



Starting Out Right: A Cluster Evaluation of the Early Childhood grants of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Year 3 Final Report

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December 11, 2007

Commissioned by

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John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Abstract

Since 2001, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation has awarded 125 early childhood grants totaling more than \$50 million. In 2007, there were 47 active grants. Gomby and Klein reviewed the grants for Knight and produced this report.

Communities

Knight has made grants in early childhood education in the Knight communities of Aberdeen, S.D.; Boulder, Colo.; Charlotte, N.C.; Fort Wayne, Ind.; Lexington, Ky.; Long Beach, Calif.; Philadelphia, Pa; St. Paul, Minn.; San Jose, Calif.; State College, Pa.; Tallahassee, Fla.; and Wichita, Kan.

**Starting Out Right:
A Cluster Evaluation of the Early Childhood Grants
of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

Year 3 Final Report

**Submitted to
The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

**By Lisa G. Klein, Ph.D.
Deanna S. Gomby, Ph.D., M.S.**

December 11, 2007

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Starting Out Right: A Cluster Evaluation of the Early Childhood Grants of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Year 3 Final Report: Executive Summary

By

Lisa G. Klein, Ph.D. and Deanna S. Gomby, Ph.D., M.S.

The Communities and the Grants

Between 2001-2007, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation awarded 125 early childhood grants, totaling more than \$50 million, in 12 communities. This final report of our evaluation of the Foundation’s early childhood grantmaking focuses on the 47 grants that were active or submitted final reports during 2007. About half of these grants will continue in 2008.

Grants Included in This Report, By Community	
Community	Number of Grants
Aberdeen	2
Boulder	5
Charlotte	4
Fort Wayne	4
Lexington	5
Long Beach	4
Philadelphia	4
St. Paul	2
San Jose	10
State College	2
Tallahassee	1
Wichita	4
TOTALS	47

Transformational Grantmaking and This Report

Beginning in 2005, the Knight Foundation began a fundamental shift toward “transformational grantmaking,” an approach the Foundation describes as requiring discovery, vision, courage, know how, tenacity, time, commitment, and risk. This led to changes in the Foundation’s grantmaking strategies in communities and to changes in our evaluation reports.

Our earlier evaluation reports organized and reported results based on the goals and strategies of the original projects (e.g., mental health, dental health, early childhood education, and parent education). In contrast, this report primarily emphasizes those grants that meet the Foundation's definition of transformational projects that change systems, build networks, and operate at sufficient scale to create meaningful change. These include programs to build or reform the early care and education systems in Wichita, Boulder, Philadelphia, and San Jose, the mental health system in St. Paul, and the public school system in Lexington; and to link together multiple systems in San Jose. Many of the transformational programs described in this report are slated to continue operations for one or two more years, and so our review describes their progress but not their final outcomes. In addition, this report summarizes the most compelling results of other grants that may not meet the Foundation's definition of transformational but that demonstrate the overall impact of the Foundation's multi-year investment in early childhood.

Summary of Results from the Foundation's Early Childhood Investments

Results of our evaluation indicate:

- Knight funding has brought services to thousands of children and families.
- Knight grantees are implementing the “best practice” program strategies that experts agree *should* benefit children and families.
- Where tested, Knight-funded strategies have indeed produced improvements in program quality and benefits for parents, children, and communities:
 - *Quality*: Increased levels of training and education among staff in preschool and child care programs, with consequent improvements in the quality of care offered to children;
 - *Parents*: Better parenting skills, more confidence in their parenting skills, and greater levels of parent involvement in their children's education, both before and after children enter school;
 - *Children*: Improvements in early literacy skills and social and emotional development;
 - *Communities*: Increases in neighborhood cohesion, community involvement, and systems of services for children and families.

Lessons Learned

By design, this report highlights the most positive results generated by grantees to illustrate that early childhood grants *can* have important and transformative effects on children, families, and communities. Of course, not all the grants awarded by the Foundation yielded large-scale success. Some grants never expanded to serve more than a relatively small number of children and families, and some Knight-funded services ceased when Foundation funding ended, suggesting that the programs never became institutionalized in their communities. In other cases, the original grant objectives were not achieved, and, in at least

one such case, the Foundation ended the grant early. And, in still other cases, grantees used such weak methods of assessing progress that we could not draw clear conclusions about the effects of their work.

Nevertheless, together, the Knight-funded projects suggest lessons for operating, sustaining, and evaluating effective early childhood programs:

1. Funded services have to be the right services.
2. Quality drives program outcomes, but measuring quality is tricky.
3. Program intensity and duration must match the needs of the children and families being served.
4. Programs can only succeed if they are able to enroll and retain their clients.
5. Programs must respond to the increasing diversity of the child population.
6. Public-private partnerships increase the likelihood of program sustainability.
7. Evaluation matters.

Conclusions

In many ways, this is the right time – and the best time in recent memory – to strive to achieve transformational change in the early childhood field. Compelling research has demonstrated conclusively that the early years are the most important in creating the foundation for children’s success in school and life, so much so that Nobel-prize-winning economist James Heckman has argued, “The best evidence supports the policy prescription: invest in the very young...”¹ Further, research is clear about the service strategies and program content that are most effective. Public policies are following the research, as states such as Arizona and California have established new taxes to create dedicated funding streams for programs for children age 5 and under, and public and private funders nationally are establishing preschool programs for all young children. For foundations that seek to achieve transformational change in early childhood, where the availability of public funding ultimately will determine the success or failure of large-scale initiatives, the prospects for creating long-term change are brighter than they have been in many years.

The Knight Foundation’s grants exemplify how transformational change can be achieved in the early childhood field. The best of these grants have implemented effective strategies and have either taken advantage of new funding streams or have advocated successfully for expansions of existing funding streams to help institutionalize their programs. This final report of our cluster evaluation tracking Knight Foundation investments in early childhood from 2001-2007 demonstrates how those grantees are benefiting children and families and creating changes that will alter their communities for the better.

¹ Ounce of Prevention Fund and the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy Studies. *Invest in the Very Young*. <http://www.ounceofprevention.org/downloads/publications/Heckman.pdf>

Starting Out Right: A Cluster Evaluation of the Early Childhood Grants of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Year 3 Final Report

By

Lisa G. Klein, Ph.D. and Deanna S. Gomby, Ph.D. †

Introduction

In 2001, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation launched its Community Partners Program in 26 communities. Each community, guided by a local Advisory Committee and with the assistance of a community liaison program officer, selected areas of concentration and developed a Community Investment Plan. By December 2007, 125 early childhood grants, totaling more than \$50 million, had been awarded in 12 communities (See Table 1).

In August 2005, the Foundation contracted with consultants Lisa Klein and Deanna Gomby to conduct a cluster evaluation of the early childhood grants awarded through the Community Partners Program. The cluster evaluation had several purposes:

- To categorize the grants across communities into common goals and strategies
- To identify and track progress in grants with solid external and/or internal evaluations
- To synthesize the lessons learned from evaluation activities within each and across all 12 communities
- To provide technical assistance concerning evaluation to interested grantees. This work was to be done in conjunction with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), through a project funded via the Foundation's National Venture Fund. (This portion of the project was completed in 2006.)

Table 1.
Knight Foundation
Communities With a Focus
on Early Childhood

Aberdeen, South Dakota
Boulder, Colorado
Charlotte, North Carolina
Fort Wayne, Indiana
Lexington, Kentucky
Long Beach, California
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
St. Paul, Minnesota
San Jose, California
State College, Pennsylvania
Tallahassee, Florida
Wichita, Kansas

During our three-year evaluation, the Foundation underwent strategic planning that resulted in a new focus on transformational grantmaking. As described below, community

† We gratefully acknowledge Julie Tarr, as our primary Foundation contact, and all the program officers, grantees, and evaluators who kindly shared their time, opinions, reports, and data with us.

grantmaking changed in response to the Foundation's new emphasis, and our evaluation plan shifted, too.

While our earlier reports organized and reported results based on the goals and strategies of the original projects (e.g., mental health, dental health, early childhood education, and parent education), this report primarily emphasizes those grants that have yielded transformational change.² It nevertheless also summarizes the most compelling results of several other grants that may not meet the Foundation's definition of transformational but that demonstrate the overall impact of the Foundation's multi-year investment in early childhood. The report concludes with some of the lessons learned by Foundation's early childhood grantees about the best ways to undertake, sustain, and evaluate early childhood programs.

Methods

We conducted telephone interviews with program officers, selected grantees, and the external evaluators working with those grantees, and we reviewed written reports submitted by grantees during 2007. We asked program officers to update us on the 47 grants we were following this year,³ with a special focus on efforts that they felt met the Foundation's definition of transformational grantmaking. We asked about both individual grants as well as the cumulative impact of all their grants on the community. Our questions for grantees and/or their local evaluators were similar, but focused more on individual grants. (See Appendices 1 and 2 for interview protocols.)

Update on the Foundation's Early Childhood Investments

Results of this third and final year of our evaluation indicate:

- Knight funding has brought services to thousands of children and families.
- Knight grantees are implementing the "best practice" program strategies that experts agree *should* benefit children and families.
- Where tested, the strategies have indeed produced improvements in program quality and benefits for parents, children, and communities:
 - *Quality*: Increased levels of training and education among staff in preschool and child care programs, with consequent improvements in the quality of care offered to children;

² For results of grants organized by goals and strategies, see our earlier reports, and, especially, our Year 2 evaluation report, February 5, 2007.

³ The 47 early childhood grants reviewed for this report were awarded between 2001-2006, had previously been recommended for inclusion by their program officer, and were open during 2007 and/or submitted final reports during 2007.

- *Parents*: Better parenting skills, more confidence in their parenting skills, and greater levels of parent involvement in their children’s education, both before and after children enter school;
- *Children*: Improvements in early literacy skills and social and emotional development;
- *Communities*: Increases in neighborhood cohesion, community involvement, and systems of services for children and families.

These outcomes are not seen in every grant, of course, but some of the best projects *are* transformational. These grants demonstrate positive outcomes, and the connections grantees have forged with state and local policymakers suggest that their efforts will change the way business is done in those communities, be sustained over time, and will be replicated in other communities.

We note, however, that the Foundation’s recent strategic planning has had profound effects on grantmaking in the communities. All program officers reported that early childhood grantmaking was unlikely to remain a primary grantmaking focus in their communities. No new early childhood grants were awarded in 2007, and, in a few communities, previously awarded planning grants were not followed by the implementation grants that the program officers had anticipated. As of the end of 2007, all Knight Foundation early childhood grants will have closed in Aberdeen, Charlotte, and Tallahassee, and only San Jose will have more than three early childhood grants continuing into 2008. Table 2 lists the number of Knight grants, by community, whose findings are included in this report, and Table 3 shows scheduled closing dates of the 27 grants slated to continue at least into 2008. Appendices 3-9 provide additional details of the grants included in this report.

Table 2. Grants Included in This Report, By Community	
Community	Number of Grants
Aberdeen	2
Boulder	5
Charlotte	4
Fort Wayne	4
Lexington	5
Long Beach	4
Philadelphia	4
St. Paul	2
San Jose	10
State College	2
Tallahassee	1
Wichita	4
TOTALS	47

Table 3. Continuing Grants, By Community			
Community	Scheduled Year of Completion		
	2008	2009	2010
Aberdeen			
Boulder	2		
Charlotte			
Fort Wayne	1	2	
Lexington	2	1	
Long Beach		2	
Philadelphia	1		1
St. Paul		2	
San Jose	4	4	
State College	2		
Tallahassee	1		
Wichita	1	2	
TOTALS	13 (48%)	13 (48%)	1 (4%)

Description of Grants

The Foundation’s early childhood grants focused on giving young children (ages birth – 8) the best possible start in life, especially children in low income communities, children of color, and children for whom English is a second language. Research consistently demonstrates that high-quality interventions for such children can pay off in long-term benefits such as increased rates of high school graduation, fewer behavior problems in school, less crime and delinquency outside of school, and higher incomes as adults.⁴

These early childhood grants fall squarely within commonly accepted definitions of programs designed to enhance children’s school readiness.⁵ In our November 2005 report, we categorized the grants into five clusters, based primarily on their objectives. Table 4 defines each of the clusters, and Appendix 3 lists all the grants reviewed for this report and the clusters into which they fall. Some grants fall into multiple clusters (e.g., family literacy programs that provide parenting education and adult education services to parents as well as center-based early childhood educational services for children; early childhood education programs that seek to improve the quality of their services by increasing parent involvement).

⁴ For reviews of this research, see Karoly, L.A., Greenwood, P.W., Everingham, S.S., Hoube, J., Kilburn, MR., Rydell, C.P. et al. (1998). *Investing in our future: What we know and don't know about the costs and benefits of early childhood interventions*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation; *The Future of Children*, 15(1), Spring 2005.

