

CHILDREN ARRIVE IN  
THIS WORLD WITH A  
POWERFUL APPETITE  
FOR LEARNING.



MARYLAND'S EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
**progress report**

**IF WE DO NOT PROVIDE  
ABUNDANT INTELLECTUAL  
NOURISHMENT TO OUR  
YOUNGEST LEARNERS,  
WE ARE SIMPLY NOT DOING  
OUR MOST IMPORTANT JOB.**

**Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent, Maryland Public Schools**

**MARYLAND'S EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**(formerly Maryland's Leadership in Action Program)**

**MARCH 2006**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The members of the Maryland Early Care and Education Committee gratefully acknowledge the following people for supporting and nurturing the work of our Committee this past year:

Nancy S. Grasmick, Superintendent, Maryland State Department of Education, chair of the Early Care and Education Committee of the Subcabinet, for guiding our work and leading the charge to support early care and education in Maryland.

Donna Stark, Director of Leadership Development, Annie E. Casey Foundation, for creating the Leadership in Action Program and financially supporting its implementation in Maryland.

Heather Weston, Philip Li, and Jolie Bain Pillsbury, staff of the Casey Leadership in Action Program, for coaching, mentoring, and providing technical assistance to our work.

Louise Corwin, Ready At Five, and Rosemary King Johnston, Maryland State Department of Education, co-chairs of the Early Care and Education Committee, for their constant leadership throughout the year.

Jean Mitchell and Steve Rohde, members of the Editorial Board, for reviewing, editing, and offering clarity to the content of this report.

Our volunteer facilitators for their time and energy.

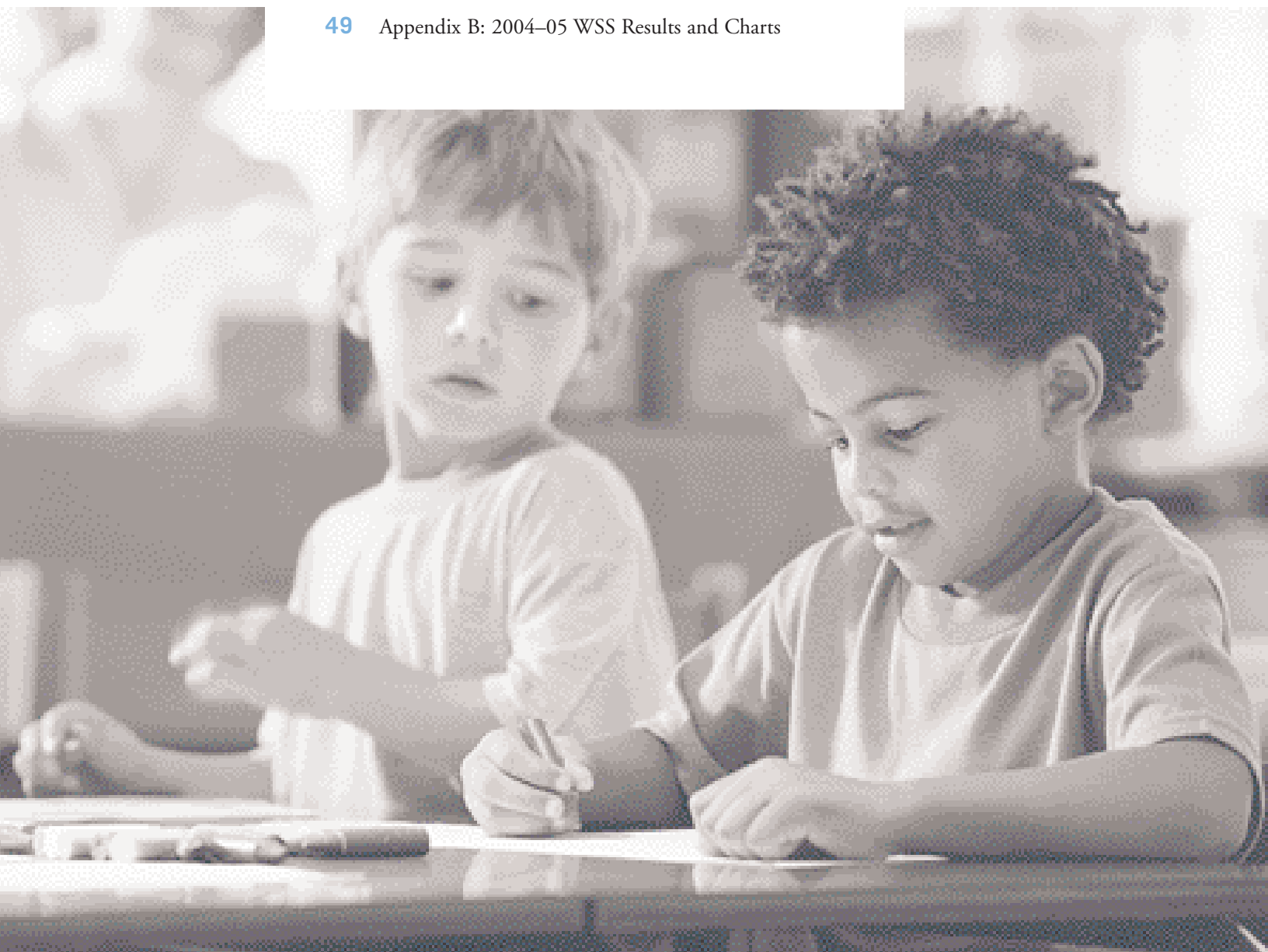
Andy Wilson, Maryland State Department of Education, for his staff support throughout the year.

The members of the Goal Groups and the Goal Keepers for their time and effort in pursuing strategies and activities that will substantially increase the number of children who enter school ready to learn.

To all our colleagues on the Committee, it has been an enriching experience to work collaboratively with so many accomplished people to reach the common goal of ensuring readiness for school for all of Maryland's young children.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 Early Care and Education Committee Members
- 3 Executive Summary
- 6 Background: Maryland Leadership in Action
- 9 LAP: Progress Since 2001
- 14 Today's Challenges
- 17 The Road Ahead
- 20 Appendix A: Progress on the Five-Year Action Agenda
- 49 Appendix B: 2004–05 WSS Results and Charts



## EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Valerie Ashton**  
Maryland State Department of  
Education

**Bonnie Birkel**  
Maryland Department of Health and  
Mental Hygiene

**Fran Bond**  
Early Childhood Consultant

**Louise Corwin**  
Ready At Five

**Monique Felder**  
Maryland Association of Elementary  
School Principals

**Karen Finn**  
Governor's Office for Children

**Clara Floyd**  
Maryland State Teachers Association

**Donna Fowler**  
Maryland Family Child Care  
Association

**Rolf Grafwallne**  
Maryland State Department of  
Education

**Linda Heisner**  
Advocates for Children and Youth

**Liz Kelley**  
Maryland State Department of  
Education

**Patricia Jennings**  
Maryland State Department of  
Education

**Rosemary King Johnston**  
Maryland State Department of  
Education

**Mary LaCasse**  
Maryland Department of Health  
and Mental Hygiene

**Maureen McLaurin**  
Baltimore Reads, Inc.

**Sheila Maynor**  
Maryland Department of Juvenile  
Services

**Deborah Metzger**  
Maryland State Department of  
Education

**Jean Mitchell**  
Friends of the Family

**Madeline Morey**  
Frederick County Office for Children,  
Youth, and Families

**Cathy Perry**  
Frederick County Judy Center

**Joyce Pollard**  
Maryland Department of Health  
and Mental Hygiene

**Steve Rohde**  
Maryland Committee for Children

**Judy Rozie-Battle**  
Maryland State Department of  
Education

**Dominique Raymond**  
Maryland Higher Education  
Commission

**Kathleen Reif**  
St. Mary's County Public Library

**Pat Rosensteel**  
Frederick County Head Start

**Barbara Scherr**  
Maryland State Department of  
Education

**Debbie Slack-Katz**  
Governor's Office for Children, Youth,  
and Families

**Debbie Shepard**  
Montgomery County Department of  
Health and Human Services

**Claudia Simmons**  
Montgomery County Public Schools

**Barbara Squires**  
Baltimore City Health Department

**Pilar Torres**  
Centro de Familia

**Chuck Wainwright**  
Maryland Child Care Association

**Susan Walker**  
University of Maryland Cooperative  
Extension

**Duane Yoder**  
Garrett County Community  
Action Agency

**Linda Zang**  
Maryland State Department of  
Education

**Al Zachik**  
Maryland Department of Health and  
Mental Hygiene, Mental Hygiene  
Administration

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

We have known for some time that it takes more than the opportunity for a good education to succeed in life. A decade of research shows that the road to success begins long before our children enter school. It begins with children who are born healthy, who are raised in safe and nurturing families, and who have enriching and positive experiences from birth through age five. Children who have had these experiences enter kindergarten curious and enthusiastic, eager to learn, willing to get along with others, and in good physical and mental health. In other words, these children “enter school ready to learn.”

In December 2001, the Annie E. Casey Foundation; the Subcabinet for Children, Youth, and Families; and the Council for Excellence in Government began an innovative approach to this issue. They convened a group of 40 leaders from Maryland’s state and local governments, as well as advocacy and service-providing organizations, to form and implement a Leadership in Action Program (LAP). The program aimed to increase the rate at which Maryland children enter school ready to learn and expand the leadership capacity of the participants accountable for that result.

### **DEVELOPING AN ACTION AGENDA**

After ten months of study and deliberation, LAP members developed *Achieving School Readiness: A Five-Year School Readiness Action Agenda*. This plan sought to increase the number of Maryland children fully ready to learn from less than half to a target of 75 percent by 2006–2007. The Action Agenda represented a very new way of doing business in Maryland. It focused on data, root causes, no- and low-cost strategies, and connecting actions to results. In particular, the Agenda had six goals—all designed to support higher rates of school readiness:

1. All children, birth through age five, will have access to quality early care and education programs that meet the needs of families, including full-day options.
2. Parents of young children will succeed in their role as their child’s first teachers.
3. Children, birth through age five, and their families will receive necessary income-support benefits and health and mental health care to ensure that they arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies.
4. All early care and education staff will be appropriately trained in promoting and understanding school readiness.
5. All Maryland citizens will understand the value of quality early care and education as a means to achieve school readiness.

6. Maryland will have an infrastructure that promotes, sufficiently funds, and holds accountable its school readiness efforts.

Beneath each of these, the Agenda laid out a series of strategies and concrete activities that sets out the work necessary to make these goals and the broader school readiness result possible.

The Subcabinet accepted the Action Agenda as its Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education in Maryland and the Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families of the General Assembly expressed support for the Action Agenda. In November 2004, the Executive Committee of the Early Care and Education Committee presented an overview of its progress to the Joint Committee.

#### **MEASURING, MAKING PROGRESS**

Progress monitoring began in February 2002, when the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) released baseline school readiness data for the 2001–02 school year. The results indicated that, statewide, only 49 percent of kindergarteners were assessed as fully ready to learn. In 2002–03, following the first year of work on the Action Agenda, the composite scores for the state increased to 52 percent, a modest but statistically significant rise. In 2003–04, as our work continued, the composite score jumped again to 55 percent. Most recently, in 2004–05, the school readiness rate moved up to 58 percent. From the baseline year of 2001–02, this represents a solid 9 percentage point increase.

The readiness data also indicated that efforts to improve school readiness had been implemented unevenly across Maryland. While the statewide trend was positive, the data in some counties were flat, despite significant efforts among service providers to make a positive impact. In the 2002–03 school year, for example, eight jurisdictions actually experienced a decrease in the percentage of children entering school fully ready to learn. Counties with these downward trends used the Work Sampling System (WSS) results to examine their own strategies and practices and seek better outcomes.

Overall, the goals and strategies of the Action Agenda were designed to attain certain immediate successes, build momentum, and lay the foundation upon which sustained efforts to affect school readiness could be built. They have brought about many significant achievements among schools, private and government programs, social service and health agencies, teachers, parents, and children. They also have increased public awareness—through campaigns directed at parents, family members, providers, community members, the business and faith communities, advocacy organizations, the media, and elected officials—about the connection between and among quality early care and education and school readiness.



