

# Transition to kindergarten evaluation

*Rochester Even Start Family Literacy  
Program (Hand in Hand)*

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(Hand in Hand)*

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# Contents

Summary .....	1
Introduction.....	3
Background on Rochester Even Start program (Hand in Hand).....	3
Purpose of the study .....	3
Study methods.....	3
Survey results.....	5
Parent survey results .....	5
Kindergarten teacher survey results.....	10
Issues to consider .....	13
References.....	17
Appendix.....	19
Kindergarten teacher survey results.....	21
Parent survey.....	22
Kindergarten teacher survey .....	28

# Figures

1. Hand in Hand program helpfulness in kindergarten preparation.....	6
2. Ways in which Hand in Hand parents prepared their child for kindergarten .....	7
3. Hand in Hand parents' participation in school activities and events, 2008-09 school year .....	9

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# Summary

The Rochester Even Start Family Literacy Program (Hand in Hand) integrates parent education, adult literacy, early childhood education, and parent-child interactive literacy activities into one comprehensive program. A focused inquiry evaluation of the program was conducted to identify transition to kindergarten activities that are helping Hand in Hand children and families, and ways transition to and preparation for kindergarten could be improved. The study obtained the views of 14 parents and 5 kindergarten teachers regarding program aspects or activities that have been helpful in the transition to kindergarten and ways that the transition might be improved.

## *Survey highlights*

Survey results indicate that parents value the Hand in Hand program. Most parents surveyed reported that the program is helpful in preparing them and their child for the transition to kindergarten. Alternatively, most kindergarten teachers surveyed are unaware of the Hand in Hand program, what the program does, or who participates in it.

- All parents reported preparing their child for kindergarten by participating in program- and school-related events and doing readiness activities at home.
- Most parents indicated that their child likes or liked kindergarten a lot and is doing or did very well in it.
- Most parents reported being engaged in their child's educational experience by talking to their child about school, reading information from school, and participating in school events and activities.
- The majority of parents said they know what to do or who to talk to if they have questions about school issues such as transportation or kindergarten placement.
- Most kindergarten teachers indicated they are unfamiliar with the Hand in Hand program or which students (and families) in their class participated in the program.
- Most kindergarten teachers reported they would like Hand in Hand staff and parents to better understand the rigorous nature of the kindergarten curriculum.
- Most kindergarten teachers indicated they would appreciate receiving assessment results and useful strategies in working with individual children and families from Hand in Hand staff.

## ***Potential areas for program development***

Parent survey results suggest that the Hand in Hand program is doing well in preparing participants for kindergarten. Kindergarten teacher survey results suggest that little attention is currently placed on collaborating and sharing information with teachers who have Hand in Hand students in their classroom. Based on these results, the Hand in Hand program may want to consider focusing transition activities more on developing working relationships with kindergarten teachers, schools, and other partners in the future.

Program staff might consider the following suggestions in developing these relationships:

- *Share programmatic information with and learn more about local kindergarten programs.* This could include information on curriculum, activities, and expectations.
- *Encourage continuity between pre-school and kindergarten programs.* Visits to the kindergarten and Hand in Hand classrooms; joint trainings or collaborative meetings; and the integration of routines and activities from the other program all could contribute to increased continuity.
- *Discuss entering kindergarten student's strengths and needs with school staff.* Hand in Hand staff could put together a portfolio of information on each child entering kindergarten and meet with school staff to discuss each child's strengths and needs, in person.
- *Facilitate interactions among parents, kindergarten teachers, schools, and relevant community agencies.* The Hand in Hand program has the opportunity to take on a leadership role in the further development and implementation of a kindergarten transition program or network.

# Introduction

## *Background on Rochester Even Start program (Hand in Hand)*

The Rochester Even Start Family Literacy Program (Hand in Hand) integrates parent education, adult literacy, early childhood education, and parent-child interactive literacy activities into one comprehensive program. The program began in 1993 and is located at the Hawthorne Education Center and Riverside Central Elementary School. It is offered free of charge to families who meet the following eligibility criteria: 1) have a child aged newborn to seven years, 2) have an income that would qualify them for the free or reduced lunch program, and 3) at least one parent has not completed high school or passed the GED exam. Funding for the program is provided by the Rochester school district's Early Childhood and Family Education program, the Adult Literacy Program, Title 1, and an Even Start grant.

## *Purpose of the study*

A focused inquiry evaluation was conducted to identify transition to kindergarten activities that are helping Hand in Hand children and families, and ways transition to and preparation for kindergarten could be improved. The study obtained the views of parents and kindergarten teachers regarding program aspects or activities that have been helpful in the transition to kindergarten and ways that the transition might be improved.

## *Study methods*

### **Telephone survey of parents**

In April 2009, a telephone survey was conducted with both former and current Hand in Hand participants who have a child that entered kindergarten in fall 2006, 2007 or 2008. Twenty-six parents were eligible to participate in the evaluation and 14 completed the survey for a response rate of 54 percent. Invalid contact information was the most common reason eligible parents were not included in the evaluation. If a parent had more than one child who enrolled in kindergarten between 2006 and 2008, she was asked to answer the survey questions regarding the child who had entered kindergarten most recently. Survey questions can be found in the Appendix.



