REPORT

Family Engagement Impact Project (FEIP): Phase II Evaluation Report

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Dana Petersen

Megan Shoji

Adam Dunn

Natasha Nicolai

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2013, the Heising-Simons Foundation (the Foundation) launched a new initiative called the Family Engagement Impact Project (FEIP). The purpose of the initiative is to offer new ways to build capacity for family engagement to promote positive educational outcomes for low-income immigrant children from birth through age 8 in California's San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. The initiative leverages existing resources and strengthens public-private partnerships in order to coordinate and integrate efforts across organizations in the funded communities. The partnerships' efforts focus on building the skills of parents[1] and professionals,

> **Box ES1. Defining Family Engagement**
> Family engagement consists of the practices that parents and other primary caregivers engage in and the beliefs they hold to support their children's learning and success. Family engagement is carried out at home, at school, and in the community (Epstein 1995).

with an emphasis on enhancing family engagement at home. The FEIP also supports partnerships in replicating at least one evidence-based family engagement model.

The Foundation awarded 8-month FEIP planning grants to six communities (Phase I) in fall 2013. During this phase, the selected communities secured partners, defined their family engagement goals, and planned strategies and approaches to achieve their goals. In June 2014, five grantee partnerships received 24-month implementation grants (Phase II). During this phase, the partnerships were tasked with implementing the plans that they had developed during Phase I, including delivering coordinated family engagement programming in their geographic focus areas and implementing at least one evidence-based family engagement program. Table ES1 provides an overview of the five grantee partnerships that received Phase II implementation awards, including the grantee lead, the geographic area served, and the key activities and programs offered by the grantee partnerships.

Table ES1. FEIP Phase II implementation grantees

Grantee lead (partnership name)	Geographic area	Key activities and programs
Estrella Family Services (Estrella)	Luther Burbank neighborhood, East San Jose	Raising A Reader (RAR) Plus Family Nights[a] Neighborhood Family Engagement Collaborative
Grail Family Services (Grail)	Alum Rock, San Jose	RAR Plus Family Nights[a] Building Blocks of Parenting
Oak Grove School District (Oak Grove)	Southeastern San Jose	RAR Plus Family Nights[a] National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)[a] Abriendo Puertas Building Blocks of Parenting Family Engagement Institute programming Parent Institute for Quality Education

[1] This study involved parents and other types of caregivers with children from birth to 8 years old. Because the majority of primary caregivers served by the FEIP grantees were parents, we use the term "parent" to refer to all types of primary caregivers throughout this report.

Table ES1 *(continued)*

Grantee lead (partnership name)	Geographic area	Key activities and programs
Puente de la Costa Sur (Puente)	South Coast, San Mateo County	RAR Plus Family Nights[a] Abriendo Puertas Ages and Stages Questionnaire training Early Childhood Language Development Institute
Redwood City School District (Redwood City)	Redwood City	RAR Plus Family Nights[a] Family Engagement Institute programming High Expectations

[a]As a condition of funding, the Foundation asked grantee partnerships to implement at least one evidence-based family engagement program from a predetermined list. Eligible evidence-based program options had (1) a family engagement component focused on families with children from birth to age 8 and (2) evidence demonstrating positive impacts on educational outcomes. (See Appendix A for a list of eligible programs.)

To document and evaluate the FEIP grantee partnerships' experiences and outcomes during Phase II, the Foundation contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to conduct an implementation and outcome study. The study assessed the FEIP as an initiative overall, rather than each grantee partnership individually. For the study, Mathematica gathered and analyzed information from documents (grantee partnership progress reports, community needs assessments, evidence-based program descriptions, etc.); interviews; site visits; administrative data evaluation forms (annual grantee partnership forms, semiannual implementing agency forms, and reports on parent participation); and surveys with parents who participated in the FEIP programs. Five questions guided the study:

1. What elements of the FEIP are implemented, and how does implementation vary among grantee partnerships?

2. With what degree of fidelity are evidence-based programs being carried out?

3. Does the FEIP lead to changes in community and organizational capacity to support family engagement, including availability of funding?

4. Do professionals improve their attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to family engagement?

5. Do parents improve their understanding of and attitudes about family engagement, increase their knowledge and uptake of engagement opportunities, and increase the quality of their involvement and relationships with children?

This executive summary describes key findings related to the study questions and concludes by distilling the findings into recommendations for others who are interested in supporting family engagement as a strategy to improve children's educational success.

What elements of the FEIP are implemented, and how does implementation vary among grantee partnerships?

Putting the grantee partnerships' Phase II plans into action required grantee leads to (1) establish administrative structures, (2) maintain partnerships, (3) recruit parent and professional participants, (4) deliver programs to build the skills of parents and professionals, and (5)

implement strategies to change community systems. Although all of the FEIP grantee partnerships were able to implement the required FEIP elements, they found some aspects of the elements more challenging to implement than others.

Establishing administrative structures

All grantee leads established structures to coordinate with their FEIP partners, though most experienced delays in initiating service delivery. Grantee leads needed time to formalize the administrative structures required to manage grantee partnerships, hire staff to coordinate grant activities, finalize their program and activity selections, and identify providers to coordinate or deliver those programs and activities. Most of the grantee partnerships were delayed by at least three months in designating or hiring staff to manage grant activities or to coordinate the Raising A Reader (RAR) Plus Family Nights program.

Because each grantee partnership implemented at least one evidence-based program in addition to other promising family engagement programs and strategies across multiple locations, most grantee leads interviewed said that having a full-time coordinator oversee implementation was critical to maintaining momentum and coordination across their diverse activities. In addition, regularly convening oversight committees increased awareness of the goals and progress of the grantee partnerships, improved the flow of information between partners, and facilitated collaborative decision making. Partners of the two grantee leads that either did not establish or regularly convene an oversight group expressed a desire for improved access to and communication with others in their grantee partnership.

Maintaining partnerships

Each grantee lead recruited partners for the FEIP during the planning phase and built on those partnerships in Phase II. On average, each grantee lead recruited eight partners, with five partners providing direct services to parents and three partners providing services to professionals—although, some partners were recruited for both functions. Most grantee leads indicated that they had the right partners to make the FEIP successful. Grantee leads reported that the their partnership's capacities to offer family engagement programs increased over time in several areas—planning, collaboration, operations, provider capacity building, communications, and evaluation—yet remained weak in the areas of fiscal infrastructure and community and political support.

Recruiting parent and professional participants

Being able to successfully recruit parents and professionals to participate was a key first step in being able to deliver family engagement programming that attended to the skill building of both parties. Grantee leads and their partners reported success in reaching parents who were personally motivated to participate and were historically the most involved. They had the greatest struggle recruiting parents they described as traditionally difficult to engage for many reasons, including parents' competing priorities. All grantee leads and partners made an effort to reach these parents, with varying success. The grantee partnerships did report higher rates of participation among fathers, a traditionally hard-to-reach group, than they had anticipated.

The grantee partnerships faced more difficulty recruiting teachers and school staff than parents and other types of early childhood professionals. According to grantee leads and

partners, teachers have little flexibility in their schedules and face many competing pressures for their time. In addition, some educators may be uncomfortable with family engagement because working face-to-face with families to address their needs and resolve conflicts requires different skills than working with children, and may require a greater time commitment. Many grantee leads and their partners reported that having district and school administrators explicitly encourage teacher and staff participation was essential to their recruitment success because it signaled that family engagement was a priority.

Delivering programs to build the skills of parents and professionals

A core element of the FEIP was using partnerships to provide programming to build the skills of parents and providers for improved family engagement. Grantee leads and their partners reported being able to successfully implement programs for parents while facing relatively more difficulty implementing programs for professionals (especially teachers). Grantee leads and their partners cited the following characteristics as facilitators of success with parent-focused programming: (1) prior experience delivering similar programs, (2) a history of working with and building trust with low-income and immigrant families, and (3) organizational missions and family-oriented service models that embrace and are well aligned with family engagement. Grantee partners that relied on districts and schools to support implementation of professional development offerings identified a number of challenges specific to working in the public education system. Paramount among these were: (1) difficulty in gaining buy-in from district and school leaders and thus support for teacher and staff participation, (2) turnover in leadership, which made it difficult to maintain program momentum from year to year as grantee partners had to rebuild relationships with new staff, and (3) competing priorities for district and school leaders, teachers, and staff. Furthermore, some district and school leaders said they were unaccustomed to working with community service agencies and did not fully understand how to make such partnerships work.

The partnerships directed most of their energy toward implementing direct services for parents in the first year. Consequently, they were delayed in implementing other aspects of the comprehensive set of family engagement programs and activities that they had proposed in their Phase II plans. Although often challenging to implement, grantee leads identified the complementary training that was offered to parents and professionals as key to realizing the benefits of the FEIP. They doubled their efforts in this area in the second year. Grantee leads and their partners identified this type of programming as the most beneficial in improving community capacity for family engagement because it provided parents and professionals the chance to learn about the contributions each had to offer. The grantee partnerships noted, however, that teachers, school staff, and other professionals may need additional support when putting new family engagement training into practice.

Collectively, the grantee partnerships served more than 4,700 parents and nearly 500 professionals in new or expanded family engagement programming, which was close to the projections stated in their Phase II proposals. Over the course of Phase II, the five grantee partnerships served the following:

- 1,535 parents in 221 RAR Plus Family Nights

- 2,571 children who participated in RAR book bag rotations

- 846 parents in 76 workshop series that included at least three sessions (such as the Parent Institute for Quality Education, Parents as Teachers playgroups, and Abriendo Puertas)

- 2,651 parents in 102 community events or other direct service activities that included only one or two sessions (such as preschool and kindergarten open houses)

- 17,185 parents through indirect family engagement activities (such as community outreach and messaging)

- 478 educators or other early childhood professionals in 120 professional development activities

Enacting strategies to change community systems

Another element of the FEIP was engaging in community systems change activities to better coordinate, link, and sequence family engagement opportunities across organizations so that efforts would be ongoing across a child's development and sustained over time. Because the grantee partnerships generally prioritized direct services and program start-up in the first year, they experienced slower progress with systems change activities than they had originally planned. However, because delivering direct services laid the groundwork for larger-scale systems change by increasing community awareness of the importance of family engagement, all five partnerships could be described as engaging in early systems change activities. Three of the five grantee partnerships enacted more substantial systems change activities: (1) Estrella launched a Family Engagement Network as a forum for cross-agency collaboration, (2) Grail worked to identify gaps in family services and strengthen interagency coordination and family engagement messaging through a non-FEIP committee called Sí Se Puede Collective, and (3) Redwood City focused on extending its reach to families with children who were not yet school-age.

With what degree of fidelity are evidence-based programs being carried out?

All of the grantee partnerships chose to implement RAR Plus Family Nights as their evidence-based model (Box ES2). One partnership chose to implement the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) as a second evidence-based model (Box ES3). The grantee partnerships met with varying success in implementing evidence-based family engagement models in their communities—although, they improved their ability to do so over time.

Box ES2. RAR Plus Family Nights
Each grantee partnership implemented this evidence-based early literacy and family engagement program in school or center settings. The program is designed to help families of children (from birth to age 8) develop, practice, and maintain home-based literacy routines. The core program involves a book bag rotation in which children invite their parents to engage in dialogic reading at home. Family night events, offered through an orientation and four subsequent sessions, focus on dialogic reading strategies.

Implementing RAR Plus Family Nights

The grantee partnerships used different approaches to provide RAR Plus Family Nights. All of the grantee partnerships offered book bag rotations to multiple groups of children, but did so in different settings and for children of different ages. Most of the grantee partnerships directed their offerings to preschool and kindergarten children and their families, while one grantee partnership offered the program to all families with children from birth to 3rd grade. On average, the grantee partnerships served 7 classrooms or

center-based groups during the first year of implementation and 12 classrooms or center-based groups during the second year.

Similarly, the grantee partnerships varied in how they implemented Family Nights. Some grantee partnerships offered Family Nights on school campuses, while others did so in community libraries. A few of the grantee partnerships invited families from across their book bag rotation settings to participate together in the same Family Night series, although most offered a unique Family Night series for smaller groups of parents in each location or classroom. The grantee partnerships also varied in the staff that they used to deliver book bag rotations and Family Nights. Although teachers oversaw book bag rotations in most school classroom settings and agency staff did so in community settings, many of the grantee partnerships solicited the help of parent volunteers. Grantee lead staff who were designated as RAR coordinators typically facilitated the Family Nights across the two years, although a community librarian facilitated events for one partnership in the first year and teachers facilitated events for two grantee partnerships in the second year.

The ability of the grantee partnerships to implement RAR Plus Family Nights with fidelity improved over time. Book bag rotations were offered with fidelity to the national model by four grantee partnerships in the first year and by all five grantee partnerships in the second year. In both program years, more than 80 percent of classrooms or groups that facilitated book bag rotations met the standards for trainings, had a designated space for the book bags, used a tracking system to monitor rotations, conducted read aloud sessions, held a library event for families, and sent book bags home weekly. Only two of the grantee partnerships were able to offer Family Nights with fidelity to the research study in the first year, while four grantee partnerships were able to in the second year. On average, the grantee partnerships delivered the five required Family Night events per family, offering approximately one workshop a month. However, at least two of the grantee partnerships did not offer the events to all parents who participated in the book bag rotation in the first program year. Two of the grantee partnerships made major adaptations to the national Family Night curriculum during the first year, while other grantee partnerships inconsistently followed the curriculum. Although all of the grantee partnerships reserved time for parents to practice reading aloud with other parents during the workshops, some grantee partnerships were unable to consistently bring children together with parents to practice those same skills.

The grantee partnerships' challenges with facilitating Family Nights were likely related to the fact that they were pioneers in implementing this component of the model. Although all grantee partnerships had some experience with the RAR book bag rotations prior to the FEIP funding, none had facilitated the Family Nights before. RAR had only recently added Family Nights as a component of the program in 2014, so training and support provided by the national and affiliate offices was less developed for Family Nights than for the book bag rotations. Moreover, because of the hiring delays that the grantee partnerships experienced, some RAR coordinators were unable to attend the initial training provided in August 2014.

Implementing NNPS

Oak Grove School District implemented NNPS in six low-performing elementary schools, including four Title I schools with high proportions of low-income families.

For the most part, schools struggled to implement NNPS with fidelity to the model. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATPs) at some schools did not meet fidelity markers and the action plans they created were of mixed quality. Although school ATPs generally included the types of members required by NNPS, district staff and one school principal noted that ATP meetings were not always attended by parent members and that parent members were not engaged in the planning and implementation of activities. All school ATPs reported that members were trained in NNPS in the first year. However, only two of the six ATPs in the

> **Box ES3. National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)**
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> Staff from six Oak Grove Unified School District schools implemented the NNPS framework. Using the framework, school leaders create an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) to lead the school's implementation of NNPS. Implementation includes developing a One-Year Action Plan for family engagement that specifies the strategies the school will use to build partnerships with families and the community, with the long-term desired outcome of creating a welcoming school climate that promotes student success.

first year and three of the six ATPs in the second school year met monthly—the minimum frequency that NNPS suggests. Although all six schools correctly identified the required goals in their action plans in both school years, only one school in the first year and three schools in the second year described the goals in a measurable or evaluable way or included at least two activities to support each goal. Thus, they were unsuccessful in meeting fidelity.

Despite challenges with meeting fidelity markers, many schools in the first year and more in the second year began implementing family engagement activities. The number of schools that had partially or fully implemented a parenting activity (such as a parenting workshop) or a learning at home activity (such as helping parents understand home conditions that support learning) as part of their NNPS plans increased from four in the first year to all six in the second year. The number of schools implementing activities related to the other types of involvement also increased, with the exception of collaborating with the community. Only two of the six schools had partially or fully implemented an activity that involved collaborating with the community in the second year. School principals reported more positive impressions of their school's NNPS program overall in the second year, although in some schools they reported less positive impressions of their ATPs as compared to the year prior. In the second year, four principals agreed that their ATPs were "formed, well organized, and functioning efficiently"—while all six principals did so the year prior.

Does the FEIP lead to changes in community and organizational capacity to support family engagement, including availability of funding?

Grantee leads and their partners cited a number of systems-related changes in community and organizational capacity to support family engagement. These included positive shifts in community and school culture for family engagement, improvements in interagency collaboration and referrals, improvements in service coverage across children's early development, supportive changes in district and school policies, and the acquisition of funding. Notably, La Honda–Pescadero Unified School District (part of the Puente partnership) and Redwood City School District (the Redwood City partnership grantee lead) received funds from the Big Lift to provide high quality learning experiences from preschool to 3rd grade, including RAR Plus Family Nights. The grantee partnerships in both communities cited their experiences with the FEIP—and with RAR Plus Family Nights, in particular—as instrumental to receiving

the awards. They view the Big Lift as an opportunity to sustain much of their FEIP programming over time.

Do professionals improve their attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to family engagement?

Grantees offered a number of services to increase professionals' capacities for family engagement work, including training for implementers of evidence-based or promising family engagement programs, complementary training for parents and professionals, and networking for service providers. As a result, grantee leads, staff, and partners across the five communities cited improvements in their own and others' understanding and skill in family engagement. In particular, professionals have a greater appreciation for the value of family engagement and the strengths of parents as partners in supporting their children's education. Grantee staff and partners also reported increased understanding and skills related to early childhood education and early literacy among professionals. At least two grantees, for example, reported that their early childhood education staff improved their understanding of brain development and early literacy as a result of facilitating or participating in Family Nights as part of RAR.

Do parents improve their understanding of and attitudes about family engagement, increase their knowledge and uptake of engagement opportunities, and increase the quality of their involvement and relationships with children?

Parents' understanding of, attitudes about, and uptake of family engagement increased over the course of their participation in the FEIP programs. For the overall sample of parents with baseline and follow-up surveys, we saw positive changes over time in parents' perceptions of self-efficacy, the importance of family engagement for their children's learning, and of the coordination of family engagement resources and supports in their communities. We also saw improvements over time in parents' knowledge and awareness of available community resources, uptake of opportunities for family engagement, and in the frequency with which they engaged with their children in general activities, in home and school learning activities, and in library visits. The time parents spent looking at books together with their children, the number of books in the household, and the percentages of families having a home reading routine and engaging in supportive parent-child reading behaviors also improved.

Changes in some outcomes were more pronounced among parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs compared to parents who participated in only one FEIP program. These outcomes included uptake of parent activities for family engagement in the community, the frequency of participation in children's school learning activities, and the frequency of library visits in the past month. We also found that the increase in the percentage of parents who asked their children questions the last time they looked at books together was more pronounced among parents who participated in RAR Plus Family Nights than among those who did not participate.

There was no evidence of improvement in the quality of parent-child relationships overall, or among parents with the greatest exposure to the FEIP or to RAR Plus Family Nights. However, parents tended to report fairly positive perceptions of their relationships at baseline.

What are the implications of FEIP for organizations and funders interested in family engagement as a strategy to improve children's educational success?

The collective experiences of grantee partnerships in implementing the FEIP uncovered a number of implications for others who are interested in building and leveraging family engagement as a strategy to improve educational outcomes for children. The following practices may be useful to others who are interested in similar family engagement work:

- **Allow more time, or time during another part of the year, for moving from planning to implementation.** Setting up administrative structures, and especially hiring grant coordinators and project managers, were more difficult and time-consuming than many grantees had anticipated. Although the Foundation gave awardees approximately three months between learning of their awards and the expected initiation of FEIP programming, these months occurred during the summer when many district and school staff were unavailable.

- **Provide grantees with guidance and support to foster effective partnering.** Although the FEIP planning period (Phase I) helped grantees catalyze relationships, support for ongoing communication at all levels—among the grantee lead and staff, their partner leads, and staff delivering programs—was necessary to sustain and leverage partnerships for family engagement. Potential strategies include: (1) supporting the identification of full-time staff to oversee grant administration and program implementation and (2) establishing initiative-level structures such as the FEIP Learning Community to facilitate linkages between partners. Funders may want to consider convening these types of learning communities more regularly and including staff beyond that of the grantee lead (that is, including implementation partners as well).

- **Focus on development of effective relationships among partners.** FEIP grantees would have benefited from technical assistance on how to build relationships between community-based organizations and districts and schools (in addition to building relationships with families). Funders may want to: (1) set parameters to ensure that grantees assess and develop district and school "readiness" for family engagement programming before launching partnership, (2) clearly delineate roles and responsibilities between districts, schools, and organizations that are implementing the programs, and (3) identify strategies to support teacher participation, including bringing teachers into the planning and coordination of activities.

- **Support grantees in recruiting and retaining parent participants, especially those who are considered difficult to reach.** This study identified the following actions undertaken by the Foundation and FEIP grantees as facilitators of parent recruitment efforts: (1) conducting needs assessments and offering programs that aligned with the preferences and self-identified training and support needs of parents, (2) using active recruitment methods and enthusiastic recruiters whom parents will want to build relationships with over time, and (3) carefully considering the timing of offerings so that schedules suit families and do not overlap with other parent and child commitments or family engagement programs.

- **Create an initiative-wide training infrastructure.** Such an infrastructure would ensure that supports are available to build organizational and professional capacity to implement evidence-based models with fidelity. Funders should consider the following actions to

improve the degree of fidelity with which grantees and their partners are able to implement evidence-based programs (and other programs according to best practices): (1) provide initial and ongoing training that clearly identifies the characteristics of high quality program implementation and gives guidance on how to meet these fidelity makers, (2) offer opportunities for sharing within and across grantees about the implementation of evidence-based models, and (3) provide ongoing coaching and technical assistance and require grantees to use a minimum amount of the supports provided.

- **Be more prescriptive in the choices of evidence-based programming presented to grantees.** Being more prescriptive in the evidence-based options available would allow funders to focus grantees on models with the most potential to influence priority outcomes. Being prescriptive would also enable funders to better anticipate and meet grantees' training and technical assistance needs and to establish structures to proactively identify and resolve implementation challenges.

- **Develop and employ intentional monitoring strategies for continuous improvement of evidence-based and promising program implementation.** Although grantee leads received data dashboards that presented information on the number of parents, children, and professionals served by program type and that described implementation fidelity markers for evidence-based programs, grantees may not have been able to use these tools to drive quality improvement because they were produced only three times during the course of Phase II and were available months after the grantee partnerships submitted data. Additional support with interpreting and applying the dashboard information likely would have been helpful. Grantees also might have benefited from observations of evidence-based programming with rapid-cycle feedback to help them identify and overcome implementation challenges.

