



Sutter County Children & Families Commission

Smart Start Program

2019 Annual Evaluation Report

by Duerr Evaluation Resources

DUERR
EVALUATION
RESOURCES

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The summer 2019 Smart Start program, now in the eighteenth year, sponsored six classrooms at six schools and was attended by 114 students. Smart Start specifically targets and primarily serves students who have no preschool experience and may never have been without parent or family supervision in an educational setting. Research indicates that many of these students will have difficulty transitioning into the kindergarten environment and are more likely to be academically behind students who have had a rich preschool experience.

Smart Start allows students to enter a controlled school experience in a classroom environment with teachers and aides who are not their parents or family members and be introduced to the basic school readiness skills that are crucial to a smooth kindergarten transition. A small number of students accepted to the program—to assure that all classrooms are full—have had a short or otherwise limited preschool experience.

Smart Start begins with the hiring and training of staff. Each classroom has a kindergarten teacher, preschool teacher and two child-care aides. Training for the Smart Start staff included the following:

- Engage in team building activities.
- Define roles of staff members.
- Review goals and objectives.
- Become familiar with the curriculum box (provided for each team).
- Review preschool and kindergarten standards as well as lessons in literacy, math, science and art, all integrated into a garden theme.

- Establish a Smart Start schedule that incorporates outside and inside physical activity, whole group circle time, small group stations, breakfast and lunch.
- Develop plans for the first days of Smart Start.
- Learn about Sutter County Children & Families Commission resources for parents. These include Bright Futures, Child Development Behavioral Specialist, Family SOUP counseling for special needs students and low or no cost dental services.
- Learn about community resources such as speech services and school district student services.
- Learn about the enrollment process which includes making first contacts with parents interested in Smart Start, setting appointments to enroll students, filling out enrollment forms with parents, determining need and eligibility for Sutter Smiles Mobile Dental van services and other special needs of the students.
- Receive training on Preschool Learning Foundations, Language and Math Games.

The staffing of Smart Start provides an opportunity for interaction between preschool staff and kindergarten teachers. The Program Coordinator provides administrative assistance, a Curriculum Coordinator handles development and dissemination of the curriculum, and, if needed, additional staff aid in parent workshops and other tasks.

When a parent agrees to enroll his or her child in Smart Start, a one-on-one visit with the family is held to complete the necessary program enrollment paperwork and to meet the child so that he/she has a familiar face to see on the first day of Smart Start.

This year, Smart Start Classes were held four hours per day over two different date periods:

- *June 13-July 12 (20 service days) at Lincoln, Bridge Street, and Butte Vista schools in Yuba City*
- *July 2-31 (20 service days) at Karperos, Park Avenue, and April Lane schools in Yuba City*

During the course of Smart Start, students are exposed to early literacy activities (including chants, songs, letters and name recognition); numeracy activities (including numbers, counting, shapes and patterns); familiarization with the classroom setting and rules; the roles of teachers and aides; socialization skills with their peers in a classroom setting and separation from their parents. All of the school readiness activities are geared to preparing the children for a smooth transition into kindergarten.

In addition to one-on-one intake, parents in the program benefit from a California State Standards for Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics workshop as well as being offered a Bright Futures event specifically for parents whose students attended Smart Start.

EVALUATION COMPONENTS

Each of the program goals is measured by the following evaluation components:

Implementation Data

Data collected by program staff includes demographic information about the child enrollment and school and level of preschool prior to attending Smart Start.

Ages & Stages Questionnaire

The Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3), a parent-completed child monitoring system, is a screening tool that provides a quick check of a child's development. The information supplied can help reveal the child's strengths, uncover any areas of concern, and determine if there is a need to seek professional assistance. The evaluators score the ASQs, and parents are given a copy of the results, which they take to the Bright Futures event. The ASQ results are not part of the formal evaluation assessment.

Preschool Skills Assessment

The Preschool Skills Assessment (created by YCUSD Child Development Programs) is given to each child at the start of the program and then again at the end of the program. The assessment measures basic school readiness skills that are the focus of Smart Start such as identifying shapes, counting, letter recognition, etc. Pre-to-post scores are averaged overall for each skill category, and the change is calculated to show improvement in students' skills.