### **Self-administered paper survey of kindergarten teachers**

Also during April 2009, paper surveys were completed by Rochester public school kindergarten teachers identified by the Hand in Hand program. Teachers who had at least one Hand in Hand child in their classroom during the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years were eligible to participate in the evaluation. Five kindergarten teachers met these criteria and five completed the survey for a response rate of 100 percent. The total number of Hand in Hand children these teachers had in their classroom between 2006 and 2009 ranged from two to four. The survey is included in the Appendix.

# Survey results

Results from the parent survey are summarized below, followed by results from the kindergarten teacher survey. Finally, issues to consider in further program planning and development are included.

## *Parent survey results*

Parents were asked to comment on their and their child's experiences with the Hand in Hand program and their child's school. They were also asked to provide suggestions for Hand in Hand program improvement regarding transition to kindergarten services.

### **Parents' background information**

Parents were asked if they are currently enrolled in any educational or training programs, their employment status, and if they have had another child attend kindergarten in the United States besides the child who this survey is about. Most parents (71%) reported that they are not currently enrolled in any educational or training programs besides Hand in Hand. Those that are enrolled in other programs specified English language, adult basic education, or other community classes. Almost one-third (29%) of parents indicated they are employed full-time, an additional 29 percent are employed part-time, and a final 29 percent are at home full-time. Just one parent reported that she is unemployed and looking for work and one is a full-time student (7% each). Half of all parents who responded have a child who entered kindergarten in fall 2008, 29 percent have a child who started kindergarten in fall 2007, and 21 percent of parents have a child that attended kindergarten in fall 2006. Most parents (71%) indicated that this survey is in reference to their first child to attend kindergarten in the U.S.

### **Value of participation in Hand in Hand**

Parents were asked if their child's participation in the Hand in Hand program helped prepare him or her for kindergarten. Parents were given a four point scale (a lot, some, a little or not at all), and 86 percent reported that the program had helped their child prepare for kindergarten "a lot." All parents indicated that it had helped their child prepare either "a lot" or "some" (Figure 1). When asked to elaborate on what the Hand in Hand program did that was especially helpful in preparing their child for kindergarten, many parents reported that their child learned the alphabet including the sounds of each letter and how to write his or her name. Another common response was that the child improved his or her social skills such as getting along and communicating with others. Fewer parents reported that their child learned English, to count, or the names of colors and shapes.

Below are selected examples of what parents reported their child learned from the Hand in Hand program in preparation for kindergarten:

- 1) To learn how to count up to 100. 2) He learned his ABC's.
- 1) To identify letters. He was advanced when he got to kindergarten. 2) To get along and communicate with other children.
- 1) They got him to write his names. 2) Introduced him to colors and shapes. 3) Taught him how to be nice and good to others.
- 1) She picked up English very fast. 2) She learned to get along with other children.

Similarly, parents were asked how much they had learned from the Hand in Hand program about preparing their child for kindergarten. Using the same four-point scale (a lot, some, a little or not at all), 79 percent of parents indicated that the program had helped them learn “a lot,” and all parents said the program had helped them learn either “a lot” or “some” about how to prepare their child for kindergarten (Figure 1). Again, parents were asked to comment on what they had learned from the program that was especially helpful in preparing their child. Almost all parents indicated that they had learned how to be a better parent. Many parents specifically mentioned that they had learned about the importance of reading to their child regularly and that parents are children’s teacher at home. Other parents reported skills they had learned such as English, reading, writing, and how to fill out a job application. One parent mentioned that the Hand in Hand program had taught them what kindergarten is like and what to expect on the first day.

The following are examples of what parents learned from the Hand in Hand program about preparing their child for kindergarten:

- The importance of teaching how to read on a daily basis and that the mothers are the first teachers our children have.
- How to be a parent, to be patient, scheduling time, and how to read every night.
- How kindergarten is, what to expect the first day of kindergarten, and how to let go of my child for the first time from home.

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### 1. Hand in Hand program helpfulness in kindergarten preparation

N=14	A lot	Some	A little	Not at all
Did your child’s participation in the Hand in Hand program help prepare him or her for kindergarten?	86%	14%	-	-
How much did you (parent) learn from the Hand in Hand program about preparing your child for kindergarten?	79%	21%	-	-

## Parent's preparation of child for kindergarten

Parents were read a list of recommended kindergarten preparation activities (Amwake, 2003; Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2000; Riedinger, 1997; Vermont Early Childhood Work Group, 2003) and were asked to indicate which activities they had done before their child started kindergarten. All parents reported that they had registered their child for kindergarten the academic year before he or she was to begin, talked with Hand in Hand staff about the transition to kindergarten, and did activities with their child to improve his or her readiness skills such as counting or naming colors and shapes. Additionally, most parents visited a kindergarten classroom, read with their child regularly, and talked with family or friends about kindergarten (86%-93%). Also, nearly 80 percent of parents attended school-related events such as open house or orientation (Figure 2). Overall, these findings suggest that Hand in Hand parents are actively preparing their child for kindergarten.