⁵ National Education Goals Panel, 1995. *Reconsidering Children's Early Development and Learning: Toward Common Views and Vocabulary*. Washington, DC: National Education Goals Panel.
<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/negp/Reports/child-ea.htm>

Of special note, most of the transformational grants highlighted in this report are systemic change grants that also emphasize a particular content area (e.g., mental health, parent education, or early childhood education).

Table 4. Grant Clusters and Definitions	
Cluster	Definition
Mental health 7 grants	Strategies related to screening for mental health or behavioral problems, and/or linking children to or providing services designed to improve their mental health.
Dental health 4 grants	Strategies related to screening for dental health problems, linking children to or providing services designed to improve their dental health, and/or educating parents, caregivers, and children about good dental health practices.
Early childhood education 18 grants	Strategies related to improving the quality or availability of home- or center-based early childhood education services. Typically, provider education, training, and professional development projects, but may also include capital improvements, purchase of equipment or materials, incorporation of new services, and/or inclusion of a new curriculum.
Parent education/parent involvement 16 grants	Strategies designed to (1) help parents improve their parenting skills, their knowledge about financial matters, or improve their own educational or professional skills; or (2) increase their involvement in their children’s education, their leadership skills, or their ability to serve as advocates for their children.
Systems change 9 grants	Strategies that seek to coordinate delivery of a variety of services to families (e.g., case management, providing health and mental health services at a child care program), and/or that seek to create operational efficiencies among like programs (e.g., technical assistance to help four early childhood programs work together to strengthen their management and family support practices), and/or that seek to create change in the delivery of services on a community-wide or systems-wide basis (e.g., creating a community-wide, uniform approach to screening and treatment of children’s mental health).
NOTE: Numbers of grants in this Table refer to the number of grants that were included in this report. Total is greater than 47 because some grants fall into two clusters.	

The Foundation’s Transformational Early Childhood Grants

Beginning in 2005, the Knight Foundation began a fundamental shift in practice “to look beyond the merely good to the transformational.”⁶ With new leadership, a new strategic plan, and renewed energy and commitment, the Knight Foundation embraced a new way of doing

⁶ Knight Foundation Annual Report, 2005, p. 3.

business: transformational grantmaking. As described in the Foundation's 2006 *Annual Report*, transformational projects emphasize systems, networks, and scale⁷:

We think the ideal transformational grant:

- *Has the potential to create systemic change, affecting an underlying system or structure by addressing root causes. Systemic change often requires innovation and discovery, and always aspires to enduring, sustainable change.*
- *Enjoys or will likely enjoy broad support, manifested through the collaboration of multiple community stakeholders, and will magnify awareness of an issue.*
- *Is either at the scale of the problem it attempts to address or is scalable, replicable or part of a phased approach.*

Successful transformational ideas:

- *Will have visionary leadership, will be carried out by a capable team working through a strong network of support, will build on a feasible execution plan and will use an approach, whether innovative or well-tested, appropriate to the context.*
- *Will present an appropriate level of risk.*

In addition, transformation requires discovery, vision, courage, know how, and tenacity,⁸ and, according to Foundation President Alberto Ibarguen, time, commitment, and risk.⁹ The transformational grants highlighted in this report illustrate the importance of these characteristics.

Implications of the Emphasis on Transformation for Early Childhood Grantmaking

The Knight Foundation's emphasis on transformation, systems, networks, and scale have important implications for grantmaking related to the early childhood field, because the early childhood field has long been composed of multiple, under-funded systems that do not network together.

Systems. The emphasis on systems change as part of transformational grantmaking poses a particular challenge for the early childhood field because there is no single system that focuses on young children in most communities. Rather, services for young children are splintered across multiple systems (e.g., health, mental health, early education, public schools, and other social services), financed through multiple funding streams, and governed by multiple agencies. And, even within a single would-be system, such as early education,

⁷ John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. *Transformation: Annual Report 2006*. Miami, FL: John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, p. 49.

⁸ Annual Report, 2005.

⁹ Annual Report, 2006.

there is usually little consistency across programs with respect to goals for children, regulations for program quality, or training requirements for staff.

Networks. Because early childhood services are delivered by multiple agencies and systems, it is imperative that these services work together if children are to succeed. Even the best child care and preschool program cannot prepare children for success in school if children are too hungry or sick to concentrate. Even the best schools cannot repair all the damage done to children who are growing up in homes with abusive or neglectful parents.

In other words, the establishment of a team or network of partners committed to a single goal such as school readiness is imperative in the early childhood field. Such teams are often led by visionary and charismatic leaders. According to David Gergen, “the role of transformation is to become a leader of leaders...to empower those at the lowest levels to become leaders in their own right....then you unleash the true transformative power of the whole team.”¹⁰

Scale. The Knight Foundation’s definition of transformational projects implies that a single project that successfully serves a limited number of children or families may be positive, but it is not sufficient. Instead, the Foundation seeks to take small successes to scale, so that the impact is felt well beyond the Foundation’s initial investment. The challenges in applying this to the early childhood field are two-fold: (1) most of the Foundation’s early childhood grantmaking has focused on human services. To deliver such services at scale to low-income families who cannot cover the costs of those services themselves, public funding is likely to be necessary. (2) But, many of the early childhood services supported through Foundation grants are either new or not typically supported through existing public funding streams. The Foundation’s transformational early childhood projects, therefore, are those that have won expansions in public funding, leveraged other capital, and/or have developed innovative ways of financing services.

These comments about scale focus on the extent to which Knight-funded efforts are moving to scale. But, several of the Knight Foundation grantees can also be viewed as replication sites for national programs that are being taken to scale (e.g., grantees in Charlotte and Wichita where the Creative Curriculum is being used in preschool classrooms; the Nurse Family Partnership home visiting program in Philadelphia; the Parents as Teachers program in Charlotte, Tallahassee, and Wichita; The Incredible Years curriculum in San Jose, St. Paul, and Wichita). In all these sites, the Foundation supported expansion and scaling up of programs that have been demonstrated to be effective in other locales.

¹⁰ Annual Report, 2006, p. 7

Results of Transformational Grants

The following sections describe some of the Foundation's early childhood grants that we believe meet the Foundation's definition of transformational projects and best exemplify the characteristics of systems, networks, and scale. We provide data when available and describe how Foundation investments are contributing to the kinds of social change that can transform communities and ultimately improve the lives of young children and families.

The grants include projects that are designed to transform a single system (e.g., the early learning system in Wichita, Boulder, and Philadelphia; the mental health system in St. Paul; the public school system in Lexington); as well as projects designed to link together services from multiple systems (e.g., San Jose). Most of these programs are slated to continue operations for one or two more years, and so the following highlights progress but not the final outcomes of the projects.

Building an Effective Early Learning System in Wichita and Serving as a Model for Kansas

Wichita, Kansas

The Opportunity Project
\$1,726,500 over 6 years

In Wichita, the Knight Foundation and its grantees are striving to improve the early learning system so young children (particularly low income children) are prepared to succeed in school. The Knight Foundation has invested in The Opportunity Project (TOP),

emphasizing systems, networks, and scale, to provide comprehensive preschool experiences for preschool-age children. The program was created by Barry Downing, a local entrepreneur who used his knowledge about building successful businesses to develop two model comprehensive early learning centers. The Knight Foundation joined forces with Mr. Downing and is investing in one of the key TOP programs, the *I Can Problem Solve* curriculum to help preschoolers develop the social and emotional skills they need to lay the groundwork for later school success.

TOP has been guided by principles that include a focus on quality and accountability. In an external evaluation, teachers reported that after children participated in *I Can Problem Solve* for one year, 84% demonstrated improved behavior. Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius cited TOP as an example of a successful public-private partnership in her state of the state address in 2006, and the state's largest newspaper, the *Kansas City Star*, recently highlighted the program and its positive results.

Seizing on the opportunity to leverage public awareness and support, the Knight Foundation's community program officer is working with Governor Sebelius and Mr. Downing to try to integrate the TOP sites into the state's pre-kindergarten (preschool) pilot project in 2008. The additional public funds would make it possible to sustain the program and, if positive results continue, potentially take the model to scale across Kansas.

As Knight Foundation staff establish networks with policymakers such as the Governor and the Children’s Cabinet, the potential for long-term sustainable change grows. According to Knight Foundation program officer Anne Corrison, “We helped connect the partners, and now we are working to extend the partnership. With the help of individuals like Barry, local and state funds, and continued support of the Governor, we’ll be able to sustain some of these programs and have a real good shot at improving early learning for lots of young children in Wichita and all across Kansas.”

Building an Early Care and Education System in Boulder, Colorado

<p>Boulder, Colorado</p> <p>Early Care and Education Council of Boulder County \$70,000</p>
--

Communities and states across the country are increasingly seeking ways to create a system out of the disparate early care and education programs that exist in most communities: home- and center-based child care programs, preschools, and full- and part-day programs. With pivotal funding from the

Knight Foundation, public and private policymakers, program administrators, and representatives of the business community are working together to plan just such a system in Boulder.

A 2003 Knight-funded report on school readiness of Latino children in Boulder County¹¹ sparked the notion of developing a comprehensive early childhood system plan, aimed at assuring that all children in the county have access to the quality early care and education, health, and mental health services they need to be prepared for success in school and life.

With a 2005 grant to the Early Care and Education Council in Boulder County, the planning began in earnest. Community members, including Knight grantees, as well as representatives of government and business, joined together to develop the plan. The written plan will provide a rationale for the importance of the early years; describe the need for early childhood services in the community; establish standards for high-quality, comprehensive services and staff qualifications; estimate the cost; and outline recommendations.

Although Knight Foundation funding has ended, planning has continued with funding from a federal grant, the State of Colorado, and the city and county of Boulder. A new Financing Task Force will provide specific recommendations for how funds should be raised (e.g., via taxes, creation of a public-private funding pool, etc.) and distributed, and Task Force members will serve as “cause champions” to advocate for implementation of the report’s eventual recommendations. The final report is slated to be issued in 2009.

¹¹ Early Care and Education Council of Boulder County. (2003). *Promoting school readiness for Latino children in Boulder County: Combining best practices, family needs and preferences, and community assets*. Author: Boulder, Colorado.

Although planning continues, the process has already led to some important accomplishments:

- Both the Boulder City Council and the Boulder County Commission have endorsed the planning process and some of its key principles. As a result:
 - Both have committed funding to continue the planning.
 - Both have expanded funding provided for child care subsidies for low income families.
- Recommendations that emerge from the early childhood comprehensive system planning will be incorporated into the County’s Human Services Strategic Plan, thereby making sure that the work will be sustained and implemented.

“The Knight funding has laid the groundwork for change,” said Karen Rahn, co-chair of the Planning Council. State policymakers, working on a parallel statewide early childhood plan, are looking toward Boulder for recommendations and suggestions.

Enhancing Early Literacy in Philadelphia and Connecting to Pennsylvania’s Statewide Early Care and Education System

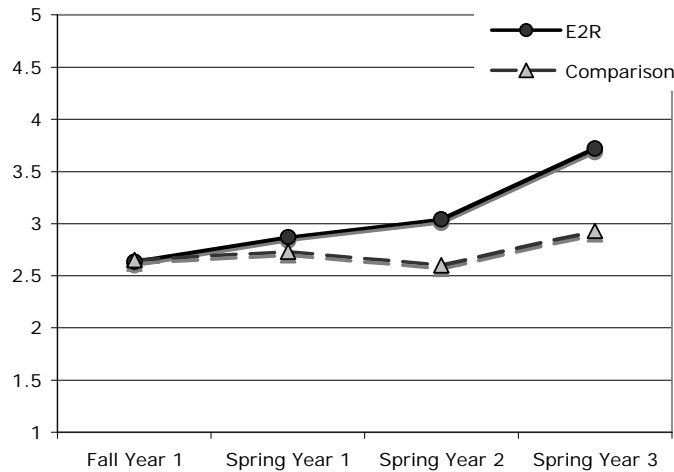
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania (Early to Read and Raising a Reader)
\$2,600,000 over 6 years in two grants

The Knight Foundation has made multiple investments in Philadelphia over the past three years to increase emergent literacy so young children are prepared to be successful in school.

The Foundation’s grant to the United Way will continue through 2008 and supports two primary activities: (1) training and support to help preschool teachers implement the *Early to Read (E2R)* literacy curriculum; and (2) the Raising a Reader parent support and book-lending program to encourage parents to read to their children at home. An external evaluation is tracking results, using the Support for Early Literacy Assessment (SELA) to gauge the effectiveness of the preschool literacy program. At the end of 2007, the quality of the classroom environment and its ability to promote children’s literacy were significantly higher in the 16 E2R classrooms than in 14 comparison classrooms (see Figure 1). The E2R classrooms also showed improvements on several SELA sub-scales (see Appendix 10 for additional details.).

