

# School Readiness at Bright Horizons

As part of Bright Horizons' mission to create and maintain a school readiness program that meets the evolving expectations of elementary schools, we recently completed our third comprehensive survey of parents and teachers nationwide to assess their views of the academic preparedness of recent Bright Horizons graduates. Parents and teachers of more than 1,200 Bright Horizons graduates were surveyed during the fall of their child's kindergarten or first grade year. The children had attended one of Bright Horizons' programs from across the country and represented a cross section of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

## What is School Readiness?

The first five years are critical to a child's lifelong development. Early experiences influence brain development, establishing the neural connections that provide the foundation for language, reasoning, problem solving, social skills, behavior, and emotional health – characteristics that determine how well a child will do in school and in life. A recent longitudinal study of the U.S. Department of Education found that if kindergarten children had a positive approach to learning, they were more likely to make progress in math and reading through fifth grade<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, a 2007 study showed



that students from programs that focus on social and emotional learning have better school grades and higher achievement test scores<sup>2</sup>. The Bright Horizons School Readiness Survey confirmed the strong positive relationship between social and emotional readiness and school success.

<sup>1</sup> Li-Grining, C.P., Votruba-Drzal, E., Maldonado-Carreño, C., Haas, K. (2010). "Children's early approaches to learning and academic trajectories through fifth grade." *Developmental Psychology*. 46 (5), 1062-77.

<sup>2</sup> Durlak, J.A., & Weissberg, R.P. (2007). "The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills." Chicago, IL: *Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning*.

## Teachers' Perspectives on School Readiness

Elementary school teachers who participated in the survey not only assessed the preparedness of the Bright Horizons graduates in their program, but also shared their views on what they believe to be the most important factors for any child to succeed in a public or private school setting. Teachers were unified in their feeling that children should enter their first years of school with an ability to comprehend broader language and math concepts, as well as to be prepared for the social and emotional demands of school. In fact, 96% of teachers indicated they believe that social and emotional preparedness are the most important outcomes of a child's preschool experience in order for them to be poised for academic success in the elementary years.

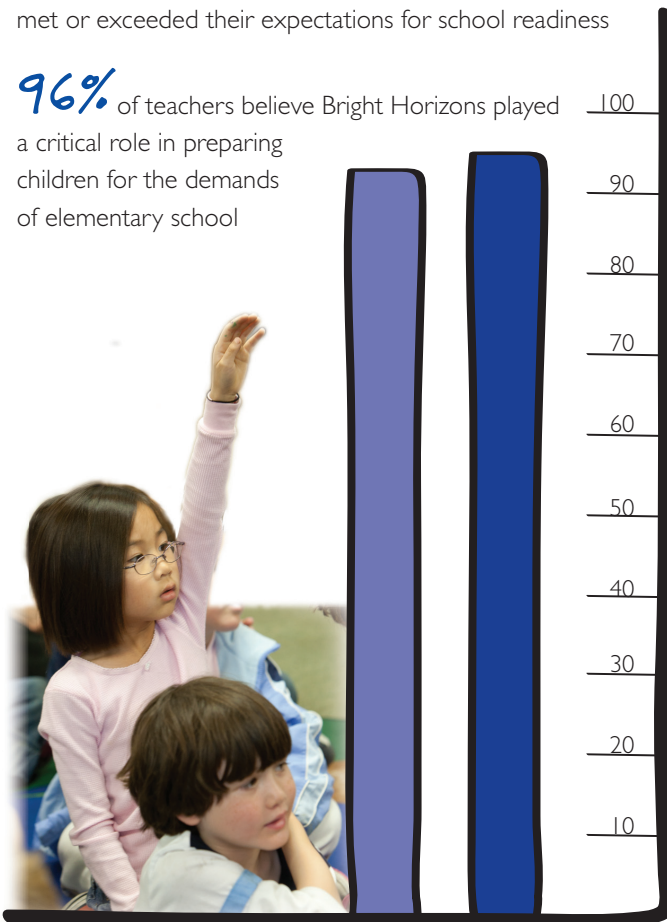


**96%**  
of teachers consider social and emotional readiness to be the most important result of preschool

The teachers overwhelmingly agreed that the Bright Horizons graduates in their classrooms entered school well prepared with these skills in mind.

**93%** of teachers feel that Bright Horizons graduates met or exceeded their expectations for school readiness

**96%** of teachers believe Bright Horizons played a critical role in preparing children for the demands of elementary school



- More than 90% of teachers agree that Bright Horizons graduates enter elementary school ready to accept the new responsibilities and greater independence with a strong enthusiasm for learning, an ability to make new friends, and the ability to respect others – all key indicators of the children's social and emotional readiness for kindergarten and first grade.
- Similarly, among the teachers surveyed, more than 90% agree that the Bright Horizons graduates in their class were well prepared with the reading and math skills they needed for academic success.
- More than 90% of the teachers surveyed believe the Bright Horizons graduates met or exceeded their expectations for readiness for kindergarten and first grade, and 96% believe the child's preschool experience played a critical role in the children's preparedness.

