

California Family Place Libraries

2010-2011 Evaluation Report

Submitted to the California State Library

By Dr. Virginia Walter, Ph.D.
UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies

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Virginia A. Walter, Ph.D.

University of California, Los Angeles,

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Using a multi-method research design, the consultant analyzed 88 surveys from parents who had participated in Family Place Parent/Child Workshops and 111 surveys from parents who did not attend workshops but did spend time in the libraries' redesigned preschool areas as well as narrative reports submitted by librarians at all twelve libraries. In addition, she made site visits to four libraries where she interviewed parents and staff and observed changes made in the libraries' public space. The findings for four sets of outcomes for parents and four organizational outcomes follow.

Outcomes for parents

- 50% of participating parents see the public library as a destination place for them and their young children.

Outcome exceeded. 85% of Parent/Child Workshop participants find the library to be “very family friendly.” 85% of parents using the library who were not Parent/Child workshop attendees also say the library is “very family friendly.” No survey respondents find the library to be “not family friendly.”

- 50% of participating parents see the public library as a community resource and support for their family.

Outcome exceeded. 85% of Parent/Child Workshop participants find the library to be “very family friendly.” 85% of parents using the library who were not Parent/Child workshop attendees say the library is “very family friendly.” No survey respondents find the library to be “not family friendly.”

- 50% of participating parents acquire knowledge about the importance of play in the lives of young children.

Outcome exceeded. 95% of all workshop participants responding to the survey said that the library had helped them to be better parents. 64%

specifically mentioned play as a positive factor in their library experiences. 87% of non-workshop attendees said that the library had helped them to be better parents. 58% indicated that play was an element of their positive parenting and/or library experience.

- 50% of participating parents acquire knowledge about techniques and resources to encourage their young children's early literacy.

Outcome not met. A total of 34 respondents who were workshop participants, or 39%, indicated through their comments that they had acquired new knowledge or resources to encourage their children's early literacy. However, 61% of Spanish-speaking parents offered evidence that they were doing more to encourage their children's literacy.

For non-workshop participants, ironically, the percentages were higher although still not at the 50% level except for Spanish-speaking parents. Eleven Spanish-speaking parents, 69%, commented on the importance of reading to their children. 40 English-speaking respondents, 42%, commented on the importance of reading and/or early literacy experiences. Fifty-one non-workshop participants, 46% of the total, seemed to have acquired new knowledge about early literacy.

Organizational outcomes

- 50% of participating libraries adopt family-friendly policies and practices.

Outcome exceeded. Only two out of twelve participating libraries reported no change in policies or procedures resulting from Family Place. Ten, or 83%, reported some new family-friendly policies and practices.

- 100% of libraries redesign space to accommodate families with young children.

Outcome met. All libraries redesigned space to accommodate families with young children.

- 25% of libraries are seen as significant resources for families of young children by two or more community agencies.

Evidence lacking from the agencies. However, all libraries established new and stronger relationships with many community agencies. It is likely that those agencies now see the library as a significant resource for families of young children.

- 75% of libraries integrate services for families into their overall mission and service plans.

Outcome met. Narrative reports indicated that all libraries have integrated services to families into their operations and goals.

All participating libraries managed to deal with the short time span between being notified that they were awarded the grant, receiving the funds, and implementing the program. They worked intensively with a wide variety of community agencies and made strong efforts to reach out to underserved populations and families who were not regular library users. Surveys from parents who did not attend the Parent/Child workshops indicated that the value of the program extends beyond the workshops. The redesigned and enhanced preschool areas make the library a more desirable destination place for families with children under the age of three.

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BACKGROUND

The consultant was asked to do an outcome-based evaluation study of the Family Place grants awarded for 2010-2011. The participating libraries are listed in Appendix A.

Two sets of outcomes were identified, one for parents who participated in the Family Place Parent-Child Workshops and one for the libraries themselves.

Outcomes for parents

- 50% of participating parents see the public library as a destination place for them and their young children.
- 50% of participating parents see the public library as a community resource and support for their family.
- 50% of participating parents acquire knowledge about the importance of play in the lives of young children.
- 50% of participating parents acquire knowledge about techniques and resources to encourage their young children's early literacy.

Organizational outcomes

- 50% of libraries adopt family-friendly policies and practices.
- 100% of libraries redesign space to accommodate families with young children.
- 25% of libraries are seen as significant resources for families of young children by two or more community agencies.
- 75% of libraries integrate services for families into their overall mission and service plans.

METHODOLOGY

A multi-method research design was employed. All libraries were asked to submit ten surveys from parents who participated in the Parent-Child workshops and ten surveys from parents who did not attend the workshops but used the redesigned children's area.