**Figure 1. Literacy-Promoting Classroom Environments in Philadelphia:
Total SELA Scores for E2R and Comparison Classrooms for Years 1, 2, and 3**



Participating center directors reported that E2R’s academic coursework helped improve teachers’ skills. In contrast, teachers reported that the coursework was useful but that the most helpful elements of the professional development program were observations of peers and coaching by literacy mentors who helped them put the information that they learned in their coursework into practice in their classrooms.

Teachers also reported benefits for children, such as earlier recognition of children’s names, letters of the alphabet, and words in general than displayed by children in comparison classrooms. With such positive results, the teachers say that they plan to use the new literacy strategies with other classrooms, which would extend benefits to other children.

Parents also reported benefits. They endorsed the *Raising a Reader* program and reported that they are now reading to their children more frequently at home.

The Knight Foundation is attempting to sustain these and other Knight-funded literacy programs by leveraging state early learning funds. For example, some of the Knight-funded literacy programs operate in the Abbott School District, which receives state funds to provide quality preschool to low-income children. If E2R and Raising a Reader continue to produce good results, they might become incorporated into state-funded Abbott preschool classrooms. In addition, Knight Foundation program officer Matt Bergheiser and United Way staff have participated in discussions aimed at adding ratings related to literacy to Pennsylvania’s Keystone Stars quality rating system for all early childhood programs. If this were to occur, then the Knight Foundation’s focus on early literacy would become a focus for every child care and preschool program in Pennsylvania.

Creating an Agenda for Community-Wide Change in San Jose

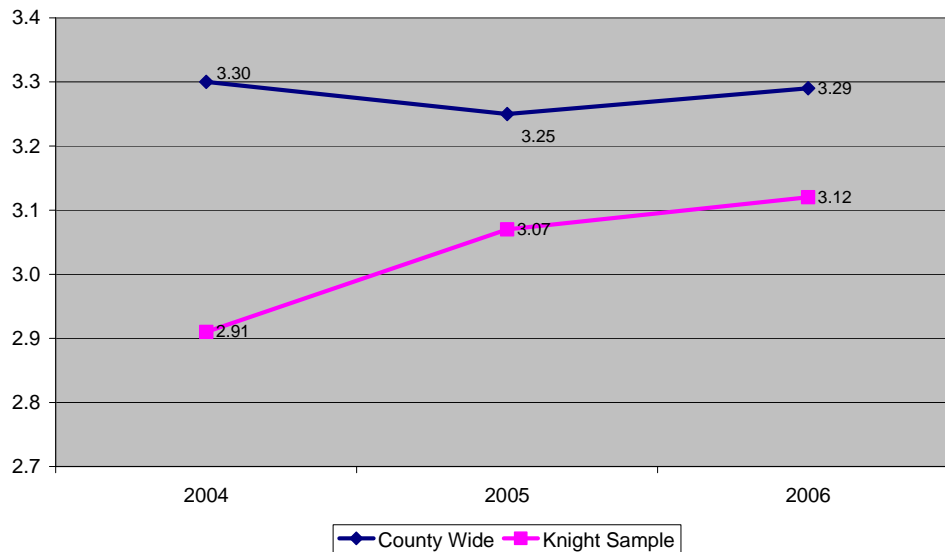
San Jose, California
Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness
\$150,000 over 3 years

The Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness brings together the largest public and private funders in Santa Clara County to discuss and plan for joint funding approaches to promote children’s school readiness. The Knight Foundation was one of the initial (and largest) funders of the Partnership, and the Foundation’s involvement helped encourage other funders to participate. For one of their first joint projects, the Partnership members agreed to support the development and implementation of the first-ever measure of school readiness for entering kindergartners in the county.

Conducted each year from 2004-06, the measure assesses teachers’ perspectives of children’s readiness for school. Results suggest that about half the entering kindergartners in the county are not prepared for school, a rate that has held steady over the past 3 years. In contrast, children’s readiness for school *improved* in neighborhoods where the Knight Foundation had concentrated its funding.¹² Although children in those low-income neighborhoods still lagged behind their more well-to-do peers throughout the county, much of the gap that existed between the groups in 2004 had been erased by 2006 (see Figure 2, which compares county-wide and Knight neighborhood average school readiness scores on a 4-point scale).

Figure 2.

School Readiness Scores of Children Entering Kindergarten in Santa Clara County and Knight Foundation Neighborhoods



¹² The Knight Foundation supported an over-sample of children in neighborhoods where it had concentrated its funding as a way of assessing the effectiveness of its grantmaking (see also the description below on the Stepping Stones and GANAS projects for more detail on the Foundation’s San Jose-area grantmaking.).

The Knight-funded school readiness measure used in Santa Clara County is now also being used in at least two other counties in California, and as far away as Lake County, Illinois. In Santa Clara County, the results of the readiness assessments have garnered press attention and spurred the members of the Partnership to undertake new initiatives focusing on two key issues identified via the assessments: Children’s social-emotional development and the school readiness of children who are English Language Learners.

This grant therefore illustrates how assessments of school readiness can be used to create an agenda for action as well as to measure the effectiveness of community-wide foundation initiatives. Further, the grant illustrates that who supports a school readiness assessment is important: Because the assessment was conducted under the auspices of a network of the largest public and private funders in the county, the new directions and initiatives suggested by the assessment results are likely to be translated into future action.

Building an Early Childhood Mental Health System in St. Paul and Ramsey County

St. Paul, Minnesota
Foundations for Success
\$2,625,000 over 5 years

The Knight Foundation has invested more than \$2.6 million to build an early childhood mental health system in Ramsey County. Foundations for Success (FfS) is a collaboration of over 100 partners aiming to create a county-wide seamless system of early childhood mental health by increasing awareness about the importance of this issue, the prevention of future problems in children with early warning signs, and the availability and accessibility of services for children already experiencing problems. The comprehensive services, the scale of the project, the breadth of the networks that have been established, and the results from an external evaluation have already been documented in a videotape sponsored by the Foundation and in an independent report¹³ presented to the Knight Foundation Board of Directors.

The FfS comprehensive system consists of screening, prevention, immediate physician referral, parent education, day treatment, *The Incredible Years* preschool curriculum, and therapeutic treatment services in early learning settings. Screening programs to identify children with mental health difficulties have already reached more than 12,000 of the 50,000 children slated to be screened over the course of the 5-year grant. Other programs reach fewer children, but the prospects for statewide replication of the FfS system are being explored this year. Knight Foundation program officer Polly Talen reports, “The lead grantees and I are talking with the Minnesota State Department of Social Services about how to secure more public funds to sustain and grow the FfS model.”

¹³Margaret Walker. (May 2007). *Telling the Story: How Foundations for Success is Transforming the Lives of Young Children, Their Families, and Their Communities in Ramsey County, Minnesota.*

In addition, the network of 100 partners involved in FfS represent all the key decision makers, program administrators, and advocates who need to be involved in St. Paul if the project is to succeed: mental health agencies, Head Start, child care, the Children's Physician Network, the county's five largest school districts, and the University of Minnesota. At bi-monthly meetings, partners review existing services, discuss challenges, brainstorm solutions for improving services or outreach, monitor outcomes, and plan statewide advocacy to expand mental health services.

External evaluators from Wilder Research report the following results at the halfway point of the grant:

- Of the 12,000 children who have been screened for potential problems using the standardized *Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social and Emotional*, well over half (60%) of parents whose children scored in the potential problem range followed up with the recommended service referrals, which should result in the prevention of many later problems.
- The more than 400 children who attended preschool that used *The Incredible Years* curriculum had more positive interactions with their teachers, parents, and other students than did children in preschools without the curriculum. Before the program, parents and teachers reported that over half (53%) of the children had difficulty with behaviors such as handling emotions, paying attention, or getting along with others, while only 39% had difficulty after the program ended.
- In 2007, parents surveyed before and after they participated in parent groups associated with *The Incredible Years* reported significant improvement in their parenting skills (e.g., using appropriate discipline and setting clear expectations).

Wilder Research is also monitoring the implementation of the new system:

- A steering committee has been formed to institutionalize a leadership structure that will last beyond the grant and maintain the system over time.
- Despite service expansions, three-quarters of FfS partners still have long waiting lists. But, in a promising development, four of the main partners now receive reimbursement from public (Medicaid) and private health insurers to cover the costs of screening and follow-up treatment services – which should help expand services further.
- In 2007, FfS increased its efforts to share information and results with nearby regional foundations to help sustain and grow the system.

Increasing Parental Involvement in Children's Education In Lexington

Lexington, Kentucky

One Community One Voice

\$870,000 over 4 years in two grants

Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence

\$539,000 over 3 years

Two investments in Lexington are working together to increase awareness about the importance of early learning and, in particular, to help parents and schools work together to increase children's success in school. One Community, One Voice (OCOV) strives

to increase parent involvement in education and to motivate children to seek academic excellence. The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence provides a 3-day parent leadership institute to help parents of preschoolers, early learning center directors, and preschool teachers work together to increase family involvement in early childhood programs and improve children's academic achievement.

One Community, One Voice (OCOV) has already been the subject of a Foundation-sponsored video, and it continues to be a catalyst for transforming the way parents, particularly low-income parents of color, are involved in their children's education. There are three dimensions to the OCOV initiative:

- Annual Back to School Rallies held each August
- The Academic Challenge
- Training programs for school staff, focusing on communicating with and involving parents.

In 2007, more than 2,800 children and families participated in Back to School Rallies in nine Lexington neighborhoods. Thirty-three schools and more than 400 students, parents, and representatives from schools, churches, neighborhood organizations, and community groups actively participated in the Academic Challenge.

The University of Kentucky has helped the school district establish a monitoring system to evaluate increased parent involvement and to track how effectively program strategies are being implemented. Results suggest that principals, teachers, parents, and students believe parent involvement is important, but their perceptions of how much communication and involvement is occurring vary, suggesting that some changes might be warranted to increase involvement even more:

- *Community-wide efforts:* A telephone survey of parents and guardians who received invitations but did not attend the rallies or academic challenge revealed that many never received information about the event, were unable to read the information because of language difficulties, or were unable to attend due to transportation problems or work schedule conflicts. These data are being used to make appropriate

changes in marketing to focus attention on families who speak languages other than English, and to help parents get to next year's event.

- *School-home communication:* Principals and teachers report making more efforts to communicate with parents than parents report receiving. Not surprisingly, parents say that some teachers are doing an excellent job of communicating while others are not, but they agree that they want more information about how to help their children at home and talk with teachers so their children do better in school.
- *Home involvement:* Similarly, students reported that some parents and guardians were very involved in their education and schools and others were not. But, overall, students reported lower less communication and involvement occurred than their parents and teachers reported.

OCOV and the Prichard Committee have close working ties. OCOV's outreach and recruitment have resulted in increased parent enrollment in the Prichard Committee's parent leadership training program for teachers and parents of preschoolers. The Prichard Committee training seeks to increase parents' participation with their children as well as on leadership committees and decision-making boards. The leadership training is producing results: So far, three of the five member of the Fayette County School Board are graduates of the Prichard Committee program.

Sustaining programs and parent involvement has been a focus of both grantees during 2007. The school district has committed to continuing the Academic Challenge even after the Knight Foundation grant ends. OCOV facilitates quarterly meetings of all Knight Foundation grantees in Lexington. The group compiled a matrix of services and is distributing it across Fayette County to give parents information about community resources that can help their children succeed in school. In addition, the Network provides information about parent involvement and school-parent partnerships to the Mayor on an ongoing basis, resulting in recommendations used by the city council and in a 2007 Community Summit led by the Mayor.

Creating a New System of Services for Families and Children in San Jose

Fewer than half of Santa Clara County's kindergartners are ready for school, according to a Knight-funded 2006 survey of entering kindergartners (described above).¹⁴ The children who are the least prepared are those who haven't attended preschool, aren't proficient in English, aren't exposed to frequent reading in the home, and live in low-income families and/or with single parents, teen mothers, or parents with low parental education. Preparing these

¹⁴ The survey was conducted by the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness, a Knight Foundation grantee.

San Jose, California

San Jose Education Foundation (Stepping Stones program)
\$2,100,000 over 5 years

GoKids, Inc. (GANAS program)
\$2,285,000 over 5 years

children for success in school means providing them with access to high-quality preschool as well as helping their parents learn how they can promote their children's development and improve their own educational and financial situations.

