



Enrollment Forecasts/Demographics Subcommittee
of the Long-Range Educational Facilities Plan Work Group

Enrollment Research Topic

Kindergarten Capture Rates

Background

Kindergarten Capture Rate refers to the number of children entering ACPS Kindergarten in a particular year as compared to the total number of children born five years earlier to residents of Alexandria. As part of its work to forecast the future population of Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), this subcommittee analyzed Alexandria's Kindergarten capture rates and evaluated how they may inform the short-, mid- and long-term projections.

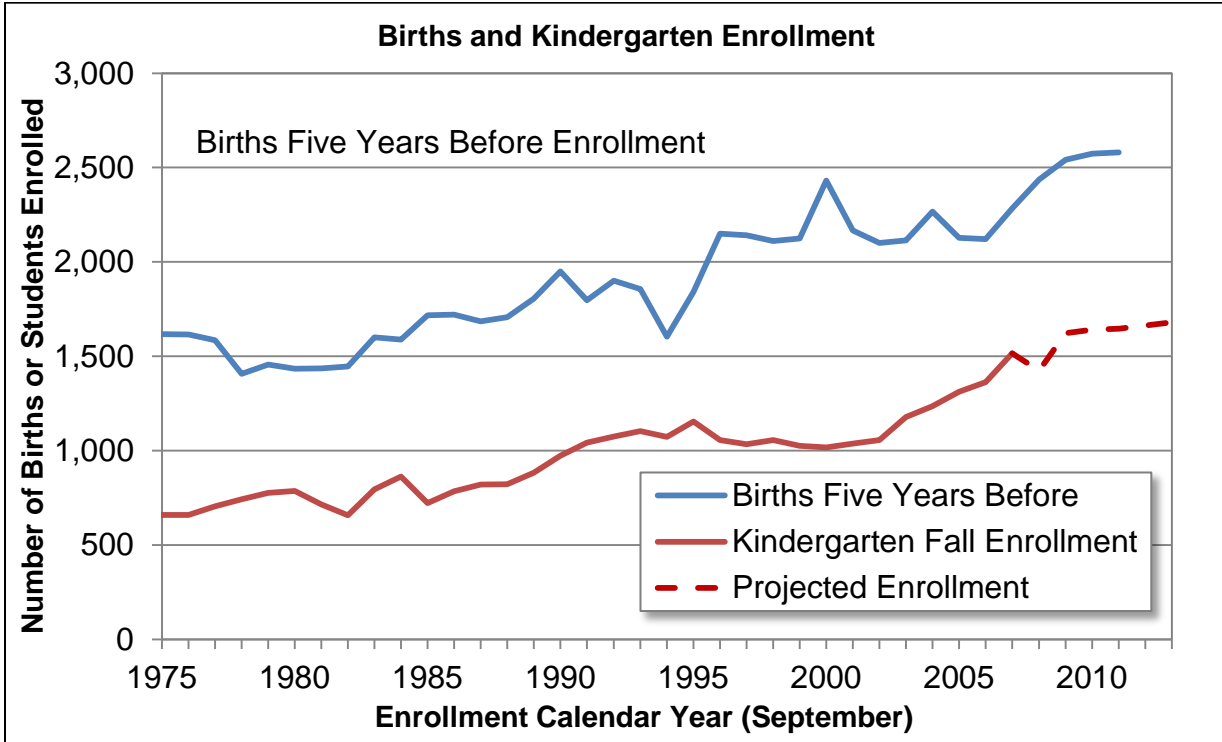
Methodology

Analysis included comparing Kindergarten capture rates over time within Alexandria and neighboring districts using data from the Virginia Department of Health- Division of Health Statistics and data obtained directly from other school districts.

