. The public can access summary Equity Journey Continuum data on the Illinois Report Card, while districts can review a detailed breakdown of their data, including KIDS data, through a secure data portal.

What is meant by 'demonstrating readiness'?

Early childhood is a period of rapid development – physical, emotional, cognitive, and social growth; therefore, determining a child's readiness for kindergarten involves more than observing a child identify shapes, numbers, and colors. Many factors determine a child's "readiness" for kindergarten.

Teachers note the highest developmental level they observe each child mastering for each of the 14 KIDS measures. Children who exhibit behaviors and skills within the expected range for children at kindergarten entry in **all three** developmental areas – social-emotional development, language and literacy, and math – are considered to have **demonstrated kindergarten readiness**. Students who display expected skills and behaviors in *two, one, or none* of the three developmental areas *may require additional support*. It is important to note that the development of individual children of the same chronological age varies, and that children enter kindergarten with a wide range of early experiences. **A child who is not demonstrating readiness in a particular measure or developmental area at the same time as his or her peers is not necessarily a reason for concern.** Developmental skills build upon other developmental skills. Providing appropriate support allows children the opportunity to get back on track – something easier to do in the younger years.

The 14 Illinois KIDS State Readiness Measures stem from a broader framework composed of 55 measures across 11 domains. As such, the 14 required measures serve as an aggregate proxy of "kindergarten readiness." This mandated subset does not offer a comprehensive representation of the Illinois Early Learning Development Standards, Illinois Early Learning Standards-Kindergarten, or the research-based developmental constructs found in the full framework. Relying solely on the 14 required measures at the 40th day of attendance will not yield KIDS ratings appropriate for assessing an individual student's development. Furthermore, the mandated KIDS administration captures only a snapshot of student development at the outset of kindergarten. However, the 14-measure subset does provide a directional indicator of children's strengths and areas that need additional support. This information can be valuable in tailoring curriculum and instruction for currently enrolled kindergarten students.

Districts are free to implement the version of the survey that best fits their needs:

KIDS is...

- An informational tool for teachers to guide instruction, adapt curriculum, and encourage play-based learning experiences.
- Information families can use to support their child's unique learning and development needs.
- Data to inform policy decisions and leverage funding.
- A tool to foster greater alignment between early childhood programs, community services, and kindergarten.

KIDS is not...

- A tool for enrollment or classroom placement decisions
- An indicator of the effectiveness of individual early childhood providers.
- An appropriate tool to use for teacher evaluation.
- An accountability metric for schools or classrooms.

- **Fourteen State Readiness Measures (first 40 days; multiple data collections points)**

Districts are required to observe and rate students on 14 measures. These select measures provide population-based information about the overall readiness of a group of children at the beginning of kindergarten. Districts collect the 14 measures at multiple points during the first 40 days of the school year to measure developmental progress in kindergarten. Results can serve as an aggregate proxy of “kindergarten readiness.”

- **Five Domains of Readiness (29 Measures)**

Districts can elect to collect an expanded data set beyond the state requirements. The 29-measure view includes the 14 State Readiness Measures with sufficient additional information to provide a full view of readiness in five domains: Approaches to Learning and Self-Regulation, Social and Emotion Development, Language and Literacy Development, Cognition: Math, Physical Development. Recommended practice is for teachers to complete the survey two or three times a year. Teachers would receive a report for each student to share with parents/guardians.

- **11 Domains of Readiness (55 Measures)**

The full 55-measure KIDS framework provides the opportunity to collect extensive data on the development of the whole child. It encompasses all 11 domains in the instrument. (English Language Development and Spanish are conditional.) Information in all domains is available to communicate with families about their child’s progress after it has been collected two or more times.

Also worthy of note is that the KIDS tool accommodates diverse learning, communication, and language styles, which allow children to demonstrate skills and abilities in a variety of ways (such as use of a communication board, sign language, or their native language). Bilingual kindergarten classrooms in Illinois provide instruction on phonological awareness and letter and word knowledge in different ways from classrooms with predominantly English-only instruction. For this reason, the KIDS Language and Literacy Development can be modified for use in bilingual classrooms or with students identified as English learners (ELs). Refer to [Guidance for Dual Language Users](#) for specific information on how and when teachers would utilize these alternate measures. Please note that

the case conference team will need to decide if KIDS is appropriate for students with IEPs. WIDA language screener results would determine if KIDS is appropriate for English learners.

