Early Childhood Programs

May 1, 2018

Key Findings

- Programs are complex, fragmented

- Not currently possible to determine extent of potential duplication

- Statewide data on program effectiveness are inadequate

- Legal requirements limit sharing data across programs

- Extent of early childhood screening is unknown

Programs Offering Direct Services

- Early Childhood Family Education
- Early Childhood Health and Development Screening
- Family Home Visiting
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- School Readiness Program
- Voluntary Prekindergarten

Programs that Provide Funding Rather than Services

- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- Early Learning Scholarships
  - Pathway I, awarded to individual children
  - Pathway II, awarded to certain early learning programs or child care programs

Quality Rating System

Parent Aware Quality Rating and Improvement System

- o Qualifies programs to accept scholarships and higher reimbursements for child care assistance
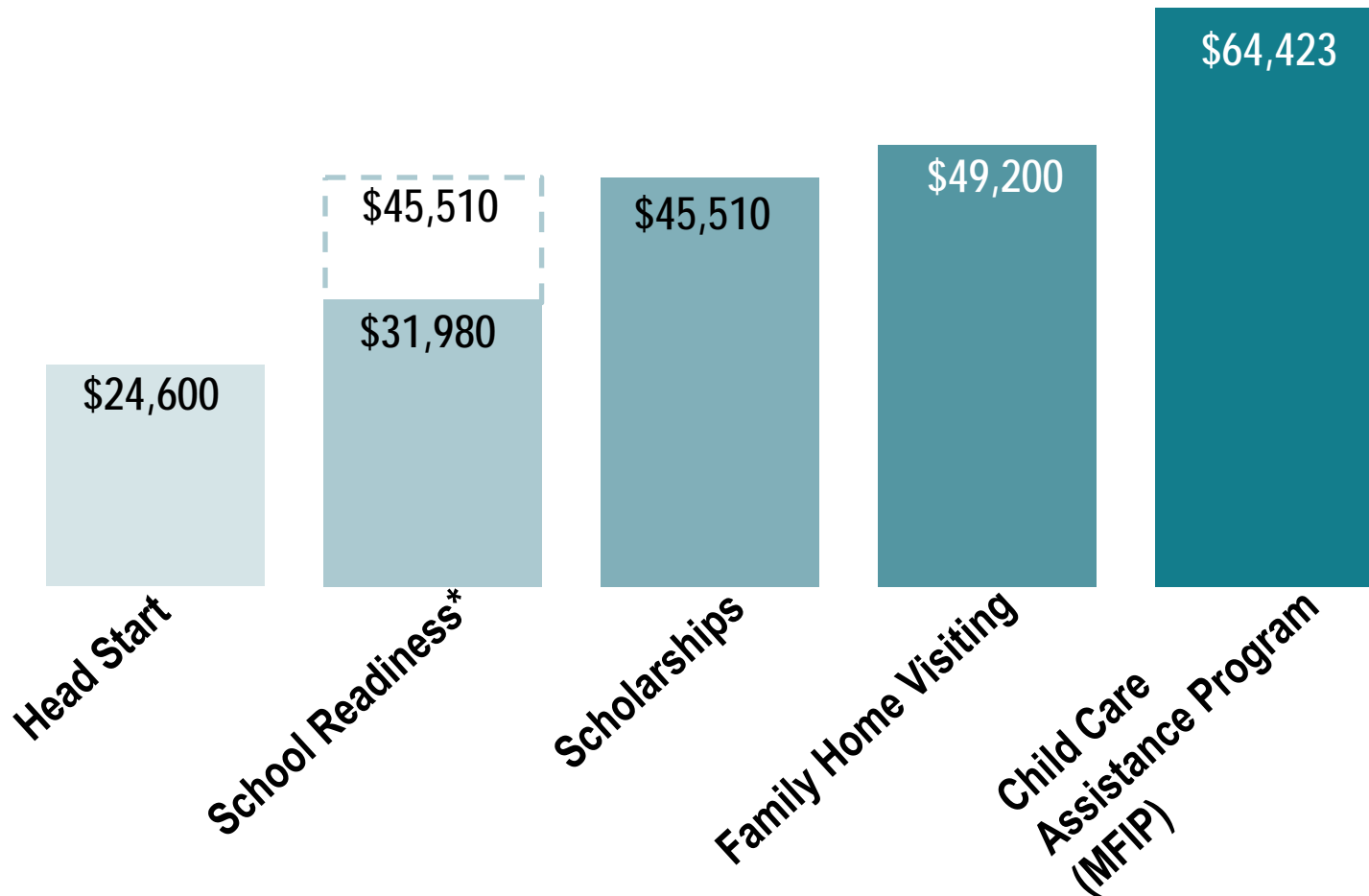
Complex, Fragmented Programs

