



# Early Care & Education Committee

April 10, 2026



# Meeting Minutes – January 16, 2026

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# Consent Agenda





# Texas Rising Star Update

Texas Rising Star	Entry Level	Suspension	Total
487	85	15	587
83%	14%	3%	100%

2 STAR	3 STAR	4 STAR	Total
46	158	283	487
10%	32%	58%	100%





# Questions





# Child Care Champion

Gracie Regalado  
Owner, Learning with Grace Educational Child Care &  
Learning with Grace Educational Child Care #2





# Texas Rising Star Staff Retention Grant

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- Learning With Grace -6 Staff received \$11,000
- Learning With Grace #2 - 3 Staff received \$7,400
- LWG #1 has retained their staff.
- LWG #2 has retained their staff and added 1 additional staff.



# Staff Testimonials



The TRS Grant has been a tremendous Blessing to me and my family. With the rising cost of living and expenses that are associated with youth activities, the grant has helped relieve a financial burden. The TRS Grant allowed me to keep my daughter in High School Cheer. I am truly grateful for the TRS Grant.



Jennifer Mc Kinnon  
LWG#2



# Staff Testimonials



I am a student at U.T.S.A. being a student can be a financial burden when working part-time. The TRS Grant has helped me with my college expenses such as books, transportation- gas, car insurance and upkeep of my vehicle. Receiving the TRS Grant has allowed me to continue working with the children at LWG, I am able to learn from them and work with them using the techniques learned at school.



Natalie Regalado, LWG  
#1



# Directors Feedback

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The TRS Grant has truly been a blessing, I am grateful that you have allowed me to be able to give my staff an additional check quarterly. The staff feels acknowledged, appreciated, and allows them to know, the children, the families, and the staff at LWG, have TRS as an advocate . Thank-you TRS, and workforce solutions for doing your part for my staff. Both centers have retained their staff.

Gracie Regalado





# Questions





# Child Care Champion

Stephanie Bustos  
Owner, Bustos Daycare and Learning Center &  
Bustos Youth Center

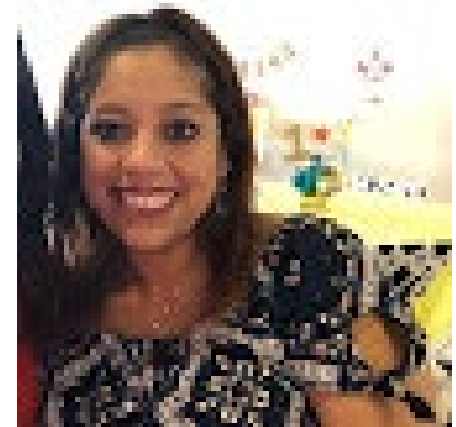




# Introduction

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- Stephanie Bustos Owner and Director
- Bustos Daycare & Learning Center 20 Years 1<sup>st</sup> location
- TRS 4 Star center 07/01/2023 & Texas School Ready
- Masters in Early Childhood
- Bustos Youth Center 04/02/2014 ages 5-13 years old 2<sup>nd</sup> location
- TRS 4 Star center 08/01/2023



# Bustos Daycare & Learning Center

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## Texas Rising Star Maintenance Incentive

- Bustos Daycare and Learning Center - \$2500
- Bustos Youth Center - \$2500

# Texas Rising Star Maintenance Incentive Bustos Daycare

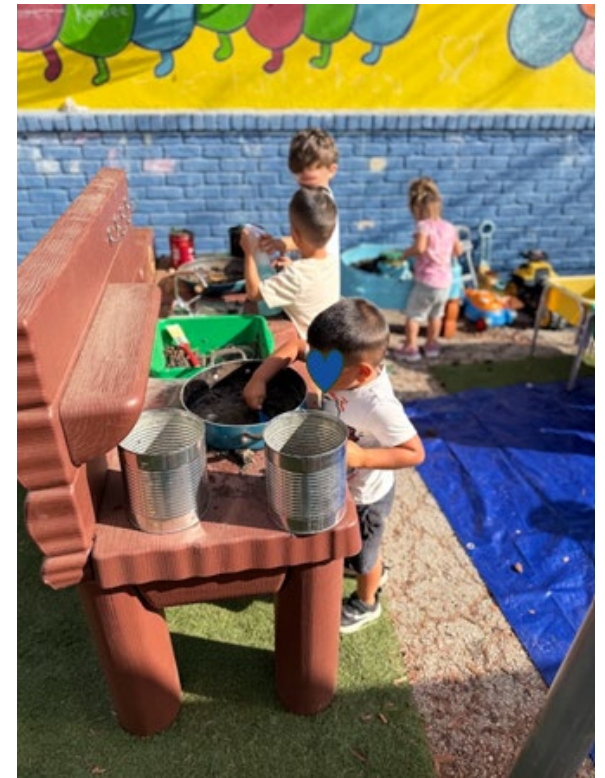
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# Mud day

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# Mud day

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# Bustos Youth Center

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# Bustos Daycare & Learning Center

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## Texas Rising Star Maintenance Incentive

- Bustos Youth Center - \$2500



# Indoor Environment





# Questions





# LiftFund, Inc.

D'Undray Peterson, Program Manager





A NONPROFIT COMMUNITY LENDER

# LiftFund & Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA) Partnership

## Texas Rising Stars (TRS) Certification Program

Supporting Childcare Entrepreneurs in the Alamo Region

**MINDY JIMENEZ**  
VP OF ADVANCEMENT  
LIFTFUND

# Purpose & Desired Outcomes

This presentation outlines the LiftFund and Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA) co-partnership supporting the Texas Rising Stars Texas Rising Stars (TRS) Certification Program—and the impact it's creating for childcare entrepreneurs across the Alamo region. the Alamo region.

## Our Purpose

- Co-promote the Texas Rising Stars (TRS) Certification Program
- Strengthen childcare small businesses through training and capital access
- Build a sustainable childcare ecosystem in the Alamo region

## Desired Outcomes

- 100+ childcare entrepreneurs trained and supported annually
- Increased TRS certifications among Alamo-region providers
- Childcare businesses that are financially stronger and more sustainable

# About the Partnership

## LiftFund

A nonprofit lender providing credit and consulting services to small businesses that lack access to traditional financing.



## Business Education



## Access to Capital



## Technical Assistance

## Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA)

The region's workforce development board — connecting childcare providers to training, resources, and program opportunities.



## Community Outreach



## Program Delivery



## Provider Engagement

# Program Components

Quarterly workshops combined with one-on-one support — designed to meet childcare entrepreneurs where they are.



Texas Rising Stars  
(TRS) Process



Access to Capital



Bookkeeping &  
Finance



Business  
Sustainability

## How It Works

- Quarterly in-person workshops
- One-day immersive sessions
- Continued 1:1 follow-up support
- Minimum 15 providers per session

# Partner Roles

## LiftFund

- Megaphone — Program Promotion (Eventbrite & Social Media)
- Checklist — Free Business Self-Assessment
- Report / Data — Industry Reports & Market Data
- Person / Meeting — 1:1 Consultations & Capital Workshops

## Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA)

- Email / Newsletter — E-Newsletter Outreach
- Social Media — Social Media Campaigns
- Globe / Website — Website & In-Office Promotion
- Star / Award — TRS Curriculum Delivery

# What Childcare Businesses Gain

Participants leave with practical tools to grow stronger, more sustainable childcare businesses.



## Cost-Saving Strategies

Reduce operational costs



## Revenue Opportunities

Grants, funding streams



## Small Business Loans

Financing pathways



## Hiring & Staff Retention

Attract qualified staff



## Client Loyalty

Improve enrollment & retention



## Financial Management

Bookkeeping & TRS navigation

# Program Impact (2024–2026)

Two years of measurable results for childcare entrepreneurs across the Alamo region.

**100+**

## Entrepreneurs Served

Childcare business owners who received training, consulting, and resources

**8+**

## Workshops Delivered

Texas Rising Stars certification and access to capital workshops co-presented

**15+**

## Providers Per Session

Childcare entrepreneurs engaged at each quarterly workshop

**4x**

## Quarterly Training Cycles

Annual workshops held consistently throughout the year in partnership

- ❑ Through this partnership, LiftFund has supported 100+ childcare entrepreneurs with training, technical assistance, and pathways to capital.

# Key Takeaways

## Together, We're Stronger

<b>Shared Mission</b> LiftFund and WSA unite workforce development with small business support.	<b>Real Impact</b> 100+ childcare entrepreneurs served through training and capital access.
<b>Stronger Businesses</b> Providers gain financial skills and pathways to Texas Rising Stars (TRS) certification.	<b>Better Outcomes</b> Stronger childcare businesses mean better quality care for Texas families.

Thank you to the Workforce Solutions Alamo Board and staff for your continued partnership and commitment to childcare entrepreneurs across the Alamo region.

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION WELCOME



# Questions





# Child Care Updates



# TWC Performance Target

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# TWC Performance Target

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- Revised BCY'26 Targets were based on data available through December 2025.
- Alamo exceeded the new BCY 2026 lower midyear target as of December 2025 but were not exceeding the initially approved BCY 2026 target. The result was that Alamo's midyear review target is set at the December 2025 actual number of CCS children enrolled.
- Targets for Average Number of Children Served per Day
  - Original: 12,994
  - Based on Midyear Review: 12,509
  - Change: (485)



# Next Steps

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- Current performance for February 2026

BCY26 Target	Average Kids Per Day for the Month	Avg Kids per Day for the Month Percent of BCY26 Target	YTD Average Kids Per Day	YTD Percent of BCY26 Target
12,509	11,990	95.85%	12,249	97.92%

- Alamo will begin the intake process for select priority populations to enroll approximately 300 children into care to meet current performance target.

