



**Granby Early Childhood Council (GECC)
Parent Survey Results Summary
March, 2008**

Survey Question	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice	4th choice	5th choice	6th choice
Kindergarten Readiness	56	13	8	7	6	5
Family Resource Center	16	9	11	17	15	17
Age for Kindergarten	5	14	8	17	22	17
Pre K Affordability	7	19	21	15	13	5
Pre K Availability	8	18	17	12	15	7
Full Day Kindergarten	5	12	19	12	6	27

I. Purpose

The survey was conducted to explore parent sentiment in Granby regarding such issues as early care affordability and availability, community support for families with young learners, the entrance age for kindergarten related to school success and full day kindergarten offering. The results of the survey will inform the development of a comprehensive transition plan for all Granby children to improve kindergarten readiness and early school success for young children in the community. In addition, by gaining insight into parent concerns, needs and desires in Granby, the GECC will be better able to adapt its goals and objectives to meet parent/child/family/community needs.

II. Overview of Respondent Parents

- 95 surveys were completed: 69 of the surveys included parent comments.

III. Rating of early childhood issues of parental concern:

- A. 56 parents listed Kindergarten Readiness as their #1 concern.

Parent comments received demonstrating the value of kindergarten readiness:

- “I want to know that my child won’t be overwhelmed with kindergarten when he starts.”
- “My top concern and priority is making sure that my child is academically and socially ready to enter kindergarten. I want him to be successful in kindergarten and enjoy learning, therefore building a foundation for lifelong academic achievement.”
- “I wish there was a formal evaluation for each child eligible to enter school, or at least an ‘official’ list of readiness skill sets to help parents decide when to enroll their child.”
- “I am concerned that the expectation of readiness from the kindergarten teachers is not communicated to all preschool teachers so children may not be ready for kindergarten.”
- “How do we measure my daughter’s readiness for kindergarten?”

B. 16 parents listed a Family Resource Center (FRC) as their #1 concern:
Parent comments received demonstrating the value of a FRC:

- “A Family Resource Center, especially for Pre-K aged kids, is a needed resource in town. The social aspect, especially in the winter months is a base for family connections and the learning for the kids that accompanies this connection.”
- “What educational/ group experiences are available for those families who are unable to afford preschool?”
- “I would like to see an ‘educational’ environment that I can bring my child to where she (we) can socialize with other children, and where I can help to be sure that she is prepared to go off to kindergarten.”
- “Having a place to go, play, and meet other families is very important for us.”
- “As of now, I go out of town for most of my children’s activities. The library (SPL-Simsbury Public Library) provides excellent resources and classes. We would like to see more at Granby Public Library and in town.”

C. 22 parents listed Age for Kindergarten as their 5th priority concern.
Parent comments received demonstrating the value of age for kindergarten:

- “I believe children entering school are expected to do more and more each year. I believe children should be as close to the same age as possible in school.”

- “There needs to be a better way to place children based on readiness, not chronological age.”
- “I feel that Connecticut should mandate a September 1st cut off for kindergarten entry. There are too many parents holding children and resulting in a kindergarten class with a vast age range.”

D. 21 parents listed Preschool Affordability as their 3rd concern.

Parent comments received demonstrating the value of preschool affordability:

- “The cost of excellent preschool is very expensive.”
- “We want to send our child to preschool, but are discouraged by the price put on sending him. We would love a few affordable options so that our son could go to preschool.”
- “We are part of the few who can afford.... (preschool). It is hard for us with a very generous “middle class” income-worrisome for families who are having trouble just “getting by.”
- “My desire is for my children to be socially and academically ready to learn formally on the 1st day of kindergarten. I need to be able to afford preschool in order to do that.”
- “Providing the children care and learning at a price that is affordable for all- No one should feel they cannot participate because of cost- It makes society a better place when there is interaction and connection early.”

E. 18 parents listed Preschool Availability as their 2nd concern.

Parent comments received demonstrating the value of preschool availability:

- “I don’t feel there are enough options for preschool here in Granby. There are some really great programs, but they are difficult to get in to and often have long waiting lists.”
- “I would like to see more preschools in Granby and more activities (Recreation Department?) for preschool age and/or family activities.”
- “It is important for me to know that my child is prepared to enter kindergarten and I believe that preschool is the best way to achieve the skills she will need to enter school.”
- “We have a two year old, so preschool options are a concern. It is important that we find a caring nurturing, educationally sound option.”