- Eligibility requirements differed
  - Income is not an eligibility requirement for Early Childhood Family Education, Screening, and Voluntary Prekindergarten
  - Among other programs, income limits differ by program

Income Eligibility

2017 Income Limit for Family of Four

Bar chart showing 2017 income limits for a family of four:
- Head Start: $24,600
- School Readiness*: $31,980 (with dashed outline to $45,510)
- Scholarships: $45,510
- Family Home Visiting: $49,200
- Child Care Assistance Program (MFIP): $64,423

Staffing Requirements Differ

	Early Childhood Family Education	School Readiness	School Readiness Plus	Voluntary Prekindergarten
Maximum Class Size		√	√	√
Staff-Child Ratio		√	√	√
Salary Requirement				√
Teacher Licensure	√		√	
Program Supervisor Licensure	√	√		

Funding and Program Differences

	Early Childhood Family Education	Early Learning Scholarships-Pathway II	School Readiness Program	Voluntary Prekindergarten
Compete for Funding		√		√
User Fees Allowed	√		√	In limited circumstances
Transporting Preschool Children				√

Recommendation

- The Legislature should consider aligning eligibility and funding requirements for certain programs
  - Could lead to a single application form for certain programs
  - Could allow providers more efficiency
- The Legislature could convene a working group as a first step
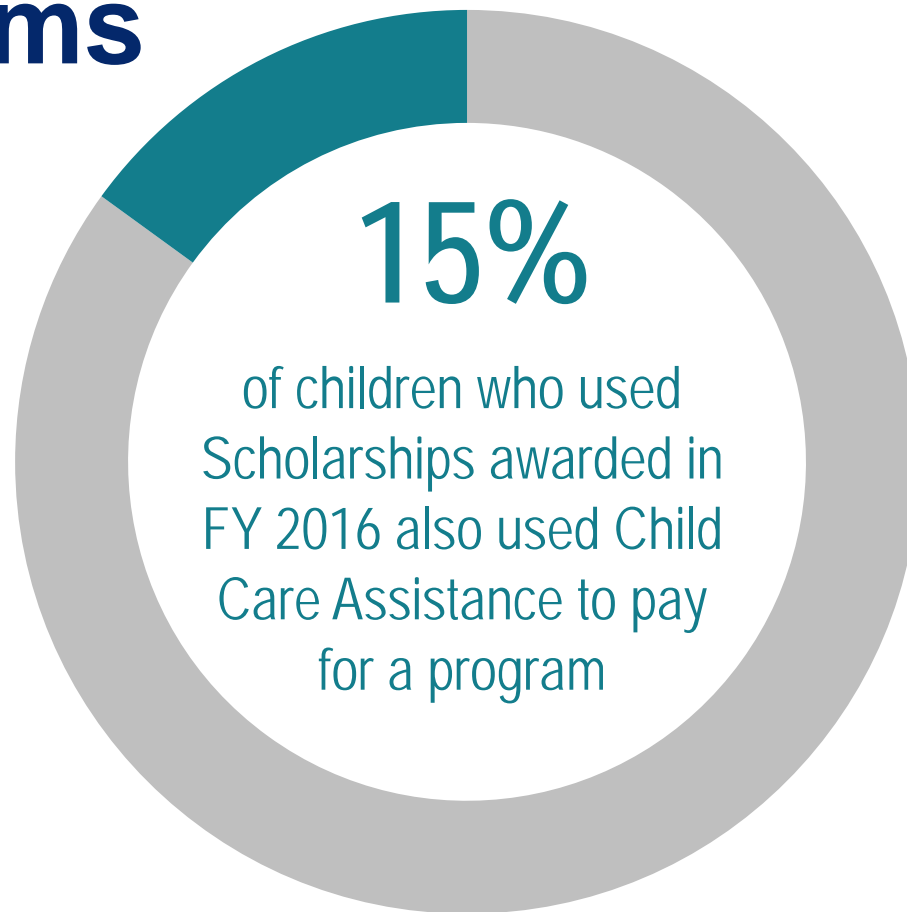
Potential Duplication

- Not possible to determine extent of potential duplication

- Agencies use different methods to identify children

Potential Duplication (cont.)

