A lack of kindergarten readiness may significantly hinder a child's educational trajectory. In recognition of the importance of kindergarten readiness, Invest in Children (IIC) has sought to improve the quality of early childhood education in Cuyahoga County.

Since 2005, public schools in the State of Ohio, have used the State-mandated Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy (KRA-L) to measure kindergarten readiness. KRA-L scores range from 0-29 and fall in one of three bands: Band 1 (0-13) - defined as *Assess broadly for intense instruction*;

Band 2 (14-23) - defined as *Assess for targeted instruction;* and Band 3 (24-29) - defined as *Assess for enriched instruction*. For the purposes of remediation, children scoring in Band 1 may be at serious risk of being unprepared for kindergarten, and children scoring in Band 2 may reflect some level of unpreparedness. The purpose of these scores is to guide kindergarten educators in developing individually tailored, child specific instruction. Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, a new kindergarten readiness assessment will replace the KRA-L. The new assessment has six components measuring social skills, mathematics, science, social studies, language and literacy, and physical well-being and motor development.
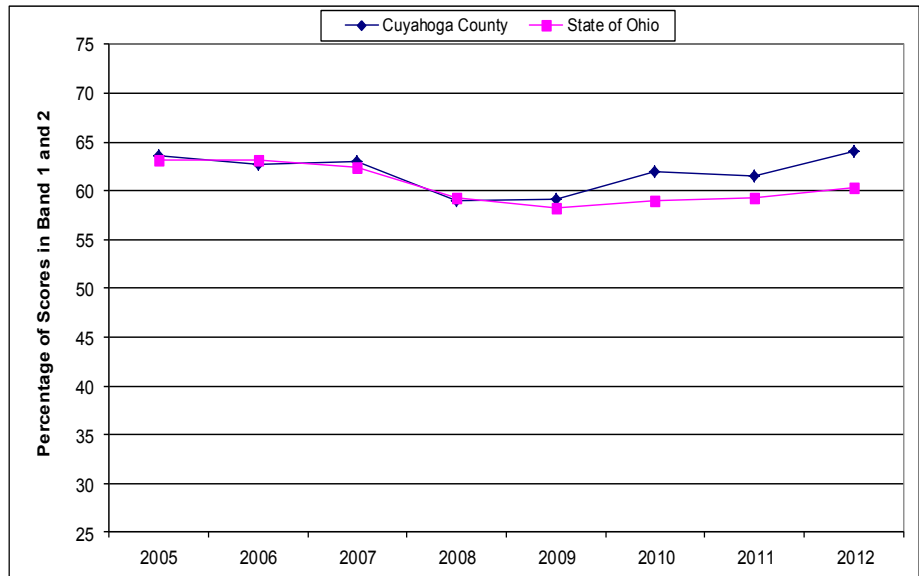
School Readiness Scores by District for Cuyahoga County

Percentage of Children by School District Scoring in the lowest two bands of the KRA-L

- 20% - 30%
- 31% - 40%
- 41% - 50%
- 51% - 60%
- over 60%
- No data
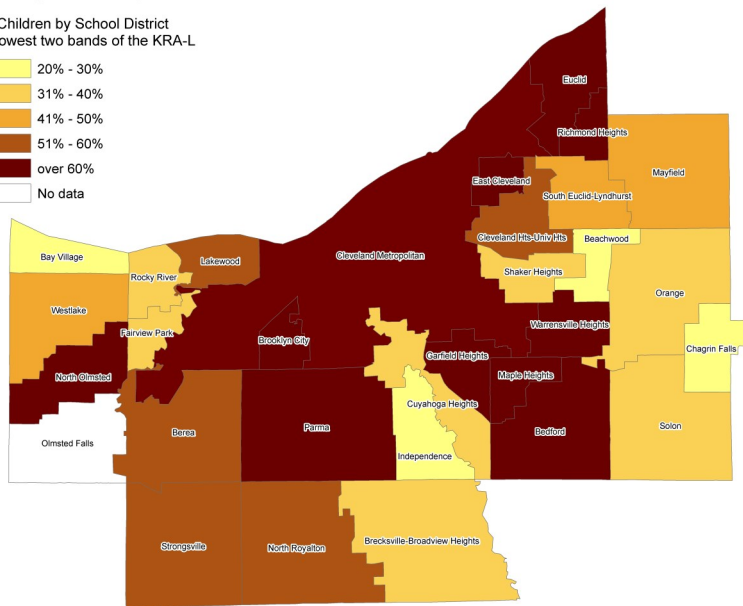
Source: Ohio Department of Education data, 2012-2013
Prepared by: Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development, MSASS, Case Western Reserve University