Walker Assessment Scale (WAS)

The WAS is used to measure students' levels of school adjustment behaviors. The WAS is given to all students during the first week of Smart Start (pre) and again during the last week (post) to gauge change within the program timeframe as a direct result of program participation. Teachers observe the child's behavior in the classroom and complete the assessment. The child's scores are then scaled into the following three categories: teacher-preferred social behaviors, peer-preferred social behaviors and classroom adjustment behaviors. These scores can then be compared with valid California norms.

Smart Start Staff Online Survey

An online staff survey is conducted with Smart Start staff at the conclusion of the program to obtain feedback about the program and obtain feedback on barriers and program improvement.

Parent Attendance and Workshop Evaluation

Parents in the program benefited from a workshop regarding California State Standards in Reading, Language Arts, and Mathematics. For the sixth year, parents were also invited to attend a Bright Futures event in the evening at Andros Karperos Elementary School. Parents were asked to provide feedback regarding their experiences with the parent workshop.

EVALUATION RESULTS

Student Recruitment

When parents enroll their children for kindergarten (usually between March and June preceding the start of Smart Start), the forms include questions about preschool experience and whether the parents might be interested in the Smart Start program. When parents return the forms, program staff divides them based on whether the child has had no preschool experience (the primary program audience), up to six months of experience or more than six months of experience. Staff members contact the group with no preschool experience first, then those with six months, and lastly those with more. The program always gives priority to those students with the least preschool experience.

This year, parents were offered either of the two sessions, the one starting June 13 and the other on July 2. Quite a few families planned to be gone at least one week during each of the four-week sessions, and, consequently, were not enrolled. This is done purposefully because research shows that students who attend fewer than 16 days do not achieve as much as those who attend 19 or 20.

Even with these careful approaches, there were not enough children with little or no preschool experience to fill the planned eight classrooms, so the number of classrooms was reduced to six. This is a pattern that has developed in recent years, with fewer and fewer preschool children identified with little or no preschool. This is a positive factor for the children given the importance of preschool but results in a smaller Start program. One of the reasons a greater number of children are attending preschool is the robust economy. When the economy is stronger, families who do not qualify for free preschool are more likely to pay for private preschool. For an example of this, the two best enrollment years for the Smart Start program were in 2009 and 2010, the years following the 2008 recession. In addition to the greater percentage of children attending private pre-school, the region also has very strong public preschool offerings.

However, project staff noted that quite a large number of families did not register their children for kindergarten until after the Smart Start program ended this year, and many of these children had no preschool experience. These children could clearly have benefited from Smart Start if they could have been identified prior to the program.

Student Enrollment

Over the course of the eighteen program years, Smart Start has served 3,196 students at 15 different schools. The program has served as many as 250 students per year (note: at commensurately high funding levels). This year, six classes were provided, lasting 20 days, serving 114 students. It should be emphasized that although the number of Sutter County students identified with little or no preschool experience as been dropping, resulting in a smaller program, those children who were identified are in every bit as much need as similar children in past years.

Table 1 provides a summary of program sites and attendance over the past four years.

| Table 1 Participation Summary by Year 2016-2019 | | |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
| Program Year | Number of Sites | Total Students |
| 2016 | 9 | 185 |
| 2017 | 8 | 166 |
| 2018 | 6 | 123 |
| 2019 | 6 | 114 |

Historically, the program enrolls 19-24 students per classroom; this year, the average was 19. Thirty percent of the students had perfect attendance, and another 18 percent were absent only one day, well within historical norms for this program. The six schools hosting Smart Start were specifically selected to ensure that preschool students in the county, even in the more rural areas, have reasonable access to a Smart Start school. Detailed information about the locations and attendance can be viewed in Appendix Table A.