- Longitudinal data system

  - Not designed to identify potential duplication

  - Missing and incomplete data

- Department lacks participation data

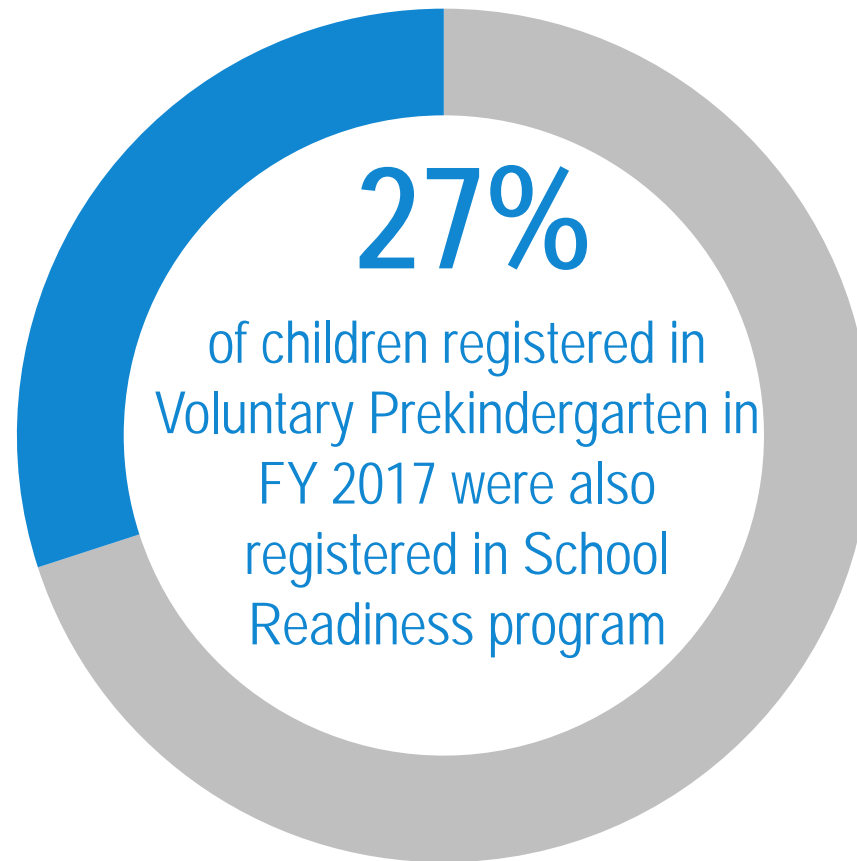- Lack of information on local program delivery

Children Using Multiple Funding Streams

15%

of children who used Scholarships awarded in FY 2016 also used Child Care Assistance to pay for a program

- Does not indicate duplicative funding

Children in Multiple Programs

27%

of children registered in Voluntary Prekindergarten in FY 2017 were also registered in School Readiness program

- Could not determine extent of potential overlap

Recommendation

- Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and Department of Human Services (DHS) should jointly identify what is needed to use a universal identification number

- MDE should consistently collect participation data

Statewide Data on Effectiveness are Inadequate

- Statutes do not require all programs to report on their effectiveness

- Statutes place priority on school readiness

- Data do not exist to measure whether children statewide are ready for school

Assessment Requirements Differ

	Head Start and Early Head Start	Voluntary Prekindergarten	School Readiness Program
Assessments Required	√	√	√
Must Align with Standards	√	√	
Tool Must be State Approved	Federal	√	
Skills Measured	Literacy, cognition, motor development, social and emotional development	Cognitive and language skills	Cognitive and language skills