These surveys were analyzed to determine parental outcomes. Appendix B is a copy of the Parent Survey in English. It was also available in Spanish.

In addition, each library was asked to submit a narrative report answering questions posed by the consultant. These reports were used to determine organizational outcomes. See Appendix C for a copy of the narrative report questions.

In addition, the consultant made site visits to four libraries: South Oxnard, Southgate Library (Sacramento), Santa Clara City, and Half Moon Bay (San Mateo County). At each site, she interviewed administrators and front line librarians and at least two parents. Appendix D lists the people interviewed at each site. She also observed the children's area at each site and observed a Parent-Child Workshop in progress at the South Oxnard Library.

Data from all three sources – parent surveys, narrative reports, and site visits – were triangulated and used as evidence in the preparation of this report.

FINDINGS

Outcomes for parents

The primary source of evidence for the parental outcomes was the analysis of responses to the parent survey. Quantitative data is summarized in Appendix E and will be discussed here along with qualitative data provided by the parents' written comments and findings from the interviews done with parents during the four site visits.

- 50% of participating parents see the public library as a destination place for them and their young children.

Outcome exceeded. 85% of Parent/Child Workshop participants find the library to be “very family friendly.” 85% of parents using the library who were not Parent/Child workshop attendees also say the library is “very family friendly.” No survey respondents find the library to be “not family friendly.”

This outcome was exceeded during the short grant cycle. It can be measured most easily by the numbers and percentage of parents who report that the library is “very family friendly.” Of the 88 surveys by Parent-Child Workshop attendees, there were 86 usable responses to this question. Two libraries submitted different sets of surveys that were not consistent with the form provided by the consultant; these were not tabulated. Findings from those surveys are included as additional qualitative data. Of the 86 workshop attendees who checked how family friendly their library was, 73 people, or 85%, found the library to be “very family friendly.” 13, or 15%, found it “fairly family friendly.” No respondents found it to be “not family friendly.”

Responses were statistically the same for non-workshop attendees who filled out survey forms. There were a total of 111 surveys analyzed. Of these, 94, or 85% said the library was “very family friendly.” Seventeen, or 15%, found it to be “fairly family friendly.” None found it to be “not family friendly.”

While these are very high positive ratings for family friendliness and indicate a strong likelihood that families will see the library as a destination place, the results are a little more worrisome when broken down by language. Spanish-speaking parents were much more likely than English-speaking parents to rate the library as only “fairly” family friendly. Thirteen workshop attendees submitted surveys in Spanish. Of these, 7, or 54%, found the library to be only “fairly family friendly.” In comparison, seventy out of 75 English-speaking respondents, 96%, found the library to be “very family friendly.”

Spanish-speaking parents who had not attended the Parent-Child workshops were also less likely to find the library to be “very family friendly” than English speakers. 12, or 69%, responded most positively while 5, or 31%, said the library was only “fairly family friendly.”

Unfortunately, there is little in the comments on the Spanish-language surveys to help us understand why these ratings are lower than those of English-speaking respondents. English-speaking respondents seemed to be concerned about the general library facility, citing poor air conditioning inadequate signage, or the lack of changing tables in the restrooms. Some wanted more services than were currently offered. Three parents felt the collection was inadequate. One parent worried that her children were too noisy in the play area, causing problems for adults in the library. And one pleaded for “a librarian specifically versed in children’s literature on hand to interact with the children.”

Many parents and caregivers provided comments on their survey forms that give some evidence about why the Family Place libraries have become destination places. Some parents appreciate having a good alternative to staying home with their young children.

“The children’s area is the best thing about this library. Being a father of a 16-month old there are few places to take my son that offer all the things the library does.”

“It is a safe, easy outing even on hot or rainy days.”

“I love coming on rainy days so my boys can get out of the house and do something educational.”

For some respondents, the opportunity for them to socialize with other parents and for their children to socialize with peers was a plus. Several were pleased that the library offered a good environment for their children of different ages. A mother in Half Moon Bay who had just moved back to the community after living abroad said that being with other parents and the library staff helped her to feel less isolated.

Many parents perceived the library to be a safe place to spend time with their children. *“It is safe, friendly, and family oriented.”* Others commented favorably on its cleanliness. A

mother from Half Moon Bay who lives with her daughter and husband on a small sailboat appreciated being able to bring her child to a place where she could move about freely. Even the relatively small Family Place area at the library was bigger than the space available on the boat.

A common theme was appreciation for the library as a place to spend quality time with young children.

“I can spend quality time with my son in the play area.”

“We spend quality time playing together and reading.”

Finally, many parents praised the staff for creating a welcoming environment for their families.

“My kids are made to feel welcome.”

“I like the friendly library staff.”

“I like the attitude of the personnel. They are courteous, helpful, and smiling!”

