

August 7, 2007



Who's Ready For School?

Teachers Value Listening and Sharing Skills Over Academic Skills, PNC Study Finds

PITTSBURGH, Aug. 7 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Most parents and teachers are concerned about the school readiness of America's youngest children, says a new study by The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. (NYSE: PNC). But for those parents who may worry that their children don't know the alphabet, numbers or colors before kindergarten, the findings may come as a surprise. In fact, teachers say they value social skills - such as following rules and directions, and being able to play and share well with others -- over academic skills as a better predictor of children's success in school.

Few parents (25 percent) and teachers (7 percent) describe U.S. children as being extremely or very prepared to learn upon entering kindergarten, PNC found, meaning that they know the basics like counting, spelling their names and that they are prepared to listen in class. Nearly three of five parents (57 percent) and two-thirds of teachers (66 percent) say that U.S. children are only somewhat prepared.

"Teachers and other experts in early childhood education agree that children are more likely to succeed in school if they have the social skills to participate and learn while in the classroom," said Eva Tansky Blum, PNC's director of Community Affairs and the PNC Grow Up Great initiative. "A focus on developing these skill sets and improving the limited access and uneven quality of preschool education today will provide children opportunities to develop the tools of learning needed to succeed in school, and life."

The first-ever PNC Study of Early Childhood Education is a comprehensive study of American adults, including parents of young children, from birth to age 8, along with teachers in pre-kindergarten through third grade. It was commissioned by PNC as part of PNC Grow Up Great, the \$100 million, 10-year investment to improve school readiness among children from birth to age 5.

Seeking Social Skills

PNC found teachers perceive that children today are less prepared in two of the most important skills for school readiness: (1) the ability to listen and follow rules and directions; and (2) the ability to interact, play, and share well with others. Teachers rate these two skills, 92 percent and 93 percent respectively, as extremely/very important to have to enter kindergarten ready to learn, above academic skills such as being able to sort and identify objects by shape, size and color (46 percent), and being able to recognize common words or signs (44 percent).

Few teachers say that U.S. children are extremely/very well prepared to enter kindergarten ready to learn in a number of skill sets by the following percentages:

Social Skills:

- Being able to listen and follow rules and directions: 8 percent
- Being able to interact, play and share well with others: 13 percent
- Being able to understand the difference between right and wrong: 20 percent

Academic Skills:

- Being able to recognize common words or signs (like Walk, Stop, their own names): 10 percent
- Being able to recognize numbers, count and do simple math: 10 percent
- Being able to read and write the letters of the alphabet: 8 percent

Consequences Later in Life

Blum said PNC's support of early education is a long-term investment. "For every \$1 spent on quality early education, it is estimated that society reaps as much as \$17 in long-term savings," she said. "If we improve the quality and access to early education, we as a nation won't have to spend nearly as much money later on special education, remedial job training, correctional facilities and other costs that contribute little to successful communities and economic growth."

Teachers view school readiness as vital to a child's long-term academic success. Seventy-four percent of teachers, PNC found, say it will be somewhat/very difficult for children who aren't prepared for school when they start kindergarten to "catch up" when they get older.

While teachers are more likely to make the correlation, parents also associate certain benefits with a school-ready child compared to one who is not as well prepared to learn. The following are the percentages of parents and teachers who strongly/somewhat agree on these long-term consequences for youngsters who enter kindergarten ready to learn:

	Parents	Teachers
More likely to have more self-confidence as adults	84 %	96 %
More likely to attend college	78 %	94 %
More likely to earn higher levels of income	72 %	87 %
Less likely to go on welfare	61 %	81 %
Less likely to become a teen parent	55 %	76 %
Less likely to try drugs	52 %	75 %

A PNC Early Education Childhood Study media kit containing survey highlights, background information and video are available on PNC's website at <http://www.pnc.com/go/presskits> .

Methodology

The PNC Study of Early Childhood Education was performed by Harris Interactive. The study of parents was conducted by telephone during January and February, 2007 within the United States among 1,001 parents (ages 18 or older) of children ages 8 and younger. The study of teachers was also conducted by telephone among 516 teachers of students in pre-kindergarten through third grade during the same months. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, income, region, number of adults in the household, and number of phone lines in the household were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. For the study of teachers, age, race/ethnicity, education, income, region, grade level and school type were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. With a pure probability sample of 1,001 or 516, one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the overall results would have a sampling error of +/- 4.3 or +/- 3.1 percentage points, respectively.

Sampling error for data based on sub-samples would be higher and would vary. However, that does not take other sources of error into account.

The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. (<http://www.pnc.com>) is one of the nation's largest diversified financial services organizations providing consumer and business banking; specialized services for corporations and government entities, including corporate banking, real estate finance and asset-based lending; wealth management; asset management and global fund services.

This report has been prepared for general informational purposes only and is not intended as specific advice or recommendations. Information has been gathered from third party sources and has not been independently verified or accepted by The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. PNC makes no representations or warranties as to the accuracy or completeness of the information, assumptions, analyses or conclusions presented in the report. PNC cannot be held responsible for any errors or misrepresentations contained in the report or in the information gathered from third party sources. Any reliance upon the information provided in the report is solely and exclusively at your own risk.

SOURCE The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.