Level of Preschool Experience Prior to Smart Start

Smart Start is designed to primarily serve students with little or no preschool experience who may otherwise have trouble adapting to kindergarten. Table 2 displays the distribution of students' preschool experience this year.

| Table 2 2019 Level of Preschool Experience Prior to Smart Start | |
|--|----------------|
| Level of Preschool Experience | Percent |
| No Preschool Experience | 52% |
| 1- 6 Months of Preschool | 8% |
| 7-11 Months of Preschool | 18% |
| 1 Year or More of Preschool | 18% |
| Preschool but amount unknown | 4% |

Table 3 below shows the percentage of students with no preschool experience for the past four years. As described earlier, it is getting more difficult to find students with no preschool experience.

| Table 3 Four-Year Comparison Level of Preschool Experience Prior to Smart Start | |
|--|----------------|
| Level of Preschool Experience by Year | Percent |
| No Preschool Experience | % |
| 2015/16 | 59% |
| 2016/17 | 63% |
| 2017/18 | 55% |
| 2018/19 | 52% |

Ages and Stages Screening Results

The Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3) is a parent-completed screening tool that provides a quick check of a child's development. This assessment has been a component of the Smart Start program for several years. The idea is to direct parents to other services if needed, in addition to participation in Smart Start.

Parents complete the ASQ-3, which makes them partners in assessing their children's development along with Smart Start Staff. The information supplied can help reveal children's strengths, uncover any areas of concern, and determine if there is a need to seek professional assistance. There are 21 questionnaires that contain 30 items that cover five developmental sub domains, and an additional set of questions about children's overall health and development. The ASQ-3 can be used to assess children from two months up to five-and-a-half years of age. Each questionnaire contains the following sub domains: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social. Parents assessed their children near the beginning of the program. The children's scores on the five sub domains fall into one of the three following categories:

- **Above cutoff:** Child's development appears to be on schedule.
- **Close to cutoff:** Child's development appears to be on schedule but may benefit from practicing skills in a specific area of development. Provide learning activities and monitor.
- **Below cutoff:** Child's development needs further assessment and referral based on the sub domain(s) of concern.

Parents had the opportunity to attend a Bright Futures event specifically for parents with students attending Smart Start. Bright Future events provide an opportunity for parents to have their parenting and child development questions answered in a fun and relaxed environment, and, if there is a need for additional services, Bright Futures staff can provide help accessing the recommended service.

Parents completed and received the results of the ASQ-3 at the Bright Futures event. ASQs were completed for 74 of the 114 Smart Start participants. Forty-three percent of students scored above cutoff on all five domains, which means their development was on schedule. The remaining 57 percent of students demonstrated needs in one or more of the five measured areas. Parents were able to discuss specific issues with experts in early childhood health and education, and in some cases referrals for service were made. On average over the past four years, about 50 percent of students scored above cutoff on all five domains, so this year's results were about typical.

Preschool Skills Assessment (PSA) Results

Preschool skills were rated on a pre and post-program basis using the PSA on a six-point scale where zero represents an absent skill and a score of five represents knowledge that far exceeds the norm for kindergarten entry. Program staff and the evaluator have long agreed that a score of three (“Moderate”) and above demonstrates a desirable skill level for kindergarten entry.

Table 4 lists each PSA skill category and *the percentage of students* who were at or above the PSA desirable level, with the overall average PSA scores at the bottom. A statistical test was performed comparing the pre and post scores, and they were all “extremely” statistically significant.

| Table 4 2019 Pre-to-Post Smart Start Preschool Skills Assessment Percent of Students with Desirable Skills for Kindergarten Entry | | | |
|--|---|------------|-------------|
| Skills <i>(104 matched pre/post assessments)</i> | Percent of Students Kindergarten Ready | | Change |
| | Pre | Post | |
| Ability to count | 63% | 81% | +18% |
| Ability to write name | 54% | 71% | +17% |
| Identify letter sounds | 16% | 23% | +7% |
| Lower case letter recognition | 31% | 46% | +15% |
| Numbers recognition | 47% | 60% | +13% |
| One-to-one correspondence | 84% | 96% | +12% |
| Shape recognition | 68% | 87% | +19% |
| Upper case letter recognition | 40% | 53% | +13% |
| Color recognition | 93% | 96% | +3% |
| Average | 55% | 68% | +13% |

The skill categories with the largest improvements were *Shape Recognition*, *Ability to Count*, and *Ability to Write Name*. On average, 13% of students moved to a higher performance category on the post test. This level of improvement was a percentage higher than last year and the highest in the past four years. Note that in most cases where a student did not achieve a greater performance ranking on a given skill, they still generally made score improvements over the course of Smart Start, just not large enough to achieve the next performance level.