Many districts utilize their local KIDS data well before the state releases results. Once teachers validate students' ratings on the 14 required measures, the school can generate group-level reports in the KIDStech platform to enhance classroom practices for currently enrolled kindergarten students. Whole class reports provide a high-level overview of the developmental continuum for a class, demographic group, school, or district. Teachers and administrators can use these reports to gain insight into strengths and areas that require support, guiding classroom or district-level planning. In some cases, districts also extract reports to examine kindergarten readiness through a demographic lens, such as gender or age.

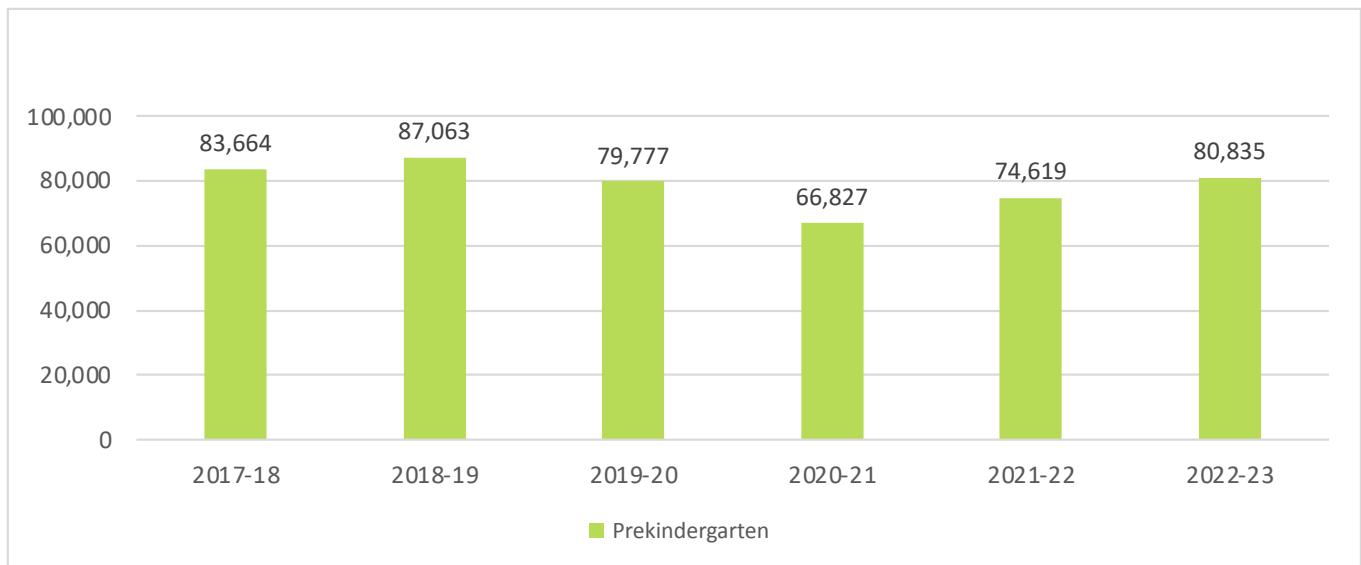
Findings

Student Enrollment in Prekindergarten

Research suggests the positive impact of high-quality early learning experiences on preparing students for kindergarten. Enrollment in prekindergarten at Illinois school districts decreased 16% in the 2020-21 school year due to the pandemic but has risen each year since. Pre-k enrollment increased by 8% for the 2022-23 school year compared to the previous year but has still not reach pre-pandemic levels.

Illinois has continued to invest in expanding access to high-quality, publicly funded preschool as a key strategy for increasing students' readiness for kindergarten and closing gaps between lower income students and their higher income peers. State funding for ISBE's Early Childhood Block Grant, which provides funding for preschool, increased by \$54.4 million from fiscal year 2022 to fiscal year 2023.

