

# Considering School Readiness from a Developmental Perspective

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# Recent History

## September 1989

historic education summit convened-agreement to set education goals for the nation

## February 1990

national education goals announced by president and adopted by governors

## July 1990

*National Education Goals Panel created-* responsible to support system wide reform

## Goal 1: Ready to Learn

*By the year 2000, all children will start school ready to learn.*

### Objectives:

- Children will receive the nutrition, physical activity experiences, and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, and to maintain the mental alertness necessary to be prepared to learn, and the number of low-birth weight babies will be significantly reduced through enhanced prenatal health systems.
- Every parent in the United States will be a child's first teacher and devote time each day to helping such parent's preschool child learn, and parents will have access to the training and support parents need.
- All children will have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school.

# Components of School Readiness



# Definitions

## *Most Simple*

A child's level of preparation to participate in a setting which embraces education as its main initiative.

## *More Specific*

A child's attainment of a certain set of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive skills needed to learn, work, and function successfully in school.

(Raforth, Buchanauer, Crissman, & Halko (2004). School Readiness- Preparing Children for Kindergarten and Beyond: Information for Parents. NASP School and Home)

Infant Mental Health: is the developing capacity to  
experience, regulate and express emotions  
form close and secure interpersonal relationships  
explore the environment and learn effectively  
all in the context of family, community, and cultural expectations for young children.

(Zero to Three)

# Aspects

- Indicators:
  - age and development
- Constructs:
  - health and physical development
  - emotional well-being and social competence
  - approaches to learning
  - communicative skills
  - cognition and general knowledge

# Brain Development: The Science of Early Childhood

- basic brain architecture constructed through an ongoing process
- developing brain heavily dependant on the interactional dance
- early experiences and impact of relationships establish a foundation for all learning, health, and behavior that follow
- emotional well being and social competence are fundamental building blocks for emerging cognitive abilities and executive function skills
- neural circuits, specialized for learning, continue to develop and adapt in response to experience

# There is Only One Science: Implications for Replication

the brain organizes and incorporates  
experiences to literally wire the circuitry

healthy brain development requires:

- safe, nurturing, predictable relationships
- opportunities for exploration and learning
- reciprocal engagement with increasingly more complex joint activity

# One Model: CSEFEL

Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning



## National Resource Center

disseminates research and evidence-based practices to early childhood programs

focuses on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children

developed a conceptual model of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's social emotional competence and preventing and addressing challenging behavior.

# Sample of Resources

Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning

[www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel)

The Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention

[www.tacsei.org](http://www.tacsei.org)

Creative Therapy Associates, Inc. (feeling guy/mood dude)

[www.ctherapy.com](http://www.ctherapy.com)

Feeling Blocks

[www.feelingblocks.com](http://www.feelingblocks.com)

Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

[www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu)

# Take Away Messages

- Consider using screening tools and assessment instruments to evaluate social and emotional developmental status of individual children
- Teach, review and reinforce new concepts. Balance the dance of interaction and instruction
- Organize classroom intentionally to embed emotional vocabulary and social skills practice into all implicit and explicit teaching activities

# Reactions & Questions

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