Table 5 is a four-year comparison of PSA success. The Change scores (gains) made were extremely similar each year, in spite of varying pre-test levels, demonstrating a very consistent level of instructional quality over that time. Note also that 71 percent of students over the four years--nearly three-fourths of the students--completed the program with the skills needed to start kindergarten. Before the program, fewer than two-thirds were kindergarten ready.

| Table 5 Four-Year Comparison of Smart Start Preschool Skills Assessment Total Scores: Percent of Students with Desirable Skills for Kindergarten Entry | | | |
|--|--|------|--------|
| Year | Percent of Students Kindergarten Ready | | |
| | Pre | Post | Change |
| 2015-16 | 55% | 67% | +12% |
| 2016-17 | 64% | 75% | +11% |
| 2017-18 | 60% | 72% | +12% |
| 2018-19 | 55% | 68% | +13% |
| Four-Year Average Skills Assessment Scores | 59% | 71% | +12% |

Walker Assessment Scale Results

The Walker Assessment Scale (WAS) is used to measure a child’s level of school adjustment behaviors. The child’s scores are scaled into the following categories:

- Teacher-preferred social behaviors,
- Peer-preferred social behaviors, and
- Classroom adjustment behaviors.

WAS scores are normed for California kindergarten students at school entry, such that the average score is at the 50th percentile. That is, half of California’s kindergartners score above 50 and half score below.

The WAS is completed by the teachers of Smart Start students during the first week of the program (pre) and again during the last week of the program (post). Changes from pre-to-post can be assumed to be a direct result of program participation, as other outside interventions during the four-week period would be minimal. Matched pre-to-post WAS forms were

completed for 112 of the 114 students at the six schools for a 98 percent completion rate. Table 6 shows WAS results by subscale for Smart Start students.

| Categories | Pre | Post | Change | Kinder State Average |
|------------------------------------|------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Teacher-Preferred Social Behaviors | 15% | 42% | +27% | 48% |
| Peer-Preferred Social Behaviors | 22% | 52% | +30% | 52% |
| Classroom-Adjustment Behaviors | 36% | 62% | +26% | 49% |
| Total Percentile Score | 22% | 52% | +30% | 50% |

Note that the Total Percentile Pre Score for Smart Start students were dramatically lower than the state average, at the 22nd percentile. This demonstrates conclusively that the students selected for Smart Start were appropriate for the program as being minimally ready for kindergarten. After the program, students were rated at the 52nd percentile, a huge 30-percentile point increase, which met the state average.

The post score for Classroom-Adjustment Behaviors was well above state average for students entering kindergarten at the 62nd percentile, and the post score for Peer-Preferred Social Behaviors met the state average at the 52nd percentile. The post score for Teacher-Preferred Social Behaviors fell slightly short of the state average at the 42nd percentile, but these students’ pre scores were the lowest of the three categories and far below the state average at the 15th percentile.

In short, these students were well below state averages when they started Smart Start. By the end of the program, they were prepared for kindergarten entry at the same level, overall, of California students entering kindergarten. This evidence strongly supports the conclusion that the program strongly impacts school adjustment behaviors.

Table 7 displays a four-year comparison of post WAS results. On average, Smart Start students ranked in the 62nd percentile for post WAS results over the past four years, far above the state average of the 50th percentile of California kindergarten students at school entry.

| Table 7 Four-Year Comparison of Post WAS Results: Overall Average Percentile Ranking Compared To Normative California Data | | |
|---|------|----------------------|
| Year | Post | Kinder State Average |
| 2016 | 62% | 48% |
| 2017 | 63% | 52% |
| 2018 | 61% | 49% |
| 2019 | 52% | 50% |

Table 8 shows the WAS change in scores for students by level of preschool experience in 2019.

| Table 8 2019 Pre-to-Post WAS Percentile Scores by Level of Preschool Experience Prior to Smart Start | | | |
|---|------------------|------|--------|
| Level of Preschool Experience | Percentile Score | | |
| | Pre | Post | Change |
| No Preschool Experience | 27% | 61% | +34% |
| 1- 6 Months of Preschool | 13% | 50% | +37% |
| 7-11 Months of Preschool | 13% | 38% | +25% |
| 1 Year or More of Preschool | 22% | 43% | +21% |

Missing information for 4 participants

Note that the intended target audience for this program, students with no preschool experience, benefited most from the program with a post score of 61 percent, eleven percent better than the state average for kindergartners. All four groups of students had impressive pre to post gains.