Additional evidence for the perception of the library as a destination place can be found in the number of activities parents engage in while they were there. Survey respondents were given five options to check for “why they visit the library” – check out books for myself, check out books for my children, use computers, spend time in the children’s area, attend storytime, and participate in the Parent/Child Workshop. Among workshop attendees, all reasons except using the computers were cited by more than two-thirds of the parents. Non-workshop attendees’ usage was similar. Parents find the Family Place Library to be a hub for many different family activities.

- 50% of participating parents see the public library as a community resource and support for their family.

Outcome exceeded. 85% of Parent/Child Workshop participants find the library to be “very family friendly.” 85% of parents using the library who were not Parent/Child workshop attendees say the library is “very family friendly.” “No survey respondents find the library to be “not family friendly.”

The same quantitative data was used as evidence for this outcome. However, different parent comments provide additional insights into perceptions of the library as a community resource. These comments are particularly telling because there were no prompts in the survey themselves to elicit this kind of information. The high number of positive responses to the question about whether the library has helped them be better parents lends weight to the library as a support for their family. This will be discussed as evidence for the following two outcomes. However, some parents volunteered specific comments that indicate their awareness of the library as a community resource and as a place for community building.

“I’ve been to public libraries all over the U.S. Porterville is one of the friendliest and most helpful. It gives us a good feeling of the community.”

“Place to connect with others from the community.”

“Socializing with other parents in the library has provided me with support structure for babysitting, play dates, and moral support. We also refer each other to local family activities and events.

“The library is the center of my community.”

“It’s a great way to connect with the local community (in a time where so many other activities require long drives).”

Several parents talked about becoming aware of community resources through the Parent/Child Workshops. One mother in Santa Clara said, “The workshops have opened my eyes to everything that’s available.” She has two children on the autism spectrum and needed a lot of support.

- 50% of participating parents acquire knowledge about the importance of play in the lives of young children.

Outcome exceeded. 95% of all workshop participants responding to the survey said that the library had helped them to be better parents. 64% specifically mentioned play as a positive factor in their library experiences. 87% of non-workshop attendees said that the library had helped them to be better parents. 58% indicated that play was an element of their positive parenting and/or library experience.

It should be noted that the statistics may be slightly skewed for this outcome because many respondents failed to answer the parenting question. It was the last question on the survey, and some simply failed to turn over the page. However, the number and percentage of parents who seemed to understand the importance of play is meaningful even without the missing responses.

Significantly, all 13 Spanish-speaking parents, 100%, said they had learned to be better parents at the library. Most of these parents mentioned helping their children learn as the specific parenting skill they had learned; but 5, or 38%, mentioned play as an element in their parenting or library experience. The Latina mothers who were interviewed at the South Oxnard Library talked about being delighted with the quality toys that were available for their children to play with at the library. They said they couldn’t afford to buy them so they were happy they were available at the library.

One would expect that workshop participants would have a higher awareness of the value of play since it is such an important aspect of the workshop experience. A total of 47 respondents, or 53% did single out play as one of their reasons for bringing their child to the library or as a parenting skill they had acquired there.

Some representative comments from Spanish-speaking parents:¹

“...aprendi como jugar con el...”

“trator de tener un poco mas de espacio para mi nino y dedicar mas tiempo para jugar con el.”

“nos ensenaron muchos cosas sobre como jugar con nuestros hijos.”

Comments from English-speaking parents who attended the workshops:

“...a chance to introduce my baby to other kids and play with new educational toys.”

“We enjoy spending time in the children’s area for a great variety of toys and activities.”

Some parents reported that the new Family Place children’s area made it easier to bring both their young and older children to the library because the little ones could play while the older ones looked for books, used the computers, or did homework.

“It keeps her busy and happy playing – instead of messing the books.”

“The toys keep my little one occupied while her brother does his homework.”

Although the non-workshop attendees did not have the advantage of the play-oriented content of the workshops, they appeared to appreciate the toys and games and opportunities for creative play in the newly designed Family Place areas almost as much as the workshop participants did. 52%, only one percentage point less than the workshop attendees, mentioned the new toys and games and play as things they liked about the library.

“I love the new toys!”

“I spend more time now playing with my child.”

Only 25% of the Spanish-speaking parents who were not workshop participants mentioned play as a positive part of their library experience or parenting skills. One library employee who is Latina herself said that many Latino parents do not see playing with their children as an important, or even proper, role for them. They love their children and show affection and feed them, but they seem to feel that play is something children do with other children. It is possible that Spanish-speaking parents who did not attend the Parent/Child Workshops have still not been exposed to this parenting principle. A Latina mother in Santa Clara told the consultant that the workshop had made even her husband more aware that he needs to play with the kids too. In fact, he was there playing with his children while the consultant talked with his wife.

