

Background

- Children exposed to domestic violence early in life have increased risk of emotional & behavioral concerns<sup>1</sup>.
- Individuals who experienced maltreatment as children are at a higher risk of becoming parents who may also engage in maltreatment<sup>2</sup>.
- Mi Escuelita, a therapeutic preschool for children exposed to domestic violence (DV), serves children and families in San Diego’s South Region, a predominantly Hispanic and bilingual community characterized by high DV rates and economic disadvantage.
- The majority of children attending Mi Escuelita preschool are Hispanic, with an approximately equal split between male and female students.
- UCSD researchers have partnered with Mi Escuelita to ascertain the success of children (i.e., attaining emotional, social, and developmental milestones and achieving total kindergarten readiness) who receive holistic services for early childhood trauma.

Method

- Qualitative interviews were conducted with parents & students enrolled in Mi Escuelita ~10 years prior.
- The purpose of the qualitative interviews was to assess the longitudinal impacts of Mi Escuelita on children who attended the school.
- The qualitative interviews were conducted with ten parents and seventeen youth (aged 12-20).
- The interviews are professionally transcribed, checked for accuracy, and imported into Atlas TI software. Team members used rapid analysis to summarize the transcripts. Atlas TI will be used for line-by-line coding using an a-priori code list developed from theoretical and conceptual considerations, as well as the initial reading of the transcripts.
- This poster presents preliminary results from youth interviews.

Conclusions

- The results indicate long-lasting, positive impacts – both socially and academically – for children who attended Mi Escuelita. Positive friendships, academic success, and understanding of healthy relationships are protective factors. Trust and communication are building blocks for healthy relationships, and this knowledge equips these youth to break the cycle of violence.
- Within this population of children exposed to trauma at an early age, early intervention programs such as Mi Escuelita can aid in decreasing the risk of maladjustment, academic struggles, and social issues.
- A foundational understanding of healthy relationships is beneficial, particularly for children exposed to domestic violence, for multigenerational domestic violence prevention.

References

1. Romano, E., Weegar, K., Gallitto, E., Zak, S., & Saini, M. (2021). Meta-Analysis on Interventions for Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 22(4), 728–738. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27124833>

2. Granner, J. R., Seng, J., & Lee, S. J. (2025). Families Optimizing Resilience via Trauma-Informed Father Involvement (FORTIFI) Theory Synthesis. *Child Welfare*, 102(6), 203-232. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48815058>