As for kindergarten preparedness in Cuyahoga County, the trend of readiness across time is mixed (see the line graph above). Specifically, the proportion of young children in Bands 1 and 2 declined between 2005 and 2008. In Cuyahoga County, the percentage of children scoring in Bands 1 and 2 remained steady at 59% until 2009, while the state percentage continued to decline. Since 2009, the percentage of children beginning kindergarten with less than optimal levels of readiness has increased, with Cuyahoga County outpacing the state. For example, in 2012, nearly 64% of kindergarteners in Cuyahoga County scored in Bands 1 and 2 compared to 60.5% of kindergarteners in the state.

Invest in Children
Cuyahoga County

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Case Western Reserve UNIVERSITY

School Readiness

Table 2. Percent of Children Scoring in Each KRA-L Band by School District

School District	% Band 1	% Brand 2	% Band 3
Bay Village	4.0	25.7	70.3
Beachwood	1.3	22.8	75.9
Bedford	19.6	44.7	35.7
Berea	18.5	35.7	45.8
Brecksville-Broadview Heights	5.9	34.5	59.6
Brooklyn	19.4	43.0	37.6
Chagrin Falls	3.6	20.7	75.7
Cleveland Heights-University Heights	20.3	37.2	42.5
Cleveland Metropolitan	43.4	38.7	17.9
Cuyahoga Heights	5.4	29.1	65.5
East Cleveland	47.1	37.2	15.7
Euclid	23.1	47.3	29.6
Fairview Park	8.7	22.7	68.7
Garfield Heights	29.8	38.8	31.4
Independence	1.3	18.7	80.0
Lakewood	19.7	33.7	46.6
Maple Heights	15.7	49.8	34.5
Mayfield	8.4	34.9	56.7
North Olmsted	19.6	45.8	34.7
North Royalton	11.5	40.4	48.1
Orange	7.6	24.4	67.9
Parma	18.3	45.3	36.4
Richmond Heights	14.6	54.8	30.6
Rocky River	8.2	28.3	63.5
Shaker Heights	11.7	25.1	63.2
Solon	4.6	28.2	67.2
South Euclid-Lyndhurst	8.0	38.6	53.4
Strongsville	11.9	40.5	47.6
Warrensville Heights	28.8	47.2	23.9
Westlake	11.2	32.5	56.3

Data source: Ohio Department of Education, 2012.

Kindergarten readiness scores also vary markedly across school districts within Cuyahoga County (see map on p.1 and Table 2, adjacent). School districts with the lowest percentage of students scoring in Bands 1 and 2 include Independence, Beachwood, and Chagrin Falls where less than 25% of students were unprepared for kindergarten. Conversely, in Warrensville Heights, Cleveland Metropolitan, and East Cleveland school districts, more than 75% of kindergarten students scored in Bands 1 and 2.

Beyond geography, results in Cuyahoga County show several demographic characteristics are related to less school readiness. These factors include having a diagnosed disability, living in an economically disadvantaged family (defined as having an income below 185% of the federal poverty threshold), and identifying as Black or Hispanic. For example, in 2012, 31% of Black students and 51% of Hispanic students scored in Band 1 compared with 14% of White students. Further, while 51% of white students scored in Band 3, only 24% of Black students and 15% of Hispanic students demonstrated the same level of school readiness.

Increasing KRA-L scores is important as recent research suggests incremental improvements on the KRA-L may well equate to significant changes in a student's future academic performance. For example, among three cohorts of kindergarten students entering Cleveland Metropolitan School District, a 1-point increase on the KRA-L was associated with a 12.1% increase in the odds of passing the Ohio Achievement Assessment (OAA) 3rd grade reading test.