

2012 PROGRESS REPORT EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Project Summary

The Neighborhood Partnership project is a 3.5 year capacity-building partnership between First 5 Alameda County (F5AC) and six city libraries and park and recreation departments:

- Alameda Free Library
- Alameda Recreation and Park Department
- City of Berkeley Recreation Division
- City of Union City Leisure Services
- Hayward Public Library
- Oakland Public Library

Grant funding for the project (January 1, 2010 through June 30, 2013) totals \$1,000,766.

Project Model

Libraries and park and recreation departments are natural gathering places for families with young children. They are conveniently located and have the potential to serve as information and activity “hubs” for families who may not have other connections to preschool or social service programs.

With support from F5AC, the Neighborhood Partnership agencies offer developmentally-specific school readiness experiences for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers and their families at recreation centers and library branches in high-need multilingual, multicultural neighborhoods. Programs specifically seek to reach low-income families whose children are not enrolled in licensed child care. Programs support parents as children’s first teachers and encourage families to practice school readiness activities at home.

Grantees participate in an intensive capacity building process that includes quarterly meetings with a peer learning community and grantee-specific work with a F5AC coach/consultant. Evaluation and program planning tools include a child observation tool and family surveys. Active planning for sustaining family-centered school readiness programming is already underway.

Project Outcomes

1 “Entering kindergarteners are ready to learn” (F5AC Outcome 4C)

Increased access to school readiness services for children 0-5 and their families located at neighborhood public institutions

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3 Increased knowledge and use of best practices in early childhood practice at public institutions

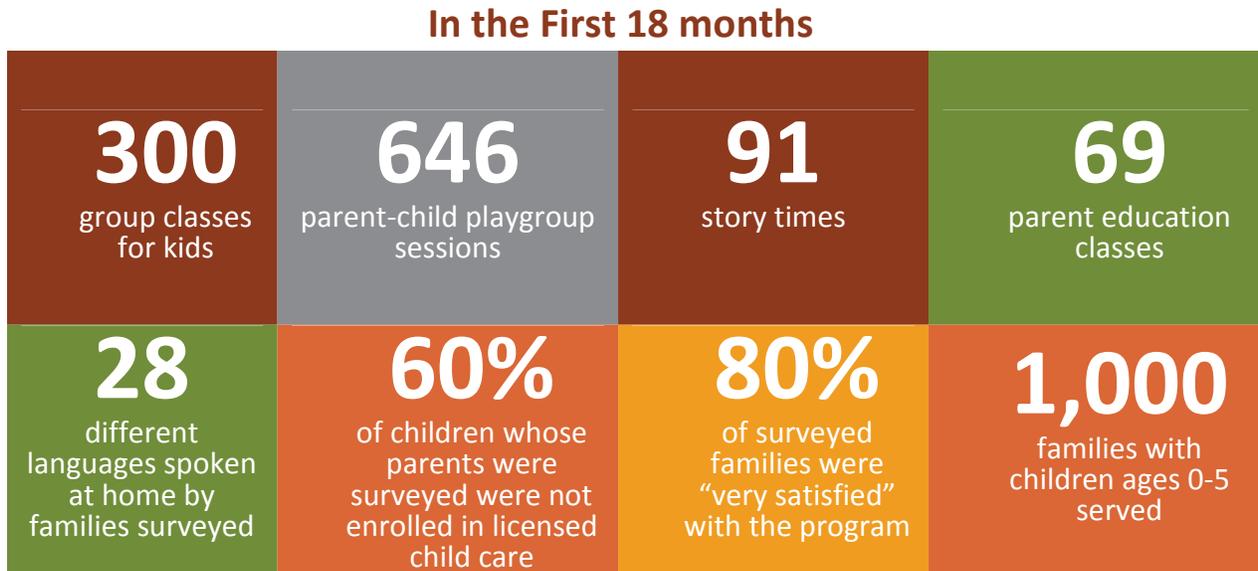
Increased collaboration between public institutions, school districts, and community based organizations

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5 Increased capacity for and commitment to sustainable early childhood programming at public institutions

Success of School Readiness Efforts

Services were provided at 13 sites in high-need neighborhoods (e.g., presence of elementary schools with low Academic Performance Index scores). Programs expanded their outreach to bring in previously unserved families.



Family Support for Children's School Readiness

Families reported doing more to support their child's school readiness by reading more, playing together, and expanding on what children are learning in the program.

"We spend more family time together."

"We are taking more responsibility as our son's first teacher to explore nature, games, parks and healthy eating."

Improvements in Children's School Readiness Skills

Staff and families reported positive changes in children's school readiness skills. Based on observations of 50 children age 4 and older, staff noted that children improved in their ability to participate successfully in circle time, write their own first name, work and play cooperatively with peers, and stay focused during activities.

*"[This program] has greatly improved my child's learning, his social skills, his language skills, his bilingual skills. He is...happier, more confident and more capable of following directions."
Program Parent*

For the full report, see "Neighborhood Partnership: Reflections on Project Progress," available at www.first5ecc.org. For more information about the Project, contact Janice Edwards, Senior Program Officer, First 5 Alameda County at janice.edwards@first5ecc.org or (510) 875-2441.