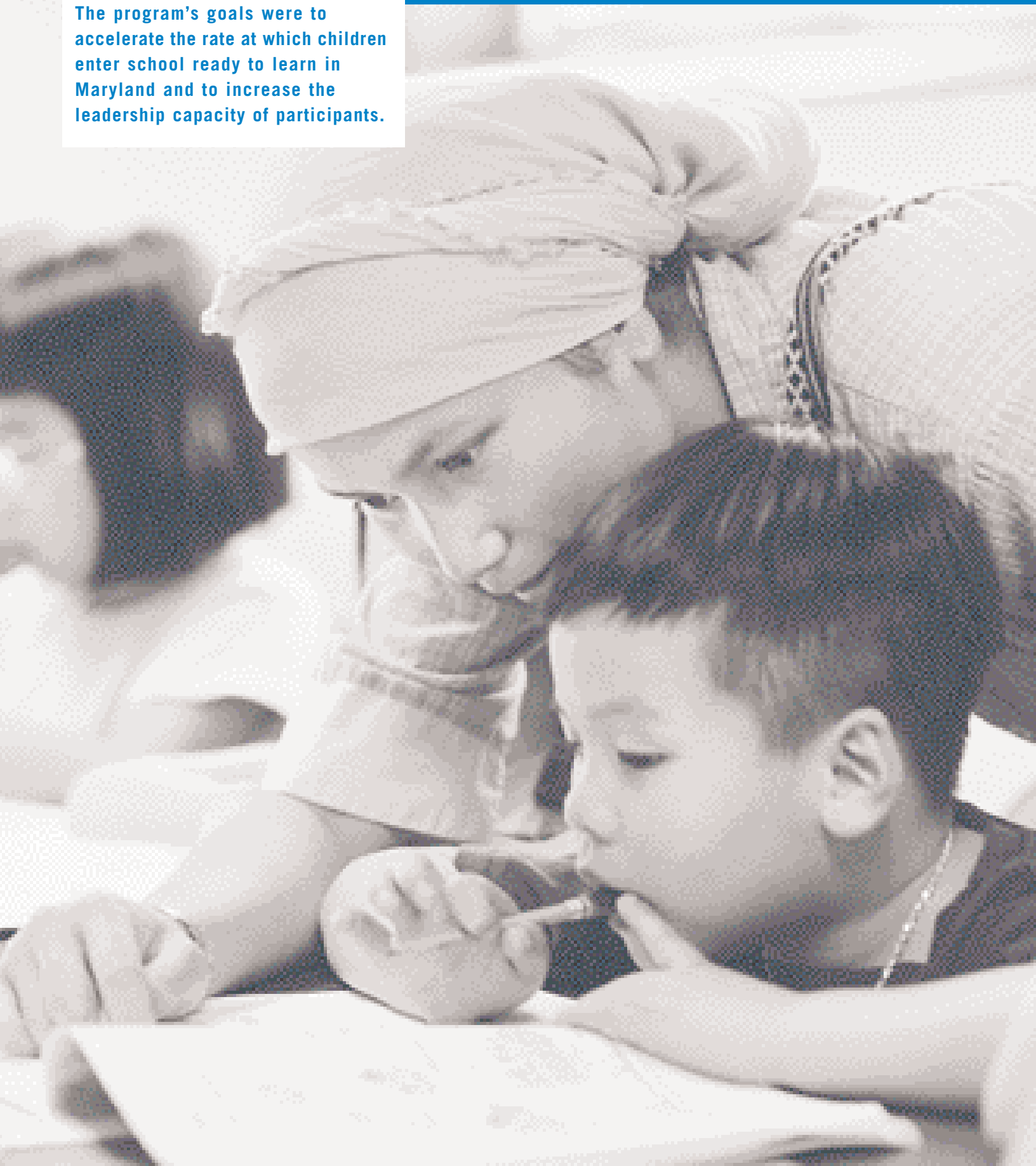
Although children's readiness levels have increased significantly since 2001, challenges remain. Forty-two percent of Maryland's young children are still entering school unprepared to succeed. Furthermore, at current funding levels, we believe that ensuring that 75 percent of kindergartners are ready to succeed by the school year 2006–07 will not be possible. Until funding for services for young children and their families is commensurate with demonstrated need, our pace of progress on this result will continue to lag and contribute to our inability to reach that target.

Despite this constraint, in the coming year, the Early Care and Education Committee will continue to focus its efforts and energies on the Action Agenda's goals and related strategies. Based on current WSS/Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) information, additional strategies have been developed to support and accelerate ongoing and new activities. They include:

- Encouraging local school systems to contract with qualified, accredited child care or Head Start programs to provide pre-K services;
- Infusing family literacy;
- Promulgating best practices for parent support activities;
- Including prevention, integrated early intervention, and community treatment programs in the Early Childhood Mental Health dialogue;
- Expanding the credentialing program;
- Broadening professional development cross-training opportunities;
- Supporting state and local public engagement campaigns; and
- Sustaining the Leadership in Action Program while expanding it into other jurisdictions.

The goals and strategies of the Five-Year Action Agenda continue to be the centerpiece of the Early Care and Education Committee's vision for Maryland's young children. The Action Agenda itself will continue to be a compelling exemplar of the state's commitment to young children and their families. In the future, we look forward to reporting on our continued progress toward ensuring all Maryland children enter school ready to learn.

The program's goals were to accelerate the rate at which children enter school ready to learn in Maryland and to increase the leadership capacity of participants.



**In 2001**, fewer than half of Maryland's kindergartners were assessed as having the skills necessary to succeed in school. In December of that year, the Annie E. Casey Foundation; the Subcabinet for Children, Youth, and Families; and the Council for Excellence in Government convened a group of 40 leaders from state and local government, and from advocacy and service-providing organizations, to form the Leadership in Action Program (LAP). The program's goals were to accelerate the rate at which children enter school ready to learn in Maryland and to increase the leadership capacity of the participants who were accountable for that result. Members of the LAP believed that all Maryland's children **COULD** and **MUST** enter school ready to learn.

For ten months, the LAP members engaged in research, discussion, and debate to understand fully the complexities of the school readiness issue and the factors that explained why fewer than half of Maryland's kindergartners in 2001 were assessed as having the skills necessary to succeed in school. Through its deliberations, LAP members developed a Five-Year School Readiness Action Agenda, which provided a road map to achieving the ultimate result that all children in Maryland enter school ready to learn, and an interim target that by the 2006–07 school year, 75 percent of all kindergartners would be assessed as fully ready for school on the state's readiness assessment, the Work Sampling System (WSS).

Both ambitious and realistic, this Five-Year Action Agenda was based on accomplishing six goals:

1. All children, birth through age five, will have access to quality early care and education programs that meet the needs of families, including full-day options.
2. Parents of young children will succeed in their role as their child's first teachers.
3. Children, birth through age five, and their families will receive necessary income-support benefits and health and mental health care to ensure that they arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies.
4. All early care and education staff will be appropriately trained in promoting and understanding school readiness.
5. All Maryland citizens will understand the value of quality early care and education as a means to achieve school readiness.
6. Maryland will have an infrastructure that promotes, sufficiently funds, and holds accountable its school readiness efforts.

After the initial publication of the Action Agenda, a number of supportive strategies, both broad and focused, were successfully implemented. For example, in 2003, the Subcabinet:

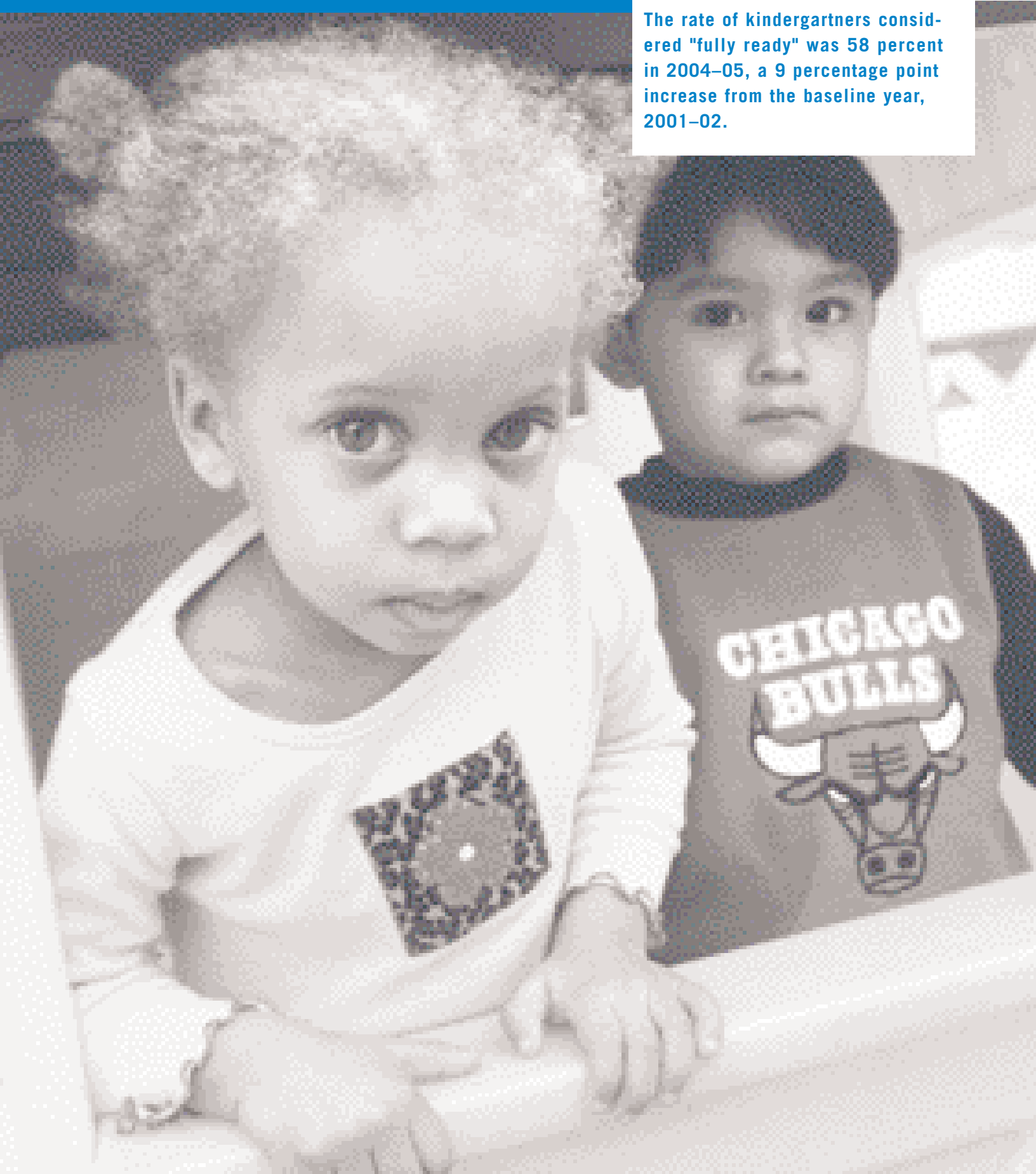
1. Adopted the Action Agenda as its Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education;
2. Renamed the Leadership in Action Program as the Early Care and Education (ECE) Committee and created it as a permanent subcommittee of the Subcabinet, chaired by Nancy S. Grasmick, Subcabinet member and State Superintendent of Schools; and
3. Informed the Joint Committee of the Subcabinet's actions and recommended the Joint Committee's adoption of the Action Agenda as Maryland's Plan for Early Care and Education.

In September 2003, representatives of LAP shared the Action Agenda with the Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families of the General Assembly and requested the Committee to adopt the Action Agenda as the strategic plan for Early Care and Education in Maryland. Although the Committee did not formally adopt the Agenda, the Committee chairs and members expressed support for it and indicated their wish that the Governor's Subcabinet for Children, Youth, and Families adopt it. In November 2004, the Executive Committee of the ECE Committee presented an overview of the progress of the Five-Year Action Agenda to the Joint Committee.

These actions provided an organizational base from which the ongoing implementation and progress of the Action Agenda is supported, monitored, and evaluated. Additionally, Goal Groups, each led by a LAP member serving as a Goal Keeper, were formed for each of the six goals in the Action Agenda. New members were added to the full ECE Committee as well as to the Goal Groups to enrich discussion and accelerate progress. These groups still meet regularly, continue to work on their goals, and report on their progress.



The rate of kindergartners considered "fully ready" was 58 percent in 2004–05, a 9 percentage point increase from the baseline year, 2001–02.



**As LAP began its work in 2001,** research and data were compiled to study Maryland's early care and education performance in the context of a state-by-state comparison. Unfortunately, while it was possible to compare unemployment, poverty, and general demographic information, no school readiness results for other states existed.

Still, a longitudinal study in Maryland was possible. In 1997, four years prior to the evolution of LAP, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) developed and implemented an early learning framework to support early education teachers and child care providers in improving their assessment and instruction skills to meet the state's standards. This framework is the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR), a comprehensive approach to teacher professional development that included training in instruction, assessment, family communication, and transition. Related to this effort, the Work Sampling System (WSS) is a measurement tool used to assess kindergartener's readiness skills. The WSS measured a child's readiness in 30 indicators across seven domains of learning: personal and social skills, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, and physical development and health.

#### **2001–02 SCHOOL YEAR RESULTS**

In February 2002, MSDE released a report providing baseline school readiness data for the 2001–02 school year. These data were based upon the first year of full implementation of WSS in all Maryland publicly funded kindergartens. The data were reported in aggregated and disaggregated form for the state and its 24 jurisdictions. Overall, the 2001–02 WSS results indicated that, statewide, just below half (49 percent) of kindergarteners were assessed as fully ready to do kindergarten work.

#### **2002–03 SCHOOL YEAR RESULTS**

In 2002–03, the composite scores for the state increased from 49 percent to 52 percent for children entering school fully ready. Although this was a modest increase, it was statistically significant and marked the beginning of an upward trend in the rate at which children in Maryland entered school ready to learn.

2001–02 STATEWIDE RESULTS BY DOMAIN AND COMPOSITE SCORES			
DOMAIN	STUDENTS FULLY READY	STUDENTS APPROACHING READINESS (NEED CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT)	STUDENTS DEVELOPING READINESS (NEED TARGETED SUPPORT)
Social and Personal	55 percent	36 percent	9 percent
Language and Literacy	36 percent	50 percent	14 percent
Mathematical Thinking	40 percent	47 percent	13 percent
Scientific Thinking	24 percent	59 percent	17 percent
The Arts	51 percent	42 percent	7 percent
Social Studies	32 percent	55 percent	13 percent
Physical Development and Health	60 percent	35 percent	4 percent
<b>Composite Score</b>	<b>49 percent</b>	<b>44 percent</b>	<b>7 percent</b>

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

### 2003–04 SCHOOL YEAR RESULTS

In 2003–04, the composite score for the state increased to 55 percent, a 3 percentage point increase from the previous year’s results. It should also be noted that of the 24 jurisdictions and the three Edison Schools, 17 jurisdictions demonstrated an increase in the number and percentage of children entering school fully ready to learn, as measured by the WSS.

The results from this school year indicated that the early care and education communities and other stakeholders successfully reached a larger number of young children and helped build the skills they needed for kindergarten. The net effect of their efforts was that more children entered kindergarten fully ready and were better prepared to do kindergarten work than at any time since 2001. While results were not consistent across all counties, overall, the state’s minority groups and low-income families made positive strides.

