

THE EVIDENCE BASE: PREDICTORS OF SCHOOL READINESS

Access to **high-quality childcare** better outcomes in the following domains: neuro-typical brain development;¹ reading and associated competencies (vocabulary, language performance, and emergent literacy);² and social-emotional development (emotional understanding, social problem solving, and learning engagement).^{3,4} It yields the highest short and long-term benefits for low-income children relative to their higher-income peers.^{5,6,7}

Multiple studies found association between **parental warmth, acceptance, and responsiveness** and child language performance as well as later academic and social performance.^{8,9}

A child's **home learning environment (HLE)** is critical to their development. HLE, which has been linked to improved outcomes in literacy and kindergarten reading success, includes active (shared readings) and passive (seeing parent read the newspaper) activities;¹⁰ consistent bedtimes and books in the home;¹¹ and amount of time and type of TV programming watched by young children.^{12,13} Further, **shared reading or reading to children** itself has been linked to higher literacy and language competencies.^{14,15,16,17}

Multiple measures of **health**,¹⁸ including current health status and low birth weight, have been found to be strong predictors of school readiness.¹⁹ Infants born premature (association stronger in boys) are more likely to display lower school readiness, and low birth weight is associated with an increased risk for learning disabilities.^{20,21} A lack of **access to prenatal care** for pregnant women is associated with low birth weight and premature birth.^{22,23} These pre-existing factors are often amplified by a lack of subsequent **access to primary care** to identify, treat, and prevent issues that may negatively impact a child's healthy development.^{24,25}

Poor nutrition has been linked to a child's ability to learn effectively, concentrate, and perform academically in school.^{26,27} In addition, poor nutrition is associated with a suite of social and emotional challenges in school, including: behavioral, emotional, and academic problems; increased displays of aggressive and anxious behaviors; and as teens, more disciplinary conflicts and increased difficulty getting along with peers.²⁸ Finally, poor nutrition is also a risk factor for health issues, including increased susceptibility to illness and obesity, which can affect a child's school readiness and academic performance.²⁹



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