### 2. Ways in which Hand in Hand parents prepared their child for kindergarten

Activity N=14	Responding "yes"	
	Number	Percent
Registered child for kindergarten the academic year before he or she was to start kindergarten	14	100%
Did other activities to improve the child's readiness skills such as counting or naming colors and shapes, etc.	14	100%
Talked with Hand in Hand staff about the transition to kindergarten	13	100% <sup>a</sup>
Visited a kindergarten classroom	13	93%
Read with child regularly	12	86%
Talked with friends or family about the transition to kindergarten	12	86%
Attended school-related events such as Kindergarten Open House, Kick off to K, or the Yellow School Bus class	11	79%
Something else	6	46%

<sup>a</sup> One respondent answered "don't know."

### Suggestions for program development

When parents were asked what the Hand in Hand program could have done to make their child better prepared for kindergarten, the majority responded that everything was great or nothing else could have been done. One parent expressed that longer hours would have been beneficial and another responded that the program should become better known in the community, especially the Latino community. Finally, three parents indicated that they would have liked the program to spend more time on a specific skill or activity including counting, sitting still, and parent-child interaction time.

Parents were also asked what the Hand in Hand program could have done to make them better prepared when their child entered kindergarten. Again, almost all parents did not have a suggestion for improvement or stated that the program was very good, did more than enough, and catered to the needs of families. One parent suggested that the program have more parent meetings, such as once a month. Overall, these findings suggest that parents are satisfied with what they and their children have learned from the Hand in Hand program regarding how to prepare for kindergarten.

### **School experience**

Parents were asked a series of questions regarding their child's kindergarten experience as well as their participation in their child's school and education. Since three cohorts of students are represented in this evaluation, half of parents had to reference their child's kindergarten experience from one or two years ago (i.e., their child is currently in first or second grade). The other half of parents have a child that currently attends kindergarten. For questions regarding school or educational involvement in general, parents were asked to respond for the current academic year.

### **Child's kindergarten experience**

Parents were asked how much their child likes or liked kindergarten on a four-point scale (a lot, some, a little or not at all). Most parents (86%) indicated that their child likes or liked kindergarten "a lot" and 14 percent reported that their child likes or liked it either "some" or "a little." The parent who reported that her child liked kindergarten only "a little" explained that her child felt lost or not included in class due to a language barrier. No parent reported that their child does or did not like kindergarten at all.

Similarly, parents were asked how well their child is or was doing in kindergarten (very well, somewhat well, a little well or not at all well). Again, most parents (86%) reported that their child is or was doing "very well" and 14 percent indicated "somewhat well." No parent said their child is or was doing only "a little well" or "not at all well." These findings suggest that, from the parents' perspective, most Hand in Hand children like kindergarten a lot and are doing very well in it.

### **Parent's involvement with child's education**

Parents were asked about how often they talk with their child about what he or she is learning in school this academic year. They were given four options (almost every day, once or twice a week, one to three times a month or less than once a month), and most parents (71%) reported that they talk with their child about school "almost every day." Fewer parents said "once or twice a week" or "one to three times a month" (14% each), indicating that all parents speak about school with their child at least monthly.

In addition to talking with their child, parents were asked how often they read the information that their child brings home from school (always, usually, sometime, rarely or never). Half of parents indicated that they “usually” read the announcements and notes that their child brings home and 43 percent said they do so “always.” Just 7 percent of parents indicated that they only “sometimes” read school-related information and no parents said that they “rarely or never” do. These findings suggest that during this school year, most Hand in Hand parents report being engaged in their child’s educational experience at home.

### Parent’s involvement at school

When parents were asked if they feel welcome at the school their child attends or attended in kindergarten, 100 percent responded yes. Parents were then read a list of common school events and activities and all parents reported that they or their spouse had participated in at least one such event this academic year. Almost all parents attended parent-teacher conferences (93%) and most have attended family events such as open house (71%). Half of parents attended a student performance or program, and fewer volunteered at school or were part of a parent committee (42% and 36%, respectively), as shown in Figure 3. More parents who indicated that this survey is about their first child to attend kindergarten in the U.S. reported volunteering at school (50% vs. 25%), while slightly more parents who have had another children attend kindergarten in the U.S. reported participating in a parent committee (50% vs. 30%).

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### 3. Hand in Hand parents’ participation in school activities and events, 2008-09 school year

Activity N=14	Responding “yes”	
	Number	Percent
Parent-teacher conferences	13	93%
Family events such as open house	10	71%
Student performances or programs	7	50%
Volunteer at school, in the classroom or during field trips	6	42%
Parent committees such as PTA/PTO, advisory board, or site council	5	36%
Something else <sup>a</sup>	3	21%

<sup>a</sup> Other activities include a parent workshop, multicultural festival, and reading club.