2002-03, 2003-04 COMPOSITE SCORES BY JURISDICTION				
COUNTY	2002-03	2003-04	DIFFERENCE	SIGNIFICANCE
1. Allegany	60.7	61.9	1.2	
2. Anne Arundel	46.4	55.3	8.9	*
3. Baltimore County	55.2	58.7	3.5	*
4. Calvert	62.9	59.8	-3.1	
5. Caroline	48.6	44.6	-4.0	
6. Carroll	58.6	63.1	4.5	*
7. Cecil	39.9	37.4	-2.5	
8. Charles	52.2	67.8	5.6	*
9. Dorchester	47.7	56.5	8.8	*
10. Frederick	61.2	70.3	9.1	*
11. Garrett	50.3	58.8	8.5	*
12. Harford	77.3	75.7	-1.6	
13. Howard	60.4	62.9	2.5	
14. Kent	70.0	83.6	13.6	*
15. Montgomery	57.0	59.8	2.8	*
16. Prince George's	41.0	48.0	7.0	*
17. Queen Anne's	66.3	63.2	-3.1	
18. Saint Mary's	46.8	49.2	2.4	
19. Somerset	80.4	67.3	-13.1	*
20. Talbot	58.5	60.3	1.8	
21. Washington	59.4	57.8	-1.6	
22. Wicomico	57.6	60.6	3.0	
23. Worcester	41.6	59.3	17.7	*
30. Baltimore City	31.7	26.5	-5.2	*
31. Edison Schools	42.6	45.2	2.6	
<b>State Total</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>*</b>

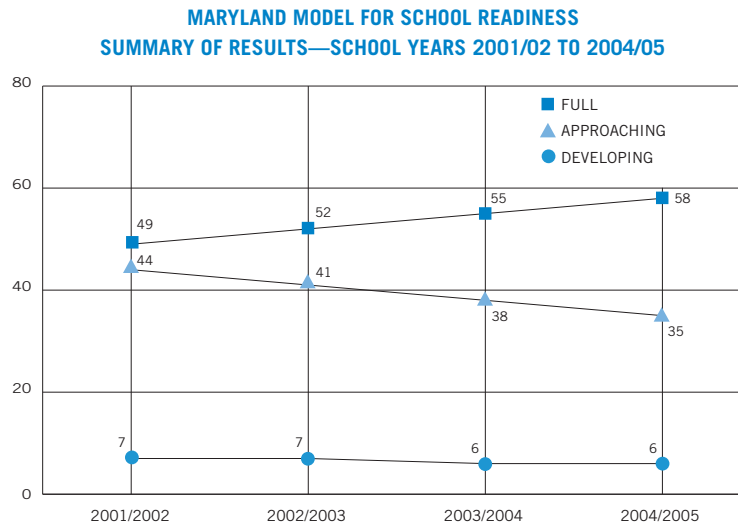
Source: Maryland State Department of Education



## 2004–05 SCHOOL YEAR RESULTS

More Maryland students entering kindergarten in the 2004–05 school year were prepared than in the past. The percentage of incoming kindergarteners considered by their teachers as “fully ready” rose to 58 percent. This represents an increase from the baseline year of 2001–02 of 9 percentage points.

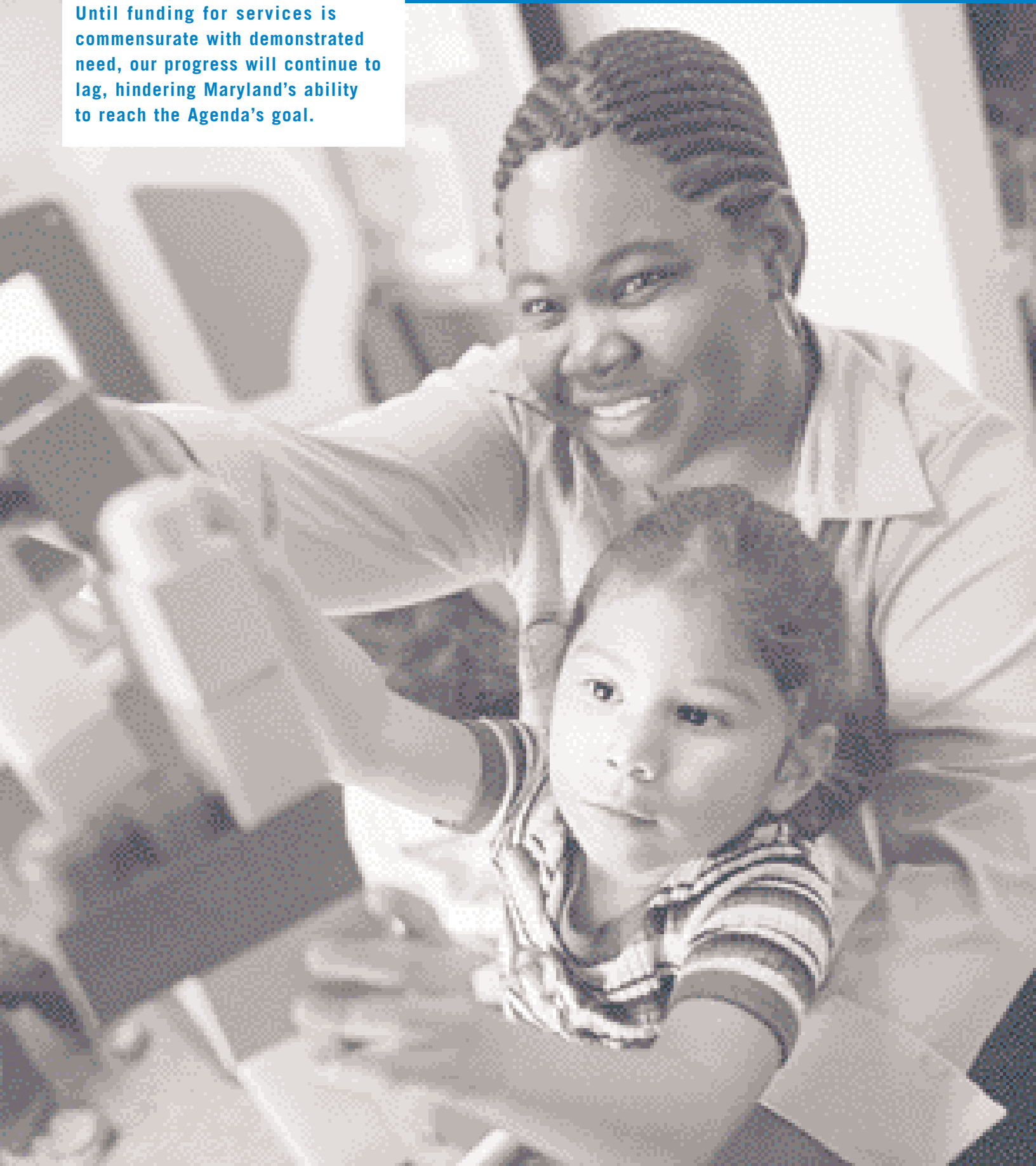
If the upward trend was a statistically significant shift from school year 2001–02, the results for the language and literacy domain proved even more so. According to the teachers’ assessment of emergent reading and writing skills, 48 percent of children were rated “fully ready,” compared with 36 percent of the youngsters who entered kindergarten in 2001–02. The increase last year was 3 percentage points (from 45 to 48 percent).



Fifty-eight percent of kindergarten students in Maryland were evaluated by their teachers as “fully ready” in school year 2004/05—a 9 percentage point increase from school year 2001/02.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

Until funding for services is commensurate with demonstrated need, our progress will continue to lag, hindering Maryland's ability to reach the Agenda's goal.



**Since 2001**, there has been a considerable increase in the awareness among Maryland's early care and education providers, including parents, of the relationship between students' readiness to learn and their scholastic success. As evidenced in numerous planning efforts, more counties are following the state's lead by focusing on the domains of learning and early learning standards outlined by the MMSR, and by placing strong emphasis on the development of precursor skills that provide a foundation for reading and cognitive development.

In conjunction with these planning efforts, state and local officials have refined their programs by building a capacity for program evaluation and creating broad-based dissemination systems of professional development opportunities for early educators. A steady flow of publicity on the benefits of early literacy, school readiness, and early childhood development has raised awareness among parents and encouraged them to become actively involved in supporting their children's school readiness skills. As a result of local planning, more elementary schools, health departments, pediatricians, and child care programs are educating parents about the importance of early learning and early literacy.

The data also indicate that efforts to improve school readiness have been implemented unevenly across the state. The trend in some counties has remained flat, despite strong service provider attempts to make a positive impact. As the table on page 12 demonstrates, eight jurisdictions experienced a decrease in the percentage of children entering school fully ready to learn, as measured by the WSS. These decreases ranged from 1.6 to 13.1 percentage points. Counties with these downward trends have since used their results to examine their strategies and practices, identify positive trends embedded within the countywide results, and explore ways to best align early childhood education and outreach to parents with the K–12 educational system.

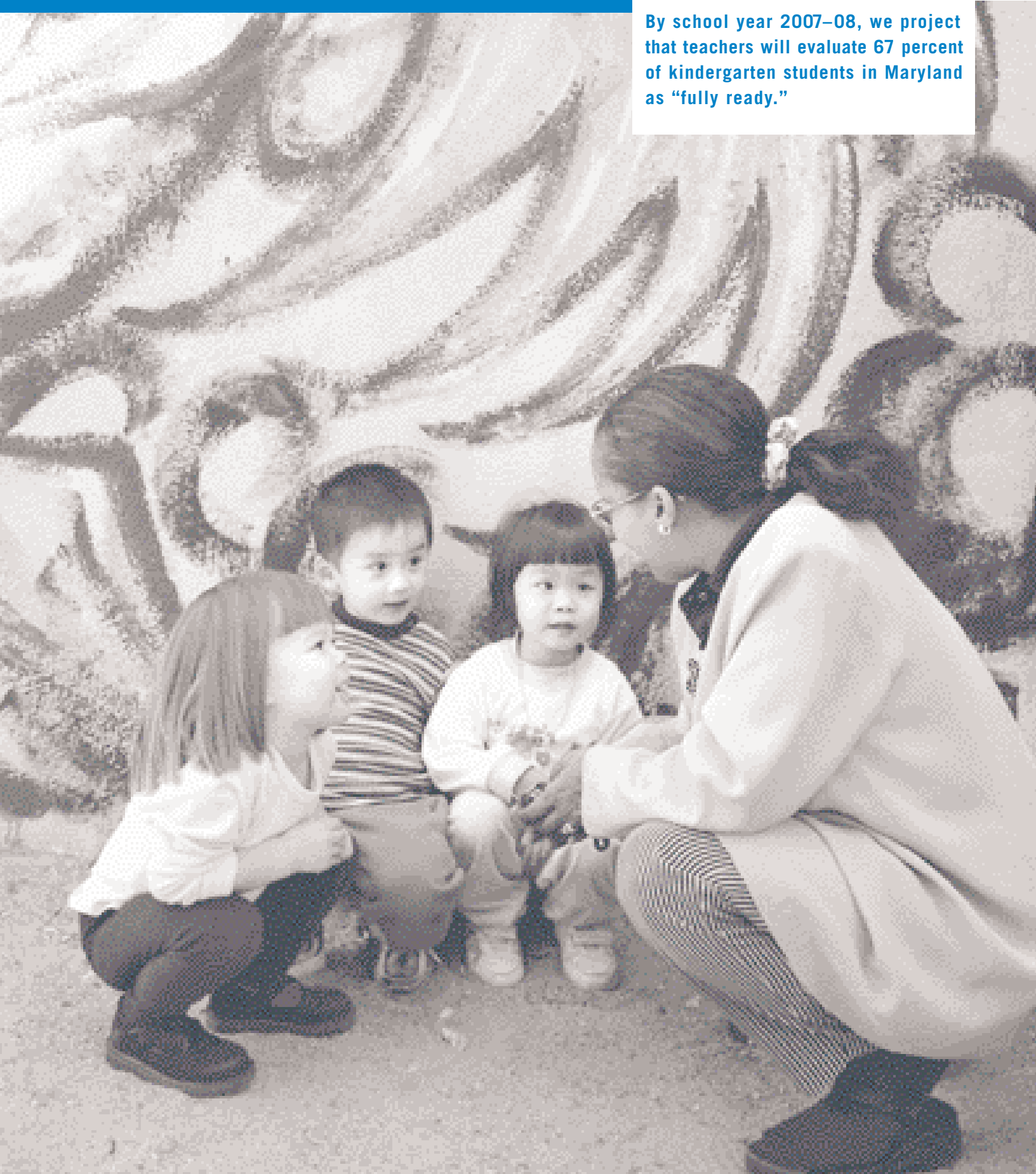
At the time this Action Agenda was developed, LAP assumed that funding for the strategies in the Agenda would remain level and perhaps increase slightly. This assumption was severely tested when the events of September 11, 2001, redirected our nation's efforts, energies, and resources toward homeland security. The downturn in the nation's economy, which deeply affected Maryland, also had a negative influence on our efforts. These and other environmental forces have led to the tightening of state budgets and reduced levels of funding to support the early childhood development infrastructure. We believe that until funding for services for young children and their families is commensurate with the demonstrated need, our progress will continue to lag, hindering Maryland's ability to reach the Agenda's goal of 75 percent of children entering school ready to learn.

Despite these challenges and their effects on Maryland's residents, the needs of young children and their families remain a priority. The ECE Committee continues to pursue its school readiness goals through the Action Agenda. Many of the original strategies continue to be implemented, and progress continues as a result of focused attention by the ECE Committee, state agencies, and early care and education practitioners. While some slippage has occurred in strategies directly affected by programmatic or funding changes, the ECE Committee has maintained its commitment to each of the Agenda's strategies. The Committee continues to monitor and assess the strategies and activities in response to changing times and resources. Most importantly, it is still focused on having all Maryland children entering school ready to learn.



THE ROAD AHEAD

By school year 2007–08, we project that teachers will evaluate 67 percent of kindergarten students in Maryland as “fully ready.”



