Children Entering School

Ready to Learn

Maryland School Readiness Information
2007-2008

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MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Achievement Matters Most

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March 25, 2008

Dear Colleague:

I am very pleased to provide you with the report, *Children Entering School Ready to Learn: School Readiness Information for School Year 2007-08*. Each year, MSDE informs policymakers and practitioners of what children know and are able to do when they start formal education in kindergarten.

This report, which is unique in its kind nationally, provides a profile of children's skill levels as they enter school based on the evaluation of their teachers. It includes valuable trend data about the school readiness levels of specific groups of children for the state and each of the 24 jurisdictions in Maryland.

The major results of the report are:

- More children are starting kindergarten better prepared for school than last year. Sixty-eight (68) percent of the entering kindergarten students were evaluated by their teachers as "fully" ready for kindergarten, a one (1) percent increase over the previous year and a nineteen (19) percent increase since 2001-02. This statistically significant increase occurred for both the composite score for *Language and Literacy* and Mathematical Thinking from 2001-02. The increase in *Language and Literacy* since 2001-02 is twenty-two (22) percent and the increase in Mathematical Thinking is twenty-three (23) percent.

- English Language Learners are making significant progress compared to last year. The number of English Language Learners who were evaluated by their teachers as fully ready increased by six (6) percent compared to last year's data. This increase is a reflection of the work in the early childhood community to improve the early learning opportunities for our English Language Learners.

I encourage you to review the report and work with your constituencies in promoting school readiness skills among our youngest learners. Neuro-scientific research has shown that young children's learning before they enter formal education is an essential foundation for later school success.

Sincerely,

Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

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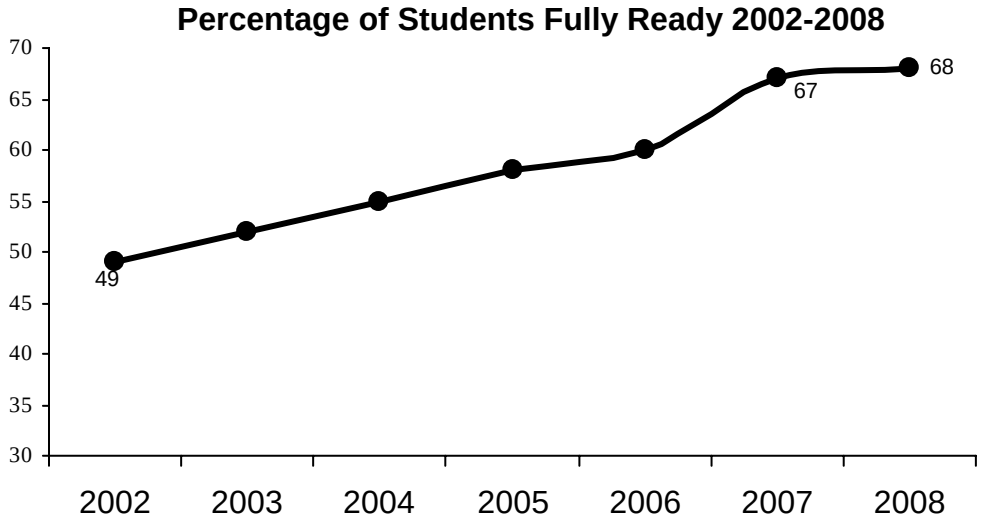
Results for School Year 2007-08

- **More Students are Entering Maryland Classrooms Prepared to Learn**

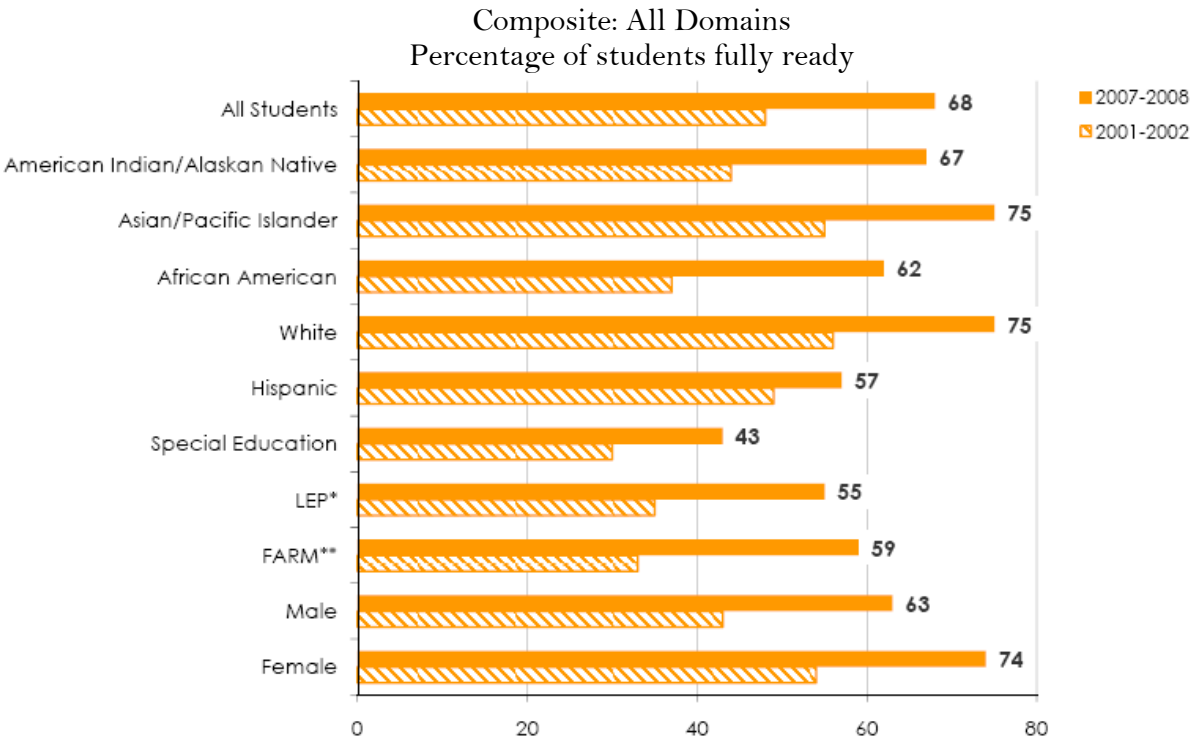
Maryland students entering kindergarten this school year were better prepared than those in the past. The cohort of Maryland's students entering kindergarten in school year 2007-2008 improved its overall school readiness skills by one (1) percent compared to students who entered kindergarten in the 2006-2007 school year. The percentage of incoming kindergarteners considered by their teachers as "fully ready" went from sixty-seven (67) last year to sixty-eight (68) percent this year. The increase from the baseline year of 2001-02 is nineteen (19) percent.



The upward trend is a statistically significant shift from school year 2001-02 and reflects the statewide efforts of improving the early learning opportunities for young children as they begin their school career. The results for the domain *Language and Literacy* and *Mathematical Thinking* are even more pronounced. According to the teachers' assessment of emergent reading and writing skills, twenty-two (22) percent more children were rated "fully ready" compared to youngsters who entered kindergarten in 2001-02. Twenty-three (23) percent more children were rated "fully ready" in the domain of *Mathematical Thinking* compared to youngsters who entered kindergarten in 2001-02.

- **Improvement in School Readiness is Apparent In All Demographic Categories**

The upward trend from school year 2001-02 is evident for all subgroups. For instance, the school readiness levels for African American kindergarteners have improved by twenty-five (25) percent for the composite score from school year 2001-02. The increase for Hispanic children was eighteen (18) percent for the Composite and sixteen (16) percent in the domain of *Language and Literacy.* The improvement among low-income children and children with disabilities was significant with twenty-five (25) and thirteen (13) percent respectively for the Composite for each group. The increase from last year for English Language Learners (coded as LEP in Appendices B and D) was six (6) percent for the composite and five (5) percent in the domain of *Language and Literacy.* The increase for English Language Learners from 2001-02 is twenty (20) percent for the composite and sixteen (16) percent in the domain of *Language and Literacy.*



*LEP is limited English proficiency **FARM is Free and Reduced-price meals

Relationship of School Readiness and Prior Early Care Experiences

Each year, local school systems collect information of where children received their early care and education one year prior to kindergarten. The Prior Care categories reflect children who were exclusively enrolled in one of the following early childhood programs: childcare centers, Head Start, non-public nursery, family child care, or public school prekindergarten. In addition, the report includes information about children who were not enrolled in state regulated programs but either stayed home or had informal care by a relative or other care giver. Each category represents different demographic groups of children. For instance, public school prekindergarten and Head Start programs are free and almost exclusively serve low-income children, while the parents of children enrolled in child care and non-public nurseries pay substantial tuition for early care and education.

Children who have been enrolled in most of the early care and education programs have continued to improve from school year 2001-02.. The composite scores for prekindergarten and Head Start children have improved by twenty-three (23) and seventeen (17) percent respectively. The composite scores for children who attended child care centers and family child care improved by twenty-seven (27) percent and nineteen (19) percent respectively from 2001-02.

Availability of the 2007-08 School Readiness Information Report
Data on the Web Site

On March 25, 2008, the school readiness information for school year 2007-08 will be available online at www.marylandpublicschools.org or at the dedicated website for the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) at www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/mmsr. Hard copies of the report are available upon request from the Maryland State Department of Education, Early Learning Office, at 410-767-0335.

Background

The Importance of School Readiness

Recent neuro-scientific research strongly supports the belief that young children's learning before they enter formal education is an essential foundation for later school success. Increasingly, state policy makers across the country are addressing readiness for school by improving the learning opportunities for young children before they enter school, particularly those who are enrolled in early care and education programs. In addition, many children require necessary family and health support to thrive developmentally.

Charge by the Maryland General Assembly and the Maryland State Board of Education

On January 20, 2000, the Subcabinet for Children, Youth, and Families submitted a report to the Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families outlining strategies to improve services for young children and to prepare them to enter school ready to learn. The report states, "If progress toward our goal (of school readiness) is to be made, policymakers must have access to data by which progress may be measured". In 2001, The Maryland State Board of Education incorporated a school readiness goal in MSDE's strategic plan, using the annual school readiness information to measure the progress toward this goal. The annual school readiness report has been issued since school year 2001-02.

Alignment of School Readiness Measures with the Maryland Content Standards

The Maryland Content Standards and Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) are included in the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) defining early learning standards and indicators of what children should know and are able to do before they start formal education. The MMSR includes as its assessment component the Work Sampling System™ (WSS), a portfolio-based assessment system helping teachers document and evaluate children's skills, knowledge, behavior, and academic accomplishments across a variety of curricular areas. Through ongoing observation, recording, and evaluating everyday classroom experiences and activities, teachers gain a better understanding of what their students know, are able to do, and what they still need to work on. The WSS™ learning domains which are part of the school readiness information are:

1. Social and Personal Development;
2. Language and Literacy;
3. Mathematical Thinking;
4. Scientific Thinking;
5. Social Studies;
6. The Arts;
7. Physical Development and Health.

Information Reported

Kindergarten teachers use the WSS™ with all children throughout the school year[1]. For this report, teachers have provided information on students' skills for the first grading period in the fall 2007. The fall assessment ratings were done on 30 selected WSS™ performance indicators of the 66 WSS Kindergarten Checklist indicators, reflecting skills and abilities that can reasonably be expected from children when they enter kindergarten. The 30 WSS™ indicators represent the aforementioned seven WSS™ domains (Appendix A) that were used for the school readiness baseline information.

[1] Several local school systems have the WSS indicators integrated into their kindergarten report cards.

More than 2,000 kindergarten teachers used portfolio-based assessment to document their students' performance in their classrooms during the first eight weeks of school. Between the dates of November 5-21, 2007, the teachers evaluated and rated their students' performance according to the WSS™ assessment protocol and specific assessment guidelines ("Exemplars") that were developed by MSDE.
The assessment information in this report reflects scores for each of the seven (7) domains and the composite score of all domains. The information has also been analyzed for each of the seven (7) domains and the composite score by the following demographic information:

- race/ethnicity;
- gender;
- prior early care;[2]
- special education;[3]
- limited English proficiency;[4] and,
- enrollment in free and reduced priced meals program.[5]

Reporting of the scores reflects the percentage of students who have reached one of the following levels of readiness:[6]

Full Readiness: Students consistently demonstrate skills, behaviors, and abilities, which are needed to meet kindergarten expectations successfully.
Approaching Readiness: Students inconsistently demonstrate skills, behaviors, and abilities which are needed to meet kindergarten expectations successfully and require targeted instructional support in specific domains or specific performance indicators.
Developing Readiness: Students do not demonstrate skills, behaviors, and abilities, which are needed to meet kindergarten expectations successfully and require considerable instructional support in several domains or many performance indicators.

School readiness data is reported for:

- Local School Systems, the Edison Partnership Schools, and the Maryland School for the Deaf
- State of Maryland

Each local school system receives the kindergarten assessment information on individual students, school building, and school system reports in the form of the aforementioned aggregated and disaggregated information. In addition, local school systems receive assessment information on each of the 30 WSS™ indicators of learning.

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[2] This information describes the percentage of students who had their most recent (i.e., 12 months), predominant, and structured early care experience in the following types of programs: child care center; family child care, Head Start, nursery school, public school prekindergarten, or had their prior experience at home or in some type of informal care with a relative.
[3] This information describes the percentage of students assessed who receive special education services and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP).
[4] This information describes the percentage of students who have a primary or home language other than English and limited or no age-appropriate ability to understand, speak, read, or write English.
[5] This information describes the percentage of students whose application meets the family size and income guidelines of the U.S. Department of Agriculture School Lunch Program for the categories "free" and "reduced" price meals.
[6] See Introduction to Scoring on p. B1

Determination of Progress

Interpreting the results regarding the readiness levels for specific groups should be evaluated as a way to track progress over time for each domain and each demographic category. For instance, the trend for the domain, *Language and Literacy*, should be tracked over time by comparing the results from year to year. Any progress is measured at the 95 percent confidence interval[7]. The same measure applies, for example, in determining any significant changes over time for *Language and Literacy* using specific prior care categories, such as prekindergarten or child care center. Caution must be taken when interpreting the information when relatively small numbers of children are involved. The information presented in this report does not presume any specific causes for the annual changes in the data.

Use of Data and Accountability

The data provides a snapshot of school readiness levels of entering kindergarteners for the state and for each local school system in the fall of each year. The school readiness information is designed for purposes of instructional accountability, i.e., the data should inform practitioners and policymakers of how to improve the learning opportunities for young children and to begin the discourse for improving the quality of early childhood education. In general, the information can be used to:

- Develop a county-wide needs assessment regarding the skill levels of children entering kindergarten.
- Target federal, state, and local funds to address identified needs in the county.
- Develop forums for partnership building.
- Modify curricular and intervention programs and to identify resources for kindergarten.

