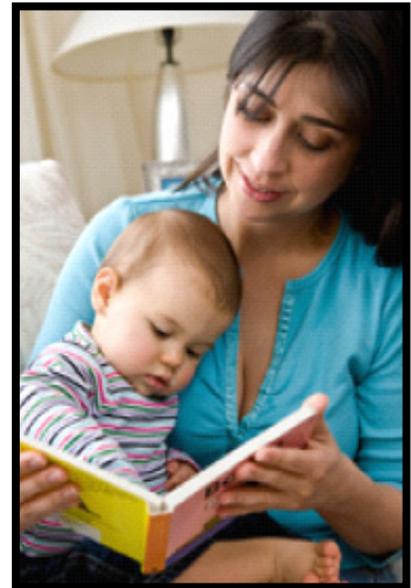


Reading for Healthy Families Year 2: Summary of Findings



Submitted to:

Mickey Lansing

Executive Director

Oregon Commission on Children and Families

530 Center St. NE, Suite 405

Salem, OR 97301

Submitted by:

Jerod M. Tarte, M.A.

Beth L. Green, Ph.D.

Ashley M. Snoddy

Wendy Nuzzo, B.S.

Judy M. Weller, B.S.

Mary Beth Sanders, B.S.

July 2010



4380 SW Macadam Ave., Suite 530

Portland, OR 97239

(503) 243-2436

www.npcresearch.com

Reading for Healthy Families Summary of Year 2 Evaluation Findings

Submitted by
NPC Research

Research Team
Jerod M. Tarte, M.A.
Beth L. Green, Ph.D.
Ashley M. Snoddy
Wendy Nuzzo, B.S.
Judy M. Weller, B.S.
Mary Beth Sanders, B.S.

For questions about this report or project, please contact Jerod Tarte at
(503) 243-2436 x 103, or tarte@npcresearch.com.

July 2010



Informing policy, improving programs

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NPC Research would like to thank the following members of the Reading for Healthy Families project team for their hard work and contributions to this report:

- Susan Lindauer, Oregon Commission on Children and Families
- Katie Anderson, Oregon State Library
- Karen Van Tassell, Oregon Commission on Children and Families
- Joann Contini, RFHF Project Coordinator
- Renea Arnold, Multnomah County Library
- Christi Peeples, Oregon Commission on Children and Families

We also wish to thank the participating children's librarians and Healthy Start Family Support Workers for providing data described in this report.

Finally, thanks to all the participating families for allowing their data and information to be shared in this report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	I
INTRODUCTION	1
The Reading for Healthy Families Training Curriculum.....	2
EVALUATION/METHODS	5
Training Surveys.....	5
Delivery of Family Education Sessions.....	5
Parent Survey	5
Focus Groups	6
RESULTS	7
Pre-Training Surveys	7
Family Support Workers.....	7
Library Staff.....	8
Post-Training Surveys.....	9
Participant Changes in Early Literacy Activities with Children and Families	12
Effectiveness of RFHF Materials and Resources	14
Presentation of Education Sessions	16
Family Service Delivery	23
Library Logs	23
FSW Logs	24
Parent Survey Responses	25
FOCUS GROUP.....	29
What Family Support Workers Are Saying About RHFH	29
CONCLUSIONS	33
Staff Trained	33
Families Served.....	33
Staff Early Literacy Activities & Comprehension of Age Appropriate Behaviors	34
Children and Family Outcomes	34
Materials	35
Transportation funds.....	35
Collaboration/Agency Partnership.....	36

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Participants Trained During Years 1 & 2	3
Table 2. FSW Pre-Training Reports of Current Activities with Families	7
Table 3. Librarian Pre-Training Reports of Current Activities for Young Children	8
Table 4. Participants Identification of Appropriate Ages for Early Literacy Activities.....	11
Table 5. FSWs Engaged in Early Literacy Activities “Very Frequently”	12
Table 6. Children’s Librarians Reporting in Early Literacy Activities at Their Library	13
Table 7. Participant Ratings of RFHF Training Material/Resource Effectiveness.....	15
Table 8. Participant Ratings of Education Session Presentations.....	17
Table 9. Frequency of Successful Partnership Activities	20
Table 10. Education Session Frequency (Children’s Librarians)	24
Table 11. Education Session Frequency (FSWs).....	25
Table 12. Demographic Comparisons of Families in Program and Comparison Group	25
Table 13. Literacy Outcome Differences for Parents Visited RFHF Trained FSWs Compared to Parents Visited by FSWs Untrained.	27

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reading for Healthy Families (RFHF) is a partnership of the Oregon State Library and the Oregon Commission on Children and Families supported by collaborative grants from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and The Oregon Community Foundation.

The goal of the RFHF project is to train Healthy Start Family Support Workers (FSWs) and children's library staff to implement the RFHF early literacy curriculum in their work with parents. By training staff to deliver this curriculum to parents, it is expected that parents, in turn, will improve their ability to foster early literacy development in their children.

- Prior to the RFHF Training, only about one-third (32% of FSWs and 35% of librarians) of the participants reported having received training in early literacy curriculum in the past 2 years.



Program Implementation

The goal of the RFHF project is to train 300 Healthy Start FSWs and children's library staff. Further, it is expected that within 12 months of the final RFHF training (by approximately April 2012), these staff will present the RFHF curriculum to 4,500 families (15 families per staff) in Oregon. During the first 2 years of the project (the period covered by this report):

- 102 FSWs and 80 Children's Librarians representing 27 Oregon counties participated in one of the nine RFHF curriculum trainings¹ provided at the time of this report.
 - A total of 182 staff or 91% of expected, have been trained.
 - 94 (94%) staff were trained in Year 1.
 - 88 (88%) staff were trained in Year 2.
- Children's librarians presented 1,293 education sessions to 1,134 families (about 1 session per family and 21 families per librarian). FSWs presented 2,006 Education Session to 622 Healthy Start families (about 3 sessions per family and 8 families per worker) since attending the RFHF training.
- It is important to note that none of the staff trained during Year 2 have had a full 12 months (at the time of this report) to reach their 15 potential families. Future data reports will more accurately describe the Year 2 cohort.
 - Of the 107 staff affiliated with counties trained in Year 1, 1,250 (78% of total expected) families have received the curriculum.
 - To date 1,756 (64% of total expected) families have received the curriculum from either a children's librarian or FSW. This includes staff trained during Year 2 who still

¹ Additionally, staff from two community agencies not part of the current RFHF project send staff to audit the training, including three staff from Coos County Even Start and one staff from Lane County Relief Nursery.

- have several months left before reaching the end of their 12 months “window” for delivering training to families.
- 75% of FSWs and 79% of children’s librarians, trained in Year 1, who completed a post-training survey (10 months following training), said they planned to continue implementation of the RFHF curriculum once the project requirements had ended.
 - Following training, Year 1 trained staff reported the greatest improvements in:
 - For FSW’s, the frequency of singing songs, doing finger plays, or playing phonological games (86% increase) and encouraging families to check out books from the library (80% increase).
 - For librarians, the frequency of family story times (100% increase), providing book lists and early literacy brochures to families (83% increase), and offering age-specific story times (80% increase).

Service Delivery

The most frequently presented education sessions reported on the Family Service Delivery Logs/Pink Sheets in which both children’s librarians and FSWs reported they were most likely to present the “Print Motivation” (which includes “Early Literacy and 6-Skills Introduction”) followed by “Reading Books” Parent Education Sessions.

Survey respondents also varied in which sessions they felt were easiest to present. Most FSWs (81%) found “Reading Books” the easiest education session to present, whereas children’s librarian felt most comfortable presenting “Print Motivation” (62%). Most FSWs thought families were most engaged with “Reading Books” (90%). Children’s librarians felt families were most engaged with “Early Brain Development” (86%).

The average amount of time sessions were presented varied—about 20 minutes a session for FSWs, and 45 minutes for librarians.

Giveaway Books & Travel Vouchers

- In all, 1,239 unique families received a total of 1,731 books. Approximately 79% of Healthy Start families and 66% of library families were presented with at least one “giveaway book.”
- The majority (92%) of staff completing the post-training survey felt that the family/child seemed interested/excited in the giveaway book, and many (69%) felt that the giveaway book “corresponded well” to the education being presented to the family.

In addition to the giveaway books, travel vouchers/library outreach funds were made available to participating programs. It is important to note that the obtaining and use of travel voucher/library outreach funds significantly changed during Year 2 (Year 1 findings indicated that minimal use of the funds occurred and there was programmatic confusion around how to best use the funds).

- According to reports from the RFHF Program Coordinator, 28 programs (82% of trained programs) submitted a plan for using library outreach funds (which could have been used to provide families transportation to/from the library, for paying down library fines, and/or for paying fees associated with library cards). Data are not available on how those funds were used programmatically, or how many families were impacted by the use of those funds.
 - According to librarian reports, 32 families benefited from the use of the funds. It is important to note, however, that many of the funds requested through libraries occurred at the supervisory level, so individual librarians may not necessarily know if a family received assistance from the library outreach funds.
 - According to FSW reports, 23 families benefited from the use of the funds. Because FSW staff would be the ones to offer/provide the use of the funds to the families, it may be that Healthy Start is making less use of these available funds.
 - Of importance to note for both library staff and FSW is that increased clarification as to the use of the funds did not occur until Year 2. Staff trained during this year still had several months of the pilot remaining at the time of this report. Future reports may more accurately describe the extent to which these funds are used.