- **Realize that moving from direct service provision to more challenging activities (such as those that attend to the complementary skill building of parents and professionals and systems change activities) takes time.** Grantees tended to follow a developmental trajectory. First, they launched programs with which they had prior experience (often direct services for parents) and those deemed a priority by the funder (the evidence-based models). With those programs under way, grantees then invested in additional FEIP elements, including more robust professional development, complementary parent-professional training, and systems change activities. This observed pattern in the grantees' experiences suggests that funders and others interested in supporting similar efforts should consider emphasizing a dual focus on service provision and systems improvement efforts. They may also consider extending implementation to provide more time for initial start-up, robust implementation of complex activities, and preparation for sustainability.

- **Understand that a long-term, concerted effort is needed to achieve improvement in children's educational outcomes.** This study documented improvements in the capacity of systems, organizations, and professionals to support family engagement. Although the study also documented statistically significant improvements in parent knowledge, skills, and behaviors over the course of the FEIP, most changes were small. These changes pointed to success on the part of the FEIP grantees and the programs they provided. However, influencing children's educational outcomes will likely require more robust improvements across a wider range of parent outcomes, particularly given that some of the observed improvements may have occurred naturally in the absence of the FEIP. Those investing in

family engagement as a strategy to improve educational outcomes will want to identify the most promising levers of improvement in parent outcomes (for example, programs, training, or other supports that have the largest evidence-based influence on outcomes) and invest in building capacity to support those levers. They will also want to support grantees and their partners in reaching and serving the parents who are most in need of program services.

In sum, this study provided information about the viability of funding public-private partnerships in order to develop and implement coordinated family engagement opportunities across organizations as a strategy for improving community, professional, and parent capacity for family engagement. The two-year timeline for Phase II provided a foundation for grantee partnerships to initiate their activities and helped them receive funding from additional sources. In two years, FEIP grantees and their partners leveraged community-based, district, and school partners to deliver a diverse set of programs to improve the knowledge and skills of parents and professionals.

The FEIP grantee partnerships are in the early stages of a long-term process to improve children's success in elementary school and beyond. Their collective experiences with implementing the FEIP uncovered a number of implications for others who may be interested in building and leveraging family engagement as a strategy to improve educational outcomes for children. Grantee partnerships will need to continue their efforts more robustly in order to increase the probability that families will be engaged in their children's education and that children will experience success. Phase III of the FEIP, initiated by the Foundation in June 2016, is intended to support the grantee partnerships in ensuring that their family engagement efforts are sustained and embedded in systems and organizations after the FEIP has ended. During Phase III, the grantee partnerships will focus on the portions of their Phase II work that they consider most promising and wish to build on.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Family engagement, the ways in which parents and other primary caregivers are involved in their children's education, consists of families' activities at home, at school, and in the community (Epstein 1995). Research over the past 40 years has linked family engagement to academic and socio-emotional outcomes for children of all ages (for reviews, see Henderson and Mapp 2002; Barbarin and Aikens 2009; Halgunseth et al. 2009; Ferguson et al. 2008; Weis et al. 2006). Engagement in children's learning during preschool and the elementary school years has been linked to positive outcomes later in life (Barnard 2004). Although family engagement positively affects the outcomes of children across sociocultural groups, some evidence suggests that family engagement might be a more powerful influence among low-income and immigrant populations (McWayne et al. 2013). In programs that build partnerships among families, schools, and communities, academic outcomes not only improve among low-income children but also reach levels that are standard for middle-class children (Jeynes 2003; Comer 1988; Cummins 1986).

Improving how parents[2] are involved in their children's education is complex and challenging, especially among parents who experience cultural and language barriers when interacting with school staff and other professionals or who might not speak or read English. Fostering parent engagement is further complicated because sociocultural differences often exist between families and early childhood educators and professionals. In addition, few educators are explicitly trained in how to work with families (McWayne et al. 2013). Given these complexities, strategies that seek to improve parent involvement in children's learning must build the organizational capacity of schools and community organizations, as well as the knowledge and skills of individual parents and professionals for family engagement.

A. Overview of the Family Engagement Impact Project (FEIP)

The FEIP is a promising strategy for realizing the benefits of family engagement. The Heising-Simons Foundation (the Foundation) launched the FEIP as a strategy for increasing family engagement in low-income and immigrant families with children ages birth through age 8. The FEIP seeks to improve the capacity of communities, professionals, and parents to engage in children's learning as a strategy to improve educational outcomes for low-income immigrant children in five communities within California's San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. The FEIP aims to leverage existing community resources and strengthen public-private partnerships to coordinate and integrate efforts across organizations. The FEIP also supports partnerships in (1) replicating at least one evidence-based family engagement model and (2) developing opportunities that focus on building the skills of parents and professionals, with a focus on enhancing family engagement at home.

In fall 2013, the Foundation awarded 8-month FEIP planning grants to six communities in the two counties (Phase I). During this phase, the selected communities secured partners, defined their family engagement goals, and planned strategies and approaches to achieve their goals. In

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[2] This study involved parents and other types of caregivers with children from birth to 8 years old. Because the majority of primary caregivers served by the FEIP grantees were parents, we use the term "parent" to refer to all types of primary caregivers throughout this report.

summer 2014, five grantee partnerships received 24-month implementation grants (Phase II). During this phase, the partnerships were tasked with implementing the plans they had developed during Phase I, including delivering coordinated family engagement programming in their geographic focus areas and implementing at least one evidence-based family engagement program. (See Appendix A for the Phase II Request for Proposals (RFP) to communities).

The logic model for the FEIP illustrates how the Foundation expects the initiative to build capacity for family engagement and improve children's success in elementary school and beyond (Figure 1). The model illustrates the inputs that may influence the implementation of FEIP activities. At the Foundation level, these inputs include funding and technical assistance to grantee leads, including the FEIP Learning Community, which met four times and brought grantee leads together to share experiences and collaborate. Additional technical assistance related to FEIP implementation generally, and Raising A Reader (RAR) Plus Family Nights specifically, was provided through external consultants. Community inputs include the availability of early care and education providers, pre-existing early learning and family engagement projects, and the characteristics of the families that are eligible for the FEIP. Grantee-level inputs include previous Phase I partnerships, the quality of their functioning and planning, and the evidence-based family engagement model they selected to implement.

According to the model, grantee partnerships engage in activities, including (1) recruiting parent and professional participants for family engagement services; (2) offering evidence-based and promising family engagement programs that build the skills of parents and professionals; (3) changing community systems to better coordinate, link, and sequence services across organizations to support and sustain family engagement; and (4) developing and implementing local policies to support and sustain family engagement.

The outputs of these activities are anticipated to lead to a variety of outcomes for families, professionals, organizations, and their communities. The short-term and medium-term outcomes include improvements in a community's ability to offer and sustain coordinated and linked services for families, an organization's capacity to deliver evidence-based family engagement programs, and professionals' and parents' knowledge and capacity for meaningful family engagement. As communities, organizations, professionals, and parents attain these outcomes, parents will be engaged in their children's education over the long-term and children will increase attendance in early childhood programs and school, be prepared to enter kindergarten, and experience success in elementary school and beyond. As the logic model indicates, contextual factors can influence the ability of the Foundation and grantee partnerships to implement the FEIP and consequently produce the desired outputs and outcomes.[3]

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[3] The long-term outcomes depicted in the logic model (Figure 1) are unlikely to be realized in the two-year time frame for Phase II and thus are not included in this report.

Figure 1. Logic model for FEIP

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term outcomes	Medium-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Foundation: • Funding • Technical assistance • Learning Community Community: • Early care and education providers, schools, and family service organizations • Preexisting/past projects in early learning and family engagement • Eligible families with children ages birth to 8 Grantee: • FEIP Phase I grantee partners and planning • Selected evidence-based model(s)	• Establish FEIP administrative structures • Recruit parents participants • Recruit professional participants • Deliver evidence-based and promising family engagement programs to parents and professionals • Use approaches that build the skills of families and professionals for family engagement • Coordinate, link, and sequence services across organizations to support and sustain family engagement • Develop and implement local policies to support and sustain family engagement	• Number of FEIP partners • Amount and type/quality of FEIP partnership communication • Number of professionals trained in family engagement • Number of parents trained in family engagement • Amount and type of family engagement training and support received by parents • Amount and type of family engagement training and support received by professionals • Number of family engagement services developed and/or linked • Number of policies developed and implemented	• Communities offer coordinated and linked services for families • Organizations have the capacity to train and supervise staff, recruit parents, and implement evidence-based programs with fidelity • Professionals improve their attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to parent engagement; and their abilities to implement evidence-based and promising programs • Parents increase their understanding of the importance of family engagement, develop positive attitudes about engagement in children's learning, and increase their knowledge of community resources	• Communities and organizations garner additional funding to sustain family engagement work • Parents increase their skills in engaging with children, school, and community; and increase the quantity and quality of their involvement in children's lives and learning • Parents and children experience improved relationships	• Parents remain engaged in their children's education • Children increase attendance in quality early childhood programs, family child care settings, or school • By age 5, children are prepared to enter kindergarten • Children experience success in elementary school and beyond

Contextual factors: County resources (existing partnerships, county offices of education support and services, external grants and funding) and policy context (transitional kindergarten, Local Control Funding Formula, parent engagement requirements in Title 1 schools, Common Core State Standards)

B. Purpose and organization of the report

This report assesses implementation of Phase II of the FEIP, including the five grantee partnerships' activities, outputs, and short-term and medium-term outcomes. The report describes how grantee leads set up administrative structures to maintain partnerships and manage FEIP grant activities, the approaches they used to deliver evidence-based and promising family engagement programs for parents and professionals, and the successes and challenges they encountered. The report focuses on the findings and lessons learned across grantee partnerships. It is intended to support the Foundation's future grant making and to offer suggestions for other communities and organizations interested in increasing family engagement as a strategy to improve children's success in elementary school and beyond.

In Chapter II, we describe the evaluation methods used to document and assess FEIP implementation and outcomes. In Chapter III, we describe the Phase II grantee leads and partnerships. In Chapter IV, we summarize key findings from the implementation study. In Chapter V, we describe the changes in communities', organizations', and parents' capacity for family engagement observed over the course of Phase II. We conclude the report in Chapter VI by distilling our findings into recommendations for others who are interested in supporting family engagement.

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II. OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION

In fall 2014, the Foundation contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to document and evaluate FEIP grantee partnerships' experiences and outcomes during Phase II. The study assessed the implementation and outcomes of the FEIP as an initiative, rather than each grantee partnership's experience. In Table 1, we present the study questions and provide a synopsis of the data sources and analytic methods used to answer each one.

Table 1. Synopsis of study questions, data sources, and analytic approach

Evaluation questions	Data sources	Analytic approach
Implementation study: How is the FEIP being implemented across grantee partnership sites?		
1. What elements of the FEIP are implemented, and how does implementation vary among grantee partnerships?	• Document review • Interviews • Partnership form • Implementing agency form • Parent participation report	• Theme-based qualitative analysis of interview data • Descriptive statistics of program administrative and parent participation data • Cross-grantee partnership comparisons of implementation findings to examine differences across grantee sites
2. With what degree of fidelity are evidence-based programs being carried out?	• Interviews • Implementing agency form • Raising A Reader fidelity form • National Networks of Partnership Schools fidelity form	• Comparison of identified core components of evidence-based model to components implemented by grantee partnerships
Outcomes study: How is the FEIP influencing community, organizational, professional, and parent change?		
1. Does the FEIP lead to changes in community and organizational capacity to support family engagement, including availability of funding?	• Document review • Interviews • Partnership form	• Theme-based qualitative analysis of interview data • Compare organizational capacity indicators at baseline to indicators demonstrated at the end of Phase II
2. Do professionals improve their attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to family engagement?	• Document review • Interviews	• Theme-based qualitative analysis of interview data
3. Do parents improve their understanding of and attitudes about family engagement, increase their knowledge and uptake of engagement opportunities, and increase the quality of their involvement and relationships with children?	• Parent survey • Parent participation report	• Descriptive analysis of mean and distribution of family engagement outcomes at baseline and at follow-up • Multivariate analysis of change in family engagement outcomes over time

In Table 2, we briefly describe each data source. We completed 63 interviews across the five grantee partnerships with a variety of key informants, including the grantee leads and staff at the grantee lead and their partner organizations who oversaw or implemented the family engagement programs and strategies. We also conducted regular reviews of grantee lead documents and family engagement materials and collected and analyzed annual grantee partnership forms, semiannual implementing agency forms, and reports on parent participation. In addition, we conducted baseline and follow-up surveys of a sample of 450 parents who participated in the

FEIP programs. We provide more details about the types of key informants we interviewed and the analysis techniques we used in Appendices B and F. (See Appendix C for copies of the data collection instruments.)

Table 2. Description of data sources

Data source	Description
Document review (ongoing)	• Collected and reviewed all reports that grantee leads provided to the Foundation about their implementation plans and progress, Foundation documents about the grantee partnerships, and other relevant documents that described the grantee partnerships' activities. • Collected and reviewed documents from evidence-based program developers that described the fidelity characteristics.
Initial site visit interviews (March 2015)	• Conducted 45- to 90-minute individual or small group interviews with key informants (grantee leads and staff at the grantee lead and their partner organizations implementing evidence-based and promising programs and other family engagement activities). • Drew on semi-structured protocols to learn about the grantee partnerships' approaches to family engagement, implementing evidence-based and promising programs, and engaging partners.
Check-in telephone interviews (February to March 2016)	• Conducted two one-hour phone interviews with the grantee lead for each of the five grantee partnerships. • Drew on semi-structured protocols to learn about grantee partnerships' implementation progress. • Engaged in discussion about the evolution of grantee partnerships' activities and changes to their baseline logic models.
Second site visit interviews (April 2016)	• Conducted 45- to 90-minute individual or small group interviews with key informants (grantee lead and staff at the grantee lead and their partner organizations staff implementing evidence-based and promising programs). • Drew on semi-structured protocols to learn about the grantee partnerships' approaches to family engagement, implementing evidence-based and promising programs, and engaging partners.
Grantee partnership form (April 2015 and April 2016)	• Collected a form before each site visit on grantee partnership characteristics and functioning, such as the number and types of member organizations, the frequency and content of meetings, collaboration levels, and staff and organizational capacity. • Used the form to identify partner agencies and to understand partnership functioning and capacity.
Implementing agency form (semiannually, December 2014 to June 2016)	• Collected four rounds of administrative data on FEIP services and outputs (children, parents, and professionals served) from each grantee lead and partner identified as providing FEIP services. • Collected a supplemental form for providers that delivered evidence-based programs, which captured information on the degree of fidelity with which the programs were being implemented. • Reviewed form data to enhance our understanding of FEIP programs, outputs, and implementation fidelity. • Summarized output and fidelity measures for grantee partnership-level dashboards provided to grantee leads.

Table 2 *(continued)*

Data source	Description
Parent survey (ongoing, October 2014 to May 2016)	• Collected surveys from all parents participating in FEIP programs that offered three or more service contacts in Year 1 and a purposive sample of such parents in Year 2. • Assessed short-term and medium-term outcomes, such as parents' understanding of the importance of family engagement, attitudes about engagement in children's learning, and participation in learning opportunities with their children.
Parent participation report (semiannually, December 2014 to June 2016)	• Collected four rounds of administrative data on parents' involvement in direct services, such as the numbers and types of FEIP activities they attended, as well as staff reports on parents' level of engagement with services. • Assessed average parent take-up rate in services and number of offerings attended.

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III. OVERVIEW OF FEIP GRANTEE PARTNERSHIPS

The FEIP grantee leads were charged with building supports for family engagement that best met their community's needs and desires, so the partnerships created and the mix of strategies and programming used in each of the five communities were different. In this chapter, we provide an overview of each grantee partnership that received a two-year Phase II implementation grant.

In Table 3, we provide an overview of the five grantee partnerships that received Phase II implementation awards, including the grantee lead (and reference name for each grantee partnership), the geographic area and population served, and the key partners of each grantee lead. All five grantee leads built public-private partnerships; two of the five grantee partnerships are led by school districts, while three partnerships are led by community-based agencies.

Table 3. FEIP Phase II implementation grant awardees

Grantee lead (partnership name)	Geographic area	Population served	Key partners
Estrella Family Services (Estrella)	Luther Burbank neighborhood, East San Jose	Families with children from birth to age 8 in center-based early childhood programs or schools	Catholic Charities Community Child Care Coordinating Council First 5 Santa Clara County Go Kids, Inc. Luther Burbank School District San Andreas Regional Center San Jose Public Library Sana Clara County Office of Education
Grail Family Services (Grail)	Alum Rock, San Jose	Low-income, mostly Latino families with children from birth to age 8 in center-based early childhood programs or schools	Alum Rock Counseling Center Alum Rock Union Elementary School District Amigos de Guadalupe School of Arts and Culture Somos Mayfair
Oak Grove School District (Oak Grove)	Southeastern San Jose	Families with children in preschool to 3rd grade in four Title I schools and two other low-performing schools	Catholic Charities Foothill College Family Engagement Institute Grail Family Services Jump into English Parent Institute for Quality Education Rebekah Children's Services Santa Clara County Office of Education Sobrato Family Foundation

Table 3 *(continued)*

Grantee lead (partnership name)	Geographic area	Population served	Key partners
Puente de la Costa Sur (Puente)	South Coast, San Mateo County	Low-income, mostly Latino immigrant families with children from birth to age 8	4Cs Half Moon Bay Library Institute for Human and Social Development, Inc. (Head Start) La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District Peninsula Family Services San Mateo County Office of Education Silicon Valley Community Foundation West Ed
Redwood City School District (Redwood City)	Redwood City	All families with children from birth to age 8 residing in the district, with an emphasis on low-income and Latino families	City of Redwood City Fair Oaks Health Clinic Redwood City 2020 Family Engagement Institute Silicon Valley Community Foundation Star Vista

Table 4 provides short definitions of the evidence-based and promising programs offered by the grantee partnerships. The table identifies whether the program served parents; professionals (educators, early childhood providers, family support staff); or both. Following the table we provide profiles of each grantee partnership, which describe the grantee lead, the key activities the grantee lead and its partners implemented during Phase II, and how grantee partnerships' FEIP activities evolved over time. The logic models for each grantee partnership, presented in Appendix D, provide supplemental detail on the activities provided under the FEIP; the children, parents, and providers who were served; and the child, parent, and community outcomes that were anticipated.

Table 4. Descriptions of selected FEIP programs and activities

Program offering	Grantee partnerships	Parent	Professional	Description of activity
Evidence-based programs[a]				
Raising A Reader (RAR) Plus Family Nights	All	X		Each grantee partnership implemented this evidence-based early literacy and family engagement program in school or center settings. The program is designed to help families of children (from birth to age 8) develop, practice, and maintain home-based literacy routines. The core program involves a book bag rotation in which children invite their parents to engage in dialogic reading at home. Family Night events, offered through an orientation and four subsequent sessions, focus on dialogic reading strategies.

Table 4 *(continued)*

Program offering	Grantee partnerships	Service focus		Description of activity
		Parent	Professional	
National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)	Oak Grove	Not applicable, not a service model		School staff from six district schools implemented this evidence-based framework for organizing family engagement offerings. Each school formed an Action Team for Partnerships to coordinate and implement the NNPS activities that were defined in action plans for each school. Each school plan defined specific strategies and goals for improved family engagement.
Promising programs[b]				
Abriendo Puertas	Puente, Oak Grove	X		This 10-week curriculum, which is designed for Latino parents, provides an introduction on how to engage in their children's learning and in their communities as leaders and agents of change.
Ages and Stages Questionnaire training	Puente		X	This training is provided by the San Mateo County Office of Education to all preschool staff who implement the Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3, which helps determine appropriate developmental progress for children between one month and five years of age. Training also included strategies for explaining screenings results to parents and helping parents support their children's development.
Building Blocks of Parenting	Grail, Oak Grove	X	X	Grail developed a document containing six positive parenting and family engagement messages titled "Building Blocks of Parenting." Grail has disseminated the messages through posters and flyers as well as through trainings with educators, staff, and parents.
Early Childhood Language Development Institute	Puente	X	X	This is training provided by the San Mateo County Office of Education to teach staff how to effectively engage dual-language learners and for parents to learn the value of dual-language expression. A novel element is also being piloted in Puente that uses a series of participant interviews and videos to increase mutual understanding.
Family Engagement Institute programming	Oak Grove, Redwood City	X	X	This is a series of parent and teacher trainings to promote family engagement. Teachers in targeted schools received the Teachers as Leaders program. In those same schools, parents received either Stretch to Kindergarten (focused on preschoolers), Strong Start Parenting (focused on older children), or Leaders for Change.
High Expectations	Redwood City	X	X	This series of parent and teacher trainings provides technical assistance to joint teams to develop family engagement action plans that link to learning goals of the school and are carried out by parents.
Neighborhood Family Engagement Collaborative	Estrella		X	Family service providers in north Santa Clara County meet monthly through this program. The network meetings allow providers to strategize about their approaches to service delivery and working with difficult-to-serve populations. Providers refine their skills through use of reflective practice (a model or process of continual learning that explores providers' professional activities) in dialogue with others.

Table 4 *(continued)*

Program offering	Grantee partnerships	Parent	Professional	Description of activity
		Service focus		
Parent Institute for Quality Education	Oak Grove	X		This nine-week workshop focuses on education and empowerment of parents of school-age children. Topics include school readiness, academic performance, school engagement, and relationships.
Parent University, community events	Grail	X	X	Grail held six community events at two elementary schools focused on family engagement topics. In Year 1, events were provided to parents. In Year 2, educators and parents participated together. Events focus on early literacy topics, and positive family engagement messages.
Parents as Teachers playgroups	Redwood City	X		This eight-week activity series, run by StarVista, is designed to engage parents with their children in focused playgroups organized on the community school campuses. Parents increase their knowledge of early childhood development and improve their parenting practices.
Preschool and Kinder Transition Supports	Redwood City	X		These are mini grants for open houses and "how to choose a school" presentations to connect preschool families with the community school campuses and resources.
Program for Infant/Toddler Care	Puente	X	X	This program provides training for parents who are informal caregivers to gain important development and education knowledge as well as for agency staff to work on their skill development as early childhood educators.
Socios for Success	Redwood City	X	X	This program provides a series of five to seven workshops, facilitated by Redwood City 2020, which are designed to bring family members, educators, and providers together in community mobilization teams. Trainings use an action-oriented, strength-based approach to helping mobilization teams set clear goals and create a welcoming atmosphere at their schools.
Toy lending library, Story Time on Wheels	Puente	X		Two supports are offered to informal child care providers to support child development and school readiness: (1) a monthly rotation of educational toy bags and (2) weekly in-home visits by an early learning specialist, which includes story time.

