

**READY SCHOOLS: A Report of the Goal 1 Ready Schools Resource Group,
Rima Shore, 1998**

Overview

Ensuring that children start school ready to learn is vitally important. But ensuring that schools are ready for children is important as well. Recognizing that good education means both ready children and ready schools, the Goals Panel convened a special group of advisors and asked them to identify what makes a ready school. This report is the result of their efforts. It recommends ten specific approaches found in successful elementary schools and documented by research to be keys to ready schools.

Ten Keys to Ready Schools

1. Smooth the transition between home and school - Despite research showing their importance, transition activities remain the exception rather than the rule in our public schools.
2. Strive for continuity between early care and education programs and elementary schools - Elementary schools can help to ease the transition to kindergarten by forging links with the community, their feeder preschools, and by drawing on the best practices of early childhood centers.
3. Help children learn and make sense of their complex and exciting world.
4. Ready schools are committed to the success of every child.
5. Ready schools are committed to the success of every teacher and every adult who interacts with children during the school day.
6. Ready schools introduce or expand approaches that have been shown to raise achievement.
7. They are learning organizations that alter practices and programs if they do not benefit children.
8. Ready schools serve children in communities - Ready schools recognize that schools alone cannot meet the broad spectrum of children's and families' needs. Children are more likely to make a successful adjustment to school when they have easy access to a range of services and supports in their community.
9. Ready schools take responsibility for results - They set high standards for all children, and commit themselves to zero failure.
10. Ready schools have strong leadership - Ready schools have a clear and unmistakable source of leadership that provides instructional focus and coherence to the many activities and efforts under way in many classrooms.

Conclusion

The ten keys to Ready Schools reflect the major themes and directions discussed by the Goal 1 Ready Schools Resource Group. They suggest concrete policies and strategies that schools can introduce or expand, in order to create learning climates for young children from preschool through Grade 3. They suggest principles to help every child grow in competence and meet high expectations.

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