These twin goals – helping children *and* their parents – have been the goals of the Knight Foundation's early childhood grantmaking and the goals of the Stepping Stones and GANAS projects in Santa Clara County. The Foundation selected neighborhoods in Santa Clara County where children have been least likely to do well in school and then funded many health and human service programs to deliver services to those children and their families. In each neighborhood, a key agency (the San Jose Education Foundation in one neighborhood and GoKids in another) was selected to outreach to the primarily Spanish-speaking immigrant families and provide case management services to make sure that families received needed services.

Many of the services to which families are referred are provided by other Knight Foundation grantees. For example, in the neighborhood served by the Stepping Stones program, the Health Trust helps enroll families in available health insurance and provides dental care; Catholic Charities provides free tax preparation assistance to residents; Lenders for Community Development helps families build assets via Individual Development Accounts where families' savings are matched with contributions from the Knight Foundation; and Choices for Children helps home-based license-exempt child care providers improve the quality of the care they provide. Other community agencies provide other services.

Each program has served hundreds of families. GANAS collects extensive data, having invested in a database that all partner agencies are required to use to record services that families receive, and data show benefits for children and parents, as well as important changes in the neighborhood.

Early Kindergarten Enrollment. A key goal for the local elementary school in Glen View (the GoKids neighborhood) was to increase the percentage of children who enrolled in kindergarten before the year started so that the principal could plan for the right number of classes and appropriate curriculum in the coming school year. In 2003-04, before GANAS started, just 45% of parents pre-registered their children in kindergarten, compared to 83% in 2007-08. (See Appendix 10 for figures that detail results mentioned here.)

Children's Early Literacy and School Readiness. Children whose families participated in one or more of the parenting services provided by GANAS scored higher on a language and early literacy test given by the Gilroy Unified School District than the did the average

kindergartner in the district (mean score of 3.39 for GANAS children versus 3.0 for kindergarteners overall).

Adult Literacy. Pre- and post-tests showed that the 66 parents who participated in in-home job skills/English as a Second Language training through GANAS improved their adult literacy skills significantly (see Appendix 10). These changes are important because national research convincingly demonstrates that children do better when they grow up in households with better educated, more literate parents.

Neighborhood Change. The GANAS project seeks to develop a sense of community identity and connection among Glen View residents, and participating residents who were surveyed twice about their neighborhood report feeling more connected to and involved in their community over time (see Appendix 10). Those feelings reflect action: GANAS-sponsored community events now routinely draw 300 - 400 residents, and 30 or more volunteers, drawn largely through their participation in GANAS services, usually manage the events.

Indeed, both Stepping Stones and GANAS staff see transformational changes in their neighborhoods. The programs' offices have become "one-stop shops" for families seeking health and social services, as other agencies have co-located services there. For example, the local utility (PG&E) has placed staff in the Stepping Stones office so that families can pay their bills in person.

In the GANAS neighborhood, a leadership group of individuals who have received GANAS services has formed. This group will merge with an already existing neighborhood association, so that, even when Knight funding ends, this expanded neighborhood association will continue to meet, organize, and address community needs. GoKids is coaching the residents about grantseeking, and the leadership group has already won a small grant from a local community foundation. Local merchants now sponsor an annual Christmas party for the community, and community members raised \$13,000 to help a family whose son died in 2006. According to Dionisio Palencia, the GANAS program coordinator, none of these activities would have occurred prior to GANAS.

Together, the results of these two projects show how making health and social services accessible to families can yield benefits for children, families, and the neighborhood, and how the Foundation's efforts to link its grantees together in networks united in common purpose can produce larger benefits than when programs work alone.

Results of Grants Open During 2007

The grants highlighted above contain the elements that the Foundation has suggested are essential for transformational projects. But, our review revealed several other grants that also produced important changes, such as improvements in the quality of services delivered and benefits for children, parents, and the broader system of services in a community. Not all grantees evaluated such changes, but the following highlights those changes that appear to be the most consistent across projects where measurement did occur.

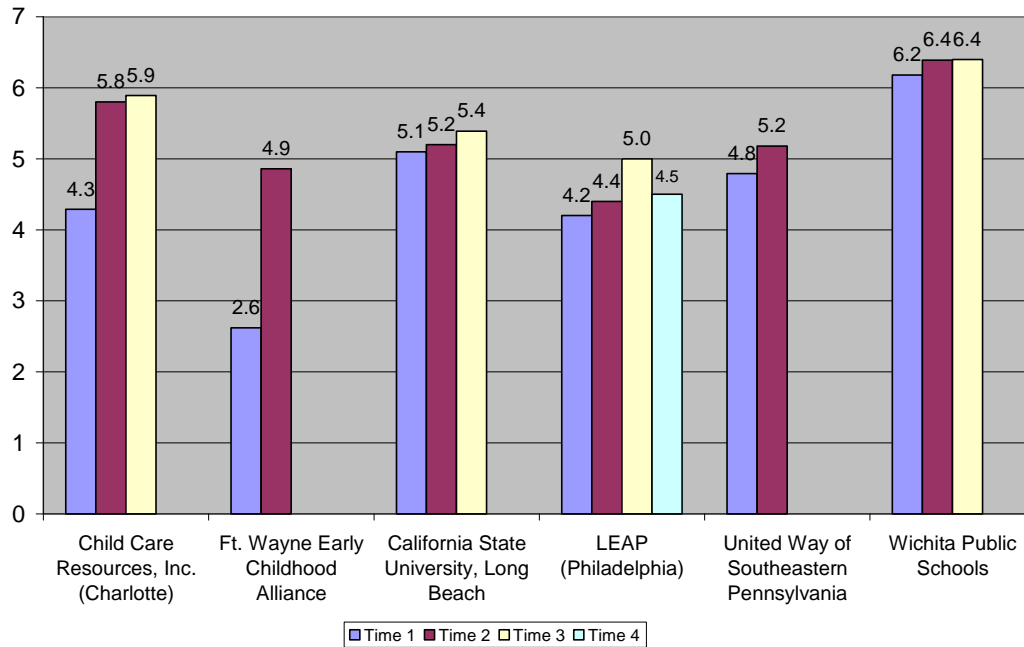
Changes in the Quality of Program Services

Many grantees focused on improving the quality of early childhood education (i.e., child care, preschool) services, usually by providing more training and professional development opportunities for teachers (see Appendix 6 for descriptions of the strategies employed by grantees). Several grantees measured their progress via the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), which assesses on a seven-point scale the extent to which the classroom's physical environment and the teacher's instructional techniques promote children's development. Figure 3 depicts the improvement in quality in participating classrooms in six Knight-funded programs.¹⁵ Results show that classroom quality generally continues to improve over time as the new instructional strategies teachers are learning becomes a natural part of their repertoires. As Suzanne Caruso at the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania says, "...it takes time to build quality but we must continue to do everything we can to make that happen, or we won't get any of the results we want for young children."

¹⁵ Results depicted are the average ECERS scores for participating classrooms in each year. Because participating programs sometimes changed, the classrooms rated in a community in one year sometimes differed from those rated in subsequent years. The Ft. Wayne project was completed in 2006, but is included in Figure 3 so as to provide a consolidated record of this outcome. Data from the fourth and final year of the California State University, Long Beach project are forthcoming.

Figure 3.

**Quality Improvement in Centers:
Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS)**



Benefits for Children

Programs also produced benefits for children in physical health, oral health, and school readiness. For example:

- Physical Health.* In the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) program in State College, nurses visit low-income first-time mothers in their homes, beginning during pregnancy and continuing until children are two years of age, to help mothers learn how to promote their children’s health and development. Children in the State College program were less likely to be born low birth weight or premature than other children enrolled in NFP programs in Pennsylvania or across the nation. They were also more likely to be breastfed for longer periods of time, which provides protection for children’s health. (See Appendix 10 for additional details and results.)
- Oral Health (dental health).* In St. Paul, the Partnership for Improving Children’s Oral Health is a collaborative working to improve oral health for new immigrants, refugees, and low income and minority children. After an evaluation showed a 46% decrease in risk of severe dental problems during the past year, the United Way contributed \$460,000 to expand the model to two other counties.
- Oral health.* Community Health Services of Mecklenburg County in Charlotte provided oral health education in child care programs across the community, recruited dental care providers to deliver dental care to low-income children, organized free dental care days, and advocated for expansion of dental care services

to low-income families. The local school district assesses the dental health of all entering kindergarteners each year. The incidence of untreated decay among kindergartners declined steadily from 13% in 2001-02 to 9% in 2005-06, suggesting that the Community Health Services' activities are resulting in benefits for children.

- *Child Development.* The Child Care Resources, Inc. program in Charlotte sought to promote children's development by improving the quality of instruction in several child care centers. Children's social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development were scored on a four-point scale twice each year. In the most recent year, the percentage of children scoring at the top two levels of the scale approximately doubled between Fall and Spring for physical (motor) development and tripled for social/emotional, cognitive, and language development.¹⁶ (See Appendix 10 for additional details.)
- *Child Development.* The Cambodian Association of America's family literacy program in Long Beach provided early childhood education services for children and parenting education and adult education for their parents. In the most recent year of the project, participating children showed improvements in receptive vocabulary and in recognition of letters of the alphabet.¹⁷
- *Child Development.* In Ft. Wayne, the Community Action summer social skills program sought to help children who had been referred because of behavior problems with their preschool peers learn new social skills. Staff ratings of children's coping behavior and emotional reactions show that the children have improved when it comes to cooperating with their peers. However, they still need help decreasing aggression and developing more age-appropriate ways of dealing with their anger and frustration, suggesting that these children may need more intensive services over a longer period of time.

Benefits for Parents

Several Knight-funded projects provided adult education or parenting programs. Not all programs measured the changes they produced, but the following highlights some examples where Knight-funded programs benefited parents, too.

- *Adult literacy:* After participation in adult education services offered by the Cambodian Association of America, parents showed a modest 2.5-point gain on the CASAS, which is a standardized test of adult literacy.
- *Parenting skills:* The Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition offered parent education and support groups to primarily Spanish-speaking fathers and mothers in Boulder.

¹⁶ The percentages of children rated at Step II and III on the Creative Curriculum continuum of development were as follows for Fall 2006/07 and Spring 2006/07, respectively: Physical development (gross motor) – 46.7%, 97.5%; physical development (fine motor) – 40.6%, 92.6%; social-emotional development – 30.3%, - 90.6%; cognitive development 28.7%, 87.3%; language development – 35.2%, 81%.

¹⁷ 3-year-olds identified 7 letters at pretest and 17 at post-test, as measured by the PALS PreK. Their average gain in receptive language was 12.2 standard score points (from 85.3 at pretest to 97.5 at post-test on the PPVT III).

- After participating, parents reported that they were more likely to engage in activities with their children (e.g., outdoor activities, school readiness activities, playing together, and asking children to help with housework) – all of which have been associated with benefits in child development in national research. Parents also indicated they were more likely to participate in their children’s education at school.
- *Parenting skills:* The CARES program in Wichita provides Parents as Teachers home visits to low-income parents with young children. After participating in the program, 80% of parents reported that they knew more about how to promote their children’s language skills and how to find necessary community services to help keep their children safe and healthy.
 - *Parenting skills:* Rainbows United in Wichita provides parent education and support groups based on *The Incredible Years*, a national parent education model that focuses on children’s social and emotional development. Surveys of participating parents show that parents feel more confident about their parenting skills after participating in the Incredible Years parent groups.
 - *Economic benefits:* Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County provided free tax preparation services to the primarily immigrant families in a San Jose neighborhood. Over three years, services yielded more than \$2.9 million in tax refunds and \$1.4 million in Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) refunds for neighborhood residents. In 2006, the EITC refunds secured through Catholic Charities represented 60% of all EITC returns in Santa Clara County.
 - *Economic benefits:* Lenders for Community Development (L4CD) in San Jose provides financial education to parents and seeks to enroll parents in Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). IDAs match funds that families save with funds provided by foundations and the federal government. The Knight Foundation supported the creation of IDAs for families with preschoolers to help parents set aside money to be used for the college education of their preschoolers. L4CD executive director Eric Weaver believes this is the only such IDA program in the nation. Results show that participating families have gradually increased their savings from an average of \$38 per month in 2005 to \$58 per month in 2007. As of September 2007, clients had saved \$165,794, which had been matched by \$310,146 from the Knight Foundation.

Changes in the Early Childhood Professional Development System

Some grants also produced changes in the higher education systems in their communities, such that the approaches developed through the Knight-funded programs have become part of the college system. For example:

- The *Community Foundation of Silicon Valley* in San Jose established a literacy network, designed to bring together advocates and programs to increase literacy activities within Santa Clara County. One product of the network was the creation of a

- community college course to help new child care providers learn how to promote literacy skills among young children.
- *Allegro Foundation* in Charlotte established a continuing education program in which preschool teachers can earn license-maintaining credit by learning the early intervention, disability awareness, and movement education techniques that Allegro uses to help children with disabilities thrive in preschool.
 - *Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition* in Boulder: a bilingual Child Development Associate program (the first step for many child care teachers in gaining a Bachelor's degree) was established at a local community college, and the community college has taken on the responsibility of counseling and supporting the Latina women who are enrolling in the program.