CHART 1. PUBLIC DISTRICT PREKINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT OVER TIME



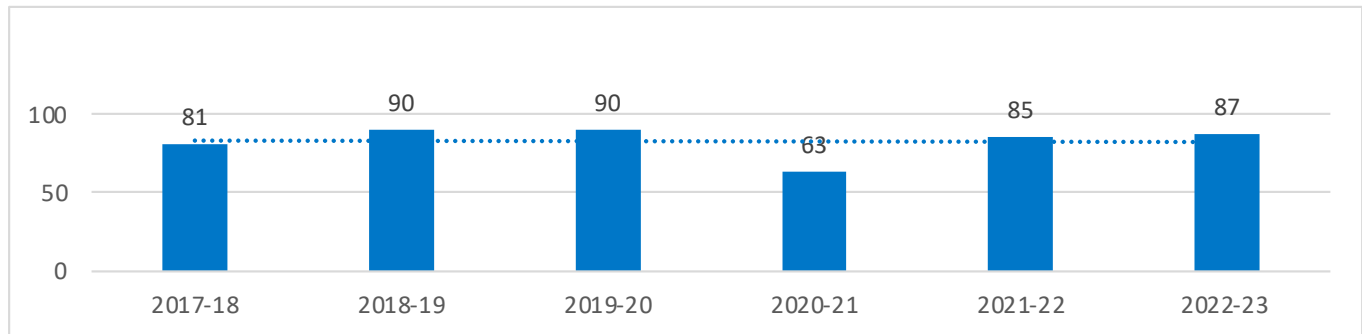
Student Participation in KIDS

Illinois enrolled 121,812 students in kindergarten in the fall of 2022. A total of 105,604 of those students were rated fully on the 14 required measures across the Five Domains of Readiness, rendering an 87% participation rate in KIDS (meaning 16,208 students were either partially rated [on less than 14 measures] or considered unable to rate with an exemption reason code). Participation in KIDS dipped to 63% in the 2020-21 school year due to the pandemic but has now returned almost to the 90% participation rate seen pre-pandemic.

ISBE allows districts to specify student exemption reason codes, which include transferring schools, hospitalization, other medical reasons, being homebound, being out of the state or country, and cognitive or developmental delays that would deem the KIDS assessment developmentally inappropriate. KIDS coaches are available to support those districts with lower

participation rates.

CHART 2. PERCENTAGE OF KIDS PARTICIPATION OVER TIME



Overall Kindergarten Readiness

ISBE sees encouraging, positive trends in the fall 2022 KIDS data.

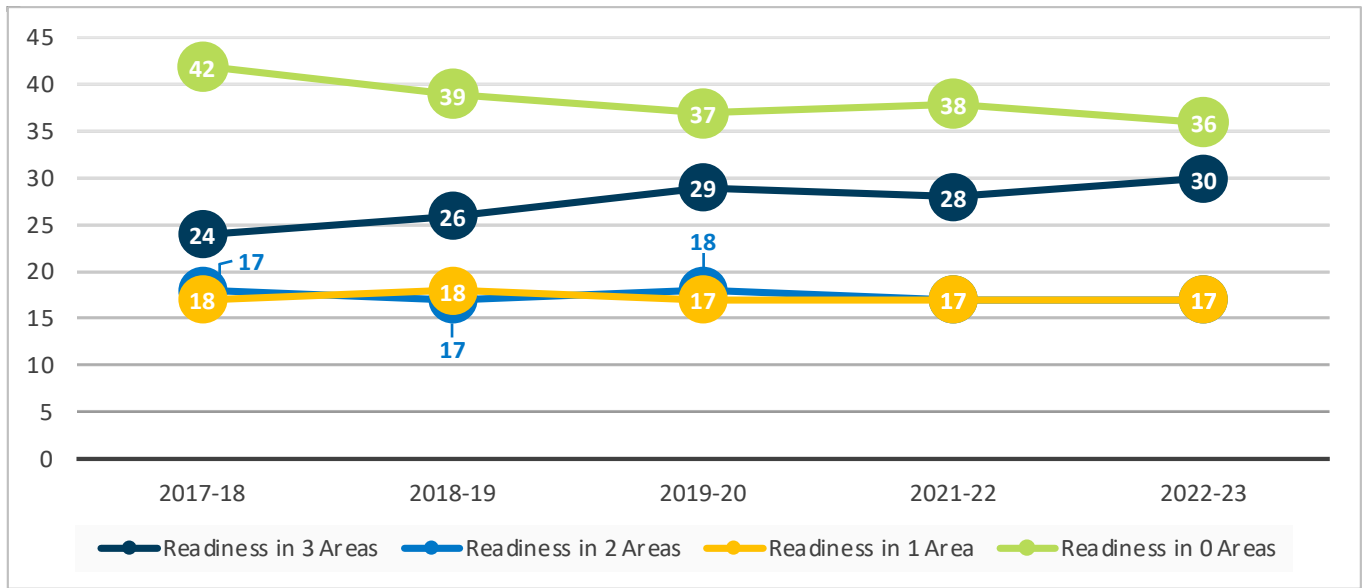
The percentage of students rated ready in all three areas has steadily increased while the percentage of students rated ready in zero areas has steadily declined – both positive trends indicating that more and more students are entering kindergarten with the skills they need to succeed. The percentage of students rated ready in all three areas has increased 25% since the first administration of KIDS in fall 2017. The percentage of students rated ready in zero areas declined 14% since the first administration of KIDS. The percentage of students rated ready in one or two areas has remained steady.