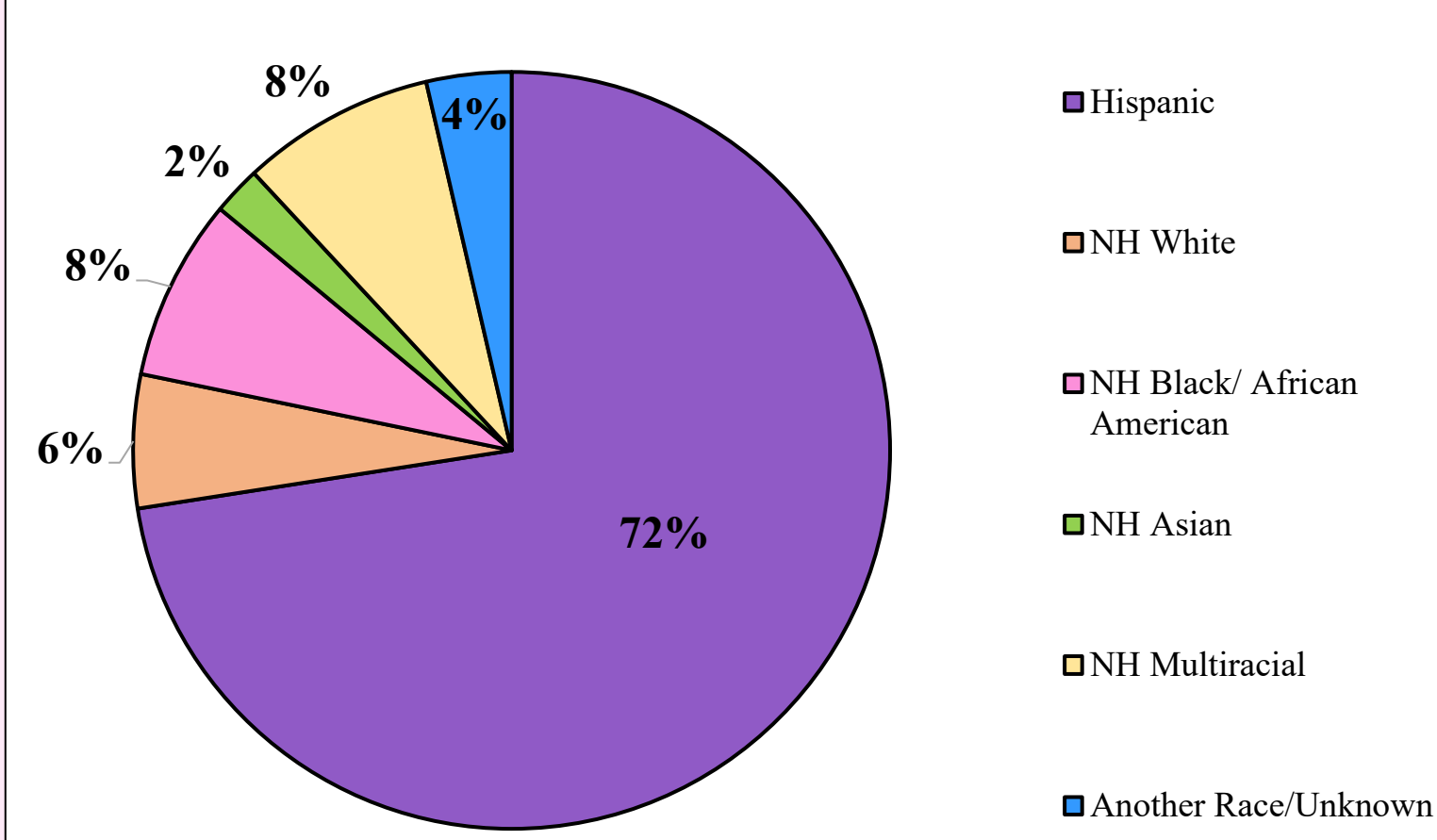
Acknowledgements

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- In collaboration with our community partner, SBCS

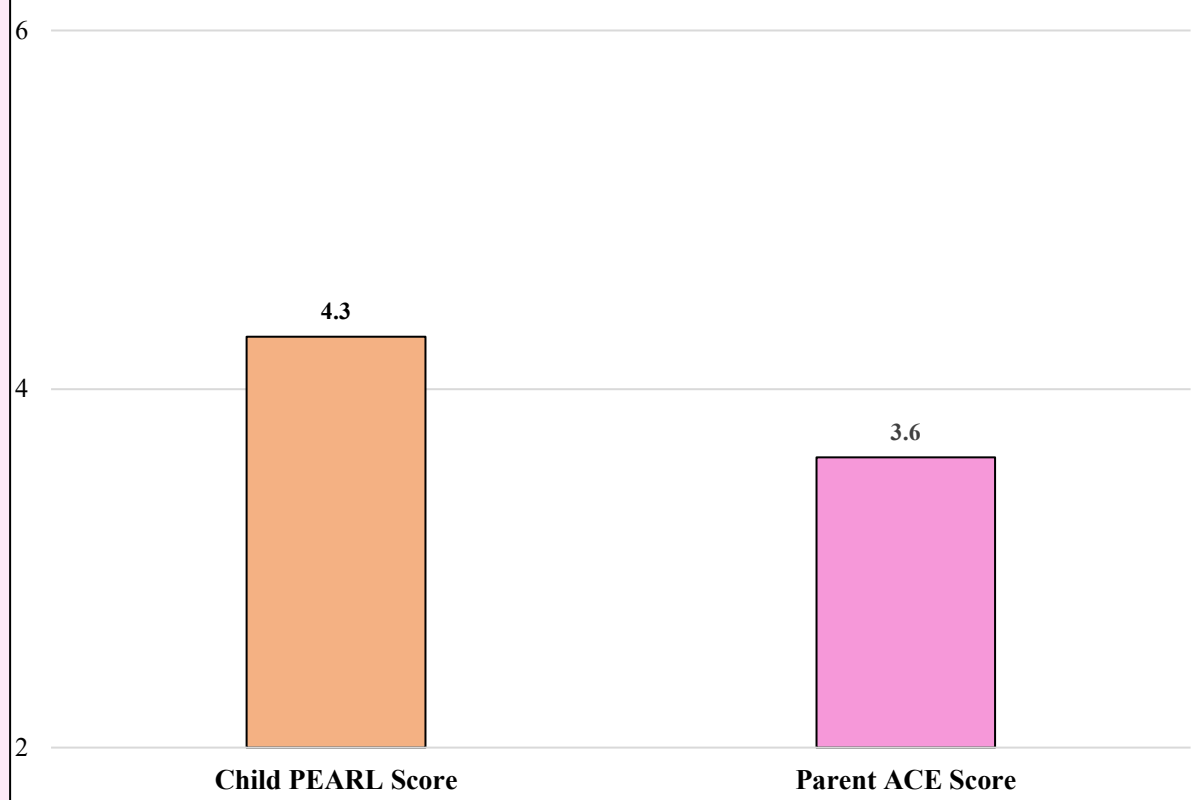
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Race and Ethnicity of Mi Escuelita Students

