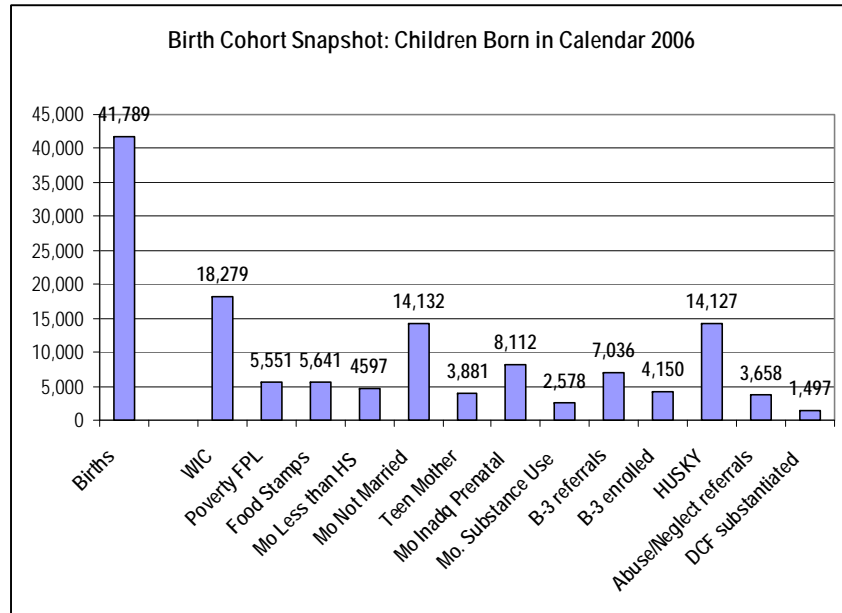


Population Report Card: Early Childhood Cabinet

Quality of Life Result #1: Ready by Five and Fine by Nine: All Connecticut children are healthy and ready for school success at age 5, contributing to a reduction over time in Connecticut's achievement gap at Grade 4.

Indicator 1: Cabinet's 1st Birth Cohort -- Babies Born in 2006 (NEW)



Story Behind the Baseline: Chronic exposure to multiple risks (especially without the buffering effect of a nurturing and capable parent or caregiver) during children's first three years impacts negatively on early brain structure and processing. This indicator presents data across risk categories for the Cabinet's first birth cohort: babies born in 2006 who will generally enter preschool in 2009 or 2010, kindergarten in 2011 and 4th grade in 2015. Note that 44% of babies born in 2006 (over 18,000 of the 41,789 births) lived in families at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level, more than are reflected in current Free and Reduced Meal Program data at the K-12 level.

Due to systemic data challenges reported later in this document, we cannot determine how many of these children are experiencing sustained multiple risks likely to lead to early developmental, health and learning challenges.

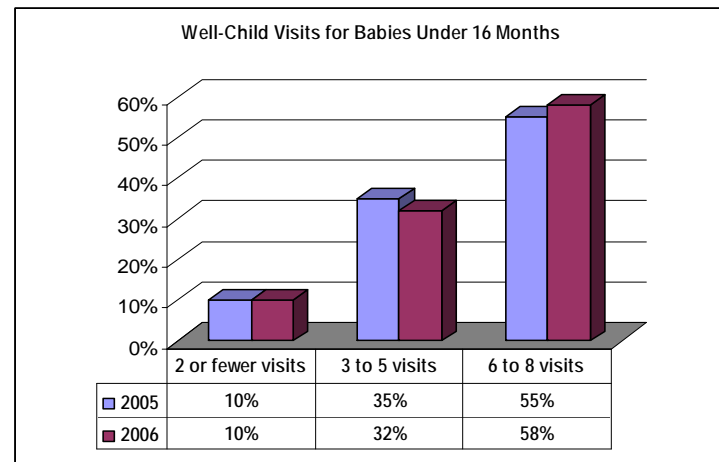
Proposed actions to turn the curve:

- As reported under the Cabinet's Goal I Systems Report Card, CT needs to assign unique child identifiers at birth, to be carried across state service agencies. This action will: (a) promote early identification of vulnerable young children, (b) assure

that families receive all services for which they are eligible, and (c) coordinate service delivery to children and families with multiple risks. Secure federal stimulus funding to enable continued data development, interoperability and reporting.

- Coordinate the use of federal stimulus funds coming to CT for Early Head Start and Child Care (CCDBG) to ensure attention to these most vulnerable young children.
- Target pregnant women and new mothers to: (a) address poverty, low education level and substance use/abuse and (b) ensure adequate prenatal care.
- Given the number of mothers without HS degrees or with other literacy and cognitive challenges, coordinate state agency outreach to ensure that all at risk families receive child development and parenting materials appropriate to their reading levels.
- Since children of divorce, domestic violence and abuse/neglect will likely be involved with the judicial system, formalize a partnership with the CT Judicial Branch to provide professional development on the neuroscience of early brain development.