[a]As a condition of funding, the Foundation asked grantee partnerships to implement at least one evidence-based family engagement program from a predetermined list. Eligible evidence-based program options had a family engagement component, focused on families with children from birth to age 8, and had evidence demonstrating positive impacts on educational outcomes. (See Appendix A for a list of eligible programs.)

[b]Grantee partnerships chose to implement a variety of additional promising family engagement programs. Grantee partnerships selected promising programs based on a number of factors, including results from community needs assessments completed prior to Phase II, the cultural and demographic characteristics of their communities, the organizational capacity of providers, and previous experience with the programs.

Estrella Family Services | <u>VISIT SITE</u>

Estrella Family Services, a nonprofit agency that operates as a subsidiary under Go Kids Inc., provides child care, youth services, and family support services to low-income families in the city of San Jose and in Santa Clara County, California. Programs include subsidized full- and part-day preschool, before and after school care, family support services, and summer youth programs. Estrella Family Services served as the fiscal agent and administrator for the FEIP Phase II grant.

Description of Estrella FEIP activities: The goal of the Estrella partnership was to increase family engagement and school readiness for low-income children in the Luther Burbank School District catchment area. The Estrella partnership focused on three key activities:

1. **FEIP Advisory Council.** Estrella partners met monthly to plan and assess implementation of the FEIP, and to better align partner policies and efforts for family engagement.

2. **Raising A Reader (RAR) Plus Family Nights.** Estrella partners offered this evidence-based program to families of children from birth to age 8 in various settings: at Luther Burbank School in preschool and transitional kindergarten classes, at two Estrella Family Services' pre-K programs, at three of Catholic Charities' family resource centers, through a Head Start program site, and to families using informal child care providers.

3. **Neighborhood Family Engagement Collaborative.** Estrella partners convened this collaborative and held monthly meetings with family providers in north Santa Clara County. Providers networked with each other, learned about professional development opportunities, and participated in reflective practice, a model or process of continual learning that explores providers' professional activities

Evolution of Estrella FEIP partnership: Over time, the Estrella partnership increased the number of program sites and ultimately served more families than it expected in RAR Plus Family Nights, more than doubling the number of children served in book bag rotations in the second year. For example, Estrella partners expanded the program to two additional family resource centers and offered Family Nights to a Head Start program. To encourage better attendance by families in the second year, Estrella decided to offer the Family Nights for smaller groups in neighborhoods, rather than hosting the events at the library for all families across program settings. This did not, however, lead to an increase in the total number of parents attending the events. The other major change experienced over the course of Phase II was that Estrella Family Services became a subsidiary of Go Kids Inc., a nonprofit child development agency.

Grail Family Services | <u>visit site</u>

Grail Family Services, a nonprofit family resource center located in the Alum Rock community of east San Jose, California, provides programs for children from birth to age 9, including summer learning, early literacy, and preschool. GFS also provides adult education and empowerment programs, as well as provider professional development. Grail Family Services served as the fiscal agent and administrator for the FEIP Phase II grant.

Description of Grail FEIP activities: The goal of the Grail partnership for FEIP was to create a community where Alum Rock families actively support their children's learning. The Grail partnership for FEIP focused on four key activities:

1. **Raising A Reader (RAR) Plus Family Nights.** Grail offered this evidence-based program to families of kindergarten students at two schools in Alum Rock Unified School District (ARUSD) and to families with children enrolled in its center-based programs. A Grail partner, Somos Mayfair, offered RAR without the Family Nights component at an additional school in ARUSD and to parents who participated in its center-based parent workshops.

2. **Community portals.** Grail convened agencies to develop a set of messages about the value of family engagement and to serve as dissemination portals for those messages. The resulting document, <u>Building Blocks of Parenting</u>, promotes six ideas to strengthen children's well-being and life success. Each idea is comprised of positive family engagement statements that are intended to be easy for parents to put into practice.

3. **Professional development.** The Grail partners promoted the messages in Building Blocks of Parenting through trainings for parents, educators, and service providers.

4. **Community events.** Grail held community events on ARUSD school campuses. In the first year, events targeted mothers and young children and focused on strengthening early literacy. In the second year, events included kindergarten families and teachers together, and focused on group activities to strengthen parent and teacher partnerships using ideas from Building Blocks of Parenting.

Evolution of Grail FEIP partnership: The most significant change over time in the Grail partnership was the decreased focus on working with community partners to improve interagency relationships and service coordination, and the increased emphasis on working with partners to serve as dissemination portals for the Building Blocks of Parenting and as trainers for parents and professionals. Designing Building Blocks of Parenting training curricula and workshop modules for parents, educators, and service providers became a core focus of the Grail FEIP partnership in the second year. Grail also pursued a professional development strategy that linked parents, providers, and educators. For example, Grail changed its community events model at ARUSD in the second year to include family engagement skill building workshops that involved both parents and their children's teachers.

Oak Grove School District | VISIT SITE

Oak Grove School District serves more than 10,000 preschool through 8th grade students in 16 elementary schools and 3 intermediate schools in east San Jose, California. Oak Grove School District is also home to several family engagement and early learning initiatives, including the Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) program, a literacy and enrichment program for English-language learners. Almost one-third of students are English-language learners, with about half of students identifying as Hispanic or Latino or qualifying for the free and reduced-price lunch program. Oak Grove School District served as the fiscal agent and administrator for the FEIP Phase II grant.

Description of Oak Grove FEIP activities: In crafting a family engagement program, Oak Grove identified its four Title I schools and two other similarly underperforming schools as the focus of its FEIP activities, with the goal of improving children's school readiness and achievement. The Oak Grove partnership for FEIP focused on three key activities:

1. **Raising A Reader (RAR) Plus Family Nights.** Oak Grove offered this evidence-based program in 21 transitional kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms across the six FEIP schools.

2. **National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS).** Oak Grove adopted this evidence-based model at the district and at the six FEIP schools, focusing on preschool through 3rd grade. NNPS is a framework for family engagement that involves school leaders working with parents and members of the community to set school goals and select parent and community involvement strategies to improve academic achievement, student behavior, and school climate. Oak Grove trained district and school administrators and educators in the model. School teams then developed plans to organize, deliver, and sustain family engagement programming.

3. **Parent and educator workshops.** Oak Grove contracted with community organizations—including the Parent Institute for Quality Education, Rebekah Children's Services, and Jump into English—to provide parent education workshops that include family engagement topics. In addition, through partnerships with the Family Engagement Institute and Grail Family Services, Oak Grove offered complementary and aligned training in family engagement to educators and parents together.

Evolution of Oak Grove FEIP partnership: Over time, the Oak Grove partnership increased the number and variety of parent engagement opportunities available at the FEIP schools. During the first year, Oak Grove offered four parent-focused opportunities across four schools, while during the second year the district offered nine such opportunities across six schools. Oak Grove also expanded its emphasis on providing trainings in which educators and parents participate in complementary and aligned offerings over time. Oak Grove struggled to fully implement NNPS at the six schools due to a variety of issues, including competing demands on staff time.

Puente de la Costa Sur | VISIT SITE

Puente de la Costa Sur, a nonprofit organization that serves as the only community resource center for San Mateo County's South Coast communities, offers more than 40 programs in the areas of adult education, youth leadership development and employment, economic security, and community health and wellness. Puente de la Costa Sur served as the fiscal agent and coadministrator for the FEIP Phase II grant with its partner, the La Honda Pescadero Unified School District.

Description of Puente FEIP activities: The goals of the Puente partnership for FEIP were to build the knowledge and skills of parents and informal caregivers in fostering young children's development, to increase the availability of high quality early childhood education (ECE) options, and to build community capacity to support children's education. The Puente partnerships for FEIP focused on four key activities:

1. **FEIP steering committee.** South Coast family engagement stakeholders and participants met with FEIP partners to derive feedback and support with strategic direction and to generate sustainability plans.

2. **ECE provider professional development.** Puente worked with partners to offer a variety of trainings to improve the ability of district, school, preschool, and community-based ECE staff to effectively support and engage with families. Offerings included the Early Childhood Language Development Institute, the Program for Infant/Toddler care, West Ed's training for informal child care providers, a toy lending library, and a model library.

3. **Raising A Reader (RAR) Plus Family Nights.** Puente offered this program to families of preschool and kindergarten students at Pescadero Elementary School, as well as to families in the community with children from birth to age 3. Puente offered Family Nights to all families receiving book bag rotations with children from birth to age 8.

4. **Abriendo Puertas.** After receiving training from the Abriendo Puertas national organization, Puente offered four cycles of this 10-week parent education series to local families. Puente staff provided coaching for parent presenters to build their leadership and public speaking skills, and to empower them to educate their peers.

Evolution of Puente FEIP partnership: Over time, the Puente partnership expanded program offerings in response to community needs and priorities for improved ECE and care options, serving more families and providers than originally anticipated. For example, Puente offered more cycles of Abriendo Puertas and informal caregiver trainings than planned and developed new services to support informal caregivers. Puente also restructured its staffing goals and added school district– community liaisons and a full-time ECE specialist. These staff members focused on reaching out to families (preschool families in particular), connecting them to schools, and improving parent and caregiver skills and confidence to support children's learning.

Redwood City School District | VISIT SITE

Redwood City School District serves more than 9,000 preschool to 8th grade students in Redwood City, California, and unincorporated areas of North Fair Oaks, California. The majority of students live in low-income, first-generation immigrant families. The 16 Redwood City School District schools are in various stages of becoming community schools—that is, schools that serve as a community hub for programs serving families and other community residents. They offer both academic and nonacademic services to children. Redwood City School District also operates 20 preschool classrooms via its Child Development Centers (CDCs). Redwood City School District served as the fiscal agent and administrator for the FEIP Phase II grant.

Description of Redwood City FEIP activities: Redwood City identified four of the district's community schools as the focus of FEIP activities. At these schools, the Redwood City partnership for FEIP aimed to extend existing community school resources to preschool age children and their families, to improve transitions from preschool to kindergarten, and to coordinate services between schools and community partners. The Redwood City partnerships for FEIP focused on five key activities:

1. **Leverage community school resources.** Redwood City expanded outreach to CDC and preschool families to connect them to the community school systems through registration, electronic records, and other communications tools and resources.

2. **Dual capacity training.** Redwood City worked with partners to offer complementary skills building programs for community school staff and parents. Programs included the Family Engagement Institute's Teachers as Leaders and Strong Start workshop series at two schools, High Expectations at two schools, and Socios for Success at three schools.

3. **Raising A Reader (RAR) Plus Family Nights.** Redwood City offered this evidence-based program to families of transitional kindergarten students at two schools in the first year, and to all families with children enrolled in its CDCs and preschools in the second year. Families from all four community schools, their associated CDCs, and community-based preschools were offered Family Nights.

4. **Parents as Teachers.** Redwood City partnered with StarVista to increase its reach on community school campuses by offering this eight-week playgroup series for parents and children focused on child development and meaningful play.

5. **Preschool and Kindergarten transition supports.** Redwood City offered mini grants for kindergarten open houses to better connect parents to the community school campuses before and during the transition to kindergarten. Redwood City also supported technology system upgrades and additional outreach strategies to better connect CDCs and the families they serve to community schools.

Evolution of Redwood City FEIP partnership: Over time, Redwood City priorities shifted from direct service provision to parents and professionals to improving linkages between community schools and families with children from birth 0 to age 5. As part of this shift, Redwood City increased its focus on improving data connections between CDCs, preschools, community schools, and families and on engaging CDC families in the community school choice and registration process.

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IV. KEY IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS: HOW IS THE FEIP BEING IMPLEMENTED ACROSS GRANTEE PARTNERSHIP SITES?

In this chapter, we answer the two implementation study questions:

1. What elements of the FEIP are implemented, and how does implementation vary among grantee partnerships?

2. With what degree of fidelity are evidence-based programs being carried out?

In describing the findings, we integrate information across data sources and use quotes to illustrate key themes.

> **What elements of the FEIP are implemented, and how does implementation vary among grantee partnerships?**

In this section, we describe grantee leads' experiences implementing the following FEIP elements: (1) administrative structures, (2) partnerships, (3) parent and professional recruitment, (4) programs to build the skills of parents and professionals, and (5) strategies to change community systems. For each element, we identify key themes to describe our findings and illustrate the factors that facilitated or hindered grantee leads' implementation experiences.

A. Establishing administrative structures

Animating grantee partnerships' plans during Phase II required the grantee leads to set up administrative structures to coordinate FEIP activities. In this section, we describe the grantee leads' experiences with setting up such structures.

Most grantee leads experienced delays in setting up administrative structures and implementing services. By and large, the grantee leads felt that they effectively used the Phase I planning time to identify key partners and form partnerships, design administrative structures, and select evidence-based models and other promising family engagement programs based on community needs and existing resources. Nonetheless, few grantee leads were able to "hit the ground running" when awarded their Phase II implementation grants. Grantee leads needed time to formalize the administrative structures required to manage grantee partnerships and program service delivery, hire staff to coordinate grant activities, finalize their program and activity selections, and identify providers to manage or deliver those programs and activities (RAR Plus Family Nights, in particular).

The difficulty of finding qualified staff to coordinate grant activities was the most common reason for the delays. Most grantee leads had difficulty finding staff to coordinate the grant efforts because of the tight job market or challenges with finding individuals with the right skills. Grantee leads desired staff with management, coordination, and early literacy or early child education experience. Two grantee leads indicated that they "did not settle" and instead posted job

> "We had to advertise the position a couple of times to find qualified candidates. We were hoping to start Raising A Reader in September, but we really didn't start until January."
>
> *— Grantee lead*

openings multiple times before hiring the "right" person. Difficulty with hiring either caused delays in implementation during the first year or meant that grantee partnerships had to rely on existing staff at lead organizations to manage start-up, which also slowed implementation. Most grantee partnerships were delayed by at least three months in the process of designating or hiring staff to manage grant activities overall or to coordinate their RAR Plus Family Nights programs. A few grantee leads noted that having more time between learning about their Phase II award in late June and the start of the school year (and program implementation in October) would have been helpful. One grantee lead noted that developing job descriptions during the planning phase and having them ready on "day one" would have streamlined the hiring process. Eventually, all of these grantee leads found the qualified staff that they needed to manage grants and coordinate FEIP programming.

Most grantee leads said that having staff in full-time coordinating roles, rather than allocating responsibilities across existing staff, was critical to implementing the diverse aspects of the FEIP. Three grantee leads hired coordinators or project managers to oversee implementation, while the other two grantee leads assigned responsibility for overseeing FEIP implementation with the grantee lead and existing staff. Because each grantee partnership implemented at least one evidence-based program in addition to multiple promising family engagement programs and other strategies across multiple locations, having a full-time coordinator oversee implementation supported the grantee partnerships in maintaining momentum and coordination across their diverse activities. Supportive functions provided by coordinators and project managers included promoting communication and coordination among partners to the grantee, carrying out FEIP programming such as RAR Plus Family Nights, developing family engagement outreach materials, and training staff to implement programs. One grantee partnership, for example, reported that it was unable to launch RAR Plus Family Nights and a professional development activity simultaneously, as it had planned, because of the lack of a coordinator. The grantee partnership instead prioritized the RAR Family Nights in the first year and delayed launching the professional development activity until it could reassign staff from RAR Plus Family Nights at the end of the first year.

Those grantee leads that regularly convened oversight committees were better able to maintain communication and coordination among partners and build a FEIP identity, than those that did not. Three grantee leads established an oversight committee or advisory council to regularly convene partners to the grantee, or used an existing group outside of the FEIP to fill a similar function. These three community-based grantee leads used administrative structures to increase awareness of the goals and progress of their grantee partnerships, improve the flow of information between partners, and facilitate collaborative decision making. These three grantee leads also used one or more additional strategies to foster information sharing. Strategies

> "The advisory council can be the central point of problem solving, but also knowing what's going on. [It's] a way for everyone to stay engaged in the ways that everyone is rolling out Raising A Reader. People can give feedback . . . focus on problem solving, and [look] at what works and what doesn't work."
>
> — *Grantee lead*

included ad hoc meetings with key partners of the grantee, regular meetings for subsets of program implementers to share learning, and joint training opportunities for program implementers across partners of the grantee or program sites. Grantee leads and their partners noted that these strategies supported service coordination and enhanced service quality.

The other two grantee leads, both school districts, either did not establish or regularly convene an oversight committee. Their partners expressed a desire for improved access to and communication with others in their grantee partnership. This led in some cases to grantee partners feeling like they were contractors providing discrete services rather than as collaborators in a larger community initiative for family engagement. A partner of one of these grantee leads said, "Really, I don't know what is happening on the grant or with the other partners at all." The coordinator for this grantee partnership appeared to struggle with communication and coordination efforts. The partners said the coordinator acted more as a "gatekeeper" than as a conduit for FEIP information. Partners of this grantee desired more support and connection to each other, as well as a greater understanding of the community vision for the FEIP as a whole.

FEIP implementation was affected by turnover in district and school leadership. Most grantee partnerships experienced organizational transitions in key positions, such as the executive director of the grantee lead organization, or among staff at partners to the grantee that were leading or delivering FEIP programs. Grantee leads reported that, for the most part, these changes did not have any significant negative impact on their ability to coordinate or deliver programming. Despite these transitions, they said service delivery continued without distress because other staff within the grantee partnerships' organizations were able to fill vacancies or take on extra work for a short period or help transition new staff through training and support. Grantee leads remarked that the district and school staff transitions caused greater impacts on program implementation. Building relationships with these staff was critical to FEIP buy-in for program integration in school settings, but building these bonds takes time. For example, a community-based grantee lead that implemented RAR Plus Family Nights in a local school found that it had much more restricted access to teachers and classrooms after a supportive superintendent left the district in the second year of Phase II, which negatively impacted implementation.

Grantee leads appreciated the FEIP Learning Community and offered suggestions to further improve its value. The five grantee leads participated in a learning community that was facilitated by an external consultant with input and funding from the Foundation. The learning community met four times. Each meeting focused on a unique topic and included dedicated time for grantee partnerships to share updates, exchange lessons learned, and engage in collaborative problem solving. The four meeting topics were (1) kickoff and overview of the FEIP, RAR Plus Family Nights, and the external evaluation; (2) using logic models, data dashboards, and process mapping for program improvement; (3) guidance on RAR Plus Family Nights; and (4) strategies for building strong family-school partnerships. Grantee leads largely found participation in the learning community to be a rewarding experience. They valued the opportunity to reflect on their experiences, share best practices, and network and collaborate with other grantee leads. Several grantee lead staff members suggested that offering additional opportunities to meet in smaller workgroups to discuss specific programs or topics of interest (such as RAR Plus Family Nights, recruiting participants, or systems change activities) would have further increased the value of these meetings. One grantee lead felt that a helpful topic would be how to build and maintain effective organizational partnerships for family engagement, especially with school districts. Grantee leads also thought that visiting each other's sites to observe activities would have been beneficial.

B. Maintaining FEIP grantee partnerships

Each grantee lead recruited partners for the FEIP during the planning phase and built upon those partnerships in Phase II. In this section, we describe grantee leads' experiences with maintaining and using partnerships to implement the FEIP.

Grantee leads described their FEIP partnerships as strong and well-functioning. On average, each grantee lead recruited eight partners, with five providing direct services to parents and three providing services to educators or other professionals—although, some partners were recruited for both functions. Most partners to the grantees had previous experience working with the grantee lead. Partners to the grantees were typically community-based organizations providing social services to families, organizations that developed and offered training on family engagement topics, or school districts and schools. All grantee leads reported that having existing partnerships to leverage for the FEIP was critical to their success, suggesting that building on existing relationships with partners that have relevant experience is a valuable strategy. Grantee leads reported that they often had more effective communication, a clearer sense of a shared mission and goals, and better ability to "hit the ground running" with pre-existing versus new partners.

For the most part, grantee leads agreed or strongly agreed (scores of three or higher) with several statements about the functioning of their grantee partnerships (Table 5). Most grantee leads in the first year and most or all in the second year indicated that they had the right partners to make the FEIP successful. Specifically, they said that partners invested an appropriate amount of time in FEIP activities and had clearly defined roles, an understanding of the goals of the partnership, and effective communication. Grantee leads' positive opinions on all of these topics increased from the first to the second year. This suggests that grantee leads generally felt positively about the qualities and strengths of their grantee partnerships.

Grantee leads were less likely to agree that the grantee partnership had adequate funds to accomplish its goals. Although most grantee leads communicated that FEIP funding was generous and sufficient to carry out their work, they also noted that additional funding would have allowed them to increase staffing to provide more services or reduce burden on existing staff.

Table 5. FEIP partnership functioning: Average grantee lead self-report ratings, with changes from 2015 to 2016

	Average grantee rating		
	Spring 2015 (n = 5)	Spring 2016 (n = 5)	Change over time
We have all of the organizations we need to be successful in our goals for the FEIP as members of our partnership.	2.8	3.0	⇧0.2
The organizations that belong to our partnership invest the right amount of time in our collaborative efforts.	3.0	3.6	⇧0.6
Our member partners have clearly defined roles within the partnership.	3.2	3.8	⇧0.6

Table 5 *(continued)*

	Average grantee rating		
	Spring 2015 (n = 5)	Spring 2016 (n = 5)	Change over time
Members of our partnership have a clear understanding of what our collaboration is trying to accomplish with the FEIP.	3.4	4.0	⇧0.6
We clearly communicate the activities and decisions of the partnership to all members.	3.6	4.0	⇧0.4
Our partnership has adequate funds to accomplish its goals.	2.8	2.6	⇩0.2

Source:　Grantee Partnership Form, spring 2015 and spring 2016.

Note:　Grantee leads rated partnership functioning on a scale of 1 to 4: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agreed; and 4 = strongly agree. Survey responses are from the grantee lead only and do not necessarily represent those of other partnership members.

The capacity of grantees' partnerships to offer family engagement programs increased over time in several areas, yet remained weak in other areas. Grantee partnerships implemented a number of strategies to increase their capacity for family engagement, including identifying partners with specific family engagement skill sets, offering staff professional development, and fundraising for future programs. Grantee partnerships ended the first year of Phase II as somewhat strong or very strong (scores of three or higher) on only three of eight key capacities (Table 6). By the end of the second year, grantee partnerships had increased the number of key capacities in which they reported being somewhat strong or very strong to six of the eight. Grantee leads reported capacities related to fiscal infrastructure and community and political support as the weakest, with scores of 2.6 and 2.8 in each year, respectively. Boosting these two capacities in the next phase of the FEIP may be a key consideration for the sustainability of the initiative. For example, effective fundraising will determine whether program operations continue beyond the period of the grant award. Building community and political support will be important for taking FEIP programs to the level of community and systems change, a goal of all grantee leads.