Validity and Reliability of Data

Since Maryland's kindergarten teachers are using a portfolio-based assessment to evaluate their students' skill levels, any concerns about the subjectivity of the teachers' evaluations must be addressed. The school readiness information is based on formative and summative evaluation protocols. The summative evaluations in the fall include the students' observed and documented records of their skills, behavior, and knowledge in response to the introduction of the kindergarten curriculum. The teachers are trained in the use of specific guidelines[8] which define fall benchmarks of kindergarten expectations for each of the 30 WSS™ indicators of learning. The indicators for the WSS™ domains language and literacy, mathematical and scientific thinking, as well as social studies are aligned with the Maryland Content Standards and the state's Voluntary State Curriculum. Any sampling error of the results is eliminated by implementing census administration of the WSS™. In addition, each year the analyzed data is being verified by each local school system as well as an independent vendor who also provides reliability analyses for the state and county data sets.[9]

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[7] A program to test the difference between two proportions was made available to all local school systems

[8] The specific guidelines, MMSR Fall Exemplars, describe examples of student behaviors in terms of rubrics established for the WSS rating scale.

[9] The reliability analysis includes (a) correlation analysis to identify the degree of association between the student scores and school scores; (b) linear regression analysis to determine the relative effect of each domain on the total score; (c) reliability coefficients to measure the inner consistency of the assessment; and (d) item-scale analysis to determine the relative influence of each item on the assessment. The results of the reliability analyses regarding the school readiness information for school year 2007-08 are available at MSDE's Early Learning Office.

APPENDIX A

Work Sampling System (WSS)
Kindergarten Checklist: Selected Performance Indicators for School Readiness Information

Work Sampling System (WSS) Kindergarten Checklist: Selected Performance Indicators for School Readiness Baseline Information

Introduction: The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) uses the Work Sampling System (WSS) Kindergarten Checklist to assess entering kindergartners' readiness levels. A selected set of 30 WSS indicators across seven curricular domains describe skills, behaviors, and knowledge of children who are entering kindergarten. The 30 WSS indicators below are briefly described. Teachers systematically observe their students, document their learning, and rate their competencies using specific WSS Kindergarten Developmental Guidelines associated with these indicators.

I Social and Personal

SELF-CONCEPT	
Shows initiative and self-direction.	Independence in thinking and action enables children to take responsibility for themselves. Most five year olds can make choices among familiar activities, participate in new experiences, and are willing to take some risks.
SELF-CONTROL	
Follows classroom rules and routines.	Children who are successful within a group know and accept the rules established for that particular group.
Uses classroom materials purposefully and respectfully.	One of the major challenges of school for five year olds is learning how to care for classroom materials. With some reminders, a child learns how to use materials thoughtfully (so the materials continue to be available for others) and how to put things away so that others can easily find them.
INTERACTION WITH OTHERS	
Interacts easily with one or more children.	Kindergarten children are beginning to play cooperatively with one or more children, listen to peers and understand their feelings, and solve problems cooperatively.

II Language and Literacy

LISTENING	
Gains meaning by listening.	Young children are actively involved in learning about their world by watching and listening. At five years, children can listen for meaning in such different situations as one-on-one conversations with children or adults, small and large group activities, story times, and videos.
Demonstrates beginning phonemic awareness.	With frequent demonstrations by the teacher, children recognize and produce rhyming words, identify beginning and ending sounds, and begin to discriminate the smaller parts of words, first distinguishing syllables and, later, sound within syllables.
SPEAKING	
Speaks clearly and conveys ideas effectively.	During kindergarten, children begin to understand how to express their ideas in group discussions as well as in one-to-one conversations.
READING	
Shows some understanding of concepts about print.	Kindergartners realize that print conveys meaning, spoken language can be written down and read, and certain words are always written the same way.
Comprehends and responds to fiction and non-fiction text.	Kindergartners demonstrate their understanding of what they hear by answering questions about the text, predicting what will happen next using pictures and content for guides, and retelling information from a story in sequence, adding more details and story elements over time.
WRITING	
Uses letter-like shapes, symbols, letters, and words to convey meaning.	Children begin using drawings to convey ideas, adding letters or words randomly to their written communication.

III Mathematical Thinking

MATHEMATICAL PROCESSES	
Begins to use and explain strategies to solve mathematical problems.	Young children solve problems and explain their reasoning by working with concrete objects, drawing pictures, or acting out solutions.
NUMBERS AND OPERATIONS	
Shows understanding of number and quantity.	Kindergarten children can count objects to at least 20; many learn to count verbally (that is, by rote) to 100. They can count using one-to-one correspondence reliably, use objects to represent numbers, and use numerals to represent quantities.
PATTERNS, RELATIONSHIPS, AND FUNCTIONS	
Recognizes duplicates and extends patterns.	Kindergartners can recognize, create, copy, and extend simple patterns using concrete objects, sounds and physical movements.
GEOMETRY AND SPATIAL RELATIONS	
Recognizes and describes some attributes of shapes.	As children play with unit blocks, table blocks, pattern blocks, shape sorters, peg boards, and geoboards, they gain a concrete understanding of shape and form.

IV Scientific Thinking

INQUIRY	
Seeks information through observation, exploration, and descriptive investigations.	As questions are raised, kindergartens seek answers primarily through exploration, manipulation, and careful observation using their senses.
Uses simple tools and equipment to extend the senses and gather data.	Although kindergarteners begin to observe using their five senses, they are very intrigued with tools that extend the power of their senses and that they associate with grown-up activities. Scientific tools include magnifiers, gears and pulleys, calculators and computers, and simple balance scales and rulers.
PHYSICAL SCIENCE	
Identifies, describes, and compares properties of objects.	With prompts from the teacher, five year olds notice what things are made of and describe numerous attributes of objects including size, shape, color, texture, weight, temperature, whether objects are attracted or unaffected by magnets, and whether various objects sink or float.

LIFE SCIENCE	
Demonstrates awareness of the reasons for rules.	Children's understanding of the reasons for the rules and laws comes about as they discuss problems in the classroom and school and participate in making reasonable rules that directly involve them.

V Social Studies

PEOPLE, PAST AND PRESENT	
Identifies similarities and differences in people's characteristics, habits, and living patterns.	Kindergartners develop self-identity by comparing themselves with others.
HUMAN INTERDEPENDENCE	
Describes some people's jobs and what is required to perform them.	Young children are ready to examine their communities and explore the many roles people fill in helping each other live.
Begins to be aware of technology and how it affects life.	Kindergartners are very interested in the technology that is so much a part of the world around them (television, telephones, vehicles, video games, VCRs, microwave ovens, computers).
CITIZENSHIP AND GOVERNMENT	
Demonstrates awareness of the reasons for rules.	Children's understanding of the reasons for rules and laws comes about as they discuss problems in the classroom and school and participate in making reasonable rules that directly involve them.

VI The Arts

EXPRESSION AND REPRESENTATION	
Participates in group music experience.	Young children enjoy singing, making up silly and rhyming verses, using instruments, learning finger plays, and using music to tell stories and express feelings.
Participates in creative movement, dance, and drama.	Young children are very active and need opportunities to move and stretch their bodies.
Uses a variety of art materials to explore and express ideas and emotions.	Kindergartners need and enjoy opportunities to explore using a variety of art materials.
UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION	
Respond to artistic creations or events	Kindergarteners are able to appreciate the artistic creations of others, the skill of a dancer, or someone's ability to play a musical instrument.

VII Physical Development and Health

GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT	
Moves with balance and control.	Young children are very active, seeming to be in constant motion. Kindergarten children can run smoothly, hop many times on each foot, and climb up and down stairs using alternating feet.
FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT	
Uses eye-hand coordination to perform tasks effectively.	Kindergartners are continuing to improve their eye-hand coordination and accomplishing tasks with greater precision.
PERSONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY	
Performs self-care tasks competently.	Kindergartners are quite competent about taking care of their own physical needs and often volunteer to help classmates who are struggling with buttons and laces.
Shows beginning understanding of and follows health and safety rules.	Kindergartners are interested in health and safety issues, especially when these relate to their own experiences.

Based upon the Work Sampling System® by Pearson Early Learning. All adaptations to Work Sampling System by the State of Maryland are the property of Pearson Early Learning

APPENDIX B

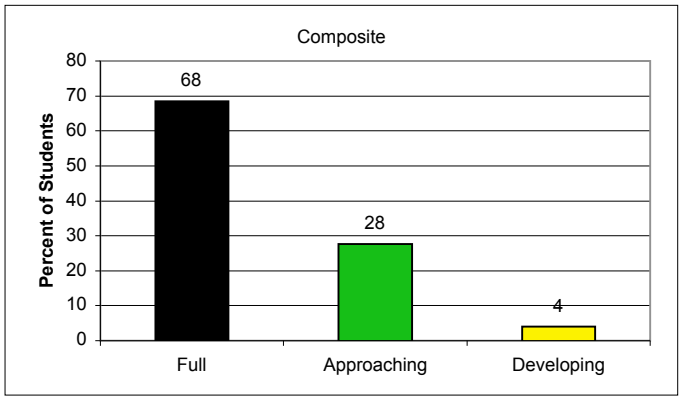
School Readiness Information: Introduction to Scoring

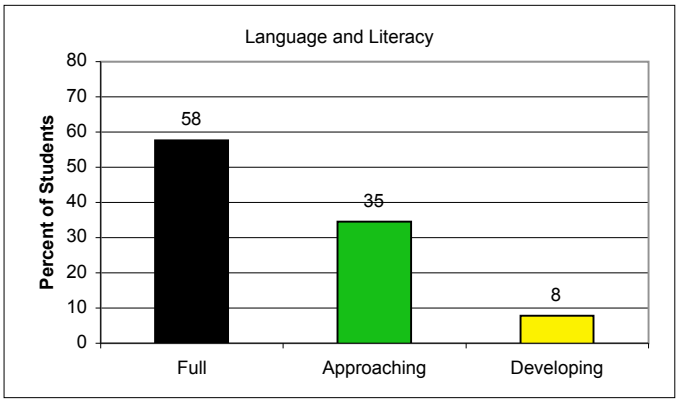
Presentation of School Readiness Information

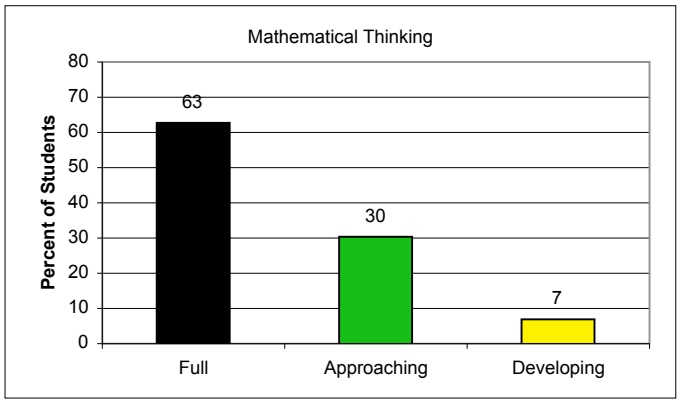
Definitions

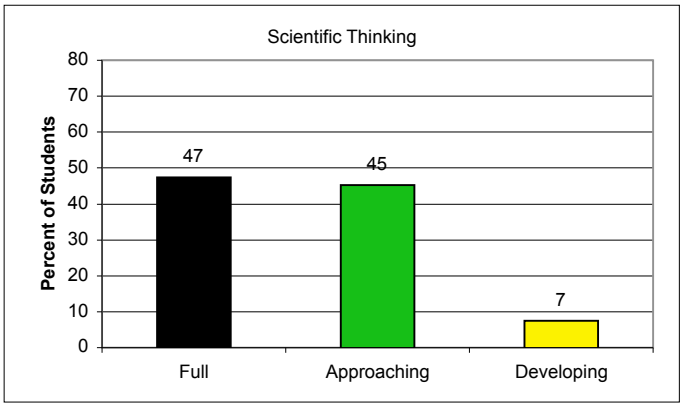
School Readiness Information for: Maryland

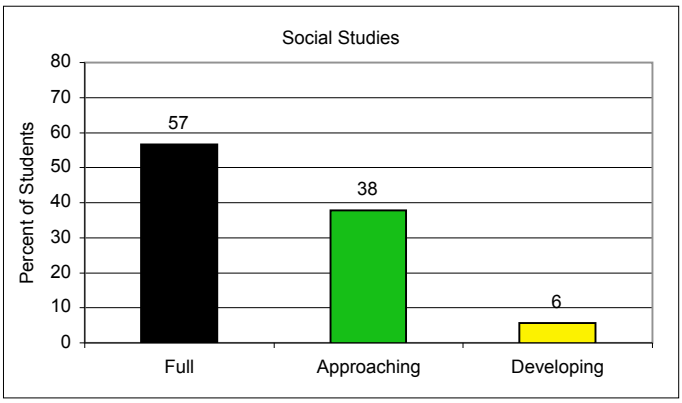
Maryland - Percentage of Kindergarten Students

