

Road to the Early Achievement and Development of Youth (READY)

What is READY?

The goal of “Road to the Early Achievement and Development of Youth” (READY) is to build upon the strengths of existing community activities by increasing the quality of early childhood education, promoting the successful transition of children into kindergarten, and establishing the foundation for long term success. Our efforts are guided by an understanding that school readiness goes beyond just the readiness of the whole child. Readiness also encompasses the capacity of families to nurture children, the ability of schools to meet the needs of children and families, the quality of early environments, and the assets of the community.

READY provides opportunities for enhancing the quality of early childhood education services, increasing school readiness, encouraging parental engagement, and closing the achievement gap by:

- Offering training and coaching for early childhood education providers
- Bridging the efforts and communication between early childhood education providers and K-3 educators
- Building consensus around a common understanding of school readiness
- Implementing consistent, effective assessment tools

These services will be achieved through active, collaborative engagement of interdisciplinary groups and individuals that share a passion for ensuring that all children have the needed resources to thrive.

Why is READY important?

President Obama’s Preschool for All initiative has confirmed what many early care and education professionals have been saying for years: children who get off to a strong start and are provided high quality early learning experiences will be better prepared for kindergarten, and more likely to read above the proficient level by third grade, which will lead to a high school diploma and a longer, healthier life. Research shows that investments in high quality early childhood education provide returns to the community of \$7 for every \$1 invested. Investing in quality preschool is investing in a future with lower crime rates, less dependence on public assistance, and increased economic development.

Who are the READY implementation team members?

In March 2013, the First 5 Commission awarded a \$1.5 million grant to the Human Services Department, in partnership with the Department of Health Services, Community Child Care Council of Sonoma County, River to Coast Children’s Services and Child Care Planning Council of Sonoma County to fund READY. First 5 Sonoma County is funded by California’s 50 cent Proposition 10 cigarette sales tax and grants more than \$4 million annually to county programs that support early childhood development.

READY is supported by Cradle to Career Sonoma County, Sonoma County Upstream Investments, and Health Action, all of which are working collectively toward the goal of being the healthiest County in California by the year 2020. In order to reach this goal, Sonoma County must think differently about the systems that impact children, youth and young adults. READY will inform these efforts and help assure all children in Sonoma County have access to a high quality preschool experience.

How can you learn more?

To learn more, please contact Megan Sirna, msirna@schsd.org or 565-5836 or Bethany Facendini, Bethany.Facendini@Sonoma-County.org 565-6625.