Table 6. FEIP partnership capacities: Average grantee lead self-report ratings, with changes from 2015 to 2016

	Average grantee lead rating		
	Spring 2015 (n = 5)	Spring 2016 (n = 5)	Change over time
Planning	3.4	3.6	⇧0.2
Strategic planning, tactical planning, decision making			
Collaboration	3.6	3.6	No change
Leadership, alignment of goals and strategies, development of relationships, working through existing relationships			

Table 6 *(continued)*

	Average grantee lead rating		
	Spring 2015 (n = 5)	Spring 2016 (n = 5)	Change over time
Operations	3.4	3.4	No change
Program outreach, recruitment, family engagement service delivery			
Provider capacity building	2.3	3.2	⇧0.9
Training, supervision, technical assistance, recruitment and retention of staff/providers			
Fiscal infrastructure	2.6	2.6	No change
Fiscal partnering, planning, fundraising, researching funding sources, and leveraging funding to support direct services			
Community and political support	2.8	2.8	No change
Building community awareness and political support for family engagement services and supports			
Communications	2.8	3.4	⇧0.6
Communicating program information, lessons learned, or policy advocacy to partners, stakeholders, and the public			
Evaluation	2.6	3.4	⇧0.8
Data collection, storage, retrieval, and analysis for program evaluation, monitoring, or quality improvement activities			

Source: Grantee Partnership Form, spring 2015 and spring 2016.

Note: Grantee leads rated each infrastructure capacity on a scale of 1 to 4: 1 = very weak; 2 = weak; 3 = strong; and 4 = very strong. Survey responses are from the grantee lead only and do not necessarily represent those of other partnership members.

C. Recruiting parents and professionals

Being able to successfully reach out to and recruit parents and professionals to participate is a key first step in being able to deliver family engagement programming that attends to the skill building of both parties. In this section, we describe grantee partnerships' experiences with recruiting FEIP participants.

Although grantee partnerships generally felt successful in their parent recruitment efforts, all of them said that there was room for improvement. In particular, grantee leads and their partners reported success in reaching parents that were personally motivated to participate and were historically the most involved. They had the greatest struggle recruiting parents they described as traditionally difficult to engage for many reasons, such as parents' competing priorities and other family issues. These included having to work long hours or multiple jobs, having limited or no English proficiency, fear of revealing their immigration status, and not having access to affordable or convenient child care or transportation. The large number of programs offered to parents in

> "Tons of males are attending [Family Nights]. This is definitely the population we want to hit…The fact that we are seeing repeat customers and dads is definitely a big win for us."
> — *Grantee staff*

many communities and the conflicting schedules of other family activities, such as secondary school sporting events and church occasions, also made some families harder to recruit and keep involved than others. All grantee leads and partners made an effort to reach these parents, with varying success. Grantee partnerships did report higher rates of participation among fathers than they anticipated, a traditionally hard-to-reach group. They attributed the increase largely to the ability of the programs to meet the families' "needs and wants." A number of programs reported that although mothers were often the first to attend activities, many would bring their husbands to subsequent meetings or would alternate attendance with the fathers. Some grantee partnerships noted that parents' participation in programs waned over time. However, one grantee partnership specifically noted parent enthusiasm building from one offering to the next—likely because the program was successful at creating increased awareness of the program and "buzz" in the community.

Grantee partnerships applied lessons learned from their first-year parent recruitment efforts during the second year. Grantee partnerships learned that early messaging about program participation was an especially important aspect of recruitment. They strove to use recruiters who had strong program and content knowledge, enthusiasm about the programs, an ability to build rapport, and the capability to answer parents' questions. These recruiters tended to be familiar teachers, experienced program staff, and parent peers. Grantee partnerships relied more heavily on these types of individuals during second-year parent recruitment efforts. Grantee partnerships also observed that parent programs that were advertised as "optional" or that did not enthusiastically engage parents at early sessions faced more challenges than others in recruiting and maintaining parent participation. One grantee partnership, for example, noticed higher attrition for Family Nights at one location where the events were described as optional versus another location where the events were not.

> "In Year 2, we amended the model to make the events more numerous, smaller, and more focused on the parent-teacher-child relationship. We got teachers to show up, which was a big draw for parents. Recruiting parents for these community events was easier than for [RAR Plus] Family Nights [because teachers were there]."
> — *Grantee lead*

Over time, grantee partnerships also transitioned to using more active and direct recruitment techniques with parents. For example, they learned that having teachers or other school staff personally invite parents to Family Night was more successful than sending flyers home with children. In one particularly small community, the grantee lead and staff directly contacted all eligible families to invite them to participate in the FEIP programs, and they followed up personally when parents did not attend. Grantee partnerships also witnessed the positive impact on recruitment and retention of offering food and reliable child care. They amplified these offerings as much as possible during the second year. In addition, all grantee partnerships adjusted program scheduling to be more convenient for parents. Some programs, for example, scheduled programming immediately after parents dropped their children off at school or later in the evenings, while other programs moved their offerings to different times during the school year to avoid offering too many options at any one time. A few grantee partnerships decreased the amount of time between consecutive offerings as a strategy to maintain momentum and to "keep the materials fresher" and make it easier to "tie all the information together."

Teachers and school staff were the most difficult types of participants to recruit.
According to grantee leads and partners, teachers have very little flexibility in their schedules
and face many competing pressures for their time. Thus, teachers may regard training
opportunities that are not integrated into standing meetings or designated as professional
development time as something additional "that they can't fit on their plate." This may be
especially salient currently, as teachers are laden with
required trainings related to new state educational
standards (California Common Core). In addition,
some educators may be uncomfortable with family
engagement because working face-to-face with
families to address their needs and resolve conflicts
requires different skills than working with children,
and may mean a greater time commitment. Partners
observed, however, that teachers and school staff that
had already had strong relationships with families were
often more motivated to participate than others, likely
due to their personal interests in engagement.

> "Everything that has been offered has
> been well received by parents. The
> teachers have been a bit different. It's a
> struggle because they are so
> overwhelmed with the changes in the
> curriculum and changes in their
> assessments. We backed off a bit in this
> area in Year 1, recognizing these things.
> But we had a stronger focus on
> teachers in Year 2 and have had more
> success."
> *— Grantee lead*

**District and school administrator support was critical to securing the participation of
teachers and other school staff.** Those grantee leads and partners who struggled the most to
recruit and retain teacher and school staff participation commonly cited insufficient buy-in for
their efforts from district and school leaders. Many partners, for example, reported that having
administrators explicitly encourage staff participation was essential to their recruitment success
because it signaled that family engagement was a priority. Puente, for example, reported strong
collaboration with its district partner and grant coadministrator, and generally experienced
success with engaging teachers and other school staff in its training. Others were less satisfied
with their district or designated school's support. For example, a partner of one grantee lead
reported that she never met the principal at one of the school sites where she delivered a program
focused on building the skills of both parents and professionals. She said that this corresponded
with insufficient teacher recruitment and participation. While working with a different grantee
lead to offer the same program, this partner similarly
noted that she had a lot of "pass through" with the
grantee lead to the schools and "not enough opportunity
to work with the school leadership directly" during the
first program year. She said this lack of direct
connection with school leaders challenged program
implementation. Notably, however, this partner was able
to garner the support and attendance of two school
principals in the program's professional component
during the second year.

> "The frustration is that when the money
> [for professional development] comes
> from grant funding, you need district and
> school leadership to ask for teacher
> participation. . . . We just didn't get that
> buy-in from them, and this affected our
> work with teachers. We wish we would
> have had more pull or access in the
> district to encourage teachers to show
> up at these events."
> *— Grantee partner*

Although some grantees included funds for teacher release time in their budgets, it was
unclear how they used these funds. According to a partner of one grantee lead, if the grant-
funded programming is not explicitly encouraged by district and school leaders, teachers often
do not view it as a priority. In addition, one grantee lead who operated early childhood programs
for school district families remarked that her agency "really can't pay" for teachers to attend
FEIP training or provide release time.

D. Delivering programs to build the skills of parents and professionals

A core element of the FEIP is using partnerships to provide programming that builds the skills of parents and providers for improved family engagement. In this section, we provide an overview of the family engagement programs offered, as well as the number of parents, children, and professionals served by grantee partnerships during Phase II. We then describe grantee partnerships' experiences with delivering these programs.

Grantee partnerships collectively served more than 4,700 parents and nearly 500 professionals in new or expanded family engagement programming. Although the majority of the FEIP programs delivered were direct services to parents or children, grantee partnerships also conducted indirect activities for families (such as community outreach and messaging) and offered professional development opportunities for professionals and parents. Table 7 shows the number of parents, children, and professionals served through the FEIP, by program type and duration. The grantee partnerships' data dashboards, presented in Appendix E, provide information on the number of parents, children, and professionals served, by program type, for each grantee partnership for each Phase II implementation year.

Direct services for parents and children. Over the course of Phase II, the five grantee partnerships collectively served more than 1,500 parents in 221 RAR Plus Family Nights, as well as more than 2,500 children in classroom and community-based settings who participated in RAR book bag rotations. In addition, grantee partnerships served nearly 850 parents in 76 other workshop series and offerings that included at least three sessions (such as the Parent Institute for Quality Education, Parents as Teachers playgroups, and Abriendo Puertas) and more than 2,600 parents in 102 community events and other direct service activities that included only one or two sessions (such as preschool and kindergarten transition support open houses). The five grantee partnerships collectively directly served approximately 200 fewer parents than they projected in their Phase III proposals.

Indirect activities for parents and children. In addition to direct services, grantee partnerships collectively provided roughly 17,000 contacts with parents through mailings and other family engagement outreach activities that did not involve face-to-face service provision. For example, Grail Family Services placed "Building Blocks of Parenting" posters, which contained positive ideas for family engagement, in their partner agencies and sent flyers with similar information to the homes of families in their community.

Professional development activities. Grantee partnerships also offered 120 professional development activities related to family engagement, which served nearly 500 educators or other early childhood professionals and 129 parents. As an example, preschool teachers at Puente participated in a one-day training in the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), a screening tool for children's developmental progress. Teachers learned how to conduct screenings, explain screening results to parents, and help parents support their children's development. Additional examples include the teacher and school staff component of skill building programs for both parents and professionals, such as the Family Engagement Institute programming offered by Oak Grove and Redwood City and the Early Childhood Language Development Institute offered by Puente. Although programs providing complementary skill building were generally captured as direct services for parents, some grantee partnerships considered these opportunities as professional development for parents. Examples of parent-focused professional development

include trainings to serve as (1) RAR book bag rotation volunteers, (2) community advocates and facilitators of family engagement programs (such as Abriendo Puertas or Socios for Success), and (3) members of Action Teams for Partnerships as part of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS).

Table 7. Total and average number of parents and providers served by the five grantee partnerships

	Total served, all grantee partnerships (n = 5)	Average served, per grantee partnership (n = 5)
	July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2016	
Number of parents served[a]	4,749	950
Raising A Reader Plus Family Nights		
Number of parent Family Night attendees	1,535	307
Number of Family Nights offered	221	44
Average number of parents attending a Family Night	17	--
Number of children served (book bag rotations)	2,571	514
Ages 0 < 3	146	29
Ages 3 < 5	2,033	407
Ages 5 to 9	392	78
Other direct services (3 or more sessions)		
Number of parents served	846	169
Number of program offerings	76	15
Average number of sessions per offering	8	--
Average number of parents attending an offering	18	--
Other direct services (1 to 2 sessions)		
Number of parents served	2,651	530
Number of program offerings	102	20
Average number of parents attending an offering	31	--
Indirect activities (no face-to-face contact)		
Estimated indirect contacts with parents[b]	17,185	3,437
Number of indirect offerings	80	16

Table 7 *(continued)*

	Total served, all grantee partnerships (n = 5)	Average served, per grantee partnership (n = 5)
	July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2016	
Professional development		
Number of parents served	129	26
Number of professionals served	478	96
Types of providers served (%)		
Educators	23	--
Center-based staff/child care provider	33	--
Home/family-based child care provider	5	--
Family support provider	13	--
Other	26	--
Number of offerings	120	24
Average number of sessions per offering	3	--

Source: Implementing Agency Semiannual Reporting Forms, received semiannually between July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2016.

[a] Number served in each type of activity may sum to more than the total served because participants may take part in more than one type of activity. This count does not include those served in indirect activities without face-to-face contact.

[b] Grantees were not required to estimate the number of parents reached. Service contacts may include multiple contacts with the same parent.

Grantee partnerships directed most of their energy toward implementing direct services for parents in the first year. This is likely because grantee leads and their partners had previously offered these services and they were therefore relatively straightforward to implement for new locations or additional groups of parents. For example, a Grail partner, Somos Mayfair, had previously offered RAR book bag rotations, while a Redwood City partner, Star Vista, had previous experience implementing Parents as Teachers playgroups. Grantee partnerships also focused on launching RAR Plus Family Nights in the first year. Although all grantee partnerships had some prior experience with the book bag rotation component of this program, none had previously facilitated the Family Nights. Due to the learning curve associated with implementing Family Nights, most grantee partnerships were delayed in implementing other aspects of the comprehensive set of family engagement programs and activities that they had proposed in their Phase II plans. For example, Estrella Family Services identified RAR Plus Family Nights and a Neighborhood Family Engagement Collaborative as its two main service components. However, the staff assigned to launch both components spent the majority of the first year implementing RAR Plus Family Nights, which led to the collaborative launching in the second year of Phase II, instead of the first, as planned.

> "I feel really good about providing a lot of services and opportunities for parents. We are offering long-standing and quality programming. . . . I think the parent trainings have gone very well."
> — *Grantee lead*

Grantee leads and their partners reported being able to successfully implement programs for parents and pointed to several organizational strengths as key facilitators. These strengths included having a history of working with and building trust with low-income and immigrant families as well as organizational missions and family-oriented service models that embrace and are well aligned with family engagement. The grantee leads and their partners also had prior experience delivering similar programs. Two grantee leads, for example, operate family resource centers, which provide family-oriented services to low-income parents that emphasize child development and being an active participant in their child' learning. The grantee partnerships found these centers to be a natural building block for their FEIP programs. One staff member at a family resource center noted that the RAR Plus Family Nights book bag rotations tied in well and provided an enhancement to other programming at the center that emphasized early literacy.

> "We have always served and supported low-income immigrant families. Family Resource Centers are hubs in the community, so we provide services that cater to the community."
>
> *— Grantee staff*

Grantee leads and their partners faced more difficulty implementing programs for professionals (especially teachers), than for parents. Although grantee leads and their partners noted that having districts and schools as partners (or grantee leads) facilitated the delivery of family engagement programming in several ways, it also created challenges. On the positive side, districts and schools commonly had pre-existing family engagement policies and programs, connections between preschool and elementary systems, and bilingual staff to help teachers and other staff communicate with parents. Grantee partners that relied on districts and schools to support program implementation, however, also identified a number of challenges specific to working in the public education system. Paramount among these were (1) turnover in leadership, which made it difficult to maintain program momentum from year to year as grantee partners had to rebuild relationships with new staff; (2) competing priorities that district and school leaders faced; (3) difficulties with securing space for programming; and (4) difficulty in gaining buy-in from district and school leaders and thus support for teacher and staff participation. Furthermore, some district and school leaders reported being unaccustomed to working with community service agencies as partners. They said they did not fully understand how to make such partnerships work.

Although often challenging to implement, grantee leads identified the complementary training that was offered to parents and professionals as key to realizing the benefits of the FEIP. Grantee partnerships doubled their efforts in this area in the second year. Four grantee partnerships offered programs that focused on building parents' and professionals' (typically school teachers) abilities to work together to support children's development and learning. Some programs offered training to parents and professionals during separate, but complementary sessions. Others offered training jointly to parents and professionals in the same sessions. Although these efforts were nascent in the first year, the grantee partnerships doubled the number of programs offering skill building opportunities for both parents and professionals in the second year.

As grantee leads and their partners gained more experience, they identified this type of programming, especially where parents and educators engaged each other directly, as the most beneficial in improving community capacity for family engagement. These opportunities provided parents and professionals the chance to learn about the contributions each had to offer. They also learned that family engagement is a shared responsibility for student success.

> "Everyone comes in with their strengths and areas of growth, and we need to work with our teachers and educators, along with families . . . be in the same room together and bring forth those areas of expertise or strength, whether on the parent or educator side. This is how we all grow together. Parents have important contributions that teachers can learn from, and vice versa."
> — *Grantee lead*

Factors likely contributing to the increase in activities for parent-professional capacity building include grantee partnerships (1) being more familiar with RAR Plus Family Nights and thus able to devote more time and energy in expanding these types of offerings and (2) applying lessons learned from their experiences implementing these programs in the first year to more successfully secure additional buy-in from district and school leaders. A key strategy employed by one grantee partner (working with both the Oak Grove and the Redwood City partnerships) was to intentionally assess schools' "readiness" for this type of programming. The grantee partner only offered programming with schools, for example, that had a culture of continuous improvement, leaders and educators with a demonstrated willingness to participate, and a sense of "openness" between the principal and school staff. Two grantee partners offering this type of programming said that they spent more time in the second year than in the first year assessing and gaining commitment from schools, including engaging in more discussions with principals, prior to launching programs. Another grantee partner remarked on the importance of having clear training objectives that are directly tied to the interests and needs of teachers. This partner, for example, revised its strategies for recruiting teacher participants by making explicit the links between the program's subject matter and teachers' other high-priority concerns (such as continuing development in the Common Core).

> "I would just really want to insist from the get-go that the sites and grantees are really committed to the dual capacity model, on both sides with educators and with parents. If you don't have that commitment from them, you won't get as far along."
> — *Grantee partner*

Teachers, school staff, and other professionals may need additional supports to put family engagement training into practice. Ongoing support can help professionals feel more comfortable and confident when applying newly gained skills. Grantee leads differed in the amount of ongoing support they offered to educators in their training programs, with most providing very little ongoing support. One grantee lead provided opportunities for teachers and school staff to create a family engagement work plan that identified concrete activities to foster family engagement. However, the grantee lead lacked the capacity to provide participants with ongoing support in enacting their work plans, which the participants identified as a gap. Another grantee partnership offered monthly coaching meetings to parent and teacher teams implementing similar family engagement plans at their schools. Yet another grantee partnership held regular support groups for staff across agencies and sites that were implementing RAR Plus Family Nights. According to the grantee lead, this helped implementers better understand the program and solve challenging implementation scenarios as a group.

E. Enacting strategies to change community systems to better support and sustain family engagement

Another element of the FEIP was engaging in community systems activities to better coordinate, link, and sequence family engagement opportunities in the funded communities so that efforts would be ongoing across a child's development and sustained over time. In this section, we describe grantee partnerships' experiences with executing strategies to change their community systems to better support and sustain family engagement.

Grantee partnerships engaged in systems change activities, but not as robustly as they had originally planned. As described previously, grantee partnerships generally prioritized direct services and program start-up in the first year, leading to slower progress with systems change activities. Because delivering direct services lays the groundwork for larger-scale systems change by increasing community awareness of the importance of family engagement, all five grantee partnerships can be described as engaging in early systems change activities. Three grantee partnerships enacted more substantial system change activities:

1. *Estrella launched a Family Engagement Network as a forum for cross-agency collaboration.* The network links agencies to improve service coordination and helps to address service gaps and reduce redundancies in services for families with young children. The network uses a model of reflective practice (a process of continual learning that explores providers' professional activities) to explore the challenges that providers face in their practice. Although the network was not launched until the second year, the grantee lead and staff reported that the extra time spent planning and clearly defining the "why" of the collaborative paid off in terms of provider interest. They report robust attendance and involvement, with an average of 30 attendees per monthly meeting and more than 80 members of their LISTSERV.

2. *Grail worked to identify gaps in family services and strengthen interagency coordination and family engagement messaging through a non-FEIP committee called Sí Se Puede Collective*. The collective, which was developed outside of the FEIP, worked to foster cross-agency collaboration and develop a "no wrong door" approach to services for families with young children in the community. The collective is in the early stages of establishing a cross-agency referral system. Within the FEIP, the Grail partnership created a common set of family engagement messages called the Building Blocks for Parenting. Grail is using its partners (most of whom are members of the collective), various media, and structured trainings to disseminate the messages across the community and create a common language about the importance of family engagement.

3. *Redwood City focused on extending its reach to families with children who were not yet school-age.* This grantee lead worked to improve linkages between the district's Child Development Centers (CDCs) and community-based preschools to community schools and community services. Activities included grants for special classroom events, open houses, workshops and information sessions for parents, and access to staff and screenings to link families to school and community services. In the second year, Redwood City moved beyond making personal connections and linkages to families with younger children to also improving data connections so that district staff could proactively contact families about community services and offer support in selecting and registering with community schools.

In sum, the FEIP grantee partnerships were able to implement all FEIP elements, although most met with some typical early implementation challenges. For example, although all grantee leads established administrative structures to manage partnerships and grant activities, most experienced difficulty and delays in hiring key staff. In addition, some grantee leads were less effective than others in using oversight and communication strategies to build a FEIP identify among grantee partnerships. Grantee leads agreed that improvements were possible. However, grantee partnerships successfully recruited and served more than 4,700 parents and 500 professionals in a diverse set of family engagement programs and began enacting strategies to make meaningful changes in community systems to support and sustain such efforts.

With what degree of fidelity are evidence-based programs being carried out?

All grantee partnerships chose to implement RAR Plus Family Nights as their evidence-based model; one grantee partnership chose to implement NNPS as a second evidence-based model. In this section, we describe the grantee partnerships' ability to implement the (1) RAR Plus Family Nights program and (2) the NNPS framework with fidelity to the models as set forth by the developers.

A. Implementing RAR Plus Family Nights

The core RAR program includes book bag rotations, which are designed to (1) teach parents about the value of regular book sharing for their child's early brain development, (2) build parents' read aloud book sharing skills, (3) excite families about book sharing, (4) provide children with weekly book bags so that parents and children can practice the habit of book sharing, and (5) connect families to libraries. Family Nights, added as part of the evidence-based model in 2014, supplement the RAR book bag rotation program through a series of five meetings, during which parents are provided with instruction on, and practice, five different shared reading skills. To launch RAR or RAR Plus Family Nights, an organization pays to join the RAR network as an affiliate. Program materials are then purchased on a per child basis. These fees include training, books, book bags, and other materials necessary for schools and other community-based agencies to deliver the program.