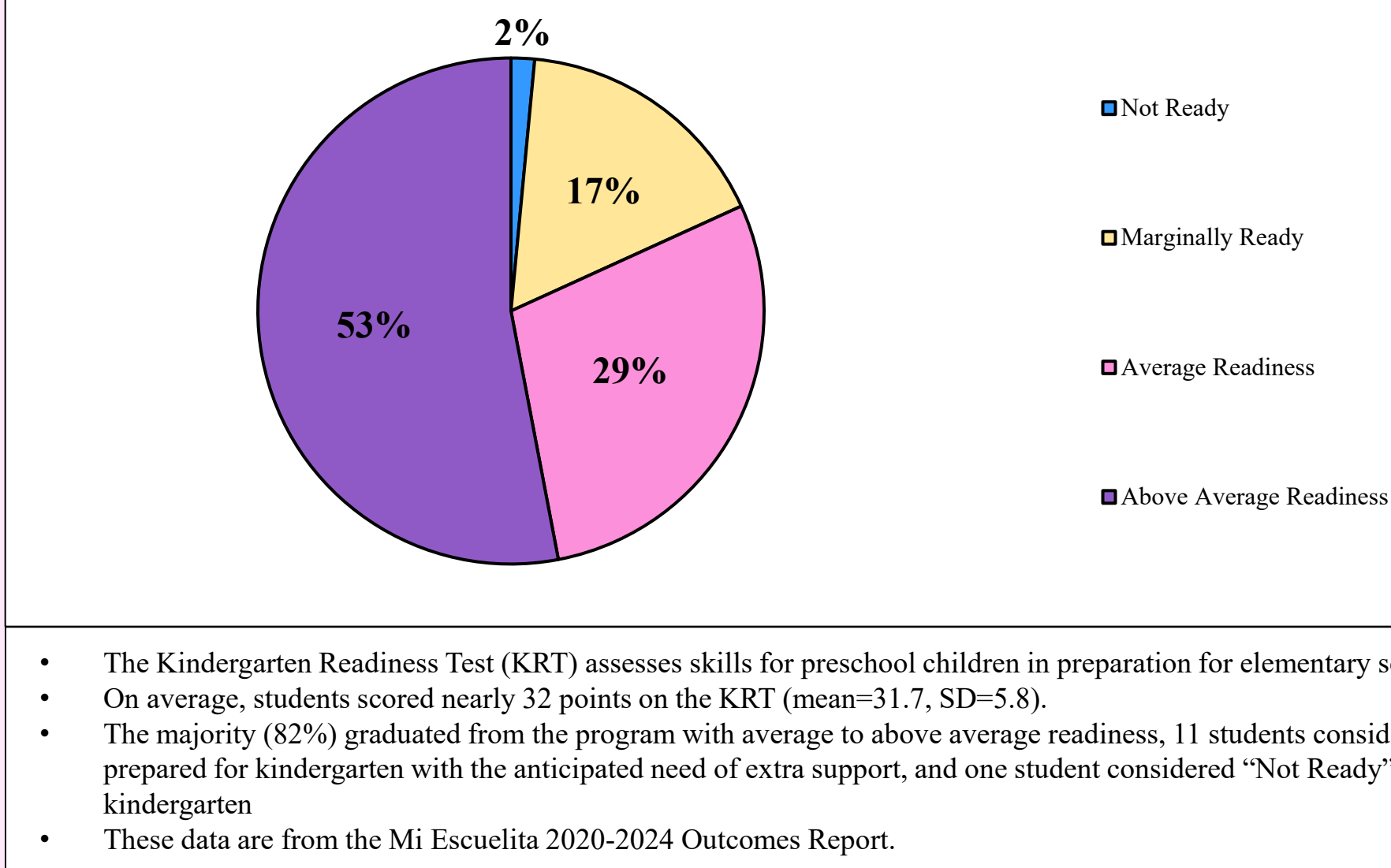


Trauma Histories of Mi Escuelita Students and Parents

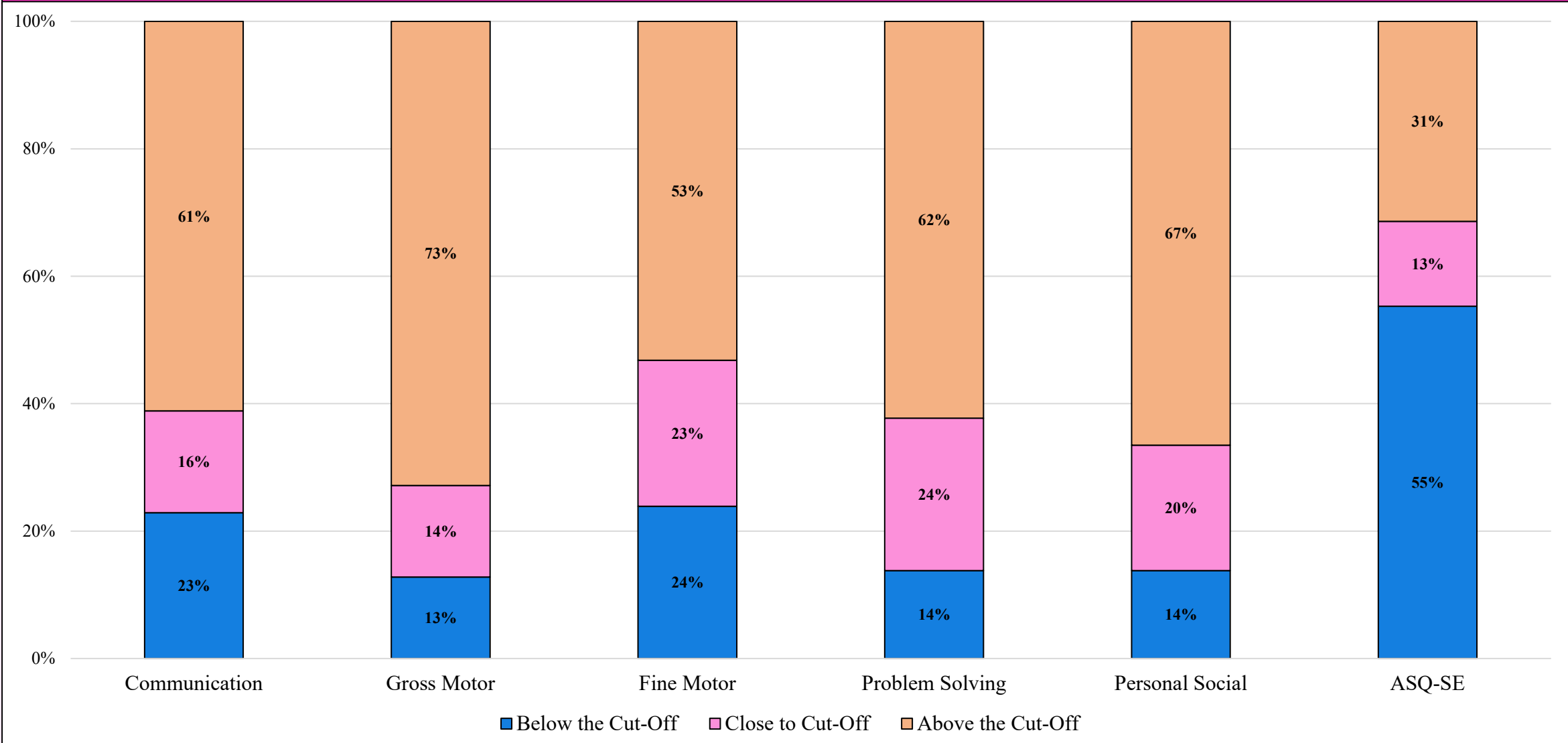


- Pediatric ACEs (i.e., PEARL scores) greater than 4 are considered “High,” and put children at risk for negative health, developmental, and academic outcomes in the future.
- The mean reported PEARL score was 4.3, with 60% of children scoring “High” (i.e., four or more).
- Of the 180 caregivers that responded to the ACE questionnaire, they reported having experienced, on average, 3.6 ACEs, with 49% reporting four or more.
