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INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

# School Readiness and Health



First Edition, 2006



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This *Instructor's Guide* is a supplement for trainers of the California Training Institute's curriculum for Child Care Health Advocates.

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOL READINESS AND HEALTH MODULE

This *Instructor's Guide* provides trainers with an outline for the teaching of the *School Readiness and Health* module. Participants will be introduced to the concept of school readiness and will learn about the importance of health to school readiness. Participants will learn how Child Care Health Advocates (CCHAs) can support best practices for the promotion of school readiness in their own early care and education (ECE) programs. In addition, CCHAs can influence families and programs in the wider community, which can, in turn, increase children's readiness for kindergarten.

## Learning Objectives:

1. To define school readiness.
2. To identify the links between health and school readiness.
3. To describe how quality of care in ECE programs improves children's readiness for school.
4. To describe how CCHAs can play a role in the preparation of a child's school readiness.

## Primary Messages:

1. School readiness means involving communities, families, schools and ECE programs in the effort to focus on giving children what they need to be successful in kindergarten.
2. Being successful in kindergarten requires having good health and age-appropriate motor skills; emotional and social development that enables positive peer relationships; the ability to express oneself and have positive peer relations; the ability to pay attention and follow basic instructions; readiness to learn letters and their sounds; knowledge about shapes and objects; and positive feelings about learning.
3. Quality ECE programs greatly improve school readiness. CCHAs can promote an emphasis on school readiness in their ECE programs by following best practices in the field of ECE.
4. In California, the First 5 School Readiness Initiative (SRI) provides funding opportunities to promote good physical, social and emotional development in children from birth to 5 years of age.
5. Physical health and social-emotional health have a significant impact on school readiness.

## Materials and Equipment Needed:

1. Copy of module: *School Readiness and Health*
2. Copy of *Instructor's Guide: School Readiness and Health*
3. Flip chart/whiteboard and markers, or chalkboard and chalk
4. Masking tape for posting flip chart paper
5. LCD projector or overhead projector
6. Computer for PowerPoint slides
7. CDs of slides or transparencies
8. Handouts in the *Instructor's Guide*

Appendix Title	Appendix Number
<i>School Readiness Case Scenarios</i>	18A
<i>Using the School Readiness and Health Module</i>	18B

## SUGGESTED TRAINING OUTLINE

Outline	Method	Time (Minutes)
I. Introduction to the School Readiness and Health Module	—	10
A. Assessment of Group Knowledge	Questioning	3
B. Introduction/Rationale to School Readiness and Health	Lecture	7
II. School Readiness and Health	—	50
A. What Is School Readiness?	Large Group Discussion	10
B. The School Readiness and Health Connection	Small Group Activity	15
C. The Role of the CCHA in Promoting School Readiness	Large Group Discussion	15
D. Linkage to Health Services and Resources	Small Group Activity	10
III. Summary and Closure	—	10–20
A. <i>Optional: Using the School Readiness and Health Module</i>	<i>Small Group Activity</i>	<i>10</i>
B. Next Steps for the CCHA	Large Group Discussion	5
C. Summary and Closure	Brief Closing Activity	5

Total time: 70–80 minutes

# OUTLINE AND INSTRUCTIONS

## School Readiness and Health

### I. Introduction to the School Readiness and Health Module

#### A. **Topic:** Assessment of Group Knowledge

**Method:** Questioning

**Instructions:**

1. Ask participants several of the following questions, choosing questions most appropriate for your participants. Ask them to raise their hand if they:
  - Are currently in the role of the CCHA.
  - Have heard the term *school readiness*.
  - Know the components of school readiness.
2. Ask participants to describe what they do to help children feel confident. To help develop their communication skills? Their social skills? Their fine and gross motor skills? Their ability to recognize shapes and letters?
3. Ask participants how many of them read to the children in their care.