The California WAS norms have also been used to develop a scale of school adjustment, with the three categories shown in Table 9. The scale links a child’s score to the severity of their potential social skills adjustment. Note that, unlike Tables 6-8, which show percentile scores, the percentages in Table 9 represent the percent of students in each group.

As noted previously, Smart Start students are selected specifically because—not having had a pre-school experience—they may not have the social adjustment skills of their similar-aged peers who have had preschool experiences, which helps explain why 38 percent of them scored in the severe-to-moderate category at pre-assessment. However, by the end of the program, none of the students were still in the *severe-to-moderate* category. The percentage of students in the *few-to-none* category (the most desirable school adjustment category) improved substantially from 41 percent of students at pre to 100 percent of students at post.

| Table 9 Percent of Students in each Risk Category 2019 WAS Assessment Pre-To-Post | | |
|--|-----|------|
| Adjustment Category | Pre | Post |
| Severe-To-Moderate | 38% | 0% |
| Moderate-To-Mild | 21% | 0% |
| Few-To-None | 41% | 100% |

The following table displays the four-year comparison of the percent of children pre-to-post who scored in the “Few-to-None” risk category.

| Table 10 Four-Year Comparison Percent of Students in Few-To-None Risk Category WAS Assessment Pre-To-Post | | |
|---|------------|------------|
| Adjustment Category | Pre | Post |
| Few-To-None | % | % |
| 2016 | 49% | 76% |
| 2017 | 35% | 88% |
| 2018 | 35% | 84% |
| 2019 | 41% | 100% |
| Average | 40% | 87% |

The table shows that over the past four years, on average, 40 percent of students fell in the “Few-to-None” risk category at pre, and at post there were 87 percent of children in that category.

Smart Start Staff Survey

During the 2019 program year, DER conducted an online survey of all Smart Start staff by sending an Internet link to an anonymous online survey. Staff members answered a series of questions regarding their role in Smart Start, support of the staff, issues or problems they may have experienced, and how to improve the program. The online staff survey was well received by staff members, resulting in 24 completed surveys—a 96 percent response rate.

Because the survey was completely anonymous—to both program leadership and to the evaluators—and due to the high response rate, the results can be trusted as being representative. The primary findings are shown below:

Program Infrastructure

- 71% of the staff reported having participated in the program in prior years.
- 92% of staff felt that the training they received was *very helpful*, up from 67% last year and the highest rating in the last four years.

- Staff unanimously rated support from program coordinators as *Excellent*. This rating has consistently been in the high 90s in recent years.
- 67% of staff rated support from school site staff as *Excellent* (down from 79% last year and the same as in 2015/16); the remaining 33% said *Good*.
- 83% of the teachers rated the support of their fellow teachers as *Excellent*, down from 92% last year; 90% in 2016/17 and 88% in 2015/16.
- 92% of the staff reported having *a lot* better understanding of what the other teacher does and needs in the classroom, about the same as last year and up from 81% in 2016/17. The rating was about the same in 2015/16.

Program Materials/Parent Night

Teachers were asked if they felt that the curriculum and materials were appropriate for the age and development of the students and if they were appropriate for the four-week time period:

- 87% of the teachers reported *yes, a lot* regarding appropriateness of materials for the age and development level of the students, up from 79% last year, about the same the previous year and down from 100% in 2015/16.
- 100% said the covering of materials was *“just right”* for the course length. The ratings have consistently been 92-100% in recent years.

Preschool and Kindergarten Teacher Collaboration

Staff members were asked to comment on the relevance of having a kindergarten and preschool teacher working together. Every staff member reported that the experience was beneficial. Most staff members (over half) appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with their different skill sets and ideas to focus on the children’s development and classroom involvement. Others appreciated having two teachers in the room to provide more individualized attention to the children. Some representative comments were:

- *“It was a collaborative, enriching experience of co-teaching. The positive and supportive atmosphere of learning and planning for age-appropriate activities and center times were developed as a team. The depth of experience and knowledge of all the adults working together was a wonderful environment for students to experience a positive school beginning to kindergarten.”*
- *“It was great to see a different perspective on how to address the learning needs of our students.”*
- *“It felt like co-teaching. The children had two teachers for support and instruction with both teachers bringing something different to the environment.”*

Additional comments and suggestions collected from the staff survey can be found in Appendix D.

