



SCHOOL READINESS

As we all know, there has been some concern in the last years that children in the United States are not meeting the educational benchmarks which will allow them to compete successfully in a global economy. President Bush's No Child Left Behind initiative was designed to address this problem. Parents of elementary school children are all aware of the periodic testing that resulted from this initiative.

Because of wide variations in state standards, though, this initiative did not accomplish all it set out do. To remedy this, a number of governors and their school officers convened a panel of experts to set national standards, particularly in the areas of English and mathematics. The resulting recommendations are now known as the common core standards. Standards were broken down by grade and, where applicable, go through twelfth grade. New York State adopted the common core standards in July of 2010, adding its own requirements to some of the standards.

These new standards have important implications for preschoolers as well. Children cannot succeed in school if they are not properly prepared to learn.

In January of 2011, the New York State Board of Regents approved the New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards which outline the skills children need when they enter kindergarten (also known as pre1a). The state also mandated core standards for preschoolers in some areas, particularly



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literacy and mathematics.

Head Start centers have been guided in their curriculum for many years by a Head Start Framework which describes the areas to be addressed by the Head Start curriculum. Head Start children are assessed at regular intervals during their Head Start stay to assure that they are meeting expectations for their age group in the different domains covered by the Framework. This framework, now known as the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, has recently been refined to as-

sure that all Head Start children enter kindergarten with the skills they need in order to learn. The new framework guides curriculum to assure that the experiences Head Start children have paved the way for later learning.

In order to assure that school readiness is a priority in Head Start, all Head Start agencies are now required to submit an individual School Readiness Plan which must establish goals aligned with the Framework, create and implement a plan for achieving these goals, and periodically assess child progress in achieving these goals. The agency

must also analyze data on child progress and plan for program improvement where there are deficits.

Yeled V'Yalda's School Readiness Goals address all the required areas. Teachers have been trained in the new framework and are working hard to assure that all their children will be well prepared when they enter elementary school.

The YVY School Readiness Goals will shortly be presented to the Parent Policy Council for approval. The YvY goals will also be available at all YvY sites for parent review, comment and input.