



Children & Families Commission of Orange County

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Agenda Item No. 6
April 1, 2009 Meeting

CLERK OF THE BOARD
ORANGE COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

DATE: March 24, 2009

TO: Children and Families Commission of Orange County

FROM: Michael M. Ruane, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Early Literacy Program

SUMMARY:

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County has received regular status reports on the Bridgespan Implementation Plan that are consistent with the recommendations outlined in the approved Strategic Plan. Responding to the recommendation to expand early literacy programs, an analysis of programs was conducted utilizing approved criteria and focus group discussions with implementers and users of the programs. This item is the next step in the process, to receive a formal presentation of the recommended programs.

Early Literacy Programs

The following programs are recommended for expansion in Orange County. These programs meet the criteria of being home based, strong parent involvement, a strong research record, and improves skills critical to school readiness.

1. **Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPIE)** – Empowers parents as their children’s first teachers by giving them the tools, skills and support to work with their children at home.
2. **Home-Based Activities Building Language Acquisition (HABLA)** – Designed to increase the school readiness of disadvantaged children by improving their language and literacy experiences in the home.
3. **The Latino Family Literacy Project** – Provides support for Latino parents and their children in building a regular family reading routine and developing strong English language skills. This program is also adaptable to other languages.
4. **Raising A Reader** – Designed to foster healthy child development and early literacy skills critical for school success by engaging parents in a routine of daily reading with their young children.

Early Literacy Expansion – Opportunities for Early Implementation

THINK Together is a non-profit organization that successfully developed partnerships with school districts to implement academic support systems that are aligned with the schools. THINK Together received a Commission Capacity Building Grant to develop a work plan that

will maximize their relationship with the school districts, and their expertise to implement the expansion of early literacy programs to pre-school aged children in Santa Ana.

The business plan was developed in coordination with the Commission's Early Literacy Program, and informed by the concurrent assessment process of early literacy programs. THINK Together has the skill set required to effectively match programs to communities. A comprehensive implementation and funding plan will be presented for action at the May or June 2009 Commission meetings.

Next Steps

The California Endowment and other local foundations will be investing significant funding in the city of Santa Ana through the "Healthy Communities" initiative. THINK Together and the Commission participate in the planning effort with an interest to link education opportunities with the health investments. The Commission's investment in the expansion of early literacy programs at school sites within the Santa Ana community provides an early opportunity to support the emerging collaborative effort and to leverage limited funds. The Commission action to approve the recommended early literacy programs provides the basis for THINK Together to develop an implementation strategy and cost structure to expand and maximize the investments in Santa Ana.

STRATEGIC PLAN & FISCAL SUMMARY:

There are no funding actions for this item. The recommended implementation plan with THINK Together can be phased to adjust to funding availability during the next few years.

PRIOR COMMISSION ACTIONS:

1. March 2009 – Continue Early Literacy Expansion planning
2. December, November, October 2008 – Received Bridgespan Implementation Update
3. September 2008 – Approved Annual Planning Session and Follow-Up Report
4. June 2008 – Received Bridgespan Group Portfolio Assessment

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. Receive presentation on proposed early literacy programs.
2. Provide policy direction regarding the proposed programs to expand early literacy in target communities.
3. Approve a partnership with THINK Together to implement the approved early literacy programs, and return at the May or June 2009 meetings for Commission consideration.

ATTACHMENT

1. Early Literacy Program Expansion Program Overview

Contact: Kelly Pijl

Early Literacy Program Expansion Program Overview

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Presenters

- Kristen Thompson – Director, Ready to Learn Programs

- Early Literacy Program Representatives
 - Katie Baker – Raising A Reader/Early Literacy Program Director
 - Alma Padilla – School Readiness Coordinator (Latino Family Literacy Project representative)
 - David Calderon – Project Coordinator, HABLA

- Randy Barth – CEO, THINK Together

Ready to Learn / Early Literacy Overview

- Introduction – Early Literacy Program
- Integration with School Readiness Initiatives
- Reach Out and Read Update (48 sites currently, expanding to 13 more sites by June, 2009)
- Vision
 - The Early Literacy Program will set the standards for best-practices and countywide curriculum for Early Literacy, and work with community agencies to deliver quality programs to children.
 - The Early Literacy Program will be the infrastructure and foundation for distribution of resources and books countywide.

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Overview

- Based on criteria developed by The Bridgespan Group, an analysis of potential early literacy programs was conducted to identify programs for expansion in Orange County.
- In February 2009, the Commission received an early literacy progress report recommending further consideration of four programs:
 1. HIPPY – Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters
 2. HABLA – Home-Based Activities Building Language Development
 3. The Latino Family Literacy Project
 4. Raising A Reader

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HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters)

- International program that empowers parents as their children's first teachers. Includes curriculum and books for the home.
- Scope: Developmentally appropriate, 30-week program includes home and bi-weekly group meetings. Includes role-play as method of teaching.
- Program Costs: \$1250 per child/per year (includes salaries, curriculum materials, fees for training/assistance, and program development)
- Evidence-Based: Studies indicate that participation in HIPPY improves children's school performance and competence.
- Currently Implemented in Orange County : No

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HABLA (Home-Based Activities Building Language Acquisition)

- Locally-designed program to increase school readiness of disadvantaged Latino children by improving home-based language and literacy experiences.
- Scope: Two 23-week sessions with bi-weekly home visits that include mentoring, modeling and coaching of parents. Books and materials are provided for the home.
- Program Costs: \$2064 per child/family per year. (includes salaries, books, materials, services and administrative costs)
- Evidence-Based: Adaptation of evidence-based "Parent-Child Home Program."
- Currently Implemented in Orange County : 3 districts

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The Latino Family Literacy Project

- National program engages parents in family reading, vocabulary and English-language development to foster home-based early literacy.
- Scope: Center-based program for parents. Curriculum focuses on experiences of Latino families and universal themes. Four age appropriate curriculum available. Adaptable to other languages.
- Program Costs: One-time costs include: Teacher training - \$200/teacher and Lending Library - \$1500/site; Ongoing costs: Literacy Kit (consumable for each program) - \$350
- Evidence-Based: No evaluation completed. Curriculum based on early literacy research.
- Currently Implemented in Orange County : 13 districts

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Raising A Reader

- National program designed to foster early literacy skills by engaging parents in a routine of daily reading with their children, birth through age five.
- Scope: Books are rotated weekly into homes. Parents are taught "read aloud" strategies anchored in storytelling and language development.
- Program Costs: Average start-up cost per child - \$83. Plus minimal annual maintenance and replacements costs which vary by site based on damaged and lost materials.
- Evidence-Based: Studies indicate that 4 year olds participating in this program exceed national norms for kindergarten readiness.
- Currently Implemented in Orange County : Yes. RAR is currently implemented in 11 child care centers and 5 Project Access Family Resource Centers. Expansion is in process in 2 additional child care centers in Santa Ana and 3 additional sites are being identified in Anaheim and Garden Grove for expansion by June 30, 2009.

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Think Together – Randy Barth, CEO

- Early Literacy Expansion
- Organizational competency to implement programs in Santa Ana
- Expertise in Scalability of Programs
- Leveraging existing relationships in Santa Ana
- Evaluation Expertise

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Recommended Actions

- Receive presentation on proposed early literacy programs.
- Provide policy direction regarding the proposed programs to expand early literacy in target communities.
- Approve a partnership with THINK Together to implement the approved early literacy programs, and return at the May or June 2009 meetings for Commission consideration.

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