Agency Partnerships

Staff trained in Year 1 completing the post-training survey offered various advantages and obstacles in the partnering of Healthy Start and the State Library on the RFHF project. Common advantages to the partnerships included:

1. reaching families that wouldn't otherwise become engaged with the library,
2. the opportunity for families to participate in library events and other resources offered by the library,
3. the professional relationship-building that occurred among staff in the two agencies, and
4. the opportunity for families to receive multiple sources of education around early literacy.

Staff also discussed obstacles they encountered that hindered their partnerships, including:

1. the time and coordination efforts that needed to occur (for both library and Healthy Start staff) in order to hold a simultaneous event or coordinate a library visit with a Healthy Start family,
2. feeling that the other agency in the partnership was not interested in partnering together, and
3. other barriers such as families disinterest in the library, language barriers, and/or obstacles families faced in obtaining a library card.

- 83% of FSWs reported partnering with the local library ‘at least once’ when providing literacy information to families. 35% reported partnering ‘once a month’ or more.
- 57% of children’s librarians reported partnering with a Healthy Start representative when providing literacy information to families. 11% reported partnering ‘once a month’ or more.

Child and Family Outcomes

In order to determine the impact of the RFHF Education Sessions on families, Parent Survey responses were compared for parents whose FSWs either had or had not been trained in RFHF. Parent surveys are completed every six months by parents participating in the Healthy Start program, and provided confidentially to NPC for analysis. Results found that those families whose FSWs were trained in the curriculum were significantly more likely to be engaged in several key early literacy activities that are the focus of the RFHF project. These findings help illustrate the impact parents have on their child’s learning and preparation for school. Specifically, parents whose workers received RFHF training were more likely to have:

- A library card for themselves or their child (53% vs. 38%).
- Attended a story time at the library in the last month (19% vs. 8%).
- Checked out materials from the library for their child (33% vs. 19%).
- Asked their child what will happen next in a story (when reading together) (52% vs. 44%).

These observations were similarly reported by FSWs participating in this year’s focus group.

Conclusions

Outcomes for RFHF show a number of successes including training 182 staff, presenting (on average two) education sessions to 1,756 families, and providing 1,731 books to families. Librarians are reporting more available early literacy activities at their libraries including story time and book lists/brochures while FSWs report that they are more likely to be singing songs, doing finger plays, and playing phonological games with families, as well as encouraging more families to check out materials from the library—changes that help ensure sustainability of early literacy education to families.

Further, families of FSWs trained in the RFHF curriculum were more likely to be engaged in several key early literacy activities as compared to families served by staff not yet trained in the curriculum.

Partnerships among the two agencies, despite the time consuming nature of the partnerships, are occurring. The majority of FSWs and many librarians reported successfully partnering with the other agency at least once since their training. Staff believe these partnerships provide opportunities for parents to engage in library services they otherwise would not have sought out, introduce new families to the library, and provide professional support among librarians and FSWs in bringing early literacy to Oregon families.

INTRODUCTION

Reading for Healthy Families (RFHF) is a partnership of the Oregon State Library and the Oregon Commission on Children and Families supported by collaborative grants from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and The Oregon Community Foundation.

RFHF strives to ensure that every Oregon child entering kindergarten is ready to learn to read. The project teaches parents how to help their children develop early literacy skills that are critical components of school success.

Parents spend more time with their child than anyone else, and thus they have the greatest potential to impact their child's development and learning. The goal of the RFHF project is to train Healthy Start Family Support Workers (FSWs) and children's library staff to implement the RFHF early literacy curriculum in their work with parents. By training staff to deliver this curriculum to parents, it is expected that parents, in turn, will improve their ability to foster early literacy development in their children. After being trained in RFHF, FSWs and children's library staff will be better able to teach parents:

- What early literacy skills children need to have before kindergarten.
- How children learn those skills.
- How to read to babies and active young children.
- How to provide other experiences that develop early literacy skills.
- How to access resources that can help them support their children's early literacy.

RFHF training for Healthy Start Family Support Workers (FSWs) and children's library staff began in October 2008 and will continue through May 2011. Staff participate in two trainings over a 4-month period. After May 2011, ongoing support for Healthy Start FSWs and children's library staff will be provided via Web site resources, an electronic discussion list, and consulting services provided by the State Library. Within 12 months of the final RFHF training, it is expected that 300 Healthy Start FSWs and children's library staff will have been trained and that they will have presented the RFHF curriculum to 4,500 families in Oregon.

The evaluation includes documentation of program implementation and outcomes. Indicators of program implementation include: the quality of training provided to participants, the number of participants trained, the number of families receiving training from the FSWs and librarians, and identification of any barriers and facilitators to delivering the curriculum to high-risk families. Parent outcomes that are tracked include the frequency of parent-child literacy activities, family engagement with books, and family use of library services.



The Reading for Healthy Families Training Curriculum

Training Session One was a 2-day training during which an adapted Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library (ECRR) curriculum² was presented by a standardized trainer. Volunteer Site Coordinators facilitated networking and communication for the attending FSWs and children’s library staff, as well as providing logistical recommendations and support to the RFHF project coordinator during the trainings. FSWs and children’s library staff practiced how to deliver Parent Education Sessions either during home visits or at library programs. Parent Education Sessions focused on six early literacy skills (describing why they are important and how children learn) and three developmental skills (providing things parents can do with their children with books related to reading books, dialogic reading, and phonological awareness games) including:

“I found the RFHF training to be extensive and very worthwhile. It is now the backbone of my program.”

- Print Motivation: a child’s interest in and enjoyment of books,
- Vocabulary: knowing the names of things to help children understand what they’ve read,
- Print Awareness: knowing how to follow the words on a page, and knowing how to handle a book,
- Narrative Skills: the ability to describe things and events, and to tell stories,
- Phonological Awareness: the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words,
- Letter Knowledge: knowing that letters are different from each other, that they have different names and sounds,
- Reading Books: how to enjoy reading books by selecting age-appropriate books for the child,
- Dialogic Reading: how to read picture books with 2- and 3-year-olds to increase language development and develop pre-reading skills in children,
- Phonological Games: how to help children hear the different parts or syllables that make up words and to improve children’s ability to say whether or not two words have the same or different first sound.

Four months after Training Session One, participants reconvened for Training Session Two, another 2-day training including various special topic trainings including: bilingual language development, media literacy, working with special-needs children, and working with difficult to engage parents (Year 1), and working with families, early brain development and media literacy (Year 2). These special topics were specifically requested by participants during Training Session One. Healthy Start and library supervisors attended Training Session Two specifically to work on developing and strengthening partnerships between Healthy Start programs and local libraries including a special presentation on “The Basics of Partnerships, Advocacy and Marketing.” Participants developed strategies designed to sustain their partnerships long-term, and to

² <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/ecrr/index.cfm>

improve the connections between the organizations. RFHF gave all supervisors Public Relations kits which were used in the training to review useful information on advocacy, fund development, and partnership-building for RFHF success. By the time of the second training, it was expected that participants would have presented at least one Parent Education Session to five families. Within a year of their initial training, each participant is expected to provide at least one Parent Education Session to 15 families.

By the end of Year 2, it was expected that 200 children’s librarians and FSWs would have attended the RFHF curriculum training. **Currently, 182 staff--91% of expected--are trained.** Due to scheduling conflicts some staff were unable to make the original training for their county. Participants from “make up” trainings are counted in the total number of trained participants for their county regardless of their training cohort/year. Table 1 describes the number and program/library location of participants trained.

Table 1. Participants Trained During Years 1 & 2

Counties Trained	Cohort	Year	# Children’s Librarians	# Family Support Workers
Washington	1	1	21	24
Benton, Lincoln, Linn, Polk	2	1	7	15
Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler	3	1	8	9
Grant, Harney, Morrow, Umatilla	4	1	11	12
Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, Yamhill	5	2	6	7
Douglas, Lane	6	2	8	19
Coos, Curry	7	2	5	5
Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake	8	2	14	11
Overall Total			80	102³

In addition to training library and Healthy Start staff, 13 community members (eight from the library, two from Healthy Start, and three from other agencies) received the training to become Every Child Ready to Read Standard Trainers. Additionally, staff from two community agencies not part of the current RFHF project sent staff to audit the trainings, including three staff from Coos County Even Start and one staff from Lane County Relief Nursery. These participants are not included in the participants training counts in Table 1.

³ Due to staff departures and program closures, 21 Family Support Workers are no longer employed by Healthy Start.

EVALUATION / METHODS

Training Surveys

At the beginning of the first training, children’s librarians and FSWs were asked to complete a pre-training survey. This survey was designed to assess participants’ initial understanding of developmental milestones as they relate to early literacy, to allow participants to describe other trainings they had recently received in early literacy, and to either describe activities their library currently offered in order to engage children in the library (library participants) or describe early literacy activities that currently took place with families (FSWs). Post-training surveys are sent to all participants approximately 9-10 months after the date of their first training. Data comparing participants’ knowledge and behavior at pretest to follow-up are reported in results.

“I worked with a family who could not read – they had a two-month-old child – I gave a presentation on print motivation and gave them a free book – the man then took his girlfriend on a “date” to the library and they got library cards and she checked out three books, one for them and two for the baby.”

Delivery of Family Education Sessions

During the first four months after the initial training, all trained participants were expected to present any one of the early literacy Parent Education Sessions to five families. Within a year of the initial training, participants were expected to provide early literacy education to a total of 15 families. Two processes were implemented in order to monitor the number of families being presented the early literacy education curriculum.