¹ Apologies for the lack of appropriate diacritical marks in the Spanish comments. This is a failure of the word processing program.

It must be acknowledged that one parent, not a workshop participant, took the time to express her unhappiness with the new emphasis on play. *“I don’t like the play area. Discourages children from looking at books. Also very difficult to teach children to use a quiet voice in the library.”* Another mother who had not attended the Parent/Child Workshop at the Santa Clara City Library was so unhappy with the new play area that she submitted a formal complaint. In spite of a well-worded, tactful response from the librarian in charge of the children’s area, she continued to believe that the toys and games represented a distraction from the books, the “real” purpose of the library.

- 50% of participating parents acquire knowledge about techniques and resources to encourage their young children’s early literacy.

Outcome not met. A total of 34 respondents who were workshop participants, or 39%, indicated through their comments that they had acquired new knowledge or resources to encourage their children’s early literacy. However, 61% of Spanish-speaking parents offered evidence that they were doing more to encourage their children’s literacy.

For non-workshop participants, ironically, the percentages were higher although still not at the 50% level except for Spanish-speaking parents. Eleven Spanish-speaking parents, 69%, commented on the importance of reading to their children. 40 English-speaking respondents, 42%, commented on the importance of reading and/or early literacy experiences. Fifty-one non-workshop participants, 46% of the total, seemed to have acquired new knowledge about early literacy.

The consultant coded all comments that indicated the value of reading to their children or changes in the caregiver’s behavior or knowledge about reading as evidence that this outcome had been met. There were many comments about children learning through their library experiences; these were not coded if reading was not mentioned specifically. Most of the comments that specifically mentioned reading were still quite general. Some representative examples:

In response to question 8 about being a better parent: *“si, pasar mas tiempo leyendo con los ninos.”*

“Yes, because I can motivate my kids to read more.”

“Yes, because I am a better reader for my kids and use the techniques that they use for storytime.”

“Yes, because my children listen when I read a story and answer my questions.”

“To keep reading to my kids daily.”

“How to teach reading.”

“To have the children begin to discover books and other library resources as tools for their learning.”

“I enjoy the story time and other programming – it helps me learn new songs and games. Also, our family is relatively new to the U.S. and it’s been a great way to learn

the language and about American children's culture. Plus we get to read far more books and stories than we would be able to do without the library's great selection."

"Reading and bonding with my kids."

"I get a better idea of age-appropriate books and activities for my young children."

A Santa Clara mother said, "The biggest thing is setting the foundation that reading is fun and important;" and a mother from Half Moon Bay said, "My son is excited about coming to the library. I am too. It is the beginning of his literacy."

It appears from a closer look at these responses and others within the context of other answers to the survey that any learning that took place about early childhood literacy was the consequence of exposure to the book collection, interactions with librarians, and attendance at story times rather than participating in the Parent/Child Workshops or spending time in the Family Place area of the library.

The consultant has observed that there is no overt content in the Parent/Child Workshop curriculum that pertains to early literacy. Most librarians have some board books on hand during the workshops, but they are not highlighted; and children seem to prefer the toys and art activities. Parents appreciate the resource people at the workshops, but their expertise lies in areas such as health and education and early childhood development, not literacy.

It should be noted that 85% of the workshop participants and 77% of non-workshop attendees indicated that they checked out books for their children when they come to the library. This may indicate that they have more knowledge about early literacy than was otherwise evident through their survey responses.

Organizational outcomes

Evidence for the accomplishment of organizational outcomes was derived from the narrative reports submitted by each library and by the closer look made possible through interviews and observations at the four site visit libraries.

- 50% of participating libraries adopt family-friendly policies and practices.

Outcome exceeded. Only two out of twelve participating libraries reported no change in policies or procedures resulting from Family Place. Ten, or 83%, reported some new family-friendly policies and practices.

The two libraries that reported no new policies or practices both pointed out that their libraries already had family-friendly policies in place before they implemented Family Place. In fact, it was a commitment to family services that motivated them to apply for the grant.

The changes reported in the other ten libraries fell into several broad categories: noise tolerance, branding, collaborations, staffing, food in the library, collections. Azusa and Sierra Madre reported new levels of tolerance for the noise generated by toddlers playing in new children's area. Two libraries reported new approaches to branding the library as a community place for families. Cameron Park in El Dorado County, for example, produced a new brochure for parents that spells out the library's focus on play for early learning. It is a striking departure from the former brochure that listed all of the rules for library use. Three libraries have forged significant new collaborative partnerships with community agencies, and two have adjusted staff expectations and tasks to accommodate families. Porterville has issued new guidelines for staff that they call "G.O.B.S.": "Greet Cheerfully, Offer Assistance, Be kind, Smile." Parents at Porterville are also now allowed to have small snacks and sippy cups for their children inside the library. One library reported doing extensive weeding of the collection to make room for Family Place and then discovering that the collection had actually improved as a result.

