

Quality Counts

2011

Our “Chance for Success”

Southern Early Childhood Association



SECA Policy Brief

March 2011

Background

The 2011 edition of *Quality Counts* represents the 15th annual edition of this evaluation of the status of states' educational performance and policymaking. For this year's report, a somewhat different approach was used to try to quantify the effect of the "Great Recession" on states across the country and changes that had occurred in their status relative to the longitudinal measures utilized by the report each year, but the core of the report remained consistent to provide data that could be compared longitudinally.

The report annually tracks these areas in the states and *Quality Counts 2011* includes information on these areas.

- **Chance for Success Index**
- **K-12 Achievement Index**
- **Transitions and Alignment**
- **School Finance**

States are "graded" and ranked nationally. The grading system follows a conventional grading system and grades range from A to F. **Nationally, the U.S. received a "C" for education policy and performance.**

For purposes of this policy brief, we'll focus on :

1. The **CHANCE FOR SUCCESS INDEX**, an index that reflects the potential for a young person to be successful as an adult, and
2. **TRANSITIONS AND ALIGNMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**, a chart showing how learning standards and transitions are aligned for pre-K and kindergarten.

Where Does Your State Rank Nationally?

National Rank	State	Grade	Score
4	Virginia	B -	81.8
5	Florida	B -	81.5
6	Arkansas	B -	81.4
8	Georgia	B -	80.5
10	West Virginia	B -	79.9
13	Texas	C +	78.8
15	South Carolina	C +	78.3
17	Oklahoma	C +	78.1
19	North Carolina	C +	77.8
21	Louisiana	C +	77.6
23	Tennessee	C +	77.4
25	Alabama	C +	76.8
34	Kentucky	C	75.2
48	Mississippi	C -	70.0
	United States	C	

Source: EPE Research Center, 2011

For our SECA states, this rise in the rankings over the last several years reflects the resources and commitment that Southern states have made to improving education, including Pre-K.

THE CHANCE FOR SUCCESS INDEX: What Is It?

This index looks at factors that impact child and adult well-being and their “chance for success” in life. The index is divided into three sections: **Early Foundations**, **School Years** and **Adult Outcomes**.

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In selecting the indicators, some assumptions of “success” are made:

➤ **Young children**

- who have parents who are better educated and steadily employed
- who have a family income that provides for their growth and development
- and are/or becoming fluent in English

have a better chance of success in American society.

➤ **Children**

- who attend pre-school and kindergarten
- who score at or above proficient on a national reading assessment in the 4th grade
- who score at or above proficient in mathematics in the 8th grade
- who graduate from high school on time
- who enroll in a postsecondary education program

find more success as adults.

➤ **Adults**

- who earn a postsecondary degree
- who have an income that reaches or exceeds the national median
- who have steady employment

are considered successful.

Young Children: Indicators for **Early Foundations**

- **Family Income**—Percent of children who live in above-low-income families. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, 2009*
- **Parent Education**—Percent of dependent children with at least one parent who holds a two-or-four year postsecondary degree. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, 2009*
- **Parental Employment**—Percent of children with at least one parent who is steadily employed. Active duty military service is considered employment. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, 2009*
- **Linguistic Integration**—Percent of dependent children whose parents are fluent speakers of English. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, 2009*

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EARLY FOUNDATIONS

State	Grade & Score	Family Income	Parent Education	Parental Employment	Linguistic Integration
Virginia	B 85.6%	68.7%	51.8%	78.7%	90.1%
North Carolina	C+ 76.7%	53.6%	45.2%	70.9%	89.3%
Florida	C 75.8%	54.0%	43.6%	72.3%	80.3%
Georgia	C 75.2%	55.3%	43.1%	72.6%	87.9%
Kentucky	C 74.6%	50.3%	39.4%	66.4%	95.9%
South Carolina	C 73.9%	51.3%	40.7%	70.0%	93.6%
Oklahoma	C 73.5%	50.7%	36.8%	75.3%	92.2%
Texas	C 73.2%	51.1%	35.6%	74.5%	72.1%
Alabama	C 72.6%	51.8%	40.1%	68.8%	95.1%
Tennessee	C- 72.0%	53.2%	38.8%	69.3%	94.2%
Arkansas	C- 71.8%	47.1%	35.1%	69.9%	92.7%
West Virginia	C- 71.4%	54.6%	36.5%	70.8%	99.2%
Louisiana	C- 71.1%	54.0%	34.5%	70.3%	96.6%
Mississippi	C- 69.7%	45.5%	35.0%	65.9%	97.3%
U.S.	C+ 78.3%	58.2%	44.2%	73.0%	83.4%

Source: EPE Research Center, 2011

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Children: Indicators for **School Years**

- **Preschool Enrollment**—Percent of 3 and 4-year-olds who are attending preschool, based on a three year average. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, 2009*
- **Kindergarten Enrollment**—Percent of eligible children attending public or private kindergarten programs based on a three year average. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, 2009*
- **Elementary Reading Achievement**—Percent of 4th graders in public schools who score at or above the “proficient” level in reading on the 2009 State NAEP assessment. *Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 2009.*
- **Middle School Mathematics Achievement**—Percent of 8th graders in public schools who score at or above the “proficient” level in mathematics on the 2009 State NAEP assessment. *Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 2009.*
- **High School Graduation Rate:** Percent of public high school students who graduated on time with a standard diploma for the 2006-2007 school year. *Source: U.S. Department of Education’s Common Core of Data, EPE Research Center, 2010.*
- **Young-Adult Education**—Percent of young adults (ages 18-24) who are either currently enrolled in a postsecondary education program or who have already earned a postsecondary credential. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, 2009*

To give you a comparison, following are the percentages from the #1 state, Massachusetts.

