



Options to complete the Miami-Dade population measure of child outcomes.

In June 2023, the IDEAS Consortium published an initial policy brief calling attention to the need to improve holistic measurement in kindergarten to inform early childhood systems that support young children's well-being and school readiness in Miami-Dade County: *Moving towards a holistic community measure of kindergarten readiness* ([IDEAS-04](#)). This brief takes the next step and describes initial community-level measures created to characterize school readiness within the context of broader community risks and assets. This step included linking and mapping available administrative data from State-mandated Kindergarten academic readiness scores, U.S. Census neighborhood indicators, and childcare registry data. We describe the countywide tool created from this work; however, we argue that to measure children's development holistically, additional indicators such as social-emotional and physical skills are needed.

Progress to date: A baseline measure and co-construction of contextualized community profiles.

The measure is being developed collaboratively with system-level data providers and a learning community of diverse community-based lead organizations (CBOs). Using a baseline of "Kindergarten Readiness outcomes," including scores for academic skills defined as essential by the State of Florida, the University of Miami and CBOs co-created community profiles (see image at right). All local area profiles, vetted by CBOs, are being made available separately.

Options: What should a holistic measure accomplish?

Florida's state-required preschool assessments measure academic skills, however, fail to provide a comprehensive picture of school readiness. See *Florida preschool measure shows promise for building a population measure* ([IDEAS-05](#), June 2023). A holistic measure would not only guide schools for academic achievement but would inform service providers and local communities regarding improving early childhood systems, neighborhood-level resources, and policies that strengthen families and long-term child outcomes.

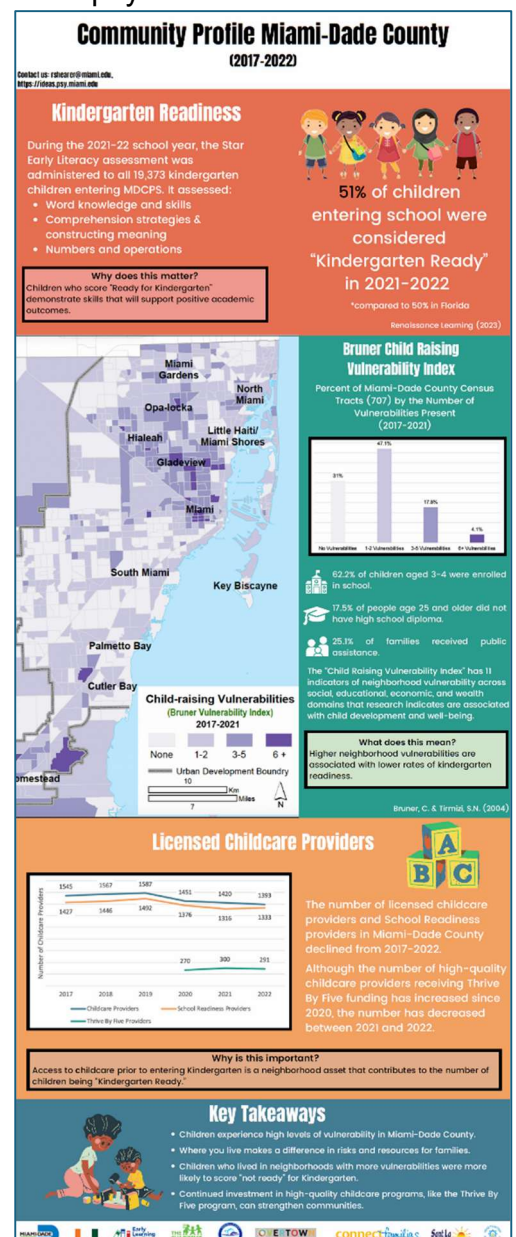
A holistic population measure should extend beyond just academic assessments. Additional factors in the community profiles include:

- The Bruner Child-Raising Vulnerability Index integrates 11 neighborhood-level Census indicators across social, educational, economic, and wealth domains that research shows to be associated with child development and well-being.¹
- The supply of affordable and high-quality childcare is also essential;² we include administrative childcare registry data.