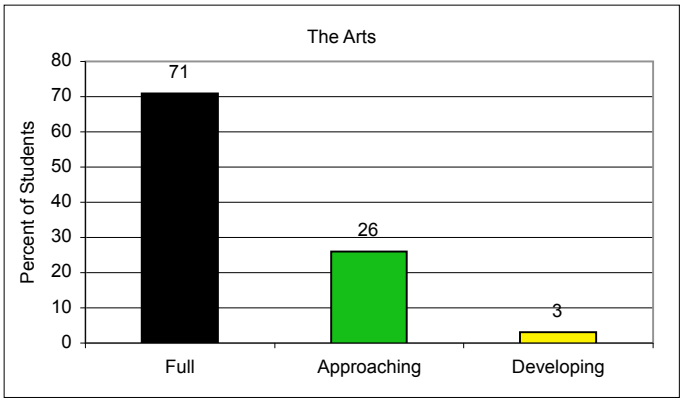


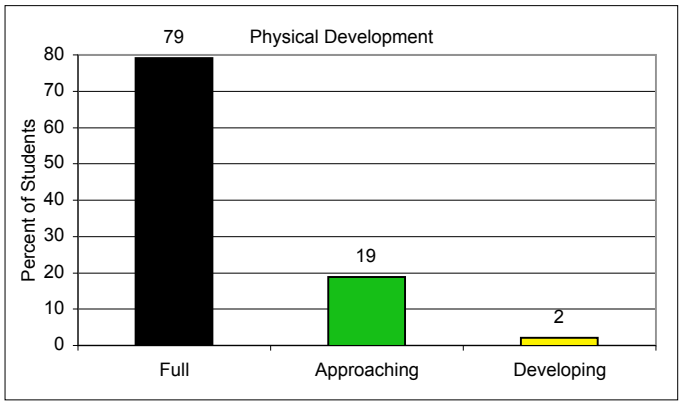


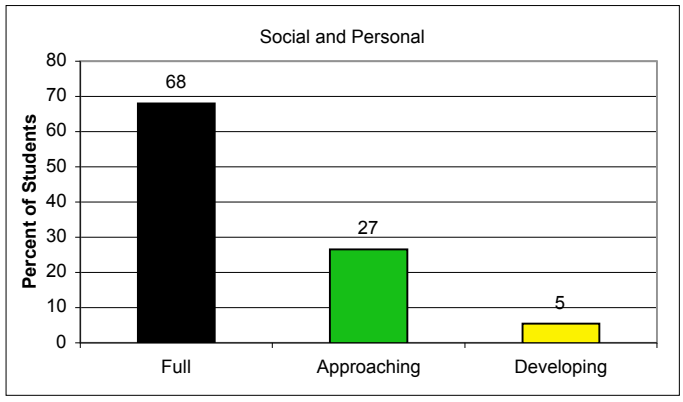












Maryland - Percentage of Kindergarten Students

	Social and Personal			Language and Literacy			Mathematical Thinking			Scientific Thinking			Social Studies			The Arts			Physical Development			Composite		
	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing
Race/Ethnicity																								
American Indian/Alaskan Native	62	31	6	60	30	10	63	29	9	52	38	10	58	36	7	70	26	4	73	24	3	67	28	6
Asian/Pacific Islander	77	19	4	66	28	6	72	23	5	48	45	7	59	35	6	72	24	3	85	14	1	75	21	4
African American	61	32	7	52	39	9	55	36	9	41	50	9	49	45	6	69	28	3	75	22	2	62	33	5
White	73	23	4	65	30	5	71	24	5	55	41	5	65	31	4	74	24	3	82	16	2	75	22	3
Hispanic	66	28	6	41	43	15	48	40	13	36	51	14	43	45	12	67	30	4	78	20	2	57	36	6
Gender																								
Male	60	32	8	53	37	10	60	32	8	45	46	9	54	39	7	64	32	4	74	23	3	63	32	5
Female	76	21	3	62	32	6	65	29	6	49	45	6	60	36	4	79	20	2	84	15	1	74	23	3
Prior Care																								
Child Care Center	66	29	5	63	32	5	68	28	4	51	44	5	61	35	4	73	25	2	81	17	2	72	25	3
Family Child Care	66	29	5	51	38	11	57	33	10	45	47	8	55	39	6	70	28	3	78	21	2	64	32	4
Head Start	60	33	7	48	43	9	54	38	8	39	52	9	47	46	6	66	31	3	75	23	2	60	35	4
Home / Informal Care	63	30	7	44	41	15	49	37	13	37	51	12	46	45	10	65	30	4	73	24	3	57	36	7
Non-public Nursery	80	18	2	75	23	2	77	20	2	61	36	2	72	26	2	79	19	1	87	13	1	82	17	1
Pre-Kindergarten	69	25	5	60	34	7	65	29	6	50	43	7	58	37	5	72	25	3	80	18	2	70	26	4
Special Education																								
Yes	46	38	16	32	45	23	41	39	20	29	47	24	36	43	21	51	38	11	56	33	11	43	40	17
No	70	26	4	60	34	6	65	30	6	49	45	6	58	37	4	73	25	2	81	18	1	71	26	3
Limited English Proficiency																								
Yes	65	29	6	38	45	17	46	41	13	32	52	15	40	47	13	64	31	4	78	20	2	55	38	7
No	68	26	5	60	33	7	65	29	6	49	44	6	59	37	5	72	25	3	79	19	2	70	26	4
Free and Reduced Price Meals																								
Yes	61	32	7	47	42	11	52	38	11	39	50	11	46	45	8	66	30	4	74	23	3	59	35	6
No	72	23	4	65	30	5	70	26	5	53	42	5	63	33	4	74	23	3	82	16	2	74	23	3
Aggregated Data	68	27	5	58	35	8	63	30	7	47	45	7	57	38	6	71	26	3	79	19	2	68	28	4

* = fewer than 5

May not total 100% due to rounding.

Maryland - Number of Kindergarten Students

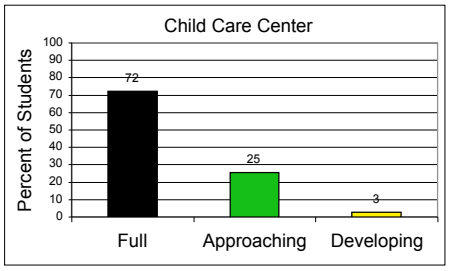
	Social and Personal			Language and Literacy			Mathematical Thinking			Scientific Thinking			Social Studies			The Arts			Physical Development			Composite		
	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing
Race/Ethnicity																								
American Indian/Alaskan Native	161	81	16	156	77	26	162	74	22	135	99	25	149	92	17	182	67	10	189	62	7	168	70	14
Asian/Pacific Islander	2,636	666	139	2,260	952	219	2,486	802	163	1,662	1,546	240	2,009	1,203	215	2,494	840	119	2,936	478	40	2,524	703	125
African American	12,348	6,439	1,455	10,488	7,978	1,745	11,144	7,375	1,729	8,393	10,084	1,763	9,943	9,036	1,268	13,897	5,716	649	15,210	4,561	504	12,490	6,574	960
White	19,351	6,112	1,125	17,287	7,873	1,402	18,914	6,465	1,224	14,526	10,778	1,289	17,363	8,250	940	19,596	6,318	704	21,739	4,345	532	19,689	5,826	756
Hispanic	4,467	1,897	376	2,776	2,888	1,038	3,212	2,697	851	2,388	3,406	928	2,912	3,043	776	4,498	2,007	254	5,262	1,339	149	3,785	2,399	404
Gender																								
Male	17,780	9,427	2,291	15,698	10,946	2,804	17,820	9,334	2,374	13,416	13,529	2,564	15,847	11,594	2,033	18,820	9,420	1,298	21,991	6,650	891	18,379	9,174	1,555
Female	21,186	5,770	820	17,272	8,823	1,627	18,101	8,080	1,616	13,692	12,384	1,682	16,533	10,030	1,184	21,851	5,529	438	23,348	4,137	341	20,281	6,398	705
Prior Care																								
Child Care Center	5,024	2,224	405	4,811	2,477	350	5,185	2,138	337	3,884	3,386	383	4,647	2,711	280	5,597	1,879	187	6,218	1,326	126	5,431	1,917	193
Family Child Care	1,813	801	142	1,404	1,048	294	1,570	905	277	1,251	1,289	214	1,523	1,060	166	1,926	761	72	2,138	568	49	1,750	863	112
Head Start	2,016	1,112	248	1,625	1,440	307	1,826	1,270	286	1,319	1,765	294	1,602	1,558	217	2,222	1,047	115	2,523	781	79	2,018	1,170	149
Home / Informal Care	5,940	2,773	656	4,085	3,841	1,412	4,628	3,502	1,253	3,422	4,774	1,163	4,273	4,180	914	6,138	2,858	397	6,895	2,207	287	5,291	3,277	648
Non-Public Nursery	6,950	1,591	197	6,504	2,018	206	6,778	1,778	191	5,352	3,179	208	6,307	2,278	144	6,939	1,689	125	7,586	1,100	69	7,103	1,431	89
Pre-Kindergarten	13,964	5,060	1,072	11,998	6,741	1,328	13,082	5,883	1,159	9,958	8,707	1,444	11,581	7,428	1,082	14,531	4,986	614	16,065	3,618	448	13,981	5,102	761
Special Education																								
Yes	2,125	1,732	754	1,466	2,081	1,056	1,887	1,809	922	1,334	2,172	1,109	1,660	1,969	971	2,356	1,729	517	2,593	1,499	516	1,958	1,821	769
No	36,827	13,454	2,354	31,489	17,678	3,372	34,020	15,594	3,065	25,761	23,727	3,136	30,708	19,642	2,243	38,295	13,213	1,217	42,729	9,278	715	36,686	13,739	1,490
Limited English Proficiency																								
Yes	4122	1861	375	2419	2832	1076	2927	2618	833	2059	3327	962	2527	2990	839	4118	2006	261	4941	1304	130	3405	2388	424
No	34832	13331	2735	30544	16927	3354	32983	14790	3156	25039	22579	3283	29848	18632	2377	36548	12940	1475	40391	9482	1102	35248	13183	1836
Free and Reduced Price Meals																								
Yes	13,526	6,953	1,580	10,233	9,272	2,501	11,413	8,313	2,356	8,546	11,101	2,396	10,213	10,012	1,830	14,577	6,660	850	16,427	5,065	592	12,882	7,665	1,264
No	25,429	8,239	1,530	22,731	10,487	1,929	24,498	9,095	1,633	18,553	14,805	1,849	22,163	11,610	1,386	26,090	8,286	886	28,906	5,721	640	25,772	7,906	996
Aggregated Data	39,059	15,236	3,125	33,045	19,827	4,443	36,009	17,460	4,001	27,161	25,994	4,257	32,460	21,678	3,229	40,770	14,989	1,743	45,451	10,817	1,236	38,751	15,616	2,267

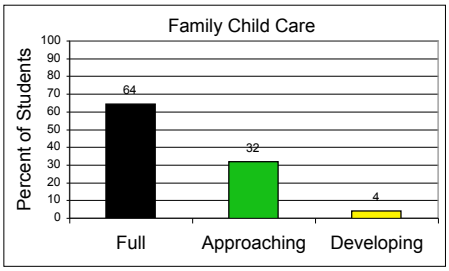
* = fewer than 5

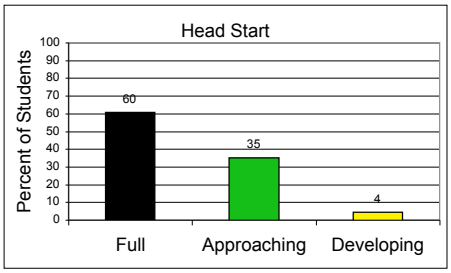
Maryland 2007-2008

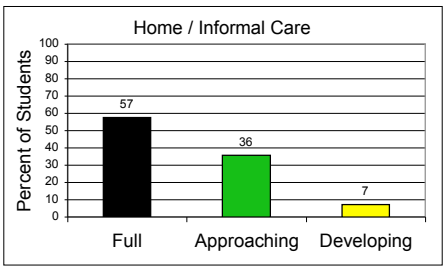
Disaggregated by Prior Care Composite Score

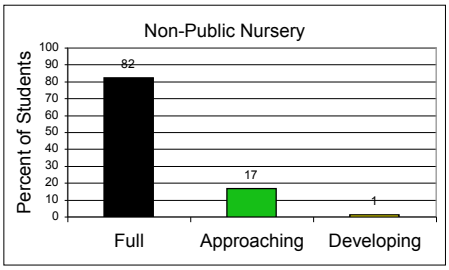
Entering Kindergarten

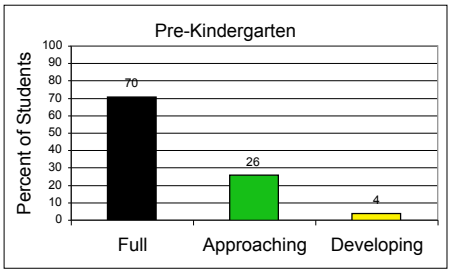












Child Care Center

Child care provided in a facility, usually non-residential, that for part or all of the day provides care to children in the absence of the parent. Centers are licensed by Child Care Administration.

Family Child Care

Regulated care given to a child younger than 13 years old, in place of parental care for less than 24 hours a day, in a residence other than the child's residence and for which the provider is paid. Regulated by Child Care Administration.

Head Start

Pre-school programs for 2 to 5 year olds from low income families; licensed by Child Care Administration and/or local boards of education.

Home/Informal Care

Care by parent(s) or a relative.

Non-Public Nursery School

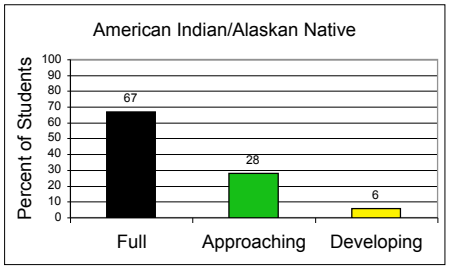
Pre-school programs with an educational focus for 3 & 4 year olds; approved or exempted by the Maryland State Department of Education; usually part-day, nine months a year.

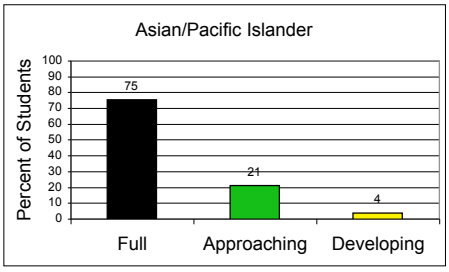
Pre-kindergarten

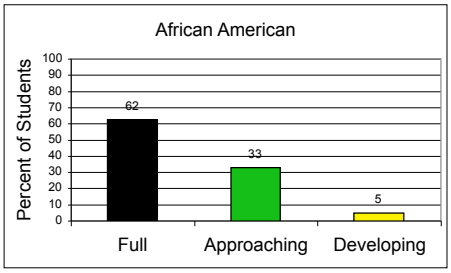
Public school prekindergarten education for four-year-old children. Administered by local boards of education and regulated by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

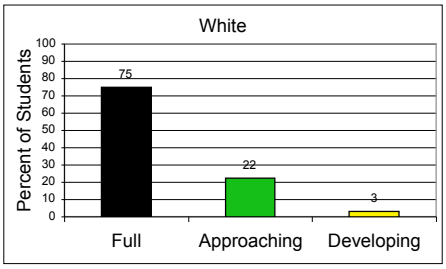
Disaggregated by Race / Ethnicity Composite Score