*This will be discussed further in Care Services – Open Intake.*



# Questions



# Child Care Service – Open Intake



# Open Enrollment (From Waitlist)

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- Based on Alamo's updated BCY'26 Targets and forecasting, there is a need to open enrollment for select priority clients on the waitlist.
- Alamo Fiscal reviews the forecast submitted by the Contractor to identify any shortfalls, then estimates the cost of new enrollment and suspensions using similar unit averages. There are a variety of factors that go into the review process and many variables to be considered.
- It is the recommendation of Alamo Fiscal to begin limited enrollment and then monitor expenditures and forecasts to see if additional children should be enrolled.



# Next Steps

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- Alamo will begin the intake process for priority populations to enroll approximately 300 children into care to meet current performance target.
- To begin the process, Contractor staff will
  - Confirm Priority Status of parents on the Waitlist, in order of priority.
  - Send out the Full Application link
- Alamo will continue to monitor enrollments and forecasts to ensure the performance target is met and projected carry-over funds do not exceed the recommended amount.



# Priority Populations of Waitlist

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- Priority group, in order of priority:
  1. Children who need to receive protective services child care
  2. Children of a qualified veteran or qualified spouse
  3. Children of a foster youth
  4. Children experiencing homelessness
  5. Children of parents on military deployment
  6. Children of teen parents
  7. Children with disabilities
  8. Children of a child care worker



# Questions



# Texas Education Freedom Accounts (TEFA) Updates

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# TEFA Program Update

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- March 2026 Applications surged from 160,000 → 200,000+
- Program capacity: ~90,000 students
- Application deadline extended to March 31, 2026
- Pre-K demand significant (21,000 applicants | 12.8%)





# Participant & Program Impact

- 79% plan to use funds for private school tuition
- 11% (~18,000 students) are students with disabilities
- Families have until July 15 to select schools

2,200+ Locations	Have Registered
<b>San Antonio Area</b>	248 TEFA locations
<b>211 Locations</b>	Supporting Pre-K
<b>121 Locations</b>	Supporting Kinder - 5th grade
<b>Texas Rising Star</b>	139





# Next Steps

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- Expected Lottery and Funding Allocation
- Comptroller will run priority-based lottery after applications close
- Provider Webinars - Include live Q&A and recorded sessions for later access
- Distribute flyers and newsletters and Utilize Workforce 1 Bus for promotion
- Monitor lottery outcomes and program impact
- Track TRS TEFA providers and follow up with non-participating providers



# Questions



# Parent Café- Be Strong Families

## Parent Café Training Institute

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# Parent Café Recap

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- Structured small groups to facilitate peer to peer conversations that provide a safe space for families to share their experience.
- Parent Café supports Texas Rising Star Certification, Category 3 Program Administration: Parent Education and Parent Involvement.
- Six TRS Mentors will conduct the Parent Café sessions

# Timeline



Date	Item
July 28th, 2025	Preschool Development Grant Webinar shared PD opportunities
July 29th, 2025	Schedule of Parent Café shared with WSA staff
July 30th, 2025	Request sent to quality contractor for TRS Mentors interested in attending Parent Café sessions
August 4th, 2025	Received list of TRS Mentors interested in opportunity
September 2025	Six TRS Mentors attended a two-day in person Parent Café training
January 7th, 2026	First planning meeting with TRS Mentors to establish session dates, topics, and delivery style
February 11th, 2026 *	Second planning meeting with TRS Mentors to establish family participation goals and outreach location
March 20th, 2026 *	Interest form for families shared with eight centers in the Schertz area
April 3rd, 2026 *	Deadline set for interest forms
April 1st, 2026 *	Third planning meeting with TRS Mentors, session overview
April 30th, 2026 *	First Parent Café session scheduled



# Next Steps Completed

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- Identify zip codes with clusters of programs for outreach
- Outreach to parents in the zip codes
- Identify a location to host- **tentative**
- Establish a parent participation goal



# Outreach Focus Area- Rural

County	# of Centers
Atascosa	12
Bandera	2
Bexar	452
Comal	26
Frio	7
Gillespie	5
Guadalupe	41
Karnes	3
Kendall	8
Kerr	8
Medina	8
Wilson	12

City	# of Centers
Cibolo	10
Marion	1
New Braunfels	7
San Antonio	1
Schertz	13
Seguin	8
Selma	1



# Participation Goals

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- WSA has set a goal to have 30 participants enroll in the Parent Café
- The participation goal is set at 50%
- Interest form for families to sign up was shared on March 20th, 2026. Mentors sent the interest form via email to the child care programs.



# Center Information

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Center	Status	Type	Capacity	Enrollment	%	Families
1	TRS 4 Star	Center	184	106	58%	73
2	ELD	Center	191	174	91%	-
3	TRS 3 Star	Center	126	62	49%	44
4	TRS 4 Star	Center	112	55	49%	50
5	ELD	Center	167	97	58%	90
6	TRS 4 Star	Center	216	155	72%	140
7	TRS 4 Star	Center	55	11	20%	6
8	ELD	Center	134	-	-	-
			1185	660		403



# Questions





# Partner Updates



# United Way – Provider Council

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# Questions



# Pre-K for SA – Updates on Quality Initiatives

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# Operation Extended Watch

## Project Updates:

- Built dedicated capacity with a Professional Learning Specialist leading support efforts
- Established initial cohort of 5 providers strategically located near military bases
- Completed enrollment of all providers in MCCYN+
- Expanded access to extended-hour care, including a 24-hour care option

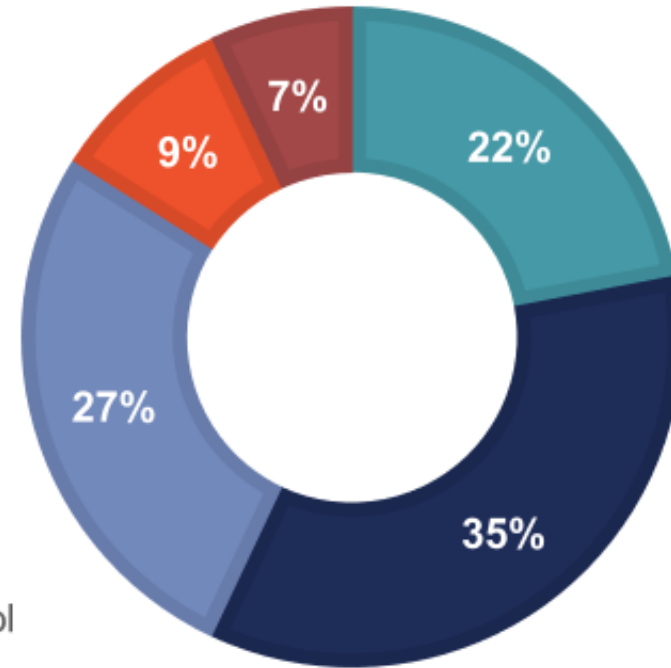


# Alliance-wide Data

Alliance Teachers By Age Group Served

What does this tell us?

- Over 60% of alliance educators are working with children in the most critical window of child brain development.
- With nearly 400 alliance educators focused on ages 0-2, Pre-K 4 SA professional learning cannot be *one size fits all*.
- 62% of alliance teaching staff are in high-cost/low-ratio classrooms.



- Preschool
- Toddlers
- Infants
- All Ages
- After School

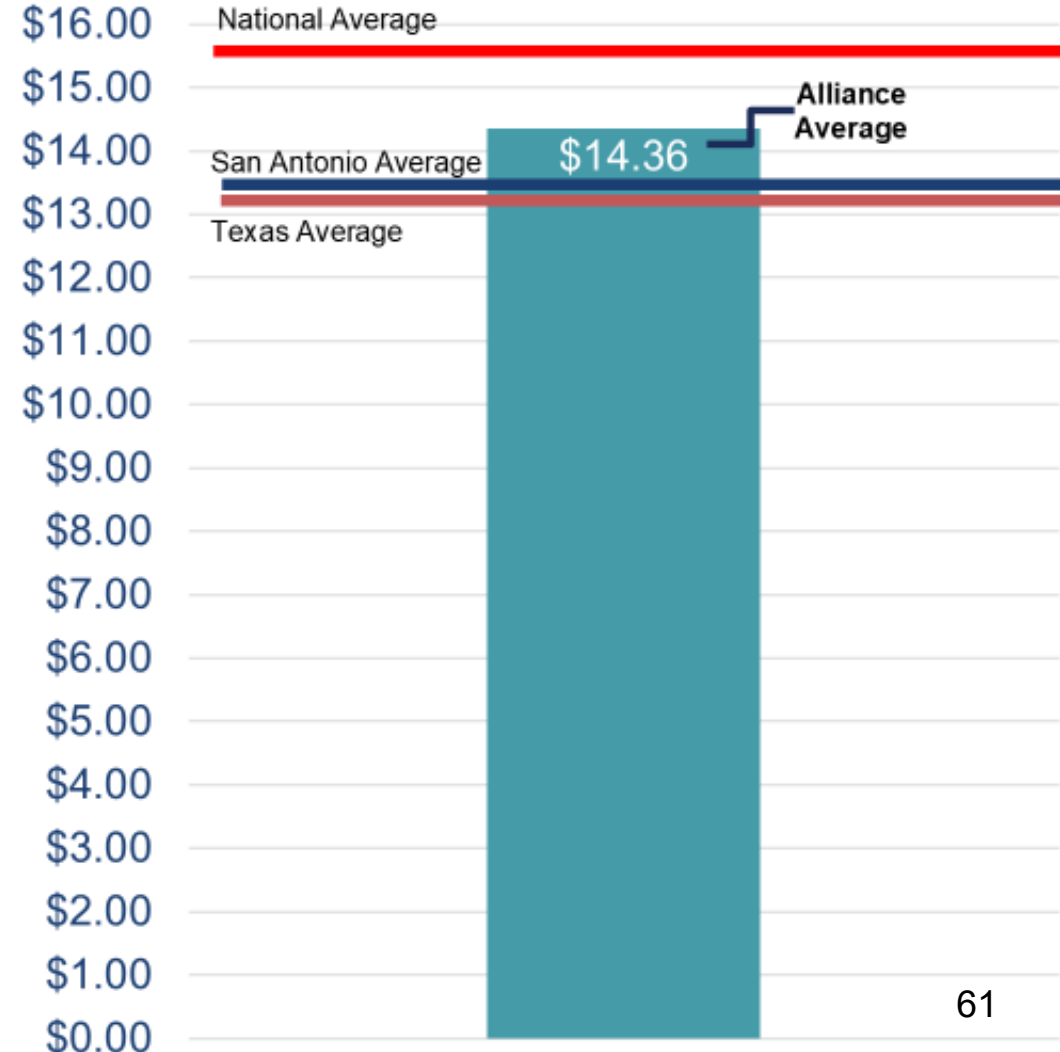
# Alliance wide-Data

What does this tell us?