> **Box 1. RAR Fidelity Markers**
>
> ✓ Book bags that contain four to five books are sent home with the child on a weekly basis, for an average of 26 weeks
>
> ✓ Local implementers are trained annually by national staff or a local coordinator
>
> ✓ Formal tracking system is used to monitor book bag rotations and there are designated spaces for the book bags
>
> ✓ Local implementers conduct read aloud sessions
>
> ✓ Families receive orientation to the program and are introduced to the library
>
> ✓ Children are transitioned to library book bags

> **Box 2. Family Night Fidelity Markers**
>
> ✓ Parents receive additional curriculum-based training during a series of five workshops that are 60 to 90 minutes each
>
> ✓ Parents practice skills with each other
>
> ✓ Parents practice skills with children with support of facilitator
>
> ✓ Participants share food together

We used a subset of characteristics specified by RAR developers as markers of high quality program implementation to assess grantee partnerships' ability to deliver RAR book bags with fidelity to the national model (Box 1). Because the RAR

developers have not yet defined fidelity markers for the Family Nights component of the Plus model, we relied on characteristics from a research study on the value added of Family Nights as fidelity markers for those events (Box 2) (Anthony et al. 2014).

Grantee partnerships used different approaches to provide RAR Plus Family Nights. All grantee partnerships offered book bag rotations to multiple groups of children, but did so in different settings and for children of different ages. Some, for example, offered the book bags through school or preschool classrooms. Others offered the book bags to children through family resource centers or other community-based programming. Some grantee partnerships did both. Most grantee partnerships directed their offerings to preschool and kindergarten children and their families, while one offered the program to all families with children from birth to 3rd grade. On average, grantee partnerships served 7 classrooms or center-based groups during the first year of implementation, and 12 classrooms or center-based groups during the second year.

Similarly, grantee partnerships varied in how they implemented Family Nights. Some grantee partnerships offered Family Nights on school campuses, while others did so in community libraries. A few grantee partnerships invited families from across their book bag rotation settings to participate together in the same Family Night series, although most offered a unique Family Night series for smaller groups of parents in each location or classroom. In Year 1, one grantee partnership offered a single Family Night series at the community library for all participating school classrooms and community settings. In Year 2, this grantee partnership changed its strategy to offer an individualized Family Night series at each school and community site. The grantee lead had hoped that this change in strategy would lead to increased attendance, but it did not. In addition, a few grantee partnerships that offered the book bag rotations in multiple classrooms within a school offered one Family Night series to the whole school (either before or after school hours), while one grantee partnership that offered book bag rotations in multiple classrooms offered the Family Night series separately for each classroom during the school day so that children were available to participate in literacy practice with their parents.

Grantee partnerships also varied in the staff that they used to coordinate their RAR book bag rotations and facilitate the Family Nights. Although teachers oversaw book bag rotations in most school classroom settings and agency staff did so in community settings, many grantee partnerships solicited the help of parent volunteers. For one partnership, staff to the grantee lead managed the book bag rotations in the early months of the program, until teachers felt comfortable taking it on. Another grantee partnership relied entirely on volunteer assistance from AmeriCorps to operate the book bag component of the program in the first year. Relying entirely on non-classroom volunteers to manage the book bag rotation met with limited success, however, and this partnership transitioned its RAR offerings in the second year to different classrooms run by teachers who were experienced with the book bags. Some of the staff coordinating book bag rotations were trained by an RAR affiliate, some were trained by a grantee lead coordinator, and others were trained by teachers with RAR book bag rotation experience.

During the first program year, grantee lead staff who were designated as RAR coordinators most commonly facilitated the Family Night events. This type of staff facilitated the events for three grantee partnerships in the first year and four grantee partnerships in the second year. Although the other two grantee partnerships used a community librarian and AmeriCorps

volunteers to facilitate events in the first year, they transferred facilitation to the grantee leads' RAR coordinators and school teachers in the second year. Only two grantee partnerships, both in the second year, used teachers as facilitators of Family Night events.

Grantee partnerships' ability to implement RAR Plus Family Nights with fidelity improved over time. Book bag rotations were offered with fidelity to the national model by four grantee partnerships in the first year, and by all five grantee partnerships in the second year**.** Across grantee partnerships, self-reports of key fidelity measures were favorable (Table 8). In both program years, more than 80 percent of classrooms or groups facilitating book bag rotations met the standards for trainings, had a designated space for the book bags, used a tracking system to monitor rotations, conducted read aloud sessions, held a library event for families, and sent book bags home weekly. Due to the difficulties with hiring RAR coordination staff and challenges with purchasing the required book bags, few grantee partnerships were able to rotate the book bags for the national average of six months during the first program year. All grantee partnerships were able to overcome this challenge in the second program year.

Only two grantee partnerships were able to offer Family Nights with fidelity to the research study in the first year, while four grantee partnerships (including the first two) were able to in the second year.[4] On average, grantee partnerships delivered the five required Family Night events per family, offering approximately one workshop a month (Table 8). However, at least two grantee partnerships did not offer the events to all parents participating in the book bag rotation component of the program in the first program year. Interviews with grantee leads and their staff suggest that grantee partnerships faced additional challenges with facilitating Family Nights with fidelity to the research study model. For example, two grantee partnerships made major adaptations to the national Family Night curriculum during the first year, while other grantee partnerships inconsistently followed the curriculum. Although all grantee partnerships reserved time for parents to practice read aloud skills together with other parents during the workshops, some grantee partnerships were unable to consistently bring children together with parents later in the session to practice those same skills. Those grantee partnerships that offered the Family Nights during the school day could more easily bring children into the sessions, while those that offered the events in the evenings were required to provide child care. One grantee partnership overcame this problem by offering an additional and separate session during which parents and children could practice together. Not all grantee partnerships consistently included food in their Family Night offerings.

One grantee lead misunderstood the specifics of RAR Plus Family Nights implementation during the first year. This grantee lead mistakenly offered the two components of RAR separately—that is, one group of families participated in book bag rotations while another group of families was offered the Family Night series (even though their children had not received book bags). After receiving feedback, this grantee lead revamped implementation in the second year and provided the program with fidelity to the research study. In the second year, this grantee

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[4] Although the Anthony et al. (2014) study included child care, parent-child practice, and shared meals, at the time of this report RAR national promoted these family night characteristics as optional and instead recommended that facilitators provide and ask parents to complete interactive reading assignments at home with their child. If the child care, shared parent-child interaction, and food criteria are relaxed, three grantees delivered events with fidelity during the first year, and all were able to do so (for most classrooms or groups) during the second year.

lead offered RAR Plus Family Nights in a different set of classrooms (with teachers that had previous experience with the book bag component), trained teachers to facilitate Family Nights, offered meals, and provided child care and opportunities for parents and children to practice skills together.

Table 8. Fidelity to RAR book bag rotation across the five FEIP grantees

	All grantee partnerships (n = 5)	
	July 2014 to June 2015	July 2015 to June 2016
Average time between start and end of book bag rotations by group (weeks)	18	28
Percentage of classroom/group staff reporting…		
Receiving RAR training or refresher training by an RAR affiliate	81	82
Percentage of classrooms/groups reporting…		
Designating an organized, permanent place for book bags	100	100
Using a logging or tracking system to monitor book bag rotations	100	100
Conducting read aloud sessions with children	83	100
Conducting a library event for families and children	89	81
Providing children with blue library book bags	78	79
Frequency of red book bag rotation (percentage of classrooms/groups offering)…		
Once a week	100	94
Twice a month	0	6

Source: Implementing Agency Semiannual Report Form, July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016; Raising A Reader School Site Fidelity Form, July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016.

Grantee partnerships' challenges with facilitating Family Nights are likely related to the fact that they are pioneers in implementing this component of the model. Although all grantee partnerships had some experiences with the RAR book bag rotations prior to the FEIP funding, none had facilitated the Family Night component of the model. In addition, because RAR had only recently added Family Nights as a component of the program in 2014, training and support provided by the national and affiliate offices was less developed for Family Nights compared to the book bag rotations. For example, although the presentation slides were available in Spanish, the curriculum script and materials were not. The lack of a Spanish-language script meant that grantee partnerships had to expend considerable time and effort developing their own materials through translation. Grantee partnerships could have saved extensive time and resources if they had collaborated on this process. In addition, although training for Family Nights was incorporated into the RAR training in August 2014, only a small portion of the two-day training focused on the Family Night events and the trainer had not actually implemented Family Nights previously. Moreover, because of the delays grantee partnerships experienced in hiring, some RAR coordinators were unable to attend the training. While the FEIP partnerships were pioneers in implementing the RAR Plus Family Nights model, the program has since been adopted for regional implementation in San Mateo County as part of the Big Lift – and two FEIP partnerships (Puente and Redwood City) received Big Lift grant awards.

Training and support from the Bay Area RAR affiliate supported grantee partnerships' implementation efforts, but some staff would have liked more opportunities to share best practices. Staff who managed RAR Plus Family Nights implementation across sites, staff who implemented the book bag rotations, and staff who facilitated the Family Night events all required training. While staff reported that training provided directly from the RAR national organization or local affiliate was more effective than training provided more informally via the train-the-trainer model, most still felt that additional training would have been helpful. This may be because the national office had not yet developed supports for the trainers when the FEIP Phase II launched. One Family Night facilitator reported that "the training provided was enough to start," but the use of other learning materials and self-training was necessary. Another facilitator noted that after training, "it was still kind of foggy. . . . I didn't know exactly what Family Literacy Nights entailed." With access to training materials and practice over time, however, implementers generally felt they were sufficiently trained and could offer the program successfully. While the Foundation made supports available to the grantee partnerships, they did not fully access many of the supports available to them. Increased use of supports that were made available to grantee partnerships through the FEIP at the initiative level, such as attendance in Bay Area RAR meetings or technical assistance from a local RAR affiliate, might have improved implementation quality. Additional opportunities for less-experienced implementers (such as classroom teachers, parent volunteers, and other school staff) to learn from skilled providers, either through the FEIP Learning Community or other shared learning experiences at the grantee partnership level, might also have improved implementation quality. One grantee partnership, for example, noted that their ongoing meetings for RAR Plus Family Night implementers served as an effective "support group" and fostered shared learning.

> "The Bay Area Raising A Reader is one of the strongest [FEIP supports], and we really enjoy that collaboration. We are happy to get the book bags to over 300 kids. . . . This is a phenomenal effort that we accomplished."
> — *Grantee lead*

B. Implementing National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)

The Oak Grove partnership implemented NNPS in six low-performing elementary schools, including four Title I schools with high proportions of low-income families in the Oak Grove School District. NNPS is a comprehensive framework to guide school leaders in building partnerships between their schools, students' families, and their communities. Using the framework, school leaders create an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) to lead the school's implementation of NNPS. Implementation includes developing a One-Year Action Plan for family engagement that specifies the strategies the school will use to build partnerships with families and the community, with the long-term desired outcome of creating a welcoming school climate that promotes student success. The NNPS model specifies certain fidelity markers for the ATP and the action plan. Table 9 shows the fidelity to the NNPS model and the progress made for Oak Grove's six elementary schools during the two years of implementation.

For the most part, schools struggled to implement NNPS with fidelity to the model. Some of the schools' ATPs did not meet fidelity markers and the action plans were of mixed quality.

Fidelity of ATPs. School ATPs included the types of members required by NNPS, with the exception of one school during the second year (Table 9). However, district staff and one school principal interviewed in the second year reported that ATP meetings were not always attended by parent members and that parent members were not engaged in the planning and implementation of activities. All school ATPs reported that members were trained in NNPS in the first year. However, only two of the six ATPs in the first year and three of the six ATPs in the second school year met monthly, the minimum frequency that NNPS suggests.

> *"*For our ATPs and planning meetings for NNPS, they honestly have not been very well attended by parents."*
> — School principal*

Fidelity of One-Year Action Plans. NNPS requires schools to specify two academic goals, one student behavioral goal, and one goal for school climate in their action plans and to describe supporting activities for each goal. Although all six schools correctly identified these goals in their action plans in both school years, only one school in the first year and three schools in the second year described the goals in a measurable or evaluable way or included at least two activities to support each goal (Table 9). One school, for example, specified an academic goal vaguely as "English Language Arts" but did not describe specific activities, a desired result, or a way to measure progress on this goal.

Table 9. Fidelity to NNPS framework at the six Oak Grove schools

	Number of schools meeting each fidelity marker (n = 6)	
	2014–2015 school year	2015–2016 school year
ATP fidelity markers		
ATP consists of at least two to three teachers from different subjects/grades and at least one school administrator	6	6
ATP consists of at least two to three parents from different grades, neighborhoods, or cultural groups and a parent liaison	6	5
All ATP members attended a team training	6	3[b]
ATP meets at least once a month	2	3
One-Year Action Plan fidelity markers		
Action plan drafted or revised	6	6
Action plan includes two academic goals, one behavioral goal, and one school climate goal	6	6
Academic, behavioral, and school climate goals describe desired results/how results will be measured	1	3
Action plan includes at least two activities to support each goal linked to six types of involvement	1	3
Implementation of activities in six types of involvement[a]		
Type 1: Parenting	4	6
Type 2: Communicating	4	5
Type 3: Volunteering	5	6
Type 4: Learning at home	4	6
Type 5: Decision making	2	5
Type 6: Collaborating with the community	4	2

Table 9 *(continued)*

| | Number of schools meeting each fidelity marker (n = 6) | |
	2014–2015 school year	2015–2016 school year
ATP received some or a lot of support from…		
District leaders (superintendent, assistant superintendent)	6	5
Principal	6	6
Teachers at school	6	5
Parents at school	6	5
Parent organization (PTA, PTO)	6	3
Community members	5	1

Source: NNPS School Site Fidelity Form and One-Year Action Plan, completed by each school in each school year.
[a]Whether school has implemented "partially" or "fully" at least one activity in each type of involvement.
[b]Team trainings are only required once per the NNPS model, not each school year.
ATP = Action Team for Partnerships; NNPS = National Network of Partnership Schools

Schools demonstrated progress in implementing plan activities linked to most of the six types of family and community involvement in the NNPS model. Despite challenges with meeting fidelity markers, many schools in the first year and more in the second year began implementing family engagement activities (see Table 9). For example, the number of schools that had partially or fully implemented a parenting activity (such as a parenting workshop) or a learning at home activity (such as helping parents understand home conditions that support learning) as part of their NNPS plans increased from four in the first year to all six in the second year. The number of schools implementing activities related to the other types of involvement, with the exception of collaborating with the community, also increased.

Schools struggled to increase community involvement. Only two of the six of the schools had partially or fully implemented an activity that involved collaborating with the community in the second year, fewer schools than in the prior year (see Table 9). A third of schools in the first school year and two-thirds in the second year described their community involvement activities in that year as "not started yet" or "just beginning implementation." Community involvement activities, per the NNPS model, can be both inward facing (for example, helping to coordinate community resources or services for families at the school) and outward facing (for example, students participating in community service activities). Only one school ATP in the second school year reported that it had received support from community members, fewer than in the prior year—indicating that community involvement and building relationships with members of the community was one area that school ATPs could focus on in strengthening their partnership frameworks.

> "[NNPS] is the perfect model for educators: there is a plan, there is an ATP, and people can sit at the table and participate. It looks like utopia, but in reality that's just not happening. First it's slow, then it's not consistent. . . . For various reasons, the fidelity is not there yet. Change takes time, and it is a change."
>
> — *District staff member*

School principals reported more positive impressions of their school's NNPS program overall in the second year, although in some schools they reported less positive impressions of their ATPs as compared to the year prior. Principals served on ATPs in each school that implemented NNPS. In the second year, four principals agreed that their ATPs were "formed,

well organized, and functioning efficiently"—fewer than in the year prior (Table 10). A decrease in positive principal sentiment to the ATPs may relate to concerns about fidelity: the difficulty schools had in encouraging parent participation on ATPs and the fewer-than-recommended meetings of ATPs during the school year. When asked about other aspects of their NNPS activities, principals reported similar or more positive impressions of their school site activities over time (Table 10).

Table 10. School principals' impressions of NNPS activities at the six Oak Grove schools

	Number of schools at which the principal agrees or strongly agrees with each statement (n = 6)	
	2014–2015 school year	2015–2016 school year
ATP is formed, well organized, and functioning efficiently	6	4
The school's program of school, family, and community partnerships meets the needs of most or all of the families in the targeted grades	4	5
The school's program of school, family, and community partnerships would continue even if there were changes in school leadership	6	6
We evaluated each activity in our program of school, family, and community partnerships after it was implemented	2	6

Source: NNPS School Site Fidelity Form and One Year Action Plan, completed by each school each school year.
ATP = Action Team for Partnerships; NNPS = National Network of Partnership Schools

School principals wanted more support and technical assistance to help them design the action plans and implement NNPS activities. While the grantee partnership used FEIP funds to send the grantee lead, who is staff in the district's administrative office, to national training on the NNPS model each year, it is unclear how much of that training was spread to other district and school staff. In addition to wanting logistical support to help organize ATP meetings and implement NNPS activities, principals also wanted to see exemplary NNPS plans, have more opportunities to learn from other schools implementing NNPS, and obtain additional training to more fully understand the NNPS framework and family engagement. District leaders have been mostly receptive to schools' calls for support. For example, using FEIP funding, the district invited the creator of the NNPS framework, Dr. Joyce Epstein, to provide a workshop for ATP members at all six schools in the 2015–2016 school year. The district is also working to provide example action plans that schools could choose to emulate for the next school year.

> "[I want to get] together [with] the other schools who are implementing [NNPS] and have them bounce ideas off of each other. What is going well that we can replicate?"
>
> *— School principal*

In sum, grantee partnerships met with varying success in implementing evidence-based family engagement models in their communities. However, most grantee partnerships improved their ability to do so over time. Their collective experiences suggest that organizations implementing evidence-based models for the first time benefit from intensive and ongoing training. This can include assistance from model developers and via other mechanisms such as the FEIP Learning Collaborative and support groups to share experiences, receive coaching, and learn from one another.

V. KEY OUTCOME FINDINGS: HOW IS FEIP INFLUENCING COMMUNITY, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND PARENTAL CHANGE?

In this chapter, we answer the three outcome study questions:

1. Does the FEIP lead to changes in community and organizational capacity to support family engagement, including availability of funding?

2. Do professionals improve their attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to family engagement?

3. Do parents improve their understanding of and attitudes about family engagement, increase their knowledge and uptake of engagement opportunities, and increase the quality of their involvement and relationships with children?

In describing the findings, we integrate information across data sources and use quotes from grantee leads and their partners to illustrate key themes.

> **Does the FEIP lead to changes in community and organizational capacity to support family engagement, including availability of funding?**

Grantee leads and their partners cited a number of systems-related changes in community and organizational capacity to support family engagement. These included positive cultural shifts, increases in agency collaboration, improvements in service coverage across children's early development, supportive changes in district and school policies, and the acquisition of funding. In this section, we provide examples of grantee partnerships' successes in each of these areas.

Four grantee partnerships described positive shifts in community and school culture around family engagement. The Grail partnership, for example, described how collaboratively developing and disseminating Building Blocks for Parenting standardized the organizations' understanding and language about family engagement, and "upped everyone's game" about what family engagement means, how to deliver consistent messaging, and how to implement quality programs. A partner to this grantee remarked that families now receive the same messages from multiple organizations in the community.

> "We are talking about family engagement in a way that we weren't before. We now think of family engagement as being meaningfully engaged in the life of our children, starting at birth. Agencies are thinking and acting on this knowledge, and they are taking it on themselves to promote these messages."
>
> *— Grantee lead*

The Redwood City grantee lead and staff reflected that the participation in the FEIP brought about positive changes in school culture, describing school environments that were now "more relaxed, open, and welcoming" to families, particularly families with children who were not yet school-age. Specifically, grantee partnership staff felt that the kindergarten support strategies enacted as part of the FEIP increased the visibility and importance of preschool as the "real start" of education within the district and community schools (as opposed to kindergarten). Oak Grove grantee lead and staff reported similar improvements in a welcoming school climate for parents at schools that participate in NNPS. Each participating Oak Grove School District school developed and implemented strategies to improve school climate—for example, offering parent education workshops and other services at the school, hosting "gallery walks" for parents of their children's work, and having greeters meet parents at student pickup or to show them around the school.

> "The work we have done in Building Blocks of Parenting family engagement messages has gone beyond the Alum Rock area and given the organization recognition for our work and expertise in the area of family engagement. It has also well positioned the organization to launch professional development for teachers, service providers, and child care providers."
>
> — *Grantee lead*

> "For a long time, people have thought of family engagement as a checklist, but it is a total cultural shift in how we engage the student and the family. [Our FEIP partnership] is helping teachers and providers understand this."
>
> — *Grantee staff*

Although La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District has always had an "open-door policy" for families, a district partner of the grantee described how offering the FEIP programs on school grounds and repeatedly delivering messages about family engagement made the open-door policy more "real." "The effect is starting to snowball and parent involvement is really becoming a part of the school culture," the partner said.

Three grantee partnerships cited improvements in interagency collaboration that led to the provision of more and varied family engagement programming in their communities.
The Oak Grove grantee lead, for example, said the district is collaborating with community-based agencies more now than ever before and that these partnerships amplified district capacity to offer programs and services to parents and teachers: "The resources are at the tip of my fingers now; the partnerships have been instrumental." Grantee lead staff with Redwood City shared that because of the FEIP the district now has relationships with

> "We have gotten to know each other a lot better. The lines of communication are a lot more open. We make easier cross-referrals. We are getting to know the strengths of each organization to support cross-referrals. Building that trust, we can refer and expect reciprocating referrals back."
>
> — *Grantee partner*

community-based preschools and is better able to reach additional segments of the community with family engagement services. Puente grantee lead staff described how using the FEIP funding to hire additional staff improved their organization's capacity to work directly with the district and school and initiate new programs, such as a toy lending library and a mobile book library.

Two grantee partnerships described improvements in interagency coordination and referrals. The Grail partnership, for example, worked through the *Sí Se Puede* Collective to initiate a "no wrong door" approaching to serving families. Together, Grail grantee lead staff and

partners developed a universal referral form so that the four participating agencies could better align their services and refer families to the supports that they need. Grail and their partners also worked together through this collective to align their summer offerings for families. The Estrella partnership reported that Family Engagement Network formed under FEIP served a forum for cross-agency collaboration and referrals.

Two grantee partnerships extended their service scope to children from birth to age 8. Although all grantee partnerships delivered services for families with children up to age 8 and emphasized that family engagement starts at birth rather than kindergarten entry, two partnerships strove explicitly to enhance service delivery to families with children from birth to age 5 (and especially birth to age 3) and to link these families to districts and schools. Puente grantee staff cited the FEIP as the vehicle that drove these enhanced connections. According to the grantee lead and staff, Redwood City Unified School District used the FEIP to extend community school services and supports to children from birth to 5 and to link community-based and other preschools and early care settings to community school campuses. The district is also working with Redwood City 2020 (a grantee partner), to further extend family engagement and support services to cover children's development from "cradle to career."