Finally, parents were asked if they know what to do or who to talk to if they have questions about school issues such as transportation or kindergarten placement and so on. On a four-point scale (always, usually, sometimes, rarely or never), a slim majority (57%) of parents responded that they “always” know what to do or who to talk to. One

parent went on to say that she chose “always” because she talks to Hand in Hand staff before attempting to navigate the school system on her own. The other three responses, “usually,” “sometimes,” and “rarely or never,” were equally divided with 14 percent of parents answering each. Both parents who responded they “rarely or never” know who to contact also indicated that this survey is about their first child to attend kindergarten in the U.S. Alternatively, three-quarters of parents who have had another child attend kindergarten in the U.S. reported that they “always” know what to do or who to call. These findings suggest that there may be a larger learning curve on this topic for parents who have had less experience working with the school system.

## ***Kindergarten teacher survey results***

Kindergarten teachers were asked to express their views on the Hand in Hand program and how prepared Hand in Hand children and families are for kindergarten. Additionally, they were asked to identify ways in which the transition to kindergarten could be strengthened.

### **Teachers’ background information**

Teachers who participated in the evaluation have been teaching kindergarten in Rochester public schools for 4 to 16 years, with an average of 10.4 years. They are currently working at four different elementary schools, including Riverside where the Hand in Hand program is housed. Between 2006 and 2008, three of the teachers had taught two Hand in Hand children each and two teachers had taught four Hand in Hand children each.

### **Transition to kindergarten activities**

According to the literature (Amwake, 2003; Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2000; Riedinger, 1997; Vermont Early Childhood Work Group, 2003), there is a generally agreed upon set of activities that families, schools, pre-schools, and communities can collaborate on in order to help children make a successful transition to kindergarten. Based on this information, a list of the most common and highly recommended activities to encourage a successful kindergarten transition was constructed. Kindergarten teachers were asked to rate each item on the list based on how often they believe it is happening (often enough, not often enough or doesn’t occur). Teachers could also indicate that they “don’t know” how often it occurs.

The first set of items provided to teachers included a list of activities that may occur *before* a Hand in Hand child enters kindergarten. These items included activities such as the following:

- Hand in Hand students, families, and staff visit a kindergarten classroom and attend other school-related transition events such as orientation.

- Kindergarten teachers visit the Hand in Hand classroom.
- Hand in Hand staff and kindergarten staff communicate with each other regarding transition in general and Hand in Hand students and families in particular.
- Hand in Hand staff and kindergarten staff have collaborative meetings regarding transition or joint in-service trainings.

The second set of items on the teacher survey listed activities that may occur *after* a Hand in Hand child enters kindergarten. Examples include the following:

- Hand in Hand staff and families visit or volunteer in the kindergarten classroom and attend school-related events such as open house.
- Hand in Hand staff, families, and kindergarten teachers communicate with each other about how an individual Hand in Hand student is doing.

Results from the survey indicate that most kindergarten teachers are unfamiliar with the Hand in Hand program or which students and families participated in the program. For example, almost all parents (93%) reported that they visited a kindergarten classroom the school year before their child was to attend, but most kindergarten teachers (three of five) indicated that this “doesn’t occur” (one said it happens often enough and one didn’t know). These findings highlight a discrepancy between what parents report they are doing in preparation and what kindergarten teachers are aware of. In fact, for most literature-recommended transition activities included in the survey, most kindergarten teachers indicated that it “doesn’t occur,” while most parents reported that they had participated in such an activity (Figure A1-A2).

Furthermore, kindergarten teacher comments on other parts of the survey indicate that they may not be familiar enough with the Hand in Hand program or participants to answer these questions validly.

[I’m] not familiar with [the] program or what they already do.  
I have never received any information about any of my students participating in this program.

### **Hand in Hand curriculum and kindergarten expectations**

Considering the importance of continuity in times of transition (Amwake, 2003; Riedinger, 1997), kindergarten teachers were asked how familiar they are with the pre-school curriculum offered by the Hand in Hand program (very familiar, somewhat familiar or not familiar). Four in five teachers indicated they were “not familiar” with the



program's curriculum (one chose "don't know"), and all five reported that they "don't know" how aligned the Hand in Hand pre-school and kindergarten curriculums are.

Most teachers were also unsure if Hand in Hand staff understands the expectations that kindergarten teachers have for children and families upon kindergarten entry. When asked to elaborate on what they wish the Hand in Hand staff would understand better, most teachers indicated that they would like staff to understand the rigorous nature of the kindergarten curriculum. Examples of things teachers would like Hand in Hand staff to understand better include the following:

The expectations (academic/social) [are] increasing for kindergarten students. [Kindergarten] students are expected to be able to read and write by the time they exit kindergarten.

The rigorous nature of kindergarten. Academic expectations are increasingly high.

## **Suggestions for program development**

### **Students**

Kindergarten teachers were asked to comment on what skills or activities Hand in Hand children were most and least prepared for academically and socially. Two teachers seemed to understand the question and indicated that Hand in Hand children are most prepared for the alphabet, including upper and lower case letters. Additionally, one teacher stated that Hand in Hand children are familiar with the school setting. Regarding what students are least prepared for, one teacher mentioned letter sounds and counting (four said "don't know" or "it varies").