First, because FSWs are already required to complete evaluation forms monitoring families’ progress, an additional form for reporting Parent Education Sessions was added to existing data collection procedures. This Service Delivery Log, (a.k.a., “pink sheet”) submitted to the evaluation team monthly, identifies the family by their Healthy Start ID number,⁴ and describes whether or not an Education Session was presented during any home visit during the month. The form records the duration of the Education Session, whether or not the family received a free book, and whether the family received a transportation voucher to get to the library.

Librarians record parallel information on an Excel spreadsheet. These spreadsheets are electronically submitted monthly to the State Library. The RFHF coordinator at the State Library compiles and shares information submitted on the spreadsheets with the evaluation team. Information on the number of families receiving RFHF Parent Education Sessions is presented in Results.

Parent Survey

As part of the Healthy Start evaluation, parents complete a survey when their child starts the program (typically at birth), and again when their child is 6 months, 12 months, 24 months, 36 months, 48 months, and 60⁵ months old. In order for families to provide more information about early literacy activities they are doing with their child, the evaluation team added additional

⁴ Healthy Start families are identified to the evaluation team using a unique Healthy Start ID number; family names are not disclosed to the evaluation team on surveys.

⁵ Many Healthy Start programs only serve children through age 3 years.

questions to the existing Parent Survey (for children ages 6 months and older). In addition to existing questions asking about the frequency of telling stories and reading books, the revised Parent Survey asks parents whether they have a library card, and how often they have attended a story time, checked out materials from the library, engaged in certain early literacy activities with their child, and how their child responds to early literacy activities. Note that these outcomes are tracked only for parents served by the Healthy Start program. Results from the Parent Surveys are described below.

Focus Groups

Each year of the project, the evaluation team conducts a focus group with participants involved in the RFHF project. In Year 1, children’s librarians and in Year 2, FSWs trained in the curriculum were invited to participate in the focus groups. The purpose of these focus groups was to find out what participants learned from participating in the RFHF training, benefits and challenges in implementing the curriculum, whether additional training or resources were needed, and how the participating families reacted to the Parent Education Sessions. Results from the Year 2 focus group are presented in Results.⁶



⁶ Results from the Year 1 focus group appeared in the Year 1 evaluation report (http://www.npcresearch.com/Files/RFHF_Evaluation_Report_0609.pdf).

RESULTS

Pre-Training Surveys

FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS

At the time of analyses, 89 FSWs completed the pre-training survey on the first day of the training. Of those, approximately 32% (28 FSWs) reported having participated in at least one other early literacy curriculum training in the past 2 years.

When asked which activities they engaged in most frequently with families, many FSWs are engaged in numerous literacy activities with families. The majority of FSWs (90%) reported that they provide opportunities for babies to explore books, and many reported that they read with children (82%), help children learn how to hold or open a book (80%), and encourage families to check out books from the library (80%). However, few FSWs reported inviting children to participate in stories by asking questions (43%), help children notice print (42%), and present material designed to help children identify and learn letters (24%). While FSWs traditionally work with younger (0-3) children and that engaging in some of the activities may not seem age appropriate, these results provide useful information about some areas of improvement for FSWs in terms of providing early literacy supports to parents and children. Table 2 describes the frequency of activities FSWs reported engaging in with children and families.

Table 2. FSW Pre-Training Reports of Current Activities with Families

Activities currently engaged in with families	Percent doing activity frequently or very frequently
Provide opportunities for babies to chew on, pat, grab, and play with books	90%
Read with children 0-2 years old	82%
Help children learn how to hold or open a book and let them practice handling a book	80%
Encourage families to check out books from the library	80%
Sing songs, do finger-plays, say nursery rhymes, or play phonological games to help children hear and play with smaller sounds in words	70%
Identify items in pictures and ask “what” questions to help children learn new words and their meanings	68%
Ask children open-ended questions when reading to them	67%
Invite children to describe things and activities in their own lives to practice telling stories and ask follow-up questions to expand their narrative skills	49%
Invite children to participate in stories by asking them to help you list items in cumulative stories, do a hand motion during the refrain of repetitive stories, or act out the story in some way	43%
Help children notice print in books and in the world around them	42%
Identify letters, talk about their similarities and differences, and ask children questions about letters to help them learn about letters	24%

LIBRARY STAFF

Eighty-three⁷ staff attending the RFHF training completed the librarian pre-training survey. Approximately 35% (29 librarians) reported having participated in at least one other early literacy curriculum training in the past 2 years.

When asked which activities their library offers to young children, the majority of librarians reported that they provide family story time (84%) and age-specific story time (82%), and many (80%) reported that they provide book lists and early literacy brochures for parents. Few staff (16%) reported their library as having an audio book center. These results, while demonstrating that many libraries provide multiple activities for families, also provide useful information about identifying additional areas libraries can provide additional support to families. Table 3 describes the frequency of activities libraries offered to young children.

“What has been most helpful for me, but also for the families, was having [the] list with the early literacy skills listed. Families ... feel very empowered and educated to have those words there to visualize.”

Table 3. Librarian Pre-Training Reports of Current Activities for Young Children

Activities currently provided by the library	Percent doing activity
Family story times for parents to bring children 0-5 years old	84%
Age specific story times (baby lap-sit, toddler time, preschool story time)	82%
Book lists and early literacy brochures, handouts, and bookmarks are located in a highly visible spot and available for parents to take	80%
Preschool component to the summer reading program for children 0-5 years old who listen to books read aloud by their caregivers	78%
Special programs appropriate for children 0-5 years old: baby signs, puppet shows, musical guests, holiday or special occasion events	77%
Library cards for everyone (babies, toddlers, and preschoolers too!)	76%
Educational toys (puppets, doll house, puzzles, table-top toys, etc.)	74%
Outreach to childcare providers, preschool teachers, or Healthy Start where you present story times, provide early literacy training, circulated library books or provide some other service at their site	71%
Computer designated for children with early literacy games for children 4-5 years old	63%
Book and activity kits containing a variety of material (books, DVD, music CD, toys, etc.) on a particular topic such as animals, transportation, going to the doctor, or making friends	61%
Bilingual programs/programs in other languages	51%
Early literacy training for parents, childcare providers, and teachers	43%
New baby kits to all children born in your community (kits may include early literacy information, library information, library card application, free book, etc.)	33%
Audio book center (cassette/CD player, headphones, and space to sit to listen to and look at books)	16%

⁷ According to training logs, only 80 children librarians have been trained. It is possible that the librarian pre-survey was completed by some FSWs or staff from other agencies in error.

Post-Training Surveys

Ten months after the initial training, all 94 participants (trained in Year 1) were emailed a link to complete a post-training web-based survey. The survey inquired about the literacy activities participants have been doing with families, which resources participants found helpful, and participants' experiences partnering with other agencies. Multiple follow-up emails were sent to staff, encouraging them to complete the survey.

Surveys were completed by 56 staff, culminating in an overall 60% response rate. Some staff, however, had left their positions and therefore could not be reached to complete the posttest. Omitting these staff from the response rate calculations, in all, 45 library staff were trained, 3 departed, and 31 surveys returned (74%); 49 FSWs were trained, 21 departed⁸, and 25 surveys were returned (89%).

Of the post-training surveys completed, 46 (82%) were able to be reliably matched to pre-training surveys. Those surveys unable to be matched were because (1) a pre-training survey was not submitted, or (2) a participant used a different name or worker ID number on the two different surveys.

AGE-APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

On both the pre- and post-training survey, children's librarians and FSWs were asked to identify the age range most appropriate to begin 8 different early literacy activities with children. On the pre-training survey, the most accurately described activities included:

- 100% of family support workers indicating reading a picture/board book to a child was appropriate for children as young as 0-12,
- 100% of children's librarians indicating reading a picture/board book to a child was appropriate for children as young as 0-12,
- 100% of family support workers indicating encouraging a child to babble and mimic sounds was appropriate for children as young as 0-12,
- 96% of children's librarians indicating encouraging a child to babble and mimic sounds was appropriate for children as young as 0-12,

In general, on the pre-training survey, participants under-estimated the ages that children could be expected to engage in early literacy activities. On the post-training survey, however, fewer staff under-estimated appropriate ages, over-estimated the ages for more activities, but also correctly identified the ideal age range for more activities.

Improvements in identifying the most appropriate age to begin early literacy activities occurred in the following areas:

- 44% of family support workers and 29% of children's librarians correctly identified 49+ months as the ideal age to ask a child to think of a word that rhymes with another (up from 13% and 7%, respectively),

⁸ While some staff departures were likely due to career changes, most were due to program closures and staff layoffs as a result of program budget cuts.

- 39% of children’s librarians correctly identified 37-48 months as the most appropriate age to look at the cover of a book with a child and ask the child what he/she thinks the book will be about (up from 15%),
- 31% of family support workers and 15% of children’s librarians correctly identified 19-24 months as the most appropriate age to ask a child to name objects in illustrations (up from 0% and 7% respectively),
- 19% of children’s librarians correctly identified 49+ months as the ideal age to ask a child to point out specific letters in text (up from 0%), and
- 15% of children’s librarians correctly identified 37-48 months as the most appropriate age to ask a child to tell you a story (up from 4%).

It is important to consider that different children may have the ability to engage in different literacy activities at different developmental stages, however, the stages and activities described on the survey are typical of those discussed in the RFHF curriculum trainings. Further, it may be that because of the 9-month lag between receiving the training and the follow-up survey, participants were less likely to recall these age-specific details. Table 4 describes the ages participants identified for being appropriate to begin the various early literacy activities.