> "Organizationally these two [FEIP] years have successfully created a shift in the way that community schools think about the preschools, and now they actually work systemically to involve those preschool and community families into their elementary campuses."
> — *Grantee partner*

Three grantee partnerships experienced positive changes in school district policies that supported family engagement. Early in the implementation phase, for example, the Puente partnership successfully worked with the San Mateo County Office of Education to extend district preschool from a half-day to full-day program, a key activity of its Phase II proposal. The Redwood City grantee lead and staff reported that their FEIP activities improved district leaders' understanding of the value of family engagement, which led to shifts in the Local Control Funding Formula. For the first time, funds were designated for family engagement and for continuing the work of linking community schools to families with young children. Redwood City grantee partnership staff also reported integrating family engagement into school board discussions with designated time on agendas and changing district communications, technology, and data procedures—for example, entering preschool families' contact information into district databases to extend information sharing to CDC and community-based preschool families. They also reported working toward shared funding across family engagement and literacy grants so that families with children from birth to age 8 have access to the full range of community school supports. Oak Grove grantee partnership staff noted a change during the implementation phase in the district board policy regarding family engagement. According to the grantee lead, Title I family engagement policy now includes more accountability by requiring that family engagement efforts be monitored and regularly reported.

All grantee partnerships secured new funding during Phase II, increasing their capacity to offer and sustain some family engagement efforts. Grantee leads and their partners leveraged their FEIP relationships and activities to apply for and secure funding for family engagement opportunities. Notably, La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District (part of the Puente partnership) and Redwood City School District (the Redwood City partnership grantee lead) received funds from the Big Lift to provide high quality learning experiences from

preschool to 3rd grade, including RAR Plus Family Nights. Grantee partnerships in both communities cited their experiences with the FEIP—and with RAR Plus Family Nights, in particular—as instrumental to receiving the awards. They view the Big Lift as an opportunity to sustain much of their FEIP programming over time. In other cases, grantee leads and their partners applied separately and jointly for funding to sustain or extend smaller pieces of family engagement, early literacy, oral language development, and professional development programs offered as part of FEIP. For example, Grail and Somos applied jointly for two sources of funding. Both organizations received funds from First 5 California, which will allow Grail to open a new family resource center to serve San Jose's East Side and to fund two new positions and will allow Somos to bolster existing programming at its family resource center. Both organizations also received unrestricted funding from the Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund, which they plan to use to boost their early learning programming. The Oak Grove partnership secured funding for 50 percent of the cost to offer the Parent Institute for Quality Education in one school for two years. The Oak Grove partnership had previously offered the program through the FEIP. Estrella received First 5 California funds to offer training and improve the family engagement skills of informal and licensed home-based child care providers.

In sum, grantee partnerships influenced positive change in community and organizational capacity for family engagement. Organizations were able to provide new programming and extend prior programming to new locations and additional groups of families. Grantee partnerships described positive changes in community and school norms about family engagement, improved interagency collaboration and service coordination, and new school policies and funding sources supportive of family engagement efforts. All grantee partnerships were able to leverage additional funding for some family engagement activities.

Do professionals improve their attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to family engagement?

Grantee leads and their partners also described changes in grantee staffs' and other professionals' attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to family engagement. They attributed these changes to participation in the FEIP (either as a service implementer or recipient). Changes included improvements in professionals' knowledge and skills related to (1) family engagement generally and (2) early childhood education and literacy. In this section, we provide examples of the changes in both areas.

Grantee staff reported that the FEIP opportunities increased professionals' understanding and skills related to family engagement. Grantees offered a number of services to increase professionals' capacity for family engagement work, including training for implementers of evidence-based or promising family engagement programs, complementary training opportunities for parents and professionals, and networking opportunities for service providers. Grantee leads, staff, and partners across the five

> "It feels like everyone's skills have really improved around reaching out to families, and this is more of a priority. The staffs' skills are improving and evolving around increased parent engagement. This is occurring at every staff training and meeting. This engagement piece is an effort and the staff are encouraged."
> — *School principal*

communities cited improvements in their own and others' understanding and skill in family engagement. One grantee lead, for example, noted that early childhood education staff who took part in RAR Plus Family Nights have a "much better understanding" of family engagement versus parent involvement. "Parent involvement is just getting parents to show up," the lead explained, "engagement is getting them to be active participants in their children's education." This grantee noted that staff now make more of an effort to invite parents to participate and volunteer in activities and to build the skills of parents as leaders (for example, through training parents as "promotores," or community educators). Another grantee lead described how Building Blocks for Parenting increased the knowledge base of the staff at a community counseling center, which now applies family engagement strategies in case management sessions with its clients.

Many grantees working with district and school staff also reported witnessing skill growth for those taking part in professional development opportunities, such as the Teachers as Leaders program offered by the Family Engagement Institute (FEI). One grantee staff member reported that educators who attended the program came away with a stronger understanding of the role of parents and families in supporting school success. After attending FEI training, one principal instituted a policy to require teachers to call the parents of their students in the first month of the new school year to welcome them and open a line of communication. In addition, because only a minority of teachers at the school speak Spanish, the district has now made interpreters more widely available for teacher

> "This training highlighted the importance of teachers and staff connecting with families and what brings them together—leading to some great discussions about the purposes of teachers and staff in the community. All the teachers for the school district and all the [partner organization] staff were in one place talking about education for the first time."
> — *Grantee lead*

contact. The Puente partnership also reported greater skill and care of school district staff to engage parents, which was validated by one parent we interviewed. This parent noted that teachers are now better able to engage with both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking parents as a result of a dual-language learner training and Spanish translation is now more readily available at school events. The parent also reported that teachers seemed better informed and more willing to discuss child development this school year.

> "We didn't have the teacher turnout that we expected. But the ones that did come, you could tell their thinking and practices were transformed. Teachers don't get these things otherwise. They are working on instruction and behavioral issues. They don't think about the family. I could see them thinking and talking differently."
> — *Grantee lead*

Grantee staff and partners also reported increased understanding and skills related to early childhood education and early literacy among professionals. At least two grantees, for example, reported that their early childhood education staff improved their understanding of brain development and early literacy as a result of facilitating or participating in Family Nights as part of RAR. Staff similarly reported that their services to informal child care providers (for example, Puente's Program for Infant/Toddler Care) have led to those providers gaining more knowledge about early childhood development and a better understanding of their role in children's development. In addition, Puente offered trainings to educators in their partner school district in the ASQ. After providing training, Puente staff found that the assessments that teachers made matched what parents observed at home, suggesting that educators were able to

reliably use the ASQ tool. Puente staff said that this allowed educators to have meaningful discussions with parents about their children's development and to offer support to families with children that they had identified through the ASQ screening as being in need.

In sum, through direct service provision to families and participation in professional development activities, professionals in the FEIP communities are improving their knowledge, skills, and behavior related to family engagement. In addition to gaining a greater appreciation for the value of family engagement and the strengths of parents as partners in supporting children's education, grantees reported that professionals improved their skills for engaging with families and in supporting early childhood education and literacy.

Do parents improve their understanding of and attitudes about family engagement, increase their knowledge and uptake of engagement opportunities, and increase the quality of their involvement and relationships with children?

In this section, we provide results from our analysis of parent survey data to examine whether outcomes for parents changed over the course of their participation in the FEIP programs in four areas: (1) understanding of and attitudes about family engagement, (2) perceptions of community coordination of family engagement supports, (3) knowledge and uptake of family engagement activities, and (4) quality of home reading engagement and parent-child relationships.

Based on the assumptions of the logic model for the FEIP (Figure 1), we conducted four types of analyses on the parent survey data to examine whether outcomes improved over the course of participation in the FEIP. First, because we expected parents' outcomes to change over the course of their involvement in the FEIP programs, we examined baseline (program start) to follow-up (program end) changes in the overall sample. Second, because we expected changes to be more pronounced among parents who had greater exposure to the programming, we separately examined changes in outcomes for parents who participated in only one FEIP program versus parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs. Third, because we expected changes in outcomes related to the home reading environment and parent-child reading behavior to be more pronounced among parents who participated in the RAR Plus Family Nights, we separately examined changes in home reading environment and reading behavior for parents who participated in RAR Plus Family Nights versus parents who did not participate in RAR Plus Family Nights. Fourth, we tested differences across subgroups via multivariate regressions to assess whether participation in more than one FEIP program or in RAR Plus Family Nights was positively associated with outcomes at the end of program participation, after accounting for differences in baseline responses. We interpreted results as evidence of improvement when, on average, positive changes were statistically distinguishable from zero at the .05 level.

In presenting the findings, we focus on changes from baseline to follow-up for the overall sample. We also describe changes within subgroups when the regression analyses showed between-group differences that were statistically significant at the .05 level. We present figures and tables for selected positive findings related to these main analyses.

We present an overview of our analytic methods in Box 3. The full parent survey study methodology and the full study results can be found in Appendices F and G, respectively.

Box 3. Assessing Parents' Attitudes, Knowledge, and Behaviors

We examined parent outcomes among a sample of 450 parents who participated in FEIP programs that offered three or more contacts with the same parent and who completed a baseline and follow-up survey. We assessed changes in survey responses from baseline (program start) to follow-up (program end) for 15 constructs across four types of outcomes:

1. **Parent understanding of and attitudes about family engagement**
   - Self-efficacy for family engagement
   - Importance of family engagement

2. **Parent perceptions of community coordination**
   - Community coordination and supports for family engagement

3. **Parent knowledge and uptake of family engagement activities**
   - Knowledge of community resources for family engagement
   - Uptake of engagement opportunities in the community for (a) parents and (b) parents and children together
   - Frequency of parent-child engagement in (a) general activities, (b) child's home learning, (c) child's school learning, and (d) library visits
   - Time spent looking at books with child

4. **Quality of home reading and parent-child relationship**
   - Quality of home reading environment
   - Quality of parent-child reading
   - Quality of parent-child relationship

When possible, we created scaled outcome variables that capture a parent's mean response across items posed as a battery of questions on the parent survey in order to yield more reliable and valid measures of multifaceted constructs, such as self-efficacy and relationship quality. We also created dichotomous categorical versions of each scaled variable to examine changes in parent perceptions at meaningful cut-points, such as whether a parent agrees versus disagrees with statements on average.

We conducted four types of analyses of the parent survey data:

1. Because we expected parents' outcomes to change over the course of their involvement in FEIP programs, we examined changes from baseline to follow-up on the overall sample.

2. Because we expected changes to be more pronounced among parents with greater exposure to FEIP, we separately examined changes in outcomes for (a) parents who participated in only one FEIP program and (b) parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs.

3. Because we expected changes in the home reading environment and reading behavior to be more pronounced among parents who participated in Raising A Reader (RAR) Plus Family Nights—a key component of which is dialogic reading—we separately examined changes in outcomes for (a) parents who did not participate in RAR Plus Family Nights and (b) parents who did participate in RAR Plus Family Nights.

4. We tested subgroup differences via multivariate regressions to assess whether participation in more than one FEIP program or in RAR Plus Family Nights were positively associated with outcomes at the end of participation, after accounting for differences in baseline responses.

The full parent study methodology and the full study results may be found in Appendices F and G, respectively.

A. Parent understanding of and attitudes about family engagement

We created scaled outcome measures that captured parents' mean response across items posed as a battery of questions on the parent survey in order to measure their self-efficacy for family engagement and their perceptions of the importance of family engagement (Box 4). Parent understanding of and attitudes about family engagement improved overall, but improvements were no more pronounced for parents with greater exposure to the FEIP (see Appendix G, Tables G.1, G.2, and G.3 for full results).

Perceptions of self-efficacy improved overall for parents who participated in the FEIP programs. The overall percentage of parents who tended to agree or strongly agree with statements about their self-efficacy for family engagement increased by about 6 percentage points from baseline to follow-up, even though most parents (90 percent) agreed with the positive statements before participating in FEIP services (Figure 2). Improvements were no more pronounced for parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs compared to those who participated in only one FEIP program (see Appendix G, Tables G.2 and G.3). This could mean that exposure to just one FEIP program was enough to improve parent perceptions, but it is also possible that the observed improvements were caused by something other than FEIP participation.


Box 4. Assessing Parent Understanding and Attitudes about Family Engagement

To assess understanding of and attitudes about family engagement, we measured parents' perceptions of the following:

- **Their self-efficacy for family engagement.** The degree to which parents agreed with various statements about their capability for engaging with their children, such as whether they know how to meet their children's needs, or whether they feel successful about their efforts to help them learn.

- **The importance of family engagement.** The degree of importance parents placed on various engagement behaviors, such as taking time to talk with their children, or reading and sharing books with them.

See Appendix F, Table F.4 for additional explanation.

Figure 2. Overall increase in the percentage of parents who agree or strongly agree on average with statements about self-efficacy for family engagement
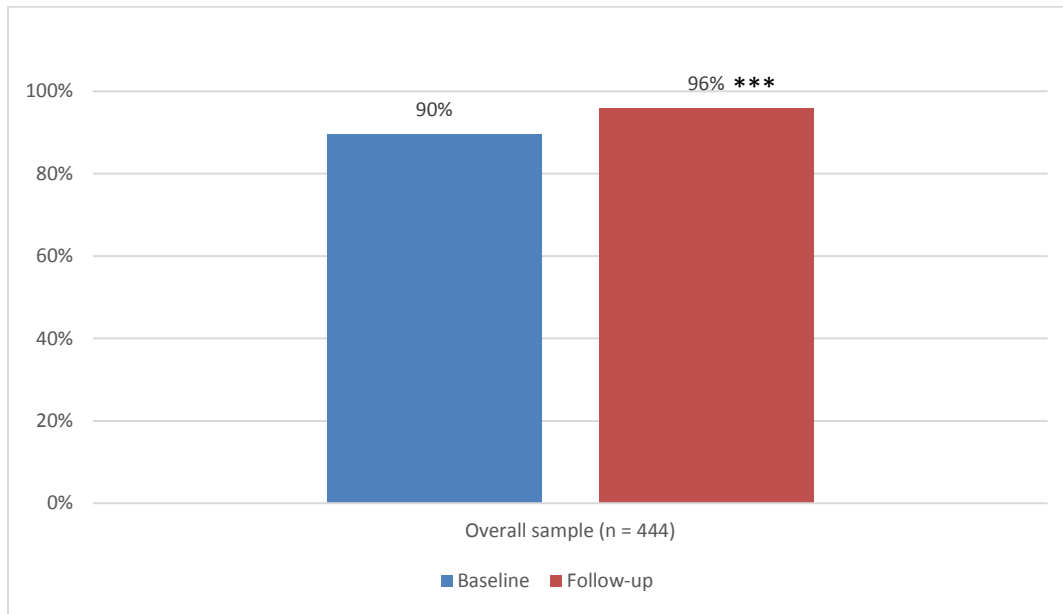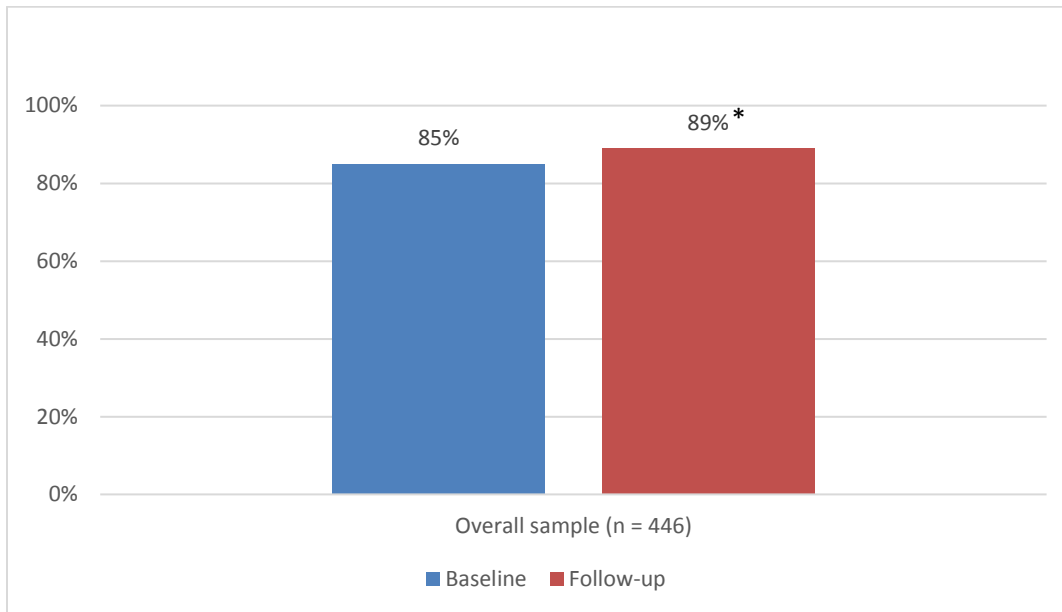

Source: FEIP Parent Survey responses at baseline and follow-up.

Note: The eligible sample for this figure is parents with nonmissing matched responses at baseline and follow-up for the outcome variable (n = 444). We calculated the percentage of parents who at least agreed on average with statements about their family engagement self-efficacy. We tested whether changes from baseline to follow-up were statistically different from zero via McNemar's tests. See Appendix G, Table G.1 for complete results and Appendix F for details of the variable construction and analysis methods.

***Significantly different from baseline at the .001 level, two-tailed test.

Perceptions of the importance of family engagement improved overall for parents who participated in the FEIP programs. The overall percentage of parents who rated family engagement as very important on average increased by about 4 percentage points from baseline to follow-up, even though most parents (85 percent) rated family engagement as very important before participating in FEIP services (Figure 3). Improvements were no more pronounced for parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs compared to those who participated in only one FEIP program (see Appendix G, Tables G.2 and G.3). This could mean that exposure to just one FEIP program was enough to improve parent perceptions, but it is also possible that the observed improvements were caused by something other than FEIP participation.

Figure 3. Overall increase in the percentage of parents who rated family engagement as very important on average

Source: FEIP Parent Survey responses at baseline and follow-up.

Note: The eligible sample for this figure is parents with nonmissing matched responses at baseline and follow-up for the outcome variable (n = 446). We calculated the percentage of parents who rated family engagement as very important on average. We tested whether changes from baseline to follow-up were statistically different from zero via McNemar's tests. See Appendix G, Table G.1 for complete results and Appendix F for details of the variable construction and analysis methods.

*Significantly different from baseline at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

B. Parent perceptions of community coordination of family engagement supports

Because the Foundation is interested in how community systems changed to better support family engagement over the course of the FEIP, we created a scaled outcome measure to capture parents' mean response across items posed as a battery of questions on the parent survey, which rated their perceptions of the coordination of family engagement supports in their community (Box 5). Parent perceptions of community coordination of family engagement supports improved overall, but improvements were no more pronounced for parents with greater exposure to the FEIP (see Appendix G, Tables G.4, G.5, and G.6 for full results).

Parent perceptions of community coordination of family engagement resources and supports improved overall for parents who participated in the FEIP programs. The overall percentage of parents who agreed with statements affirming community coordination of services increased by 6 percentage points from baseline to follow-up, even though most parents (86 percent) agreed with the statements before participating in FEIP services (Figure 4). This movement was

> **Box 5. Assessing Parent Perceptions of Community Coordination**
>
> We measured parents' perceptions of community coordination of family engagement supports as the extent to which they agreed with various statements about community efforts, such as whether programs in the community are working together to support families and young children.
>
> See Appendix F, Table F.4 for additional explanation.

concentrated among parents who went from disagreeing at baseline that communities offer coordinated and linked family engagement services to agreeing at follow-up; there was no evidence of increases in the percentage that strongly agreed, which was around 20 percent at both baseline and follow-up (see Appendix G, Table G.4). This suggests that parent perceptions of community coordination improved over the course of their involvement in the FEIP, though not to the point of increasing the percentage of parents who unequivocally agreed that their communities offered coordinated and linked services. There was no evidence that improvements were more pronounced among parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs compared to those who participated in one FEIP program (see Appendix G, Tables G.5 and G.6). This could mean that exposure to one FEIP program was enough to improve parent perceptions or that FEIP activities improve service coordination regardless of parents' participation in FEIP programs. It is also possible that the observed improvements were caused by something unrelated to FEIP or parents' FEIP participation.

Figure 4. Overall increase in the percentage of parents who agree or strongly agree on average that communities coordinate resources and support family engagement
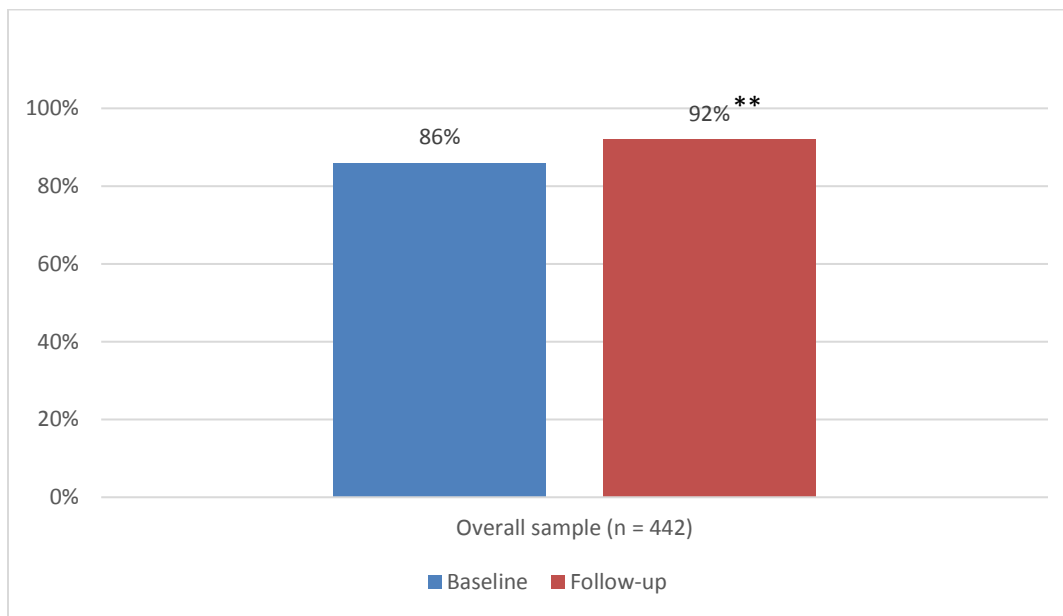
Source: FEIP Parent Survey responses at baseline and follow-up.

Note: The eligible sample for this figure is parents with nonmissing matched responses at baseline and follow-up for the outcome variable (n = 442). We calculated the percentage of parents who at least agreed on average with statements about community coordination of family engagement supports. We tested whether changes from baseline to follow-up were statistically different from zero via McNemar's tests. See Appendix G, Table G.4 for complete results and Appendix F for details of the variable construction and analysis methods.