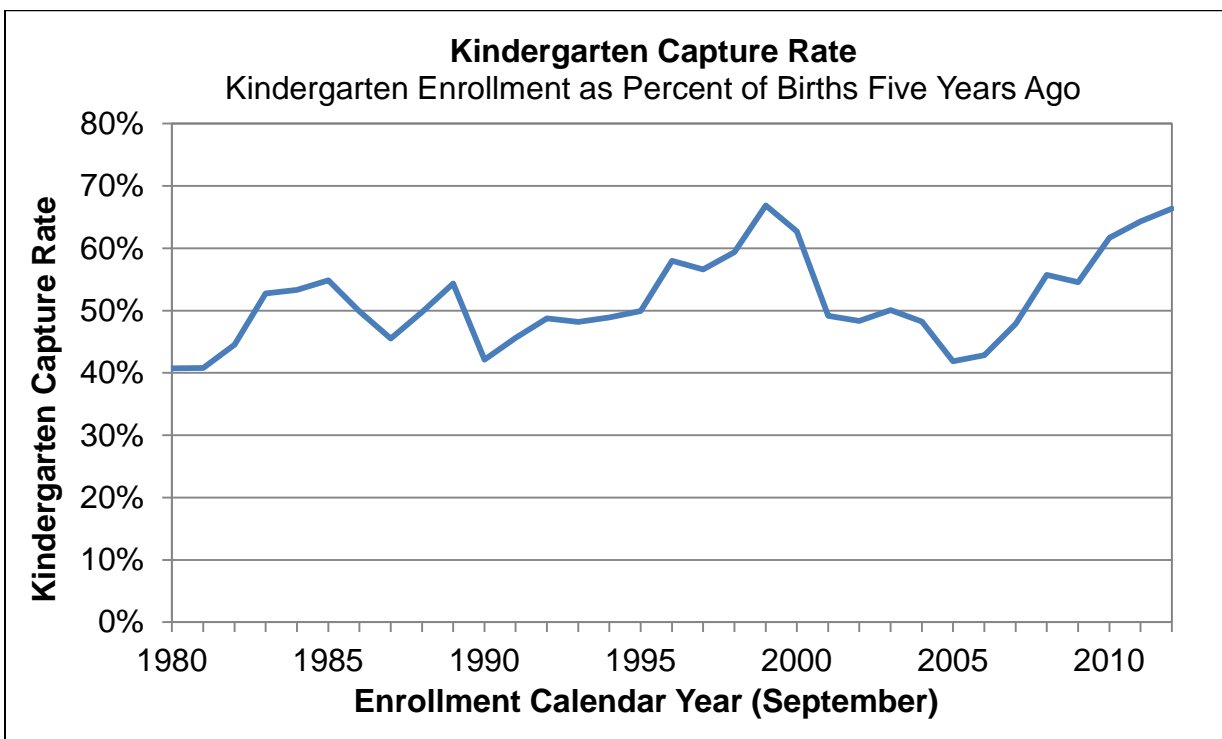
Alexandria has traditionally had a lower kindergarten capture rate compared to neighboring jurisdictions. In an effort to understand why families may or may not choose to stay in Alexandria – and if they do, enroll their 5-year old children in ACPS – the subcommittee explored potential factors that could influence parents' decisions including ACPS facilities and reputation; availability of alternatives to ACPS; economic factors and how they may impact migration patterns; the city's available housing stock, and household demographics. **(See Student Generation.)**

Findings

- Since 2005, Kindergarten capture rates have been rising, indicating that more families are remaining in Alexandria until their children reach Kindergarten age and are choosing to enroll their Kindergarten-aged children in ACPS.

