Closing The Gap In Reading Readiness
For America’s Preschoolers

Nemours BrightStart!, a program of Nemours Children’s Health System, is dedicated to helping all children become successful readers. For more than a decade, we have developed evidence-based tools and resources for parents, educators, health care providers and the public for this purpose.

Nemours Releases 2nd Annual Reading Readiness Snapshot for America’s Preschoolers

Nemours knows that literacy and health are connected, so we developed the ReadingBrightStart.org website to help parents build their children’s early literacy skills. It is loaded with tips, milestones, developmentally-appropriate activities, articles and recommended books by age, for children from birth through age 5. The site features Nemours BrightStart’s Preschool Reading Screener, designed for a parent to complete with their child aged 3 to 5. It takes only 5 to 7 minutes to complete, and provides a snapshot of a child’s progress in four essential reading readiness skills: oral language; letter knowledge; phonological awareness; and beginning writing. The Preschool Reading Screener was developed and tested with thousands of parents, using rigorous research showing that it is easy and accurate.

Nearly 14,000 (13,873) parents in all 50 states and Washington D.C. have completed the screener; more than 5,000 (5,181) gave us permission to use their data for further research*. With this data we can help to better determine where each child is on their journey to becoming a reader, and ensure they are on track for reading success.

2005 - Nemours identifies reading readiness as a major child health issue and dedicates resources to identify and intervene with children at risk.

Nemours BrightStart! preschool screening and intervention program has helped thousands of at-risk children catch up to their peers.

ReadingBrightStart.org, our latest parent tool, puts tips, milestones and activities into the hands of parents where they can intervene earlier.

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*Continued on reverse
Percentage of Children Demonstrating Specific Early Literacy Skills by Age

*Represents 5,181 Nemours BrightStart! Preschool Reading Screener Research Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child’s Age</th>
<th>Writes Own Name</th>
<th>Identifies Beginning Sound in Words</th>
<th>Identifies Two Simple Words That Rhyme</th>
<th>Can Identify 18* Uppercase Letters</th>
<th>Says Correct Letter Sound as Parent Points to Letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of a maximum possible 31 points, the average score for 3-year-olds is 18; for 4-year-olds, 23; and for 5-year-olds, 26. Not surprisingly, 3-year-olds earn most of their points on oral language items including skills such as, “continuously understands and uses new words” and “connects own feelings and experiences to stories we read together.” Three-year-olds know quite a bit about letters, too. For example, 64% of 3-year-olds recognize their own names in print and 82% can name some letters. They also have some beginning knowledge of rhyming and beginning sounds — which are the earliest emerging phonological awareness skills — and beginning writing. Nearly 95 percent of 3-year-olds enjoy drawing and scribbling, and 64% already understand that writing is different than drawing a picture.

For 4-year-olds, the emergence of letter knowledge is especially striking. Whereas 59% of parents report that their 4-year old says the correct sound as mom or dad points to a letter, 69% of 4-year-olds point correctly to some letters when parents name the letter’s sound, and nearly 88% point to some letters when named by the parent. Importantly, nearly 68% of 4-year-olds are able to identify at least 18 uppercase letters, a skill that is vital for being on track for reading success as children move into kindergarten.

More than 90% of 5-year-olds demonstrate strong letter naming skills. For example, 94% of 5-year-olds can sing, say, or recite the alphabet; 93% can point correctly to some letters as a parent names them; and 96% can name some letters. Skill with letter sounds is also strong: 86% of 5-year-olds point correctly to some letters as a parent names the letter sound, and 78% say the correct sound as a parent points to the letter. Five-year-olds are also good at identifying two words that rhyme (82%), and 71% can state a word that rhymes with a word said by the parent. Blending words is easier for 5-year olds than breaking them apart: 65% can blend two words into a compound word, whereas 54% can break compound words apart.

Summary

With the recent focus and controversy surrounding what preschool- and early elementary-aged children should be taught and at what pace, this snapshot shows us how America’s preschoolers are actually doing in reading readiness, according to the people who know them best: their parents.

With reasonable efforts to expose young children to books, language, drawing and writing, they will develop a solid foundation for future reading success. It is empowering and motivating for parents to know whether their child is on track, or needs additional help, especially when easy tips and tools are right at their fingertips at ReadingBrightStart.org.