Parent Attendance and Workshop Evaluations

Parents were offered one Smart Start-sponsored workshop and one Bright Futures event in 2019. There were 24 parents from 112 Smart Start families in attendance at the workshop (Kindergarten Readiness and Expectations), representing 21 percent of all Smart Start families.

Parents were asked to provide feedback regarding the workshop. Table 12 shows the results of the parent feedback from 19 attendees at the California Standards/Kindergarten Readiness and Expectations Workshop held on July 25. Appendix E contains parent comments.

The overall workshop evaluation score was 4.8 on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest score. The large majority (about 80%) of parents found the handouts on California Standards and Kindergarten Expectations very helpful. Over 80 percent (84%) found the information on Kindergarten Expectations very helpful, and about 80 percent thought the same of the California Standards information. Nearly all (95%) rated the presenter very high on being well informed on the topics, and everyone who had questions had them all answered. Overall, about 90 percent rated the workshop “above average” or “excellent,” slightly lower than last year but up from 87 percent the previous year.

Table 12
California State Standards/Kindergarten Readiness and Expectations Workshop
Parent Feedback

Were the handouts helpful?

| | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| A great deal 79% | Quite a bit 11% | Somewhat 5% | Very Little 0% | Not at all 5% |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|

How helpful was the California Standards information?

| | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| A great deal 79% | Quite a bit 16% | Somewhat 5% | Very Little 0% | Not at all 0% |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|

How helpful was the Kindergarten Expectations information?

| | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| A great deal 84% | Quite a bit 16% | Somewhat 0% | Very Little 0% | Not at all 0% |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|

Was the presenter well informed about the topics?

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| A great deal 95% | Quite a bit 5% | Somewhat 0% | Very Little 0% | Not at all 0% |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|

Did the presenter answer all your questions?

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Yes, all 95% | Most 0% | Some 0% | Few 0% | I didn't ask any questions 5% |
|-----------------|------------|------------|-----------|----------------------------------|

Overall, how would you rate this workshop?

| | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------|
| Excellent 84% | Above average 5% | Average 11% | Below average 0% | Poor 0% |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------|

OVERALL WORKSHOP EVALUATION SCORE **4.8***

*Scale: 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest score

Table 13 shows the four-year comparison of average scores.

| Table 13 Four-Year Comparison of Average Scores Kindergarten Readiness and Expectations Workshop Parent Feedback | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Year | Average Workshop Score* |
| 2016 | 4.6 |
| 2017 | 4.8 |
| 2018 | 4.9 |
| 2019 | 4.8 |

*On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest score

The table shows that the workshops were rated high each year, especially the past three. Again, as with so many of the measures, the quality of the program has been maintained over time.

Parents had the opportunity to also attend a Bright Futures event specifically for parents with students attending Smart Start. A total of 74 Smart Start parents attended, representing 112 families (66% of all Smart Start families).

EVALUATION SUMMARY

The 2019 program year marked the eighteenth time Smart Start has been offered in Sutter County. Six classes were held at six schools and attended by 114 students, with an average attendance of 19. Classes were held in Yuba City. Over the eighteen years of the program, 3,196 students have participated.

- **Program Design:** This year, classes were provided for 20 days. There were four adults in each classroom, as in the previous three years.
- **Preschool Experience:** The program seeks to serve primarily students with no prior preschool experience. This year, 51 percent of the students came to the program with no prior preschool experience, the lowest percentage in the last four years. The availability of State Preschool in recent years has decreased the percentage of children with no preschool experience, which was historically about 20 percent higher before 2015/16.
- **Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3):** The Smart Start Staff collected ASQ-3s for 74 students. Forty-three percent of students, slightly lower than last year, scored above

cutoff on all five domains, which means their development was on schedule. Parents received the results of the ASQ-3s at the Bright Futures event and were able to discuss specific issues with experts in early childhood health and education. Overall, about three-fourths of students over the four-year period completed the program with the skills needed to start kindergarten.

