

Early Childhood Parent-Led Workshops at Urban Elementary Schools: Successfully Promoting Family Involvement in Literacy

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Introduction



This poster presents findings from an evaluation of the Strategic Learning Initiatives Early Childhood Program (ECP), a preschool parent involvement program implemented in two low-income urban public schools.

Background

Parents' involvement in their children's schoolwork and academic life is a critical component in early school success. Low-income parents often have difficulty becoming school-involved due to environmental stresses, logistical challenges, and unsuccessful previous school experiences. Lower income parents may also feel a cultural "mismatch" between themselves and the school context, which can feed hesitancy to act and create the need for overt outreach.

Intervention

- Two 10-workshop parent education sessions held at two largely Latino, entirely low-income elementary schools in a large urban school district
- Workshop content focused on emergent literacy: parents were instructed in activities they could do at home with their preschool-age children (Learninggames, Sparling & Lewis, 2000)
- Leaders demonstrated one or two parent-child activities; then parents role-played conducting the activities with each other.
- Each workshop was parent-led, delivered in Spanish, and designed to accommodate diverse levels of caregiver literacy

Evaluation Design Elements

- Demographic surveys on participants
- Attendance at each session
- Participant reports on at-home use of activities
- Participant reports of frequency of literacy-related behaviors (collected at each attendee's first workshop and at the last workshop of each session)

Who attended?

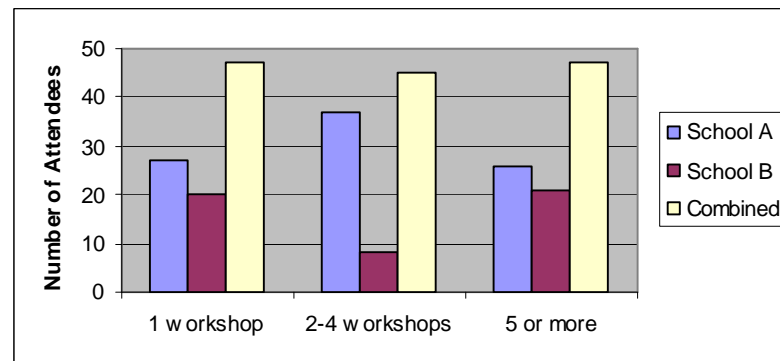
Of the 139 participants who attended ECP at Schools A and B during the 2005-2006 school year, most:

- were parents (87%);
- had either two or three children (68%);
- had at least one child of preschool age (78%); and
- were between 21 and 37 years of age (82%).

How often did they attend?

Attendance varied among caregivers but was strong overall.

- 34% of attendees only came once,
- 33% attended between 2-4 workshops, and
- 34% came to at least 5 of the 20 workshops offered.



Twenty-four attendees (roughly 20%) came to 10 or more workshops, and 13 of these attended 14 or more times.

At-home Implementation (Fall Only)

For 9 of the 14 activities introduced over the 10 workshops of the fall session, a majority of participants (range 55 to 93%) reported using the activity at home with their child after having been trained on it. The other 5 activities were reportedly used by from 4% to 48% of trained participants. Spring data for this question are unavailable.

Changes in Caregiver Behavior

Significant increases were reported in parent-child interactions that support emergent literacy.

Mean Frequency of Literacy-Related Behaviors And T1-T2 Increase Significance at Respondent Level

	Time 1	Time 2	Sig. Of Increase
We tell stories to each	2.59	2.77	P < .003
We visit the library	1.93	2.13	n.s.
We take books	2.26	2.73	P < .043
My child sees me read	2.85	3.36	P < .003
I talk with my child	3.96	4.00	n.s.
I play with my child	3.19	3.58	n.s.
I praise my child	3.48	3.52	n.s.

Frequencies represent Likert-scale choices that varied per question; e.g., "I read stories..." scale choices were "never" = 1, "monthly" = 2, "weekly" = 3, "daily" = 4. Wilcoxon's Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Tests were used to determine significance (N = 27).

Summary

- Based on attendance, ECP appears to encourage linkages between schools and the families of young children.
- At-home parent-child interactions that support emerging literacy increase among ECP participants.

Study Limitations

- Changes in caregiver behavior are based on only 27 participants who responded at two time points.
- All change data is based on self-report.

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