These significant increases in kindergarten readiness coincide with significant increases in state funding for early childhood care and education services.

Additionally, Illinois invested \$12.5 million of federal pandemic relief funds in the Jump Start Illinois grant program to provide educational support to younger learners who were most impacted by the pandemic. The grant program targeted the least well-funded districts, where children received less than 50% of instruction in-person during the 2020-21 school year and provided educational support during the summer before students started kindergarten or first grade. The program has funded 127 districts, reaching approximately 15,000 Illinois kindergarten students. The program continued through summer 2023.

Interventions like Jump Start Illinois and other district-led initiatives lessened the impact the pandemic had on Illinois' kindergarten readiness.

CHART 3. PERCENTAGE OF OVERALL KINDERGARTEN READINESS IN ZERO, ONE, TWO, OR THREE DOMAINS OVER TIME



Overall Readiness by Developmental Area

Students' readiness for kindergarten has increased significantly in every developmental area since the first administration of KIDS in fall 2017.

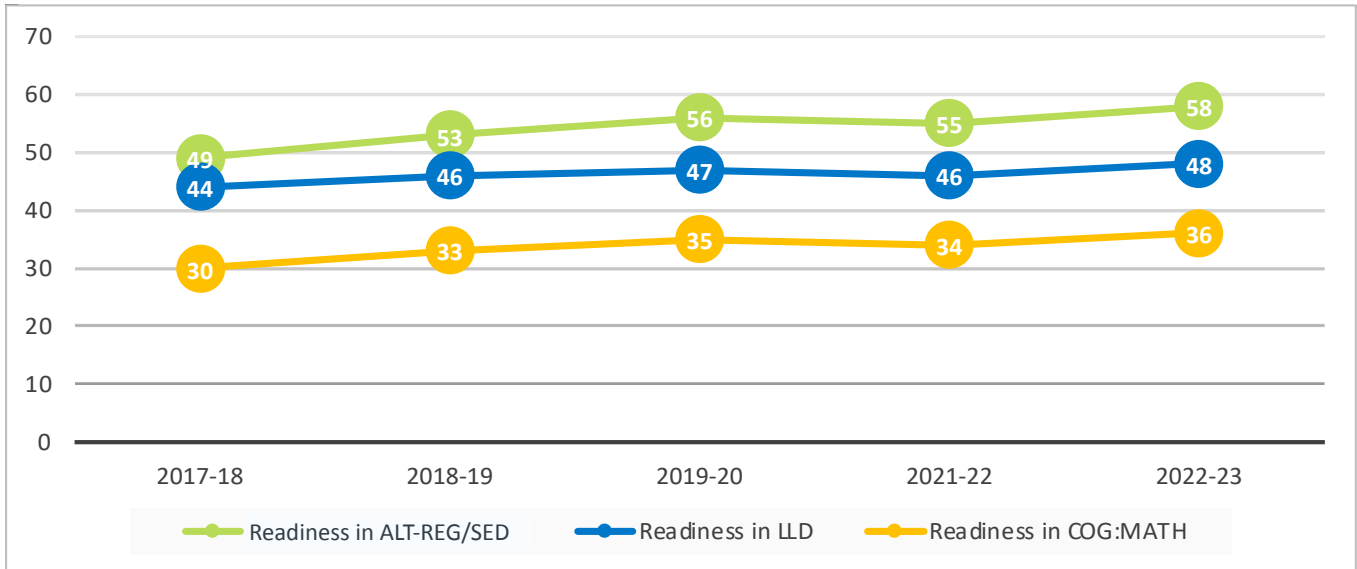
- The percentage of students rated ready in the COG:MATH area has increased 20%.
- The percentage of students rated ready in the ALT-REG/SED area has increased 18%.
- The percentage of students rated ready in the LLD area has increased 9%.