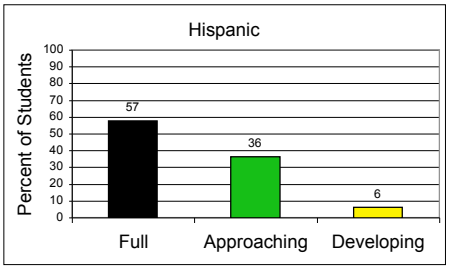
Entering Kindergarten







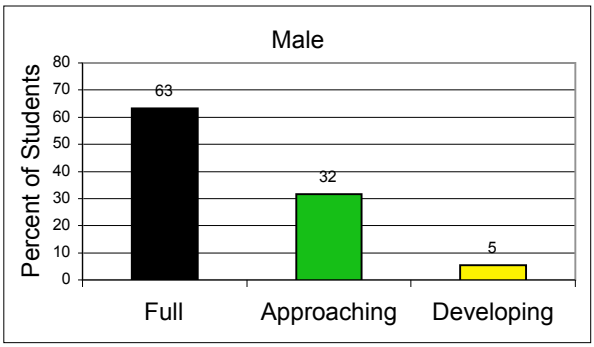


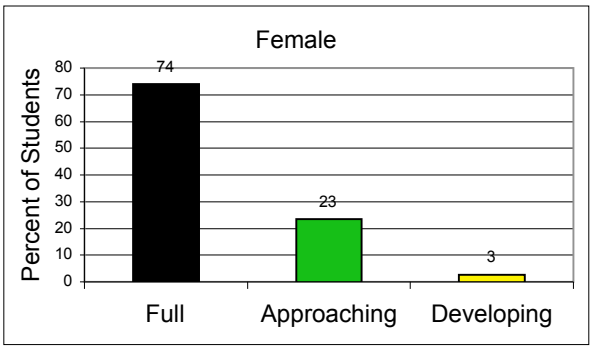


Maryland 2007-2008

Disaggregated by Gender Composite Score

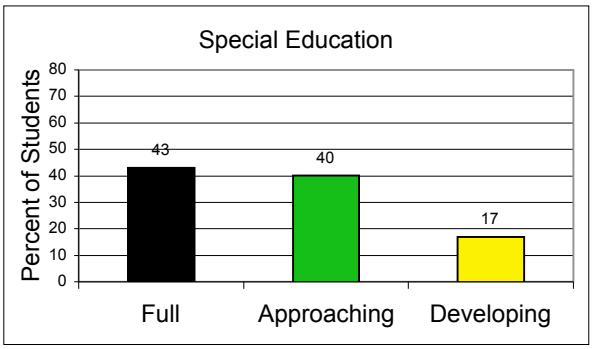
Entering Kindergarten

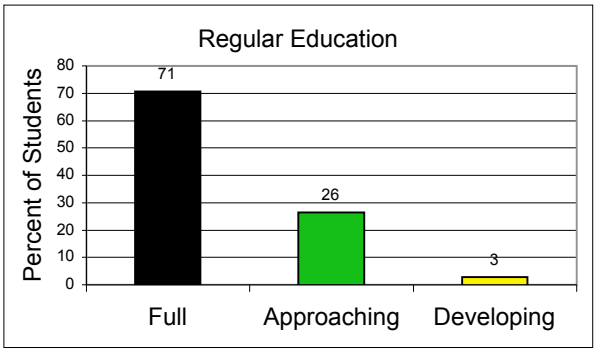




Disaggregated by Special Education Composite Score

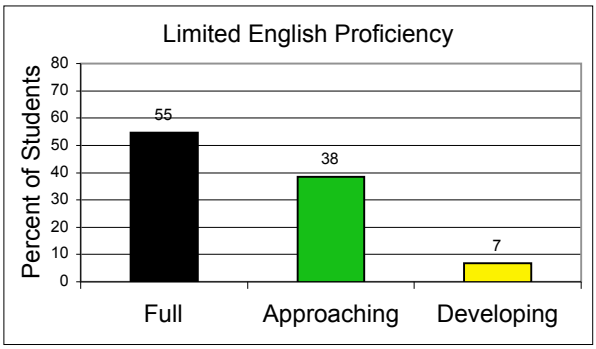
Entering Kindergarten

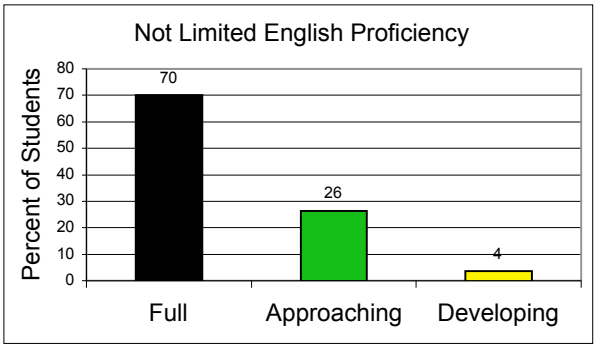




Disaggregated by Limited English Proficiency Composite Score

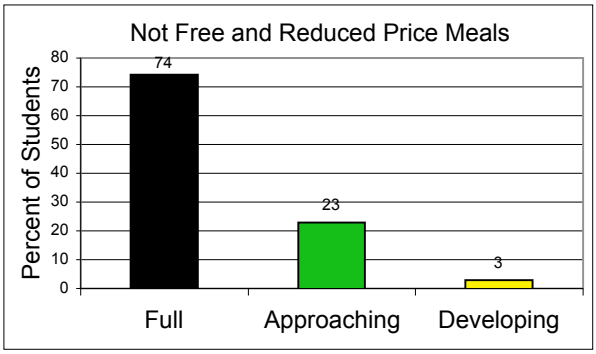
Entering Kindergarten





Disaggregated by Free and Reduced Price Meals Composite Score

Entering Kindergarten



APPENDIX C

Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix C

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Why is the school readiness information collected and reported annually?**

   The Maryland General Assembly is interested in improving services for young children to prepare them to enter school ready to learn. Several legislative committees want to know what children know and are able to do when they enter school. This has necessitated school readiness data at the entry into kindergarten. Collecting evaluation information on all entering kindergarten students will enable policymakers and other stakeholders to have access to data by which progress can be measured over time. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) was the state agency charged with implementing an assessment system for kindergarten. It is required to report this information to the General Assembly in February of each year.

2. **How is the information collected?**

   All kindergarten teachers evaluate and rate their students' proficiency on 30 selected indicators of the Work Sampling System™ (WSS) Kindergarten Checklist. This information is aggregated and disaggregated, i.e., broken out, into the data displayed in this report. According to a statewide teacher survey asking for the preferred way of collecting assessment information, 58% of all respondents keep personal notes and children's work in a file or container, 14% keep observational data and work samples by domains of learning.

3. **What is the advantage of using performance-based assessment rather than a norm-referenced test to measure school readiness?**

   Performance-based assessments measure demonstrated skills, knowledge, and behaviors in an actual learning setting such as a kindergarten classroom. When measuring readiness for school, all developmental skill areas are important. Qualified kindergarten teachers, properly trained and prepared, are an excellent source of information for their students. They assess children's skills against established standards of learning[1]. On the other hand, norm-referenced readiness tests compare a group of children against a national norm. At the kindergarten level, national norms are difficult to obtain and typically do not reflect all developmental skill levels.

4. **Why are entering kindergartners assessed over several weeks and not during the first week in school?**

   In order to learn more about the skills and dispositions of entering kindergartners, the assessment protocol for the data in this report takes into account the following:

   - Young children need a familiar and comfortable setting to show what they know and are able to do.
   - Teachers are looking for multiple sources of documentation of children's learning which are collected over a period of time.

[1] Maryland State Content Standards and Voluntary State Curriculum for Kindergarten

- The Work Sampling System™ (WSS) requires teachers to assess their students' performance in response to the instructional program during the first few weeks of school.

5. What does the school readiness information mean?

The information describes the skills, knowledge, and behaviors of children as they enter public school kindergarten programs. The assessment is based on performance indicators that define valid skills and competencies for that age group of children based on research and national standards of learning. The school readiness baseline information is broken into three categories of "full", "approaching", and "developing readiness". (See Questions 6 to 8)

This information is designed to provide a profile on the readiness levels of a group of children for parents, policymakers, schools, early care and education service providers (e.g., child care, Head Start, prekindergarten, etc.), community-based organizations, and the public at large. This information, in combination with other valuable data, will better inform those who are planning to improve the learning opportunities and services for young children.

6. What does "full readiness" mean? Does it mean perfect scores?

Full readiness means that students consistently demonstrate skills, behaviors, and abilities which are needed to meet kindergarten expectations successfully.
A student need not score "proficient" in all indicators within a domain or the composite to be rated at "full readiness". The top range of scores is considered "full readiness". (See *Introduction to Scoring* in Appendix B.)

7. What does "approaching readiness," mean?

Approaching readiness means that students inconsistently demonstrate skills, behaviors, and abilities which are needed to meet kindergarten expectations successfully and require targeted instructional support in specific domains or specific performance indicators. The middle range of scores is considered "approaching readiness." (See *Introduction to Scoring* in Appendix B.)

8. What does "developing readiness," mean?

Developing readiness means that students do not demonstrate skills, behaviors, and abilities which are needed to meet kindergarten expectations successfully and require considerable instructional support in several domains or many performance indicators. The bottom range of scores is considered "developing readiness."

Note: Teachers either rate students "Proficient," "In Process," or "Needs Development." The categories specified above refer to the aggregated score for each domain and composite.

9. Is the information used to place children in special programs?

No. The kindergarten teacher uses the information on children for instructional planning in the classroom. Policymakers, program supervisors, and administrators can use the information from this report for program planning purposes.

10. Is the information used to rate kindergarten teachers' performance?

No. This is used for program and instructional planning. Kindergarten teachers provide information about children as they enter kindergarten. The assessment information is not a reflection on their performance.

11. How are teachers using the information?

Based on teacher responses statewide in school year 2002 – 2003, the assessment information is used as follows (percentage in parenthesis):

- Helps teachers know what they need to do with certain children (92%)
- Helps them determine how to group children (78%)
- Used for reporting purposes to parents (86%)
- Used when referring student to inter-disciplinary teams for further evaluation (68%)
- Helpful when completing the local kindergarten report card (80%)

Results reflect multiple teacher responses.

12. How are school officials using the information?

School officials, including building administrators and school improvement teams, are able to look at a profile of readiness levels in a school's kindergarten program. This review of the data could impact program development, materials expenditures, and staff training.

13. How are county officials using the information?

As county officials consider the early education opportunities within the county and the funding necessary to provide a strong kindergarten program, this data will identify needs upon which decision can be made. Service providers (e.g., child care, prekindergarten, homevisiting, or Head Start programs) that work with young children before they come to kindergarten can review the data to align their programs with kindergarten.

14. How are state officials using the information?

State officials use this data to make informed decisions about the result area, *Children Entering School Ready to Learn*, for state policy and budget projections. Also, state officials use the data to facilitate the planning process at the local levels.

15. How are parents using the information?

Kindergarten teachers share the assessment information with parents in the fall as part of regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Sharing this information provides a

profile of each child's needs and strengths and serves as communication to support children's learning both in school and at home.

16. How are changes from one year to the next explained?

Each year a different group of kindergarten students is being evaluated. This year's group of kindergarten students, or their respective subgroups, might look slightly different from groups from previous years. For instance, the degree to which a relatively small group of English language learners is proficient in English might vary from year to year and impact the results. When using the data, it is always helpful to check the actual number of students for each category in addition to the percentage breakout to check major increases or decreases in the data. As a rule, any changes are statistically more volatile when small number of students is involved. Since change is defined statistically as any difference within the 95 percent confidence level, any significant change with relatively small number of children could be relatively large. The changes could also be explained as a result of programmatic or instructional improvements which account for differences. Some of these improvements are more likely to show up in the results of specific domains of learning. For instance, specific instructional approaches in early literacy will most likely impact the domain of Language and Literacy. At any rate, when explaining changes in the data, always consult additional assessment data, if available, or seek information from teachers who have worked with the students.

17. What safeguards have been put in place to make sure that the teacher ratings are reliable and valid?

The following features have been developed to ensure that the teacher information reflects a consistent application of the assessment protocol:

- MSDE has developed a professional development program for all kindergarten teachers using expert consultants who have been trained and properly oriented. The program uses consistent training materials and evaluation forms to determine the effect of each professional development session. As a result of these efforts, teachers are improving their skills of observation, systematic documentation, and evaluation of students' learning.
- MSDE has produced specified guidelines, for rating students' performances.
- During the professional development program, teachers' accuracy in rating students' skills and abilities is assessed.
- After a national testing company scans the student assessment information, the data is reviewed and examined for internal consistency, correlations, and possible irregularities or unusual performances.

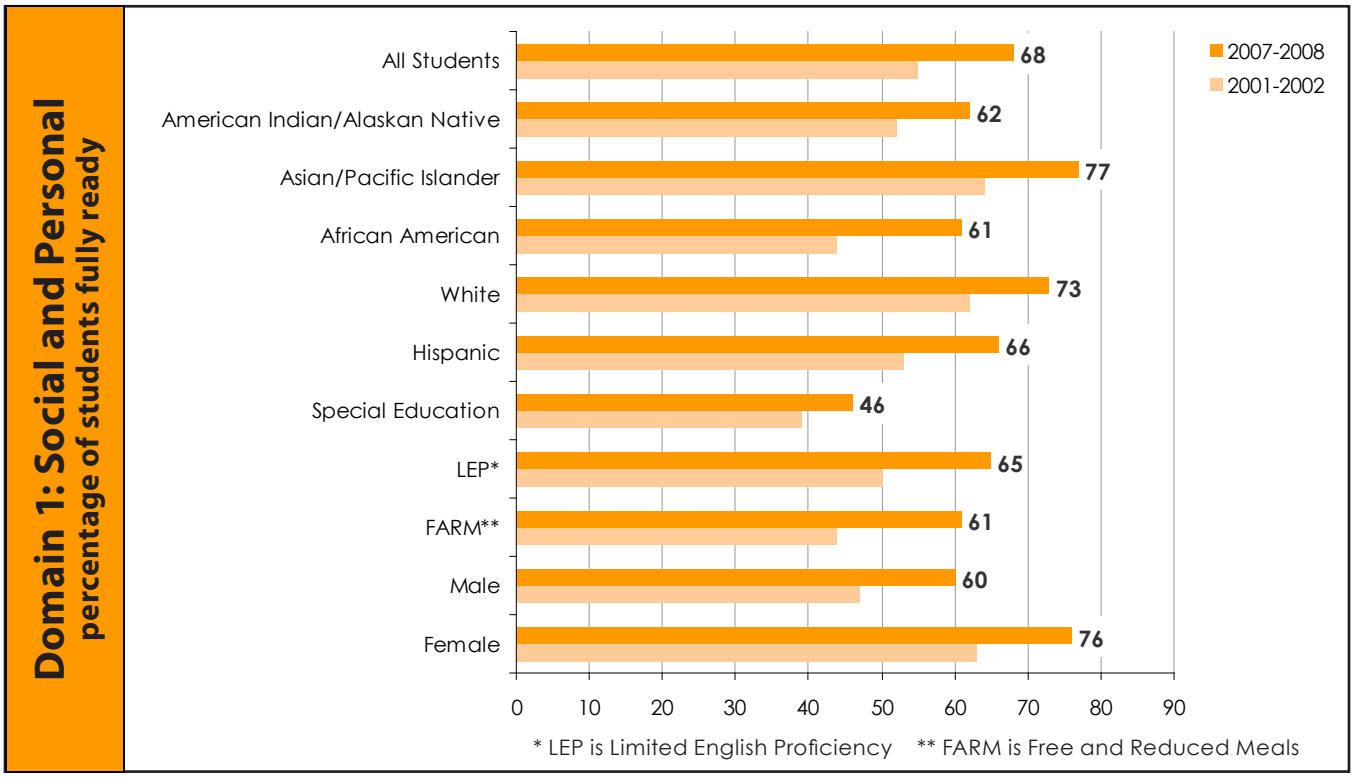
™ Work Sampling System is a registered trademark of Pearson Education