Throughout the survey, kindergarten teachers listed what they ideally would like incoming kindergarten students to know. These skills include knowledge of letters and the alphabet including the sounds of all consonants and short vowels; ability to write one's name; recognition of numbers and counting to 100; sitting and listening attentively; and treating peers with kindness and respect (one to three teachers each).

### **Parents**

When asked what additional things would be helpful for the Hand in Hand program to do with parents regarding their child's transition to kindergarten or general involvement at school, three teachers responded. All three teachers want parents to understand kindergarten expectations and be active at school. Selected comments regarding parents' role in the kindergarten transition include the following:

Discuss the importance of being active in the school community, by volunteering and attending conferences.

Help parents understand that the academic/social expectations are great in kindergarten and that parents need to be in a *working partnership* with school.

## **Staff**

Finally, teachers were asked to comment on what kind of information (e.g., work samples, assessment results, or useful strategies in working with the child or family) is most helpful to receive about Hand in Hand students before they enter kindergarten. Both teachers who answered the question indicated that assessment results and students' work ethic, or strategies in working with the child would be helpful to receive. Teachers were then asked what additional things would be helpful for the Hand in Hand program to do regarding students' transition to kindergarten. Teachers' responses were more varied on this question; one teacher indicated that she would like Hand in Hand to give children an "academic preschool experience," another suggested that the staff should become familiar with the kindergarten program, and a third teacher would like to meet with or receive an email from staff with information about individual Hand in Hand students.

## ***Issues to consider***

Survey results indicate that parents value the Hand in Hand program, overall. Most parents reported that the program is accommodating, supportive, and helpful in preparing them and their child for the transition to kindergarten. Alternatively, most kindergarten teachers are unaware of the Hand in Hand program, what the program does, or who participates in it. These findings suggest that the program is focusing on meeting the needs of program participants, but may not be doing enough collaborating and sharing of information with kindergarten teachers who have Hand in Hand students in their classroom. Based on these results, the Hand in Hand program may want to consider focusing more on developing working relationships with kindergarten teachers and other partners in the future. There is not a single model of a successful kindergarten transition program for the program to utilize; transition networks vary according to each community's unique strengths and needs. Therefore, the following issues, while focused on developing partnerships, include a variety of ideas and examples for consideration.

## **Share programmatic information with and learn more about local kindergarten programs**

The literature is clear that the development and implementation of a successful kindergarten transition program is a collaborative process (Amwake, 2003; Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2000; Riedinger, 1997; Vermont Early Childhood Work Group, 2003). Some

of the most successful partnerships include early childhood programs, such as Hand in Hand, teachers, principals, support staff, such as guidance counselors or social workers, families, and relevant community partners. This network of support is central to the ongoing process of transition. The Hand in Hand program may want to share programmatic information with and learn more about these partners to help build relationships. Specifically, the program may want to consider the following suggestions for building partnerships with local schools.

- *Share Hand in Hand curriculum and program activities with school staff.* Most kindergarten teachers are unaware of Hand in Hand's goals or services.
- *Learn more about the kindergarten program's curriculum and expectations for students.* Throughout the survey, teachers highlighted the rigorous nature of kindergarten; expectations for students are increasingly high, both academically and socially. The majority of teachers reported that this is the main issue they would like Hand in Hand staff to understand better.
- *Share Hand in Hand's expectations for students and families with school staff.* Most kindergarten teachers are unaware of Hand in Hand's priorities or expectations for students and families.
- *Learn more about schools' expectations for families.* Survey results indicate that kindergarten teachers would like parents to understand the academic and social demands of the kindergarten curriculum, be active in the school community, and be part of a working relationship with the school. Hand in Hand staff can help identify both the similarities and differences between the expectations set forth in pre-school and kindergarten, and help parents reconcile these differences.

### **Encourage continuity between pre-school and kindergarten programs**

Most pre-school and kindergarten programs are different in terms of curriculum, student-teacher ratio, and level of parent involvement creating discontinuity for students (Amwake, 2003; Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2000; Riedinger, 1997; Vermont Early Childhood Work Group, 2003). Although these differences are often necessary, steps can be taken to increase continuity in some areas, especially near the end of pre-school and beginning of kindergarten to help students make a successful transition. Below are a number of ideas regarding ways to encourage continuity.

- *Visit kindergarten classroom.* Most parents indicated that they and their child had visited a kindergarten classroom the academic year before their child was to start, as recommended. Additionally, Hand in Hand staff can visit the kindergarten classroom, either with or without their students and families, to learn more about the

routines and experiences their students will encounter shortly. Additionally, staff can visit previous students who are now in kindergarten.

- *Visit Hand in Hand classroom.* Similarly, kindergarten teachers can be invited to observe the Hand in Hand classroom or other program events and activities. These visits can occur, either with or without kindergarten students, in order to better understand where future students are coming from and to develop relationships.
- *Joint trainings or collaborative meetings.* Kindergarten and Hand in Hand staff can participate in joint staff development trainings. Either group can invite the other to participate in relevant trainings or professional development activities. Hand in Hand staff and kindergarten teachers can also create a discussion group focused on kindergarten transition; discussion topics can range from classroom practices to the specific needs of a child.
- *Integrate other's routines and activities into the classroom.* Hand in Hand pre-school staff can incorporate some routines or activities from kindergarten into their classroom during the spring of the year before a child is to start kindergarten. Similarly, kindergarten teachers can incorporate familiar customs from pre-school into their classroom during the fall of kindergarten to encourage continuity.