Indicator 2: Well-Child Health Care for Low Income Children



Story behind the baseline: The failure to obtain regular well-child health care and developmental screening can result in lost opportunities to identify and address early development challenges that may impair brain architecture as well as cognitive, language and even social-emotional development. According to federal EPSDT standards, well-

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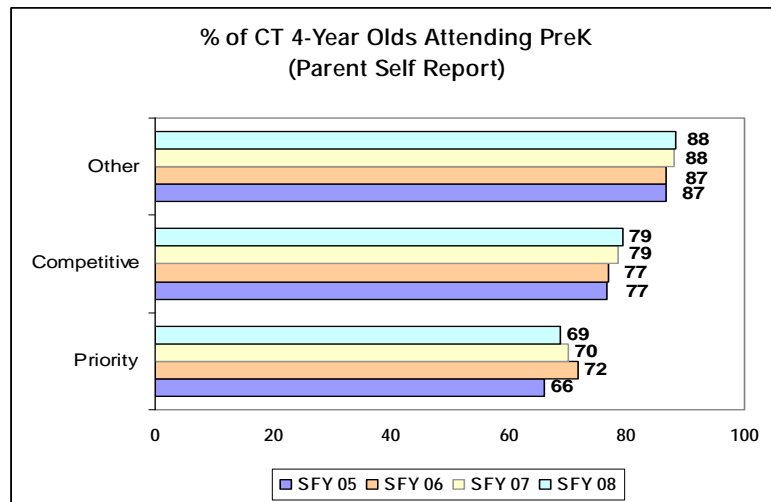
child visits should occur at 2-4 days, at 2 weeks, then at 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15 and 18 months of life.

In 2006, 42% of CT infants continuously enrolled in HUSKY did not receive all required visits. Also in 2006, just 58 infants had a record of receiving a developmental screen. In 2007, HUSKY records indicate that just 48 of the 1635 infants continuously enrolled received a developmental screen. In 2007, 76% of children ages 2 to 5 years received at least one well child visit, but fewer than 2% had an encounter record for developmental testing. Among 3 to 5 year olds enrolled in HUSKY in 2006, only 20% received preventive dental care.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

- Several initiatives are being implemented to increase HUSKY utilization. SFY 07 data should be reviewed annually to track expected increases in well-child visits for very young children. If parents are required to cover additional costs of child health care in HUSKY, SFY 10 data should be quickly reviewed to determine if this serves as a disincentive to enrollment or participation.
- The Governor's proposed budget for SFY 10 and 11 eliminates funding for ongoing external HUSKY data analyses. State, philanthropic and/or federal funds should be examined as a way to restore HUSKY data analyses and reporting.

Indicator 3: Trends in Preschool Attendance

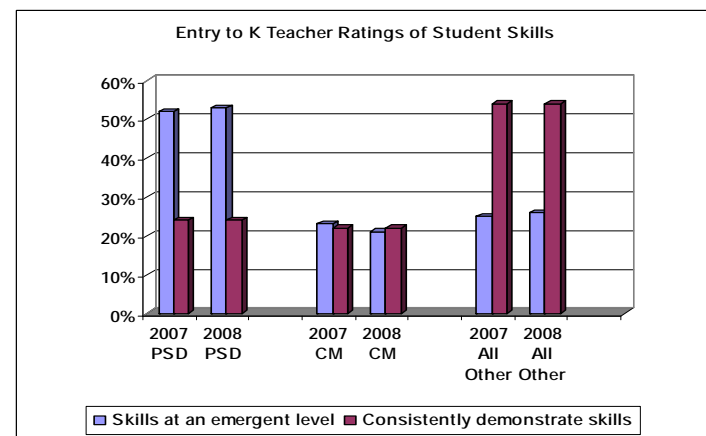


Story behind the baseline: This indicator for preschool attendance is based on parental reporting, includes only 4-year old children, does not differentiate among types of preschool experiences (e.g., full-day v. a two-hour play group), and is not verified for accuracy. Despite these challenges, this indicator confirms that a dramatic gap continues to exist in preschool attendance between children in our most economically challenged towns and those from more affluent towns. This indicator does NOT provide information on the effectiveness of the preschool programs these children attended.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

- The SDE Pre-Kindergarten Information System (PKIS) and Public School Information System (PSIS) are being examined to determine how they can carry more complete data on the specific preschool attended by entering kindergartners. This information should be extracted and analyzed as part of the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS).
- Work should continue, with consultation from the national Taking Stock Accountability Project, to determine the quality and effectiveness of preschool, beginning with the facilities currently receiving state funding of any kind.
- Next-stage development of the proposed Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for preschool and child care programs should continue and can be funded by federal stimulus funding available shortly.