**Alliance Average = \$14.36**

- ↑ San Antonio Average = \$13.93
- ↑ Texas Average = \$13.71
- ↓ National Average = \$15.41
- 302 teachers in the alliance earn less than the alliance average (\$14.36)

## Early Childhood Teacher Hourly Average Pay



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, careerstop



# Questions



# Texas A&M University San Antonio (Early Matters) - Recap of All Partners Convening

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# earlymatters

SAN ANTONIO



# OUR HEADLINE GOAL

**70% OF BEXAR COUNTY CHILDREN  
ARE KINDER-READY BY 2030.**



Where are we?



Newborn

6 Months

12 Months

2 Years

3 Years

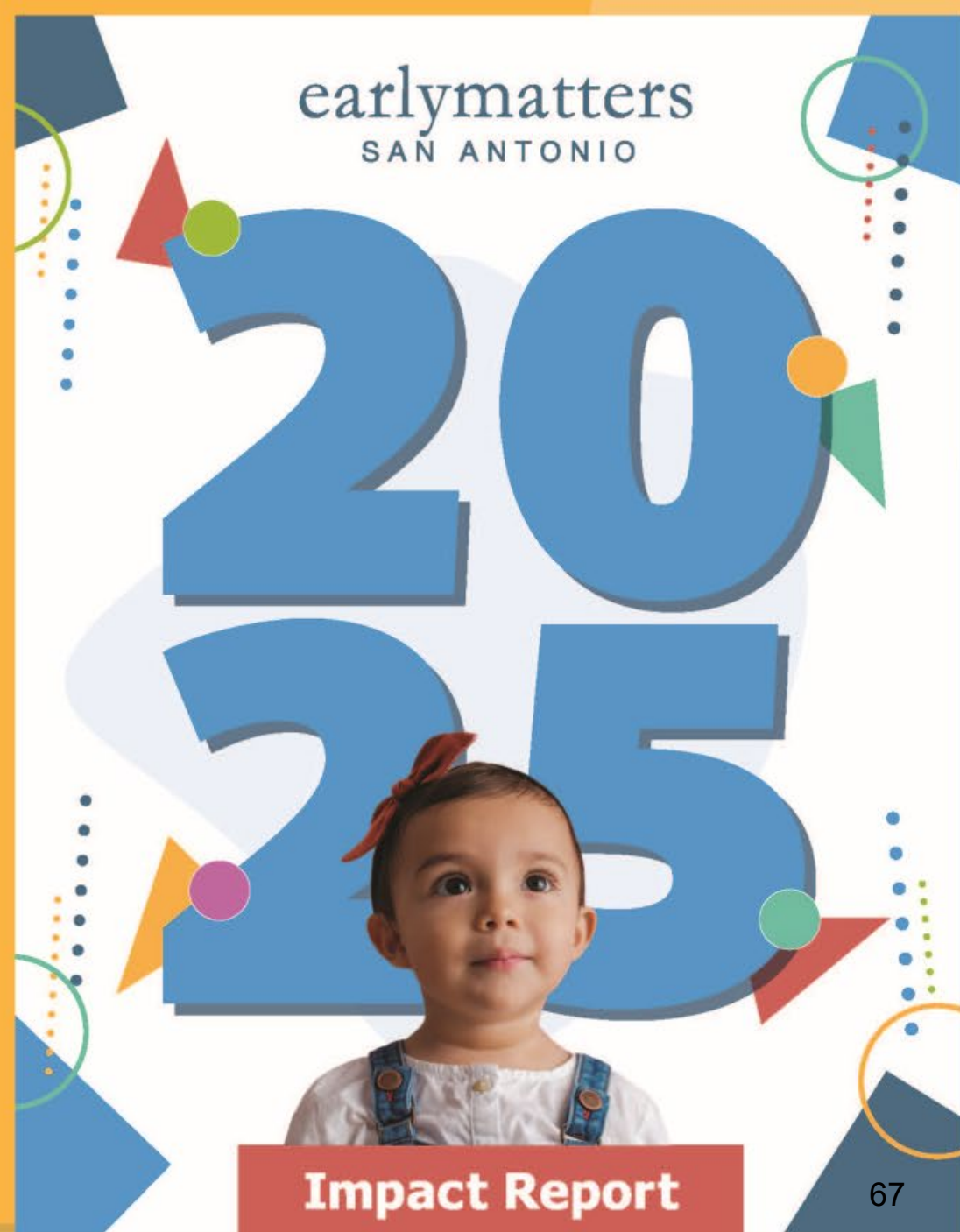
4 Years

Kindergarten 66



## 2025 Annual Impact Report

- First Annual Impact Report
- A reflection of shared progress and community accountability
- 100s of workgroup members and partners advancing real system change
- Please take a copy and continue building momentum with us