These positive results suggest that many of the Foundation's grantees employed the right strategies and implemented them well enough such that benefits were produced. Because not all the grantees measured or reported outcomes, we do not know how many of the Foundation's grantees generated the same sorts of results. Still, these results, plus those of the transformational grants described above suggest that the Foundation's early childhood grantmaking has reached thousands of children and families, and that many of those children and families benefited in important ways.

Finally, we note that while the Foundation supported projects that are largely in the mainstream of strategies employed in early childhood programs elsewhere (e.g., quality improvement programs for child care and preschool programs; home visiting and parent education programs), some of the Foundation's efforts are at the leading edge of efforts nationally (e.g., mental health improvement services; early childhood system building; the IDA program to help parents save for the college education of their preschoolers).

Other Cluster Evaluation Activities in 2007

During 2007, we also worked closely with Knight Foundation staff on related efforts designed to communicate the effects of Knight-funded projects to appropriate audiences. This included collaborating with Foundation staff and other consultants on videotaped reports about the projects in Lexington and Wichita, and preparing materials and options for videotapes about projects in Boulder and San Jose. These videotaped reports are designed for general audiences.

In addition, we worked with Knight Foundation staff member Julie Tarr and Knight Foundation grantee Emile McGill from the Wichita Public Schools to create a presentation on the Knight Foundation's investments in early childhood aimed at early childhood administrators and policymakers. The presentation was accepted as an invited session at the annual NAEYC Professional Development Institute, held in Pittsburgh in June 2007.

Lessons Learned

By design, this report has highlighted the most positive results of the Foundation's grantees to illustrate that early childhood grants *can* have important and transformative effects on children, families, and communities. Some of the programs that we highlighted are ongoing and may produce additional benefits in the future.

Of course, not all the grants awarded by the Foundation yielded large-scale success. Some grants focused on relatively small numbers of children or families (e.g., 20 – 50 per year), and, while those individuals may have benefited, the projects never expanded to serve larger groups. Sometimes, Knight-funded services ceased when Foundation funding ended, suggesting that the programs never became institutionalized in their communities. In other cases, the original grant objectives were never achieved, and, in at least one such case, the Foundation ended the grant early, without paying out the whole amount that had been awarded. And, there are a substantial number of projects whose evaluation data are not strong enough for us to draw conclusions about their effects.

Nevertheless, together, the Knight-funded projects suggest lessons for operating, sustaining, and evaluating effective early childhood programs:

Operating Effective Early Childhood Programs

1. Funded services have to be the right services.

This sounds simplistic, but there are a great many ineffective programs for families with young children. To combat this, the Foundation supported programs that either were replications of model programs that had been demonstrated to be effective elsewhere (e.g., The Incredible Years, Nurse Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers), or supported programs that employed strategies that had been part of successful programs in other locales.

In addition, because parents play such powerful roles in shaping their children's development, some of the best Knight-funded programs sought to provide services to both parents and children (e.g., the Santa Clara County GoKids and San Jose Education Foundation efforts to help both children and parents access services; the St. Paul mental health initiative that provides services for both children and parents; the Philadelphia effort that seeks to build children's early literacy skills by improving preschool instruction and parent-child interactions; and many others).

However, even when the right constellation of services was delivered, programs did not always produce hoped-for benefits. We believe that this is due at least in part to the implementation and quality of program services, including the intensity of the intervention and engagement of families in services. The next four lessons illustrate these points.

- 2. Quality drives outcomes, but measuring quality is tricky.** The Foundation supported a range of programs with different goals and strategies, and, consequently, different quality metrics. Results suggest that high quality services produce better outcomes for children. For example, the Home Nursing Agency, which administers the Nurse Family Partnership in State College, exceeded the national NFP program benchmarks for intensity of services delivered and percentage of families retained in the program, and this site also exceeded national program goals for children's health and development (see Appendix 10). Similarly, the Child Care Resources, Inc., professional development program for child care staff in Charlotte resulted in both quality improvement in services and benefits in child development.

But, not all programs that met quality standards produced benefits for children. For example, the CARES program in Wichita demonstrated significant classroom quality improvements, but early language and reading scores for children in participating child care classrooms were no better than scores of their peers in comparison classrooms. Part of the explanation may lie in the way in which quality has traditionally been conceptualized and measured in child care and preschool programs.

In the past, child care quality was defined by factors such as low child-staff ratios, teacher education, and the presence of good instructional materials in classrooms, and the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) was the tool used most frequently to judge such aspects of quality. However, new research shows that interactions matter as much or more than these factors. Warm, responsive teacher-child interactions that are focused on learning lead to better outcomes for children, and new quality measures can capture such interactions. By using the ECERS to monitor progress, the grantees may have been changing their services to improve the factors measured by the ECERS, while ignoring some of the most important aspects of quality that the ECERS does not assess.

For all programs, therefore, measuring the quality of services, using an appropriate metric, is essential for maintaining program quality. All early childhood programs should seek to meet the quality benchmarks established by their national models, or, if they are new, to establish benchmarks for quality. And, all programs should use the newest standardized measures to assess program performance and child outcomes.

- 3. Program intensity and duration must match the needs of the children and families being served.**

Another element of quality is intensity and duration of services. Most of the Knight-funded programs were directed at disadvantaged children. When outcomes for these children were compared with those of more well-to-do peers, even if they showed some improvement over time, it was usually not enough to close the achievement gap

completely (e.g., children in Knight-funded communities in San Jose demonstrated increasing kindergarten readiness, but did not reach performance levels of their peers).

It may be that, for disadvantaged children in particular, interventions must be more intensive – beginning earlier in life and delivering more total hours of services. In fact, **the earlier in children’s lives the intervention, the better the outcomes, especially for disadvantaged children.** The Knight-funded Nurse Family Partnership program in Philadelphia is an example of a program that begins early – during pregnancy – and continues until children are two years of age. If such services were coupled with high quality child care or preschool, then children and parents would experience a continuum of support through the children’s entry into school. National research indicates that such programs are likely to yield long-term benefits.

4. **Programs can only succeed if they are able to enroll and retain their clients.**
Program administrators may design and funders may support a program with all the right elements, but if the “customers” do not enroll or if they leave the program before it is scheduled to end, families will not benefit and the program cannot be considered a success. For example, in Lexington, the parents who are involved in the Academic Challenge and the Prichard Committee’s leadership training benefit, but too few parents are participating, especially the most impoverished families, because they do not know the opportunity exists. The new “one-stop shop” Bellefonte Family Resource Center (FRC) in State College has successfully attracted important services such as Even Start parenting classes, a food bank, and training programs for child care and preschool teachers, but the agency must do more outreach to let families know that the FRC now offers all those services.

5. **Programs must respond to the increasing diversity of the child population.**
The population of children in America is increasingly diverse ethnically, racially, culturally, and linguistically, and programs must respond to those changes. At the simplest level, that means agencies must have staff who speak the languages that their clients speak and materials must be translated into those languages (e.g., St. Paul’s FfS has translated measures into Hmong and Spanish). But, parenting beliefs about everything from breastfeeding to discipline to the role of parents in their children’s education, are very culturally bound, and we believe that families will not enroll or stay in programs that they feel do not respect their culture or their child rearing practices. Programs therefore must also hire staff who understand the parenting beliefs of the families they serve. As we reported in our first-year evaluation report, agencies in all communities are finding it very difficult to hire culturally competent bilingual staff, and delays in start-up were common.

Even if an individual program welcomes a diverse clientele, the climate of the larger community can limit enrollment or retention. Grantees in Boulder report that, as anti-

immigrant sentiment has risen in Colorado, some of the families that they had been serving in the past were no longer willing to participate.

Sustaining Early Childhood Programs

6. Public-private partnerships increase the likelihood of program sustainability.

Most of the Knight grants supported services that did not otherwise have access to public sources of funding. But, to take such services to scale, public funding is almost always necessary. Several programs responded to this challenge by launching strategies other than direct services, such as advocacy in Philadelphia and St. Paul, political involvement in Lexington and Wichita, and partnerships with business in Wichita.

Some grantees were able to expand services by securing access to new public funding streams (e.g., St. Paul mental health). In another example, the Health Trust in San Jose has forged an innovative partnership to create a dental care clinic for low-income families in San Jose. The nonprofit Health Trust will provide start-up costs for equipping the clinic, but will lease the space to a for-profit dental care provider who will agree that, for the next 10 years, at least half the clinic's clientele will be low-income families. Then, just like any other dental care provider, the leasee will bill insurance (both public Medicaid and private insurance) for its services. The partnership will quadruple the number of children receiving dental care in the neighborhood.

Evaluating Early Childhood Programs

7. Evaluation matters.

This report relies heavily on the data collected by the grantees and their external evaluators. Many grantees reported no quantitative data beyond the numbers of children or families they served, or used relatively weak measures or methods to gather information about the effects of their programs. But, when programs did collect data rigorously – either for program improvement or to provide accountability for funders or stakeholders – the results were compelling. A few projects compared children served by their programs with others in the community, which provided the best test of an individual program's effectiveness, and the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness showed how a measure could be used to assess the collective impact of Foundation grantmaking in a community. When careful examination of the data in St. Paul revealed that about 25% of the scores in the mental health screenings administered to children had been miscalculated due to human error, partners responded quickly and are now considering changing to electronic scoring. Making that change would improve program operations in St. Paul but could also have a national impact since the measure used (the ASQ-SE) is one of the most commonly used measures of social-emotional development in the country.

Conclusions

In many ways, this is the right time – and the best time in recent memory – to strive to achieve transformational change in the early childhood field. Compelling research has demonstrated conclusively that the early years are the most important in creating the foundation for children’s success in school and life, so much so that Nobel-prize-winning economist James Heckman has argued, “The best evidence supports the policy prescription: invest in the very young...”¹⁸ Further, research is clear about the service strategies and program content that are most effective. Public policies are following the research, as states such as Arizona and California have established new taxes to create dedicated funding streams for programs for children age 5 and under, and public and private funders nationally are establishing preschool programs for all young children. For foundations that seek to achieve transformational change in early childhood, where the availability of public funding ultimately will determine the success or failure of large-scale initiatives, the prospects for creating long-term change are brighter than they have been in many years.

The Knight Foundation’s grants illustrate how transformational change can be achieved in the early childhood field. The best of these grants have implemented strategies that research has shown to be effective, and have either taken advantage of new funding streams or have advocated successfully for expansions of existing funding streams to help institutionalize their programs. This final report of our cluster evaluation demonstrates how those grantees are benefiting children and families and creating changes that will alter their communities for the better.

¹⁸ Ounce of Prevention Fund and the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy Studies. *Invest in the Very Young*. <http://www.ounceofprevention.org/downloads/publications/Heckman.pdf>

Appendix 1

Telephone Interview Protocol Community Liaison Program Officers

1. What changes have occurred with your grants over this past year—particularly as they relate to achieving outcomes and program improvement?
2. What outcomes have been achieved this past year or are you working to achieve?
3. How have your projects/grants contributed to the Knight Foundation focus on transformation? Please provide examples particularly focusing on: systems, network, scale
4. What activities are you planning and doing to help sustain the work beyond the Knight Foundation investment?

Appendix 2

Telephone Interview Protocol Community Grantees

1. What changes have occurred with your grant over this past year—particularly as they relate to achieving outcomes and program improvement?
2. What outcomes have been achieved this past year?
3. How has your project contributed to the Knight Foundation focus on transformation? Please provide examples particularly focusing on: systems, network, scale
4. What activities are you planning and doing to help sustain the work beyond the Knight Foundation investment?

