



KITS Teacher and Facilitator Survey Summer 2016

In June and July 2016, Lane County launched an ambitious project to expand the evidence-based Kids In Transition to School (KITS) program in 12 school districts. KITS is an intensive, 16 week program that provides biweekly group-based kindergarten readiness activities to children ("School Readiness Groups") and weekly parenting groups for family members. As part of this effort, Portland State University is conducting an evaluation of the KITS implementation and outcomes.

As one part of the evaluation, KITS School Readiness Group Lead Teachers, Assistant Teachers, and Parent Group Facilitators completed a web-based survey in August, 2016. The purpose of the survey was to describe the characteristics of KITS staff and their perceptions of the nature and quality of KITS implementation after the first 8-week summer session. Ninety-one percent (91%, n=59) of KITS Teachers and Facilitators participated in the survey.

Survey Findings

KITS staff characteristics

Respondents were predominantly white, English-speaking, women, with at least some college education.

- Most SRG Lead Teachers were kindergarten teachers (57%) or 1st-12th teachers (14%).
- Most SRG Assistant teachers were Teaching Assistants (31%) or preschool/childcare teachers (31%).
- Parent Group Facilitators were primarily from social service/therapeutic occupations, including Family Resource Coordinators, Parent Educators, School Counselors, and Psychologists.

KITS staff expressed strong support for the KITS model

KITS Teachers and Facilitators indicated their comfort with various components of the KITS model on a scale of 1 ("Really Dislike") to 5 ("Really Like"). Overall, respondents were very positive about the model:

- 12 out of 15 model components received a "Like" to "Really Like" rating.
- Staff were most positive about the following aspects of the program:
 - the strengths-based approach,
 - the KITS approach to teaching social-emotional skills,
 - the emphasis on structure/ routine, and
 - the support for and attention to transitions
- Only 3 model components fell into the "Neutral" to "Like" range, including the number and length of child and parent sessions and the use of homework assignments. Many staff felt that 8 weeks of additional KITS sessions after the start of school was challenging, especially with full-day kindergarten.

Social-emotional and self-regulation components of KITS seen as more important than academic

KITS Teachers and Facilitators also indicated how important they felt each of the model components was to *program success*, on a scale of 1 ("Not at all important") to 4 ("Very Important").

- Staff felt that the most important aspects of KITS were the model's emphasis on:
 - teaching social-emotional skills (76% said this is *very important*),
 - structure/routine,
 - strengths-based strategies,

- teaching self-regulation skills, and
- strategies for behavior management
- Homework assignments were seen as least important to success of the program (40% said *not at all* or *somewhat important*).

KITS approach to behavior management seen as effective

KITS follows a specific protocol for behavior management in the classroom. SRG Lead and Assistant Teachers rated the perceived effectiveness of the behavior management techniques on a scale of 1 ("Very ineffective") to 4 ("Very effective").

- Overall, SRG Teachers seemed to find the KITS approach to behavior management effective, with all items receiving a mean rating in the somewhat effective to very effective range.
- Teachers saw the following components as most effective:
 - using specific praise,
 - providing individual attention to support on-task behavior, and
 - providing a 5:1 ratio of positive reinforcement to corrective feedback
- Incentives and rewards received slightly lower mean ratings, as did the two strategies for "time out."

Overall SRG implementation successes & challenges

SRG Lead and Assistant Teachers were asked about the relative ease/difficulty with which they were able to carry out various elements of the KITS program.

- Teachers reported the greatest success in executing: (1) snack time, (2) social-emotional lessons, and (3) the use of point chart/incentives.
- Some areas of implementation were rated as more challenging: (1) weekly home letter and homework, (2) early literacy lessons, and (3) transportation.
- Consistent attendance was the challenge most often reported: close to half of teachers reported that consistent attendance had been very challenging or somewhat challenging.

Overall PG implementation successes & challenges

Parent Group Facilitators were likewise asked to indicate the relative ease/difficulty with which they were able to implement elements of the KITS Parent Group program.

- PG Facilitators reported the greatest success in executing: (1) weekly topic instruction, (2) weekly topic group discussion, and (3) weekly raffle/incentives.
- Greatest reported challenges were in the areas of attendance and make-up sessions with parents, with 30% of Facilitators reporting that consistency of attendance was very or somewhat challenging, and almost half of Facilitators reporting that make-up sessions with parents were very or somewhat challenging.
- Facilitators likewise reported challenges in carrying out the parent home practice activities, with the majority (71%) reporting that execution was somewhat challenging or only somewhat successful.

KITS Coaching experienced as helpful

Ongoing coaching is a crucial component of the KITS model, intended to support program implementation with high fidelity. Coaches meet with teaching teams weekly to review implementation and provide feedback, as well as act as a resource for emerging questions and support. SRG Teachers and PG Facilitators were asked to indicate how often their Coach utilized a variety of KITS coaching strategies, on a scale of 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Always"). Overall, KITS Coaches received very high ratings from both Teachers and Facilitators, with 92%-100% of Teachers and Facilitators indicating that their Coach *almost always* or *always* engaged in each of 6 different coaching behaviors.

- Coaches received highest rating for having a positive attitude, being emotionally supportive, and being readily available.

- Respondents said the coaching process had been useful in supporting team development, skill improvement, and the learning process.
- More challenges were reported in terms of the weekly clinical meetings, the videotaping process, and the program-required paperwork.

Most KITS Staff would like to return in Year 2

Respondents indicated their interest in returning as KITS staff, as well as in becoming a KITS trainer.

- Most (78%) of Teachers and Facilitators said they would like to return.
- Fewer indicated interest in becoming a KITS trainer (36%), although a sizeable number (42%) put themselves in the "Maybe" category.

Overall, survey results point to generally high levels of buy-in and support from KITS staff for the KITS curriculum and approach. A few areas were identified for potential improvement for next summer, and modifications to ensure fidelity to KITS content while adapting where possible to strengthen participation and implementation are being incorporated.