

Early Childhood Screening

DESCRIPTION

Early childhood screening is an assessment performed by school districts that identifies potential developmental problems in infants and young children. The screening identifies the potential need for a more intensive diagnostic assessment or educational evaluation.¹ Early childhood screening is required for admittance into all Minnesota public schools and supports preparedness for kindergarten. It is recommended to take place before kindergarten, typically when a child is between three to four years old.² Within the first 30 days of kindergarten, school districts screen children who were not screened earlier.

HOW WE ARE DOING

In the 2016-2017 school year, 77.7 percent of Ramsey County children were screened before age five. This was only slightly lower than the state (80.5 percent) for the same school year.³ Most Ramsey County children were age four when they were screened.³ Between 2005 and 2015, there was a 13.4 percent increase in children who were screened before age five.³ Even though most early childhood screening is occurring before kindergarten entrance, there are still students who are completing their screening after they begin school. During 2013 to 2016, an average of 9 percent of students had not been screened before the first day of kindergarten, which is double the state percentage.³ If a statement signed by the child's parent or guardian is submitted to the school that the child has not been screened because of conscientiously held beliefs of the parent or guardian, the screening is not required.²

BENCHMARK INDICATOR

Minnesota Law²: Increase the proportion of children who receive early childhood screening before kindergarten.

Minnesota Target: 100 percent of children

DISPARITIES

Children from lower-income families, Hispanic/Latino children, and American Indian children have the lowest rates of kindergarten readiness⁴; defined as having received screening, and necessary immunizations.⁵

RISK FACTORS

Parents/guardians who do not realize that early childhood screening is an admission requirement for school might not initiate the screening process until a school demands it. This could delay needed intervention for a child who needs help.

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health began a process in 2017 to share information with the Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) regarding children enrolled in WIC. This will enable SPPS to contact the children's families to encourage them to come in for their early childhood screening. This data sharing may be expanded to all Ramsey County school districts in the future.

Information to note

- During the past three school years, an average of 73.9% of Ramsey County children were screened before age five - the lowest rate in the 7-county metro area.

¹ Early Childhood Screening. Minnesota Department of Health. <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/early/scr/>. Accessed August 2, 2018.

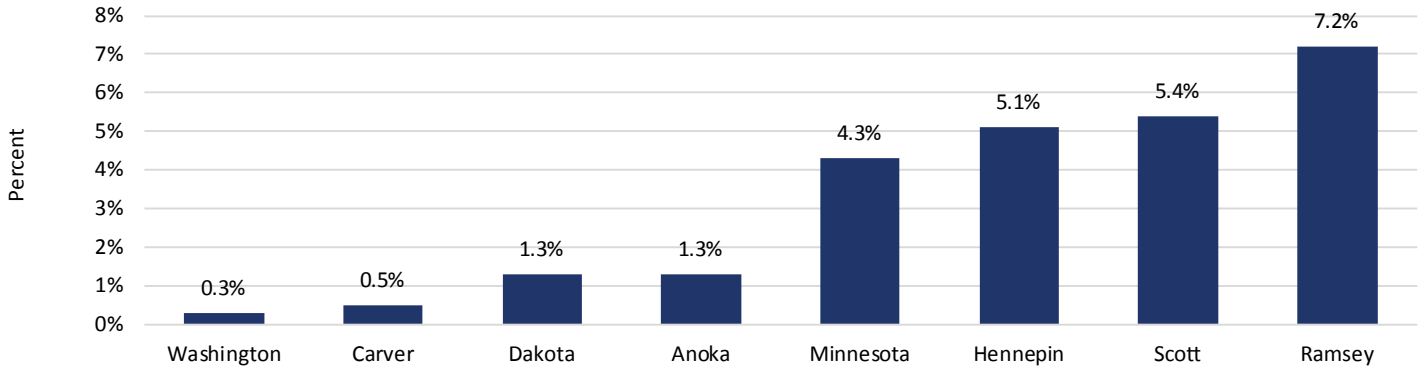
² 2017 Minnesota Statutes 121A.17. The Office of the Revisor of Statutes. <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/121a.17>. Accessed August 2018.

³ Early Childhood Screening (data). Minnesota Department of Education. <http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/DataTopic.jsp?TOPICID=290>. Accessed August 3, 2018.

⁴ Chase R. All Kids Ready for Kindergarten. Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. 2013. <https://www.wilder.org/articles/all-kids-ready-kindergarten>. Published November 25, 2013. Accessed August 2, 2018.

⁵ School Readiness. Minnesota Department of Education. <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/early/read/>. Accessed August 2, 2018.

Children Screened after Kindergarten Start Deadline,
Public School Districts, 2015-16



Source: Minnesota Department of Education.⁶

⁶ Early Childhood Screening (data). Minnesota Department of Education Website. <http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/DataTopic.jsp?TOPICID=290>. Accessed August 3, 2018.