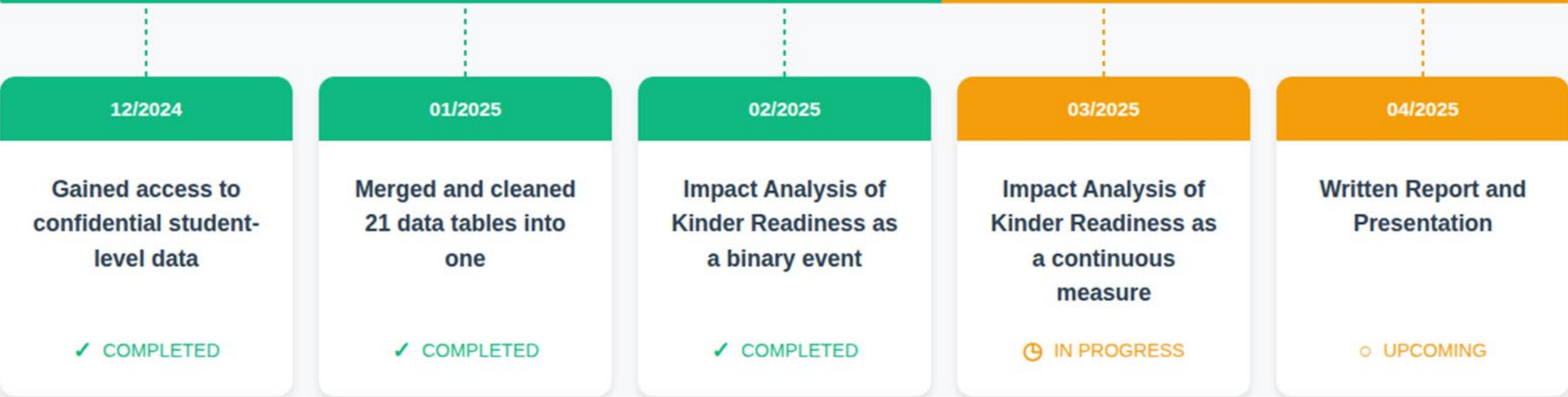




# Kindergarten Ready, Third Grade Ready

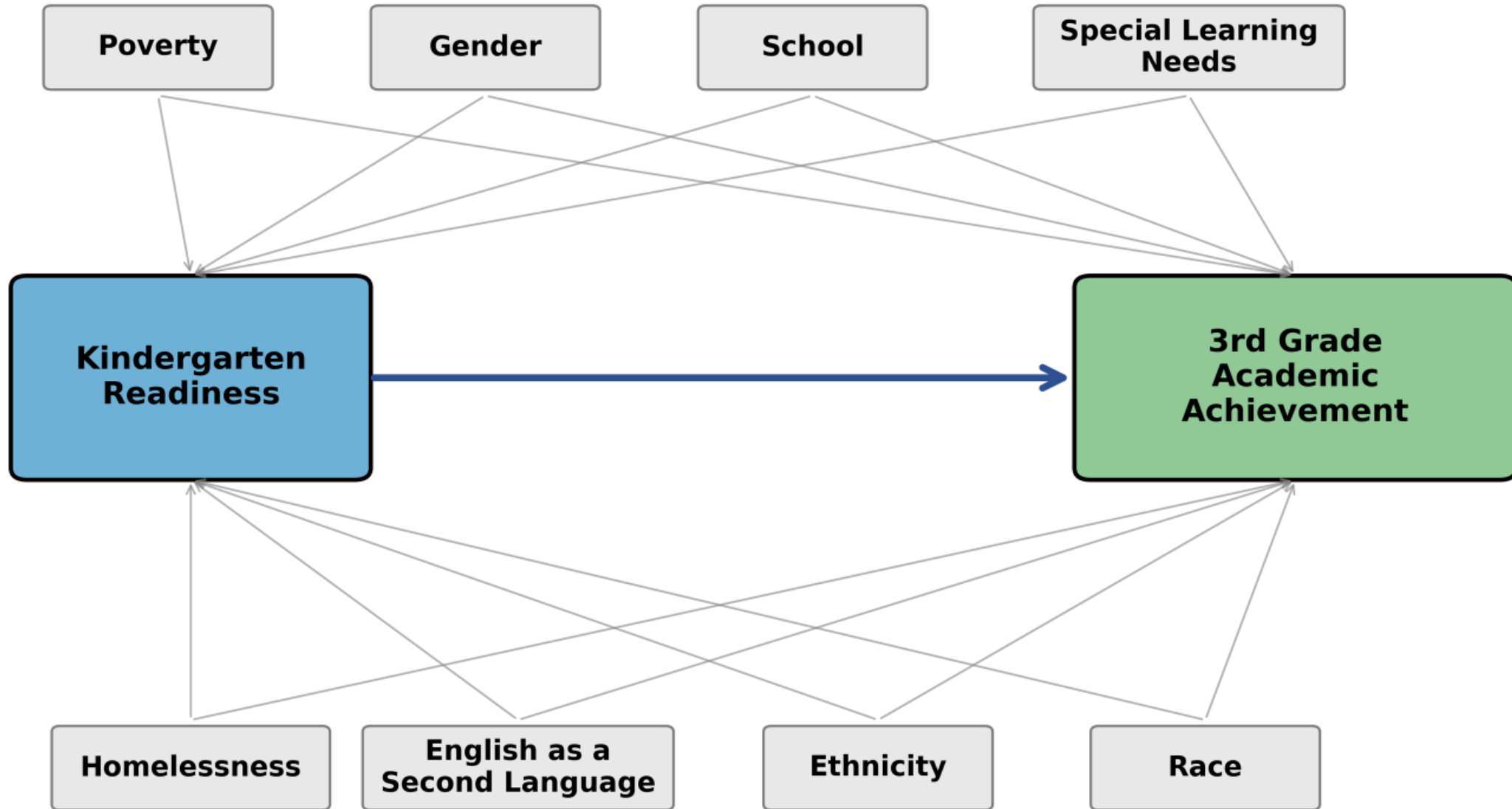
By Mike Villarreal, PhD

# Project Timeline



● Completed    ● Upcoming / In Progress

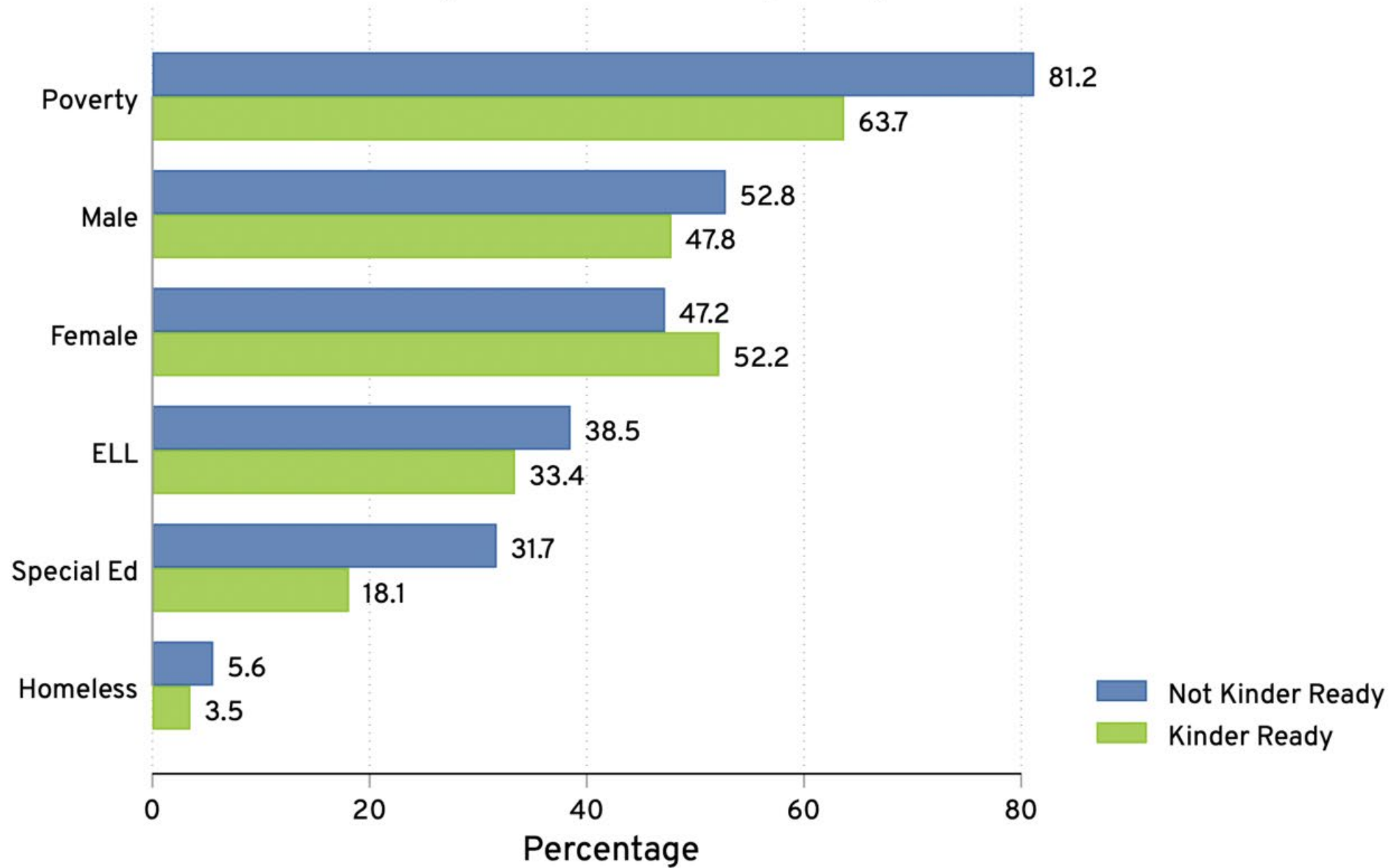
# Causal Pathways



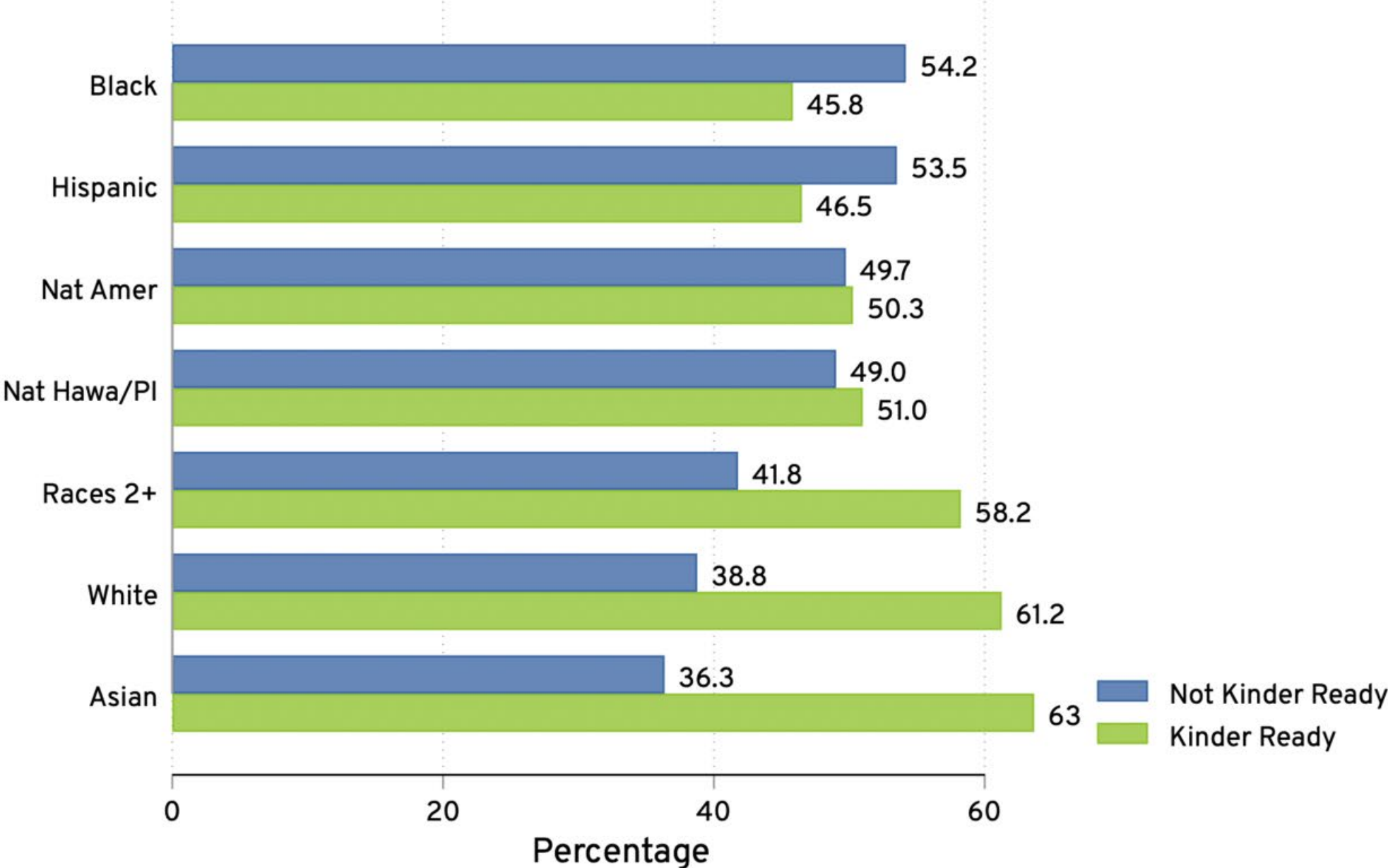