#### B. **Topic:** Introduction/Rationale to School Readiness and Health

**Method:** Lecture

**Instructions:**

1. Give participants the following information:
  - a. At the national and statewide level, much attention has focused on when and how children become “ready” for school and how to adequately prepare schools for children starting kindergarten.
  - b. Physical health plays an important role in school readiness because children who are not physically healthy may have a difficult time getting used to school due to frequent absences and distractions, such as pain associated with dental cavities. Basic health needs must be met before important learning can begin. ECE providers can help families get the health care their children need.
  - c. In addition to physical health, social and emotional development is also an important part of school readiness (Thompson, 2002). Research in early childhood development clearly shows that intellectual, social-emotional and physical development are all related to each other (National Research Council, 2001). If ECE and health providers can identify children who have difficulties with physical or behavioral problems, children may get help to deal with these problems before they enter kindergarten.
  - d. It is very important for CCHAs to understand what school readiness is and how ECE programs can help children become ready for school. This module introduces participants to their role as CCHAs, as well as to the important role they play in getting children ready for kindergarten, no matter what the age of the children they care for.

## II. School Readiness and Health

### A. **Topic:** What Is School Readiness?

**Method:** Large Group Discussion

**Instructions:**

1. State that many people think school readiness is having what you need for school and knowing your ABCs, but it is actually related more to child development, to helping children develop all parts of themselves in healthy ways and to supporting children during the important transition to kindergarten. Ask participants what they think school readiness is.
2. Review participants' ideas and categorize them into school readiness in the children themselves, a school's readiness for young children and what communities do to promote the healthy development of children.
  - a. Ask participants what school readiness is in children. Refer to *What Is School Readiness?* and *Readiness of Children* on page 2 of the module.
    - i. If these signs of school readiness from the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) (1997) are not mentioned, review them with the group.
      - a) Physical Well-Being (Good Health) and Age-Appropriate Gross and Fine Motor Skills: For example, the child can hold a pencil.
      - b) Emotional and Social Development: The child has the ability to understand the emotions of others and to interpret and express his or her own feelings. The child can get along with peers and has positive social behaviors.
      - c) Language Development: The child has listening and speaking skills and print awareness (the knowledge that printed words have meaning).
      - d) Cognition and General Knowledge: The child has knowledge about the properties of specific objects and knowledge gained from looking across objects, events or people for similarities, differences and associations.
      - e) Positive Feelings about Learning: The child has curiosity, enthusiasm and persistence regarding tasks.
    - ii. Summarize by saying that school readiness is the preparedness of children to be able to learn in school, to get along with others and to have the skills and capacities necessary to be successful in the school environment.
  - b. Ask participants to describe what school readiness is in schools. Refer to page 3 of the module.
  - c. Ask participants what school readiness in communities looks like. Refer to page 4 of the module.
3. Review Table 1 on page 5 of the module.
4. Give participants information about the First 5 California SRI (page 4 in module).

### B. **Topic:** The School Readiness and Health Connection

**Method:** Small Group Activity

**Instructions:**

1. Ask participants to describe the ways in which health impacts school readiness.
2. Break participants into small groups and direct them to *Appendix 18A*. Ask them to read the cases and answer the questions in small groups.

3. Reconvene the large group and discuss the relationship between health and school readiness in these scenarios.

C. **Topic:** The Role of the CCHA in Promoting School Readiness

**Method:** Large Group Discussion

**Instructions:**

1. State that children's skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and their experiences in ECE programs (Maxwell & Clifford, 2004). Research has shown that children who have attended high-quality ECE programs had better school readiness, better language comprehension and fewer behavior problems than children who did not attend high-quality ECE programs (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD] Early Child Care Research Network, 2002; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 1999; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2001).
2. Review the research findings on the impact of ECE programs on school readiness in Table 2 (page 7 in module).
3. Refer to the signs of school readiness in children listed in Section IIA. Ask participants how they promote these qualities in their settings.
4. State that although many of the tasks just discussed apply to all ECE providers, the CCHA has a special leadership role. CCHAs should:
  - a. Be aware of local school readiness programs.
  - b. Provide resources to ECE staff and families.
  - c. Train ECE staff on school readiness.
  - d. Link with local public elementary schools.
  - e. Encourage a focus on school readiness.
  - f. Use best practices.
5. State that CCHAs can promote best practices on the part of their program. Ask participants to review Table 3 on page 10 of the module. Ask them to circle which practices they presently engage in and to discuss which practices they would like to begin in their setting. Ask participants which of the best practices they have circled, and ask them to describe how they conduct these services.
6. Tell participants about the *Quality in Early Care and Education* module, which is another resource for CCHAs to support school readiness.