Two libraries reported that they were now revisiting policies regarding no picture-taking because of parents wanting to document their children's visits to the Family Space.

Managers at the two site visit libraries that were part of larger systems reported that they were working to expand the Family Space concept to other locations. Greg Bodin, Acting County Manager of San Mateo County Library, said that the positive experiences at the Half Moon Bay library made Family Place an easier sell to some of the more traditional "old timers" who were initially resistant to the notion of play as an aspect of core library services. Rivkah Sass, Sacramento Library Director, echoes this saying, "It has renewed interest and the understanding that this is an important thing we do." She is currently putting together a funding package to expand the program to other libraries in the system. She finds that the Family Place concept is an excellent model to present to potential donors.

- 100% of libraries redesign space to accommodate families with young children.

Outcome met. All libraries redesigned space to accommodate families with young children.

For some libraries, creating a welcoming, family-friendly space was challenging. Some had already had to accommodate computer stations in their existing children's areas and had very little open space for the rugs, toys, and special seating needed to make it a Family Space where very young children and their caregivers could spend time together in a learning environment.

This challenge was met in a variety of ways. At least one library dramatically weeded its collection. More than one library removed shelving.

Most libraries did some remodeling in order to accommodate the new public Family Place. Several libraries relocated existing areas, such as a Teen Lounge, to another part of the library. The Cameron Park Library placed the Family Place in a part of the library

formerly used by middle-school students after school. The Friends of the Library then donated funds to refurbish the Young Adult section, and that is now where the older kids spend time. In Sacramento and La Habra, Friends groups also helped out with additional money to make the new early childhood area attractive and welcoming. San Bernardino hired a professional space planner to help them create a Family Place out of their existing children's room, and Sierra Madre has followed suit.

Creating an appropriate space for the Parent/Child workshops was another challenge for the two libraries that did not have community rooms or auditoriums. The Half Moon Bay Library staff moved heavy tables and chairs out of an adult reading room in order to hold the workshop there, putting the furniture back again when the workshop was over. They held their workshops on a morning when the library was closed so adult patrons were not inconvenienced. The South Oxnard Library held their workshops in a section of the library that otherwise serves as a reading area especially for adult newspaper and magazine readers. By moving the tables to openings in the low shelves that make a large rectangular space, they had a nicely enclosed area. They hold their workshops during morning hours when the library is open, but there have been no complaints from adults about their space being usurped. In fact, when the consultant observed the workshop, there were a few older adults who looked fondly on the families playing there.

- 25% of libraries are seen as significant resources for families of young children by two or more community agencies.

Evidence lacking from the agencies. However, all libraries established new and stronger relationships with many community agencies. It is likely that those agencies now see the library as a significant resource for families of young children.

The consultant failed to revise reporting guidelines in such a way that community agencies could provide this kind of feedback. However, the narrative report did ask libraries to list the community agencies that they had worked with in their implementation of Family Place. It is clear from these reports that the libraries did reach out and interact with community agencies in meaningful ways. Appendix F is a list of the community agencies throughout the state that had significant involvement in Family Place.

The consultant was able to talk with a resource person and two observers from two different agencies – the local First Five agency, Neighborhood for Learning, and the Ventura County Public Health Department – at a workshop held at the South Oxnard Library. One of these observers had helped to recruit families for the program and was very impressed with the library's foray into early childhood programming. Another observer was looking forward to working with the library next year in a special outreach effort to Mixtec families who have come to the area to work in the fields.

Interviews with key staff during site visits also indicated that they had seen increased awareness by staff in agencies of the greater role the library was playing in the early

childhood community. Susan Baier at the Santa Clara City Library said, that agency people were “blown away. We offer the only free program for 0 to 3.” This finding was repeated by many librarians. Sarah Denton, Children’s Services Coordinator at Sacramento Public Library, said that the partnerships that came about through Family Place put the library squarely in the context of early childhood development as the only game in town for “under three’s.” Library Director Rivkah Sass sees good opportunities to leverage those partnerships that had come about as a result of Family Place.

Next year libraries will be asked to submit feedback forms from at least two community agencies so that we will have better reporting data to use as evidence for this outcome.

- 75% of libraries integrate services for families into their overall mission and service plans.

Outcome met. Narrative reports indicated that all libraries have integrated services to families into their operations and goals.