Appendix 3. Grants Included In This Report, By Community

Aberdeen Program Officer: Anne Corrison

Grantee	Project Description	Cluster	End Date
CASA of Aberdeen Fifth Judicial Circuit	To create a team of professionals to develop protocols and serve drug-endangered children	Mental health	10/07
Presentation College	For Early Childhood Partners to provide training and materials essential for delivery of effective, age-appropriate health and oral hygiene routines to children and child care providers	Dental health	1/07

Boulder Program Officer: Dave Mills

Grantee	Project Description	Cluster	End Date
Foothills United Way	IDAs for low-income Spanish-speaking child care providers	Early childhood education	8/08
City of Boulder (Annette Crawford)	To provide outreach, licensing, and coaching services for Spanish-speaking family child care providers	Early childhood education	9/07
Early Care and Education Council of Boulder County	To craft a community-wide sustainability plan for early childhood	Early childhood education	12/06
Parenting Place	To improve early childhood development and school readiness skills of children ages 0-5 in 200 monolingual Latino families	Parent education	9/07
Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition	Training for parents, ECE staff, and prospective family child care providers to promote children's school readiness	Parent education	12/08

Charlotte
Program Officer: Susan Patterson

Grantee	Project Description	Cluster	End Date
Child Care Resources	For Curriculum Matters, a school readiness project to introduce and support the use of a standard curriculum in child care classrooms	Early childhood education	12/06
Community Health Services of Mecklenburg County	To promote good early childhood oral health practices and connect low-income children with free dental care	Dental health	3/07
Allegro Foundation	To implement a weekly movement class for preschool children with disabilities	Early childhood education	8/07
United Way of Central Carolinas, Inc.	To expand Success by 6 school readiness initiative	Parent education	2007

Fort Wayne
Program Officer: Vivian Neal

Grantee	Project Description	Cluster	End Date
Community Action of Northeast Indiana, Inc.	To provide preschool, therapeutic classroom services for 60 children.	Mental health; early childhood education	11/07
Ft. Wayne Community Schools	Infuse Reggio Emilia into early childhood education in school and community based programs.	Early Childhood Education	12/08
United Way	New Hoosiers to promote literacy among immigrant families.	Parent education	12/09
Urban League	Read and Rise program to help low income African American and other parents prepare their children for school success.	Parent education	1/09

Lexington Program Officer: Laura Williams

Grantee	Project Description	Cluster	End Date
Community Action Council of Lexington-Fayette, Bourbon, Harrison, and Nicholas Counties	To build the capacity of early childhood educators to administer a culturally responsive curriculum to preschool children and outreach to increase parental involvement for a successful transition into Fayette County schools	Early childhood education; parent education	10/08
Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence	To pilot and implement a parent leadership component for early child care.	Parent education; Early childhood education	12/07
One Community One Voice	To increase parent and family involvement in their children's education	Parent education; Systems change	11/07
Salvation Army	To promote literacy in Fayette Public Schools through after-school activities for children ages 3-8 who live in temporary housing	Early childhood education	4/09
United Way	Enhance and extend HANDS home visiting program for children 2-4 -year olds.	Mental Health	3/08

Long Beach

Grantee	Project Description	Cluster	End Date
Long Beach Community College District	To extend the Good Beginnings Never End Project, a home visitation effort focused on increasing the quality of care provided to young children in home-based settings	Early childhood education	9/09
Long Beach Community Service Development Corporation	For the Role of Men Academy project to increase the involvement of low-income fathers in the lives of their children	Parent education	9/09
Cambodian Association of America	For the Cambodian Family Literacy program	Parent education	6/07
California State University- Long Beach	To improve literacy skills of preschoolers at nine child care programs	Early childhood education	6/07

Philadelphia
Program Officer: Matt Bergheiser

Grantee	Project Description	Cluster	End Date
LEAP/Center for Strategic Urban Community Leadership	To implement an early literacy education program in child care centers contracted with the Camden School District	Early childhood education	9/07
Management and Evaluation Associates	To evaluate LEAP	Early childhood education	4/07
Rutgers University Foundation	To construct the Knight Early Learning Research Academy in Camden for comprehensive early childhood education	Early childhood education	12/10
United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania	To implement the Raising a Reader emergent literacy curriculum in 15 child care sites, improve literacy teaching skills, and provide family literacy support for parents	Early childhood education; Systems change	12/08

St. Paul
Program Officer: Polly Talen

Grantee	Project Description	Cluster	End Date
Ramsey Action Programs now= Community Action Programs of Ramsey and Washington Counties (Foundations for Success Initiative)	To support a collaborative effort to provide a continuum of developmentally appropriate and culturally competent early childhood mental health services in Ramsey County	Systems change Mental health	9/09
Greater Twin Cities United Way: Bright Smiles	To increase access to dental care for children ages 0-5 and to improve oral health knowledge and practices in parents and pregnant women	Dental health	1/09

**San Jose
Program Officer: Dave Mills**

Grantee	Project Description	Cluster	End Date
Community Foundation Silicon Valley	Community-wide literacy network	Systems change	12/07
Choices for Children	To train unlicensed, informal caregivers	Early childhood education	6/09
San Jose Unified School District	For Step into Kindergarten, a literacy-based, kindergarten transition program	Early childhood education	12/08
Catholic Charities	For tax preparation and financial/tax education services to low-income families in the Mayfair, Solari/Seven Trees, and Gilroy areas	Parent education	9/09
Go Kids	To form a five-agency alliance that will provide coordinated services to children, families and child care providers, and improve families' connections to neighborhood-based developmental and economic supports	Systems change	9/09
Kidango	For behavioral health and mental health services to children and families in the Mayfair neighborhood	Mental health	4/2008
Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness	To develop a baseline measure of school readiness and assess cohorts of kindergarten students	Early childhood education	6/07
Franklin-McKinley Education Foundation	To create a centralized hub for school readiness activities in the Solari/Seven Trees neighborhood	Systems change	9/09
Lenders for Community Development	To expand IDA program	Parent education	12/08
The Health Trust	To provide oral health education and preventive, restorative, and specialty dental services to children and families in three SJ neighborhoods; <i>and</i> grant to evaluate the project	Dental health	12/08

State College Program Officer: Julie Tarr

Grantee	Project Description	Cluster	End Date
Bellefonte YMCA	To implement a family resource center as a "one stop shop" for families and young children	Systems change; parent education	11/08
Home Nursing Agency	To replicate the Olds Nurse-Family Partnership Program in Centre County and provide regular home visits to approximately 50 expectant families each year.	Parent Education	12/08

Tallahassee Program Officer: Mike Tate

Grantee	Project Description	Cluster	End Date
Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition	To provide parenting, child development, and nutrition education through the Smart Start home visitation program	Parent education	9/07

Wichita Program Officer: Anne Corriston

Grantee	Project Description	Cluster	End Date
Rainbows United	For the Incredible Years training project to increase the social and emotional well-being of young children by giving parents the skills to effectively parent their child	Mental health	12/07
The Opportunity Project	To teach social and emotional learning skills and provide a potential model for a statewide universal pre-Kindergarten program	Systems change; mental health	9/09
Wichita Public Schools	To implement Wichita CARES, expand parent education programs, provide young children with health screenings and referrals, and implement at 2 early childhood centers	Systems change	9/08
Wichita State University	To evaluate CARES		6/09

Appendix 4. Strategies Employed in Mental Health Grants

GRANTEE	COMMUNITY	STRATEGIES					
		Screening	Referrals/ Case Management	Treatment (children, child care providers, parents)	Consultation to/training of staff at child care programs	New curriculum in child care program	Parent education/ home visits
CASA	Aberdeen		X				
Community Action of Northeast Indiana	Ft. Wayne			Therapeutic preschool			
United Way	Lexington			Parent/family counseling			X
Community Action Programs (Foundations for Success)	St. Paul	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rainbows United	Wichita					X	X
The Opportunity Project	Wichita	X				X	X

Appendix 5. Strategies Employed in Dental Care Grants

GRANTEE	COMMUNITY	STRATEGIES						
		Screening	Health Education				Treatment	
			Children	Parents	Child Care Providers, Teacher	Public (media campaign)	Mobile van	Clinic
Presentation College	Aberdeen				X			
City of Boulder	Boulder	X (as part of family child care project)						
Smart Start of Mecklenburg County	Charlotte		X	X	X	X		X
Greater Twin Cities United Way	St. Paul							X
The Health Trust	San Jose	X		X			X	

Appendix 6. Strategies Employed in Early Childhood Education Grants -- Centers

GRANTEE	COMMUNITY	STRATEGIES							
		Capital Improve-ments/ Supplies Equipment	Financial incen-tives for staff	TA, training, college courses	Mentors/ coaches, Consul-tation	New Curriculum	Early Literacy	Parent Involve-ment/ education	Kinder-garten Transition
Child Care Resources	Charlotte	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Allegro Foundation	Charlotte				X	X			
Community Action of Northeast Indiana, Inc.	Fort Wayne					Summer therapeutic preschool			
Ft. Wayne Community Schools	Fort Wayne			X		X			X
Community Action Council of Lexington-Fayette, Bourbon, Harrison, and Nicholas Counties	Lexington			Cultural diversity training		X			
Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence	Lexington			Training institutes for parents and staff				X	X
Salvation Army	Lexington						X	X	

GRANTEE	COMMUNITY	STRATEGIES							
		Capital Improve-ments/ Supplies Equipment	Financial incen-tives for staff	TA, training, college courses	Mentors/ coaches, Consul-tation	New Curriculum	Early Literacy	Parent Involve-ment/ education	Kinder-garten Transition
California State University, Long Beach	Long Beach	X	X	X	X		X		
LEAP/Center for Strategic Urban Community Leadership (also grant to Management and Evaluation Associates for evaluation)	Philadelphia				Literacy coaching for preK teachers		X	X	
Rutgers University Foundation	Philadelphia	X		Training, TA	X			X	X
United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania	Philadelphia				X (literacy coaching)		X	X	
San Jose Unified School District (Step into K)	San Jose						X	X	X
Kidango	San Jose				X (mental health)	X			
Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness	San Jose								

GRANTEE	COMMUNITY	STRATEGIES							
		Capital Improve-ments/Supplies Equipment	Financial incen-tives for staff	TA, training, college courses	Mentors/coaches, consul-tation	New Curriculum	Early Literacy	Parent Involve-ment/education	Kinder-garten Transition
Wichita Public Schools (plus grant for evaluation)	Wichita					X		X	
The Opportunity Project	Wichita					X		X	

Appendix 7. Strategies Employed in Early Childhood Education Grants – Home-Based Programs

GRANTEE	COMMUNITY	STRATEGIES						
		Screening	Financial incentives for staff	TA, training, college courses	Mentors/coaches	Support Groups for Providers	Book Distribution	Parent Involvement/education
Foothills United Way	Boulder			IDAs				
Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition	Boulder		X	X	X	X		X
City of Boulder	Boulder	X	X	X	X	X		X
Long Beach City College	Long Beach			X			X	X
Choices for Children	San Jose		X	X	X		X	
GoKids	San Jose			X				
Franklin-McKinley Education Foundation	San Jose			X				

Appendix 8. Strategies Employed in Parent Education and Parent Involvement Grants

GRANTEE	COMMUNITY	STRATEGIES						
		Parent Education		Screenings, referrals, case management	Parent Support groups	Adult education/ ESL/ Job assistance	Parent involvement/ leadership development	Literacy focus
		Parenting	Financial Education					
Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition	Boulder	X			X		X	X
Parenting Place	Boulder	X (home visits)			X	X		X
United Way Success by Six	Charlotte	X		X				
Urban League	Ft. Wayne						X	X
United Way	Ft. Wayne							
Community Action Council	Lexington						X	
Prichard Committee	Lexington						X	
One Community One Voice	Lexington						X	
United Way	Lexington	X (home visits)						

GRANTEE	COMMUNITY	STRATEGIES						
		Parent Education		Screenings, referrals, case management	Parent Support groups	Adult education/ ESL/ Job assistance	Parent involvement/ leadership development	Literacy focus
		Parenting	Financial Education					
Long Beach Community Services Corporation (Role of Men)	Long Beach	X		X	X	X		
Cambodian Association of America	Long Beach	X			X	X		X
Catholic Charities	San Jose		X					
Lenders for Community Development	San Jose		X					
Bellefonte YMCA	State College			Referral directory	X	X		
Home Nursing Agency	State College	X (home visits)		Screenings, referrals				

Appendix 9. Strategies Employed in Systems Change Grants

GRANTEE	COMMUNITY	STRATEGIES						
		Coordinating Services Across Agencies		Community-wide Planning and Community-wide Change in One or More Systems				
		I&R, Referrals, Case Management	Co-location of services (family resource center, school)	Mental Health	Early Childhood Education	Literacy	Parent Education	School Readiness
Early Care and Education Council of Boulder County	Boulder				X			
One Community One Voice	Lexington	X						X
United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania	Philadelphia					X	X	
Franklin-McKinley Education Foundation	San Jose	X						
GoKids	San Jose	X						

GRANTEE	COMMUNITY	STRATEGIES						
		Coordinating Services Across Agencies		Community-wide Planning and Community-wide Change in One or More Systems				
		I&R, Referrals, Case Management	Co-location of services (family resource center, school)	Mental Health	Early Childhood Education	Literacy	Parent Education	School Readiness
Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness	San Jose							X
Community Foundation for Silicon Valley	San Jose					X		
Bellefonte YMCA	State College		X				X	
Community Action Programs (Foundations for Success)	St. Paul	X		X				
The Opportunity Project	Wichita		X	X	X		X	
Wichita Public Schools	Wichita	X			X		X	

Appendix 10.

