4-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN STUDY

Our vision for a fully capable and employed Racine County **starts with our youngest Racine residents.** In order for our children to be successful, it’s important they enter school ready to learn. To more fully understand local drivers of improved outcomes, we took a deeper look into local four-year-old Kindergarten (4K) programs with our community partners.

Higher Expectations collaborated with Racine Unified School District, Acelero Learning, AIM Now, and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee’s Consulting Office for Research and Evaluation to conduct a study of 4K programs throughout the community. By looking at a broad range of factors, our goal was to learn **what matters most in** preparing Racine children for success.

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**OVERVIEW**

800,000 data points

Looking at: Academic Growth, Social-Emotional Growth, Cognitive, Fine Motor, & Language Skills

1,247 four-year-old kindergarten students

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**KEY FINDINGS**

- **Attendance** is one of the most important factors for ensuring student growth in 4K & 5K.

- **Participating in 4K** improves students' math and reading growth in 5K.

- Students in **full-day 4K** programs have greater social-emotional and academic growth than students in half-day 4K.

- **Social-emotional development** in 4K helps students focus on learning and have greater academic growth in 5K.

- **Positive classroom climates and student behaviors** impact how much a student grows academically and social-emotionally in 4K.

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**RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS**

**Expand**

Continue to expand 4K enrollment and full day 4K options for Racine families.

**Implement**

Identify best practices and implement high impact 4K attendance strategies.

**Invest**

Increase investments that create conditions for strong school climate and student behavior.

**Decide**

Decide whether to track students into first grade and/or include more students for a future study.

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*Findings are true when accounting for all other factors.*