Table 4. Participants Identification of Appropriate Ages for Early Literacy Activities

Activity	Participant	n	Pre-Survey	Post Survey
			% Correct	% Correct
Read a picture/board book to a child	FSW	16	100%	100%
	Library	27	100%	93%
Encourage a child to babble and mimic sounds	FSW	16	100%	100%
	Library	25	96%	92%
Ask a child to think of a word that rhymes with another	FSW	16	13%	44%
	Library	28	7%	29%
Ask child to name objects in illustrations	FSW	16	0%	31%
	Library	27	7%	15%
Look at a cover of a book and ask the child what he/she thinks the story will be about	FSW	16	19%	19%
	Library	26	15%	39%
Ask a child to read you a story to see if he/she knows how to handle a book	FSW	16	19%	13%
	Library	26	35%	8%
As a child to tell you a story	FSW	15	7%	7%
	Library	27	4%	15%
Ask a child to point out specific letters in text	FSW	15	7%	0%
	Library	26	0%	19%

PARTICIPANT CHANGES IN EARLY LITERACY ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Children’s librarians and FSWs identified engaging in specific early literacy activities with children and families on the pre-training survey (see Tables 2 and 3 above). Participants were also asked to identify engagement with those same activities on the post-training survey. An increase in frequency of activity ensures sustainability of early literacy education and local activities.

“I never had much enthusiasm for finger puppets or flannel board stories until I took the RFHF training and learned why this [is] important. Now I use them with a lot more imagination and enthusiasm!”

FSWs were asked to rate the frequency (on a 5 point scale of very infrequently to very frequently) of 11 activities they may be doing as part of their work with families. Participants reporting that they engaged in activities “very frequently” ranged from 8% (identifies items in pictures and ask “what” questions) to 79% (provide opportunities for babies to play with books). Of those participants with room for improvement, the greatest percent improvements were seen in singing songs, doing finger plays, or playing phonological games (86%) and encouraging families to check out books from the library (80%). Table 5 describes the number of FSWs reporting they “very frequently” engaged in the early literacy activity prior to the curriculum training, the number of FSWs with room for improvement (those participants who were not engaged in those activities “very frequently” prior to the training) and the proportion of those who improved (by increasing their participation in those activities).

Table 5. FSWs Engaged in Early Literacy Activities “Very Frequently”

Activity	N	FSWs Reporting “Very Frequent” Activity	FSWs with “Room for Improvement”	
			N	Percent (N) Improved
Sing songs, do finger plays, or play phonological games	11	36% (4)	7	86% (6)
Encourage families to check out books from the library	10	50% (5)	5	80% (4)
Identify items in pictures and ask “what” questions	12	8% (1)	11	46% (5)
Help children notice print in books and in the world around them	13	15% (2)	11	46% (5)
Invite children to participate in stories by acting out the story in some way	12	17% (2)	10	40% (4)
Help children practice handling a book	14	57% (8)	6	33% (2)
Provide opportunities for babies to play with books	14	79% (11)	3	33% (1)
Invite children to describe things and activities to practice telling stories	12	17% (2)	10	30% (3)

Activity	N	FSWs Reporting “Very Frequent” Activity	FSWs with “Room for Improvement”	
			N	Percent (N) Improved
Read with children 0-2 years old	12	42% (5)	7	29% (2)
Ask children open-ended questions when reading to them	12	42% (5)	7	29% (2)
Identify and talk about letters	15	13% (2)	13	15% (2)

Children’s librarians were asked to rate whether or not their library currently provided any of 14 early literacy activities for children 0-5 and/or their families. Participants reporting that their library provided the activity ranged from 10% (audio book center) to 93% (family story times for parents to bring children 0-5 years old). Of those participants whose libraries had room for improvement, the greatest percent improvements were seen in family story times (100%), book lists and early literacy brochures (83%), and age-specific story times (80%). Table 6 describes the number of children’s librarians reporting their library offered the early literacy activity prior to the curriculum training, the number of librarians whose libraries had room for improvement, and the proportion of those who improved (by offering the activity).

Table 6. Children’s Librarians Reporting in Early Literacy Activities at Their Library

Activity	N	Librarians Reporting Library Provided Activity	Librarians with “Room for Improvement”	
			N	Percent (N) Improved
Family story-times	29	93% (27)	2	100% (2)
Book lists and early literacy brochures	29	79% (23)	6	83% (5)
Age specific story-times	29	83% (24)	5	80% (4)
Early literacy training for parents, childcare providers, and teachers	29	52% (15)	14	71% (10)
Outreach to childcare providers, pre-school teachers or Healthy Start	29	66% (19)	10	70% (7)
Preschool component to Summer Reading Program	29	83% (24)	5	60% (3)
Book and activity kits	29	69% (20)	9	44% (4)
Special programs appropriate for children 0-5	29	76% (22)	7	43% (3)
Computer designated for children with early literacy games	29	59% (17)	12	42% (5)
Educational toys	29	72% (21)	8	38% (3)

Activity	N	Librarians Reporting Library Provided Activity	Librarians with “Room for Improvement”	
			N	Percent (N) Improved
Library cards for everyone	29	73% (21)	8	25% (2)
Audio book center	29	10% (3)	26	23% (6)
New baby kits to all children born in your community	29	28% (8)	21	10% (2)
Bilingual programs/programs in other languages	29	59% (17)	12	0% (0)

EFFECTIVENESS OF RFHF MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

On the post-training survey, FSWs and children’s librarians (trained in Year 1) were asked to consider the effectiveness of 14 different resources made available to trained participants as part of the RFHF curriculum training.

FSWs rating the following materials and resources as the most effective in working with families:

- Giveaway books (92%)
- Children’s books for illustrating concepts (non-giveaway) (88%)
- Finger puppets (56%)
- RFHF workshop handouts (52%)
- Felt board and stories (52%)

Children’s librarians had slightly different ratings for the materials and resources they felt were most effective in their work with families. These included:

- RFHF workshop handouts (84%)
- Giveaway books (77%)
- RFHF workshop scripts (65%)
- Six-skills mini-posters (55%)

Both FSWs and children’s librarians agreed that the travel voucher was the least effective resource in working with families (28% and 19%, respectively). In Year 2 the use of travel voucher funds was changed to also encompass “Library Outreach.” Data collected from staff trained in Years 2 and 3 may reflect a change in option about the “travel vouchers” given the new process for using the funds. Table 7 describes the proportion of participants describing each material/resource as most effective/least effective for working with families.

Table 7. Participant Ratings of RFHF Training Material/Resource Effectiveness

Resource	Participant	N	Most Effective	Not Effective
Giveaway books	FSW	25	92% (23)	0% (0)
	Library	31	77% (24)	0% (0)
Children's books	FSW	25	88% (22)	4% (1)
	Library	31	48% (15)	0% (0)
Finger puppets	FSW	25	56% (14)	0% (0)
	Library	31	36% (11)	0% (0)
RFHF workshop scripts	FSW	25	24% (6)	16% (4)
	Library	31	65% (20)	16% (5)
RFHF workshop handouts	FSW	25	52% (13)	16% (4)
	Library	31	84% (26)	3% (1)
Felt board and felt stories	FSW	25	52% (13)	4% (1)
	Library	31	42% (13)	3% (1)
Music CD	FSW	25	48% (12)	0% (0)
	Library	31	29% (9)	3% (1)
Six skills mini-posters	FSW	25	44% (11)	12% (3)
	Library	31	55% (17)	7% (2)
Local library information/card application	FSW	25	44% (11)	16% (4)
	Library	31	23% (7)	0% (0)
Point of contact parent activities	FSW	25	28% (7)	8% (2)

"A two-year-old who had gone to one story time looked at the book to be read at a second story time and, recognizing the book, proudly announced "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom."

"I conducted a home visit with two moms in one house. We watched the 'Success Starts with Reading' DVD. The outcome was pretty wonderful; we talked about their 6-month and 4-month olds and also had a discussion about dads and books."

Resource	Participant	N	Most Effective	Not Effective
	Library	31	39% (12)	0% (0)
RFHF brochures	FSW	25	24% (6)	16% (4)
	Library	31	48% (15)	7% (2)
Professional books/resource books	FSW	25	24% (6)	12% (3)
	Library	31	45% (14)	3% (1)
Early literacy DVDs	FSW	25	16% (4)	28% (7)
	Library	31	42% (13)	13% (4)
Travel vouchers	FSW	25	16% (4)	28% (7)
	Library	31	3% (1)	19% (6)

PRESENTATION OF EDUCATION SESSIONS

FSWs and children’s librarians were asked reflect back on the 10 different education sessions they could have presented to families and describe (1) how frequently they presented the different session types, and if they presented a session type (2) how easy was it to present the session and (3) how engaged were families with the education session.

Participants varied in which education sessions they presented frequently. The most frequently presented education session for FSWs was “Early Brain Development” (86%) whereas children’s librarians most frequently reported presenting “Reading Books (60%). Participants also varied in which sessions they felt were easy to present. Most FSWs (81%) found “Reading Books” the easiest education session to present, whereas children’s librarian felt most comfortable presenting “Print Motivation” (62%). Finally, participants described how engaged families were with the different types of education sessions they presented. Most FSWs thought families were most engaged with “Reading Books” (90%). Children’s librarians felt families were most engaged with “Early Brain Development” (86%). Table 8 describes the participants’ ratings of the education sessions.

