

AGE OF LEARNING, INC.

New Survey Reveals That Two-Thirds of Kindergarten Teachers Say: “Children Are Not Adequately Prepared for School”

Same Teachers Offer Specific Suggestions for How Parents Can Better Prepare Their Children Before They Enter Kindergarten

November 2, 2011 (Orlando, FL): **Age of Learning, Inc.** released today the results of a nationwide kindergarten preparedness survey to coincide with the opening of this year’s **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** annual conference in Orlando, Florida. The survey, conducted with more than 500 kindergarten teachers across the country, reveals that **America’s kindergarten teachers believe most young children are unprepared for school when they enter kindergarten**, and veteran kindergarten teachers believe that this situation is deteriorating.

When asked, “On average, how well prepared academically would you say children are when they first enter your kindergarten classroom?” **two-thirds of teachers (66 percent) stated that students were only somewhat or not at all prepared and only 6 percent felt that students were very well-prepared academically.**

According to the teachers who were surveyed, children entering kindergarten are weakest academically in their knowledge of the alphabet and phonics, with **two-thirds of teachers reporting that the majority of children do not know their alphabet when they enter kindergarten.**

Though many early learning researchers cite the crucial importance of a child’s oral language development in relation to future academic success in reading and other subjects, **less than 9 percent of responding teachers described the oral language skills of entering students as “very good.”**

Many early childhood education experts advocate for preschool and pre-k programs that better prepare children for kindergarten. Of the kindergarten teachers who participated in this survey, **95 percent agreed that preschool attendance is, in fact, “beneficial” with most of those (75 percent of all respondents) believing it is “very beneficial.”**

Teachers were also asked about the value of technology in preparing children for kindergarten. **Seventy-seven percent (77 percent) of respondents view technology as “very useful” or “useful”** in this respect. Specific benefits of technology cited most often were engagement, helping children learn the ABC’s, educational games, number recognition, and interactive learning.



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Teacher Recommendations

Kindergarten teachers have several recommendations regarding what parents should do to prepare children for entering kindergarten, including the following:

- Actively participate in your child’s education with pre-reading and reading activities, such as reading books together and practicing the alphabet.
- Expose children to new experiences and talk with them about those experiences, in order to improve their ability to speak and understand oral language, and increase vocabulary
- Practice identifying numbers and counting with both verbal and written activities.
- Work with children to identify shapes, colors, and objects in the world around them.
- Place children in social settings with other young children so that they can learn together while they also develop manners and the ability to share and be respectful.

Parents can read Age of Learning’s *Special Report to Parents: Preparing for Kindergarten* for specific suggestions about how to work with their children to carry out these recommendations at www.ABCmouse.com/PreparingforKindergarten.

Dr. Rebecca Palacios, pre-k teacher of more than 25 years and **co-founder of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)** as well as a Senior Curriculum Advisor for Age of Learning, commented: “This survey offers additional evidence for something that teachers of young children know very well—when children have effective academic learning experiences prior to kindergarten, not only are the children more successful, but the kindergarten teachers are then more able to concentrate on making sure their students are well prepared for what they should be learning in first grade. So everyone benefits, all the way through elementary school and beyond.”

Kim Oliver Burnim, 2006 National Teacher of the Year, who has more than a decade of experience teaching kindergarten in a highly diverse setting and is also a Senior Curriculum Advisor for Age of Learning, noted: “Young children are able to learn a great deal if it is presented to them in the right way, in settings where they are encouraged to explore and interact with their environment and engage in active play. As a nation, we would get a huge return on investment by helping every child enter kindergarten prepared.”

And as one surveyed teacher observed about the importance of knowing the alphabet and other basic skills as they enter kindergarten, “Those who don’t are behind from day one.”

The objective of this survey, which sheds light on the significant gap between what children should know when they enter kindergarten and what they do know, is to provide parents with specific suggestions on how to better prepare young children for school during the critical years from birth through age five. (See www.ABCmouse.com/KindergartenPreparednessSummary for a summary of the survey findings.) The results described above represent the responses of more than 500 kindergarten teachers to an online survey conducted between October 7th and October 23rd. The margin of error for this survey is $\pm 4.3\%$ at a 95 percent confidence interval. An executive summary report of survey results can be seen at www.ABCmouse.com.

About Age of Learning, Inc. / ABCmouse.com Early Learning Academy

Age of Learning, Inc. is a Glendale, California, company that has launched a global education initiative intended to provide young children with a strong foundation for future academic success. One of the goals of this initiative is the collection and dissemination of information about early childhood education in the United States and English language learning around the world.

Age of Learning, Inc. is also the creator of the award-winning early childhood education website ABCmouse.com *Early Learning Academy*[®], described by many educators as the most comprehensive early learning curriculum available online. The website has received special recognition from *Parents* magazine, and has been honored with the 2011 Parents' Choice Gold Award, the 2011 Mom's Choice Gold Award, and the 2010 Children's Technology Review Editor's Choice Award. Also, the WMA presented ABCmouse.com with the 2010 Outstanding Achievement in Web Development award in two categories—Education Standard of Excellence and the Family Standard of Excellence.



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