**The ECE Committee** will continue to focus its efforts next year on the Action Agenda's six goals and accompanying strategies. Based on current WSS/MMSR information, additional strategies and activities have been developed to support and accelerate our progress. These include:

- Encouraging local school systems to contract with qualified, accredited child care or Head Start programs to provide pre-K services;
- Infusing family literacy as a strategy to support parents as their child's first teacher;
- Identifying and promulgating best practices for parent support activities;
- Including prevention, integrated early intervention, and community treatment programs in the Early Childhood Mental Health dialogue, with particular attention paid to environmental impacts on health, such as asthma and lead poisoning;
- Revising the regulations and expanding the credentialing program;
- Broadening professional development cross-training opportunities;
- Supporting the state and local public engagement campaigns; and
- Sustaining the Leadership in Action Program as the Early Care and Education Committee of the Subcabinet for Children, Youth, and Families in Maryland and expand the LAP into other jurisdictions.

Through the Action Agenda, we will "stay the course" in the coming year and pursue the following strategic efforts:

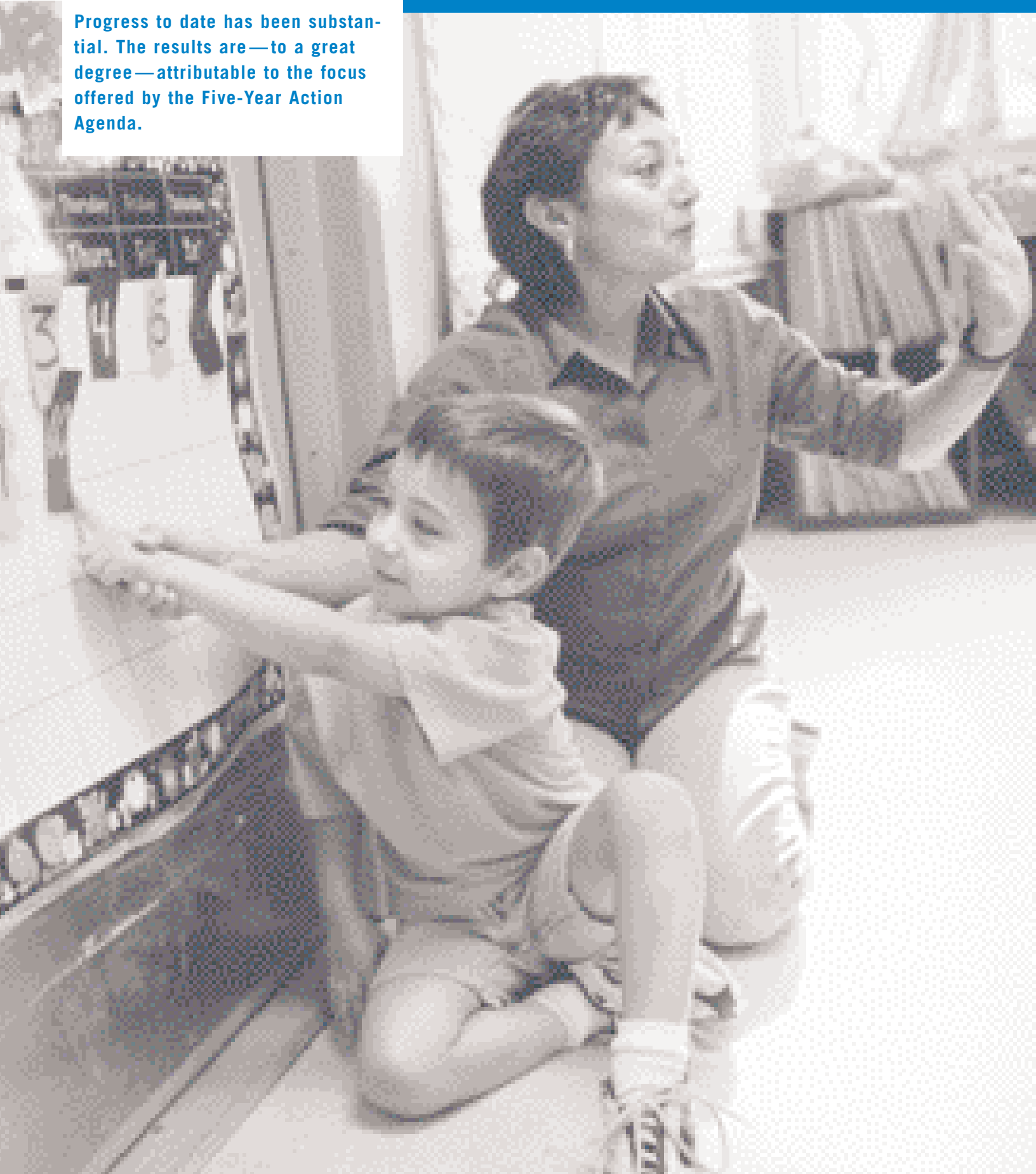
- Encourage the Maryland General Assembly to maintain its focus and priority on quality early care and education programs and to continue to direct funding resources to programs and services that support Maryland's young children;
- Advocate for the state child-serving agencies to create and implement consistent policies that address the needs of families and young children;
- Ensure that Local Management Boards make early care and education priorities areas of need;

- Provide opportunities for parents to be their child's first teacher utilizing the rich array of resources available in communities;
- Recognize that healthy children are ready for school by supporting the health and mental health needs of young children;
- Provide an array of professional development opportunities to enhance the quality of early childhood programs, establish continuity between early care and education programs and public school programs, and encourage programs to seek accreditation and credentialing;
- Utilize the *Countdown to Kindergarten* public engagement campaign as a means to provide opportunities for Maryland's citizens to understand the value of quality early childhood programs as a means to achieve school readiness;
- View the statewide public library system as a community resource to promote literacy and language development; and
- Recommend that every Maryland jurisdiction develop a School Readiness Strategic Plan that addresses jurisdiction-specific needs and is aligned with the state's Achieving School Readiness Action Agenda.

The ECE Committee is proud of the progress it has made and the increases that have been achieved in school readiness in Maryland. However, our work is not done! Since the beginning of the Leadership in Action Program in December 2001, the number of children entering school fully ready has increased by 9 percentage points. While that is a significant result, it is noteworthy that 42 percent of Maryland's young children are entering school not ready to succeed. Our initial 2006–07 goal of reducing that number to 25 percent (75 percent of children entering school ready to succeed) is still several years off.

The goals and strategies of the Five-Year Action Agenda, however, continue to be the centerpiece of the Early Care and Education Committee's vision for Maryland's young children. The Action Agenda itself will continue to be a compelling exemplar of the state's commitment to young children and their families. In the future, we look forward to reporting on our continued progress toward ensuring all Maryland children enter school ready to learn.

Progress to date has been substantial. The results are—to a great degree—attributable to the focus offered by the Five-Year Action Agenda.





The primary result of the Action Agenda and the LAP experience was acceleration in school readiness. This translated into the overarching goal of the Action Agenda that all Maryland children enter school ready to learn, and by the 2006–07 school year, 75 percent of Maryland kindergartners will enter school assessed as fully ready on the Work Sampling System.

To meet this result, six goals were selected for inclusion in the Action Agenda. The six goals and their associated strategies provided a logical sequence of actions designed to achieve certain immediate successes, to build momentum, and to lay the foundation upon which sustained efforts to affect school readiness can be built. The following pages illustrate each goal and the key accomplishments that have been achieved since the release of the Action Agenda in October 2002. It should be noted that decreases in the levels of federal, state, and local funding allocated for early care and education and to school readiness have limited implementation of many of the original strategies and action steps in the Action Agenda. Nonetheless, the progress to date has been substantial. The results are—to a great degree—attributable to the focus offered by the Five-Year Action Agenda. There also have been numerous, outstanding local efforts that have contributed to the achievement of the statewide school readiness goals. Many of these local efforts are highlighted as well.

## **GOAL 1:**

**ALL CHILDREN, BIRTH THROUGH AGE FIVE, WILL HAVE ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES, INCLUDING FULL-DAY OPTIONS.**

### **STRATEGY: COORDINATE THE DELIVERY OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION**

To address Goal 1, LAP members helped implement strategies to coordinate the delivery of quality early care and education programs (child care, early intervention, Early Head Start/Head Start, preschool, home visiting, family support, and family literacy services). These strategies resulted in the achievement of a number of key accomplishments:

- In December 2003, MSDE and Head Start developed a framework, Successful Linkages, to help public schools and Head Start programs work collaboratively to support each other and the parents of young children in achieving school readiness.
- Through the collaborative environment created by Successful Linkages, a number of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) were developed and signed. A statewide MOU was signed by Dr. Nancy Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools, and Clare Siegel, President, Maryland Head Start Association, in March 2004. The statewide MOU addressed areas that schools and Head Start could address together, including joint planning, articulation, parent involvement, and professional development. Regional meetings were held to promote local agreements, based on the statewide MOU.
- Similarly, an MOU was developed by Head Start, the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (MITP), and Preschool Special Education Services. This MOU sought to improve the quality of programs and services for children with disabilities, birth through age four, and their families. This collaboration should improve access to participation in inclusive early childhood environments throughout Maryland's communities.
- Funding for the MITP was increased in FY03 through collaborative efforts by parents, community members, the state's child-serving agencies, Local Management Boards, schools, and MSDE. Senate Bill 856 was passed in the 2002 Maryland General Assembly session, providing state funding for infants and toddlers programs at a level intended to increase the quality, quantity, and frequency of services available to children with disabilities and their families. This funding has resulted in improved programs and services to these children and families.
- Under the Bridge to Excellence Act, passed in the Maryland General Assembly in 2002, and the No Child Left Behind Act, local school systems are required to submit master plans to MSDE. The guidelines developed by MSDE and provided to local school systems included directions to use the contracted services of qualified, accredited child care programs or Head Start to provide pre-kindergarten services. Four local school systems (Garrett, Allegany, Howard, and Worcester) submitted master plans with strong public school/early childhood community partnerships. It is noteworthy that less than 17 percent of local school systems in the state have early childhood/public school coordination.

- The rich tapestry of diversity in Maryland necessitated that outreach information be provided in a variety of culturally competent formats. To reach the widest number of families, MSDE issued *Your Child Goes to School* as a flyer for parents of entering pre-K and kindergarten students. It was published in 15 languages and is still available in print and on the MSDE website. This flyer was transformed into a new publication, *It's Time for School*, by MSDE and Ready At Five, in the spring of 2005. It was distributed to local school systems in CD-ROM form in time for pre-K and kindergarten registration in 2005. *It's Time for School* is available on the Ready At Five and MSDE websites.
- There are 24 Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Centers, or “Judy Centers,” in Maryland, serving 29 Title I elementary school attendance areas. Judy Centers were written into Maryland law in May 2000 (Maryland Code Annotated Education §5–125), with the opening of 13 centers. In 2002, 11 additional centers were funded. Judy Centers are early childhood and family learning centers that typically operate service programs for young children and their families 7–12 hours a day, year round. Judy Centers offer pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and preschool special education; the services of local Maryland Infants and Toddlers Programs; and before- and after-school child care services. Additionally, the Judy Centers are required to provide:
  - full-day/full-year services;
  - student breakfasts and lunches;
  - service coordination;
  - integration of early education services;
  - coordinated family support;
  - early identification and intervention services;
  - health-related services such as immunization and vision and hearing screenings;
  - coordinated professional development;
  - family involvement activities; and
  - accredited/validated programs.

Judy Centers are unique because they promote school readiness through collaboration among community-based agencies and organizations, including Head Start, family support centers, home visiting programs, parent involvement programs, family literacy programs, and public libraries. This integrated approach includes early childhood care and education as well as

family support and health programs, whose services are conveniently provided within or near school buildings. Maryland has a long history of providing early intervention preschool services to children with disabilities in specialized settings. The Judy Centers have continued this tradition by fostering opportunities for inclusive early childhood programs and services. For the 2003 school year, Judy Center programs successfully included 78 percent of children with disabilities in inclusive settings. This is a significantly higher percentage than the statewide average.

- Through Judith P. Hoyer Accreditation Enhancement Grants and Child Care Administration (CCA) support, the number of accredited classroom-based early childhood programs increased from 123 in 2000 to 329 through October 31, 2005, a 267 percent increase. The number of accredited family child care programs increased from one in 2000 to 175 through October 31, 2005, a 175 percent increase.
- Two local Leadership in Action Programs were established in Baltimore City and southern Maryland, including Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties. Both used WSS and the statewide Achieving School Readiness Action Plan as templates for their jurisdictions. Additionally, Baltimore City added a seventh goal—*Baltimore City Schools will be prepared to receive all children.*

#### **CHALLENGES: THE COST TO FAMILIES**

There were significant accomplishments in the strategies and action items of Goal 1. However, there are also challenges ahead. Access to quality child care is problematic for many families because of the economic downturn that affected the state in 2003. Many of the issues are summarized below:

- The Purchase of Care program had operated a waitlist, with over 20,400 children and their families waiting for the program's benefits. All categories of the Purchase of Care waitlist were opened in the fall of 2005.
- Families that are able to access Purchase of Care now have a higher co-pay requirement, which in most cases is financially burdensome.
- Funds for "wrap-around" care have been significantly reduced, meaning that families that use less-than-full-day programs (e.g., six-hour Head Start programs) aren't able to access high-quality programs for the remainder of the care-day for their children.

- Head Start programs have not adjusted income guidelines for families to better reflect the changes of welfare reform (both at the federal and state levels).
- Funding to increase the quality of care through the training of early care and education professionals was significantly reduced, beginning in FY 2003. This has resulted in fewer training sessions and fewer topics available to professionals interested in improving their skills.
- Funding to recognize those providers who exceed minimal licensing requirements, through the Maryland Child Care Credential, were significantly reduced. This reduced motivation for caregivers to continue training to improve skills, and ultimately, the quality of caregiving settings.