Yet other measures are not readily available on a large scale, such as informal childcare and additional neighborhood and child development indicators. The strategy for adding new layers to our baseline is complex and is explored on the next page.

¹ Bruner, C. (2017). *ACE, place, race, and poverty: Building hope for children*. *Academic pediatrics*, 17(7), S123-S129.

² Shonkoff, J. P., Phillips, D. A., & National Research Council. (2000). *Growing up in childcare*. In *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. National Academies Press (US).



Community profiles illustrate Kindergarten Readiness in relation to child vulnerability factors and available services. Local profiles focus on areas defined by CBOs.

Assessing children's development in context: Towards a holistic measure.

Child well-being, as described in our earlier [briefs](#), is influenced by contextual factors at the family, school, and neighborhood levels. This page reviews four measurement tools that capture indicators across these levels. A holistic measure of early childhood development for children transitioning into K-12 education will extend beyond available Kindergarten academic assessments that focus on literacy, reading, and mathematics skills.

Student assessments

The Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) Star Early Literacy is used to monitor student progress and inform instruction beginning in VPK. FAST is used in any early learning program accepting the VPK voucher. FAST administration continues throughout a student's K-12 career. In **Kindergarten**, **academic readiness scores** include scores from the FAST STAR early literacy, reading and mathematics tests administered to students in public kindergarten.

Screeners

Developmental screeners are used by early learning providers to assess whether children are on track in multiple domains of **child global development**. The Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) was adopted by several funders and grantees in Miami-Dade; expanded use would be vital to ensure representative samples.

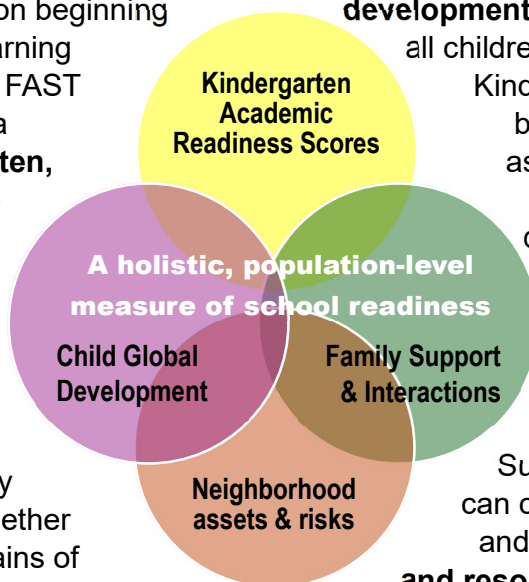
To move forward on a holistic population-based measure, some combination of tools must be identified, piloted, and validated with a diverse representative sample of Miami-Dade County children. Neighborhood-specific indicators may not be fully captured in Census data, especially for under-represented immigrant communities. A focus on hard-to-reach families will require innovative sampling methodologies but may be addressed in the administration of parent or teacher surveys.

Teacher surveys

Validated instruments allow the collection of common data across multiple **child global development** domains, potentially reaching all children in a school. Though Florida Kindergarten teachers are already burdened with required student assessments, random sampling procedures could reduce time demands and allow for piloting validation of the measure across diverse populations.

Parent surveys

Surveys of Kindergarten parents can collect data on **family support and neighborhood assets, risks and resources**. Attention to methods is vital to achieve a representative sample of parents, accurately reflecting local families and communities.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Local policy. The IDEAS Consortium should carefully evaluate available tools—parent surveys, teacher surveys, and screeners—and pilot survey data in Spring 2025. Consensus recommendations on a viable and sustainable child measure should then be made by systems and CBO partners through a policy brief and public event.

State policy. Based on this work, the IDEAS Consortium should then work with state partners to inform state policy regarding the potential development and implementation of a more holistic statewide assessment of School Readiness to include “life skills that build confidence, support mental and emotional health, and enable students to overcome challenges” (Florida Statutes, Sec. 1003.43(2)(o)4, Required Instruction).

Research. The Consortium should publish community profiles, appropriately contextualized by system and CBO partners, and continue to engage national research expertise in design and validation of the measure.

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