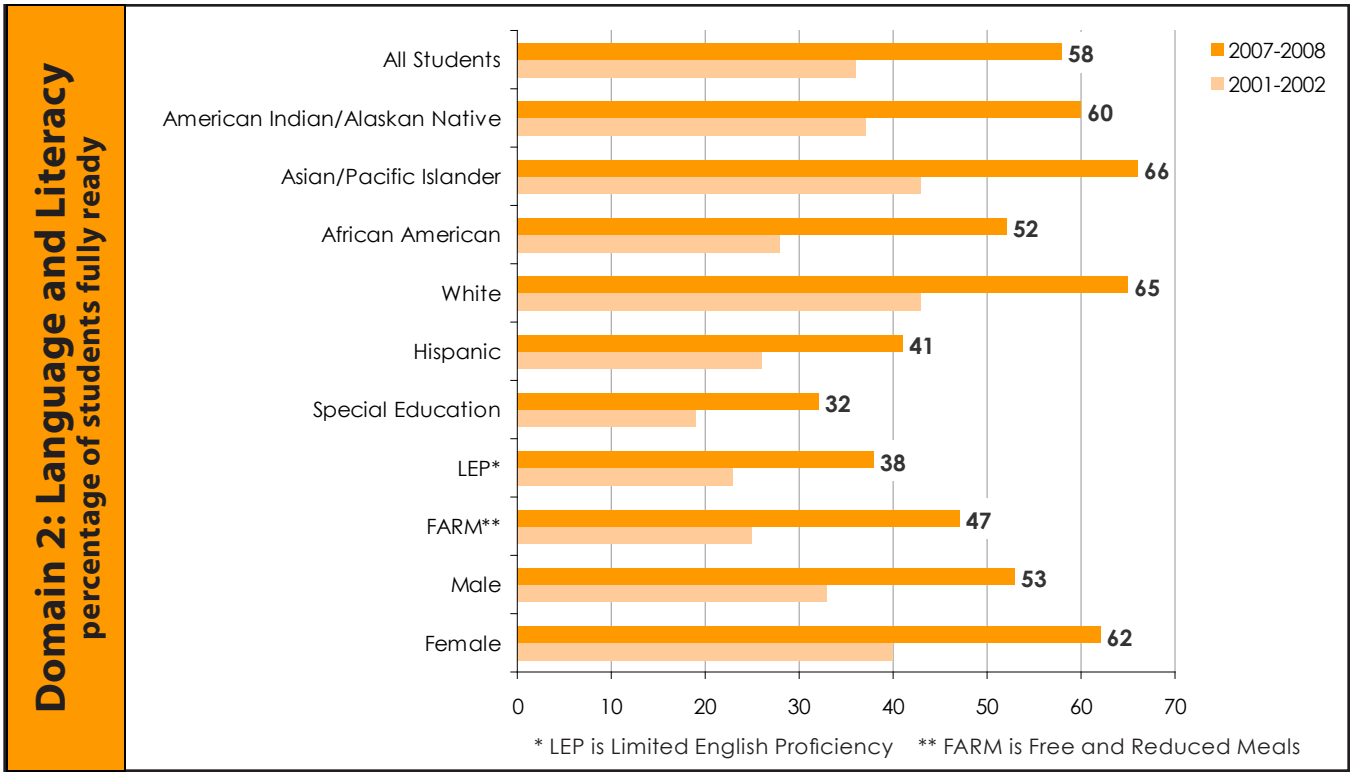
APPENDIX D

Percentage of Students Fully Ready by Domain

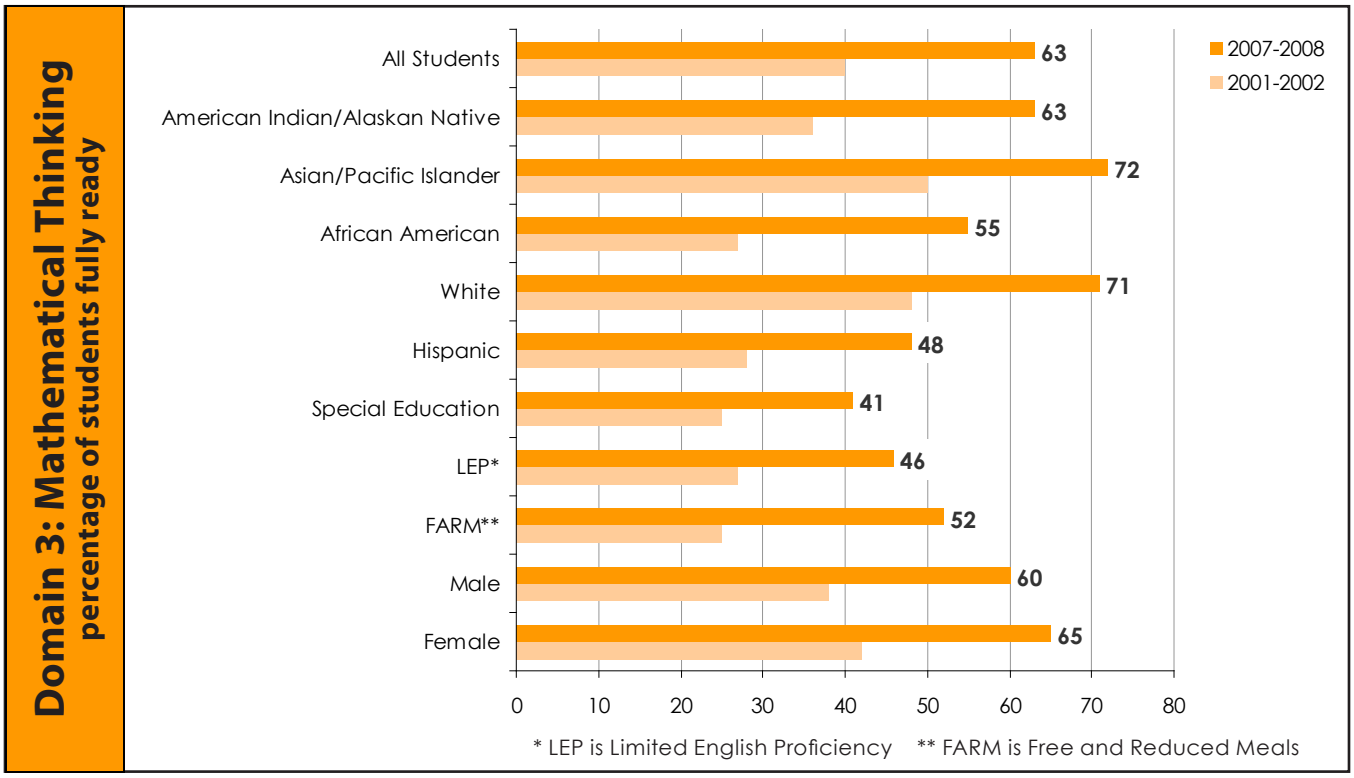
MD 2001-2007 Trend Data

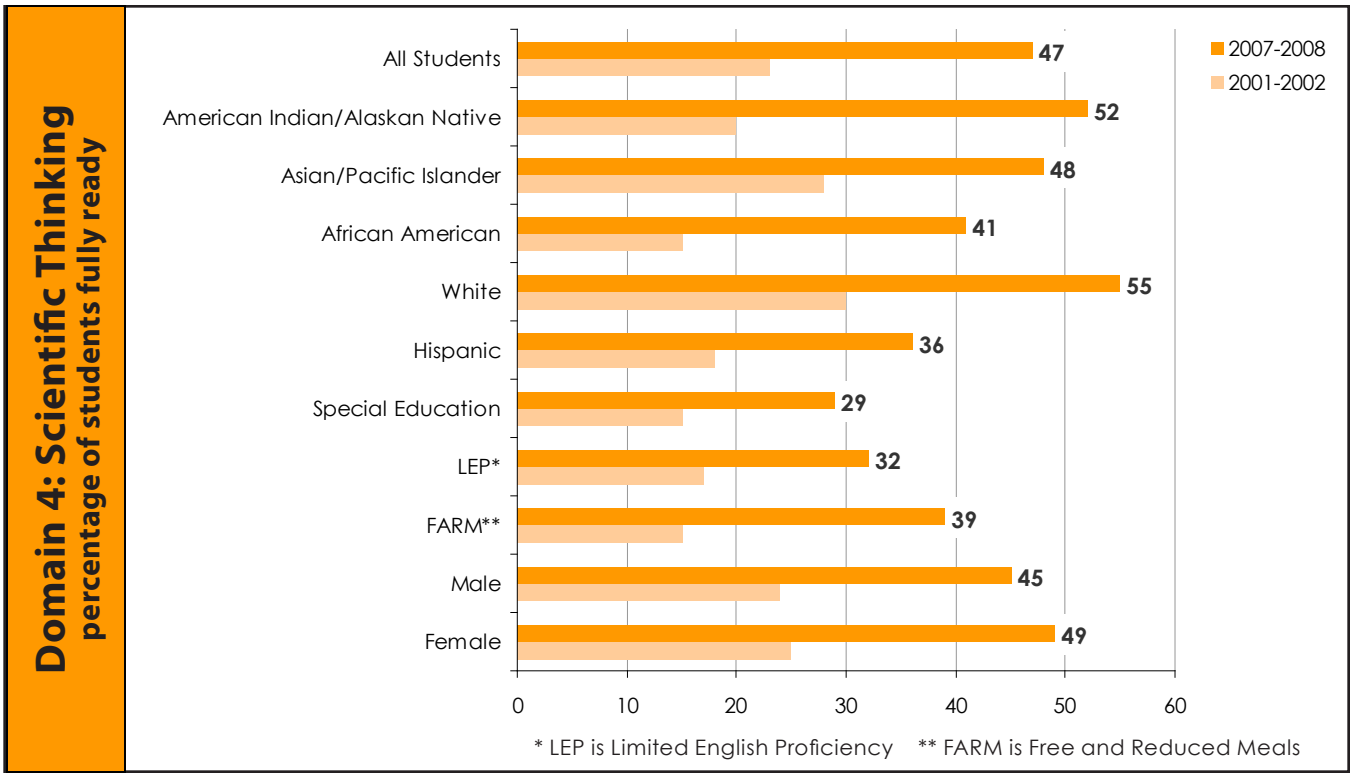
APPENDIX D: Percentage of Kindergarten Students Assessed as "Fully Ready" by Domain and Subgroup 2001-02 and 2007-08