## **GOAL 2:**

### **PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN WILL SUCCEED IN THEIR ROLE AS THEIR CHILD'S FIRST TEACHERS.**

#### **STRATEGY: USE LIBRARIES AS RESOURCE CENTERS FOR PARENTS**

Public libraries are abundant in Maryland and they provide an ideal venue for children and families to learn together, serve as a community information center, and ensure free access to literacy activities. Annually, 350,000 children, birth through age four, participate in library story times throughout the libraries in Maryland. A strategy of using libraries as resource centers for parents to accomplish Goal 2 resulted in the following accomplishments:

- A pilot program to conduct school readiness outreach activities specifically tailored to engage parents in the Hispanic community was established in 2003 in the library systems of Wicomico, Frederick, and Howard counties. Eighty library staff participated in the field testing of the Emergent Literacy Training for speakers of Spanish. The training was conducted by staff of the Johns Hopkins Center for Reading Excellence and MSDE. This training was featured at the Family Literacy Conference in Baltimore.

- In 2003–04, librarians in each public library system received training on emergent literacy best practices. Five hundred and fifty librarians were trained by the Johns Hopkins Center for Reading Excellence personnel. As a result, preschool story times and parenting programs have incorporated these best practices to help children start school ready to learn to read.
- In 2004, staff members from each library system were trained and received certification to conduct a CCA-approved workshop called “Having Fun with Language and Literacy: Starting Children Out Right for School Readiness!” This course is being presented to child care providers across the state for which they earn three hours of core of knowledge training in the area of curriculum.
- Wicomico County Library’s Birth to Four Team entered into collaboration with Head Start. This two-year project (2002–04) included monthly story times, early literacy training for teachers and parents, new books and bookcases, distribution of newsletters, and a variety of other activities and resources. The library involvement with the local school system, child care providers, parents, and Head Start was a contributing factor to improvement in the WSS achievement for children in Wicomico County who attended Head Start.

#### **STRATEGY: SUPPORT FAMILY LITERACY**

The Ready At Five Partnership continues to develop and disseminate its acclaimed *Parents Matter* publication series—school readiness materials that offer a variety of topics—to support parents as their child’s first teachers. This strategy, which promotes family literacy, has resulted in the following accomplishments:

- Governor Ehrlich proclaimed January 28, 2004, as Family Literacy Day to promote family literacy and the importance of family involvement in children’s literacy development. Governor and Mrs. Ehrlich have provided positive role models of parents as their child’s first teachers and have provided public support for early childhood initiatives.
- MSDE developed a family literacy initiative, *Take 15 for the Family*, which included school readiness activities that parents and their young children could do together. These activities aligned with the domains of learning in the Work Sampling System. As a result of this initiative, during the 2003–04 school year, over 250 schools participated in family literacy activities, and over 200 parents, home visitors, Head Start staff members, and school staff members participated in workshops focused on activities that built on learning at home.

- On March 24, 2005, MSDE, in partnership with the Office of Maryland First Lady Kendel Ehrlich, the Maryland PTA, and the Maryland Dietetic Association, launched *Take 15 for the Health of It*, designed to help Maryland families develop strategies for healthy living. This statewide initiative builds on the existing *Take 15 for the Family*.
- MSDE's Even Start Family Literacy Program successfully provided a comprehensive family literacy program for 11 years to Maryland's families that have low income and are "most in need" of literacy services. In 2003–04, Maryland awarded \$2.8 million to 13 school systems for the operation of 17 project sites statewide. The projects were designed to improve the academic achievement of parents and their young children, especially in the area of reading. Programs must integrate early childhood education, adult literacy (adult basic and secondary-level education and/or instruction for English language learners), parenting education, and interactive parent and child literacy activities into a single, unified family literacy program. Approximately 475 children, birth through age seven, and their families received services. The Even Start Performance and Program Indicators were used to monitor, evaluate, and improve local programs. For the 2002–03 school year, Maryland met all of its statewide targets for early childhood education, adult education, family functioning, and service delivery and implementation.
- The Family League of Baltimore City, the city's Local Management Board, was awarded a federal Early Learning Opportunities Act grant in October 2003. This 17-month grant permitted the Family League and its many partners to implement a range of activities designed to promote the early language and literacy development of children age birth through four. The activities included: the distribution of 3,500 early language and literacy activity boxes (designed by the Ready At Five Partnership, as noted earlier) directly to parents; provision of early literacy coaching to over 100 family child care providers; implementation of parent-child Bright Beginnings groups that promoted early language skills; the hosting of parent workshops on early language and literacy; the implementation of a Born to Read initiative; and outreach to the faith-based community to engage it in promoting early literacy. This grant was supplemented with funding from the Annie E. Casey and Abell Foundations to further efforts with family child care providers and home visitors.
- There are a variety of parent-child activities offered annually by the plethora of home visiting programs, including Healthy Families, Home Instruction Program for Parents and Preschool Youngsters (HIPPPY), Parents As Teachers (PAT), and other family support programs. A required element of all these programs is a parent-child activity. For example:

- Parents and their children, birth through age three, participated in 65,402 parent-child activities in family support centers in FY 2004;
  - Through the Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) program, over 9,000 books were distributed to children, age birth through three, in family support centers;
  - Numerous School Readiness Fairs were held throughout Maryland communities and jurisdictions, during Young Child Week and Month, back-to-school nights, kindergarten registration, and summer celebrations;
  - Judy Centers and their partnering agencies provided 4,351 parent-child activities in FY 2004; and
  - 502 parents with children, age three through five, participated in HIPPY.
- The PAT home visiting program, housed at The Family Works, provided training to 2,311 Maryland families.
  - The Family Works, Maryland’s Parent Information and Resource Center-sponsored Parent Leadership Institute, provides parents with the skills needed to effectively advocate for their child as they transition into elementary school. The Institute enrolled three parents who had children under five. Two parents had children enrolled in Early Head Start; one parent had a child enrolled in Head Start.
  - Friends of the Family, Inc. (FOF), intermediary for Maryland’s Network of Family Support Centers, added an Early Literacy Component to its Infant/Toddler Program Core Service in the Maryland Family Support Center Manual in 2004. An additional category was added to the Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) to confirm that all early literacy expectations were being met in all programs. The 25 centers are required to undergo an ITERS review every year, and all centers have earned a minimum score of 6 (7 is the highest score possible). In 2004, FOF added an Early Literacy and School Readiness section to its website with links to additional Maryland-specific and national literacy resources. “Language Development and Literacy in Young Children,” a two-hour required training for all child development staff in all centers (approximately 140 at any given time), was developed in 2004 by FOF Child Development Specialists and is offered regularly. FOF receives funding from Reading Is Fundamental annually to provide each child at every family support center with at least three books per year to keep as part of a family library.



#### **STRATEGY: PROMOTE ADULT EDUCATION**

The Maryland Adult Education Program provides instruction that is aimed directly at the skills and knowledge parents need to support and improve their children's learning and has achieved the following accomplishments toward reaching Goal 2:

- In 2002–03, the Maryland Adult Education Program served 14,496 parents of 19,653 school-age children enrolled in the Maryland school system.
- 43 percent became employed, compared with 14 percent before enrolling (NCFL).
- As a result of their participation, 4,870 parents increased their involvement in their children's education, as evidenced by increased involvement in school activities, greater assistance with their children's homework, more frequent reading to their children at home, and more family visits to the library.
- Adults participating in family literacy remained enrolled longer and 50 percent earned their GED.

### **GOAL 3:**

**CHILDREN, BIRTH THROUGH AGE FIVE, AND THEIR FAMILIES WILL RECEIVE NECESSARY INCOME-SUPPORT BENEFITS AND HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARRIVE AT SCHOOL WITH HEALTHY MINDS AND BODIES.**

#### **STRATEGY: FOCUS ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH**

Ensuring that children are born healthy and maintain good health is a critical first-step in all school readiness efforts. Many of LAP's strategies to reach Goal 3 are designed to draw public attention to this need and garner public support for programs and services that support the health needs of young children and their families. These efforts have brought about the following accomplishments:

- The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), Center for Maternal and Child Health (CMCH), received a two-year Early Childhood Comprehensive Services planning grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, in July 2003. The goal was to improve the health of young children in Maryland by promoting early childhood systems building through strategic planning and collaboration. Under this continuing initiative, CMCH is building upon the work begun by the Action Agenda's developers to mobilize new and existing partners and implement strategic planning and collaborative processes to promote child health and school readiness statewide.
- DHMH, the state Medicaid agency, implemented a statewide initiative to share information with families of Medicaid-insured infants about access to health, mental health, and support services as well as information regarding health education and parenting. From January 2004 to June 30, 2004, Maryland Medicaid mailed over 15,000 *Healthy Start, Grow Smart* information packets to parents of Medicaid newborns.
- DHMH—together with agencies and private partners, including the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Department of Human Resources Child Care Administration, and the Maryland Department of Environment—has developed the Maryland Asthma Control Plan. The plan includes goals and objectives to be implemented through early care and education programs. DHMH has authority and responsibility for the Maryland Asthma Control Program under a state legislative mandate supported by funding from the CDC. The Maryland Asthma Control Plan, issued in March 2004, includes objectives relating to maximizing management of asthma in the school setting and in the child care setting. DHMH also has developed the Asthma Action Plan to promote communication between providers, parents, child care givers, and schools for better asthma management. Information about the Maryland Asthma Control Plan and Asthma Action Plan is available at [www.marylandasthmacontrol.org](http://www.marylandasthmacontrol.org).
- In September 2003, the Head Start State Collaboration Project of MSDE sponsored a Health Information Workshop for the Early Head Start, Head Start, and Judy Center staffs. The utilization of early care and education programs and practitioners as vehicles for providing information on child health issues contributing to school readiness, including low birthweight, immunizations, asthma, and lead poisoning, is an innovative approach to collaboration among health care practitioners and early child care and education professionals.

- Ready At Five established a partnership with the University of Maryland, Open Gates Medical Center, and Harbor Hospital to combine the message of the importance of healthy child development and school readiness to parents with young children residing in high poverty communities.
- In Maryland, particularly Baltimore City, lead poisoning is a serious environmental health issue. DHMH, along with other agencies and private partners, worked collaboratively with the Maryland Department of the Environment to develop a plan to eliminate lead poisoning by 2010. This planning process began in January 2004 and the plan was submitted to the CDC in July 2004. The plan incorporates the enforcement of a Child Care Administration regulation to use a lead-risk questionnaire and test for lead levels in the blood of children residing in high-risk areas (as per the Maryland Lead Poisoning Targeting Plan) upon entrance into all early care and education programs. The plan also uses early care and education programs as a vehicle to systematically provide child care provider and parent workshops on lead poisoning. A copy of the plan and information about childhood lead poisoning prevention is available at [www.mde.state.md.us/lead](http://www.mde.state.md.us/lead).
- In 2002, the Baltimore City Health Department Infants and Toddlers Program began accepting referrals for evaluation of children with blood lead levels of 15mcg/dcl and above.

#### **STRATEGY: IMPLEMENT EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CARE**

The area of children's mental health is often overlooked and underfunded. The goal of the Early Childhood Mental Health Steering Committee, an interagency committee chaired jointly by MSDE and DHMH, is to promote and implement an integrated early childhood mental health system of care through the achievement of objectives such as initiating a public education campaign, developing funding strategies, state policy integration, and local capacity building. Following are some specific accomplishments:

- The Steering Committee conducted a Capacity/Needs Assessment throughout Maryland to determine the need for mental health services for young children and their families and the capacity to provide these services in 2002. The project was funded by MSDE, DHMH, the Department of Human Resources Child Care Administration, and the Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families. Working with the LMBs and the Steering Committee, the

scope of the project was defined, the type of relevant data already existing was identified, and a tool to collect the new data was developed. The LMBs were the lead agencies for the data collection phase of the process. Data were collected locally, in all 24 jurisdictions, from a diverse array of programs and partners. The data showed the existence of a broad continuum of services and support for young children and their caregivers in more than half of the counties. The data further highlighted the need for: (1) the development of an infrastructure, and (2) the need to expand the service delivery capacity of local jurisdictions, paying particular attention to the need for therapeutic foster care and nursery services. After analysis of the data, recommendations were made in three areas: (1) use data to inform decision-making, (2) assure equitable access, and (3) maximize existing resources.

- Four regional forums (Eastern Shore, Columbia, Southern Maryland, Western Maryland) were conducted between June 2003 and April 2004 to share information regarding the Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative, current information on brain research, and parents' and therapists' perspectives. Over 200 representatives of the early care and education community participated in the forums. These 200 people have become advocates and ambassadors throughout Maryland for mental health services for our youngest citizens. During fiscal year 2005, the Early Childhood Mental Health Steering Committee will develop and begin implementation of strategies for the provision of technical assistance and training at the jurisdictional level.
- A statewide conference, *Young Children's Mental Health Policy Conference 2004*, was held November 3, 2004. Approximately 300 individuals representing a cross-section of the early care and education community and the birth to age five mental health provider community attended the conference.
- The Steering Committee partnered with Georgetown University's Center for Child and Human Development to conduct a Search Conference, *The Workforce Challenge: Developing New Partnerships to Serve Children and Families Within a System of Care*. On June 5, 2003, 85 individuals representing a wide range of public and private agencies and organizations attended the conference. A smaller interagency group, convened by the Steering Committee, continues the work. A Maryland Mental Health Workforce Summit was held on April 12, 2005. Over 100 individuals attended, with 40 signing up to work with the Mental Health Workforce Development Steering Committee.