— Primary causal effect of interest

— Confounding relationships

## Kindergarten Readiness by Group

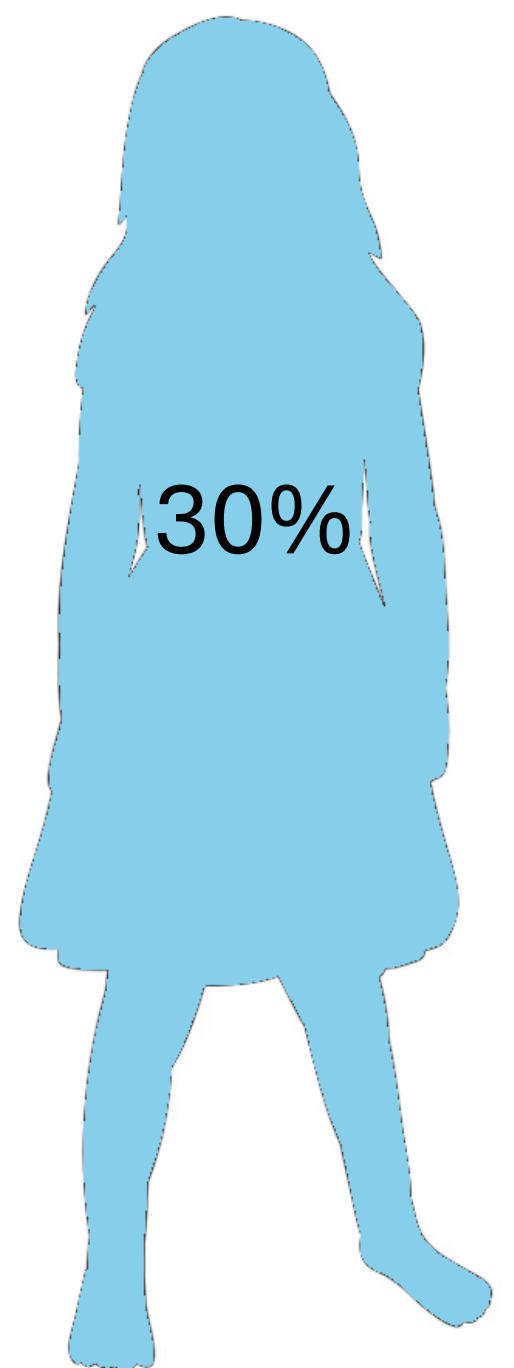


# Kindergarten Readiness by Group





66,000+  
Kinder Readiness  
Probability  
Twins

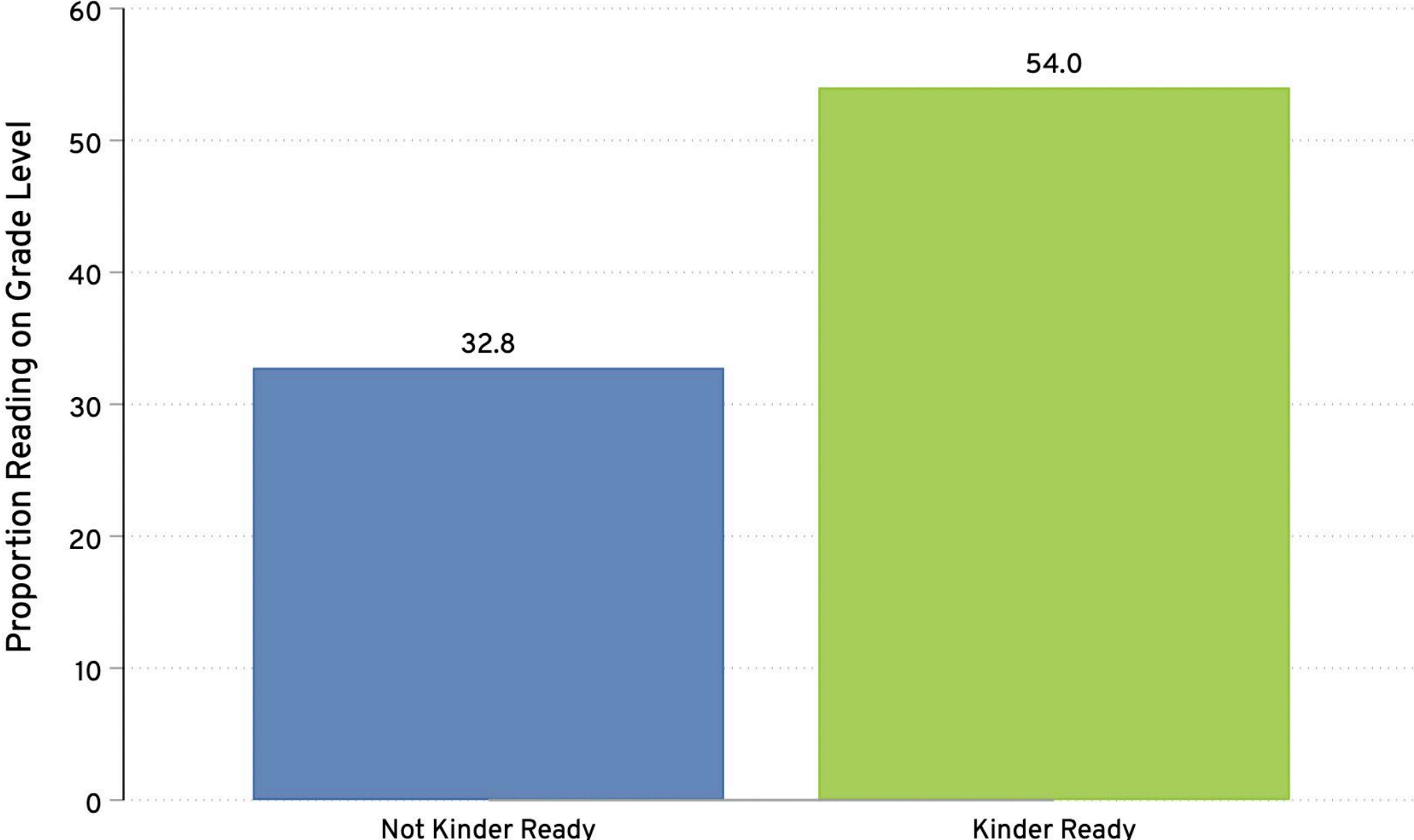


Not Kinder Ready