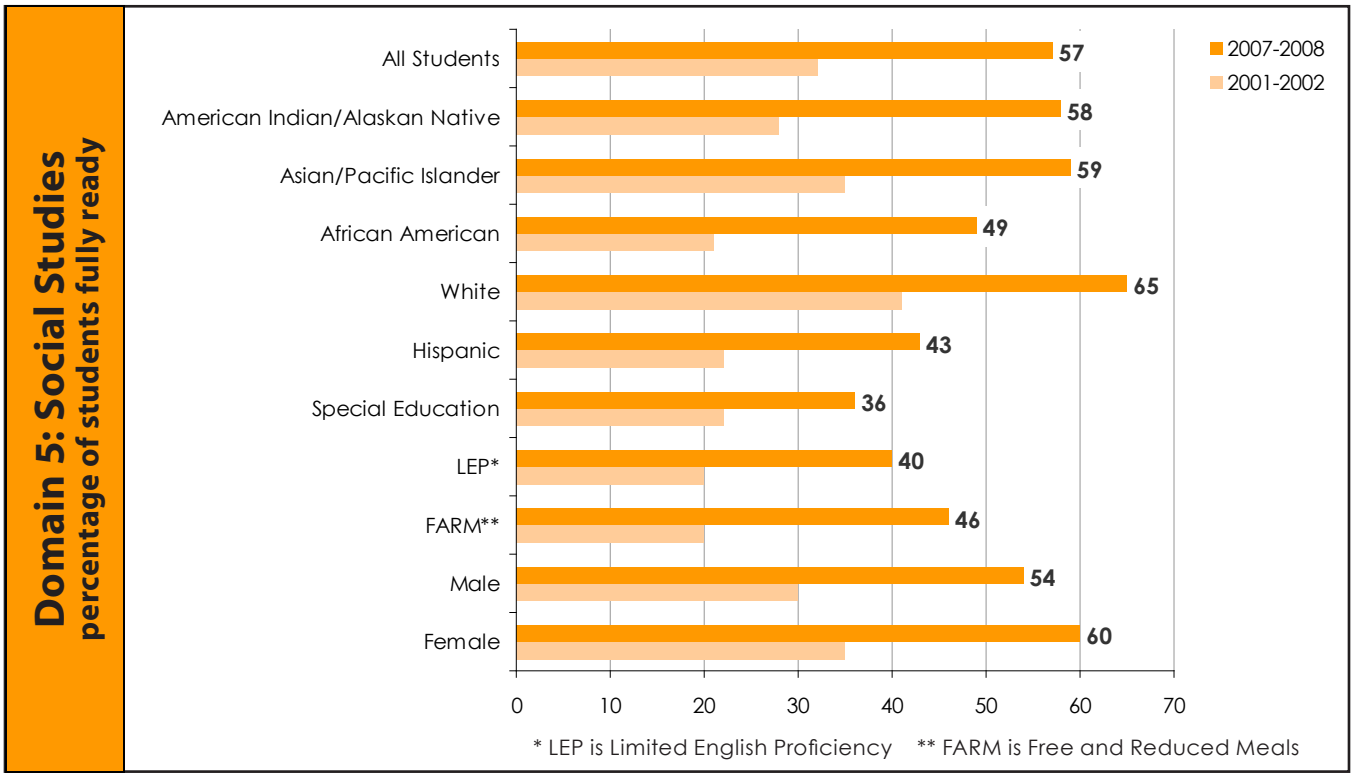


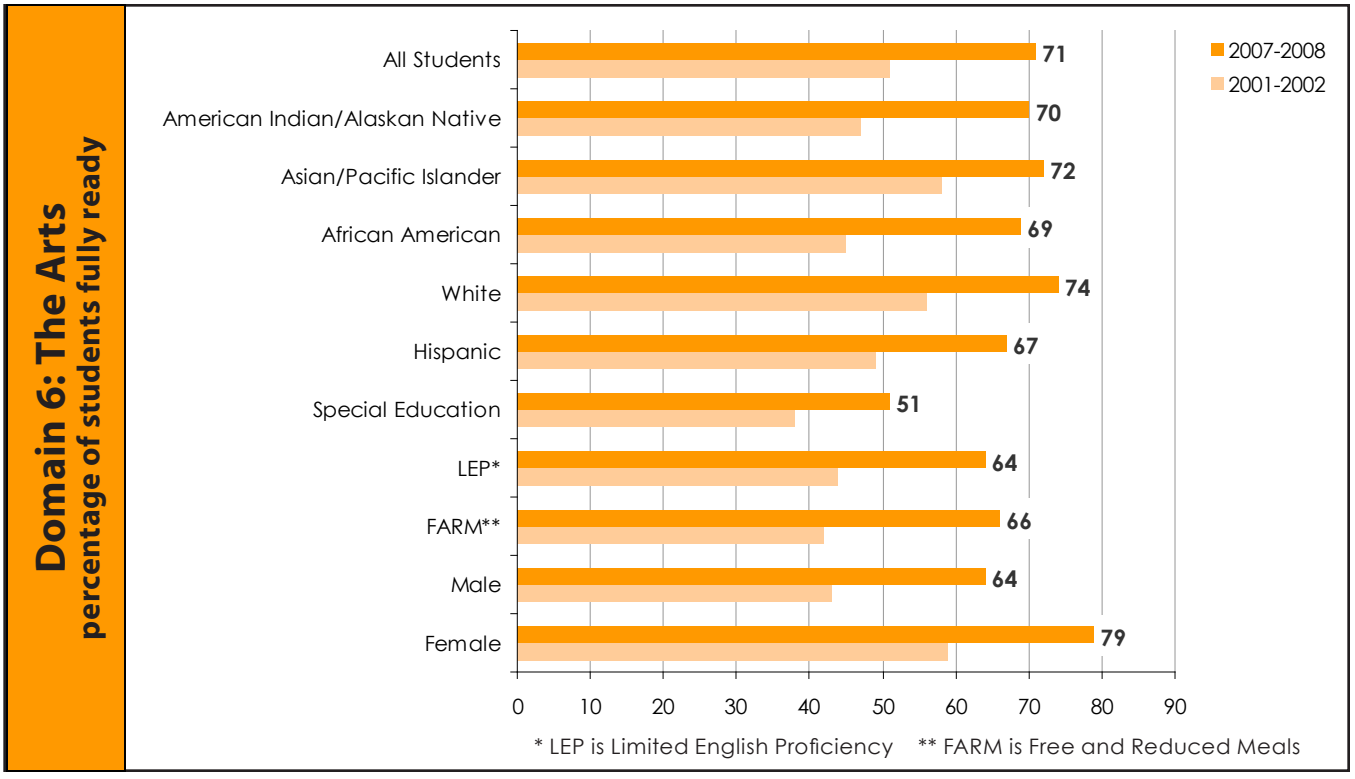
APPENDIX D: Percentage of Kindergarten Students Assessed as "Fully Ready" by Domain and Subgroup 2001-02 and 2007-08



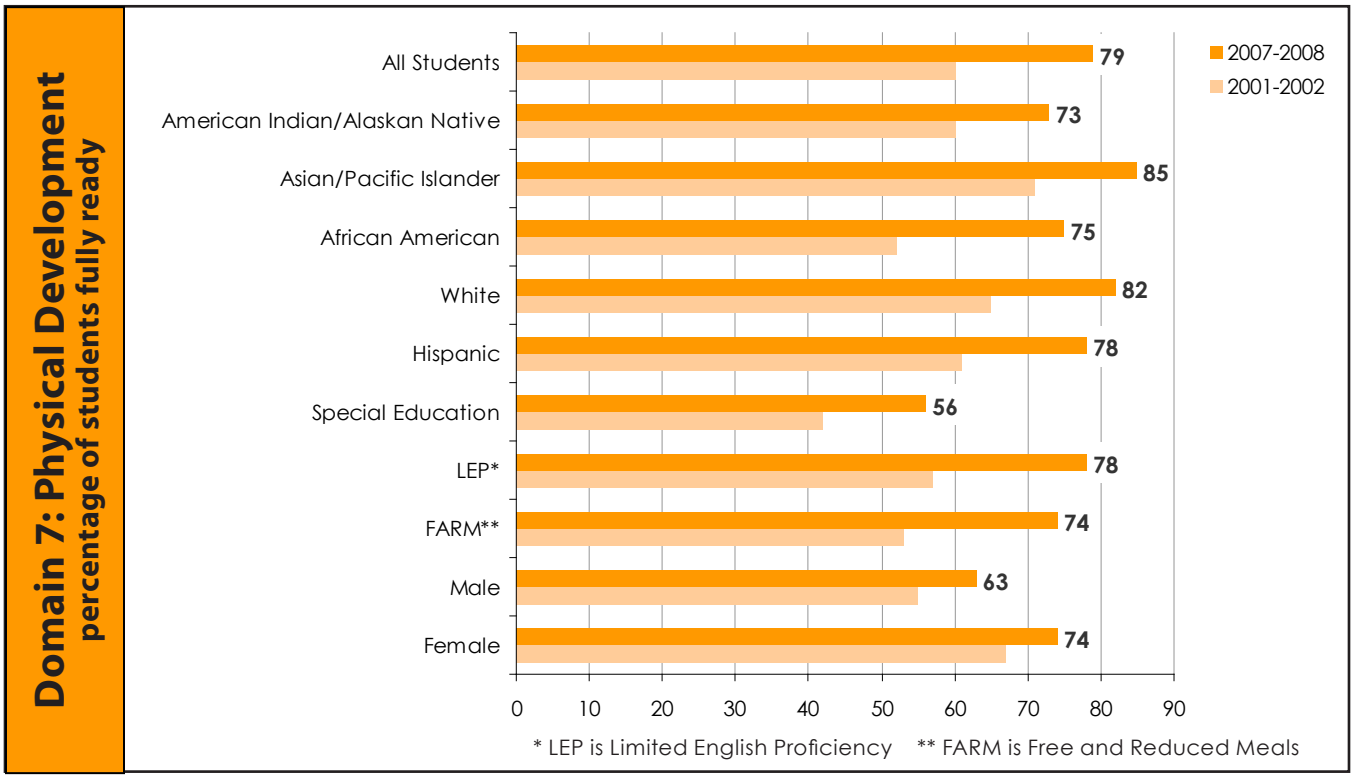


APPENDIX D: Percentage of Kindergarten Students Assessed as "Fully Ready" by Domain and Subgroup 2001-02 and 2007-08

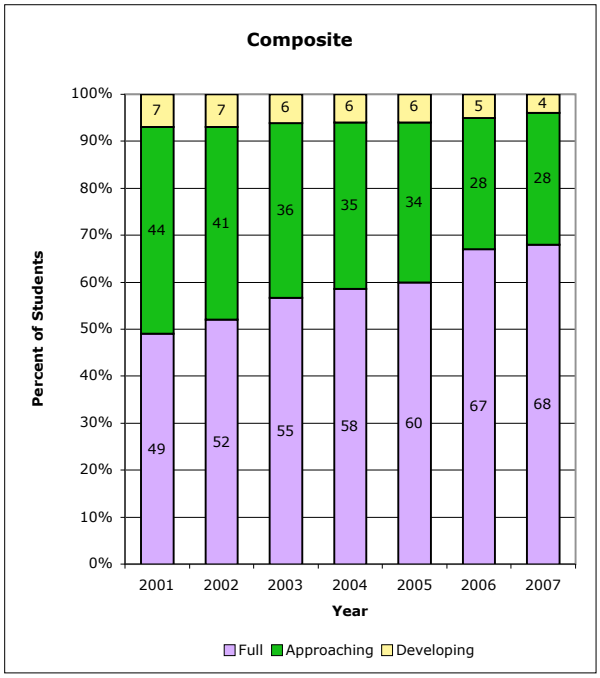


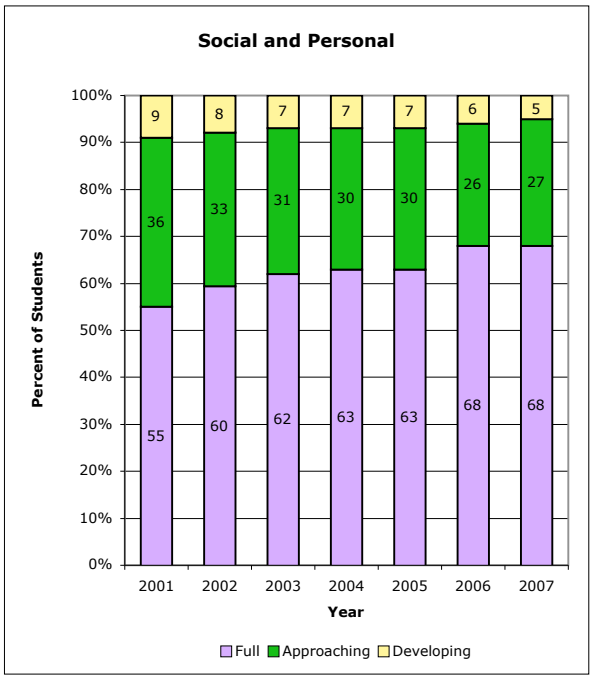


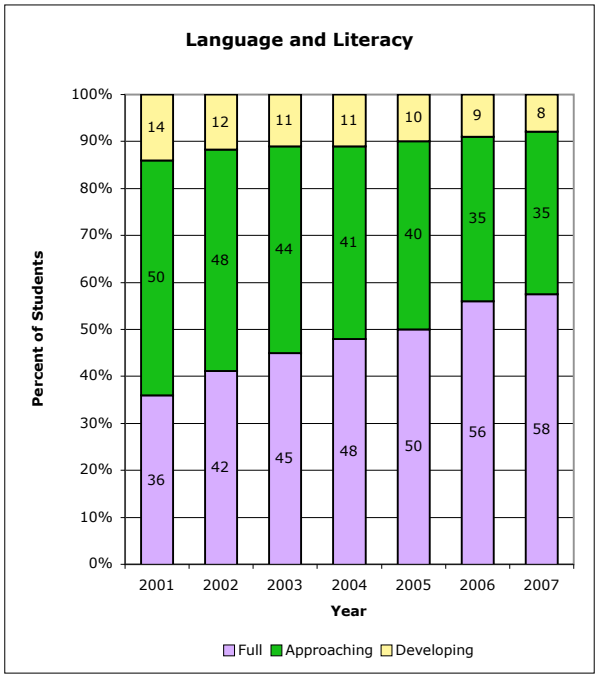
APPENDIX D: Percentage of Kindergarten Students Assessed as "Fully Ready" by Domain and Subgroup 2001-02 and 2007-08