F. 19 parents listed Full Day Kindergarten as their #3 concern, and 27 parents listed it as #6.

Parent comments received demonstrating the value of full day kindergarten:

- “Now a days children have already been through preschool, pre-K or day care settings before they reach kindergarten. Going in to a kindergarten program for only 2 hours a day is a step backwards. They are ready to learn more.”
- “Full day is also very important as there is so much to cover and the day is so short.”
- “Full day kindergarten helps prepare children better for 1st grade.”
- “Many children are accustomed to a full day of preschool or day care; the model of half-day kindergarten is antiquated and no longer practical.”
- “The expectations of our children entering kindergarten are higher than ever before and we must give them the tools to succeed. The cut off date must be changed and it would benefit all children if all towns offered full day kindergarten.”
- “Children today are ready for a full day of school at age 5. A very high percentage are in all day care/preschool and ready for the all day commitment.”

IV. Additional Parent Comments:

- “What options are available in the Granby area? What should I look for in a preschool? What skills are helpful for the child to know before attending preschool?”
- “Making sure our children are kindergarten ready, and there are standard criteria established for measuring successes and areas of weakness.”
- “I would like my child to be prepared and aware of all expectations kindergarten has.”
- “I’m concerned about the pressure on kids to do more and more academically at an earlier and earlier age.”
- “I am interested in guidelines for children who are not enrolled in preschool- anything they specifically need to know for kindergarten.”
- “My son has an August birthday. He is definitely ready academically but there is a question on maturity. It would be better if CT had the same date of eligibility as most other states.”
- “Growth as a little person getting ready for the upcoming schooling. Always amazes me. Great job.”

- “With the YMCA offering only a few (costly) slots of all day kindergarten, the gap across this age group only widens and the teacher’s job of engaging all the kids gets even tougher. All day kindergarten should either be the norm, or not at all.”
- “A ½ day is perfect.”
- “Preschool is expensive - I’d like to see it made public. I’d like to see the age to enter kindergarten be pushed back to September 1. As a working parent I’d like to see a full day of kindergarten. My child is definitely ready!”
- “No matter what age or resources are available, the child needs to be “ready” for kindergarten.”
- “Preparing children for demands of schooling, socialization”
- “Our biggest concern for our children would be that they are safe and enriched in their academic careers.”
- “We just want to be sure that our son is in a safe environment where he can prepare for kindergarten.”
- “Kindergarten readiness (both academically and socially) and affordability of preschool”
- “Making sure that children have access to affordable, quality childcare is extremely important. I feel that in order to get good teachers we need better pay and more qualified teachers. But must be affordable or won’t be able to take advantage of this. The early years are so important in forming who our children will be.”
- “My son is a little young for his age so we are most interested in resources that will help him to be ready for kindergarten and stay with his peers.”
- “My first concern is that my child(ren) receive the best education available. If difficulties arrive, I want the child to receive the extra help necessary during school hours.”
- “Full day of kindergarten - Is this for the learning or for parent convenience? I had one who still needed a nap while in kindergarten.”
- “The expectations of our children entering kindergarten are higher than ever before and we must give them the tools to succeed. The cut off date must be changed and it would benefit all children if all towns offered full day kindergarten.”
- “They should have more fun and play time to just be kids. Homework in elementary is too hard for kids to do independently.”
- “Being prepared for and kept up in each grade/ future grades. Parental updates.”

- “We want our children to be ready for kindergarten academically, emotionally and socially. We are unsure whether to send our child to kindergarten when she is 4 (turning 5 in November) although she seems fine and ready. What about the later school years?”
- “We put a bit too much pressure on the academics.”
- “The cost of good care is very high and the providers aren’t getting rich either. I’d like to see a subsidy for this very crucial time.”
- “Getting them ready for school, early-lessons learned.”
- “Kindergarten readiness appears to be very important as it is more demanding on the children than it was for earlier generations.”
- “Preparation to ensure kindergarten readiness”
- “It is most important to me that my children are ready socially to make the transition to kindergarten.”
- “Affordable activities for preschoolers, especially physical.”
- “Having quality time for fun, educational interactions locally and teaching our children about conservation and morals.”
- “I don’t believe in full day kindergarten. Programs for those who can’t afford preschool should be available for those who would like to participate.”
- “Many area towns have full day K. Kids nowadays are ready for it since most attend all day daycare prior to entering K. Plus, they can learn so much more daily by going a full day rather than 2½ hours. In addition, daycare for ½ K days is so expensive- most parents work full days and need full day school for kids. It’s about time we go full day kindergarten.”
- “Full day kindergarten but with more play activities and nap.”
- “Children should be 5 by the start of school unless testing that shows there are more than ready to start. Full day is also very important as there is so much to cover and the day is so short.”
- “My son has a Nov 1 birthday. I want the option of sending him to kindergarten when he is 4 instead of waiting until he is 5+. The current policy works for us.”
- “Access and affordability to quality early childhood (1-4 ages) programs.”
- “Ensure my twins are both ready for kindergarten.”
- “I want to be sure my child is ready socially and academically to be with other children her age.”