Preschool Enrollment—61.2%
 Kindergarten Enrollment—78.5%
 4th Grade Reading—47.2%
 8th Grade Mathematics—51.7%
 High School Graduation—77.3%
 Young Adult Education—67.2%

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SCHOOL YEARS

State	Preschool Enrollment	Kindergarten Enrollment	4 th Grade Reading	8 th Grade Mathematics	High School Graduation	Young Adult Education
Virginia	49.4%	76.4%	38.5%	35.6%	69.9%	57.1%
North Carolina	47.1%	79.4%	32.2%	35.6%	57.8%	51.2%
Florida	51.0%	78.5%	35.8%	29.0%	62.1%	51.4%
Georgia	50.7%	78.4%	29.3%	26.8%	57.8%	48.9%
Kentucky	45.7%	78.9%	36.2%	27.2%	71.8%	46.5%
South Carolina	50.2%	80.0%	27.6%	30.2%	54.9%	49.0%
Oklahoma	42.5%	77.7%	27.7%	23.8%	71.8%	47.6%
Texas	42.7%	78.3%	27.7%	36.2%	65.1%	46.2%
Alabama	44.5%	78.0%	28.2%	20.4%	62.5%	50.8%
Tennessee	41.0%	77.0%	28.0%	25.2%	65.8%	45.4%
Arkansas	49.7%	79.5%	28.8%	27.0%	69.3%	43.2%
West Virginia	37.0%	75.7%	25.7%	19.4%	71.6%	51.1%
Louisiana	53.9%	78.5%	18.3%	20.3%	57.4%	47.9%
Mississippi	53.0%	80.4%	21.7%	15.2%	62.5%	50.4%
U.S.	48.3%	77.7%	31.5%	32.6%	68.8%	53.8%

Source: EPE Research Center, 2011

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Adults: Indicators for **Adult Outcomes**

- **Adult Educational Attainment**—Percent of adults (ages 25-64) who have earned a postsecondary degree. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2009*
- **Annual Income**—Percent of adults (ages 25-64) whose annual personal income reaches or exceeds the national median (\$35,082 in July 2009 dollars). *Source: U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2009*
- **Steady Employment**—Percent of adults (ages 25-64) who are steadily employed, defined as working full-time (at least 35 hours per week) and year round. *Active duty American Community Survey, 2009*

ADULT OUTCOMES

State	Adult Educational Attainment	Annual Income	Steady Employment
Virginia	43.4%	57.4%	75.0%
North Carolina	38.1%	45.0%	68.3%
Florida	36.4%	42.9%	68.0%
Georgia	36.3%	46.8%	70.4%
Kentucky	30.4%	43.5%	69.9%
South Carolina	35.0%	42.6%	69.0%
Oklahoma	31.7%	44.6%	75.2%
Texas	33.3%	47.1%	73.4%
Alabama	31.4%	45.0%	71.2%
Tennessee	31.8%	43.0%	68.8%
Arkansas	27.0%	39.6%	72.1%
West Virginia	26.2%	43.0%	73.3%
Louisiana	28.2%	47.3%	73.5%
Mississippi	29.3%	39.7%	72.1%
U.S.	38.1%	50.0%	69.4%

Source: EPE Research Center, 2011



TRANSITIONS AND ALIGNMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: What Does This Mean?

This component of the report looks at a state’s success in making early childhood programs and kindergarten a seamless transition with:

- Early Learning Standards
- School Readiness Definition
- School-Readiness Assessment
- Readiness Interventions
- Kindergarten Standards

Quality Counts 2011 looks at whether states have these elements in place and grades them accordingly. Most of the SECA states rank in the top 20 in the nation in this category.

The report also includes information on ***Transitions and Alignments in College Readiness*** and the ***Economy and the Workforce***.

Transitions and Alignment: Early Childhood Indicators

- **Early Learning Standards**—State has early learning standards that describe what preschool students should know and be able to do and has aligned those expectations with academic standards in the elementary grades. *Source: EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2009*
- **School-Readiness Definition**—State administers a statewide school-readiness assessment or requires local school districts to assess the readiness of entering students. *Source: EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2009*
- **Readiness Interventions**—State provides students not meeting school-readiness expectations with targeted services that go beyond what is required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Programs that identify children based solely on demographic characteristics do not receive credit. *Source: EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2009*
- **Kindergarten Standards**—State has standards describing what kindergarten students should know and be able to do and has aligned those expectations with elementary and secondary academic standards. *Source: EPE Research Center annual state policy survey, 2009*

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TRANSITIONS AND ALIGNMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Rank	State	Grade	Early Learning Standards	School-Readiness Definition	School-Readiness Assessment	Readiness Interventions	Kindergarten Standards
1	Arkansas	A	X	X	X	X	X
3	Tennessee	A	X	In progress	X	X	X
4	Texas	A	X	X	X		X
5	West Virginia	A	X	X	X	X	X
6	Georgia	B+	X	X	X	X	X
10	Oklahoma	B+	X		X		X
13	North Carolina	B	X	X		X	X
14	Alabama	B-	X	X		X	X
16	Florida	B-	X	X	X	X	X
18	Kentucky	B-	X	X			X
19	Louisiana	B-	X		X	X	X
21	Virginia	B-	X	X	X	X	X
33	Mississippi	C	X	X		X	X
42	South Carolina	C-	X				X
	U.S.	C+					

Source: EPE Research Center, 2011

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