Table 8. Participant Ratings of Education Session Presentations

Education Session	Participant	N	Presented Most Frequently	N	Ease of Presentation	N	Family Engagement
Early brain development	FSW	22	86% (19)	22	73% (16)	20	75% (15)
	Library	25	40% (10)	23	44% (10)	21	86% (18)
Reading books	FSW	21	81% (17)	21	81% (17)	19	90% (17)
	Library	25	60% (15)	25	60% (15)	23	83% (19)
Print motivation	FSW	22	68% (15)	22	73% (16)	22	68% (15)
	Library	26	54% (14)	26	62% (16)	25	84% (21)
Vocabulary	FSW	22	64% (14)	20	80% (16)	20	65% (13)
	Library	26	46% (12)	26	58% (15)	25	72% (18)
Phonological awareness	FSW	21	62% (13)	19	63% (12)	19	63% (12)
	Library	26	46% (12)	25	52% (13)	24	67% (16)
Print awareness	FSW	22	59% (13)	21	67% (14)	20	70% (14)
	Library	25	48% (12)	26	58% (15)	24	71% (17)
Dialogic reading	FSW	20	55% (11)	19	53% (10)	18	44% (8)
	Library	24	42% (10)	22	50% (11)	22	77% (17)
Narrative skills	FSW	21	48% (10)	19	58% (11)	18	56% (10)
	Library	26	46% (12)	25	56% (14)	24	71% (17)
Phonological games	FSW	21	48% (10)	16	69% (11)	15	80% (12)
	Library	24	26% (11)	23	44% (10)	19	58% (11)
Letter knowledge	FSW	21	38% (8)	19	47% (9)	18	44% (8)
	Library	24	46% (11)	22	55% (12)	21	76% (17)

BOOK GIVEAWAY AND TRAVEL VOUCHERS

Book Giveaway

At the initial RFHF training, each participant received 15 “giveaway” books so that each of the expected families receiving the curriculum would have a book as part of their participation in the education sessions. The number of giveaway books presented to families is reported in the section “Family Service Delivery,” later in the results section. However, two questions about the giveaway books were included on the post-training survey:

“[A] child was having nightmares and being afraid to go to bed. The mom was frustrated. I used ‘Go Away Big Green Monster’ book and the kid loved it. I was able to leave the book with the family. It helped.”

- 69% of participants (77% of FSWs, 62% of children’s librarians) felt that the giveaway book “corresponded well” to the education being presented to the family, and
- 92% of participants (91% of FSWs, 92% of children’s librarians) felt that the family/child seemed “interested/excited” in the giveaway book.

Travel Vouchers

At the RFHF training, participants and program supervisors were informed that \$200 for each participating Healthy Start program and library was available for the purpose of helping get library services to families and to get families to the library. During Year 1, transportation request forms described allowable travel costs as including:

“Using the transportation funds, 17 parents went from the high school to the library– nothing like that had ever happened at the library before.”

- Bus tickets for Healthy Start families
- Taxi vouchers for families
- Renting a bus or other vehicle to transport families to the library, and
- Mileage reimbursement for library staff traveling to provide library services to Healthy Start families

Year 1 participants described barriers to families using the library, including families avoiding the library because they owe late fees and families not using the library because the library charges for a library card. Subsequently, in Year 2, the request for “transportation funds” was expanded to allow programs to use the funds for “library outreach” by applying the funds to (1) help pay for library cards for those families who would not normally obtain one due to cost, and (2) pay off (or help reduce) the fines incurred by families (see Family Service Delivery later in results for additional information on library outreach funds).

- According to reports from the RFHF Program Coordinator, 28 programs (82% of trained programs) submitted a plan for using library outreach funds (which could have been used to provide families transportation to/from the library, for paying down library fines, and/or for paying fees associated with library cards). Data are not available on how those funds were used programmatically, or how many families were impacted by the use of those funds.

PARTNERING

Part of the rationale for training FSWs and children’s librarians together was to help establish a forum for creating partnerships among professionals focusing on early literacy work with children and families. As part of the post-training survey, participants (trained in Year 1) reported on the partnerships they developed with the other agency.

- 83% of FSWs reported partnering with the local library ‘at least once’ when providing literacy information to families. 35% reported partnering ‘once a month’ or more.
- 57% of children’s librarians reported partnering with a Healthy Start representative when providing literacy information to families. 11% reported partnering ‘once a month’ or more.

“We had a ‘super collaboration’ for 6 weeks of story time and a lesson with a school district. Even Start staff, parenting program staff, Healthy Start staff, the library, and the school are already planning for next year: 6 nights of parent education sessions, open to all in the community, one skill per night, with the school providing the food and child care—this is a totally new thing for the school to do this!”

Participants were asked to describe the types of activities that they successfully partnered on together. The most frequently reported partnership activity for FSWs was “coordinating a story time effort at the library.” For children’s librarians, the most frequently reported partnership activity was “organizing another library event with parents.” Table 9 describes the frequency of successful partnership activities as described by participants.

Table 9. Frequency of Successful Partnership Activities

Partnership Activity	% (n) FSWs Reporting Successful Partnership	% (n) Children’s Librarians Reporting Successful Partnership
Coordinating a story time effort at the library	48% (12)	23% (7)
Organizing a library tour with parents	24% (6)	19% (6)
Organizing another library event with parents	20% (5)	26% (8)
Coordinating a story time at a non-library location	12% (3)	23% (7)
Organizing a library tour with staff	8% (2)	10% (3)
Presenting early literacy information to other staff	8% (2)	23% (7)

Participants also provided feedback (via open-ended questions) about advantages to working with the partner agency as well as obstacles encountered when working together.

Advantages

Twenty-seven participants (10 FSWs, 17 children’s librarians) provided feedback on advantages to the agencies working together. Responses were organized into several distinct categories:

- **Reaching New Families.** Thirteen children’s librarians noted that partnering with Healthy Start has allowed them to reach more families. One children’s librarian commented, “We were able to reach new families who either didn’t know about library services or were reluctant to use them.” Another librarian added, “The FSWs have such a strong, positive relationship with their families, it made introducing them to the library an informal, low-stress process.”
- **Events and Library Resources.** Five FSWs and 1 children’s librarian described the benefit of shared events and available library resources. “Families got to be at the library for our playgroup and then access other library services while there. Families were able to check out books since [they were] already at the library. Families got to meet the librarians and possibly were more comfortable accessing the library later.”
- **Staff Relationships.** Five FSWs and 1 children’s librarian highlighted the importance of staff relationships—both with families and among professional staff. FSWs commented on children’s librarians creating an open environment for their families: “Staff were readily available to answer questions and meet parents. Staff provided a welcoming atmosphere that encouraged families to come back.” Further, both FSW and library staff felt that working together helped strengthen their own work: “Working and partnering

with others who share the same goals is always helpful. [It allows you to gain] a different perspective on the challenges each group faces.”

- Multiple Sources of Education for Families. Two FSWs noted the importance of having the information they were presenting to families, reinforced by another person. “We teach the same things on early literacy, so the families are receiving the same information from both of us.”

Obstacles

Thirty-one participants (11 FSWs, 20 children’s librarians) provided feedback on obstacles encountered when working together. Responses were organized into several distinct categories:

- Time/Coordination. Four FSWs and 17 children’s librarians reported time/coordination as an obstacle to successful partnership. For instance, One FSW reported that the story times offered at the library were typically during “nap time” for the families. Additionally, several (4) children’s librarians cited not knowing who to contact or not feeling like there was a clear Healthy Start contact to get in touch with, as a barrier to partnering.
- Other Agency Disengaged/Not Interested in New Approaches. Four FSWs and one children’s librarian felt that the other agency’s unwillingness to participate and/or implement a different approach to working with families was a barrier to working together. For instance, one FSW felt that even though the library was appreciative of Healthy Start families obtaining library cards and attending story times, “[The library] felt they were already doing the things I suggested we could do together. They didn’t feel a need to include me in on that.” Similarly, one children’s librarian stated that “[Healthy Start] did not respond to calls to plan an activity together.”
- Family Barriers. Four FSWs and one children’s librarian felt that the obstacles to the agencies successfully partnering was due to family barriers. These barriers included families not interested/not available to go to the library, library card access, and language barriers.
- Other Barriers. Library staff identified several other barriers to successful partnerships such as (1) geographical boundaries for libraries not being the same as Healthy Start programs, contributing to inability to engage in some partnerships and (2) staff layoffs.

CONTINUED PRACTICE, NEEDED RESOURCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Continued Practice

Within 12 months of the initial training, it was expected that participants would have reached the expectation of providing at least one early education session to 15 different families. As a final part of the post-training survey, participants were asked whether they planned to continue implementing the RFHF education sessions with families once their expectations were met. The majority of participants (77%) plan to continue delivering education sessions:

- 75% of FSWs planned to continue, 25% were not sure, and none said they would not continue,
- 79% of children’s librarians planned to continue, 18% were not sure, and 4% said they would not continue.

Finally, participants also provided feedback (via open-ended questions) about additional resources and recommendations for the RFHF curriculum.

Additional Resources

29 participants (11 FSWs, 18 children’s librarians) provided input about additional resources needed in order to continue teaching the curriculum to parents.

- Giveaway Books. Six FSWs and five children’s librarians felt that having access to more giveaway books is essential for continuing to teach the curriculum to parents. One FSW commented, “Sometimes, the books we give out are the only books some of our families ever have.”
- Additional Training. Six children’s librarians and 2 FSWs requested on-going additional trainings (or alternative ways to gain new information) and trainings for new staff. One children’s librarian commented “I would like to see more information on brain development. The parents of younger children really found that interesting, but we did not have a lot of current information.” Subsequently, additional content on brain development became part of the Year 2 training.
- Additional Materials. Three children’s librarians and 1 FSW requested additional materials including brochures about the six skills, short parent handouts and other parent “giveaways” such as posters and magnets to serve as reminders of the shared information.
- Other Resources. Six children’s librarians and 3 FSWs suggested other resources as important to continuing teaching the curriculum to parents such as the need for child care options (for parents attending sessions) and more Spanish-language materials.