- “It is very important for me to know that my child is prepared to enter kindergarten and I believe that preschool is the best way to achieve the skills she will need to enter school.”
- “Child’s exposure to viruses”
- “We wish for our children to be more than adequately prepared for entry into kindergarten. We also wish for our children’s teachers to communicate with us openly regarding our children’s strengths and weaknesses and with recommendations on what we can do to assist our children in the learning process.”
- “That my child be educated at the best/ highest level corresponding to the capabilities of my child. To not be held back or hold back others with different learning capacities. My top concern and priority is making sure that my child is academically and socially ready to enter kindergarten. I want him to be successful in kindergarten and enjoy learning, therefore building a foundation for lifelong academic achievement.”
- “I know many parents with summer/fall children who struggle with whether to enroll their child at age 5 or to red-shirt until age 6. The hardest part of the decision is not knowing where your child will fall relative to his peers, especially those who are up to a year older, and/or what is expected of him at the time he enters school. Setting your child up for success is so critical, and yet as a parent I felt so unprepared to make an informed decision.”
 - “Is it possible to have a summer school program for the “almost ready” group? There needs to be a better way to place children based on readiness, not chronological age.”
 - “Since this is the first step within the school system it is important that my child has the skills and confidence to be successful.”
 - “Readiness of children and that services are offered when needed.”
 - “Making sure the local school systems are comparable to other schools in Connecticut and nationwide.”
 - “Services for children with developmental delays and special needs in order to prepare for kindergarten.”
 - “Ensuring my child is in a competitive educational environment that allows her to learn and grow.”
 - “Children today are ready for a full day of school at age 5. A very high percentage are in all day care/preschool and ready for the all day commitment.”

- “It is most important to me that my children are ready socially to make the transition to kindergarten.”
- “Their being able to speak clearly, so they are understood.”
- “I selected a preschool for my daughter to attend this Fall (2007). I picked ...(*name omitted*).., in Simsbury because ...(*name omitted*).., in town has a long wait list. (*name omitted*)...preschool does not have accreditation (like...*names omitted*). This is a priority for me.”
- “I am unsure what this (a Family Resource Center) is. Does it already exist in Granby?”

V. Challenge and Resource Needs:

A. Challenges Granby faces in meeting parental early childhood needs:

Kindergarten readiness is a major concern for parents of young children in Granby. It should be noted here that “readiness” needs to be defined for Granby parents. Children develop at different rates in many areas such as EI- emotional intelligence, IQ Intelligence Quotient (difficult to ascertain at a young age), MI-maturity intelligence and global knowledge, OT, PT, Speech, etc., and Granby parents need to understand how all of these developmental areas impact school readiness. Also, parents are asking for a consistent way to measure or evaluate their child’s readiness so that they will have a successful transition from early care into kindergarten. In addition, parents in Granby want dialog with their childcare providers, and assurance that providers are adequately preparing their children for success in kindergarten.

Granby parents are uncertain of what kindergarten expectations are. Parents want kindergarten expectations clearly defined for them and easily available to them. Parents feel unprepared, and fear that their child might be overwhelmed in a kindergarten classroom where state and national demands continue to increase. The survey respondents want their children to be successful in school, and will participate through parental involvement in their child's education if structure/information is provided. Parents seeking information and willing to participate in their child's education will ensure individual student success with guidance and information provided to parents by the GECC, an educated early care environment and the public school system in Granby.

Parents feel that early care and preschool is very expensive...too expensive for all families in town to be able to afford. Parents surveyed believe that all children in the community should have access to affordable, quality childcare no matter what their family income is. Granby parents believe that quality childcare is necessary for young children to be able to develop the skills they need to enter public school. Exploring ways to offer more preschool scholarships and financial assistance to families for early care is one approach that should be considered to ensure that all children in the community have equal access to quality early care.

B. Resources or services parents of young learners would like for the town to provide to support them as their child's most important teacher.

Granby parents of young children who responded to the survey recognize that they are their child's primary and most influential teacher, and are seeking ways to assist their children in the learning process as their "child's first teacher." Parents acknowledge that early education and socialization are critical, yet they feel that there are too few options in town for affordable, quality programs and activities. The Granby Public Library and the Granby Recreation Department are recognized by parents as providing excellent resources and activities, but parents would like to see more offered in town for preschool age children and/or families.

Granby parents of young children want additional educational/ group experiences available to them and to those families in the community who are unable to afford preschool. Moreover, parents who find the cost of preschool prohibitive are seeking alternative options for providing the same educational and social experiences for their children. Parents want an educational environment they can bring their child to where their child can socialize with other children, and where parents can be assisted and supported in preparing their child for kindergarten. Establishing a Family Resource Center in Granby should be explored as a way to provide these resources to children and families in the community.