Assessments at Kindergarten

- No state requirement to assess school readiness in kindergarten

81% assessed all children for school readiness

49% used assessment tools other than MDE approved
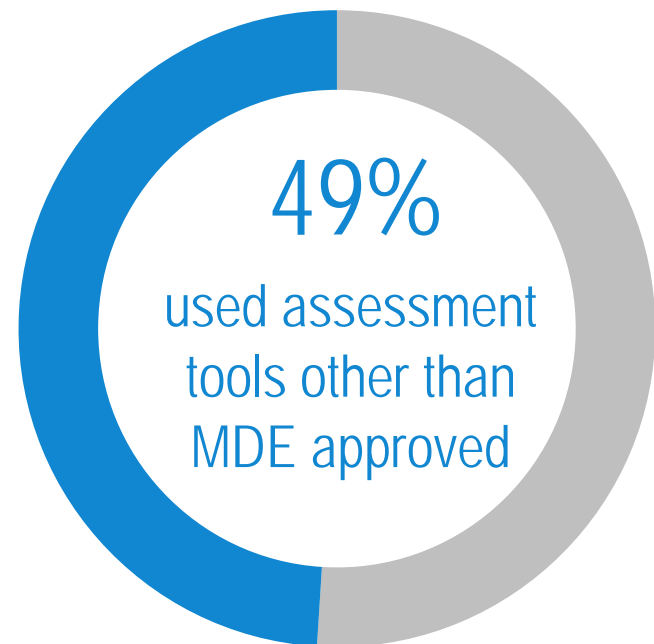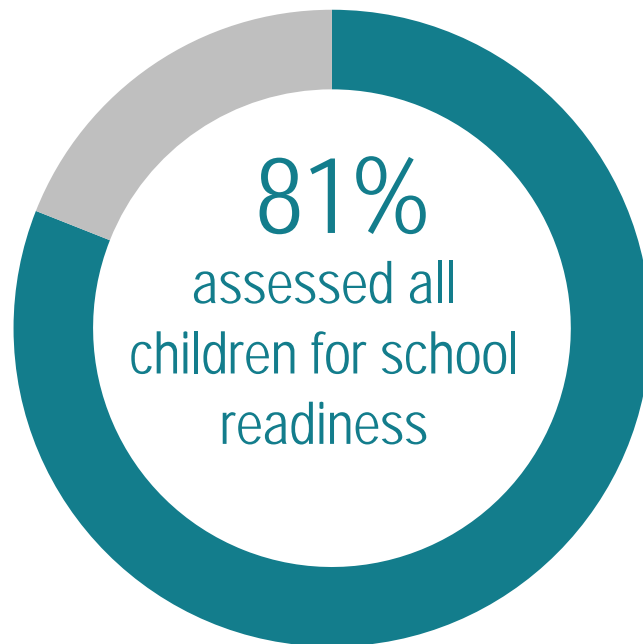
Recommendation

- Legislature should consider requiring assessments of all children's school readiness as they complete certain early childhood programs
  - Eventually, all publicly funded, Parent Aware-rated programs
  - Use a state-approved assessment tool
  - Submit assessment results to the state
- Legislature should consider requiring assessments for children in kindergarten

Recommendation

- The Legislature should direct MDE, MDH, and DHS to plan a comprehensive approach to evaluating impacts

  - Legislature would specify general outcomes

  - Agencies would identify indicators of effectiveness

  - Legislature would decide whether to proceed

Legal Requirements Limit Data Sharing Across State Agencies

- Laws protect children's identity

- Laws prohibit sharing data unless the subject of the data gives informed consent

- Restrictions can interfere with program operations

Recommendation

- The Legislature should consider broadening authority for MDE, MDH, and DHS to share individual-level data from early childhood programs

Early Childhood Screening

- State law requires that all children undergo health and development screening, with exception for conscientious objections

- The number of children who are not screened is unknown

Recommendation

- Minnesota Department of Education should collect data on children who are not screened

Summary

Changes are needed to address:

- Program complexity and fragmentation
- Lack of data on whether young children statewide are prepared for school
- Need to measure program impacts
- Legal restrictions on data sharing
- Unknown number of children not screened

Early Childhood Programs

www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us