D. **Topic:** Linkage to Health Services and Resources

**Method:** Small Group Activity

**Instructions:**

1. State that an important role that CCHAs perform is to link families to services and resources. State that families often have not identified a need for services or are unfamiliar with them. ECE providers may be the first to identify a need for services and may have a considerable amount of influence on the family of a child in their care.
2. Divide participants into small groups. Direct participants to the *Activity* on page 11 of the module. Have them fill out the grid. Encourage participants to share resources and strategies for developing linkages. Reconvene the groups.



**If you have experienced CCHAs in the room, do the following:**

Break into small groups. Either have the experienced CCHAs together in a separate group or have at least one experienced CCHA in each group. Ask the experienced CCHAs to describe how they promote:

- physical well-being (good health) and motor skills
- emotional and social development
- language development
- cognition and general knowledge
- positive feelings about learning

III. Summary and Closure

*A. **Optional Topic:** Using the School Readiness and Health Module*

***Method:** Small Group Activity*

***Instructions:***

1. *Explain to the participants that the curriculum is a rich resource for them and encourage them to become familiar with it. Towards this end, spend a few minutes looking through it together. Explain that participants will work in pairs to go through the module to find the answers to these questions.*
2. *Hand out Appendix 18B. Tell the participants they have 5 to 10 minutes to locate the answers.*
3. *Note to Trainer: Participants may feel that this is “busy work.” Let them know that our goal is to use our time today to give them new tools and resources, and the curriculum is one such resource. Explain that becoming familiar with the curriculum is one way to help them determine how they will improve quality in their setting.*

**B. Topic:** Next Steps for the CCHA

**Method:** Large Group Discussion

**Instructions:**

1. State that participants have learned about what school readiness is and how ECE programs can promote it. Review the ways a CCHA can impact school readiness. Direct participants to think about some possible areas of improvement in their setting and about possible next steps. Ask the group to generate a list of possible next steps for improving school readiness of the children in their care.

**C. Topic:** Summary and Closure

**Method:** Brief Closing Activity

**Instructions:**

1. Summarize the key points shared by participants. Review the components of school readiness.
2. **Next Steps:** Direct participants to write down one next step they will take as a result of this training. Ask them to share this with the group.

# APPENDIX 18A

## School Readiness Case Scenarios

### Instructions:

Read the cases and answer the questions below for each case.

1. Sammy, a 3-year-old child with non-English-speaking parents, speaks very little English. You are not sure how much of his native language he speaks. He has been in your care for more than 2 years, and you have noticed that he has more colds than other children. Sometimes he tugs at his ears and seems to be somewhat unpredictable in mood.
2. Katrina is a 4-year-old child who is constantly in motion and who rarely sits still. She bumps into things and seems to fall a bit. She does not like to draw or color and has some difficulty gripping a pencil.
3. Michael is a 4-year-old child who is very engaged in everything he does and hates to be interrupted. He is very large and unaware of how he can intimidate other children. He loves to play with other children as long as he gets his way. “Circle time” is hard for him.
4. Roslyn is sick a lot and misses a lot of child care. It is hard to communicate with her parents, as they have three other children and both work full-time. You do not know what is happening with Roslyn or what kind of medical care she receives. You know her parents do not have health insurance.
5. Rosa drinks a lot of orange juice and is not hungry for lunch at lunchtime.

### Questions for Discussion:

1. What questions should be considered regarding this child’s health?
2. What could prevent this child from being ready for school? What aspect of school readiness would be impacted (e.g., peer relationships and interactions, physical health, fine and gross motor skills, ability to follow instructions or pay attention, ability to learn shapes and letters)?
3. What actions need to be taken by the CCHA or teacher?

# APPENDIX 18B

## Using the School Readiness and Health Module

**Topic:** Using the School Readiness and Health Module

**Method:** Small Group Activity

**Instructions:** Review the module and find the answers to the following questions.

According to the module:

1. How does the First 5 California School Readiness Initiative (SRI) work?
2. Does a delay in starting kindergarten help children be more successful in school?
3. What do “ready schools” do to support the learning and development of young children?
4. Do all counties in California have a school readiness program?