**Significantly different from baseline at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

C. Parent knowledge and uptake of family engagement activities

To measure parents' knowledge and uptake of family engagement activities, we created scaled outcome measures that captured parents' mean response across items posed as a battery of questions on the parent survey to measure their knowledge of available community resources and frequency of engagement in parent-child activities, and we used parents' responses on individual survey items to measure their uptake of engagement opportunities and amount of time spent looking at books together (Box 6). Parent knowledge and uptake of family engagement activities increased overall, and in some cases was more pronounced for parents who participated in multiple rather than one FEIP program (see Appendix G, Tables G.7, G.8, and G.9 for full results).

Knowledge of community resources for family engagement increased over the course of FEIP participation. The overall percentage of parents who strongly agreed that they know where to get advice and how to find and use services increased by more than 10 percentage points from baseline to follow-up

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Box 6. Assessing Parent Knowledge and Uptake of Activities

To assess knowledge and uptake of family engagement activities, we measured parent reports of the following:

- **Knowledge of community resources for family engagement.** The degree to which parents agreed with statements about knowing where to get advice about how to help their children learn and how to find and use services and programs their families want or need.

- **Uptake of engagement opportunities in the community.** Whether parents participated in a parent activity (such as a parent group or parenting education class in the past six months) and a parent-child activity (such as a music class, gym class, or formal playgroup in the past six months).

- **Frequency of parental engagement in parent-child activities.** The frequency with which parents engaged with their children in (a) general involvement activities (such as singing songs or playing together in the past week), (b) home learning activities (such as spending time working on number skills or creative activities like drawing or coloring), (d) school learning activities (such as reviewing children's school work or attending parent meetings at school), and (d) library visits in the past month.

- **Time spent looking at books.** The number of minutes that people in the household usually spend each time they look at books with children.

See Appendix F, Table F.4 for additional explanation.

(Table 11). Improvements were no more pronounced for parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs compared to those who participated in only one FEIP program (see Appendix G, Tables G.8 and G.9). This could mean that exposure to just one FEIP program was enough to improve parent knowledge of community resources for family engagement, but it is also possible that the observed improvements were caused by something other than FEIP participation.

Table 11. Increases in selected measures of parent knowledge and uptake of family engagement activities, overall

Outcome	N	Baseline	Follow-up
Knowledge of community resources for family engagement			
Strongly agree that know where to get advice and services (%)	435	35	47***
Uptake of community opportunities for family engagement			
Participated in a parent activity (%)	430	37	48***
Participated in a parent-child activity (%)	427	39	49**

Source: FEIP Parent Survey responses at baseline and follow-up.

Note: The eligible sample for this table is parents with nonmissing matched responses at baseline and follow-up for each outcome variable (n = 427–435). We tested whether changes from baseline to follow-up were statistically different from zero via matched-pairs t-tests for mean differences and McNemar's tests for differences in correlated proportions. See Appendix G, Table G.7 for complete results and Appendix F for details of the variable construction and analysis methods.

**Significantly different from baseline at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

***Significantly different from baseline at the .001 level, two-tailed test.

Uptake of community opportunities for family engagement increased overall, and particularly among parents exposed to multiple FEIP programs. Parents reported overall increases of about 11 percentage points in uptake of family engagement opportunities in the community. By the end of their FEIP involvement, nearly half of parents reported that they had participated in a parent activity or a parent-child activity in the past 6 months (Table 11).

Increased participation in a parent activity (such as a parent group, parenting education class, or home visit) was more pronounced for parents who attended multiple FEIP programs than for those who attended only one FEIP program. Regression analyses controlling for baseline responses showed that parents who attended multiple rather than one FEIP program were more likely to have participated in a parent activity by the end of FEIP program participation (see Appendix G, Table G.9). As shown in Figure 5, the percentage of parents who reported participating in a parent activity in the community increased by 14 percentage points among those who attended multiple FEIP programs and by 10 percentage points among those who attended one FEIP program.[5] Although the survey instructed parents to exclude the FEIP program they attended the day they were surveyed, parents who attended multiple FEIP programs may have included a FEIP program they attended previously. If this happened frequently, then the difference in responses related to participation in a parent activity could reflect parents' attendance in multiple FEIP programs, rather than a distinct outcome of FEIP participation.

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[5] The increase was significant at the .05 level only among those who participated in one FEIP program (n = 361), though it may be more difficult to detect a small change among the smaller sample of parents who participated in multiple programs (p = .07, n = 69). Differences in the amount of change for the two subgroups should be interpreted with caution, as the change may be estimated less precisely for the smaller sample of parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs.

Increased participation in a parent-child activity (such as a music class, gym class, or formal play group) was no more pronounced for parents who attended multiple FEIP programs than for those who attended only one FEIP program (see Appendix G, Tables G.8 and G.9).

Figure 5. Increases in the percentage of parents who participated in a parent activity in the past six months, overall and by number of FEIP programs received
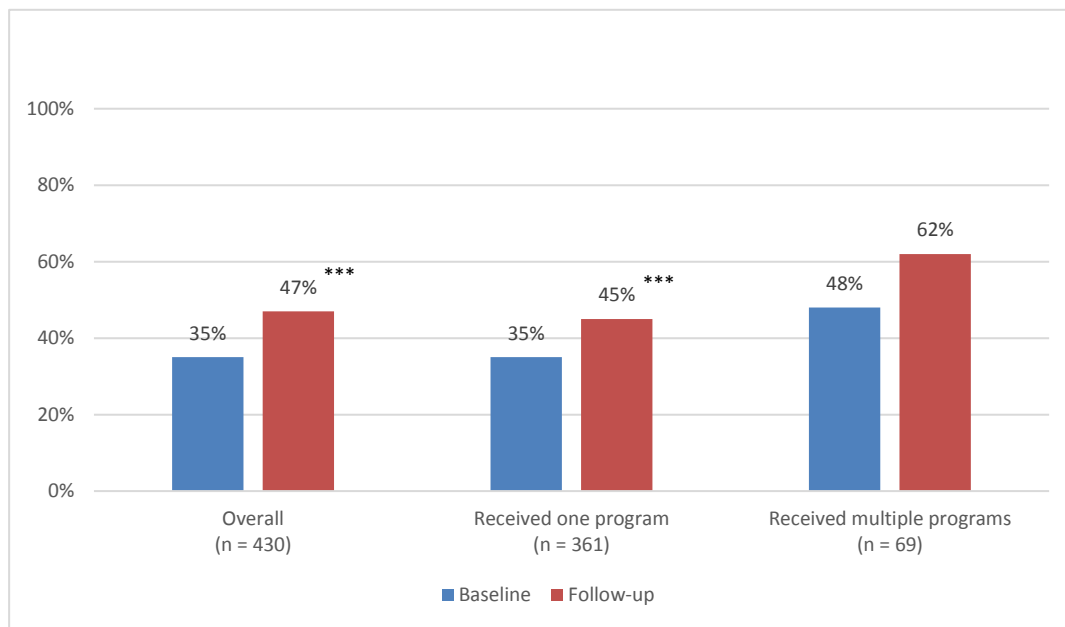
Source: FEIP Parent Survey responses at baseline and follow-up.
Note: The eligible sample for this figure is parents with nonmissing matched responses at baseline and follow-up for the outcome variable (n = 430). We calculated the percentage of parents who reported that they participated in a parent activity in the past six months, not including the FEIP program they attended the day of survey completion. We tested whether changes from baseline to follow-up were statistically different from zero via McNemar's tests. See Appendix G, Tables G.7 and G.8 for complete results and Appendix F for details of the variable construction and analysis methods.
*Significantly different from baseline at the .05 level, two-tailed test.
**Significantly different from baseline at the .01 level, two-tailed test.
***Significantly different from baseline at the .001 level, two-tailed test.

The frequency of parental engagement in parent-child activities increased among parents overall, and particularly among parents exposed to multiple FEIP programs. The overall percentage of parents reporting high frequency engagement with their children in general activities (such as signing songs or playing together in the past week), home learning activities (such as spending time working on number skills or creative activities like drawing), and school learning activities (such as reviewing children's schoolwork or attending parent meetings at school) increased by about 10 percentage points from baseline to follow-up (Table 12). The percentage of parents who reported that they often or always visited the library together with their child increased by 9 percentage points from baseline to follow-up, while the percentage who reported that they rarely or never visited the library decreased by 13 percentage points (Table 12).

Table 12. Increases in selected measures of frequency of parent-child engagement activities and time spent looking at books, overall

Outcome	N	Baseline	Follow-up
Frequency of parent-child engagement activities			
General activities: Engage at least six days per week (%)	444	32	41***
Child's home learning: Engage often (%)[a]	378	20	32***
Child's school learning: Engage often (%)[b]	332	15	24**
Library visits: Often or always (%)	438	37	46***
Library visits: Rarely or never (%)	438	28	16***
Time spent looking at books with child			
Typical length of each instance (minutes)	420	24.46	26.59***

Source: FEIP Parent Survey responses at baseline and follow-up.

Note: The eligible sample for this table is parents with nonmissing matched responses at baseline and follow-up for each outcome variable (n = 420–444). We tested whether changes from baseline to follow-up were statistically different from zero via matched-pairs t-tests for mean differences and McNemar's tests for differences in correlated proportions. See Appendix G, Table G.7 for complete results and Appendix F for details of the variable construction and analysis methods.

[a]Responses pertain only to children ages 3 to 8.

[b]Responses pertain only to children ages 3 to 8 who attended preschool or school.

**Significantly different from baseline at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

***Significantly different from baseline at the .001 level, two-tailed test.

Increases in the frequency of engagement in general and in home learning activities were no more pronounced for parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs than for those who participated in one FEIP program (see Appendix G, Tables G.8 and G.9). However, regression analyses controlling for baseline responses showed that parents who participated in multiple rather than one FEIP program were more likely to engage in school learning activities at least sometimes by the end of FEIP programming. They also were more likely to have visited the library at least sometimes with their children in the past month (see Appendix G, Table G.9).

As shown in Figure 6, the percentage of parents who engaged with children in school learning activities at least sometimes increased by nearly 20 percentage points among parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs and by less than 5 percentage points among those who participated in only one FEIP program.[6] Though it is possible that parents included FEIP program attendance in their reported frequency of engagement in school learning activities (in particular when answering the questions about attending parent meetings and participating in parent education programs at the school), this measure includes four other activities (reviewing children's schoolwork, talking with the teacher, checking the school calendar for upcoming

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[6] The increase in frequency of school-based learning activities was significant at the .05 level only among those who participated in one FEIP program (n = 280), though it may be more difficult to detect a small change among the smaller sample of parents who participated in multiple programs ($p = .052$, n = 52). Differences in the amounts of change for the two subgroups should be interpreted with caution, as the change may be estimated less precisely for the smaller sample of parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs.

events, and volunteering in the classroom or school), which are not directly related to typical FEIP programming.

Figure 6. Increases in the percentage of parents who engage in children's school learning at least sometimes on average, overall and by number of FEIP programs received
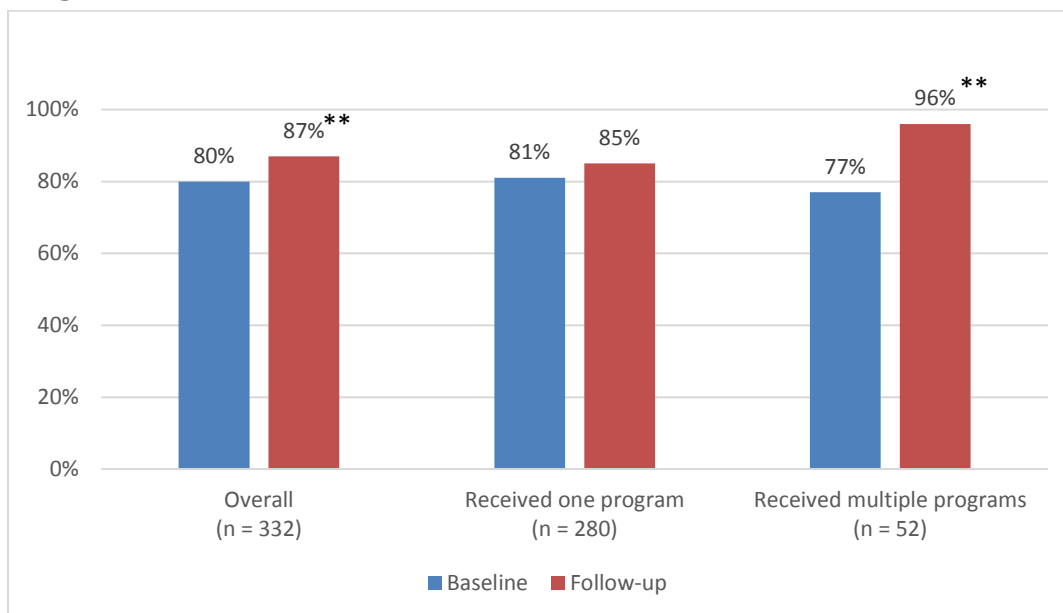
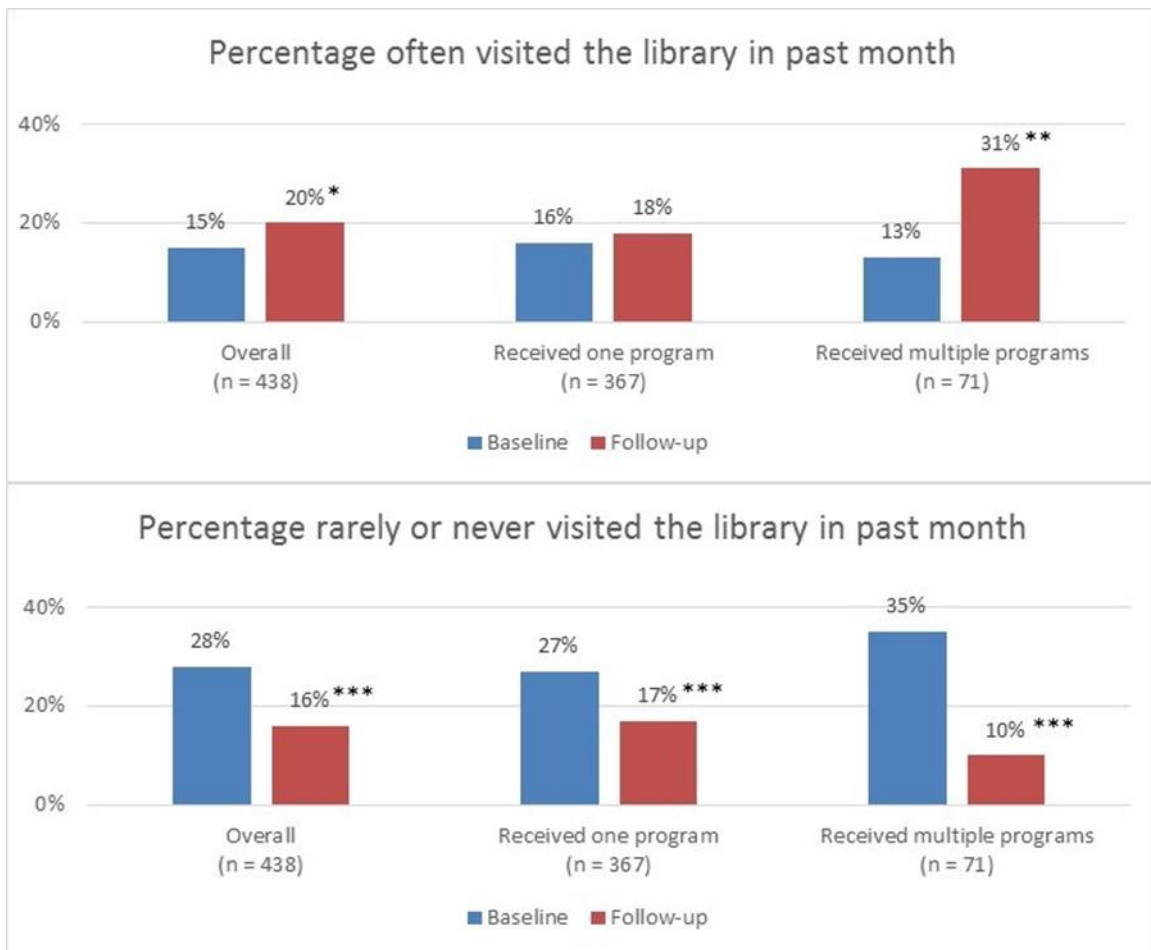Source: FEIP Parent Survey responses at baseline and follow-up.

Note: The eligible sample for this figure is parents with nonmissing matched responses at baseline and follow-up for the outcome variable, and whose children were age 3 to 8 years and attended preschool or school (n = 322). We calculated the percentage of parents who reported engaging with their children in school learning activities at least sometimes on average. We tested whether changes from baseline to follow-up were statistically different from zero via McNemar's tests. See Appendix G, Tables G.7 and G.8 for complete results and Appendix F for details of the variable construction and analysis methods.

*Significantly different from baseline at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

**Significantly different from baseline at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

We observed similar improvements in the frequency with which parents visited the library with their children in the past month. As shown in Figure 7, these improvements were most pronounced among parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs, with the percentage of parents who reported that they often visited the library in the past month increasing by 18 percentage points and the percentage of parents who reported that they rarely or never did so decreasing by 25 percentage points. In contrast, among parents who participated in only one FEIP program, we observed changes of 2 percentage points and 10 percentage points, respectively, for these measures. Although the regression analyses confirmed statistically significant differences between these groups of parents at follow-up (see Appendix G, Table G.9), it is possible that the differences in responses reflect the fact that some parents attended FEIP events that were held at the library.

Figure 7. Changes in the percentage of parents who often or rarely visited the library with children in the past month, overall and by number of FEIP programs received

Source: FEIP Parent Survey responses at baseline and follow-up.

Note: The eligible sample for this figure is parents with nonmissing matched responses at baseline and follow-up for the outcome variable (n = 438). We tested whether changes from baseline to follow-up were statistically different from zero via McNemar's tests. See Appendix G, Tables G.7 and G.8 for complete results and Appendix F for details of the variable construction and analysis methods.

*Significantly different from baseline at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

**Significantly different from baseline at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

***Significantly different from baseline at the .001 level, two-tailed test.

   The time that parents spent looking at books with their children in a sitting increased overall. Parent reports of how long family members typically spent looking at books with children in a typical sitting increased over the course of their FEIP involvement, though the overall increase per sitting was only about 2 minutes on average (Table 12). This is a total increase of less than one-fifth of a standard deviation, from a mean of about 25 minutes per sitting at baseline to about 27 minutes per sitting at follow-up. Increased time spent reading was no more pronounced for parents who participated in multiple versus one FEIP program (see Appendix G, Tables G.8 and G.9). Because the RAR Plus Family Nights program specifically targets parent-child reading behaviors, we also assessed whether the increase in time spent

looking at books was more pronounced for parents who participated in the Family Nights compared to parents who did not participate in them. Regression analyses, however, showed no significant between-group differences at follow-up, after accounting for reading time at baseline (see Appendix G, Table G.10).

D. Home reading engagement and parent-child relationships

To assess home reading engagement and parent-child relationship quality, we used parents' responses on individual survey items to measure the quality of the home reading environment and parent-child reading engagement, and we created a scaled outcome measure that captured parents' mean response across items posed as a battery of questions on the parent survey to measure the quality of parent-child relationships (Box 7). Home reading environments and the quality of parent-child reading improved for parents overall, and one aspect of parent-child reading improved particularly for parents who participated in RAR Plus Family Nights (for full results, see Appendix G, Tables G.11-G.15). Parents' self-reports of the quality of their relationships with their children did not change over the course of FEIP participation (see Appendix G, Tables G.16, G.17, and G.18).

Box 7. Assessing Home Reading and Parent-Child Relationship Quality

To assess home reading engagement and parent-child relationship quality, we measured parent reports of:

- **The home reading environment.** Whether parents have a reading routine in place for looking at books with their children, and the number of children's books currently in their homes.
- **The quality of parent-child reading.** Whether parents engaged in seven specific practices with their children, such as asking them questions or talking about new words, the last time they looked at books together (see Box 8).
- **Parent-child relationship quality.** How often various positive relationship indicators, such as having warm and close times with their children, were present over the past month.

See Appendix F, Table F.4 for additional explanation.

The quality of home reading environments improved overall. The percentage of parents with a home reading routine and the number of children's books in the home both increased from baseline to follow-up for the overall sample. The percentage of parents reporting that they had a routine for looking at books with their children increased by nearly 10 percentage points from baseline to follow-up, even though many parents (72 percent) had a routine before participating in FEIP services. The percentage of households with five or fewer books decreased by about 7 percentage points, while the percentage of households with more than 20 books increased by about 12 percentage points by follow-up (Table 13). Improvements in the home reading environment were no more pronounced for parents who participated in multiple rather than one FEIP program (see Appendix G, Tables G.12 and G.13) or for those who participated in the RAR Plus Family Nights program (see Appendix G, Tables G.14 and G.15). This could mean that exposure to just one FEIP program was enough to improve home reading environments, but it is also possible that the observed improvements were caused by something other than FEIP participation.

Table 13. Improvements in selected measures of the quality of home reading environments and engagement, overall

Outcome	N	Baseline	Follow-up
Quality of home reading environment			
Have a routine for looking at books (%)	426	72	81***
Have 5 or fewer children's books in the home (%)	443	20	12***
Have more than 20 children's books in the home (%)	443	37	49***
Quality of parent-child reading[a]			
Let child choose what to read (%)	419	98	99
Asked child questions (%)	419	87	94***
Child turned pages (%)	412	84	90**
Child asked questions (%)	412	84	92***
Child read or told story (%)	410	75	85***
Used voices for characters (%)	417	72	80***
Talked about new words (%)	412	76	88***

Source: FEIP Parent Survey responses at baseline and follow-up.

Note: The eligible sample for this table is parents with nonmissing matched responses at baseline and follow-up for each outcome variable (n = 410–443). We tested whether changes from baseline to follow-up were statistically different from zero via McNemar's tests. See Appendix G, Table G.11 for complete results and Appendix F for details of the variable construction and analysis methods.

[a]For these tests, we adjusted the *p*-values for multiple comparisons via the Benjamini-Hochberg method (see Appendix F).