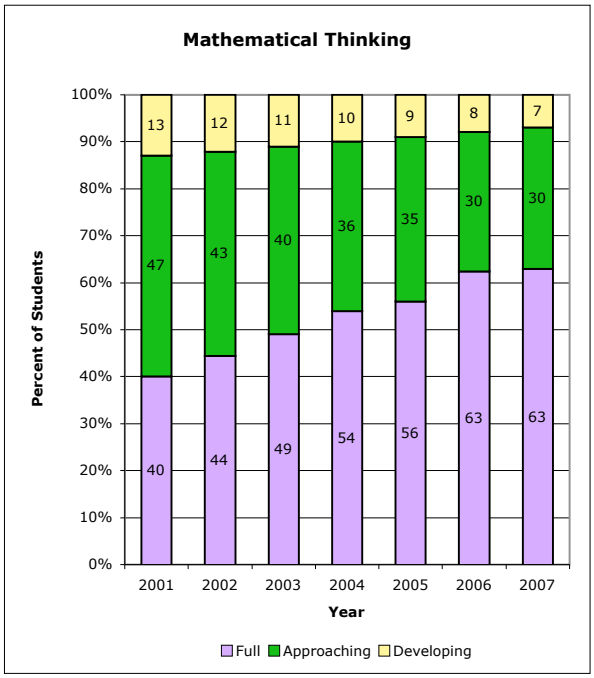


Maryland Trend: 2001-2007
Percentage of Kindergarten Students

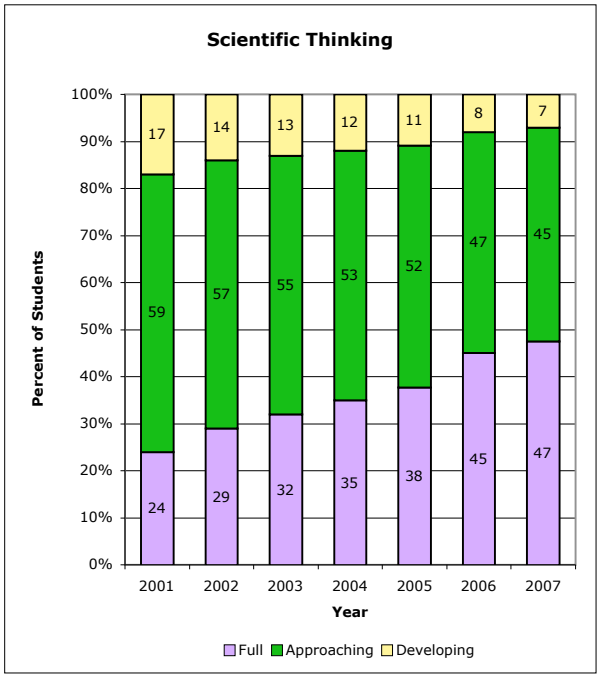


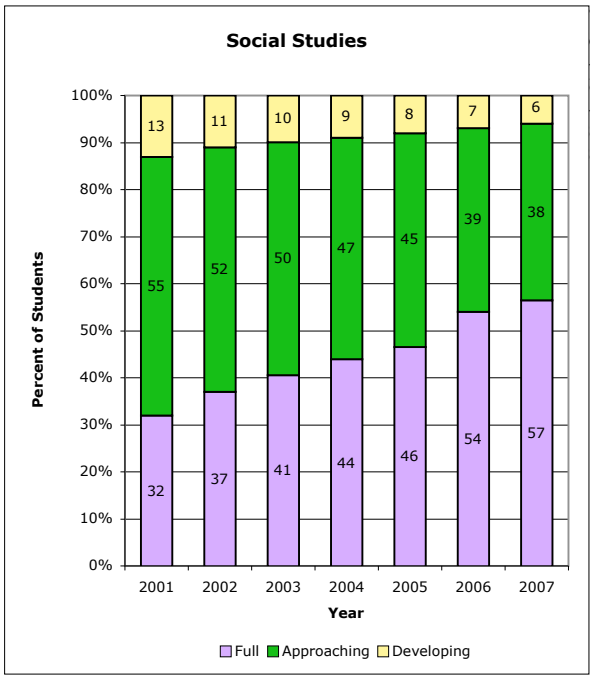


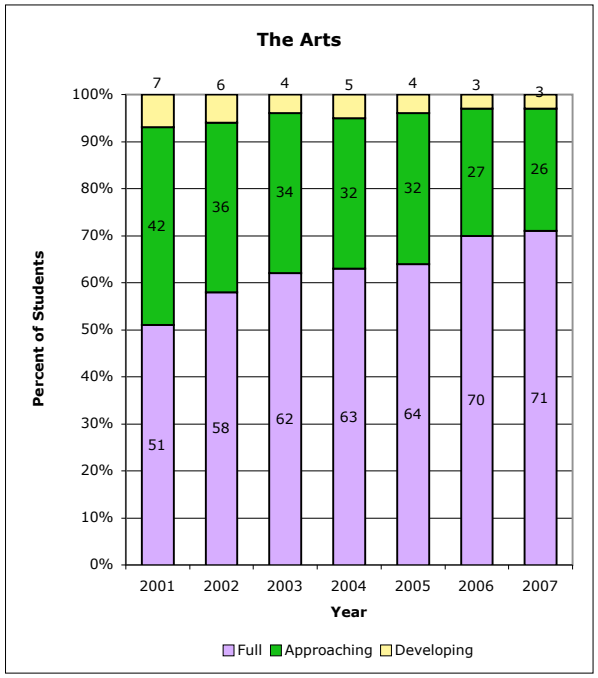


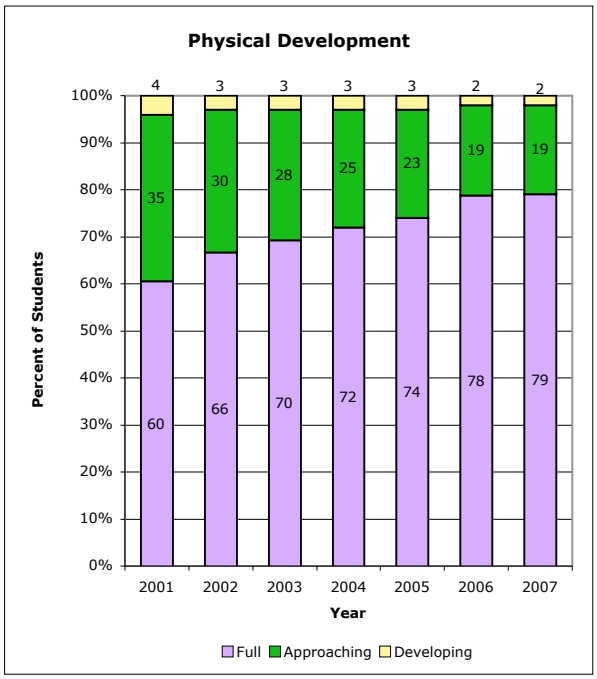


Maryland Trend: 2001-2007
Percentage of Kindergarten Students



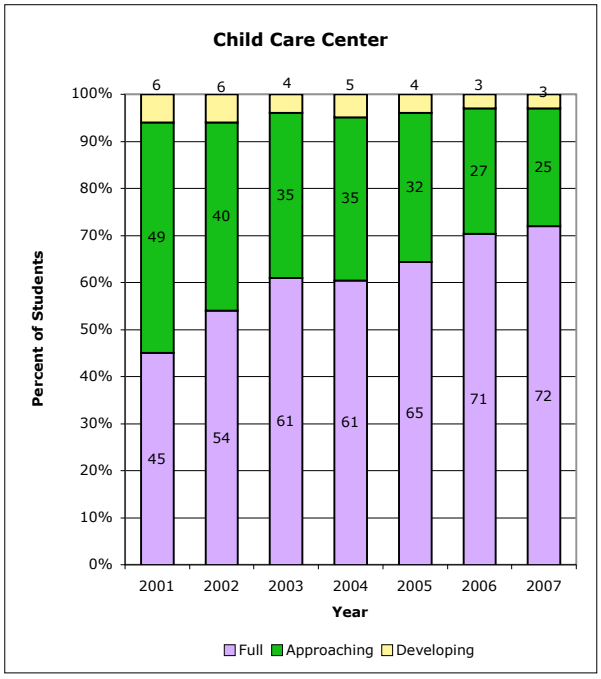


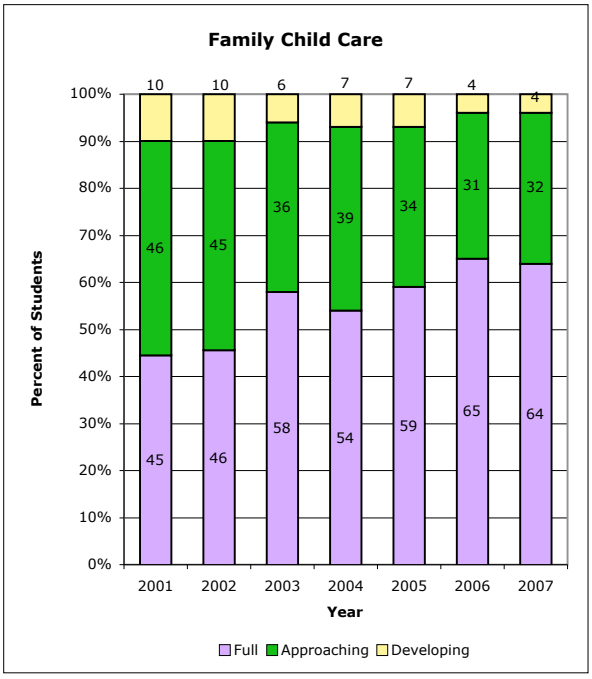


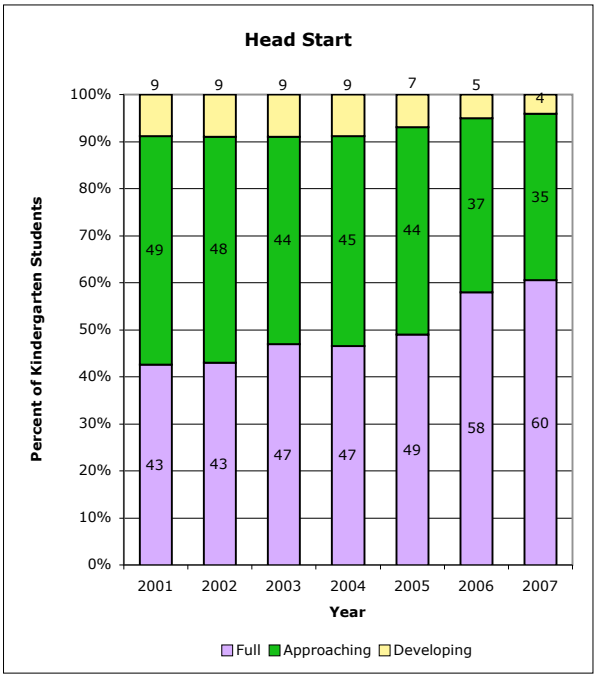


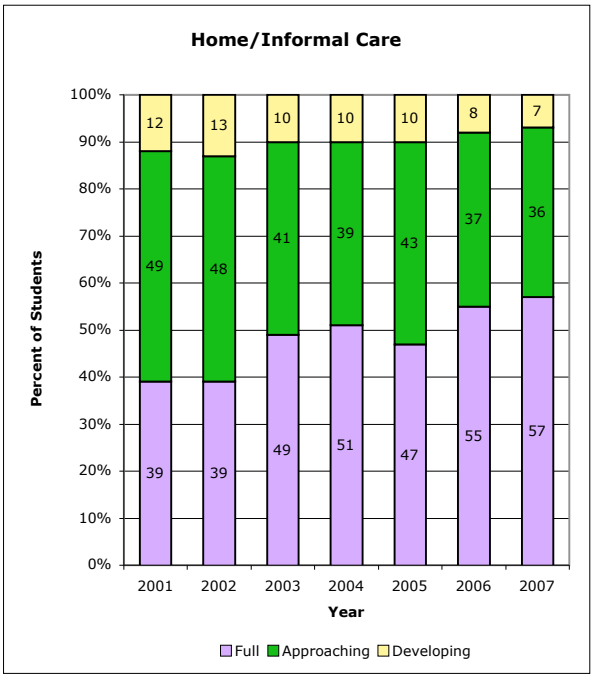
Maryland Trend: 2001-2007
Percentage of Kindergarten Students

Disaggregated by Prior Care



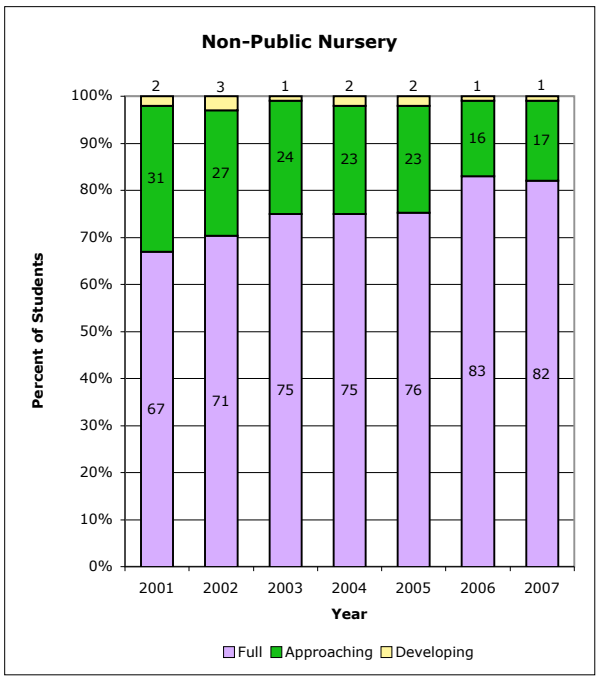


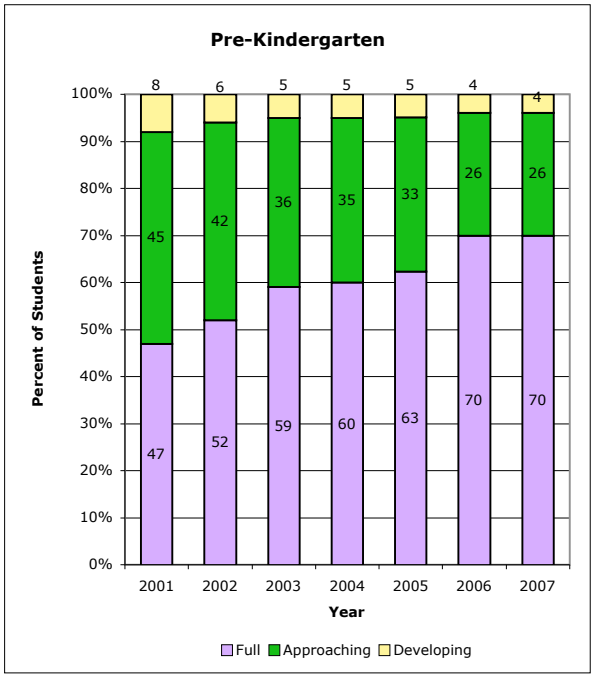




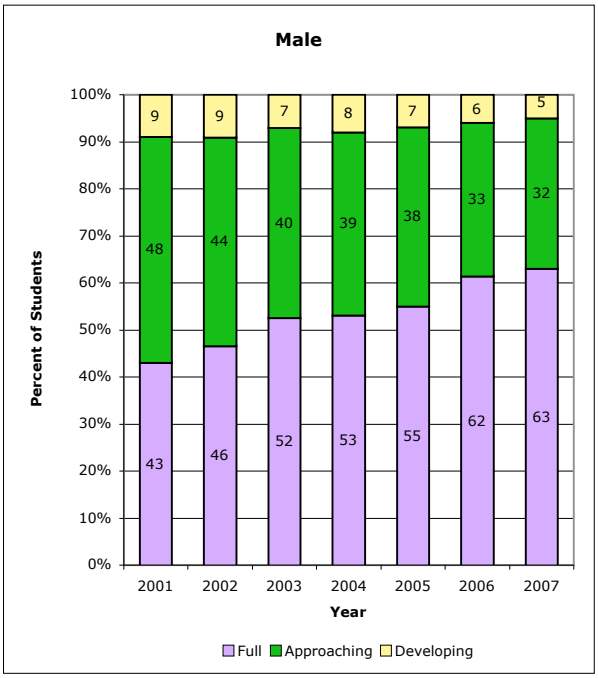
Maryland Trend: 2001-2007
Percentage of Kindergarten Students

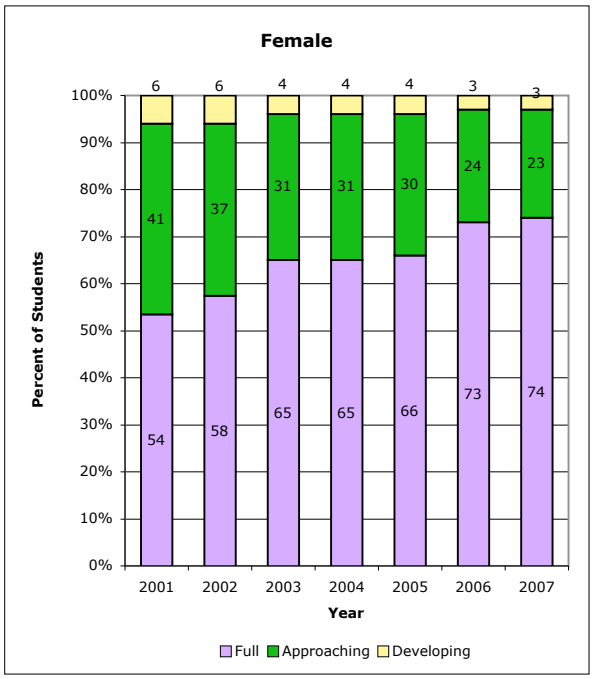
Disaggregated by Prior Care





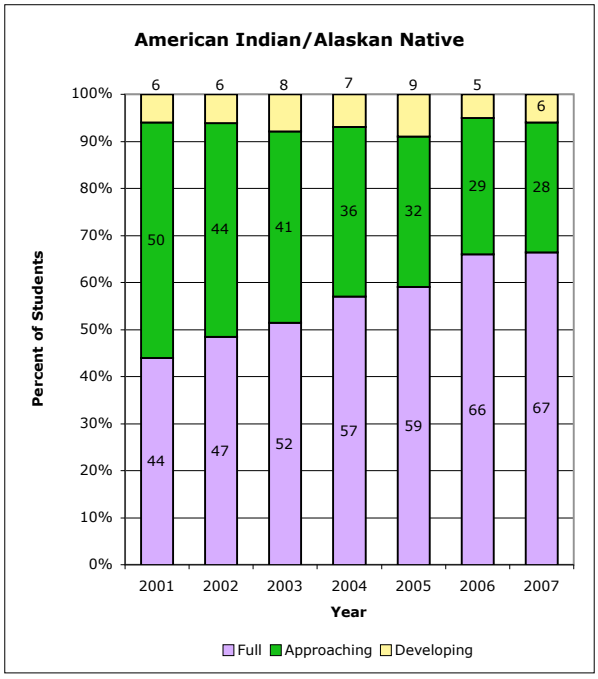
Maryland Trend: 2001-2007
Percentage of Kindergarten Students
Disaggregated by Gender