### **Discuss entering student's strengths and needs with school staff**

Hand in Hand program staff acquires a lot of information about participating children and their families while working with them, sometimes over a number of years. Much of this information is relevant and useful to kindergarten teachers and other school staff. The literature (Amwake, 2003; Kraft-Sayre & Pianta, 2000; Riedinger, 1997; Vermont Early Childhood Work Group, 2003) recommends that program staff share relevant information with the child's new school and examples of how to do so are included below.

- *Transfer of program records, including assessments.* Hand in Hand staff can put together a portfolio of information on each child entering kindergarten. This packet of information can include examples of student work; useful strategies in working with the child or family; strengths and weaknesses; and assessment results. Survey results indicate that Rochester kindergarten teachers are particularly interested in receiving assessment results.
- *Individualized meeting before or shortly after a student enters kindergarten.* The family, Hand in Hand staff, kindergarten teachers, and relevant school staff may want to hold a brief meeting to discuss the strengths and needs of an individual child. These meetings can often be incorporated into another school event such as orientation or open house.

- *Program staff and teacher meetings.* If it is not possible to hold individualized meetings, program staff can meet with kindergarten teachers and relevant school staff to discuss the strengths and needs of individual children.

**Facilitate interactions among parents, kindergarten teachers, schools, and relevant community agencies**

The Hand in Hand program has the opportunity to play a leading role in the development and implementation of a kindergarten transition program. Although it is not easy to build relationships among educational programs, schools, families, and communities, a well-constructed kindergarten transition network has the potential to provide a strong support for local families and students. In addition to working with parents and schools separately, the Hand in Hand program is in a unique position to facilitate interactions between these groups in order to help students succeed in school.

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# Appendix

*Kindergarten teacher survey results*

*Parent survey*

*Kindergarten teacher survey*





## *Kindergarten teacher survey results*

### **A1. Activities that may occur before a Hand in Hand (HiH) child enters kindergarten**

<b>Activity</b> N=5	<b>Often enough</b>	<b>Not often enough</b>	<b>Doesn't occur</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
HiH students visit the kindergarten classroom	1	-	3	1
HiH parents visit the kindergarten classroom	1	-	4	-
HiH pre-school staff visit the kindergarten classroom	1	-	4	-
HiH families attend school-related events (e.g., orientation, open house)	1	1	2	1
Kindergarten teachers visit the HiH pre-school classroom	-	-	5	-
Opportunities for interaction between HiH pre-school students and kindergarten students	-	1	4	-
HiH pre-school staff share information with kindergarten teachers about each HiH child	1	-	4	-
HiH pre-school staff & kindergarten staff communicate with each other regarding transition	1	-	4	-
HiH pre-school & kindergarten/school staff have collaborative meetings regarding transition	-	-	5	-
HiH pre-school and kindergarten staff have joint in-service trainings together	-	-	5	-

### **A2. Activities that may occur after a Hand in Hand (HiH) child enters kindergarten**

<b>Activity</b> N=5	<b>Often enough</b>	<b>Not often enough</b>	<b>Doesn't occur</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
HiH pre-school staff visit HiH students in kindergarten	1	-	4	-
HiH families attend school-related events (e.g., open house, parent-teacher conferences)	2	2	1	-
HiH parents volunteer at school	-	3	2	-
Early in the year, familiar activities from HiH pre-school are incorporated into the kindergarten classroom	-	-	4	1
HiH families & kindergarten/school staff communicate with each other about the HiH kindergarten student	1	-	4	-
HiH pre-school staff & kindergarten/school staff communicate with each other about HiH kindergarten students	1	-	4	-

**Rochester Even Start Hand in Hand Program  
Parent Survey**

**Activity code: 70296**

**Introduction**

Hello, could I speak with (RESPONDENT)?

IF THE RESPONDENT IS NOT AVAILABLE: My name is (INTERVIEWER) from Wilder Research in Saint Paul, (Minnesota). When might I reach (THE RESPONDENT)?

PLEASE RECORD THE INFORMATION ON THE COVER PAGE. IF THE RESPONDENT NO LONGER LIVES AT THIS NUMBER, ASK THE INFORMANT IF HE/SHE KNOWS HOW TO FIND THE RESPONDENT.

IF THE INFORMANT ASKS ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE CALL, TELL HIM/HER ONLY THAT IT RELATES TO A PROGRAM THE REPSONDENT WAS REGISTERED FOR.