Students can demonstrate kindergarten readiness through interactions and everyday classroom activities. Teachers provide rich, engaging, and developmentally appropriate activities to further students' development across the five domains.

ISBE has also promoted the importance of developmentally appropriate guided play-based instruction in pre-k and kindergarten to support students' attainment of early math, literacy, and social-emotional skills.

Importantly, COG:MATH is consistently the area in which the fewest students have been rated ready, indicating a need to offer greater support for both early childhood educators and families on supporting students development of early math skills.

CHART 4. PERCENTAGE OF READINESS BY DEVELOPMENTAL AREA OVER TIME



Overall Readiness by Student Group

The following disaggregated information serves a purpose for schools and communities to raise awareness, generate conversation, and direct state and local investment in support of students with less access to high-quality early learning experiences before kindergarten. Identifying and addressing children’s needs as early as possible allows them the chance to succeed in school. Providing additional support to kindergartners already experiencing development gaps may allow them to make more significant learning gains in school.

The persistent early gaps between student groups (EL and non-EL, with IEP and without IEP, eligible for free or reduced-price lunch [FRPL] and not eligible) indicate the importance of increasing identification and support for students with more significant needs in the critical early years before kindergarten.

Even so, the kindergarten readiness of all student groups has increased steadily since the first administration of KIDS in fall 2017.

The group with consistently the lowest percentage of students rated ready in all three areas is students identified as English learners.

ISBE also continues to work with partners and KIDS coaches to provide professional development to educators on how to effectively interpret and rate behaviors and skills displayed in the classroom, how to collect valuable evidence that demonstrates readiness, and how to collaborate with other classroom educators who have an impact on the student for reliable data gathering.