- These data are from the Mi Escuelita 2020-2024 Outcomes Report.

Kindergarten Readiness Levels

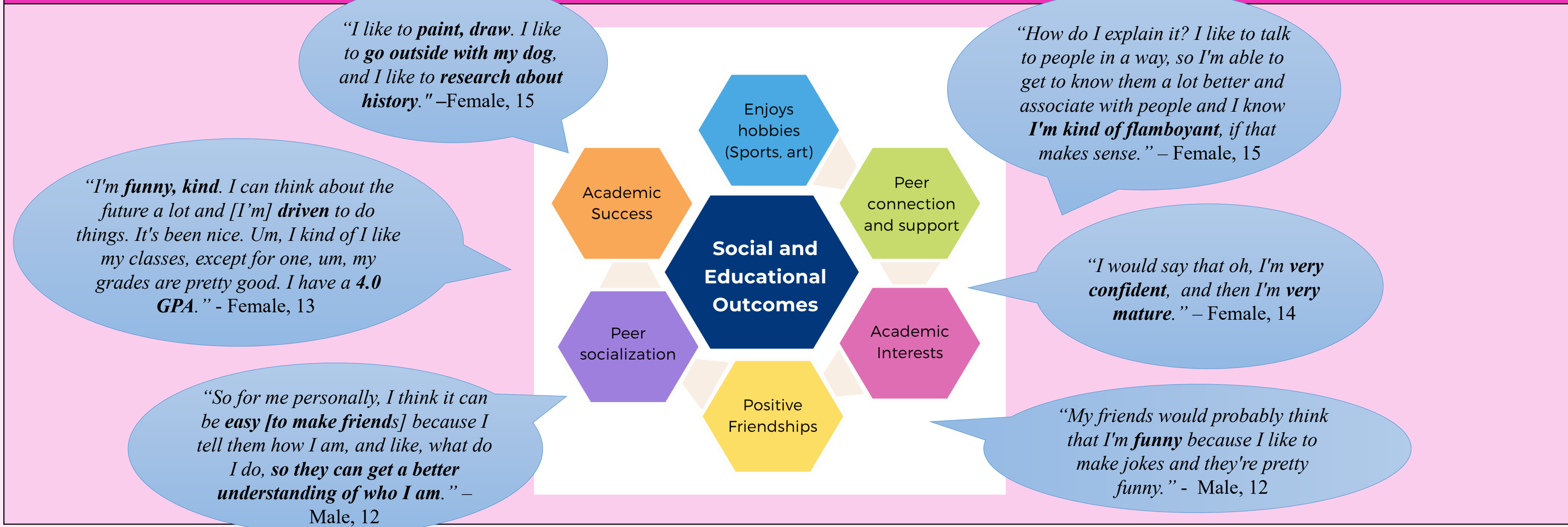


ASQ and ASQ-SE2 Cutoff Groups at Program Start



- Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ®) provide reliable, accurate developmental and social-emotional screening for children between birth and age six. On average, students scored nearly 32 points on the KRT (mean=31.7, SD=5.8).
- The ASQ has been specifically designed to pinpoint developmental progress and catch delays in young children—paving the way for meaningful next steps in learning, intervention, or monitoring.
- ASQ scores highlight the developmental and emotional complexity of the children who attend Mi Escuelita preschool. Children demonstrate high levels of need from program start – requiring further evaluation in Communication, Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills, Problem Solving, and Personal Social Skills.
- These data are from the Mi Escuelita 2020-2024 Outcomes Report.

Social and Educational Outcomes



Healthy versus Unhealthy Relationships