IF THE RESPONDENT IS ON THE TELEPHONE: I am (INTERVIEWER) from Wilder Research in Saint Paul (Minnesota) and I am calling on behalf of the "Hand in Hand" program. We are working with the staff of "Hand in Hand" to evaluate the program. We would like to get your views and ideas on how well your child was prepared to start kindergarten and how well you were prepared for him or her to start school as well as how your child is doing now. The interview is voluntary and confidential and lasts about 10 minutes. Your name will not be included with any of your responses. Is this a good time to do the interview?

YES: PROCEED WITH THE INTERVIEW.

NO: When would be a better time to call?

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ HOUR: \_\_\_\_\_

IF REFUSES: Is there any reason that you do not want to do the interview? (DESCRIBE)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Rochester Even Start Hand in Hand Program Parent Survey

This survey is based on experiences with your child, (CHILD), who was enrolled in the Hand in Hand program and entered kindergarten in fall of (YEAR). Your ideas and suggestions will be valuable to Hand in Hand for planning future program activities and you will not be identified in reporting the survey results.

First, I have some questions about (CHILD) and school.

1. Before (CHILD) started kindergarten, how did you prepare him/her for kindergarten? Did you...

	Yes	No	REF	DK
a. Read with your child regularly	1	2	7	8
b. Do other activities to improve your child's readiness skills such as counting or naming colors and shapes, etc.	1	2	7	8
c. Register (CHILD) for kindergarten the year before he/she was to start kindergarten	1	2	7	8
d. Attend school-related events such as Kindergarten Open House, Kick off to K, or the Yellow School Bus class	1	2	7	8
e. Visit a kindergarten classroom	1	2	7	8
f. Talk with Hand in Hand staff about the transition to kindergarten	1	2	7	8
g. Talk with friends or family	1	2	7	8
h. Something else? (SPECIFY: _____ _____)	1	2	7	8

2a. Did (CHILD'S) participation in the Hand in Hand program help prepare him/her for kindergarten? Would you say...

- Yes, a lot, ..... 4
- Yes, somewhat, ..... 3
- Yes, a little, or ..... 2
- Not at all? ..... (GO TO Q. 3) ..... 1
- Refused..... (GO TO Q. 3) ..... 7
- Don't know ..... (GO TO Q. 3) ..... 8

2b. What did the Hand in Hand program do that was especially helpful in preparing (CHILD)?

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3. What could the Hand in Hand program have done to make (CHILD) better prepared for kindergarten?

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4a. How much did **you** learn from the Hand in Hand program about preparing (CHILD) for kindergarten? Would you say...

- A lot, ..... 4
- Some, ..... 3
- A little, or ..... (GO TO Q. 5) ..... 2
- None? ..... (GO TO Q. 5) ..... 1
- Refused ..... (GO TO Q. 5) ..... 7
- Don't know ..... (GO TO Q. 5) ..... 8

4b. What did **you** learn in the program that was especially helpful?

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5. What could the Hand in Hand program have done to make **you** better prepared when (CHILD) entered kindergarten?

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6a. How much does/did (CHILD) like kindergarten? Would you say...

- A lot, ..... (GO TO Q. 7a) ..... 4
- Some, ..... (GO TO Q. 7a) ..... 3
- A little, or ..... 2
- Not at all? ..... 1
- Refused ..... (GO TO Q. 7a) ..... 7
- Don't know ..... (GO TO Q. 7a) ..... 8

6b. Why doesn't/didn't he/she like kindergarten very much?

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- 7a. Do/did you feel welcome at the school your child attends/attended in kindergarten?
- Yes ..... (GO TO Q. 8)..... 1
  - No..... 2
  - Refused..... (GO TO Q. 8)..... 7
  - Don't know ..... (GO TO Q. 8)..... 8

7b. Why not?

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8. How well is (CHILD) doing [did (CHILD) do] in kindergarten? Would you say...
- Very well,..... 4
  - Somewhat well, ..... 3
  - A little well, or ..... 2
  - Not at all well?..... 1
  - Refused..... 7
  - Don't know ..... 8

9. Is there anything else that you wish you would have known before (CHILD) entered kindergarten?

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Now, I have a few questions about you and your involvement in (CHILD's) school.

10. Do you know what to do or who to talk to if you have questions about school issues such as transportation or placement of your child in morning or afternoon kindergarten or something else?
- Always,..... 4
  - Usually, ..... 3
  - Sometimes, or ..... 2
  - Rarely or never? ..... 1
  - Refused..... 7
  - Don't know ..... 8

11. Since the beginning of the school year, how often have you talked with (CHILD) about what he/she is learning in school? Would you say...

- Almost every day, ..... 4
- Once or twice a week,..... 3
- One to three times a month, or ..... 2
- Less than once a month?..... 1
- Refused..... 7
- Don't know ..... 8

12. Do you read the information that (CHILD) brings home from school – for example, notes from his/her teacher, announcements of school events or activities, or other school-related information? Would you say...