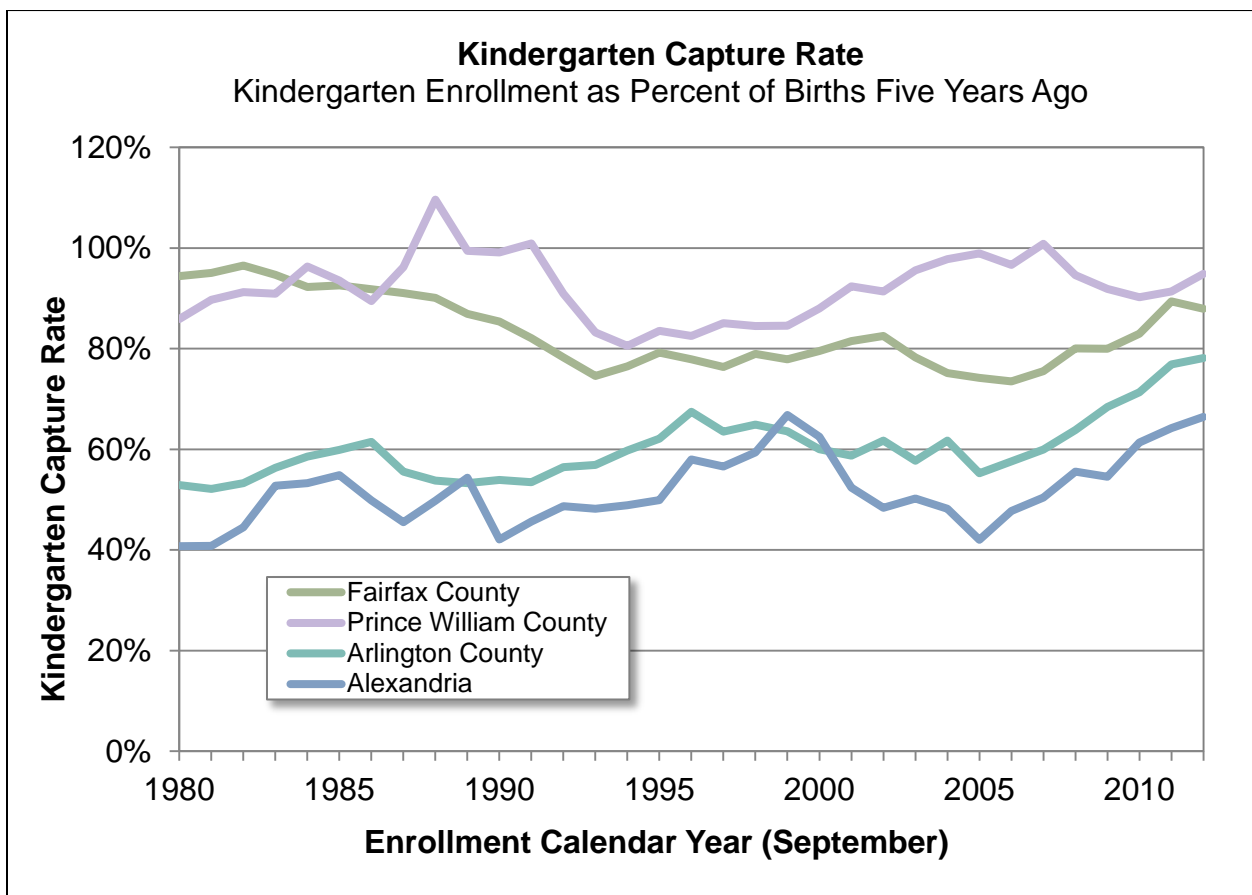


[Resource #1/2](#)



[Resource #1/2](#)

- Kindergarten capture rate data for surrounding jurisdictions. Alexandria has traditionally had a lower kindergarten capture rate compared to neighboring jurisdictions.



[Resource #3](#)

- While it is difficult to analyze and quantify why families move in and out of Alexandria, it appears that ACPS reputation, economic factors, and Alexandria's housing stock (smaller percentage attractive to families as compared to surrounding jurisdictions) play a role – the effects of which can be seen in the capture rate.

Summary

While the data cannot prove a cause-and-effect relationship, it is reasonable to connect the housing bubble that peaked in 2006 with an outmigration of families with children from Alexandria that resulted in a reduction in student enrollment in ACPS from 2000 to 2006. During this period, many families felt compelled by rapidly rising prices and equity in their homes to find larger units in the suburbs before they were priced out of the market. Easy access to loans encouraged such moves. Similarly, the housing finance crisis of 2006-2009 meant that many families were unable to move to larger units as they had expected to as their children grew older and they had more children, pushing enrollments up from 2007 through today at a rate much higher than the rate of increase in housing stock in the city.

Once children enter into ACPS for Kindergarten, recent trends have shown they are more likely to stay in the system. (See **Cohort Survival**)

Resources

- 1./2. **Population:** Linear interpolation between Census 2000 and 2010 Census populations, city estimates of population since 2010 based on housing construction.
Births: Virginia Health Department data revised to ensure valid Alexandria addresses and adjust to months of kindergarten eligibility. October-September
3. Virginia Department of Health- Division of Health Statistics and data obtained directly from other school districts.