Other Recommendations for Improving the Training Workshop

19 [participants (7 FSWs, 12 children’s librarians) provided recommendations for improving the RFHF workshops presented to staff. Responses included the need for:

- Material Revision/Condensing. Four children’s librarians and 3 FSWs commented on the materials. Six participants commented on the quantity of materials. While there was some concern for how much paper and material were used, most focused on the volume of information being overwhelming. One FSW commented, “I really found that I did not use most of the materials that were given to me. Some of it didn’t apply and presentations don’t really fit how I do home visits.” A children’s librarian commented, “I never understood [the binders] organization and generally didn’t find it user friendly. I am not saying the information was not important, but for me, much of it was material I’d already received at other workshops or not easily retrievable.” Subsequently, changes to the organization of the materials were made for Year 2 trainings.
- Challenges Presenting Material. Four children’s librarians and 2 FSWs commented on the challenges they experience presenting some of the materials in hopes that those issues could be addressed in future trainings. One librarian commented, “I believe that the workshops need to be shown on how to present the information to families. I felt at times that I was the parent being taught and I wanted to experience how it should be taught so that I felt comfortable presenting.” One FSW shared “Sometimes teaching the lessons I felt like I was repeating myself from week to week [because of home visiting different families]. This model of material probably works better in a group setting because of

things like that.” Year 2 trainings focused on modifying the approach to teaching material presentation.

- **Need for Spanish Materials.** Two children’s librarians and two FSWs mentioned the need for Spanish materials. Additional Spanish materials have been made available as part of the Year 2 trainings.
- **Other Recommendations.** Four participants provided ideas for other recommendations that did not fit into the above categories. These recommendations included: time for more coordination with the other agency, opportunities to partner with other agencies, reduced evaluation reporting on the sessions provided to families, and a reduction in the number of email communications about the project.

Family Service Delivery

LIBRARY LOGS

Of the 66 children’s librarians trained prior to the end of the data collection period for this report, 54 (82%) submitted family training logs for inclusion in the evaluation. Based on information provided by the logs, 1,293 Education Sessions were presented to 1,134 families⁹ (about 1 Education Session per family and 21 families per librarian). The average time of the Education Sessions presented was 45 minutes or longer. During those sessions, 818 “giveaway books” (approximately 66% of families¹⁰) and 32 transportation vouchers were provided to families.

The most frequent Parent Education Sessions presented were Print Motivation (27% of the sessions presented) and Reading Books (16%). Dialogic Reading (2%) and Letter Knowledge (2%) were the least frequently presented Sessions. Table 10 describes the frequency of the Parent Education Sessions provided by children’s librarians.

“A young boy who started first grade with no story time and no preschool experience came to the library one day, with head down, sad that he could not read like the other kids. The librarian said ‘We can fix that’ and through a group effort had him reading at grade level in three months. He still comes to the library but never with his head down. His father later came to the library to thank whoever taught his boy to read and started coming to the library more himself.”

⁹ The number of families reported is not a unique count. Many families attending library activities only listed a first or last name so identifying unique families is difficult. Additionally, the same family may be presented an education session by different librarians over time, and each librarian would be able to count that family as unique.

¹⁰ Approximately 746 unique families received a giveaway book.

Table 10. Education Session Frequency (Children’s Librarians)

Education Session	Frequency of Sessions	Percent of Sessions
Print Motivation	354	27%
Reading Books	201	16%
Phonological Awareness	185	14%
Early Brain Development	112	9%
Print Awareness	103	8%
Narrative Skills	99	8%
Vocabulary	48	4%
Phonological Games	33	3%
Dialogic Reading	32	2%
Letter Knowledge	30	2%

FSW LOGS

Of the 91 FSWs trained prior to the data collection cutoff date for analysis, 74 (81%) submitted “pink forms” on families. Based on information submitted by the FSWs, 2,006 Education Sessions were presented to 622 different families—about 3 Education Sessions per family, and 8 families per FSW submitting forms. On average, FSWs were spending about 20 minutes presenting the Education Sessions (about 80% of session were under 30 minutes). During those sessions, 493 families (79%) received at least one “giveaway book” (a total of 913 books were distributed, averaging about 2 per family), and 23 families (4%) benefited from funds reserved through the travel voucher system.

“A dad who had been told he was illiterate learned to share picture books and now he shares books with his child.”

The most frequent Parent Education Sessions presented were Print Motivation (23% of the Sessions presented) and Reading Books (16%), while Letter Knowledge was the least frequently presented Session (2%). See Table 11 for frequency Parent Education Sessions presented by FSWs.

Table 11. Education Session Frequency (FSWs)

Education Session	Frequency of Sessions	Percent of Sessions
Print Motivation	349	23%
Reading Books	246	16%
Vocabulary	222	15%
Early Brain Development	167	11%
Print Awareness	159	10%
Narrative Skills	132	9%
Phonological Awareness	88	6%
Dialogic Reading	81	5%
Phonological Games	48	3%
Letter Knowledge	33	2%

Parent Survey Responses

The evaluation team created a ‘program’ group which included families receiving home visits from participants trained in Year 1. In order for families to be included in the program group, we verified (via Family Service Delivery (“Pink”) Forms) that the family received at least one education session from their FSW. The most recent parent survey completed by the family was considered for analyses. Additionally, we created a ‘comparison’ group of families from programs in which the FSWs are not yet trained in the RFHF curriculum (these families are from the cohort being trained in Year 3 (beginning in October 2010)).

The program and comparison groups were matched so that families from both groups appeared similar (no significant differences) on various descriptive traits.¹¹ See comparisons in Table 12 below.

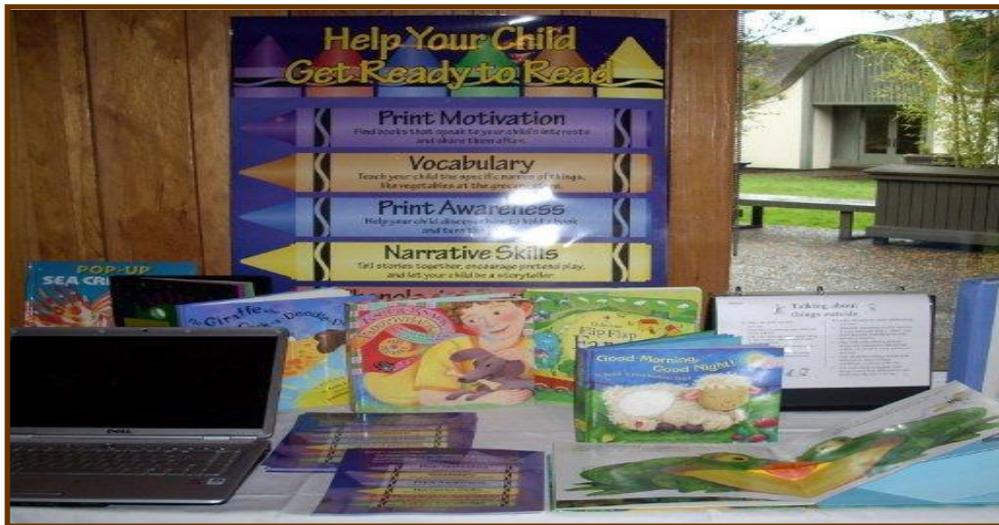
Table 12. Demographic Comparisons of Families in Program and Comparison Group

Descriptive Traits	Program Group	Comparison Group
Parent Speaks English	72%	81%
Child is Caucasian	37%	43%
Child is Hispanic	48%	32%
Child is Other Race/Ethnicity	15%	25%
Average Family Risk Factors	3.4	3.5
Range of Family Risk Factors	0 – 8	0 – 9

¹¹ Despite being an untrained program, the evaluation team decided to remove Multnomah County families from the comparison group. Families in this county had different race/ethnicities and primary languages from the other counties in the comparison group. This initially caused the comparison group to look significantly different than the program group on a demographic level.

Despite an additional year of data collection, just over half of the families (57%) whose workers presented Parent Educational Sessions to them had a 6-month or later parent survey submitted after the worker went to the training. There are a couple possible reasons for the low parent survey rate from families receiving an education session from their FSW: (1) Education Sessions could have been provided but no Parent Survey was due to be submitted on these children by the time data were finalized for this report. Parent Surveys with these literacy items are only completed when children are 6, 12, 24, 36, and 48 months of age. For instance, if an education session was presented when a child was 13 months of age and data collection (for this report) ended when the child was 18 months of age; we would not anticipate a survey on this family for another 6 months. Also, parents have the option to decline the parent survey. For instance, about 2% of all Healthy Start parents declined to complete the 6-month parent survey. The low return rate may be partially explained by some parent refusals. It will be important for Healthy Start leadership to stress the importance (to both program staff and program supervisors) of completing these survey forms so that future evaluations will have additional data available.