 *Significantly different from baseline at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

 **Significantly different from baseline at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

***Significantly different from baseline at the .001 level, two-tailed test.

The quality of parent-child reading improved overall. For six of the seven desirable reading engagement behaviors examined (Box 8), we observed increases in the overall percentage of parents who reported engaging in the behaviors the last time they looked at books with their children.[7] The overall percentages of parents who asked their children questions, let them turn pages, heard questions from their children, had them read or tell a story, used voices, and talked about new words increased by 6 to 12 percentage points from baseline to follow-up, even though many parents (at least 72 percent) already engaged in each behavior before participating in FEIP services (Table 13). The percentage who let their child choose

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Box 8. Assessing the Quality of Parent-Child Reading

We measured parents' reports of whether each of the following occurred the last time they looked at books with their child:

- **Let child choose** what to read.
- **Asked child questions** about the story.
- **Child turned pages** of the book.
- **Child asked questions** about the book.
- **Child read** the book or told a story about the pictures.
- **Used different voices** for different characters in the story.
- **Talked about new words** and what they meant.

---

[7] For the seven reading engagement behaviors, which are indicators of the same construct (parent-child reading), we applied a multiple comparisons adjustment to the statistical test *p*-values using the Benjamini-Hochberg method (see Appendix E for details).

what to read did not change over the course of their participation in FEIP programming, though this may be because 98 percent of parents at baseline indicated that they did this the last time they looked at books. Thus, there was little room for improvement on this item.

There was no evidence that improvements in the quality of parent-child reading were more pronounced among parents who participated in multiple versus one FEIP program (see Appendix G, Tables G.12 and G.13).

Because the RAR Plus Family Nights program specifically targets parent-child reading behaviors, we also assessed whether improvements in parent-child reading engagement were more pronounced for parents who participated in Family Nights compared to parents who did not participate in them. After accounting for parent responses at baseline, we found that parents who had participated in Family Nights were more likely to ask their children questions when looking at books by the end of FEIP programming. However, there were no significant between-group differences for the other six reading engagement behaviors (see Appendix G, Table G.15). As shown in Figure 8, the percentage of parents who asked their children questions when looking at books together increased by about 9 percentage points among parents who participated in RAR Plus Family Nights, while the increase was smaller and not statistically significant for parents who did not participate in Family Nights.

Figure 8. Increases in the percentage of parents who asked their children questions the last time they looked at books together, overall and by receipt of RAR Plus Family Nights
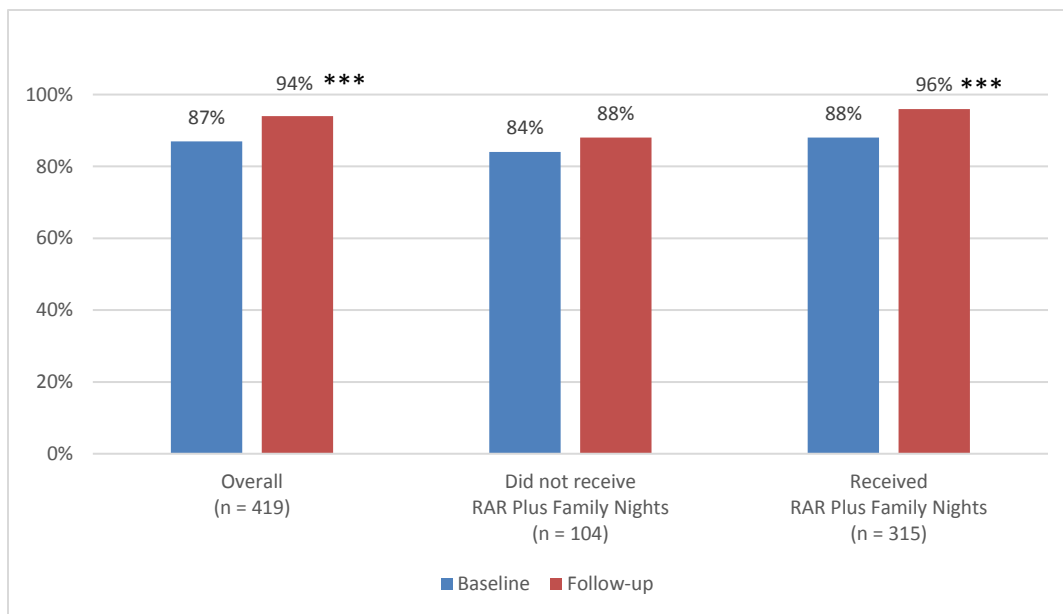
Source: FEIP Parent Survey responses at baseline and follow-up.

Note: The eligible sample for this figure is parents with nonmissing matched responses at baseline and follow-up for the outcome variable (n = 419). We tested whether changes from baseline to follow-up were statistically different from zero via McNemar's tests. We adjusted the *p*-values for multiple comparisons via the Benjamini-Hochberg method. See Appendix G, Tables G.11 and G.14 for complete results and Appendix F for details of the variable construction and analysis methods.

*Significantly different from baseline at the .05 level, two-tailed test.

**Significantly different from baseline at the .01 level, two-tailed test.

***Significantly different from baseline at the .001 level, two-tailed test.

We found no evidence of improvement in parents' self-reports of the quality of their relationships with their children overall. It is possible that this is because there was little room for improvement on the measure, as 95 percent of parents in the overall sample reported at baseline that positive relationship qualities were present at least often on average. On the other hand, there was room for improvement at the uppermost end of the response scale, as only 57 percent of parents at baseline reported that the positive relationship indicators were always present (for full results, see Appendix G, Tables G.16 and G.17).

In sum, parents' understanding of, attitudes about, and uptake of family engagement increased over the course of their participation in the FEIP programs. For the overall sample of parents with baseline and follow-up surveys, we saw positive changes over time in parents' perceptions of self-efficacy, of the importance of family engagement for their children's learning, and of the coordination of family engagement resources and supports in their communities. We also saw improvements over time in parents' knowledge and awareness of available community resources; uptake of opportunities for family engagement; and in the frequency with which they engaged with children in general activities, engaged in home and school learning activities, and visited the library. The time parents spent looking at books together with their children, the number of books in the household, and the percentages of families having a home reading routine and engaging in supportive parent-child reading behaviors also improved. Changes in some outcomes were more pronounced among parents who participated in multiple FEIP programs, as compared to parents who participated in only one FEIP program. These outcomes included (1) uptake of parent activities for family engagement in the community, (2) frequency of participation in children's school learning activities, and (3) frequency of library visits in the past month. We also found that the increase in the percentage of parents who asked their children questions the last time they looked at books together was more pronounced among parents who participated in RAR Plus Family Nights than among those who did not participate. We found no evidence of improvements in the quality of parent-child relationships overall, nor specifically among parents with the greatest exposure to the FEIP. However, parents tended to report fairly positive perceptions of their relationships at baseline.

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VI. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Studies of home, school, and community partnerships to increase academic outcomes often point to the primary challenge of building the belief systems and collective capacity of stakeholders to partner effectively with each other and share responsibility for achieving identified goals (Mapp and Kuttner 2013). Through the FEIP, the Foundation is attempting to address this challenge in the five funded communities. The FEIP brings partners together to develop and implement coordinated activities that attend to the skills of parents and professionals, while also building the capacity of organizations and community systems to support and sustain family engagement more broadly.

The information in this report suggests a number of practices that may be useful to others who are interested in building and maintaining partnerships to develop and deliver coordinated family engagement opportunities that focus on building skills of families and professionals as a strategy for improving children's success in elementary school and beyond. In this section, we present the implications for organizations carrying out this type of work as well as for the funders who support them.

A. Implications and recommendations

Allow more time when moving from planning to implementation so that administrative structures and other supports can be firmly established. The grantee partnerships reported needed more time between learning of their implementation awards (Phase II) and the beginning of the school year, when many services were expected to start. Setting up administrative structures, and especially hiring grant coordinators and project managers, were more difficult and time-consuming than many grantees had anticipated. Although the Foundation gave awardees approximately three months between learning of their awards and the expected initiation of FEIP programming, these months occurred during the summer when many district and school staff were unavailable.

> **Box 9. The Four Stages of Implementation**
>
> 1. **Exploration.** Assess needs, examine fit and feasibility, involve stakeholders, define model, and make decisions
>
> 2. **Installation.** Develop implementation supports and make necessary structure and instrumental changes; new services are not yet being delivered
>
> 3. **Initial implementation.** Service delivery initiated; data used to drive decision-making, continuous improvement, and rapid-cycle problem solving
>
> 4. **Full implementation.** Skillful implementation, system and organizational changes established, measurable child and family outcomes
>
> Source: Halle et al. (2015).

Instituting new interventions like the FEIP often occurs according to typical implementation stages identified by implementation science research (Halle et al. 2015) (Box 9). Although grantees completed the exploration stage during FEIP Phase I, they would have benefited from more time, or perhaps time during a different part of the year, during the installation stage to set up the conditions for success in delivering the initiative. Halle and colleagues (2015) suggested an installation period of at least three to six months to establish all the resources and procedures needed to support implementation. In contrast, most grantees felt pressured to get the FEIP "off the ground" as soon as possible. Because of this, they may have hurried through the establishment of some important supports, such as (1) having communications systems and

feedback loops among partners, (2) ensuring that partners and other implementation staff were adequately prepared to effectively deliver the programs, and (3) developing parent and professional recruitment strategies.

At the end of Phase II, grantees, for the most part, were somewhere between the initial and full implementation stages. All grantees had initiated diverse family engagement programs for parents and professionals, some of which were skillfully implemented. In addition, some grantees had launched community systems change activities. All grantees had observed parent outcomes. As discussed below, however, the use of data-driven decision making among grantees was minimal.

Provide grantees with guidance and support to foster effective partnering. Developing and maintaining a comprehensive array of family engagement services requires strong relationships among a set of partners with a broad range of expertise. Although the FEIP planning period (Phase I) helped grantees catalyze these relationships, support for ongoing communication at all levels—among the grantee lead and staff, their partner leads, and staff delivering programs—is necessary to sustain and leverage partnerships for family engagement. Because the FEIP is complex and includes multiple elements, finding ways to support partners in working effectively together is critical. To assist grantees in leveraging partnerships, funders should consider the following in subsequent efforts:

- *Supporting the identification of full-time staff to oversee grant administration and program implementation.* The grantee partnerships' experiences suggested that designating a full-time coordinator to be the point person for their partners was critical to ensuring a sufficient investment in relationship building, information sharing, and collaboration. Funders will want to require proof of commitment on the part of grantee leads in securing staff to oversee grant management and partner coordination (as opposed to direct service provision). This could entail requiring prospective grantee leads to demonstrate in-kind or monetary commitment to staffing this type of position. Funders may not want to fund these positions entirely through grants because it may be prove difficult for grantee leads to sustain the positions in the long-term.

- *Establishing initiative-level structures, such as the FEIP Learning Community, to facilitate linkages between all grantee leads and their partners.* Grantee leads valued the FEIP Learning Community, but requested additional time to collaborate with each other and participate in joint training. Funders may want to consider convening these types of learning communities more regularly and inviting staff beyond that of the grantee leads (that is, including implementation partners as well).

- *Encouraging grantees to regularly use meetings and other communication strategies to keep partners engaged and informed.* Regular communication fosters discussion of progress as well as collaboration, collective decision making, and a sense of shared mission across multiple organizations.

Focus on development of effective relationships among community-based organizations and district and school partners. These relationships are central to establishing home, community, and school connections. This study documented the particular importance of having good relationships among community-based organizations and district and school leaders—as

well as securing teacher buy-in—when implementing family engagement programs that attend to the skill building of parents and professionals. Although the Foundation included a presentation focused on building family-school partnerships in its learning community, FEIP grantees would have benefited from technical assistance on how to build relationships between community-based organizations and districts and schools (in addition to building relationships with families). For example, the grantee lead for a partnership led by a school district acknowledged having little experience partnering with community-based agencies. Community-based grantee leads and partners of all grantee leads described challenges implementing FEIP programming on school sites. Grantees' experiences suggest a variety of strategies to assist organizations, districts, and schools in effectively partnering to deliver family engagement programming. Funders may want to set parameters to ensure that grantee partnerships employ the following strategies:

- *Assessing and developing district and school "readiness" for family engagement programming before launching partnerships.* Readiness is defined as a developmental point at which a person, organization, or system has both the capacity and willingness to engage in a particular activity (Halle 2012). Funders and grantees should recognize that some districts and schools may have little experience partnering with community-based organizations and that readiness is not a pre-existing condition; it must be nurtured and developed (Halle 2012).

- *Clearly delineating roles and responsibilities between districts, schools, and organizations that are implementing the programs.* For example, funders might require partners to assign responsibilities for tasks and include a strategy for regular communication in a memorandum of understanding.

- *Identifying strategies to support teacher participation,* such encouraging district and school leadership to explicitly promote participation, integrating trainings into existing meetings or professional development opportunities, or providing release time or other participation incentives. Capacity-building efforts that are embedded into existing district and school structural processes, such as training and professional development, teaching and learning, curriculum, and community collaboration, are often more successful than those that do not use these processes (Mapp and Kuttner 2013).

- *Bringing teachers into planning and coordination of activities* in schools to increase their buy-in, participation, and commitment to family engagement, as well as to encourage parent recruitment and retention in activities.

Support grantees in recruiting and retaining parent participants, especially those that have been historically hard to reach. All grantee leads and their partners undertook efforts to encourage participation in the FEIP programs and were successful in attracting parents—fathers, in particular. This study identified the following actions by the Foundation and FEIP grantee partnerships as facilitators of parent recruitment efforts:

- *Offering programs that aligned with the preferences and self-identified training and support needs of parents.* During Phase I FEIP planning, the Foundation funded the John W. Gardner Center at Stanford University to work with grantee partnerships to conduct community needs assessments. The assessments documented parents' and providers'

perceptions of community strengths and needs. They also drove grantee partnerships' Phase II planning and selection of evidence-based and promising programs.

- *Using active recruitment methods and enthusiastic recruitment agents* who parents will want to build relationships with over time, such as their children's teachers and school principal, experienced program staff, and parent peers.

- *Considering the timing of offerings carefully* so that the schedule suits families and does not overlap with other parent and child commitments (such as work, church, and children's sports or other activities). The offerings also should not compete for participation with other family engagement activities.

Create an initiative-wide training infrastructure that ensures supports are available to build organizational and professional capacity to implement evidence-based models with fidelity (and other programs according to best practices). The Foundation established a learning community that included presentations and information sharing related to RAR Plus Family Nights and funded an external consultant to provide additional RAR Plus Family Nights implementation support. The Foundation also paid for the Oak Grove grantee lead to attend NNPS trainings once each year at the NNPS headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland. However, grantee leads and their partners needed even more support to implement the evidence-based programs with fidelity to the developers' models. Although grantees' ability to implement RAR Plus Family Nights and most aspects of NNPS improved over time, only some partners and schools were able to implement these programs with fidelity. Train-the-trainers models were less effective in building staff skills than training provided directly from national program implementers (for RAR Plus Family Nights and NNPS), most likely because the initial training was too light and those being trained as trainers had little prior experience with the evidence-based models. Funders should consider the following actions to improve the degree of fidelity with which grantees and their partners are able to implement evidence-based programs (and other programs according to best practices):

- *Providing initial and ongoing training that clearly identifies the characteristics of high quality program implementation and gives guidance on how to meet these fidelity markers.* Although grantee partnerships received training from RAR Plus Family Nights in August 2015 (before launching the program) and the Oak Grove grantee lead attended NNPS training at the developer's headquarters, those staff who attended appeared unable to effectively transfer their knowledge to the program implementers. Partners of grantee leads reported that the direct training was more effective than the train-the-trainer models. Funders should consider providing more intensive training to those who will train others and offer more guidance to those trained on how to spread their knowledge. Staff who are directly implementing the evidence-based programs should also be included in the training offered by the model developers.

- *Offering opportunities for sharing within and across grantees about the implementation of evidence-based models*. Although two of the four FEIP Learning Community meetings included training and discussion related to RAR Plus Family Nights, most attendees were grantee leads rather than the staff who were implementing the model. Funders could consider developing additional supports for shared learning among program implementers across grantee partnership sites.

- *Requiring that grantees use a minimum amount of ongoing technical assistance.* As described, grantee partnerships did not robustly take advantage of the technical assistance made available to them through the Bay Area RAR group meetings or through the external consultant funded by the Foundation. Funders could consider requiring grantees to attend a specific number of trainings, undergo observations of key program activities conducted by trained observers, or participate in regular check-in calls with a technical assistance provider.

Consider being more prescriptive in the choices of evidence-based programming presented to grantees, while remaining flexible with regard to their selection of promising programs. Being more prescriptive would allow the Foundation to focus grantees' choices on evidence-based models with the most potential to influence the initiative's priority outcomes. If parent-child relationships and dialogic reading behaviors, for example, were not the highest priority, perhaps RAR Plus Family Nights would not be on the list. Even though the Foundation gave grantee partnerships 23 different options, all grantees chose RAR Plus Family Nights as an evidence-based model. Although all grantees selected the same model, being prescriptive in the list of eligible choices may have allowed the Foundation to better anticipate and meet grantees' training needs and to establish structures to proactively identify and resolve implementation challenges.

Attend to grantees' developmental trajectories and acknowledge that moving from direct service provision to more challenging activities (such as those that attend to the complementary skill building of parents and professionals and systems chance activities) takes time. Implementing interventions like the FEIP that include multiple elements is difficult, especially if grantees are unsure where the funder's priorities lie. For the most part, grantees were unable to simultaneously launch all elements of the FEIP in the first year. Instead, they tended to follow a developmental trajectory. First, they launched programs with which they had prior experience (often direct services for parents) and those deemed a priority because they were identified as requirements in the grant funding (the evidence-based models). With those programs under way, grantees then invested in additional FEIP elements, including more robust professional development, complementary parent-professional training, and systems change activities. This observed pattern in grantees' experiences suggests that funders and other interested in supporting similar efforts should consider the following:

- *Emphasize the dual focus on service provision and systems improvement efforts*, yet give grantee partnerships more time to undertake and realize the benefits of systems change activities.

- *Consider extending implementation time to more than two years.* This would provide more time for initial start-up, robust implementation of complex activities, and preparation for sustaining these activities. The process of reaching full implementation usually takes two to four years, depending upon the complexity of the intervention (Halle et al. 2015). Given the multiple elements of the FEIP, a longer timeline should be anticipated.

Develop and employ intentional monitoring strategies for continuous improvement of evidence-based and promising program implementation. A key component of the initial implementation stage is to test and fine-tune programs on a small scale before launching as part

of regular program operations (Halle et al. 2015). As mentioned earlier, most grantees are between the initial and full implementation stages; service delivery has been initiated and problem solving is occurring, but grantees are not collecting and regularly using data to drive decision making or continuous improvement. Although grantees delivered a variety of new and expanded programs in their communities and applied lessons learned from the first year to improve implementation in the second year, the use of data-driven decision making and fine-tuning among grantees was minimal. Although grantee leads received data dashboards (see Appendix E) that presented information on the number of parents, children, and professionals served by program type and that described the implementation fidelity markers for the evidence-based programs, grantees may not have been able to use these tools to drive quality improvement. The dashboards were produced only three times during the course of Phase II and were not available until months after grantee partnerships submitted their data. Additional support with interpreting and applying the dashboard information likely would have been helpful. Grantees might also have benefited from required observations of evidence-based programming with rapid-cycle feedback to help them identify and overcome implementation challenges.

Understand that a long-term commitment and a concerted effort are needed to achieve improvement in children's elementary school success and beyond. This study documented improvements in organizations' and systems' capacity to develop, coordinate, and support family engagement activities. We also heard examples improvements in professionals' capacity, including positive shifts in mindsets and improved skills for engaging families. These changes, including increased respect between professionals and parents and cultural changes that promote a shared responsibility for learning, are critical first steps in building home, community, and school relationships that may ultimately foster children's academic success (Mapp and Kuttner 2013).

The study also documented statistically significant improvements in parent knowledge, skills, and behaviors over the course of FEIP participation. However, although there were changes in the desired direction for many targeted outcomes that were statistically significant, most were small. Moreover, for several of the outcome measures, parents reported fairly positive family engagement attitudes and behaviors even at baseline. For parents overall, we saw increases of at least 10 percentage points in only a few areas: (1) demonstrating knowledge and uptake of community resources for family engagement, (2) participating in a parent activity in the past few months, (3) engaging in learning activities at home with their child, (4) increasing the number of books in the home, and (5) asking their child to read or tell the story when looking at books. Although these changes point to success on the part of FEIP grantees and the programs they provided, influencing children's educational outcomes will likely require more robust improvements across a wider range of parent outcomes, particularly given that some of the observed improvements may have occurred naturally in the absence of the FEIP. For example, the time spent looking at books together in a typical sitting increased significantly over the course of FEIP participation, but the average increase was two minutes.

Those investing in family engagement as a strategy to improve educational outcomes will want to identify the most promising levers of improvement in parent outcomes (for example, the programs, training, or other supports that have the largest evidence-based influence on outcomes) and invest in building community and organizational capacity to support those levers to further

improve parents' knowledge and skills. For example, if the time parents and children spend reading together is a key outcome, funders and other interested parties will want to explore whether other interventions may be more potent, cost-effective, or both. Those investing in family engagement as a strategy to improve educational outcomes will also want to support grantee leads and their partners in reaching and serving the parents who are most in need of program services.

B. Conclusion

Through FEIP, the Foundation aimed to improve educational outcomes for low-income children, from birth to age 8, through increased family engagement. This implementation and outcomes study provides information about the viability of funding public-private partnerships to develop and implement coordinated family engagement opportunities across organizations as a strategy for improving community, organizational, professional, and parent capacity for family engagement. The two-year timeline for Phase II provided a foundation for grantee partnerships to initiate their activities and helped them receive funding from additional sources. In two years, FEIP grantees and their partners have leveraged community-based, district, and school partners to deliver a diverse set of programs to improve the knowledge and skills of both families and professionals. Grantees' efforts improved professionals' capacity for family engagement and facilitated progress in creating coordinated and integrated systems of training and supports for family engagement. In addition, over the course of their participation in FEIP programs, parents improved their attitudes, knowledge, and practices related to family engagement in many areas.

The FEIP grantee partnerships are in the early stages of a long-term process to improve children's success in elementary school and beyond. Their collective experiences with implementing the FEIP uncovered a number of implications for others who may also be interested in building and leveraging family engagement as a strategy to improve educational outcomes for children. Grantees will need to continue their efforts more robustly in order to increase the probability that families will be engaged in their children's education and that children will experience success. Phase III of the FEIP, initiated by the Foundation in June 2016, is intended to support grantee partnerships in ensuring that their family engagement efforts are sustained and embedded in systems and organizations after the FEIP has ended. During Phase III, grantee partnerships will focus on the portions of their Phase II work that they consider most promising and wish to build on.

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