



# GET READY FOR SCHOOL (GRFS)

Program Evaluation

Survey Results and Kindergarten Outcomes

Executive Summary

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## Executive Summary

- The Get Ready for School (GRFS) program is a SPARK Ohio<sup>1</sup> initiative that was designed by kindergarten teachers, preschool teachers, speech-language therapists, and SPARK staff members.
- The goal of GRFS is to familiarize the children with the rules and routines of a kindergarten classroom and to school in general, and to help them develop literacy, communication, and social skills important for kindergarten success.
- In order to measure the results of the 2023 program year, a survey was created that includes 12 items that are in alignment with the Ohio Department of Education's Kindergarten Standards as well as the Transition Skills Summary (TSS).
- Teachers who administer the program completed a pre-test and post-test survey for each student (N=301 students).
- Students were enrolled across 12 school districts and in 21 school buildings, with the largest percentage enrolled in Cuyahoga Falls City Schools (29%).
- Over two-thirds of students (69%) had previously attended preschool.
- Based on survey results from the Fall 2023 session, the GRFS program shows great promise as an effective strategy to increase the skills students need to successfully transition to kindergarten.
- The broad distribution of GRFS programs across school districts in Summit County indicates that this program may be effective regardless of geographic location and differences in school culture.
- The program significantly improved outcomes both for students who did not attend preschool and for students who previously attended preschool, though students who attended preschool previously scored significantly higher on pre- and post-test scores.
- Results indicate that the GRFS program has a positive effect on student outcomes over and above preschool exposure and experience.
- Further exploration of the relationship between the GRFS program, Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) scores, and school attendance metrics were compared with a matched group of similar students.
- GRFS students with KRA data available were compared with randomly selected similar students who were matched by gender, race/ethnicity, economic disadvantage, and building (N=285 students).
- 5 KRA scores were used for comparison including: Overall (OISR), Language and Literacy (LL), Math (M), Physical Well-Being and Development (PD), and Social Foundations (SF).

- Results did not show significant differences for KRA scores between GRFS and Matched students, but additional comparisons highlighted similar demographic differences in both the GRFS and Matched groups:
  - Comparisons between students by gender showed that female students scored higher than male students on OISR, PD, and SF in both groups.
  - Comparisons between students by economic disadvantage status showed that ECDIS students scored lower than students without ECDIS on all scores in both groups.
  - Comparisons between students by minority status showed that minority students scored lower than white students on all scores in both groups.
- 3 attendance metrics were used for comparison including: Attendance Percentage, Excused Absences, and Unexcused Absences for the first half of the school year.
- Results demonstrated a positive effect on attendance percentages and unexcused absences for GRFS students when compared to Matched students, with additional comparisons highlighting some demographic differences in one or both groups:
  - Comparisons between students by gender showed no significant differences between male and female students on all attendance metrics in both groups.
  - Comparisons between students by economic disadvantage status showed that ECDIS students had lower attendance percentages and more unexcused absences than students without ECDIS in both groups.
  - Comparisons between students by minority status showed that minority students had significantly lower attendance percentages and significantly higher unexcused absences than white students in the Matched Group only, suggesting that the program may have a larger impact in reducing unexcused absences and increasing attendance percentage for minority students.
- When comparing attendance outcomes, the GRFS program demonstrated utility in reducing educational disparities between white and minority students.
- The GRFS program meets the criteria<sup>ii</sup> for a *promising practice*.

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<sup>i</sup> SPARK Ohio (2022). Get Ready For School Manual. [SPARK Helping Parents and Children Get Ready for School \(ecresourcecenter.org\)](https://ecresourcecenter.org)

<sup>ii</sup> The Maryland Child and Adolescent Innovations Institute. Evidence-Based Practice, Promising Practice, & Practice-Based Evidence: What's the difference? University of Maryland. [How do we know it works \(umaryland.edu\)](https://umaryland.edu)