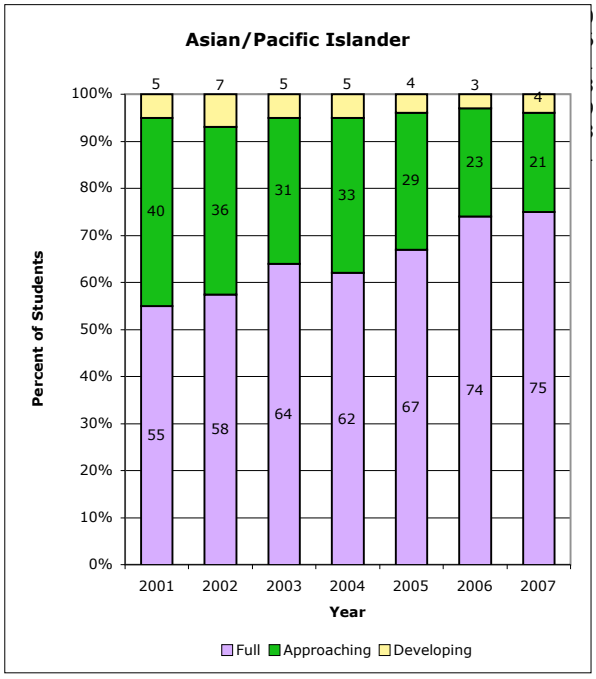


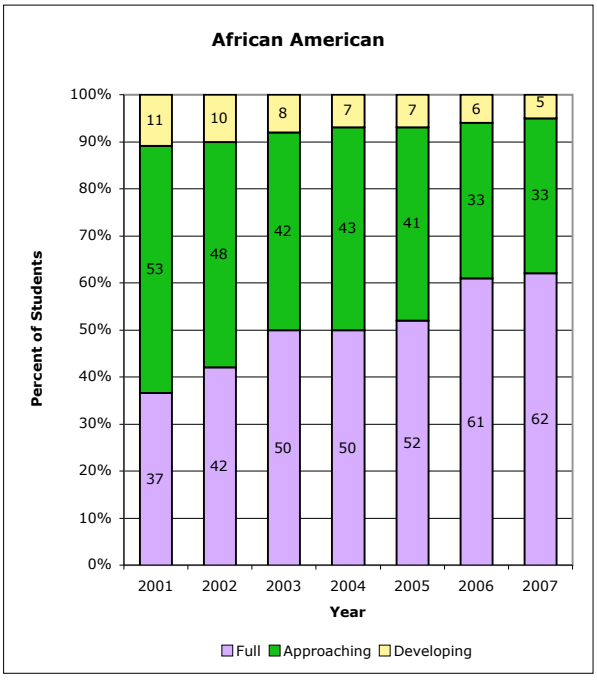


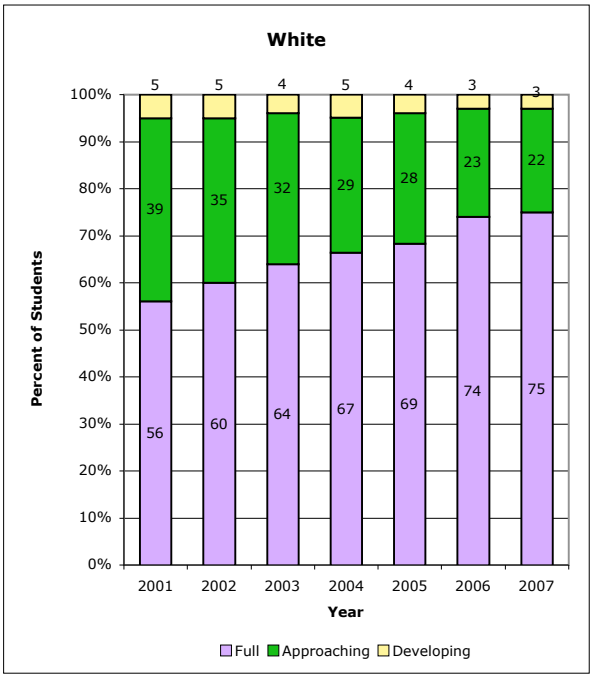
Maryland Trend: 2001-2007
Percentage of Kindergarten Students

Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity

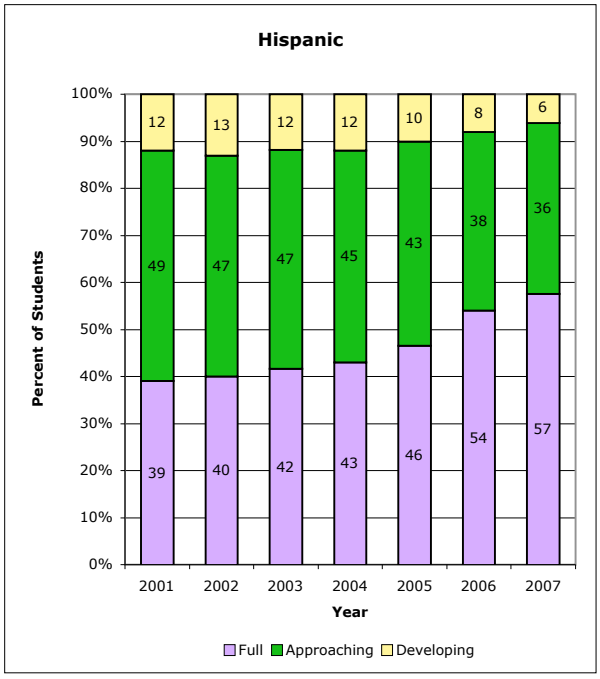




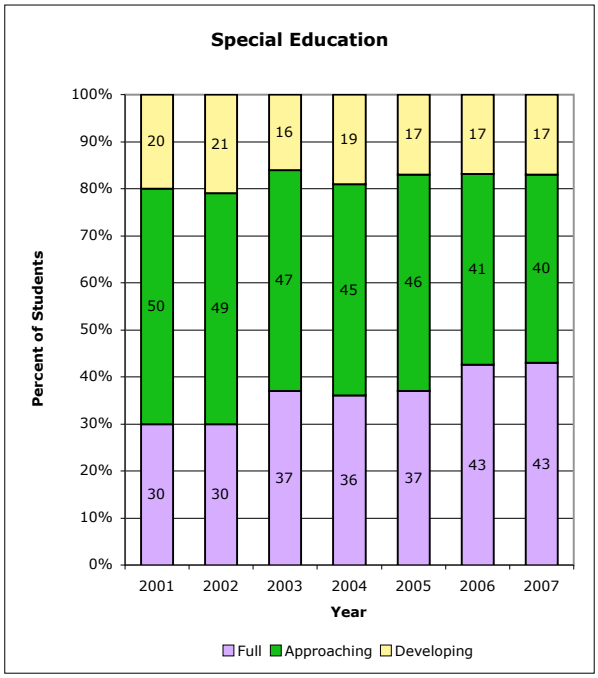


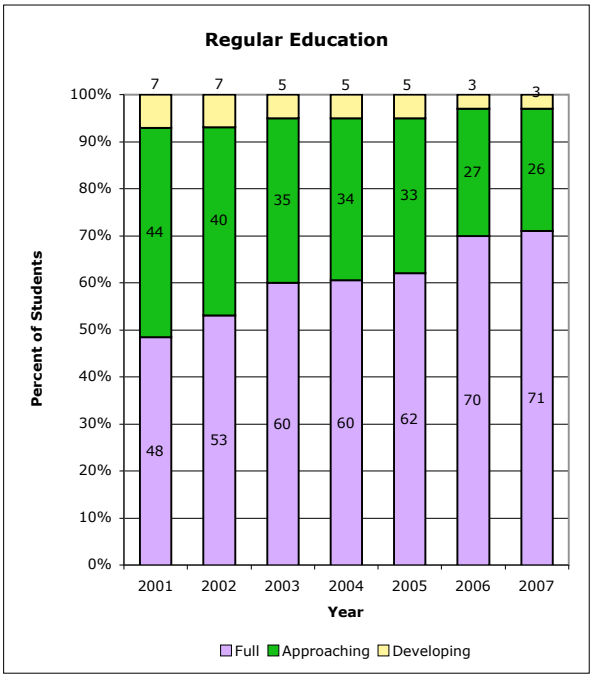


Maryland Trend: 2001-2007
Percentage of Kindergarten Students
Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity

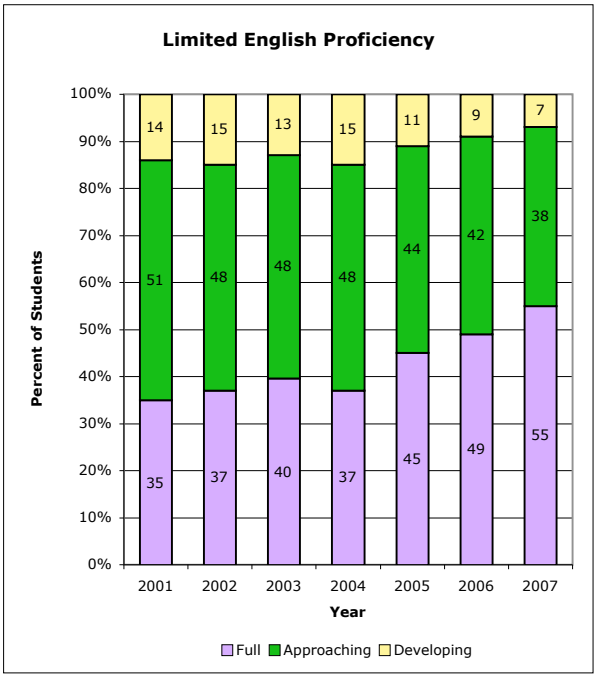


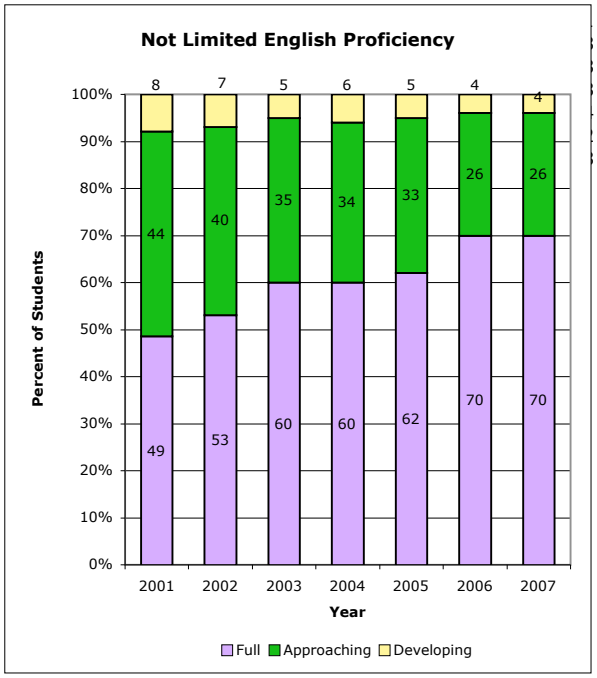
Maryland Trend: 2001-2007
Percentage of Kindergarten Students
Disaggregated by Special Education



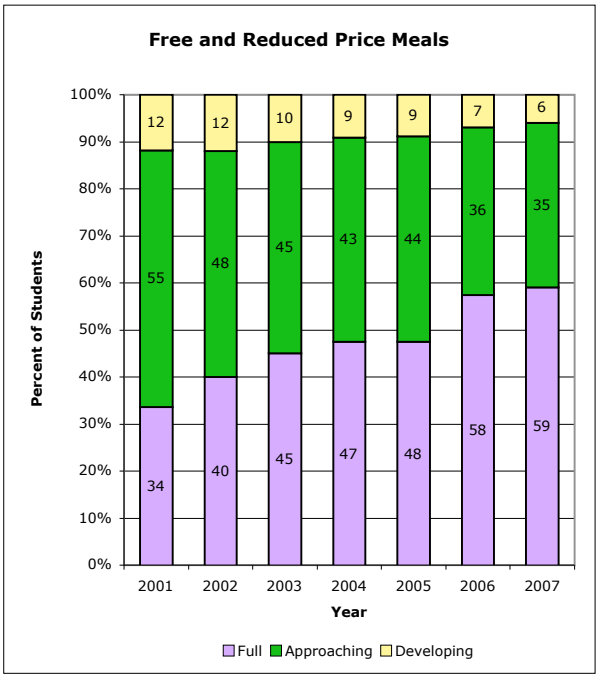


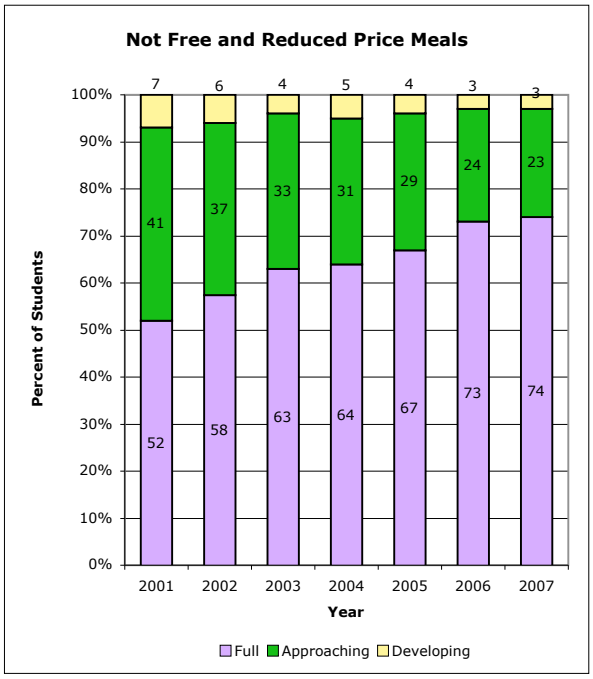
Maryland Trend: 2001-2007
Percentage of Kindergarten Students
Disaggregated by Limited English Proficiency





Maryland Trend: 2001-2007
Percentage of Kindergarten Students
Disaggregated by Free and Reduced Price Meals





APPENDIX E

Maryland Model for School Readiness – Composite Results by Jurisdiction

2006-07 and 2007-08

MARYLAND MODEL FOR SCHOOL READINESS
COMPOSITE RESULTS BY JURISDICTION
2006–07 AND 2007–08

Jurisdiction	Percent of Students 2006 - 07	Percent of Students 2007 - 08	Change
Allegany County	73	77	+4
Anne Arundel County	69	72	+3
Baltimore City	58	57	-1
Baltimore County	77	73	-4
Calvert County	70	75	+5
Caroline County	69	79	+10
Carroll County	60	63	+3
Cecil County	53	61	+8
Charles County	52	48	-4
Dorchester County	59	61	+2
Frederick County	76	76	0
Garrett County	81	76	-5
Harford County	83	82	-1
Howard County	71	76	+5
Kent County	67	81	+4
Montgomery County	68	70	+2
Prince George's County	59	62	+3
Queen Anne's County	72	89	+17
Somerset County	79	78	-1
St. Mary's County	70	69	-1
Talbot County	68	66	-2
Washington County	65	69	+4
Wicomico County	66	66	0
Worcester County	68	75	+7