## Parents' Perspective on School Readiness

Today's parents share high expectations for early achievement. In fact, 89% of parents surveyed cited academic preparedness as the most important factor in their child's preschool experience. They want to ensure that their children enter school ready to meet or exceed academic expectations and with a demonstrable ability to apply their newly developing skills in reading, writing and math. Those same parents overwhelmingly believe that their child's Bright Horizons experience met their high expectations:

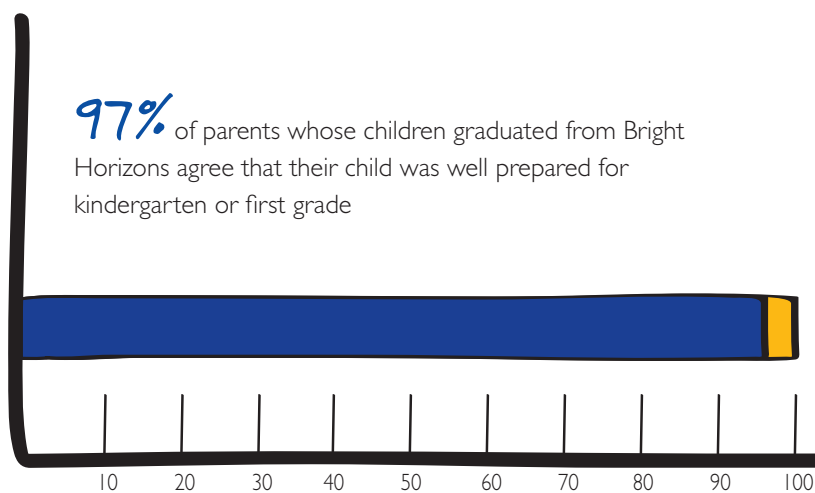
- 99% of Bright Horizons parents believe that Bright Horizons graduates entered elementary school with a strong enthusiasm for learning.
- 97% of Bright Horizons parents agree that their children entered school prepared and ready to meet the demands of kindergarten or first grade.
- More than 90% believe their child entered elementary school with the necessary writing and math skills.

## Conclusions

This study shows that Bright Horizons graduates are well prepared for the academic, social, and behavioral expectations of the first year of elementary school. Parents and teachers agree that Bright Horizons is successfully preparing children for school both socially and academically while fostering a strong enthusiasm for learning.

Furthermore, teachers and parents strongly agree that Bright Horizons graduates enter elementary school ready to adapt, learn new rules, accept new responsibilities, and work independently.

Bright Horizons will continue to measure and evaluate our graduates on school readiness to ensure that we consistently provide the very best education for children.



## The Bright Horizons Approach to School Readiness

Bright Horizons' classrooms engage children intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially and help prepare children to meet the expectations that both elementary school teachers and parents have for school readiness.

We encourage children to learn through hands-on exploration guided by teachers who inspire curiosity and creative thinking. The result is well-rounded, confident children who possess the ability to solve problems, make decisions, and engage with others.

Bright Horizons' curriculum, *The World at Their Fingertips*, is a comprehensive, integrated approach to learning that stimulates each child's innate curiosity and exploratory nature to prepare them for lifelong learning. It places a strong emphasis on language development, math, science, and social skills.

Areas of focus include:



- **Language Works:** Integrates listening, reading, speaking, and writing



- **Math Counts:** Focuses on counting, sorting, pattern recognition, and problem solving



- **Science Rocks:** Encourages children to question, experiment, observe, and use the scientific method



- **ArtSmart:** Helps children uncover their talents and express themselves through art, music, dance, and theater



- **Well Aware:** Fosters a positive attitude by helping children develop healthy habits and routines



- **Our World:** Helps children learn respect for the world, its diverse people, and the environment

Ensuring and facilitating a smooth and successful transition from Bright Horizons' preschool or kindergarten programs to public or private schools is a major goal of all our programs. While almost everything we do helps prepare children for success in school in some way, certain materials and activities are more directly focused in this area. The READY for SCHOOL component of our curriculum builds skills through experiences in the *World* elements and through carefully chosen supplemental academic materials in math and literacy that support and complement *The World at Their Fingertips*.

For more information visit [www.brighthorizons.com/school\\_readiness](http://www.brighthorizons.com/school_readiness)