

Baltimore Infants and Toddlers Program

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For this brief, we analyzed a cohort of children referred to Baltimore’s Infants and Toddlers program (BITP). The children were born between September 2, 2008, and September 1, 2009, to mothers living in Baltimore City, and many later enrolled in Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) for kindergarten.

Referrals. Usually, pediatricians, parents, or early education staff refer a child to BITP upon observing a delay in development or speech and language skills. Thereafter, BITP staff assesses the child to determine eligibility for services, then refers eligible children to appropriate services. Table 1 shows that 1,360 children of this birth cohort were referred to BITP. The primary outcome categories are: ineligible (21%), not assessed (27%), and eligible (52%).

Table 1
Status of BITP-referred Children Born September 2, 2008–September 1, 2009

	Count	%
Ineligible	278	21
Not Assessed	355	27
Parent Withdrew	94	7
Moved	20	2
Cannot Contact	241	18
Eligible	673	52
Completed	110	9
Transition	230	18
Parent Withdrew	104	8
Moved	55	4
Cannot Contact	174	13
Total	1,306	100

Not Assessed. The majority of children in this group were not assessed because they could not be contacted, often because BITP staff had an incorrect or deactivated phone number or an invalid address. A smaller number were withdrawn, and a yet smaller number moved out of Baltimore.

Assessed Eligible. Among eligible youth, the most common outcome was to transition from receiving serves from BITP to receiving services from City Schools. The next largest group could not be contacted following the assessment. Youth who completed services represent the next largest group, followed by youth who were withdrawn. Again, the smallest group moved after being assessed.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) Results. Complete results on the 2016 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) administered by City Schools were available for 816 of the 1,306 children initially referred to BITP (62%). Table 2 reports composite and domain-specific readiness scores by BITP outcome category. Statistics for the small number of children who reported moving out of Baltimore but then returned to City Schools are suppressed because of the small sample size.

Table 2
Percent of Children with Kindergarten Readiness
Assessment (KRA) Scores Fall 2016 by BITP Status

BITP Program Status	Percent K Ready Composite	Percent Ready by Domain			
		Math	Language	Physical	Social
Not Assessed					
Parent Withdrew (N=55)	33	38	39	44	39
Moved (N=9)	--	--	--	--	--
Cannot Contact (N=170)	44	41	42	57	45
Ineligible (N=180)	43	43	46	49	46
Eligible					
Completed (N=63)	46	46	52	50	44
Transition (N=153)	20	24	21	24	19
Parent Withdrew (N=63)	21	33	27	37	21
Moved (N=6)	--	--	--	--	--
Cannot Contact (N=117)	32	36	31	44	35
Total BITP (N=816)	35	37	37	44	36
District Average (N=5,998)	38	28	36	54	52

Among students who were not assessed by BITP, students who could not be contacted scored above the district's composite KRA average, but children who were withdrawn scored below, although these differences were only statistically significant in math. Children determined ineligible for services performed significantly higher than the district average in the math and language domains, and were comparable to the district on the composite, physical development, and social foundations domains.

The highest overall mean outcomes were among eligible children who completed services. These children scored above the district average on math, language, and the composite and were significantly different from students who transitioned or withdrew from the program. Eligible children who transitioned into kindergarten and those who withdrew from services were significantly less likely to be proficient on all domains.

Summary. These findings suggest the need for continued communication with parents on the importance of completing the services their children are eligible to receive. Eligible children who withdrew from the program entered kindergarten with relatively low levels of proficiency. There are also substantial numbers of children who could not be contacted, either during the referral process or after they had been identified for services, and the evidence suggests that the eligible children who could be contacted were less ready for kindergarten. This analysis cannot determine why children who transition to kindergarten for additional services had the lowest levels of proficiency, but the fact that they remained entitled to services suggests they required continued support. Further study might rule out other explanations such as unmet needs or gaps in services.

The members of the EEDC continue to discuss the challenge of keeping contact with families, including maintaining current phone numbers and addresses, which is seen here limiting children's access to assessment and services. This challenge is prevalent across all programs providing early education services and is something the EEDC hopes to focus on more in the future, by designing and testing interventions.

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