- The Child Care Administration funded two two-year pilot programs, one on the Eastern Shore (Project Right Steps) and the other in Baltimore City (Early Intervention Project). Georgetown University’s Center for Child and Human Development was asked to serve as the external evaluator for the pilot sites. They are described as follows:
  - Project Right Steps primarily used a child-centered approach to consultation. Child-centered consultation was initiated by a referral of a particular child to a person who had expertise in the social-emotional and behavioral development of young children. Project Right Steps served 120 children in five counties on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in its two years of operation. The majority of the children were referred because of aggressive behaviors and other externalizing disorders, including non-compliance and problems with activity level. Children were seen in their homes and their child care settings, and referrals for additional services and supports were made for the majority of the children. Overall, 88 of 107 children for whom data were available were maintained in their child care programs; only two of the children who changed placements were expelled. There were statistically significant improvements in social skills and decreases in problem behavior for the children in the program. Specifically, child care providers rated 82 percent and 92 percent of the children age one to three as improved in their social skills and problem behaviors respectively; child care providers rated 65 percent of the children age three to five as improved in their social skills; more than 80 percent of parents rated their children’s social skills and problem behavior as improved. In at least one Head Start Program, Project Right Steps implemented a hybrid model, where intensive program-focused consultation also was implemented. In this setting, strong findings on improvements to the social-emotional environment in the classroom were reported.
  - The Early Intervention Project in Baltimore City has both components in its model: during the first year of operation, they relied more on a child-focused strategy, whereas during the second year, they added the development of partnership agreements with more than 12 specific child care programs to provide ongoing consultation on behavioral issues. Rather than focusing on the individual behavior of a given child, program-focused consultation offered early childhood settings ongoing assistance in preventing the development of problem behavior in young children. The Early Intervention Project has served 88 children in child care settings in 19 different

zip-codes in Baltimore City during its first two years of operation. The majority of children presented with behavioral or emotional concerns, including biting, hitting, and problems with activity level. Eighty-eight percent of the children served were not removed from their child care setting; only two of the children who changed placements were expelled. Statistically significant changes in problem behavior were seen in the children served, with two-thirds of the children demonstrating improvements in their acting out (externalizing) and withdrawal behaviors (internalizing). Strong differences that were found in the social-emotional environment of the classrooms were also reported.

- From the fall of 2001 to May 2003, mental health consultation and services provided at Judy Centers increased from 61 children to 341, an increase of 450 percent. These services were provided by on-site behavioral specialists, or if needed, through referrals to partnering mental health service providers.
- In Montgomery County, the overall goal of the county-funded Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and Training Services for Child Care Program was to enhance the competency and capacity of child care staff to provide appropriate interventions and/or make referrals for more intensive services for children's mental health needs. In FY 2004, the project served a total of 1,995 children in 31 different child care programs. Evaluations of the project indicate that 88 percent of the children at risk for expulsion were retained due to the behavior/mental health consultations provided.
- Montgomery County child care providers can access mental health consultation through ChildLink. ChildLink serves as a single point of entry, where bilingual counselors can triage calls, make referrals, and provide information and linkages to a wide variety of programs and services for young children and their families. Issues range from the simple, such as "How do I find out about child care?" to the complex, requiring counseling, multiple follow-up calls and referrals to health, mental health, early intervention, family support, and social services agencies. In FY 2004, the first full year of ChildLink's operations, 1,333 callers were served with referrals to 481 programs. One hundred and thirty-seven agency/program representatives called for information about services for young children. Eighteen percent of callers received services in Spanish.

**STRATEGY: ENSURE ADEQUATE MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AND YOUNG CHILDREN**

The link between health care coverage for pregnant women and young children and improved school readiness outcomes was documented in the Five-Year Action Agenda. To this end, accomplishments within the state's Medicaid program to ensure adequate coverage for pregnant women and young children are worth noting:

- The HealthChoice program continued to experience a growth in enrollment. In December 2000, there were over 410,000 enrollees in HealthChoice. By December 2003, this number rose to just over 470,000. The majority of enrollees continue to be in the Family and Children coverage group.
- In FY 2004, the Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP) encountered an enrollment freeze and new premium requirement. Once these restrictions were lifted, there was steady growth in MCHP enrollment. An assessment of the impact of these changes showed the premium's impact on enrollment was immediate and temporary, and the majority of dis-enrolled children maintained health coverage.
- Access to ambulatory care has increased for all enrollees, from 60 percent to 68 percent (2000–2003). Children age two and under experienced notable increases: visit rates increased by roughly 20 percent since CY 2000.
- Access to well-child visits in HealthChoice increased from 38 percent to 46 percent for all ages, with significant increases for children under age two (2000–2003).
- Children's access to dental services increased from 34 percent to 43 percent (over the three-year period 2001–2003).
- Lead screening for one-year-olds increased from 43 percent to 47 percent (over the three-year period 2001–2003). In Baltimore City, an identified high-risk area, the HealthChoice lead screening rate exceeded 50 percent.
- The FY 2003 budget increased physician fees for the Maryland Children's Health Program and the Maryland Medical Assistance Program by \$50 million (total funds). The fee increase applied first to approximately 100 medical procedures that comprised Evaluation and

Management (E and M) services. DHMH prioritized E and M services to ensure that the new resources had the greatest impact. Primary care physicians, who account for the majority of services provided to women and children under the Medicaid program, benefited most from the higher rates. At the same time, specialists also received the increased rates when providing E and M services.

- Funding for dental services increased from \$12 million in CY 2000 to \$33 million for CY 2005, which reflected increases in rates and utilization. In March 2004, DHMH increased rates for restorative fees. New restorative fees were at the midpoint of 2003 charges reported by the American Dental Association for the South Atlantic Region. There are now 330 dentists enrolled as HealthChoice providers statewide (a 19 percent increase from 2003 to 2004).
- Additional quality measurements show steady improvements in HealthChoice. Findings from consumer satisfaction surveys (Consumer Assessment of Health Plans) show that parents experienced overall satisfaction with the health care their children receive in HealthChoice. The following measures related to pregnant women and children were included in DHMH's system for creating incentives for delivery of high-quality care by managed care organizations (MCOs):
  - Well-Child Visits for Children Age 3–6
  - Dental Services for Children Age 4–20
  - Ambulatory Care Services for SSI Children
  - Timeliness of Prenatal Care
  - Lead Screenings for Children Age 12–23 Months
  - Childhood Immunization Status (Combo 2)





## **GOAL 4:**

### **ALL EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION STAFF WILL BE APPROPRIATELY TRAINED IN PROMOTING AND UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL READINESS.**

#### **STRATEGY: PROVIDE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The need for ongoing, relevant training and professional development for early care and education practitioners and families is constant, and the demand for high-quality professional development and training far outweighs the supply. Goal 4 focuses on ways to maximize existing resources by developing opportunities for joint training and professional development activities.

- In school year 2003–04, a total of 2,700 pre-kindergarten, preschool, special education, and kindergarten teachers attended from one to five full-day professional development sessions.
- Early Reading First (ERF) is an early literacy grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education that is being implemented in the Montgomery County Public Schools. This grant intensifies early literacy efforts and provides opportunities for students, parents, schools, and child care centers in the Wheaton Community. The goals of ERF are to ensure that all children entering kindergarten have the necessary language, cognitive, and early reading skills for school success. Another of its primary goals is to enhance pre-kindergarten students' foundational reading skills, including oral language, phonemic awareness, concepts about print, and letter knowledge. Five schools, four libraries, three child care centers, and the Department of Health and Human Services partner under the grant in the Wheaton Cluster. The sites are at Wheaton Woods, Viers Mill, Harmony Hills, Brookhaven, Weller Road, Brighteyes Child Care Center, Rockville Association Child Development Center, Wheaton High School Child Development Center, Aspen Hill Library, Twinbrook Library, Kensington Park Library, and Wheaton Library. The Department of Health and Human Services provides Literacy Learning Parties for parents in the Wheaton Cluster.
- The previously mentioned MOUs between MSDE, Head Start, the MITP, and Special Education Preschool Services, developed in April 2004, represent forward movement toward joint training opportunities for early care and education providers and families. These innovative collaborative partnerships have the potential to maximize existing resources,

both human and fiscal, and to provide a wide range of high-quality training and professional development activities.

- HIPPIY, Even Start, and In-Home Intervention home visiting programs delivered collaborative training on a variety of topics and issues since February 2002. Cross-training by these three groups has been provided in stress management, the involvement of fathers, and family literacy. Forty home visitors have been trained on ways to include fathers in their children's programs and activities. Since that time, collaborative trainings for all home visitors have been conducted by the Home Visiting Consortium at the Governor's Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF). The First Annual Home Visiting Conference, hosted by OCYF, was held on June 10, 2004. A statewide Home Visiting Training Day, also hosted by OCYF in collaboration with many state agencies and nonprofit organizations, was held on November 18, 2004.
- Earning college credits for early care and education providers' required training hours is one way to ensure a highly qualified workforce and to encourage providers to remain in the field. By January 2004, the Child Care Administration, Head Start, and participating community colleges developed and put in place agreements that provided college credits for completed child development training and for earning the Child Development Credential.
- The Learning Center, in Washington County, has been involved in the credentialing program since 2001. At present, 34 employees hold credentials, with nine renewals pending or being reevaluated. Thirty-three of 34 with current credentials have received two or three renewals. Of the 34, one is at Level 6; 11 are at Level 5; 16 are at Level 4; and six are at Level 3. Current staffers have received \$25,650 cash award bonuses since the beginning of the program. The Learning Center holds a Tiered Reimbursement Level 4 Center Credential. Additionally, 11 staff members have earned the national Child Development Associate (CDA). As a direct result of the credentialing program, in 2003–04, children accomplished on average 92 percent of their developmental objectives. Staff morale is at a 96 percent positive rating, parents are extremely pleased with the program (as evidenced by a 97 percent positive rating), and staff turnover is at an all-time low (12.1 percent in 2003–04 compared to 39.9 percent in 2001–02 and to 40 percent nationally in the field of child care).

- Child care providers and early educators were able to obtain college credit for MMSR training through the collaboration of the Maryland Committee for Children and Villa Julie College and funding from the Judith P. Hoyer Enhancement Grant. Child care providers were able to complete this critical training and were able to continue a professional development path toward a degree program.
- The Maryland Committee for Children (MCC), in partnership with Port Discovery, the children's museum, sponsored *Child Care Provider Night at Port Discovery*. This event provided an orientation to child care providers about resources available through Port Discovery and was structured to allow providers of early care and education to understand how all of the domain areas of school readiness (personal and social, language and literacy, scientific thinking, mathematical thinking, social studies, the arts, and physical development and health) can be utilized in classroom activities and field trips. As a follow-up to this event, participants received materials on how to structure learning environments for program activities that would lead to meaningful field trips and follow-up activities. In the future, MCC plans to sponsor and conduct additional activities of this type.
- As part of its Early Learning Opportunities Act grant, the Family League of Baltimore City and the Baltimore Child Care Resource Center have partnered to provide early literacy coaching to over 100 family child care providers serving families in the four Success By 6<sup>®</sup> communities. Since the fall of 2003, two literacy coaches, hired by the Resource Center, have provided monthly home visits to these family child care providers to give on-site guidance on infusing more age-appropriate language and literacy activities into the providers' child care setting. With supplemental funding from local foundations, the Family League also has been able to offer additional training, provided by the Children's Literacy Initiative, on reading aloud to children and has given participating providers high-quality children's book collections.
- In June 2004, the K-16 Leadership Council approved outcomes and standards for the Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) in Early Childhood Education. These standards enabled 66 credits attained in the AAT in Early Childhood Education degree to be transferred, without further review, to the teacher preparation program at a four-year institution of higher education.

- The Maryland Committee for Children provided training in literacy and numeracy for over 450 early care providers as part of a Judith P. Hoyer Enhancement Grant. Three, one-day, “Creating Literacy Rich Classroom Environments” mini-conferences were held. Additionally, trainers attending the conference were able to continue to offer training sessions in their regions in literacy and numeracy. Training in numeracy, using the Big Math for Little Kids strategy, was offered to trainers in the Maryland Child Care Resource Network, who could then offer professional development opportunities in mathematical thinking and numeracy to early care providers.
- Research-based staff training modules were developed for the MMSR and WSS. The MMSR training was presented to Head Start, Judy Centers, and child care staffs statewide. A total of 1,532 child care professionals received training in the first round of offerings. Training was given to 542 Head Start teachers and 655 assistant teachers; 100 home visitors; and 185 child care providers. In addition, 50 providers received train-the-trainer instruction, enabling them to instruct additional child care providers throughout the state.
- Research-based staff training was developed in program standards and child assessments for early care and education programs. Under the requirements of President Bush’s “Good Start, Grow Smart Initiative,” guidelines for healthy child development and care for children birth through age three were developed. These guidelines provide information to parents and providers on healthy child development and on interactions between children and caregivers to promote brain development and learning. Training will be developed and guidelines disseminated to all child care providers in the state. The guidelines are available via the DHR/Child Care Administration website at [www.dhr.state.md.us/cca](http://www.dhr.state.md.us/cca).
- Existing websites on early care and education were coordinated through hotlinks in order to provide updated research in a systematic fashion. DHR/Child Care Administration is now in the process of implementing a new database system for credentialing, training/trainer approval, licensing, and POC tracking. The web-based system will include public portals and the ability to provide links to MCC, NCCIC, NAEYC, NAFCC, etc. Phase 1 of the system became operational in July 2004. Phase II, which will provide public access, is in development.

- The articulation of training hours to college credits, based on the existing agreement with community colleges, was fully implemented. A challenge exam was developed and is currently offered by the community colleges to any student requesting credit for prior learning. The AAT in Early Childhood Education was developed and accepted by community colleges. Under this agreement, the AAT will be accepted, without further review, by four-year institutions for up to 64 credit hours toward a bachelor's degree. The addition of a materials and methods curriculum course to the AAT course of study will now allow a person completing this degree to fill the position of senior staff (preschool lead teacher) or director of a preschool center.
- Participation in the Maryland Child Care Credentialing Program continued to expand. A flyer was developed to publicize the program to child care center staff. A letter and survey was distributed at conferences and trainings, and sent to all child care associations to request information and feedback on the credentialing program and process. A focus group convened to address barriers to program participation. Based on the information received from the survey and the focus group, a report was submitted to the Maryland Legislature identifying improvements to the credentialing program to improve participation. Regulations were submitted for review. Three thousand sixty-four first-time credentials have been issued since the beginning of the program (July 1, 2001).
- A plan to provide mental health consultation to all child care providers was developed. Montgomery County has developed an Early Childhood Mental Health Plan, which includes a three-tiered program for early childhood mental health services for child care providers.