In order to determine the impact of the RFHF Education Sessions on families, Parent Survey responses were compared across the two groups. All analyses controlled for race/ethnicity. Of the 13 literacy-related items asked on the Parent Survey, four items showed a significant difference when comparing responses from families whose FSW had attended the RFHF curriculum to those whose workers had not yet been presented the curriculum. One additional item, “playing games like peek-a-boo and finger games,” was significantly higher for the comparison group than it was for the RFHF trained group. The literacy-related items are described in Table 13. It is worth noting that families whose FSW received the RFHF training were significantly more likely to be engaging in all of the library-related activities included in the Parent Survey. These findings are promising, as they demonstrate the increased role of the parent in impacting their child’s learning and preparation for school. Research has shown that on tests of language development, children who were actively involved in the reading process had more advanced language and pre-reading skills.¹²



¹² Grover Whitehurst, et al. “A Picture Book Reading Intervention in Day Care and Home for Children from Low-Income Families.” *Developmental Psychology* v.30 no.5 (1994) p.679-689.]

Table 13. Literacy Outcome Differences for Parents Visited RFHF Trained FSWs Compared to Parents Visited by FSWs Untrained.

Outcome indicator	RFHF mean	Comparison mean	Significant
Response scale ranged from (1) not at all to (6) more than once a day			
Sang songs	5.3	5.3	No
Told stories or talked about activities you are doing with your child	5.4	5.5	No
Read/looked at books	5.0	5.0	No
Play games (like peek-a-boo, finger-games, etc.)	5.5	5.7	Yes
Response scale= yes/no (not controlled for race/ethnicity)			
Have a library card for you or your child	53%	38%	Yes
Response scale ranged from (0) never to (3) more than once or twice			
Attended a story time at the library in the last month	.30	.18	Yes
Response scale ranged from (0) never to (3) weekly			
Check materials out from the library for your child	.61	.32	Yes
Response scale ranged from (0) never to (3) often			
Ask child what will happen next in a story (when reading together)	1.5	1.1	Yes
Point out and talk about pictures in a book (when reading together)	2.7	2.7	No
Help child learn new words from a book (when reading together)	2.4	2.3	No
Relate the story you are reading to something in child's experience	1.8	1.6	No ¹³
Child pretends to read along (when reading together)	1.7	1.5	No
Child participates in reading by asking questions, turning pages, or acting out parts of a book	1.9	1.9	No

¹³ While not statistically significant, the mean difference on this item suggests a trend toward families visited by the RFHF trained FSWs being higher on helping children relate stories to their own experiences.

FOCUS GROUP

WHAT FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS ARE SAYING ABOUT RFHF

Participants from the 12 Healthy Start programs trained during Year 2 were asked to participate in a telephone focus group. An NPC Research staff member conducted the focus group in April 2010. Three FSWs and one Program Manger (representing four different programs) participated in the focus group conference call. The following lists each focus group question, followed by a summary of responses.

Tell me how RFHF has changed your day-to-day practice with parents/children.

The HS staff agreed there has been increased access to the libraries for families, as well as increased likelihood of getting library cards. They reported that more families were going to the library and reading more throughout the week than they have in the past. One HS staff member noticed that the parents are feeling very empowered by having the correct verbiage--having the words that they know the teachers will use when they get to school makes them feel knowledgeable.

How have you incorporated the RFHF materials in what you are already doing with families? What are you doing differently, if anything? How do you think these changes will help your families in terms of early literacy or using the library?

All focus group participants agreed that they have incorporated the RFHF materials. For example, one HS staff member explained that their program has designated the first week of every month to have staff focus on one of the RFHF areas, and then do an activity related to that so that families become comfortable using the terminology. Three of the focus group participants said they have incorporated the RFHF curriculum into the Parents as Teachers curriculum, which has literacy activities as well.

A HS staff member explained that RFHF has helped them understand the bigger picture—the concepts related to early literacy that they are promoting when they are doing activities with the families. She explained, “Whereas we used to hand out a book and talk about the importance of reading, now we can combine the concepts with it and say, ‘This is a book that’s about narrative, it’s about reading, and how it goes through that process for the child.’”

What, if any, barriers to library services do the families you work with experience? What, if anything, have you done to address these barriers?

According to HS staff, one of the biggest barriers is fines for lost materials. The experience of losing materials may make it less pleasant to go to the library because of the stress, or concern, that families need try to keep track of materials and not lose them again. The HS staff member said it seems to be a punitive process that, for some families, feels discouraging, and it is difficult to get them back on board with wanting check out materials. To address this barrier, the HS staff member mentioned that the library did reduce the fine for a parent in this situation, so that she would be able to check out materials if she wished. HS staff suggested libraries provide an incentive for returning books—perhaps a bookmark or other small incentive such as 25 cents off of any fines they owe—in order to encourage parents to return books.

Another issue, especially during winter, is transportation for families in rural areas who do not have a car, according to a HS staff member in a rural community. She said it is possible to get to the library by taking a bus, but some families won't do that.

To address these barriers, one HS staff member said they found it helpful to have home visits at the library without parents checking out materials, but just engaging the families. Another HS staff member said in her county they have a nice children's section of toys and activities, so just getting them comfortable and HS staff reading books to them while they are there has seemed to motivate them to want to take the books home. The home visitor in another county does this as well—meets parents at the library or takes them to the library and helps them with their fines. She has been very successful with her families in the library and getting them to participate in the children's programs.

Another HS staff member said that they had the children's librarian come and do a parent group at their place, and then they have one scheduled at the library with the same librarian. She believes that by just getting families comfortable with the same person, they seem to be more engaged than going from a new person to a new person. The consistency of seeing the same face helps.

How easy or difficult has it been for you to develop partnerships with library staff? Tell me about any partnerships you've been able to develop.

HS staff found it to be very easy to develop partnerships with library staff, as they already had those connections in place. In one of the counties, they have had joint story times for a couple of years. Recently, one HS staff member said they had a specific Healthy Start group at the library and then the librarian had a story time for their families. They have also combined in the past by taking families to story time that was already happening at the library.

What, if anything, has made it difficult to develop that kind of partnership?

One HS staff member observed something in the physical layout of one of their libraries that she believes may affect whether Spanish language folks go there and participate: this particular library has all the Spanish-language materials, including those for children, in a different section of the library from English-language materials, and in a space where people are supposed to be quieter. In other words, the Spanish language children would not be in the same area of the library as English language children. She believes that Spanish language families may not be as comfortable there as at other libraries (the HS staff member observed fewer such families at the library that is divided into language sections).

Is there anything that RFHF could do differently to better support the partnership between Healthy Start and library staff?

HS staff agreed that the partnership has been great, and didn't think there was anything additional that needed to be done. "The main thing is getting the families there and comfortable," according to one HS staff member.

How do plan to continue using the early literacy training and resources that you received from RFHF?

One HS staff member thought that one thing that would continue is just the fact that the families are excited—they look forward to that first week learning something new about literacy and early learning. Even though it is incorporated throughout the whole month in other visits, just labeling it for them helps them feel like they are helping their kids become smarter and better learn-

ers. So, she believes that is something that will be carried on—just telling families that first week, “This is early literacy week.”

What additional resources do you need to continue providing early literacy education to your parents through your library (besides the handouts and more materials in Spanish)? How do you suggest RFHF change the training and/or resources to improve them for future cohorts?

In addition to books, HS staff would like to have something to give to families throughout the month, such as bookmarks or pencils to remind them of the importance of reading with their children. One HS staff member gave each family a baggie with letter magnets that spelled out the child’s name. They put them on the fridge, and this gave them something to focus on with their children for identifying letters.

In one county in particular, it would be helpful to have more material in Spanish. They have the Power Point material in Spanish and brain development information, but because Spanish is the main language with most of the families this HS staff member works with, she would appreciate more materials in that language.

Another suggestion was to have about 10 songs in English and Spanish with the hand motions that the HS staff member would learn well and teach—something to support the sing-alongs. She would also like to be able to give this to families on a DVD, so that they could learn the songs with their children.

Do your libraries have any plans to continue book giveaways, library cards, dismissing fines, providing transportation, or anything else they are doing once the grant period is over?

The HS staff did not know about plans for continuing to offer assistance and resources after the grant period.

How would you say that your supervisors have been as far as supporting you in implementing the RFHF activities? Is there anything that you felt they could do to be more supportive?

The HS staff agreed that their supervisors have been supportive. However, as one said, “There’s not a lot I feel they can do. It really falls on the FSWs [Family Support Workers] to do their jobs.” Another HS staff member talked about what supervisors do to support their efforts: “Really working as a team to share ideas of ways we incorporate the concepts around early literacy and how we share it with families, and working together when we work with the library. That’s been important.”

Thinking back to the training you received in this curriculum, do you have any other recommendations for improving the parents’ education/presentation materials or training? Or other ways to improve RFHF?

HS staff agreed that the handouts and prep materials that they were given have been very helpful. However, they thought it would be helpful to have a handout with more information on one or two pages as opposed to the Power Point style [that has more pages with less information per page]. They find the Power Point style to be useful in group settings, but having all the information in a concise handout would be helpful for giving to the families.

Another suggestion was, “When we get other books from other organizations, they always put a sticker on the back that says, ‘Donated by...,’ so I think to raise awareness and for families to remember what they are doing, it would be nice if there were labels placed on all our books that say, ‘Sponsored by Reading For Healthy Families’ to get the name out there.

What do you think has been the most important or helpful part of the RFHF project for you?

According to FSW staff:

“What has been most helpful for me, but also for the families, was having that purple list with the early literacy skills listed. Families have all put them on the fridge, and for some reason feel very empowered and educated to have those words there to visualize and also to feel like when their kids start school they can talk the same language as the teachers and that’s the one thing they have really, really enjoyed. I also know that any time you help a family to feel empowered, you are doing something positive.” She added, “We could use some more of those, too!”

“I think the best has been to enhance what we are already doing in the homes with early literacy and give us more information and more ideas on working with families. Promoting that library for the families has been nice for us in our County.”