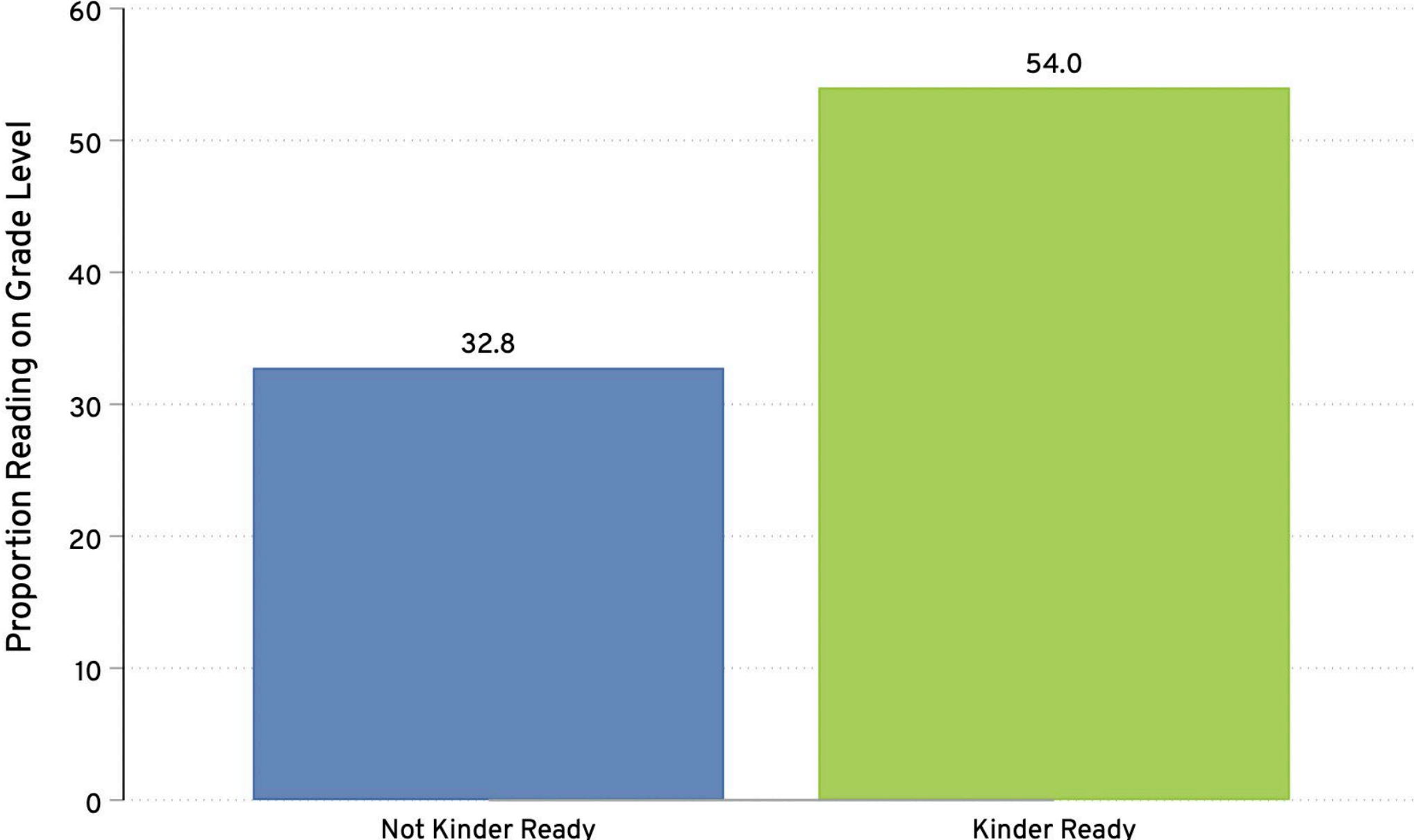


Kinder Ready

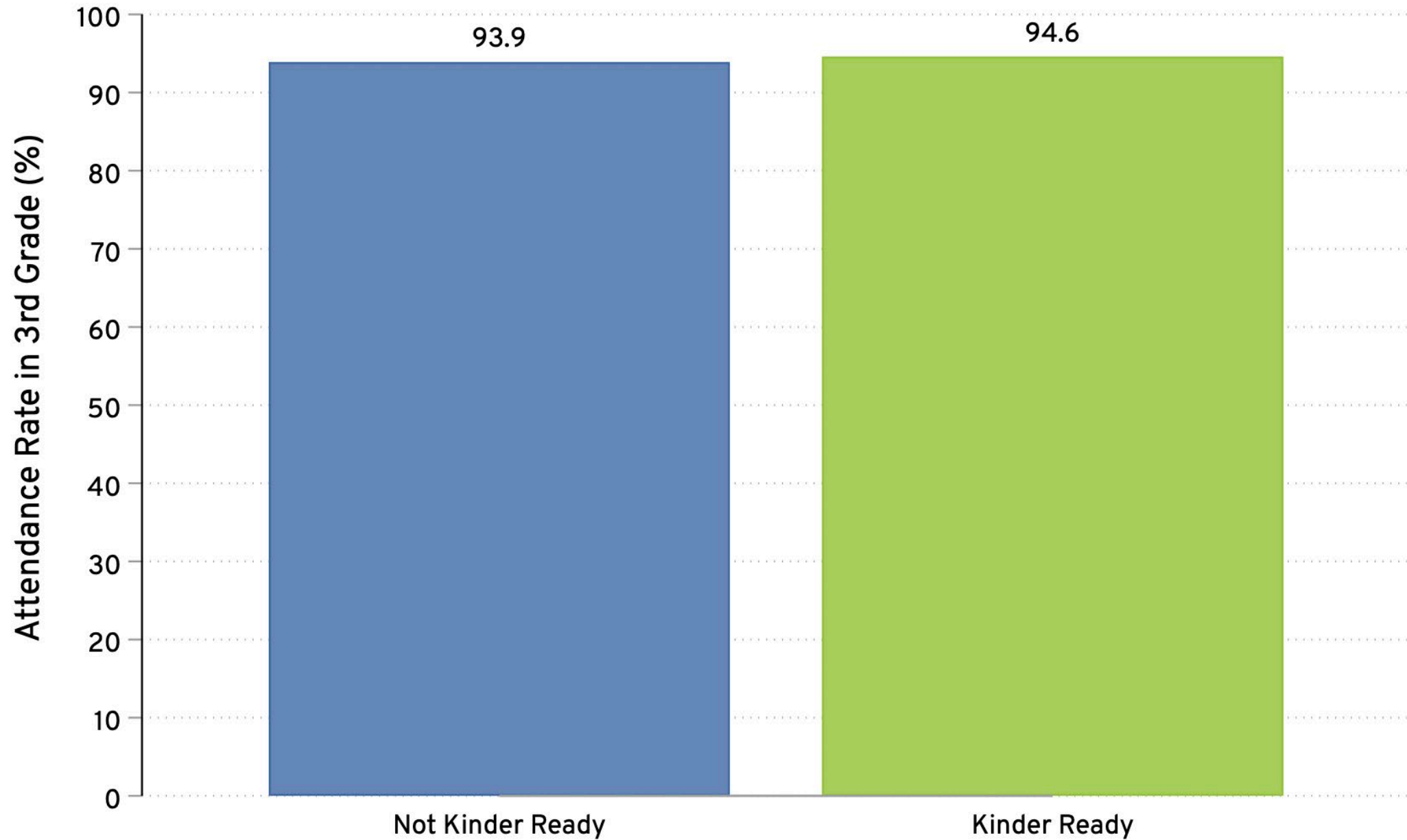
# 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency by Kindergarten Readiness



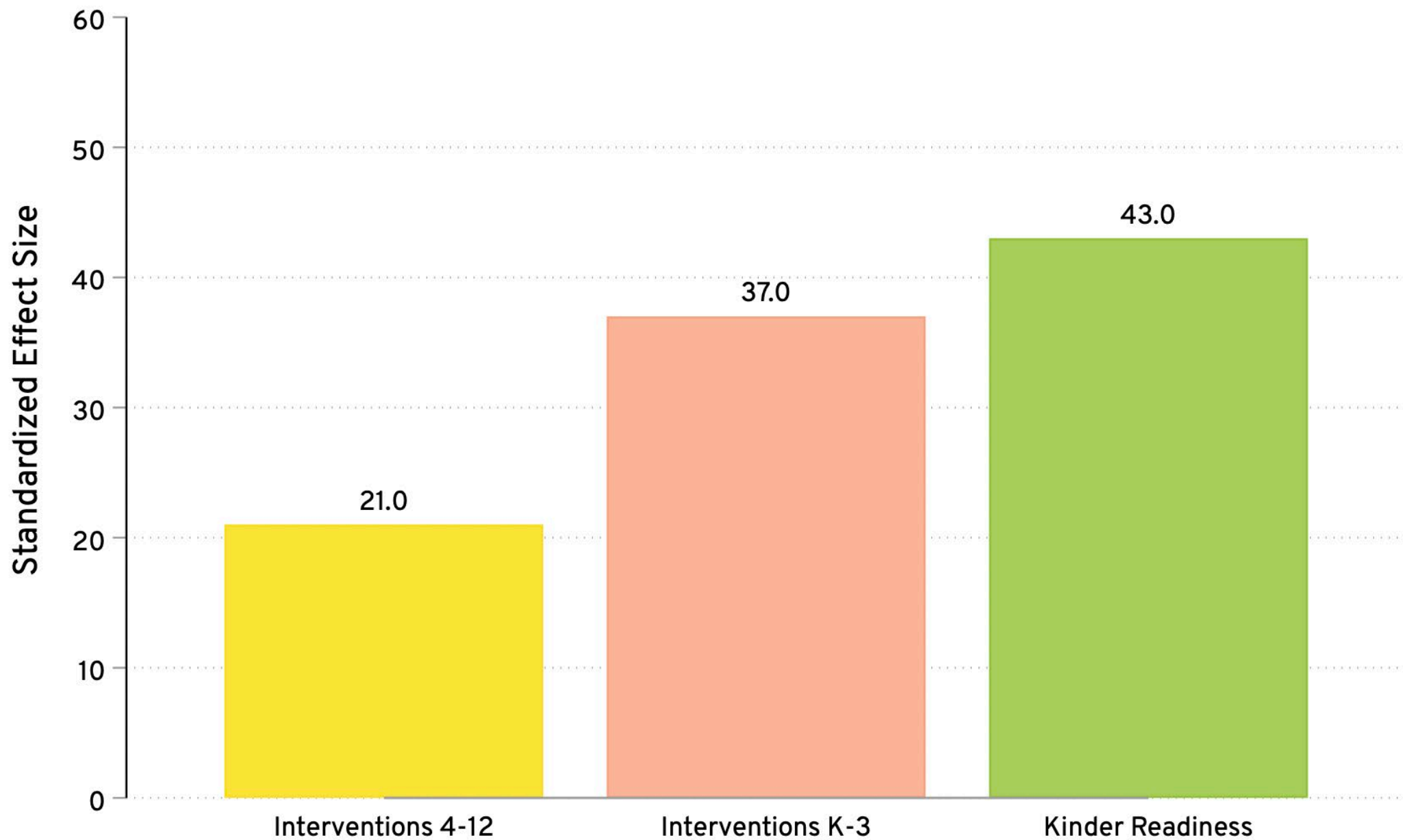
# 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency by Kindergarten Readiness



