



The Importance of Family Support in the Early Years

National Interest Parent Engagement



- Federal agencies
- Local and state policy leaders
- Foundations and corporations



Evidence is clear that **what happens in the home and with the family** is critical in children's literacy development

- Family is where values, habits and attitudes are formed. Learning is always occurring in families.
- Children spend five times as much time outside an institutional setting as they in school.

Where Are the Kids?



- In formal setting
- Outside classroom

Parent Engagement

- All families have strengths and their assets, not deficits, need to be emphasized.
- All parents can learn ways to help their children if they are provided with the opportunity and necessary support.
- What do we really want parents to do with young children?
- **We want parents to help their children succeed.**



Parent engagement & its effect on child outcomes



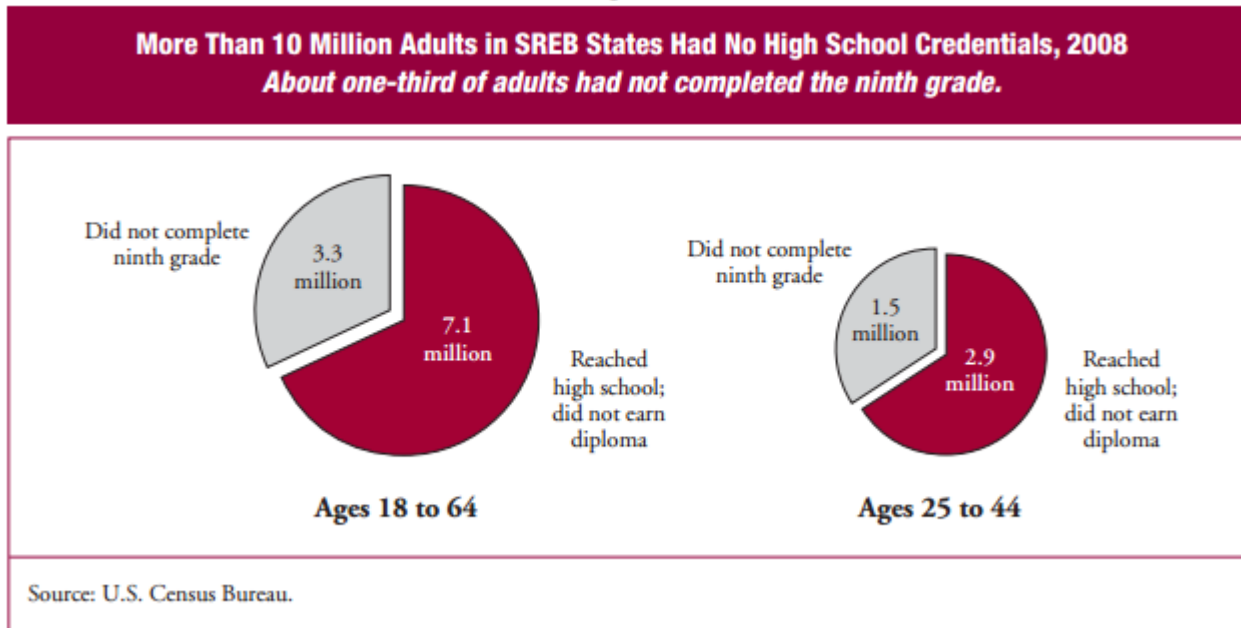
What does research tell us?

- Literacy levels at 3rd grade are higher when parents are trained in specific strategies to help their children (Senechal)
- Increased parent involvement has been particularly effective at promoting low income student success in early childhood programs (Hindman)
- Meta analysis found children whose families are more involved in their child's literacy development displayed higher levels of achievement than similar families less involved (Hattie)






Who are the parents we are trying to engage?

- Too much is taken for granted in assuming parents have the tools they need to help their children learn in the early years or succeed in school
- Adult challenges: literacy and poverty
90 million marginally literate



What is the effect of parental education on child outcomes?



-  **National Institute of Health**
Mother's reading skill is the greatest determinant of her children's academic success.
-  **Rand Study**
The key factors in whether a child will be adequately prepared to begin elementary school are the education level achieved by the mother and the level of poverty in the child's neighborhood.
-  **Foundation for Child Development**
Children living in poor families with mothers who have low educational attainments are only 1/3 as likely to be proficient in reading and math.



Multi-generation approaches

- Dual generation strategies are about a commitment to better outcomes for children and parents at the same time/outcomes must be measured for both together.
- Two generational learning approaches, such as family literacy, are critical to success.
- Moving from an adult or child focus to an intergenerational approach.



Successful family literacy interventions



- **FACE programs** on 44 Native American Reservations
 - 20+ year history of positive outcomes for parents and children with most disadvantaged population in the nation
 - From independent evaluation on 38,000 families, children entered at 23rd percentile as 3 & 4 year olds and exited at 49th percentile
- Children in grades K-3 who participated in FACE as preschoolers scored significantly higher on standardized reading and math tests
- Parents more involved in child's education and engaged in education activities in the home
- Children half as likely to need special education services



Toyota Family Learning Programs



- **TFLP Research Projects** evidence that programs narrowed the achievement gaps for minority students and their peers.
- TFLP studies showed students continued to outperform peers through grade 5.
- TFLP studies demonstrate significant improvements in parental engagement in their children's learning and education.
- Children who attended family literacy programs had higher attendance rates.
- TFLP partnerships with the private sector and matching funds brought family literacy to scale.



The First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative Evaluation

Fig. 3 Mean CST English Language Arts Z-scores for students in grades 2-5



* $p < .05$



Examples of family literacy initiatives

Briya Public Charter School, Washington, D.C.

- 400 parents and 500 children
- Funding for parents at ½ ADA
- Top performing charter school in D.C.
- Job training for parents



The Washington Post

Education

D.C. charter school educates parents alongside children

The District's Briya Public Charter School enrolls parents and young children together in the same school, a novel effort to improve children's prospects by building the skills of those who are closest to them. It's an approach that [an increasing number of researchers and philanthropists are promoting](#) across the country as experts worry that investments in early childhood education or school improvement can only go so far.

Community Action Agency Project

- Education and training for parents leading to employment
- Financial literacy services
- Career coaching
- Head Start and Early Head Start



State Policy Implications



- **Align and link systems and funding streams** to promote a two generational approach to early childhood education.
- **Cross agency funding and collaboration.** Laws can be written in such a way that requires a comprehensive plan put together.



State Policy Implications



Intentionality about policy implementation details including the level and intensity of services and use of data to ensure that child and parent outcomes match a policy intent.

Showcase best practices of agency collaboration increasing outcomes and provide roadmaps for communities to support the educational needs of 0-8 children.



State Policy Implications



Private sector resources to innovate and build the successful models that can become legislation and policy.



If our nation is to realize the promise of early childhood education, we must also make a promise to attend to the needs of the adults who are in the lives of those young children.



Resources are available at the National Center for Families Learning website: familieslearning.org