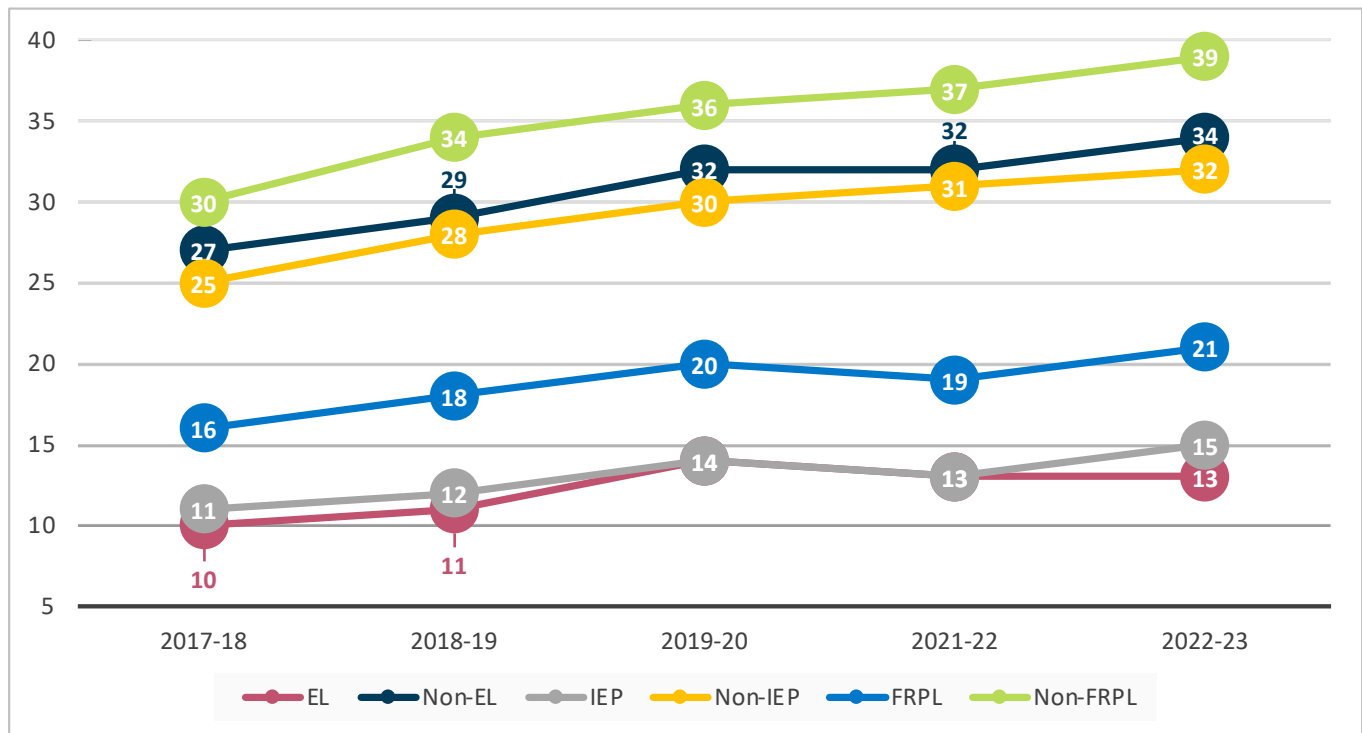
In February 2023, ISBE received a \$4 million federal award to support and strengthen the early care and education system in the state. Projects funded by the Preschool Development Grants

Birth through Five include an initiative to improve the capacity of community-based early learning providers to identify and serve English learners. Community-based providers do not have to follow the same requirements as their public school counterparts, leading to gaps in identification and services across programs. The project will offer training for community-based early learning providers to interview families and administer language screeners, as appropriate, and will deploy a team of consultants to conduct screening services on site, when needed.

The grant will bring together diverse stakeholders from state agencies, higher education, advocacy groups, and research entities to support strategic planning and evaluation with the goal of improving coordination throughout the early childhood delivery system. The grant will support the identification of programmatic gaps and solutions to better support and strengthen the early childhood workforce. The grant will fund a range of activities from data collection and data system integration, to family outreach and communication, to infrastructure mapping and program evaluation, to model program pilots and professional development.

Additionally, the state budget for FY 2024 increased funding for the Early Childhood Block Grant by \$75 million to specifically target grants to preschool providers serving areas of the state identified as preschool deserts. The state aims to completely eliminate preschool deserts and provide universal access to publicly funded preschool within four years, thereby reducing gaps in readiness between student groups.

