

Snapshot of Year 1 Evaluation Findings

Background

In 2010-2011, the Yes We Can...Read!™Children’s Initiative was piloted in kindergarten classrooms at Dorsa Elementary School as a strategy to support young children’s literacy development and later academic achievement. The program was developed in response to the great number of children in East San José falling behind in reading early on in school. Program services were designed on the basis of focus groups with 100 parents and an extensive review of the research regarding effective literacy intervention strategies. Strategies utilized by the Yes We Can...Read!™Children’s Initiative included weekly one-on-one literacy mentoring sessions for children with trained Community Volunteer Mentors and a series of Parent Engagement Workshops and Family Literacy Nights offered for parents and teachers. An evaluation was conducted in Year 1 to assess whether program processes were occurring as intended and whether program activities were having impacts on children’s reading test scores and parents’ literacy practices. The table below summarizes the findings of this evaluation.

Findings

Evaluation Question	Conclusion and Data Highlights
<p>1. Was the Yes We Can...Read!™Children’s Initiative implemented as intended?</p>	<p>Overall, the Yes We Can...Read!™Children’s Initiative was successful in delivering program activities as intended and meeting the short-term and intermediate outcomes outlined in the program logic model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program surpassed its Year 1 goals for the number of children served. The number of families participating in Parent Engagement Workshops/Family Literacy Nights doubled between Fall and Spring. Mentors, classroom teachers, and parents reported high degrees of satisfaction with program processes and the value of program services.
<p>2. Did parent engagement and home literacy practices improve after participation in Parent Engagement Workshops and Family Literacy Nights?</p>	<p>In comparison to parents who did not participate, participants showed more growth in communication with teachers and use of home literacy practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop attendance was associated with significant gains in parents’ use of five reading practices known to support children’s literacy development. Parents who attended Parent Engagement Workshops reported speaking to teachers about their children’s academics and schoolwork more often. Teachers observed increased confidence and engagement among the parents who attended the workshops.
<p>3. Did children’s attitudes toward reading improve with program participation?</p>	<p>An increased number of children rated themselves “very good readers” at program’s end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students showed significant growth in their enjoyment of reading and confidence in their own reading abilities between the first and last mentoring sessions of the Spring semester. Teacher and mentor observations supported these findings.
<p>4. Did children’s literacy skills improve with program participation?</p>	<p>Mentoring sessions and participation in Parent Engagement Workshops/Family Literacy Nights were significantly associated with growth in children’s literacy skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who received more mentoring sessions and/or whose parents attended more Parent Engagement Workshops showed more growth on the <i>SRA Imagine It! California Benchmark Reading Assessment</i>. Students had higher year-end Composite Scores on the <i>DIBELS</i> when their mentors had focused on <i>Word Recognition and Spelling</i> more frequently.