

Background

- School readiness is a **pivotal point** for a child's learning trajectory and later success in life.^{1,2}
- Children growing up in poverty are **at higher risk of not reaching milestones**, such as school readiness.
- In South Africa, about **60% of children are growing up in poverty**.³
- In South Africa, up to **50% of children entering Grade 1, do not test ready for school**.^{4,5}
- One of the main contributing factors is a **lack of teacher training**.^{4,6}
- The concept of school readiness is well-defined internationally.
- However, it is unclear how the concept is defined and used in South Africa or understood by preschool teachers.

Aim

The aim of the study was to investigate the concept of school readiness within the South African context, as well as to develop a plain language summary (PLS) for dissemination to stakeholders.

Method

Concept Analysis: Walker and Avant⁷

1. Selecting a concept
2. Determining the aim or purpose of analysis
3. Identifying all forms of concept usage
4. Determining the concept's defining attributes
5. Identifying a model case
6. Identifying additional cases
7. Identifying antecedents and consequences
8. Defining empirical referents (Replaced with a validation process with a reference panel)

Plain Language Summary: Dormer et al⁸

1. Rationale and scope
2. Identifying your target audience
3. Consider dissemination channels
4. Identify key stakeholders for co-creation -
Create a plain language summary team
5. Write the plain language summary
6. Disseminate information
7. Track dissemination and measure success

Results

- ATLAS.ti software
- 619 quotations related to school readiness
- Inductive thematic analysis we identified 48 unique concept codes
- Eight categories or attributes of school readiness
- Contextual definition of school readiness

Conclusion

- Broad definition of school readiness with eight attributes.
- Only four articles included all eight attributes in some form within their definition.
- There were no unique features of the definition of school readiness within the South African context.
- The attributes of school readiness do not seem to be context-bound.

References:

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8. Dormer, L., Schindler, T., Williams, L.A., Lobban, D., Khawaja, S., Hunn, A. et al., 2022, 'A practical "how-to" guide to plain language summaries (PLS) of peer-reviewed scientific publications: Results of a multi-stakeholder initiative utilizing co-creation methodology', *Research Involvement and Engagement* 8(1), 23.



Results: Contextual definition of school readiness

Children who are fully prepared for school can engage in meaningful learning, because they have developed the necessary behavioural, intellectual, language, literacy, numeracy, physical, socio-emotional and classroom skills for formal schooling.

Behavioural Readiness

How easily a child can adapt to the classroom and manage their own behaviour through skills such as sharing, turn-taking, self-control and how they respond to others.

Intellectual Readiness

A child's ability to take part in learning through thinking skills such as memory, attention and concentration, following of instructions and problem solving.

Language Readiness

A child's ability to communicate in the classroom by following the teacher's instructions, communicating basic needs, asking and answering questions, talking to peers, and speaking clearly.

Literacy Readiness

A child's ability to learn reading and writing skills through letter identification, writing of their name, letter-sound recognition, and visual perceptual skills.

Numeracy Readiness

A child's ability to perform basic math skills, such as sorting, naming, identification and counting of various objects, shapes, colours and numbers.

Physical Readiness

The motor, sensorimotor and perceptual-motor skills needed to participate in activities such as throwing and catching, walking, running, jumping, sitting at a desk, writing, drawing, colouring and cutting.

Socio-emotional Readiness

The emotional, social and cultural aspects needed for participation in formal schooling so that the child can engage with teachers and peers, build and maintain friendships and control their emotions.

Classroom Readiness

Independence in selfcare, such as eating and toileting, in basic classroom skills, such as playing and engaging with peers, and in spiritual and mental well-being.

Contribution

- This Plain Language Summary may contribute to sustainable and affordable access to culture-centred preschool teacher training content.
- Future research can strengthen and further refine this PLS of school readiness in the SA context.