The libraries were asked why they had decided to apply for a Family Place grant. Without exception, they responded that Family Place enabled them to meet an objective to better serve families. Sample language included:

“The Children’s Department’s goal is to create a family welcoming and engaging environment that is reflected in the library’s atmosphere, space and resources and to make the Altadena Library District an integral part of the life and health of our community.”

“Providing Azusa’s parents and caregivers with knowledge and an environment that encourages play and literacy was a priority for the library. We also wanted to come and remain a focal point for the lives of families and attract non-traditional library users.”

“The Family Place philosophy meshed so well with the direction the staff of our library wished to take. Our efforts over the previous two years had been focused on making our library a welcoming place for families. Our work with Early Learning for Families and with First Five had helped us in this mission and increased the number of families turning to us as a resource. But in spite of the many strengths of our library (including motivated staff and a desire to offer family-friendly programs), we felt we needed focus and direction to accomplish our goals. Our hope was that the Family Place initiative would give us the framework, knowledge and financing we needed, would set a timeline for our planning process, and would push us to greater levels of professionalism and service.” (Cameron Park)

“It reinforced our policies of reaching out to young families in the community and working with them to develop pre-reading skills.” (La Habra)

“We wanted to position ourselves in the community as a provider of early literacy services and as a connector to other agencies specializing in childhood health and development.” (Santa Clara)

It was not always clear from the narrative reports whether these family-oriented goals and objectives were codified in official planning or service documents. However, the Porterville Library reported that they applied for Family Place in part because of a community needs assessment that revealed a community need for early literacy enhancements. As a result, the City Council had approved a master plan that included reorganization of library space to allow for an early learning center. They also reported that the grant was complementary to the library service roles: Create Young Readers; Satisfy Curiosity and Lifelong learning; Visit a Comfortable Place; and Learn to Read and Write. The Half Moon Bay report alluded to the San Mateo County Library's strategic goals, including serving as a destination place and engaging the community as part of their rationale for being a Family Place Library. Rivkah Sass said that Sacramento Public Library will be embarking on a strategic planning process, and that family services will be embedded in it. It is likely that as other Family Place libraries embark on their next planning cycle this outcome will be more fully documented.

DISCUSSION

Over all, the libraries participating in this second round of funding for Family Place seem to have come farther faster than the libraries who received grants during the first year. They all managed to deal with the short time span between being notified that they had the grant, receiving the funds, and implementing the program. They made impressive efforts to work more intensively with community agencies and to reach out to underserved populations and families who were not regular library users.

The consultant spoke with Kathleen Deerr, the National Coordinator for Family Place Libraries, during the ALA Conference in New Orleans. She had recently returned from making her own round of site visits in California, and we agreed on our positive assessment of the progress made this year. It seems possible that libraries have learned from the experiences of the earlier grantees. Library administrators seem to be more aware of the program than they were two years ago; they must be hearing about Family Place from their peers around the state. The notion of play as a key element in early childhood development and more significantly perhaps in early literacy acquisition also seems to have taken hold in the children's library community. In the latest version of Every Child Ready to Read, the national initiative developed by two divisions of the American Library Association, the Association for Library Service to Children and the Public Library Association, play has been named as one of the five essential strategies for acquiring early literacy skills.

It is particularly impressive that the 2010-2011 Family Place grantees exceeded or met all but one of the objectives laid out by the State Library in the light of budget cuts that affected staffing at nearly all of the libraries. Children's librarians reported that they had found staff from all areas of the library ready and willing to help, whether it was moving furniture, cleaning and sanitizing toys, assisting with workshops, or dealing with the increased activity and noise from the Family Place area,

The one objective that was not met was parents' acquisition of knowledge about techniques and resources to encourage their young children's early literacy. As noted earlier in this report, there is little focus on literacy in the guidelines for Parent/Child Workshops. Some librarians reported that many parents didn't even go into the library itself on workshop days; they simply came to the community room. It is also possible, as one parent pointed out in her survey response, that the toys in the public area were a distraction from the books. However, librarians report that circulation of picture books in general and board books in particular is booming.

RECOMMENDATION: Ask that one resource person at the workshop be an early literacy specialist. This could be the children's librarian.

RECOMMENDATION: Add one attractive literacy-oriented station to the room set-up for Parent/Child Workshops.

The only red flag that was raised for the consultant was the response of Spanish-speaking parents who found the library less family-friendly than those parents who filled out survey forms in English. Considering the large number of Latino families in the state and the expressed desire by many libraries to reach out to them, it would be worthwhile to look into this a little more closely.