## GOAL 5:

### ALL MARYLAND CITIZENS WILL UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION AS A MEANS TO ACHIEVE SCHOOL READINESS.

#### STRATEGY: CONDUCT STATEWIDE PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

For citizens to value early care and school readiness, there must be activities and strategies to develop public awareness. The ECE Committee is currently working with existing state and local efforts to develop and implement public awareness of the connection between quality early care and education and school readiness. In particular, the statewide Early Childhood Public Engagement Campaign, called *Countdown to Kindergarten*, an outgrowth of a partnership between the state and the National Governors Association, has made some accomplishments worth noting:

- The campaign has raised over \$500,000 in public and private funds to support its efforts, utilized the Maryland Committee for Children as the fiscal agent, and provided staff support to this project. The campaign goal is to increase public awareness about the importance of early experience as the basis for school readiness. Campaign materials convey the message that everything a child experiences, every day, can stimulate his/her mind and build the foundation for learning and success in school.
- The campaign has gathered together the following members to provide leadership:
  - Atwood Collins III, M & T Bank
  - Richard Cass, Baltimore Ravens
  - Judith McHale, President, Discovery Communications
  - Paul Schurick, Communications Director, Office of Governor
  - Senator Ulysses Currie
  - Delegate Sheila Hixson
  - Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools
  - Sandra Skolnik, Executive Director, Maryland Committee for Children
  - Margaret Williams, Executive Director, Friends of the Family

- The campaign features a strategic media campaign, utilizing television and radio, print media, and the Internet. Governor Ehrlich officially launched the campaign at a press conference on January 18, 2005. Radio ads began airing statewide on January 25, 2005. The radio campaign consists of three 60-second ads that stress the link between early learning and school readiness and that urge parents to use everyday activities as opportunities to teach their children. The “everyday learning” theme was developed after conducting focus groups and is central to the radio ads and the grassroots outreach work described below. The ads can also be heard on the website at [www.countdownMD.org](http://www.countdownMD.org).
- *Countdown to Kindergarten* also has a grassroots outreach component. The campaign is reaching out to parents, the community, and regional press with the dual message about the importance of early learning and about using everyday activities as learning activities for young children. This outreach is being conducted through partnerships with local and regional early childhood initiatives/groups; and state agencies, departments, and programs, including:
  - Maryland State Department of Education
  - Department of Human Resources
  - Governor’s Office for Children, Youth, and Families
  - Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
  - Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program
  - Maryland Child Care Resource Network
  - Maryland Head Start Association
  - Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
  - Friends of the Family
  - Public Libraries
  - Home Visiting Consortium
  - Community Connections, Maryland
  - Reach Out and Read
  - Ready At Five Partnership
- *Countdown to Kindergarten* provides parent education and support materials. In conjunction with the grassroots outreach, several items were developed. These have been enhanced or expanded since their introduction:

- School readiness refrigerator magnets, available with either the Baltimore Ravens or Washington Redskins logos, allow the campaign to benefit from association with both of Maryland’s professional football teams. (50,000 have been distributed statewide)
  - *Tips for Turning Everyday Activities into Learning Activities*, the illustrated booklet for parents, has been published in English and Spanish and translated into 15 other languages and is available to download from the website. (130,000 have been distributed in English statewide, 16,000 in Spanish)
  - The website has been updated to handle requests for *Countdown to Kindergarten* materials, to provide PDFs of *Tips* in 17 languages, and to showcase the radio ads. This is in addition to the original content of the website, which includes other parent education and support resources and a research-focused resource list.
- Baltimore City launched its local *Countdown to Kindergarten Baltimore City* public engagement campaign in August 2004. Baltimore City’s campaign is to promote school readiness and awareness about the importance of early childhood experience, age birth to five. Baltimore City Countdown partners with the schools, libraries, community-based organizations, city agencies, citizens, and, of course, families. The goal is to work with all partners to recognize the exciting milestone of kindergarten in a family’s life and to understand all the supports, services, opportunities, and experiences that kids, age birth through five, need to be successful when they enter school. This campaign focuses on increasing the availability and quality of all activities and supports needed to help kids be ready for school.
  - Baltimore City campaign activities included the distribution of over 7,000 kindergarten registration packets, brochure development and distribution, participation in numerous community fairs, and provision of technical assistance to community-based organizations in support of school readiness efforts.
  - Montgomery County is a model in the development and marketing of a public engagement campaign to promote early care and education:
    - In 2001, Montgomery County hired a marketing firm to create the **help me grow** logo, which now identifies early childhood services to parents and providers. An interagency workgroup developed and implemented a yearly workplan for public engagement. Information on both campaigns is shared with the Early Care and Education



Committee. A preliminary evaluation found that the public knows they can find information on children's programs on the Montgomery County website or through printed materials at schools, libraries, child care programs, and many other sites.

- Literacy Learning Parties have been offered to parents and other adult caregivers in targeted communities throughout Montgomery County since 2002. The Literacy Learning Party curriculum is supported by current research and provides interactive parent-child activities to promote early language and literacy skills. The Literacy Learning Party series includes ten sessions that focus on a specific concept to promote early learning, including those for parents and caregivers who are other than English speaking. There have been a total of 643 Literacy Learning Parties attended by parents and caregivers.
  - Through the Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center, the Literacy Learning Party curriculum has been used as approved training for child care providers. Participating providers who complete the full ten module preschool series earn 15 CCA-approved hours of continued training.
- Frederick County's Office for Children and Families launched the "Frederick County Family Friendly Practices Program" in 2003. The program is a partnership of business, community, and government developed to increase business participation and support for employees to ensure that all children receive quality supervision during work hours. Through a community-wide survey process, businesses that have practices in place addressing employee's child care needs are honored with Family Friendly Business Awards at a public ceremony held annually in January. To be selected for the award, businesses must meet at least eight of the ten Family Friendly Criteria:
    - Provide tax-deferred savings options, including pre-tax dependent care;
    - Offer cafeteria plans where employees can be flexible in benefit spending;
    - Offer parental sick leave;
    - Offer flexible work hours to accommodate family obligations;
    - Purchase licensed or registered child care for employees;
    - Offer child care resource and referral services;
    - Donate equipment, supplies, or space to child care centers;
    - Offer new parent transition plans;
    - Offer paid parental leave; and
    - Offer time to employees to make daily telephone check-ins with their children.

## **GOAL 6:**

### **MARYLAND WILL HAVE AN INFRASTRUCTURE THAT PROMOTES, SUFFICIENTLY FUNDS, AND HOLDS ACCOUNTABLE ITS SCHOOL READINESS EFFORTS.**

#### **STRATEGY: DEVELOP A PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTION AGENDA**

The members of the original Leadership in Action Program were determined to ensure the viability of the Action Agenda. Its members recognized the need to develop a plan for the implementation of the Action Agenda's recommendations as well as sustainability strategies. To this end, accomplishments in implementing Goal 6 included:

- In September 2003, the ECE Committee presented the Action Agenda to the General Assembly's Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families and:
  - requested its continued support of early care and education as a state priority
  - asked it to adopt the Action Agenda as the state plan for early care and education
  - provided information about the impact of proposed cuts to services to children and families
- The Joint Committee agreed to maintain early care and education as one of its priorities, and recommended that the Subcabinet adopt the Five-Year Action Agenda as its Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education.
- The Subcabinet adopted the Five-Year Action Agenda as its Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education in August 2003. The Subcabinet also converted the LAP group into the Early Care and Education Committee, a permanent subcommittee of the Subcabinet. Dr. Grasmick was appointed to chair the Committee.
- The ECE Committee established a Goal Keeper and a Goal Group for each of the six goals of the Action Agenda. These groups meet regularly, track progress on activities contributing to the achievement of their goal, and report on implementation of action steps and key accomplishments.

- *Countdown to Kindergarten* created a Resource List on School Readiness, accessible on the Maryland Committee for Children’s website. The list provides information in promising practices, program evaluation, and early childhood research. Each entry on the list contains a brief summary and a link to more detailed information. This has proven to be a useful resource for families, advocates, organizations, and educators.
- As previously reported, all local school system master plans submitted to MSDE include plans to provide pre-kindergarten services. The plans afford an opportunity to develop school/early childhood community partnerships to provide pre-kindergarten services through a variety of sources, including schools, Head Start, and accredited child care programs.
- Local versions of the Leadership in Action Program have been implemented in two areas of the state:
  - In September 2003, the Baltimore Leadership in Action Program (B-LAP) was launched as a joint project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Reason to Believe Enterprise. Over 50 leaders from around the city were convened to both identify and implement short-term activities to affect the WSS results for the 2004–05 school year, and to develop a five-year school readiness plan for Baltimore City. This plan was released on March 28, 2005, at Port Discovery in Baltimore. B-LAP has become a standing committee of the Family League of Baltimore City—the city’s LMB—and is charged with the ongoing implementation of the plan.
  - In September 2004, the Southern Maryland Leadership in Action Program was initiated under the sponsorship of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Local Management Boards of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s counties. Approximately 55 individuals from the three southern Maryland counties met for seven days between September and February 2005. Each county team is working on creating a plan for their respective county as well as a plan that will meet the needs of the region. The group expects to have its plans in place by November 2005.
- The Frederick County Interagency Early Childhood Committee, a subcommittee of the Frederick County Local Management Board, launched a comprehensive community needs assessment for children age birth to five and their families in Frederick County in March 2003. The needs assessment, completed in May 2003, included the distribution of a family survey, convening of focus groups, and a rollout of assessment findings at an Early Childhood

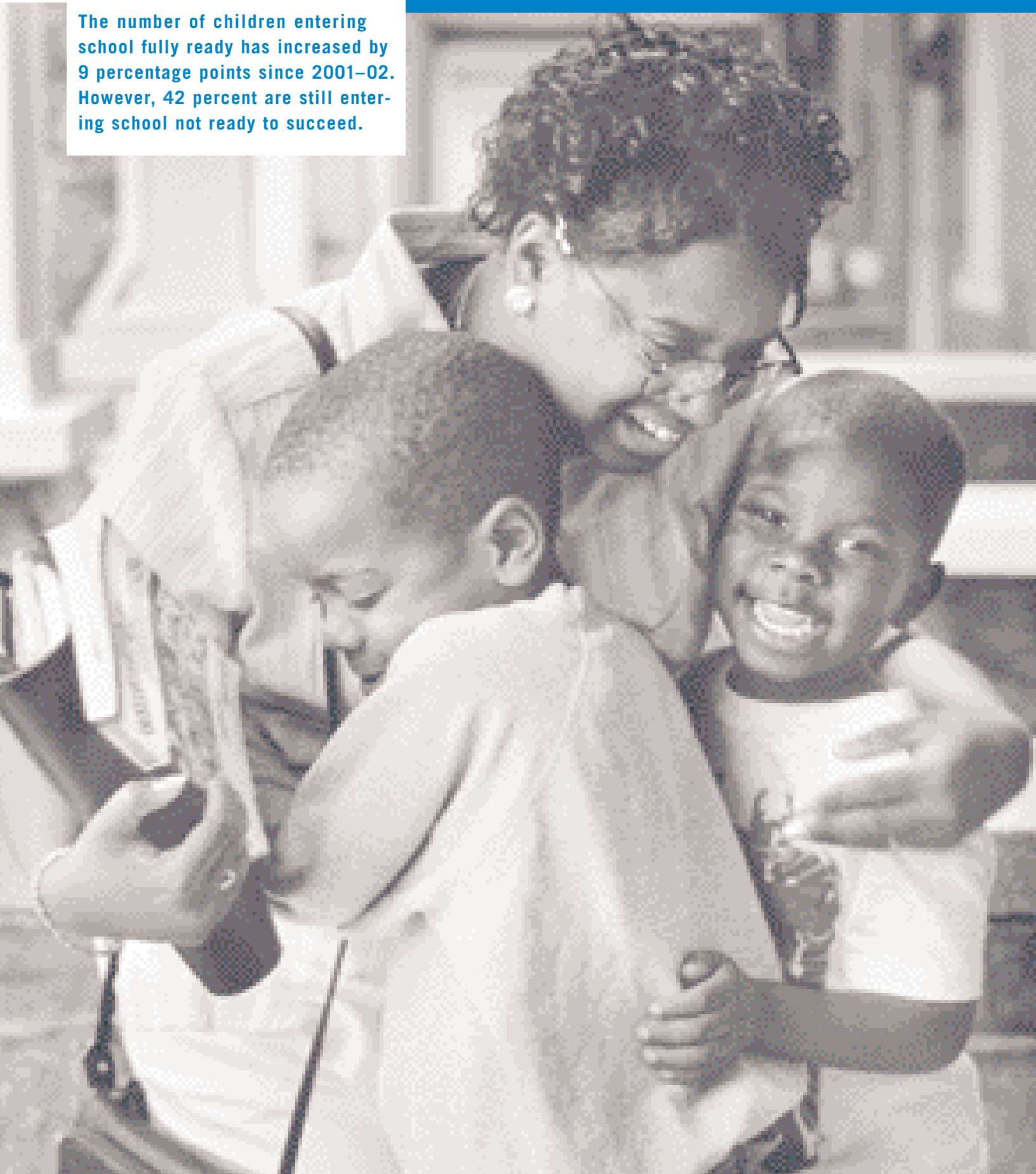
Summit, held in November 2003. Interest area groups continued the work timeline established at the Summit, which culminated in 2004 with the publishing of *Caring for Frederick County's Children—A Five-Year Strategic Action Plan*. The Plan includes four goals:

- Goal 1: Increase access to health care for all pregnant women, young children, and their families
- Goal 2: Support parents/guardians as children's most important teachers
- Goal 3: Increase the public's knowledge of the importance of quality early education
- Goal 4: Increase funding for young children and families

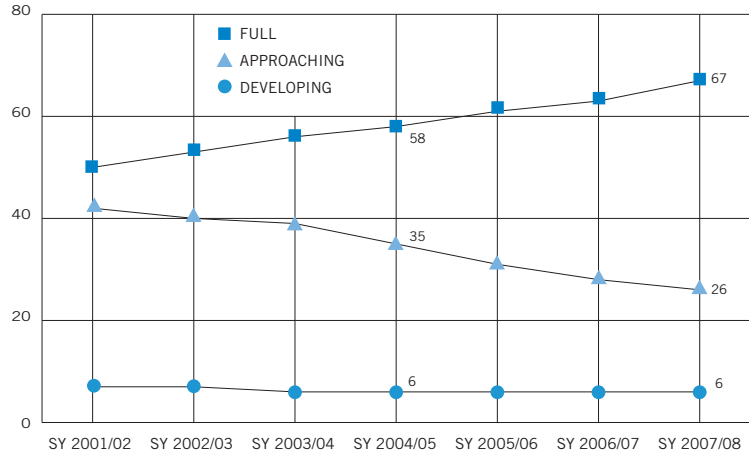
The Interagency Early Childhood Committee continues to serve as the Goal Keeper of the Plan, taking steps to implement the objectives within each goal.