Indicator 4: 2007 and 2008 Skill Assessment of Entering Kindergartners



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Story behind the baseline: Kindergarten teachers continued their annual October assessment of student skills, according to one of three Performance Levels for each of six readiness domains (Creative; Physical/Motor; Personal/Social; Language; Numeracy; Literacy):

- **Performance Level 1 (PL1):** Students at this level demonstrate emerging skills in the specified domain and require a large degree of instructional support.
- **Performance Level 2 (PL2):** Students at this level inconsistently demonstrate the skills in the specified domain and require some instructional support.
- **Performance Level 3 (PL3):** Students at this level consistently demonstrate the skills in the specified domain and require minimal instructional support

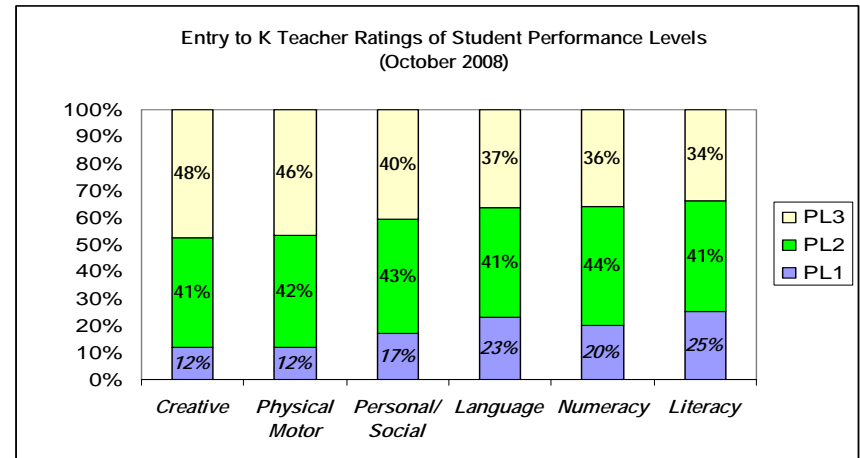
Results from this fall's 2008 Entry to K Inventory show no change from 2007 scores reported in the Cabinet's prior RBA presentation. Within Priority School Districts, just over 50% of entering kindergartners were rated at the lowest skill level. Conversely, just over 50% of students in 110 more affluent districts consistently demonstrated expected skills across the domains. NOTE: Nearly 5,000 entering kindergartners from the Priority and Competitive districts DO demonstrate consistently high skill levels at entry to K.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

- Since there will likely be no new funding through the state School Readiness funding Program in the coming biennium, effort must focus on parents to inform them of the knowledge, skills and behaviors expected of entering kindergartners. Partner with: (a) all state agencies now serving vulnerable families; (b) family support and literacy projects reaching parents across the state; and (c) sectors from which parents "naturally" obtain information, specifically the pediatric and faith communities.
- The Cabinet will work with SDE to obtain and analyze data on those children from vulnerable circumstances who do demonstrate higher skill levels at entry to K.
- SDE will specify those commercial curricula already available that correlate with the CT Preschool Curriculum Frameworks and provide that information annually to all preschool programs receiving any state or federal funds.
- The Cabinet, or other early childhood coordinating and accountability entity, will continue to focus effort on assuring age-appropriate development of children from birth to three years such that children *do not enter preschool* with delays, especially in language development

- Work with SDE, DHE and other early education stakeholders *and* TA from the national Taking Stock Initiative to (a) establish the validity and reliability of the current Entry to K Inventory or (b) propose more appropriate child assessment tools for use beginning in the fall of 2010.

Indicator 5: Snapshot of Entry to K Teacher Ratings by Domain (NEW)



Story behind the baseline: In the normal course of development, student skill levels will vary across readiness domains in the first five years of life. However, the fall 2008 Entry to K teacher assessment indicates that just over one third of public school kindergartners consistently demonstrated the expected skills (PL3) in the critical domains of language and literacy. Just four in ten consistently demonstrated personal/social skills such that only minimal kindergarten teacher classroom support would be required. Language, literacy and numeracy were the three domains in which teachers found between 20% and 25% of students at the most basic level of skill.

Proposed action to turn the curve:

- The skills measured by the Entry to K Inventory are taken from the CT Preschool Curriculum Framework. SDE will establish a formal professional development plan for preschool teachers anchored in developmentally-appropriate pedagogy and based upon this Framework. This plan will focus first on the development of language, literacy and numeracy knowledge and skill development.