Does it make a difference if there are staff involved with Family Place who are both Latino and fluent in Spanish? Is there something about the Family Place concept that doesn't feel as comfortable or culturally relevant to Latino families? The consultant spoke last year with mothers from Pakistan at the Union City Library. They were eager to learn more about American child-rearing practices that were different from those in their home countries. Do Latino parents feel the same? The consultant reported earlier in this document that one Latino librarian shared the insight that Latino parents do not see it as their role to play with their children. Certainly many Latino parents were playing happily with their children at the Parent/Child Workshop in South Oxnard and elsewhere, but this might be something to look at more closely. If this is true, how can the idea of the importance of play be communicated more effectively? It is interesting that such a high percentage of Spanish-speaking respondents reported that the library had helped them to be better parents. There are some indications in their comments that what they meant was that they were able to encourage their children's formal learning at the library. It was the library's educational role that was important to them.

It might be informative to conduct focus groups or interviews with Spanish-speaking parents to find out what they envision a "family-friendly" library to be. Many of their written responses seemed to indicate a desire for activities that were more obviously "educational."

RECOMMENDATION: Consider convening a study group of children's librarians serving heavily Spanish-speaking communities to consider this issue.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider creating an easy-to-read, jargon-free brochure in Spanish that clarifies the positive relationship between play and early literacy.

RECOMMENDATION: Discuss the issue of relevance to Spanish-speaking and Latino parents with the national Family Place staff.

In summary, the consultant found a great deal of evidence that the 2010-2011 Family Place grantees had implemented programs that met designated program outcomes. The California State Library can feel assured that there has been an excellent return on investment in its commitment to Family Place.

Appendix A

PARTICIPATING FAMILY PLACE LIBRARIES
2010-2011

Altadena Library District
Azusa City Library
El Dorado County Library -- Cameron Park Branch
Orange County Public Libraries -- La Habra Branch
Oxnard Public Library – South Oxnard Branch
Porterville Public Library
Sacramento Public Library – Southgate Branch
San Bernardino Public Library
San Mateo County Library – Half Moon Bay Branch
Santa Clara City Library, Central Park Library
Sierra Madre Public Library
Sunnyvale Public Library

Appendix C

NARRATIVE REPORT QUESTIONS

1. Why did you decide to apply for a Family Place grant?
2. What challenges did you face in implementing the grant? How did you deal with them?
3. What role do you see your library playing in the lives of families and young children? How does Family Place help you fulfill this role?
4. Has your experience with Family Place led to any changes in your library's policies or procedures?
5. What, if anything, has surprised you about staff or parent or other patron responses to Family Place?
6. Please list the community agencies that you have worked with in your implementation of Family Place? What has been their involvement? (Participation as resource people in the Parent/Child Workshops? Publicity? Outreach to parent participants? Other?)
7. How would you characterize the demographics of the adults who attended the Parent/Child Workshops at your library? Mothers? Fathers? Grandparents? Caregivers? Ethnic or racial composition?
8. Were the adults who attended your Parent/Child workshops mostly people who were already regular library users? Or did you attract some new library users to the workshops?
9. What would you say was the most significant organizational outcome from Family Place at your library? (It doesn't need to be one of the officially stated outcomes?)
10. What would you say was the most significant outcome for parents from Family Place at your library? (It doesn't need to be one of the officially stated outcomes.)

Appendix D

LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED DURING SITE VISITS

Oxnard Public Library – South Oxnard Branch

Robin Middleton, Manager, Extension Services Manager
Joanne Center, Children’s Librarian

3 mothers

Sacramento Public Library – Southgate Branch

Christy Aguirre, Branch Manager
Sarah Dentan, Youth Services Coordinator
Nicole Powell, Children’s Librarian
Rivkah Sass, Library Director

3 mothers

San Mateo County Library – Half Moon Bay Branch

Jeanine Asche, Manager of Community Engagement
Karen Choy, Children’s Librarian
Greg Bodin, Acting County Librarian

2 mothers and 1 father

Santa Clara City Library

Susan P. Baier, Library Division Manager, Youth and Extension Services
Julie Passalacqua, City Librarian
Erin Ulrich, Children’s Librarian

3 mothers and 1 grandmother

Appendix E

SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Calculations for all tables based on results from all participating libraries. Note that the N (number of responses in each category) varies.

Reasons for coming to the library

Parent/Child Workshop Participants
N=88

Activity	Number	Percentage
Check out books for myself	62	70%
Check out books for my children	75	85%
Use computers	25	28%
Spend time with my children	70	79%
Attend storytime	59	67%

Other activities mentioned: Do work, check out DVDs and CD, music and movement class, gather pamphlets, special events, meeting with friend's child, kids read, take a break from the sun or housecleaning.

Non-Workshop Participants
N=111

Activity	Number	Percentage
Check out books for myself	69	62%
Check out books for my children	86	77%
Use computers	32	29%
Spend time with my children	94	85%
Attend storytime	78	70%

Other activities mentioned: volunteer, school age programs, check out videos and music, summer programs, book sales.

