



Language that Supports the Successful Learner Equation

The Minnesota Department of Education’s [Due North Strategic Plan](#) envisions a future where every child receives a high-quality education no matter their race or zip code. In support of that goal, the Division of Early Learning Services (ELS) no longer uses the term and concept of “readiness,” which places an undue burden on children to “be ready for school.” Instead, ELS is using language that aligns with the [Successful Learner Equation](#), which recognizes that children are always learning and adults and systems should support all children wherever they are in their learning progression. The words used by educators, community partners, state employees, and policy makers impact the families and children served as they transition to kindergarten and experience school. The Successful Learner Equation illustrates that all four components must work together to support the success of all children.

An important action that all entities represented in the equation can play is promoting and using consistent and aligned language around supporting successful learners. The table below provides examples of alternative language to use when communicating with others.

Replace “Readiness” Language Like This...	With Successful Learner Language Like This...
I want to make sure my child is “kindergarten ready.”	I want to make sure that my child is successful in kindergarten.
The focus of our programs is to make sure that children are ready for school.	The focus of our programs is to make sure that children and families receive instruction, services, and supports so that they are successful in school.
When all children are healthy, valued, and thriving, they will be ready for school when it’s time to start kindergarten.	When children are healthy, valued, and thriving, they are set up for successful learning in school and beyond
What should you do to make sure your child is ready for kindergarten?	What can you do to support your child's transition into kindergarten?
There are so many skills that go into being kindergarten ready — but what are the first things you should start with?	There are many skills you can help your child develop as they prepare to transition into kindergarten.
Completing an Early Childhood Screening will help you know if your child is ready for kindergarten.	Completing an Early Childhood Screening will give you important information about how your child is developing, and may lead to referrals for other resources and supports for you and/or your child. The results will not impact your child’s ability to enroll in kindergarten.
Having your child complete an assessment will help us know if your child is ready for kindergarten.	Having your child complete an assessment will help us get to know your child better so we can be ready to support your child. Children come to kindergarten with a wide variety of skills and abilities.

Please contact mde.els@state.mn.us if you would like to connect with someone from the Division of Early Learning Services about this messaging and the rationale behind the change.