# 3rd Grade Attendance Rate by Kindergarten Readiness

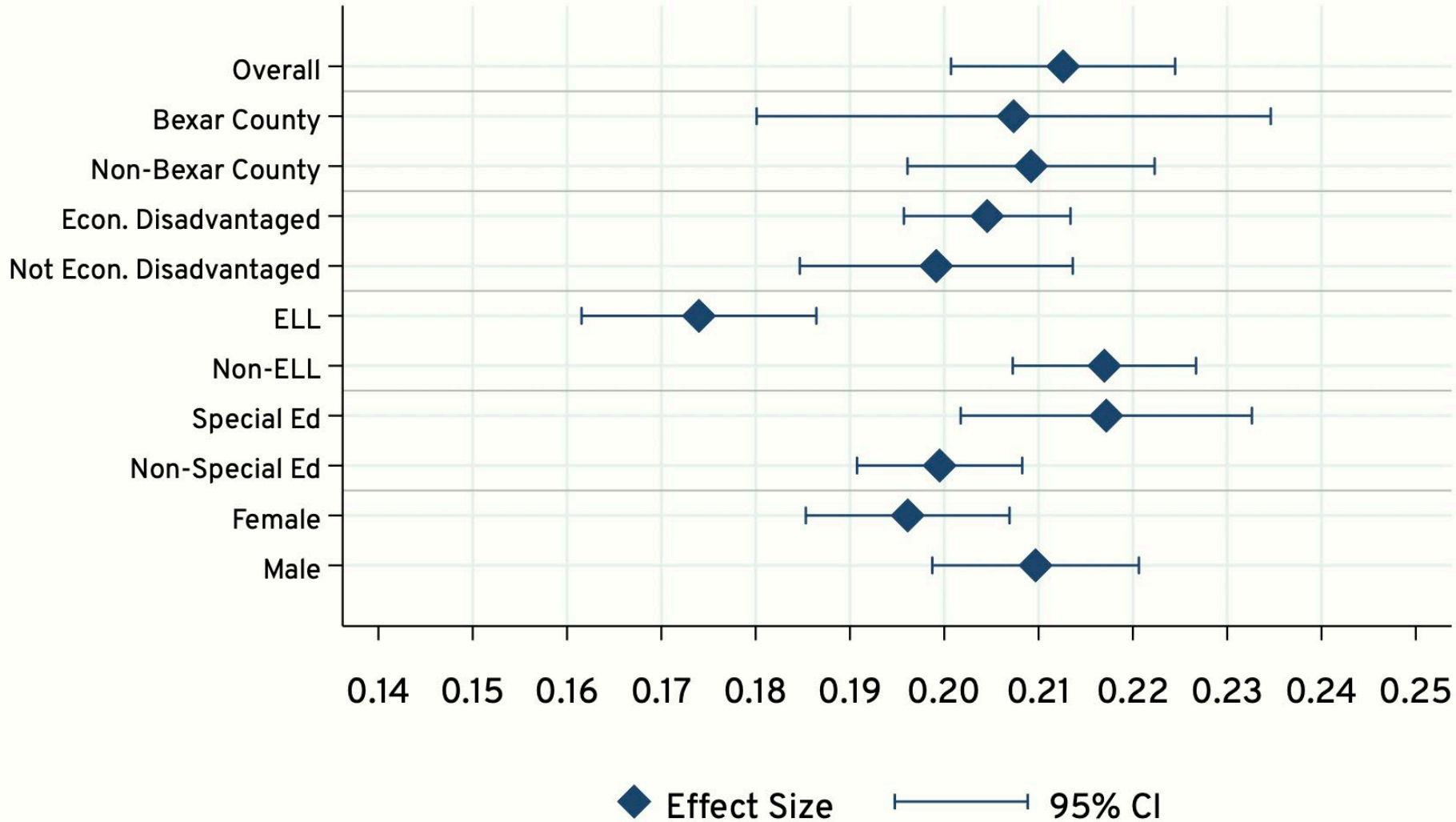


# Comparative Effectiveness of Literacy Interventions vs. Kinder Readiness



# Reading Effect Sizes by Subgroup

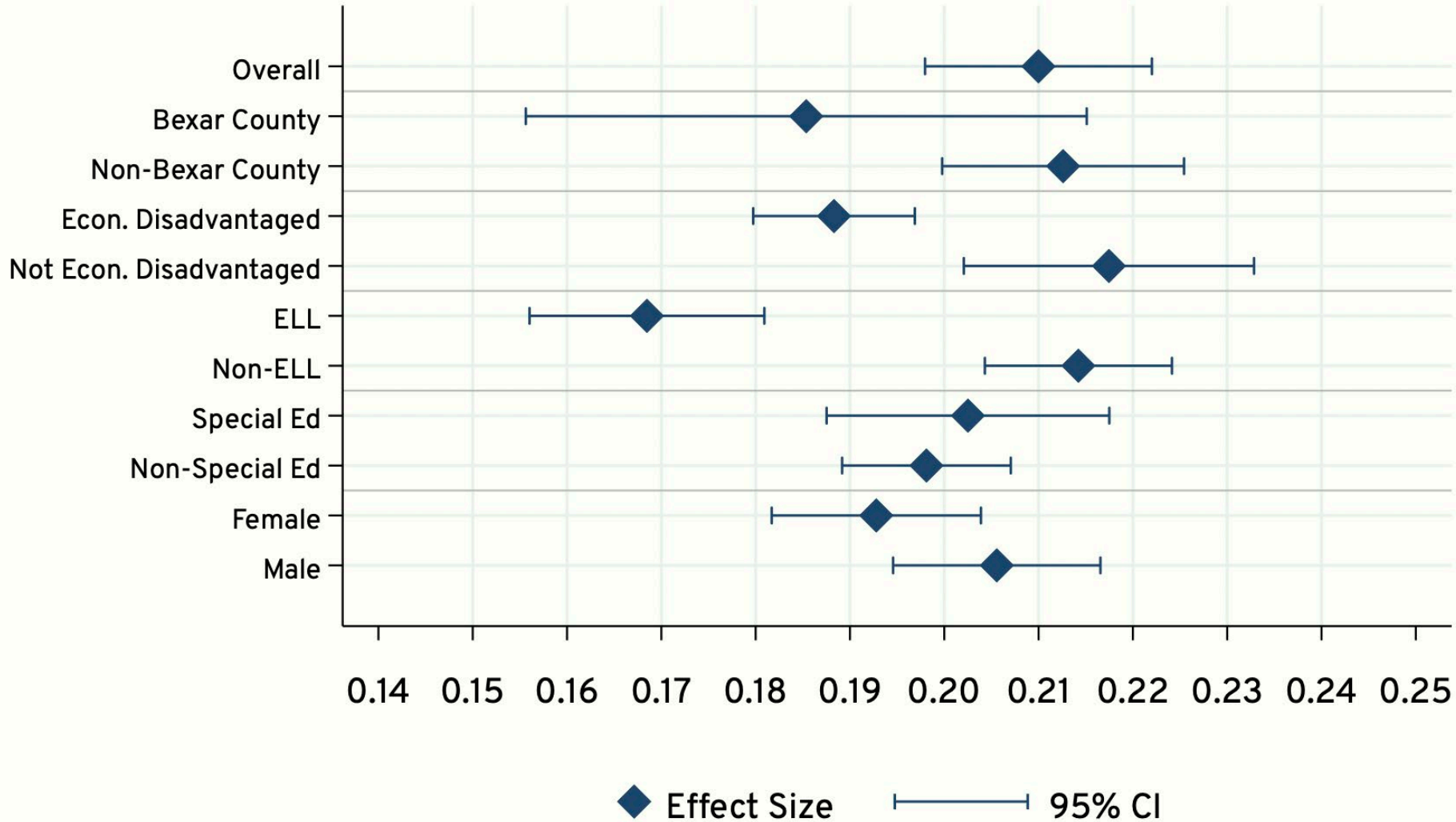
Average Treatment Effect on the Treated with 95% Confidence Intervals



1. The effect of Kinder Readiness was positive for all subgroups.
2. The effect size was statistically equivalent across all subgroups except ELL children.
3. The slightly smaller effect size for ELL students may be due to the language of the test.

# Math Effect Sizes by Subgroup

Average Treatment Effect on the Treated with 95% Confidence Intervals



1. The effect of Kinder Readiness on math performance in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade was positive for all subgroups.

2. The effect size was statistically equivalent across all subgroups, except economically disadvantaged and ELL children. 80

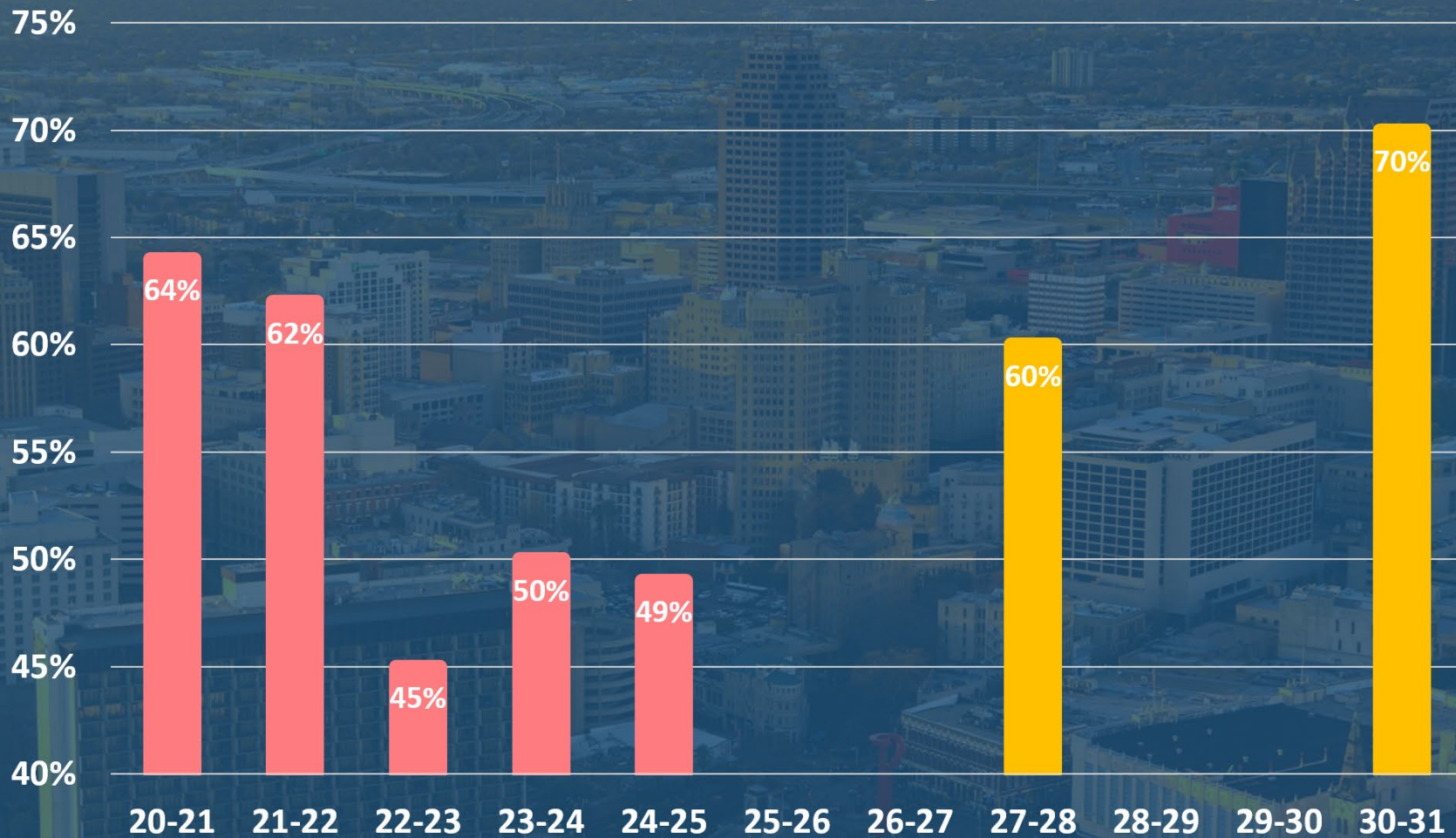
Questions?