Perceptions of the Library’s “Family-friendliness”

Parent/Child Workshop Attendees

Perception	Spanish-speaking N=13	English-speaking N=73	Total N=86
Very family friendly	6 (46%)	67 (92%)	73 (85%)
Fairly family friendly	7 (54%)	6 (8%)	13 (15%)
Not family friendly	0	0	0

Non-Workshop Attendees

Perception	Spanish-speaking N=17	English-speaking N=94	Total N=111
Very family friendly	12 (69%)	82 (87%)	94 (85%)
Fairly family friendly	5 (21%)	12 (13%)	17 (15%)
Not family friendly	0	0	0

Has library helped respondent to be a better parent?

Parent/Child Workshop Attendees

Better parent?	Spanish-speaking N=13	English-speaking N=61	Total N=74
Yes	13 (100%)	57 (93%)	70 (95%)
No	0	4 (3%)	4 (5%)

Non-Workshop Attendees

Better parent?	Spanish-speaking N=15	English-speaking N=69	Total N=84
Yes	13 (87%)	60 (87%)	73 (87%)
No	2 (13%)	9 (13%)	11 (13%)

Do parents see value of play?

Parent/Child Workshop Attendees

Spanish-speaking: 5 (38%)
 English-speaking: 42 (69%)

Total 47 (64%)

Non-Workshop Attendees

Spanish-speaking 4 (27%)
English-speaking 45 (65%)

Total 49 (58%)

Has library helped parents learn strategies for encouraging early literacy?

Parent/Child Workshop Attendees

Spanish-speaking 8 (61%)
English-speaking 26 (35%)
Total 34 (39%)

Non-Workshop Attendees

Spanish-speaking 11 (69%)
English-speaking 40 (42%)
Total 51 (46%)

Appendix F

COLLABORATIONS WITH COMMUNITY AGENCIES

Early Childhood Agencies

Bowling Green Head Start
Early Head Start
First Five San Bernardino
First Five/Parents Place (Sunnyvale)
First Five Sacramento
Head Start (2 libraries)
Help Me Grow/Orange County
High Five for Quality/First Five El Dorado
Orange County First Five
Oxnard First 5 Neighborhood for Learning
Sacramento County Office of Education
SETA Head Start
Sierra Madre Community Nursery School
South Oxnard/Port Hueneme First 5 Neighborhood for Learning

Educational institutions

Azusa Pacific University
Azusa Unified School District
Burton School District
California State University San Bernardino
Community School of Music and Art (Sunnyvale)
Cuesta College
El Dorado County Office of Education
La Habra School District
Pasadena Unified School District Parent Welcome Center
Porterville College
Porterville Unified School District
San Bernardino County School District
San Jose State University
Santa Clara County Office of Education
Santa Clara Unified School District
Sierra Madre School District
Sunnyvale Elementary School District
University of Redlands
William Daylor High School

Health services

Azusa Wellness Center
Clinicas
Community Health Alliance of Pasadena
El Dorado County Public Health Services
Growing Healthy Children Occupational Therapy
Health Education Council (Sacramento)
Huntington Hospital
Marshall Community Hospital
Palo Alto Medical Center
Sacramento County WIC
San Gabriel Valley Foundation for Dental Health
San Mateo County Public Health Department
Silicon Valley Eye Physicians
Sonrisas (Half Moon Bay)
Tulare County WIC
Ventura County Public Health WIC
Ventura County Public Health, Health Education
WIC Half Moon Bay

Media

Porterville Recorder
Sacramento Press
Ventura County Star

Social services for families

Children's Home Society of California
El Centrito Family Learning Center
Foothill Family Services (2 libraries)
Hiram Johnson Family Education Center
Innovative Therapy Services
Jewish Family and Children's Services Parents' Place
La Habra Family Resource Center
Los Angeles Learning Disabilities Association
Meadowview Family Resource Center
P.R.I.D.E. and Joy/Family Connections
Project Cornerstone
Rainbow Connections (Oxnard)
Sunnyvale Community Service Division – Columbia Neighborhood Center
Valley Hi-Florin Family Resource Center

Other

City of Porterville Parks and Leisure Department
Las Madres Neighborhood Playgroups (Santa Clara)
Mary Tumilty Endowment Fund
Mothers' Support Network (Sacramento)
Porterville Chamber of Commerce
READ/Orange County
READ Santa Clara
St. Clare's Catholic Church
St. John's Shelter for Women and Children
Santa Clara Parks and Recreation
Sierra Madre Civic Club
Sierra Madre Community Foundation
Sierra Madre Rotary Club
Southgate Mom's Club
Southgate Recreation and Park District
United Way San Bernardino