



Valley View Community Unit District #365

KIDS Helps Families Boost Learning at Home

KIDS DATA ENHANCES REPORT CARDS, HELPS PARENTS SEE BIG PICTURE

Rachel Dellamorte felt her bubbling, theatrical 6-year-old daughter Bryce's development and skills in the areas that mattered were "just fine" as she entered kindergarten. Bryce knew words. She knew numbers. She was happy.

Dellamorte hadn't given much thought to how well her daughter was developing socially or emotionally, whether her physical skills were on track, or whether Bryce's self-regulation skills were progressing typically for her age. It wasn't until she received Bryce's first kindergarten report card – enhanced by KIDS data – that she realized she could easily be doing more at home to boost her daughter's progress across a far wider range of developmental areas.

"While my child may be academically above average, there are other areas of her development I definitely want to strengthen and support so she can be more successful," Dellamorte said. "I like seeing all the stages and knowing what comes next and what came before. It gives me some direction."



Rachel Dellamorte, with 6-year-old Bryce, found KIDS helpful in supporting her daughter's development.

KIDS HELPS PARENTS AND TEACHERS IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

Valley View Community Unit District 365, an early adopter of KIDS, was the first in the state to begin using KIDS data as its kindergarten report card to families. The sprawling Bolingbrook and Romeoville district developed the report card template—available in Spanish, too—after much discussion and many rounds of input from families on what would be most useful to them. That template – available in Spanish, too – is now increasingly used by districts administering KIDS across Illinois. The reports are made up of data collected from the district on every child's skill level within each KIDS measure and placed on a developmental map that spans the continuum of developmental "norms." The span reaches from the typical development of children as they enter kindergarten to where they should be by the end of the year.

Districts may opt to collect anywhere from 14 to 55 measures, with some districts choosing to do so multiple times a year. Each child's skill or developmental level on the measures is based on teachers' observations of their students. Those observations are documented through note-taking or other recording methods during the course of the regular school day.



LESSONS FROM VALLEY VIEW

- **KIDS** equips families with tools to promote their child's development at home.
- **KIDS** helps teachers better understand each student's development across multiple domains, not just math and literacy.
- Many teachers have re-evaluated and improved their teaching strategies as a result of using **KIDS**.

Dellamorte said the report card information has helped her engage in richer, more productive conversations with Gina Jordan, Bryce's kindergarten teacher at Jamie McGee Elementary School in Bolingbrook.

"I like that it gives me talking points with the teachers that are much more specific than the old report cards, which may have just given you a heading of something in the content area along with a letter that goes with it," Dellamorte said. "It helps me to bring up specific areas that I might be concerned about or want to know how to support her even more."

Dellamorte has used the new information to begin adding to the activities she engages in at home with Bryce. Instead of counting from 1 to 20, for instance, Dellamorte will ask Bryce to start at 5 and count up, count to 100 by 10's, or count backwards. All of these were activities suggested by Jordan to help build Bryce's early math skills.

"I think parents really kind of look through it and they say, 'All right, I see where my child is and this is where they need to go,'" Jordan said. "Just for that reason alone, I find it very useful. It's something I hadn't thought about before KIDS, but now I have it laid out and can explain it to parents."



Dellamorte and Gina Jordan, Bryce's kindergarten teacher, review Bryce's report card.

Dellamorte said she felt confident about her ability to help Bryce develop language skills, but she felt less sure about how to help her develop math skills. Jordan is able to suggest specific activities and link parents like Dellamorte directly to materials that help them support their children's development at home, particularly in areas of challenge.

Valley View Curriculum Coordinator Amanda Dykstra was an early KIDS convert and led the district's embrace of the tool. In Valley View, KIDS aligns with the district's Increasingly play-based, full-day Kindergarten. Dykstra developed the new report card using KIDS data, generated a suite of materials to help teachers administer KIDS, and aggregated family resources around specific KIDS measures to share with parents.

"Some of my teachers, they've come and said, 'This has made me re-evaluate what I'm doing in the classroom,'" said Dykstra. She added that many teachers also commented that they didn't previously have access to the kind of social emotional and self-regulation data that they do now with KIDS, in addition to information on literacy, math, and other developmental domains. "It's made them go more developmentally appropriate with their teaching."



Amanda Dykstra, Valley View Curriculum Coordinator, developed a district wide report card using KIDS data to improve communication between teachers and parents regarding students' development.