- **Preschool Skills Assessment (PSA):** PSA results demonstrated a 13 percent growth, about the same as the previous three years. Again, students' average pre assessment score was high (55%), making it somewhat more difficult to obtain higher change scores. Overall, 68 percent of the students completed the program with the skills needed to start kindergarten, slightly lower than the last two years and about the same as in 2015/16.
- **Walker Assessment Scale (WAS) Results:** The WAS measures children's level of social and school adjustment behaviors. The WAS gains during the 2019 program were commensurate with past years. The pre Total Percentile Scores for Smart Start students were dramatically lower than the state average, at the 22nd percentile. After the program, students were rated at the 50th percentile, a significant 28-percentile point increase, and at state average for students entering kindergarten.
- **Staff Survey:** Of 25 Smart Start staff members, 24 (96%) completed an online questionnaire. Over 70% of staff had prior Smart Start experience. Ratings were higher (in some cases much higher) this year than last for the helpfulness of the training (92%); program coordinators' support (100%); and having *a lot* better understanding of what the other teachers do and need in the classroom (over 90%). Most staff (87%) also rated the appropriateness of materials for the age and development level of the students higher this year, up from 79 percent. However, the ratings were lower this year than last in regard to fellow teachers' support (83%) and school site staff support (67%). As in the past, the cooperative nature of the work between preschool and kindergarten teachers in the same classroom has important side benefits that may positively impact their work during the regular school year.
- **Parent Events:** The large majority of parents and caregivers rated the workshops high, although not quite as high as in the previous three years.

Overall, the results of the program indicated positive cognitive and social-emotional growth for nearly all participants, with students much better prepared to enter kindergarten. Multi-year data demonstrates that program quality has remained steady over many years.

APPENDIX

Appendix Table A
Participation Summary By School and Year
Summer 2002-2019

| School | 2002* | 2003* | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|-------------------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| A. Karperos | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 20 | 26 | 25 | 24 | 17 | 21 | 20 | 23 | 22 |
| April Ln. | 22 | 23 | 23 | 20 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 19 | 14 |
| Barry | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 24 | 26 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 0 |
| Bridge St. | 22 | 23 | 23 | 22 | 22 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| Brittan | 0 | 0 | 19 | 24 | 23 | 24 | 20 | 24 | 25 | 24 | 21 | 20 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Butte Vista | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 20 | 21 | 0 | 21 |
| C. Gaither | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 17 | 20 | 22 | 17 | 18 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| King Ave. | 0 | 0 | 22 | 24 | 22 | 49~ | 27 | 27 | 26 | 20 | 26 | 24 | 20 | 19 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lincoln | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 28 | 25 | 24 | 20 | 27 | 23 | 26 | 20 | 21 | 24 | 19 | 21 |
| Lincrest | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 18 | 15 | 21 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Luther^ | 22 | 24 | 47^ | 43^ | 47^ | 47^ | 51^ | 50^ | 51^ | 20 | 22 | 27 | 26 | 22 | 21 | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| Park Ave. | 0 | 0 | 24 | 24 | 23 | 0 | 24 | 26 | 26 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 18 |
| Riverbend | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 24 | 27 | 22 | 27 | 15 | 20 | 19 | 21 | 0 |
| T. Buena | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 26 | 24 | 22 | 26 | 23 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| W. Walton | 0 | 0 | 25 | 24 | 22 | 25 | 24 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Students | 66 | 70 | 183 | 181 | 205 | 239 | 241 | 250 | 245 | 185 | 223 | 203 | 186 | 131 | 185 | 166 | 123 | 114 |
| Ave. per Classrm. | 22 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 24 | 21 | 25 | 23 | 23 | 19 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 19 |

**Per school attendance was not reported in 2002 or 2003 report, so total attendance was evenly split by school for this table.*

~Two classrooms 2007

^Two classrooms 2004-10

| Appendix Table B | |
|--|-------------|
| Level of Preschool Experience Prior to Smart Start | |
| Level of Preschool Experience | Percent |
| No Preschool Experience | |
| <5 years old by 9/1/19 | 17% |
| aged 5 by 9/1/19 | 83% |
| Total | 100% |
| 1- 6 Months of Preschool | |
| <5 years old by 9/1/19 | 13% |
| aged 5 by 9/1/19 | 88% |
| Total | 100% |
| 7-11 Months of Preschool | |
| <5 years old by 9/1/19 | 40% |
| aged 5 by 9/1/19 | 60% |
| Total | 100% |
| 1 Year or More of Preschool | |
| <5 years old by 9/1/19 | 14% |
| aged 5 by 9/1/19 | 86% |
| Total | 100% |
| Preschool but Amount Unknown | |
| <5 years old by 9/1/19 | 50% |
| aged 5 by 9/1/19 | 50% |
| Total | 100% |