Additional Results from Grants Reviewed in this Report

United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania (E2R and Raising a Reader)

The United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania aimed to improve the preschool classroom environment and increase parents' involvement in the classrooms. Figure x in the body of the text showed the overall improvement of the classroom environment as measured by the Support for Early Learning Assessment (SELA). Figures 4-7 compare the changes in the intervention classrooms with those of other preschool classrooms in the community over time on subscales of the SELA.

Figure 4 illustrates that E2R classrooms improved each year in how well they were equipped to promote literacy skills in preschoolers.

Figure 4. Literate Environment SELA Subscale Scores for E2R and Comparison Classrooms for Years 1, 2, and 3

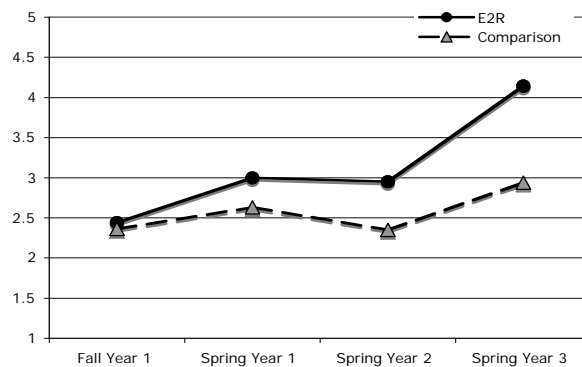


Figure 5 illustrates that the classrooms also improved in the extent to which they were equipped to promote language development in preschoolers after the program was in place for two years.

Figure 5. SELA Language Development Subscale Scores for E2R and Comparison Classrooms in Years 1, 2, and 3

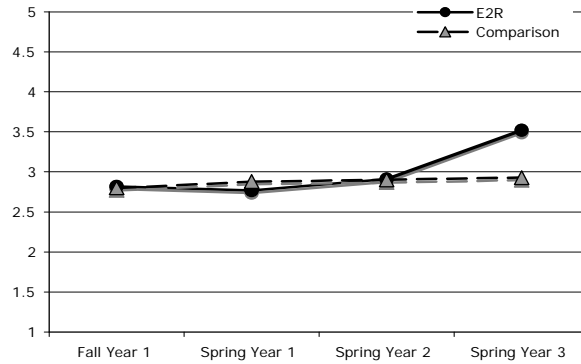


Figure 6 shows that, although there were initially fewer literacy strategies being used in E2R classrooms than in the comparison classrooms, their frequency increased significantly in the second half of year one and showed steady increases, surpassing the quality of the comparison classrooms in year 2 and the first part of year 3.

Figure 6. SELA Early Literacy Strategies Subscale Scores for E2R and Comparison Classrooms in Years 1, 2, and 3

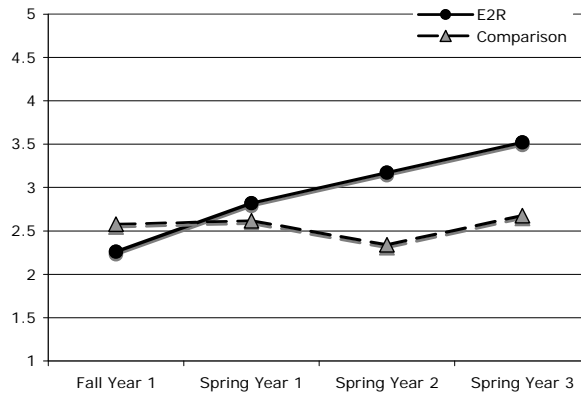
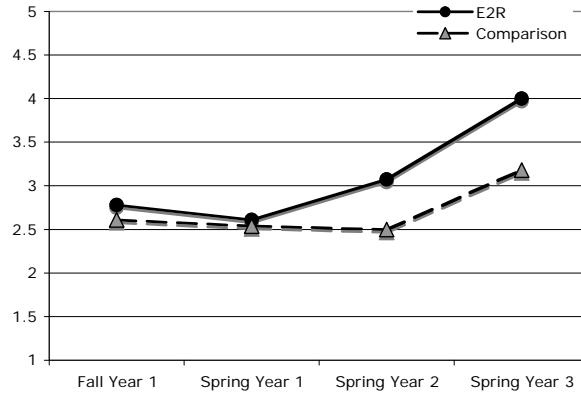


Figure 7 shows that parent involvement increased in the E2R classrooms after year 1, and is significantly greater than in the comparison classrooms.

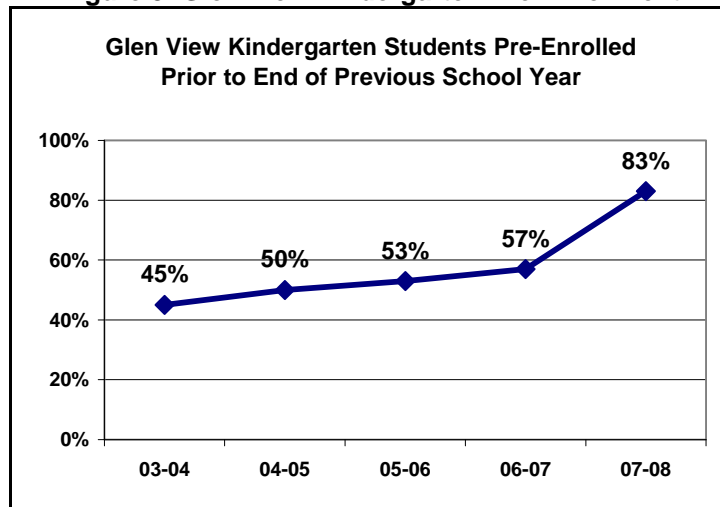
Figure 7. SELA Parent Involvement Subscale Scores for E2R and Comparison Classrooms in Years 1, 2, and 3



GoKids, Inc. (GANAS Project) in San Jose, California

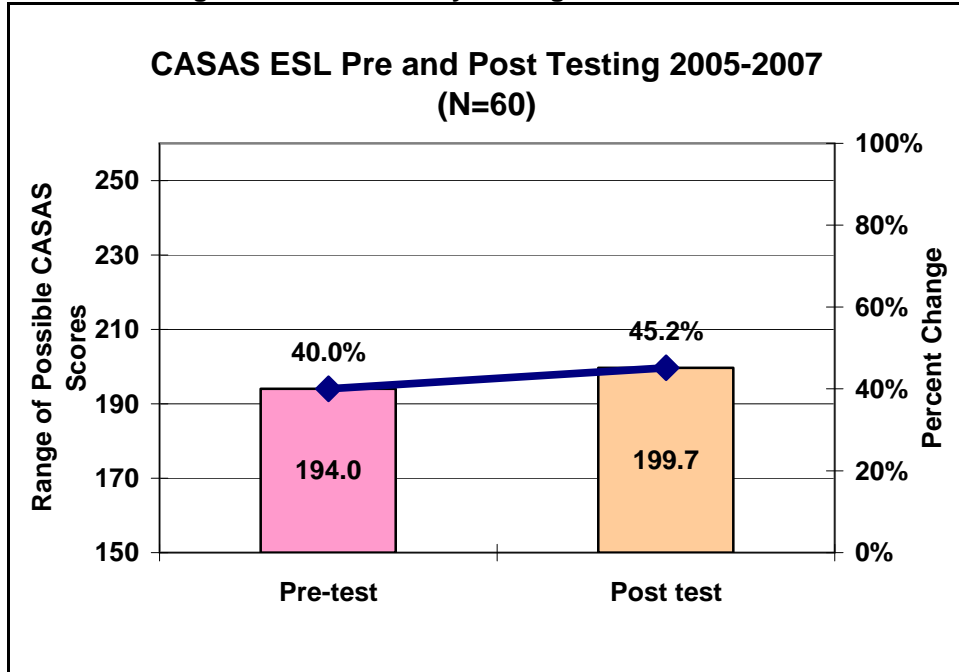
Figure 8 illustrates the increase in the number of children in the Glen View neighborhood who pre-register for kindergarten. This is an indicator of parent awareness of the importance of school readiness, and also results in the local elementary school being better able to plan for kindergarten each year.

Figure 8: Glen View Kindergarten Pre-Enrollment



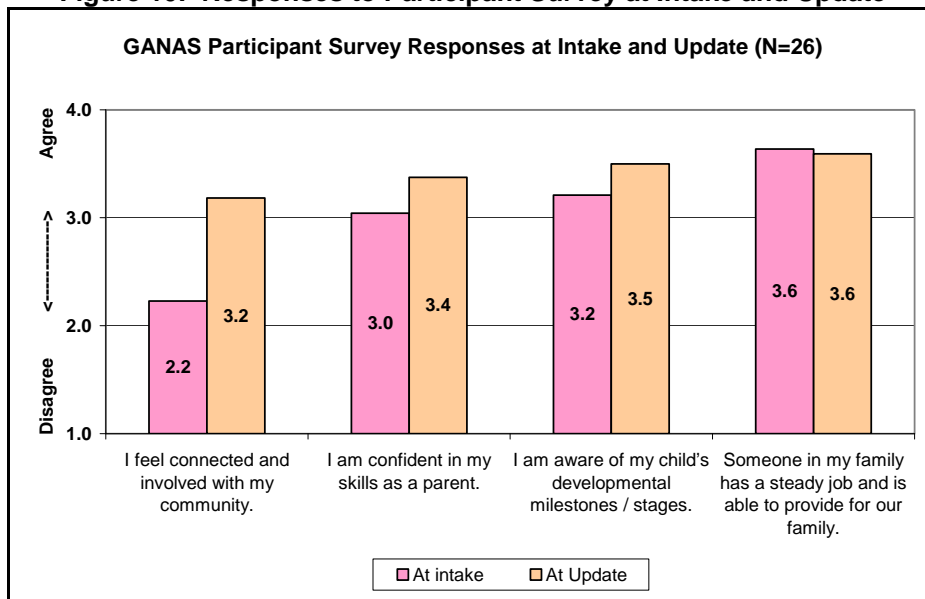
The CASAS is a test of adult literacy. Scores show that parents enrolled in GANAS’s adult education classes improved their literacy skills significantly. These gains should result in better economic prospects for the parents and greater school success for their children.

Figure 9: Adult Literacy: Change in CASAS Scores



Finally, parents who were surveyed twice report changes in their connections to the community and in their abilities as parents that should also result in better outcomes for children. There were no apparent differences in factors related to employment.

Figure 10: Responses to Participant Survey at Intake and Update



The Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) in State College, PA

NFP is a home visiting program that brings nurses into the homes of low-income, first-time mothers, beginning during pregnancy and continuing until children turn two years of age. Table 5 shows that the NFP program operated by the Home Nursing Agency in State College has met or exceeded performance and outcome benchmarks on 11 of 13 indicators established by the national NFP program office in areas such as birth outcomes and infant health and development. This is important because research indicates that much of children’s school readiness and later health are influenced by early birth outcomes (e.g., smoking during pregnancy affects child health and neurological/cognitive development; low and especially very low birth weight are associated with cognitive and developmental delays). Table 5 also shows that the State College NFP site exceeded state and national NFP benchmarks for quality of services.