- Efforts to develop five-year early childhood development and/or school readiness plans are in various stages of development in other jurisdictions throughout the state. For example:
  - Howard County completed its Strategic Early Care and Education Plan in partnership with its Local Children's Board and Ready At Five in 2002.
  - Calvert County, in partnership with the Calvert County Children's Network, United Way of Calvert County, and Ready At Five, completed its Strategic Plan in 2004.
  - The Baltimore County Executive issued an Executive Order establishing an Early Childhood Action Committee comprised a 25-member panel. The panel, operating under the auspices of the county Local Management Board, is charged with developing an Early Childhood Action Agenda. The panel approved the Action Agenda in late spring 2005.
  - Montgomery County developed its local plan in 2001 and is well into the implementation of its plan. In FY 2004, over 89,000 early childhood services were accessed by parents and caregivers. Montgomery County's Collaboration Council (Local Management Board) has agreed that its Early Childhood Work Group would be responsible for updating the Montgomery County Early Childhood Initiative Plan for 2006–11.

The number of children entering school fully ready has increased by 9 percentage points since 2001-02. However, 42 percent are still entering school not ready to succeed.



**MARYLAND MODEL FOR SCHOOL READINESS  
PROJECTED RESULTS**



By SY 2007/08, it is projected that 67 percent of kindergarten students in Maryland will be evaluated by their teachers as “fully ready,” short of the 2007 statewide goal of 75 percent.

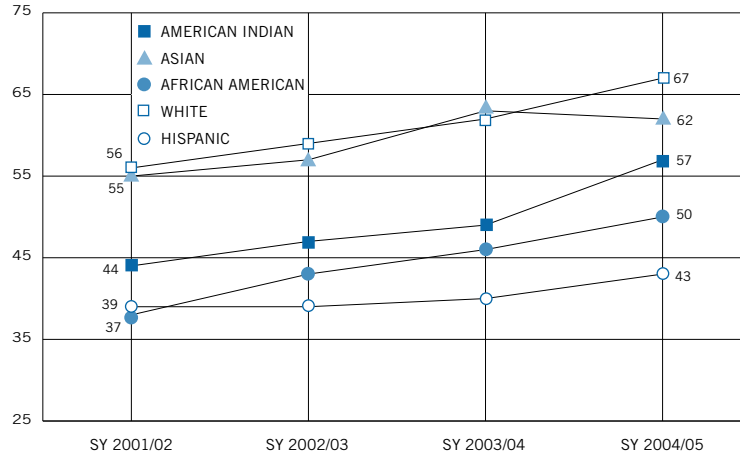
Source: Maryland State Department of Education

**PERCENT OF MARYLAND CHILDREN ENTERING SCHOOL READY TO SUCCEED, BY DOMAIN  
SCHOOL YEAR 2001/2002 AND SCHOOL YEAR 2004/2005**

	SCHOOL YEAR 2001/2002			SCHOOL YEAR 2004/2005		
	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing
<b>Composite</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>6%</b>
Social & Personal	55	36	9	63	30	7
Language & Literacy	36	50	14	48	41	11
Physical Development	60	35	4	72	25	3
Mathematical Thinking	40	47	13	54	36	10
Scientific Thinking	24	59	17	35	53	12
Social Studies	32	55	13	44	47	9
The Arts	51	42	7	63	32	5

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

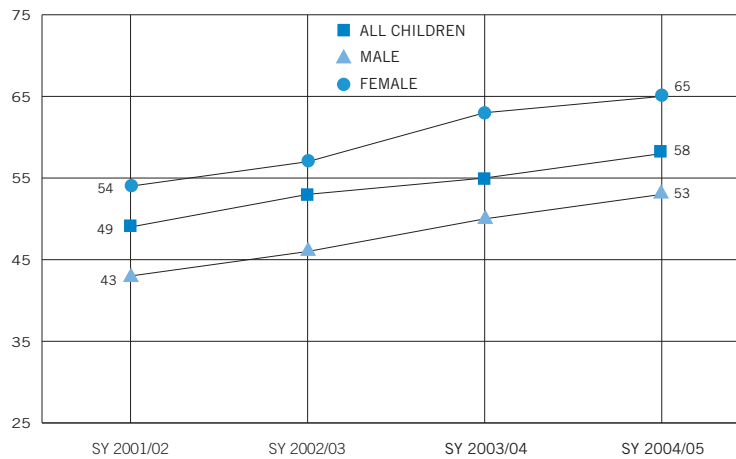
**PERCENT OF MARYLAND CHILDREN ENTERING SCHOOL READY TO SUCCEED,  
DATA BY ETHNICITY—SCHOOL YEARS 2001/02–2004/05**



Although the school readiness of children from most ethnicities continues to improve, gaps exist between white children and minority children, with virtually flat improvements in Hispanic children.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

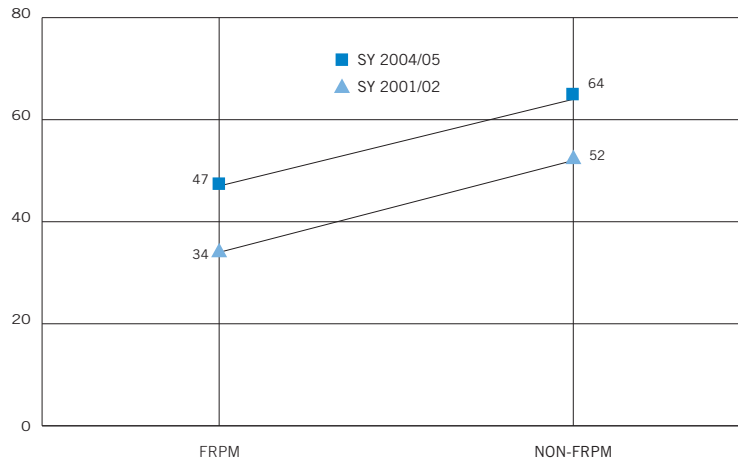
**PERCENT OF MARYLAND CHILDREN ENTERING SCHOOL READY TO SUCCEED  
DATA BY GENDER—SCHOOL YEARS 2001/02–2004/05**



Although the school readiness of children continues to improve, gaps exist and are widening slightly between males and females.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

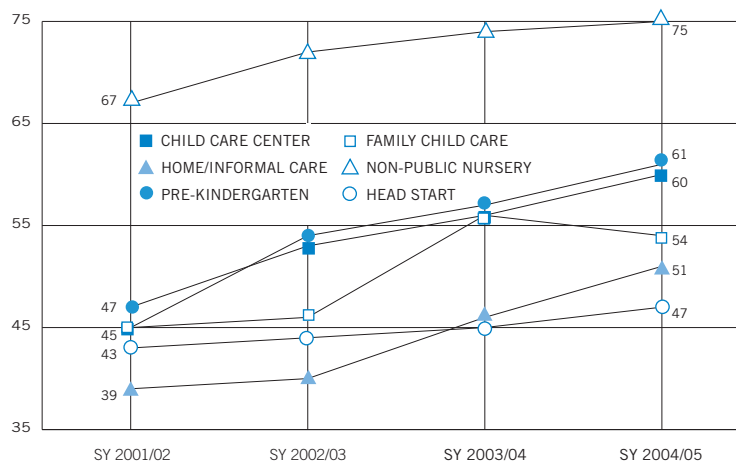
**MARYLAND MODEL FOR SCHOOL READINESS  
SUMMARY OF RESULTS, BY INCOME LEVEL—SCHOOL YEARS 2001/02 & 2004/05**



Although both low-income (Free and Reduced Priced Means—FRPM) and middle-/high-income (Non-FRPM) children showed improved school readiness skills, the gap between low- and middle-income students remained the same.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

**PERCENT OF MARYLAND CHILDREN ENTERING SCHOOL READY TO SUCCEED  
DATA BY PRIOR CARE—SCHOOL YEARS 2001/02–2004/05**

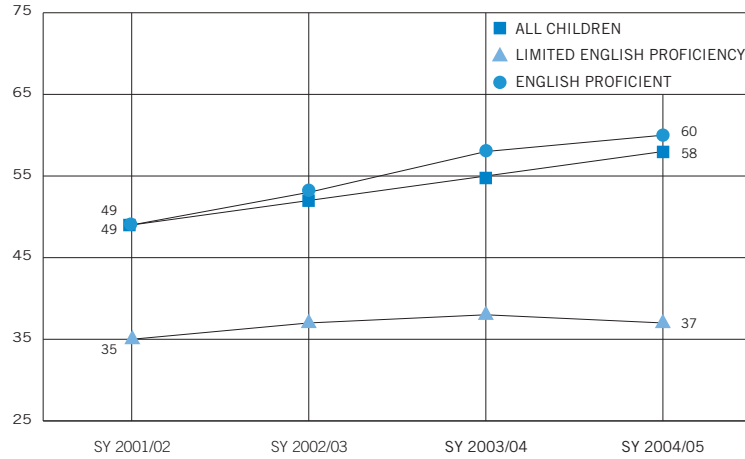


Although the school readiness of children in most prior care environments continues to improve, large gaps continue to exist between kindergarten children with non-public preschool experience and other prior care situations.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education



**PERCENT OF MARYLAND CHILDREN ENTERING SCHOOL READY TO SUCCEED  
DATA BY ENGLISH PROFICIENCY—SCHOOL YEARS 2001/02–2004/05**



The school readiness of children learning the English language declined in SY 2004/05 to 37 percent, widening the gap between English language learners and their English-speaking peers to 23 percentage points. This has nearly doubled in four years, up from a 14 percentage point gap in SY 2001/02.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

PERCENT OF MARYLAND CHILDREN ENTERING SCHOOL READY TO SUCCEED, SY 2004/05

	COMPOSITE			SOCIAL AND PERSONAL			LANGUAGE AND LITERACY			PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT			MATHEMATICAL THINKING			SCIENTIFIC THINKING			SOCIAL STUDIES			THE ARTS		
	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing	Full	Approaching	Developing
Composite	58	35	6	63	30	7	48	41	11	72	25	3	54	36	10	35	53	12	44	47	9	63	32	5
<b>ETHNICITY</b>																								
American Indian/Alaskan	57	36	7	63	32	6	41	44	15	73	25	3	53	36	10	33	54	13	44	46	10	63	31	6
Asian/Pacific Islander	62	33	5	71	24	5	48	42	10	78	20	2	60	34	6	34	55	11	41	49	10	62	33	4
African American	50	43	7	55	36	9	42	46	12	67	30	3	44	43	13	27	59	15	36	53	11	60	36	5
White	67	29	5	69	25	5	55	36	8	76	21	3	63	30	7	43	49	8	54	41	6	57	29	4
Hispanic	43	45	12	58	34	8	31	46	22	68	28	4	37	43	20	21	55	24	30	50	21	57	36	7
<b>GENDER</b>																								
Male	53	39	8	56	35	9	43	44	13	67	29	4	52	37	12	33	53	14	42	47	11	55	38	6
Female	65	31	4	72	24	4	53	38	9	78	20	2	57	35	9	36	53	10	47	45	7	72	26	3
<b>SPECIAL EDUCATION</b>																								
Yes	36	45	19	44	40	17	25	48	27	51	38	11	37	41	22	21	52	26	30	48	22	46	42	12
No	60	34	5	65	29	6	50	40	10	74	24	2	56	35	9	36	53	11	46	46	8	65	31	4
<b>LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY</b>																								
Yes	37	48	15	52	37	11	26	48	27	63	31	6	34	43	23	18	52	30	26	49	25	54	38	8
No	60	34	6	64	29	6	49	41	10	73	24	3	55	36	9	36	53	11	46	46	8	64	32	4
<b>FREE &amp; REDUCED LUNCH</b>																								
Yes	47	43	9	54	36	10	37	47	16	66	30	4	41	43	16	25	57	18	33	53	14	58	36	6
No	64	31	5	68	27	5	53	38	9	75	22	2	60	32	7	40	51	9	50	43	7	66	30	4

Source: Maryland State Department of Education



**The Maryland Early Care  
and Education Committee**

c/o Ready At Five Partnership

111 S. Calvert Street, Suite 1720

Baltimore, MD 21202

410.727.6290 Phone

410.727.7699 Fax