CHART 5. PERCENTAGE OF READINESS IN ALL THREE AREAS BY STUDENT GROUP OVER TIME



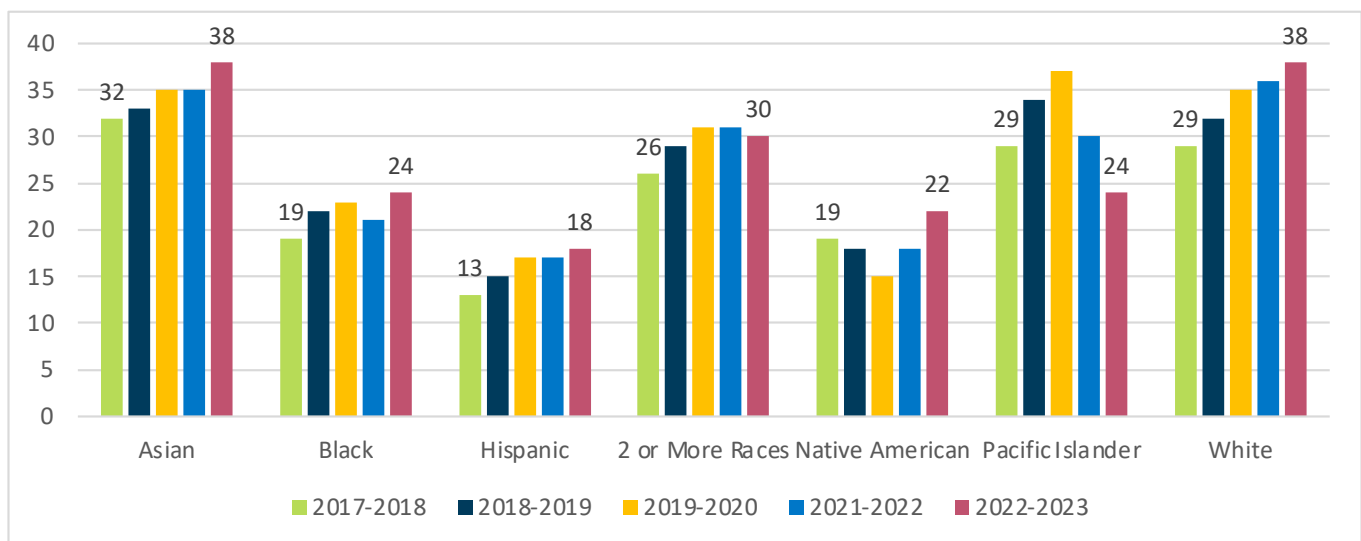
Overall Readiness by Race/Ethnicity

The percentage of Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White students rated ready in all three areas has risen significantly in fall 2022, compared to fall 2021 and to the first administration of KIDS in fall 2017. However, gaps in readiness persist between Black and Hispanic students and their White and Asian peers.

State investments in early childhood care and education aim to increase access to high-quality preschool in underserved communities.

Additionally, in order to support a statewide focus on closing gaps in access to high-quality early learning programming, ISBE includes KIDS data as part of its Equity Journey Continuum tool. The tool places districts along an equity continuum in three areas – student learning, learning conditions, and elevating educators – based on the size of access and outcome gaps between student groups. ISBE includes kindergarten readiness data as one of the metrics in the student learning category. The tool does not impact accountability or funding in any way whatsoever and serves only as an informational tool to guide local conversations pertaining to equity, including local strengths and areas for growth.

CHART 6. PERCENTAGE OF READINESS IN ALL THREE AREAS OVER TIME BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Next Steps

Illinois has focused on expanding access to high-quality early childhood education as the key strategy for increasing kindergarten readiness and ensuring all students have a strong foundation for success in school and lifelong learning. In addition to developmentally appropriate instruction in key domains, early childhood education programming also offers screening opportunities for young students who may need additional support in special education and English language acquisition through early intervention screening and assessment.

Illinois has increased state funding for ISBE's Early Childhood Block Grants by \$229.4 million – from \$443.7 million in FY 2018 to \$673.1 million in FY 2024 – since KIDS was first administered in fall 2017. In spring 2023, Governor JB Pritzker announced his Smart Start Illinois initiative, a multi-year plan that includes an investment of \$75 million per year for the next four years to completely eliminate preschool deserts across the state and ensure all students and families have access to high-quality publicly funded preschool. ISBE's FY 2024 grants targeted providers in underserved areas of the state identified as preschool deserts and are intended to expand access to preschool to more than 5,000 additional children across the state.

On Oct. 24, 2023, Governor Pritzker signed Executive Order 2023-09 to begin the process of creating a new state agency dedicated to early childhood. Currently, three separate state agencies, including ISBE, administer early childhood education and child care services, sometimes resulting in confusion for families looking for care and for providers looking for funding and guidance. Housing all of the state's early childhood services in one agency will result in better coordinated state-funded programs, more equitably allocated resources, less bureaucracy for providers, greater access for parents and families – and, ultimately, greater kindergarten readiness, especially for currently underserved students.