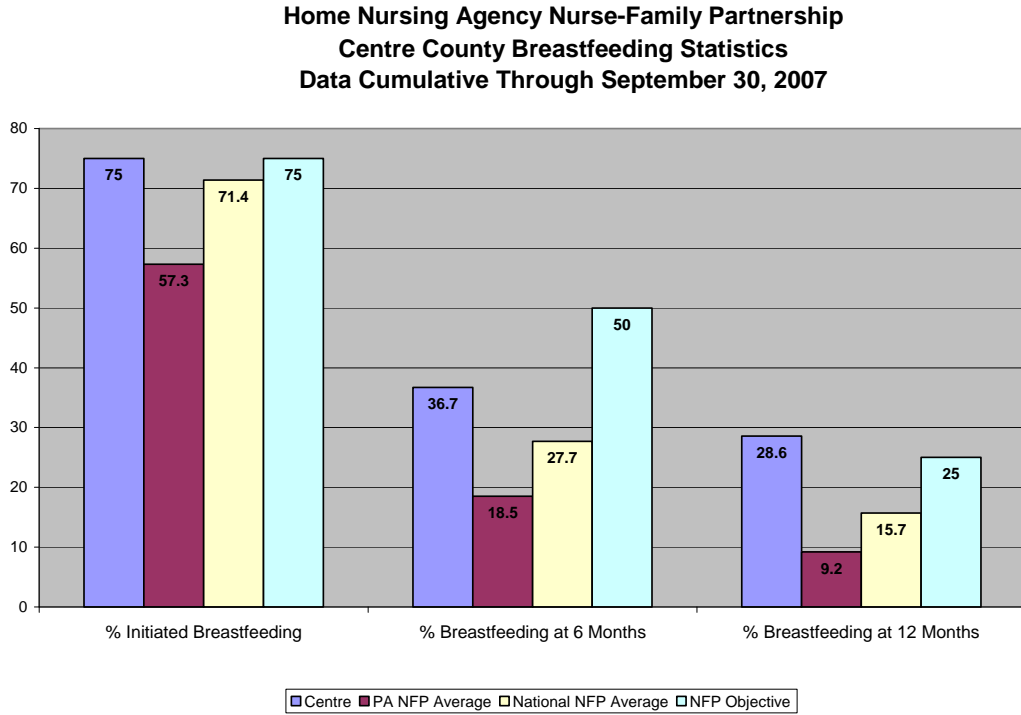
Table 5.
Home Nursing Agency Summary Findings for Centre County
Through September 2007

Topic	Centre	PA NFP	National NFP	NFP Objective
Mean % Completed/Expected Visits in Pregnancy**	88%	83%	81%	80% or greater
Mean % Completed/Expected Visits in Infancy**	72%	65%	60%	65% or greater
Mean % Completed/Expected Visits in Toddlerhood**	76%	70%	58%	60% or greater
% Reduction in Maternal Smoking 36 Wks Pregnancy**	29%	15%	15%	20% or greater
% Premature Births**	2.4%	8.9%	9.4%	7.6%
% Low Birth Weight Births**	4.8%	10.1%	9.0%	5%
% Very Low Birth Weight Births*	0%	1.9%	1.4%	N/A
% Initiated Breastfeeding**	75.0%	57.3%	71.4%	75%
% Breastfeeding at 6 Months*	36.7%	18.5%	27.7%	50%
% Breastfeeding at 12 Months**	28.6%	9.2%	15.7%	25%
% Toddlers’ Immunized at 24 Months Age	88.2%	94.5%	93.3%	90%
% Toddlers’ Language Development Below 10 th Percentile at 21 Months Age**	7.4%	11.6%	10.2%	25% or less
% Subsequent Pregnancy by 24 Months Postpartum	39%	30%	32%	25% or less

Key: * Benchmarks equal to or better than PA statewide NFP and National NFP
** Benchmarks equal to or better than PA statewide NFP, National NFP, and the NFP objective

NFP seeks to increase the number of women who initiate and continue to breastfeed their infants, because research shows that infants who are breastfed longer have stronger immune systems for fighting off disease later in life. Figure 11 illustrates that a greater percentage of Center County program mothers initiate and continue breastfeeding than in other NFP sites in Pennsylvania or across the nation.

Figure 11. NFP Breastfeeding Findings for Centre County Through September 2007



Child Care Resources Inc. in Charlotte

Child Care Resources, Inc. in Charlotte focused on professional development of staff in child care programs as a way to promote the quality of care children receive, which would then lead to better child development. As described in the body of the text, the program did indeed lead to higher quality classroom environments and instruction. Figures 12-16 illustrate that children's gross and fine motor, social/emotional, cognitive, and language development also improved from Fall to Spring of the 2006/07 academic year. On each aspect of child development, the percentage of children who were at the beginning levels of development (Forerunner and I) in the Fall of the year declined by Spring.

Figure 12.

**Number of Children at Varying Levels of Physical Development (Gross Motor): Fall 2006/07 - Spring 2006/07
Child Care Resources, Inc. (Charlotte)**

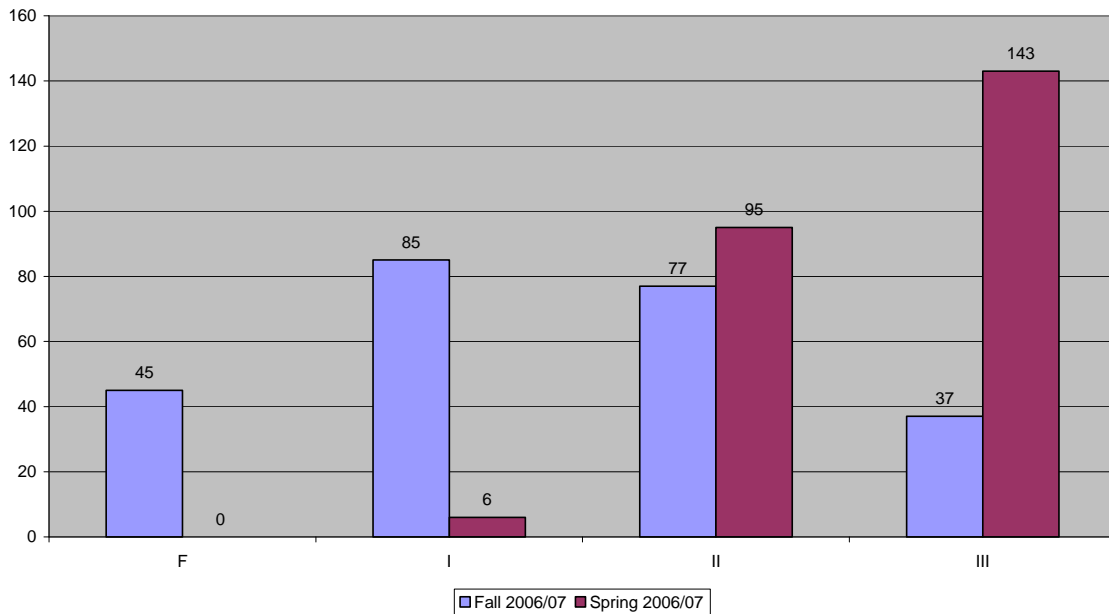


Figure 13.

**Number of Children at Varying Levels of Physical Development
(Fine Motor): Fall 2006/07 - Spring 2006/07
Child Care Resources, Inc. (Charlotte)**

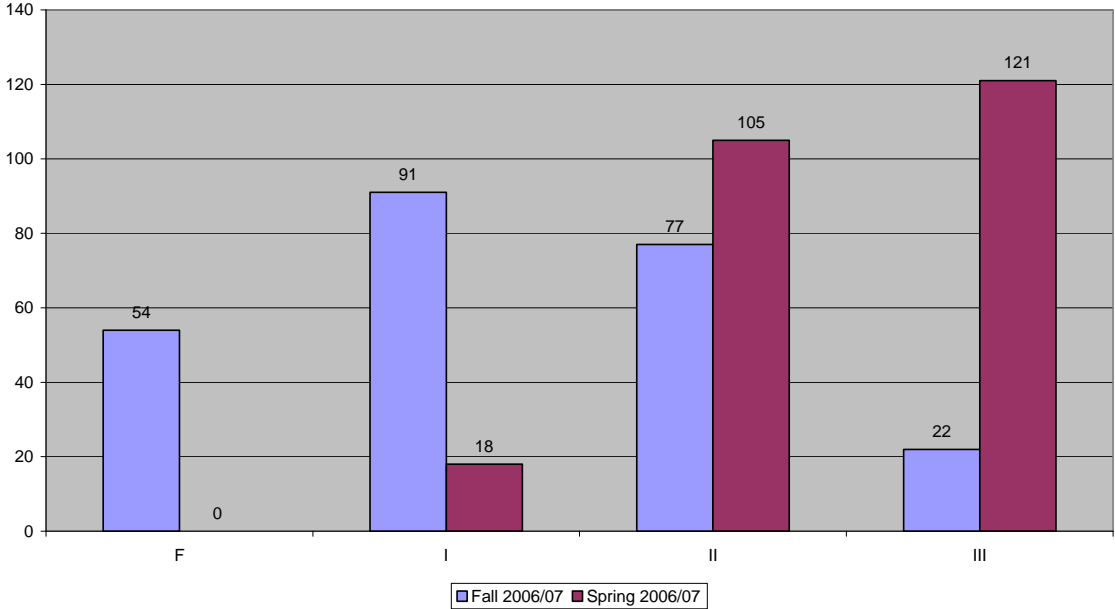


Figure 14.

**Number of Children at Varying Levels
of Social Emotional Development:
Fall 2006/07 - Spring 2006/07
Child Care Resources, Inc. (Charlotte)**

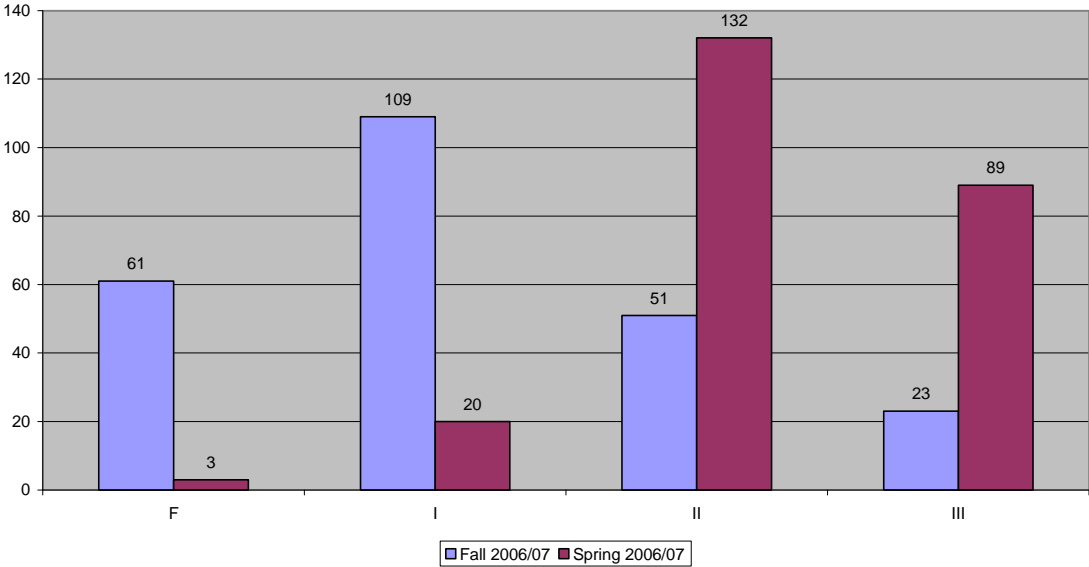


Figure 15.

**Number of Children at Varying Levels of Cognitive Development:
Fall 2006/07 - Spring 2006/07
Child Care Resources, Inc. (Charlotte)**

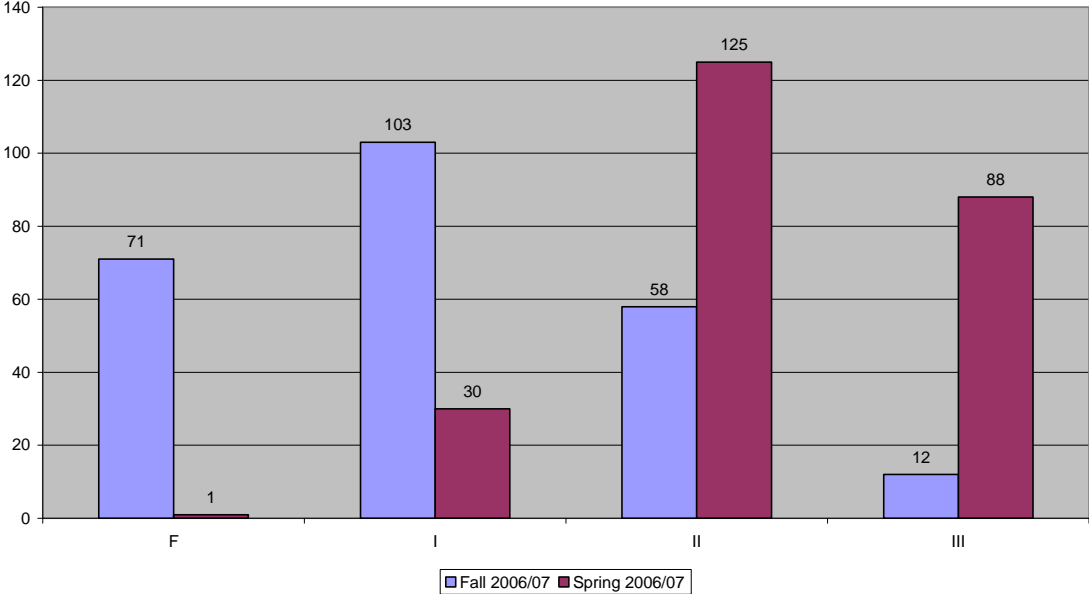


Figure 16.

**Number of Children at Varying Levels of Language Development: Fall
2006/07 - Spring 2006/07
Child Care Resources, Inc. (Charlotte)**