- Always,..... 4
- Usually, ..... 3
- Sometimes, or ..... 2
- Rarely or never? ..... 1
- Refused..... 7
- Don't know ..... 8

13. Have you participated in any of the following activities or events at (CHILD's) school this school year?

	Yes	No	REF	DK
a. Parent-teacher conferences	1	2	7	8
b. Student performances or programs	1	2	7	8
c. Family events such as open house	1	2	7	8
d. Parent committees such as PTA/PTO, advisory board or site council	1	2	7	8
e. Volunteer at school, in the classroom or during field trips	1	2	7	8
f. Something else? (SPECIFY: _____ )				
_____ )	1	2	7	8

14. Is (CHILD) your first child to attend kindergarten in the U.S.?

- Yes..... 1
- No..... 2
- Refused..... 7
- Don't know ..... 8

15a. Are you currently enrolled in any educational or training programs besides Hand in Hand?

- Yes ..... 1
- No..... (GO TO Q. 16)..... 2
- Refused..... (GO TO Q. 16)..... 7
- Don't know ..... (GO TO Q. 16)..... 8

15b. Which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

16. What is your current employment status? Would you say...

- Employed full-time, ..... 1
- Employed part-time, ..... 2
- Unemployed and looking for work, ..... 3
- At home full-time (raising children, homemaker, etc.), or ..... 4
- Something else (SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_),? ..... 5
- Refused ..... 7
- Don't know ..... 8

**Those are all the questions I have. Thank you for your time.**

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**INTERVIEWER**

Do you have comments about this case? Please include anything that you think the supervisor or the coder should know about this case. If you are unsure how to code a particular response, note the item name and the problem here.

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# Kindergarten teacher survey

## Rochester Even Start Hand in Hand Program Kindergarten Teacher Survey

This survey is based on experiences with the Hand in Hand program. Your ideas and suggestions will be valuable to Hand in Hand for planning future program activities and you will not be identified in reporting the survey results.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years teaching kindergarten in Rochester public schools: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The following are statements about activities that may occur before a Hand in Hand (HiH) child enters kindergarten. For each activity indicate whether it occurs often enough, occurs sometimes but not often enough or doesn't occur at all.

	Often enough	Not often enough	Doesn't occur	Don't know
a. HiH students visit the kindergarten classroom:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
b. HiH parents visit the kindergarten classroom:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
c. HiH pre-school staff visit the kindergarten classroom:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
d. HiH families attend school-related events (e.g., orientation, open house):	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
e. Kindergarten teachers visit the HiH pre-school classroom:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
f. Opportunities for interaction between HiH pre-school students and kindergarten students:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
g. HiH pre-school staff share information with kindergarten teachers about each HiH child:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
h. HiH pre-school staff & kindergarten staff communicate with each other regarding transition:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
i. HiH pre-school & kindergarten/school staff have collaborative meetings regarding transition:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
j. HiH pre-school and kindergarten staff have joint in-service trainings together:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>

2. The following are statements about activities that may occur after a Hand in Hand (HiH) child enters kindergarten. For each activity indicate whether it occurs often enough, occurs sometimes but not often enough or doesn't occur at all.

	Often enough	Not often enough	Doesn't occur	Don't know
a. HiH pre-school staff visit HiH students in kindergarten:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
b. HiH families attend school-related events (e.g., open house, parent-teacher conferences):	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
c. HiH parents volunteer at school:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
d. Early in the year, familiar activities from HiH pre-school are incorporated into the kindergarten classroom:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
e. HiH families & kindergarten/school staff communicate with each other about the HiH kindergarten student:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
f. HiH pre-school staff & kindergarten/school staff communicate with each other about HiH kindergarten students:	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>

3. What kind of information is most helpful to receive about a Hand in Hand student before they enter kindergarten (e.g., samples of work, assessment results or useful strategies in working with the child or family)?

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4. How familiar are you with the pre-school curriculum offered by the Hand in Hand program?

- <sup>3</sup> Very familiar
- <sup>2</sup> Somewhat familiar
- <sup>1</sup> Not familiar
- <sup>8</sup> Don't know

5. The curriculum between Hand in Hand pre-school and kindergarten is...

- <sup>4</sup> Completely aligned
- <sup>3</sup> Mostly aligned
- <sup>2</sup> Partially aligned
- <sup>1</sup> Not aligned
- <sup>8</sup> Don't know

6. How well do you think Hand in Hand staff understand the expectations you have for children and their families upon kindergarten entry?

- <sup>3</sup> Very well
- <sup>2</sup> Pretty well
- <sup>1</sup> Not so well
- <sup>8</sup> Don't know

6B. What things would you like the Hand in Hand staff to understand better?

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7. What skills/activities are Hand in Hand students **most** prepared for academically and socially (e.g., know the alphabet or numbers, stand in a line or share well)?

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8. What skills/activities are Hand in Hand students **least** prepared for academically and socially?

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9. What does Hand in Hand do with students regarding the transition to kindergarten that is especially helpful?

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10. What additional things would be helpful for Hand in Hand to do regarding students' transition to kindergarten?

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11. What does Hand in Hand do with parents regarding their child's transition to kindergarten or involvement at school that is especially helpful?

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12. What additional things would be helpful for Hand in Hand to do with parents regarding the kindergarten transition or general school involvement?

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13. What further ideas do you have for making a stronger transition for Hand in Hand families and children to your classroom and school?

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Thank you!