“First of all, putting the concept behind the different activities that families are doing so that they understand when they are doing these songs with their child that they are teaching them little tiny sounds of words. So, being able to give them reasons why to be doing this, instead of just, ‘Your Healthy Start worker says it’s great to read with your child.’ Being able to explain that better, I think is really important. The other piece would be that I am really impressed with the increased access to the libraries and the libraries—everyone’s—willingness to make this be a positive experience for our families. We had mentioned some negative experiences a little bit at the library at checkout and reception. We had brought that up in training, and I noticed a lot of effort on the part of librarians to make people feel welcome. That is working.”

CONCLUSIONS

Results show a number of areas in which RFHF has successes as well as several areas in which RFHF can improve.

Staff Trained

RFHF curriculum has now been presented to eight different cohorts in 27 counties via 9 training dates. During the past two years, Healthy Start programs have faced major program budget cuts affecting the number of staff employed. One county had no Healthy Start program at the time their county received the training, and other counties lost several of their provider agencies, resulting in few staff employed. Despite these cuts, the number of staff who have received the training (182) is just slightly below the expectations of the project (200) at this time, resulting in 91% of expected staff trained.

Families Served

With 182 staff trained it is expected that 2,730 unique families would have received an education session from trained staff. To date, 1,756 families have received the curriculum—about 64%. It should be kept in mind, however, that not all of these trained staff have been trained for 12 months (the time staff are given to fulfill their expected number of parent trainings). Of those staff affiliated with counties trained in the first year, 78% of total expected families have received an education session.

The number of families is still a bit lower than would be expected. Closer examination of the data shows that librarians, in general, exceed the number of expected families (about 21 families per librarian¹⁴). However, because librarians are not required to keep full names of parents participating in their curriculum, it is unknown how many of the families being counted as “unique” may in fact be duplicate families. Also, librarians are able to count the same family more than once, if the family works with two different librarians on two different occasions. The data from Healthy Start presents a different picture, with FSWs presenting the curriculum to just over half the expected number of families (approximately 8 families per FSW). One reason for this may be FSW staff departures. As noted above, Healthy Start budget cuts have resulted in the closure of one county program and the reduction of staff in others. Approximately 40% of FSWs trained in Year 1 were no longer employed by the end of Year 2. Further, due to the high-risk nature of the clients they work with, FSWs may choose to not present the curriculum to families dealing with difficult life situations that would make benefiting from the curriculum a challenge—this may also account for the lower than expected rate of families receiving the curriculum from FSWs. FSWs may benefit from additional assistance identifying appropriate families on their caseload, as well as encouragement to encourage supportive child development activities concurrently with activities designed to reduce family risk. However, despite the fact that FSWs were only “required” to provide one education session per family, FSWs were averaging more education sessions to families—approximately three sessions per family.

¹⁴ It is unknown from the data how many of the families receiving education sessions at the library would be considered “high-risk families” compared to those families that may have already been engaged in and attending library services.

Of the 1,756 families receiving the curriculum, approximately 1,239 families (71%) received at least one giveaway book (the rate is higher for FSWs (79%) compared to library staff (66%). Part of this may be due to the structure of presentations. At libraries, parent education sessions are typically done as part of a large parent group (as opposed to the one-on-one sessions commonly completed by FSWs). If enough books (of various languages and ages) are not available, library staff may decide not to distribute books unless it can assure that every participant receives one.

Staff Early Literacy Activities & Comprehension of Age Appropriate Behaviors

It was clear from staff surveys administered prior to the first training session, that many library and Healthy Start staff were already engaged in several early literacy activities with children and families. The survey administered 10 months after the first training session showed that staff engaged in even more of those activities. For instance, 86% FSWs who were not already engaged in singing songs, finger plays or playing phonological games became “very frequently” engaged in those activities with children. Similarly, there were librarians who indicated on the pre-training survey that their library did not offer family story times—100% of them had family story times available by the time of the post-training survey. These positive staff changes are encouraging for a couple of different reasons. First, the change (which was a behavioral practice for some and an organizational practice for others) occurred in a relatively short amount of time (10 months). Second, both librarians and FSWs are typically part of larger organizations that potentially have their own bureaucratic systems in which rapid change, such as that seen here, may not typically be expected.

Librarians and FSWs also identified the most appropriate age to begin 8 different early literacy activities. There were several items that at least 90% of staff identified correctly on the pre- and post-training survey. On the post-training survey, staff increased their ability to correctly identify the most appropriate age for several other activities (ranging from 15% - 44% estimating correctly) as well. However, staff generally seemed to underestimate (at both time periods) the ages most appropriate to begin various early literacy activities with children. Because children are different, a staff person’s experience with children who may be more advanced in skill—and thus can begin these activities earlier—may explain some of these results. Further, it may be that staff are (appropriately) offering activities that are slightly ahead of children’s developmental trajectory in order to support and encourage their development, a technique known as “scaffolding.” This is appropriate as long as staff are careful not to build unrealistic developmental expectations in parents. Further examination of this survey instrument and how it relates to the RFHF curriculum should be conducted.

Children and Family Outcomes

Families receiving visits from FSWs trained in the RFHF curriculum (and receiving at least one RFHF education session from their FSW) were significantly more likely to have (1) a library card for themselves or their child, (2) attended a story time at the library in the last month, (3) checked out materials from the library for their child, and (4) asked their child what will happen next in a story (while reading together). Another item, “related the story you are reading to something in the child’s experience,” while not statistically significant, was different enough from families whose workers had not been trained to suggest a positive trend. While a number of other items did not show significant differences between the RFHF families and those who have not yet received the training, it is notable that all of the items having to do with library use were sig-

nificantly better for RFHF families. Other items (such as the frequency of developmentally appropriate activities) have been monitored and measured by Healthy Start for a number of years, and thus may have been less likely to change as a result of RFHF.

Further, when considering the parent-level outcomes, it is important to remember that parents received (on average) only three 15-minute Parent Education Sessions. The average “intervention” time of 45 minutes over a 12-month period is an unusually light “dosage” for a literacy program and should not be expected to have comprehensive or large impacts on parent’s behavior—especially in the short term. Further, improving early literacy among Healthy Start families has been a focus for some time. In fact, one of the performance indicators that Healthy Start programs are held to is assuring that 70% or more of the families read to their child at least 3 times a week or more. Since all programs focus on literacy, differences seen in families served by programs with RFHF-trained FSWs may not be as dramatic as would be observed if comparing to non-Healthy Start high-risk families.

Materials

Several welcomed changes to the RFHF training materials were implemented in Year 2. The binders were re-structured to reduce their size and were organized by education sessions, and scripts and handouts were translated into Spanish. However, staff continued to comment on the volume of information/materials; finding them difficult to use for retrieving information or feeling the materials weren’t developed enough to do a full workshop even when combining multiple skills. Several FSWs felt the materials were designed to be delivered in group settings and found them less useful for the one-on-one work they do with families. Additional Spanish materials continued to be requested. It is important to note that staff feedback came from two sources: staff trained in Year 1 completing the 10-month post-training survey, and staff trained in Year 2 attending the focus group discussion. It is possible that some concerns brought up by Year 1 staff have actually been addressed but information about those changes or access to the additional/revised materials were not available to staff at the time of their survey (RFHF leadership should verify that staff trained in Year 1 are aware of the revised materials and have access to the updated training procedures, approaches, and information).

RFHF leadership should determine if there are additional ways to decrease the amount of materials present at the training sessions. For instance, there may be opportunities to have additional resources that are non-essential to the training available on the web versus being included in the binders. Material could also be reviewed for repetition among the sessions. Finally, participants may benefit from additional ideas for modifying the available training materials to be used in a one-on-one conversational format versus a more formal presentation format.

Transportation funds

One area that has shown dramatic change has been in the use of transportation funds. RFHF leadership modified the use of the funds in Year 2 to include paying for library cards and/or using the funds to pay to existing library fines—two issues that were preventing families from using the library (as reported by trained staff). Data reported by staff suggest that 55 families have currently benefited from the transportation funds. It is unclear, however, if all staff (especially librarians) would know if a family actually received support from the library outreach funds. Data reported by the RFHF Program Coordinator suggest that 28 different programs submitted requests for library outreach funds during Year 2.

Collaboration/Agency Partnership

Encouraging partnerships among Healthy Start programs and the libraries is a key component of the RFHF project. Despite the fact that many staff commented that partnering is a time consuming process, staff are reporting in having successfully engaged at least once in those partnerships (FSWs reported partnering more frequently (75%) compared to library staff (57%)—however the rate of FSWs to library staff in many counties is likely higher). The advantages of partnering were clear to staff: the partnerships allowed them to reach new families, introduce families to events and resources at the library, provide multiple opportunities and ways to educate families about early literacy, as well as to promote professional relationships among the other agency's staff.

Summary

The overall outcomes for RFHF are impressive. The number of trained staff and served families is congruent with the project expectations. Staff report more literacy activities with families, and those families are more likely to be engaged in several key early literacy. Inter-agency partnerships among the two agencies provide opportunities for parents to engage in library services they otherwise would not have sought out, introduce new families to the library, and provide professional support among librarians and FSWs in bringing early literacy to Oregon families.

A few areas may need further attention. Both FSWs and librarians seem to underestimate the ages most appropriate to begin various early literacy activities with children. Training materials should be reviewed to make sure these developmental milestones are given sufficient discussion during the trainings. Further, Staff report that successful partnering among agencies is time consuming. Agency supervisors and RFHF leadership should work at identifying additional supports to encourage and enhance these partnerships.