# OUR HEADLINE GOAL

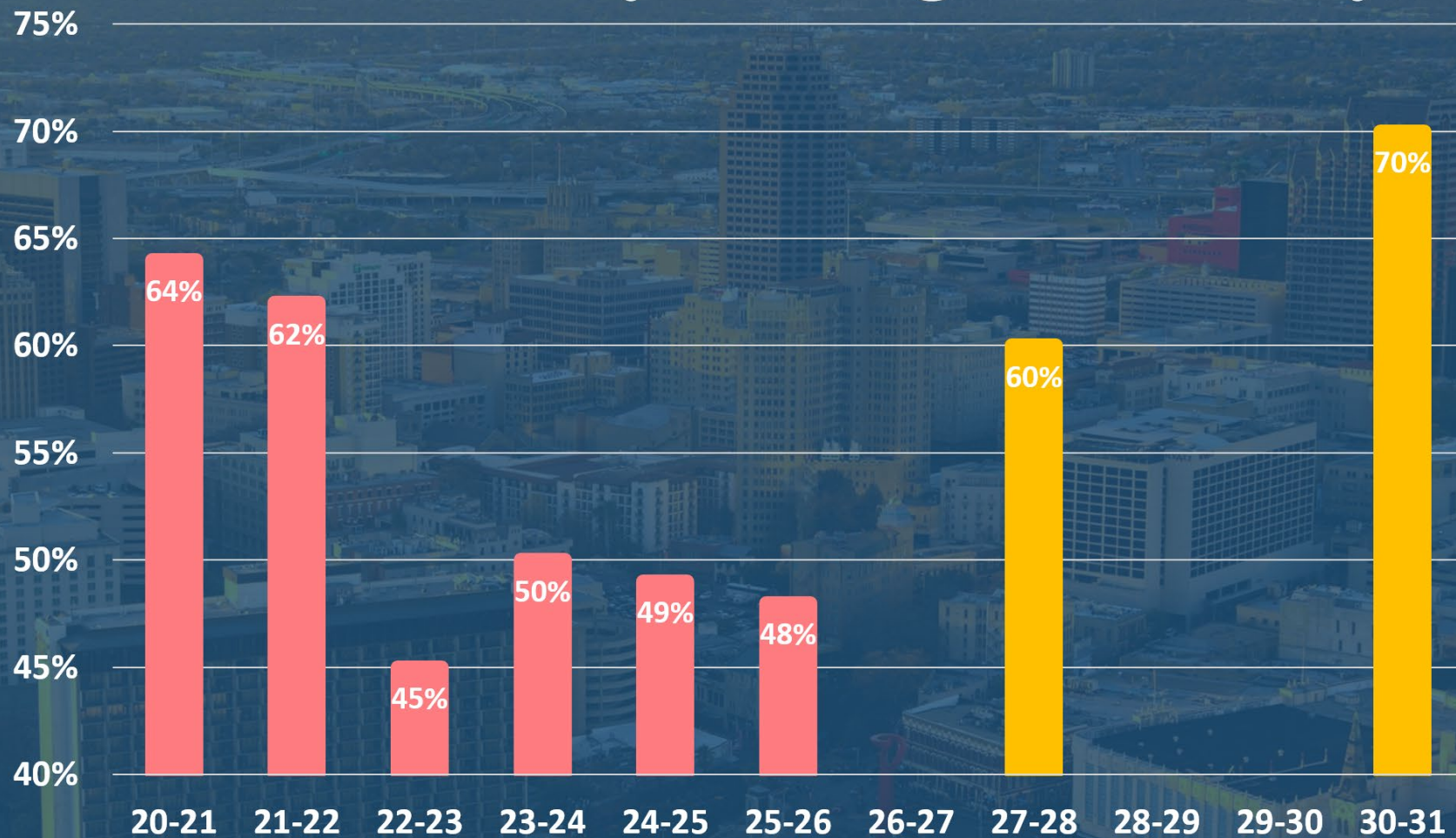
**70%** OF BEXAR COUNTY CHILDREN  
ARE KINDER-READY BY **2030.**



# Bexar County Kindergarten-Ready



# Bexar County Kindergarten-Ready





**Now,  
More Than Ever**





# Questions





# CEO Report

## Adrian Lopez



# Impact Awards Honoring Those Who Took the Chance...



**Workforce Solutions**  
ALAMO  
BUILDING BUSINESS - BUILDING CAREERS

**2026**  
**IMPACT AWARDS**

Wednesday, May 13th  
8:00 AM | PEDROTTI'S RANCH | 13715 FM 1560, HELOTES, TEXAS 78023

**Honoring Those Who Took the Chance...**

- ▶ To identify and produce Texas Talent
- ▶ To develop innovative partnerships
- ▶ To explore, discover and prepare futures
- ▶ To serve those who served
- ▶ To inspire the workforce of tomorrow

**Boldly invest in our community's future by sponsoring the Workforce Solutions Alamo Impact Awards.**  
Your support helps empower individuals, create careers and connect communities to positively transform lives.

# Impact Awards Honoring Those Who Took the Chance....



- Lakeshore Partnership





# Questions





# Local Match Partnerships

**Child Care Local Match Total \$8,736,341**

**EQUUS  
\$3,768,041**

**United Way of  
San Antonio & Bexar County  
\$3,559,937**

**YMCA of Greater San Antonio  
\$449,696**

**Early Matters San Antonio  
\$958,667**

<b>2026 Alamo Target</b>	<b>Federal Target</b>	<b>2026 Alamo Amount Pledged</b>	<b>Federal Amount Pledged</b>	<b>% of Alamo Match</b>
<b>\$3,768,041</b>	<b>\$7,536,082</b>	<b>\$8,736,341</b>	<b>\$17,472,682</b>	<b>+231.85%</b>



# Questions





# Chair Report

## Ana De Hoyos O'Connor





# Annual Board Retreat

### Topics of Discussion



**Child Care System Gaps & Pressures**

- Regional shortages in child care availability
- Provider closures, wage stagnation, and rising operational costs
- Need to increase awareness of systemic challenge including affordability and



**Workforce Pipeline Challenges**

- Barriers to entry: limited training, low wages, lack of guidance
- Need for structured pathways, training, business support, and workforce development




**Business Engagement a Strategic Lever**

- Employers see child care as essential to workforce retention
- Opportunities for public-private partnerships
- Explore tax incentives and employer-supported models



**Pilot Program Opportunity**

- Partner with the City of San Antonio or U.S. Department of Labor
- Test targeted solutions with 3-5 select centers (wages, operations, incentives, etc.).
- Implement mentorship programs




**Data & Staff Capacity Needs**

- Data tracking and wage impact analysis
- Staff support for implementation, partnerships, and evaluation
- Promote employer partnership models
- Plan for future


### Main Priorities (2026)

**1 Awareness of Child Care Gaps**




- Assess local facility shortages in collaboration with regional stakeholders
- Promote public understanding of workforce wage challenges, and sustainability needs
- Highlight entrepreneurial opportunities including new center startups or expansions

**2 Pathways Into the Child Care Field**

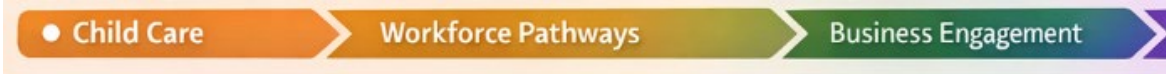


- Provide step-by-step support for new providers including business planning, startup financial guidance, and operations
- Expand pre-apprenticeship child care certification programs through high school and colleges
- Implement mentorship programs to build

**3 Business Engagement**



- Develop a local employer coalition to encourage investment in workforce-friendly child care
- Explore tax incentive structures and shared service models to support employer participation
- Produce outreach materials demonstrating the business benefits of investing in local child care



12-Month Rolling Period: February → February



# Questions



**Thank you!**