| Appendix Table C Pre-to-Post WAS Percentile Scores by Level of Preschool Experience Prior to Smart Start | | | |
|--|------------------|------|--------|
| Level of Preschool Experience | Percentile Score | | |
| | Pre | Post | Change |
| No Preschool Experience | | | |
| <5 years old by 9/1/19 | 18% | 50% | +32% |
| aged 5 by 9/1/19 | 30% | 63% | +33% |
| 1- 6 Months of Preschool | | | |
| <5 years old by 9/1/19 | 8% | 38% | +30% |
| aged 5 by 9/1/19 | 13% | 52% | +39% |
| 7-11 Months of Preschool | | | |
| <5 years old by 9/1/19 | 8% | 38% | +30% |
| aged 5 by 9/1/19 | 18% | 36% | +18% |
| 1 Year or More of Preschool | | | |
| <5 years old by 9/1/19 | 40% | 43% | +3% |
| aged 5 by 9/1/19 | 19% | 40% | +21% |
| Preschool but Amount Unknown | | | |
| <5 years old by 9/1/19 | 27% | 40% | +13% |
| aged 5 by 9/1/19 | 3% | 40% | +37% |

Appendix D
Comments from Staff Survey
Suggestions for Program Improvement
2019

- *“Some of the supplies this year were not enough for all the kids.”*
- *“I think having a time when all parents visit the classroom one day. They can have an opportunity to see the class setting and the projects the children have done that are hung up. It could be made like an Open house!”*
- *“More advertising for the program itself. There were a lot of parents, I knew in general, who said they would have loved this program had they known about it.”*
- *“I would like to see more of South Sutter County targeted for this program. I'm sure Marcum School would be willing to be a South Sutter County site. I think the program could be better advertised and possibly recommended to preschool teachers for students they think might benefit from an extra month of school.”*
- *“I had no issues. Having an experienced person on the program was essential, though. I don't know if we'd have been prepared if all four of us were new.”*
- *“The need seems great for students at the end of the school year that are not quite kindergarten ready. I'd love to see this program offered to children that had preschool but still need the support or English language learners.”*

Additional Comments from Staff Survey

- *“It's my hope that this program continues. These children need this extra exposure to a classroom setting to prepare them for kindergarten. The 20-day growth of the children is amazing.”*
- *“Thank you again for another wonderful year!”*
- *“Can't wait for next year!”*
- *“I gained a great experience with the Smart Start program.”*
- *“Smart Start program gives incoming kindergarten students the opportunity to experience a school atmosphere.”*
- *“It's a great program. I love to see the growth in every child.”*
- *“The students came a long way. It is great to see how much more prepared for K and TK they are now at the end of the program.”*
- *“I really enjoyed working this program and I look forward to next year. It was exciting to see growth within the children.”*
- *“I would definitely apply next year if the program is around next year.”*
- *“Learning and lots of fun was had by ALL!”*
- *“I'm really happy to see that so many kids are going to preschool, but I worry that this program will become extinct and it's such an amazing program.”*
- *“I enjoyed the experience and would look forward to applying again in the future.”*
- *“I had a positive experience and was completely impressed with the organization of the training and the teacher's effort.”*
- *“Had fun being a part of the program.”*
- *“I appreciate the 4 adult support to students learning. It was essential to support and develop the goal of students learning.”*

Appendix E
Parent Workshop Comments
2019

- *“This workshop is a great success.”*
- *“It was very helpful, the information they gave us.”*
- *“I learned that I should not practice with my son at home for more than 3 minutes because he gets tired and bored. Thank you.”*
- *“This was really informative and helpful.”*
- *“Very good and great program. Great information of the topic for kindergarten.”*
- *“Presenter articulated and explained very well. Good job!”*
- *“Much more helpful than expected.”*
- *“Very good and great program.”*
- *Very good (3)*
- *“Very boring, very long, repeated information several times. Learned 1 new thing.”*