Evaluation of the First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative

Report on Year 2 Findings

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Executive Summary

This executive summary provides an overview of the second year (June 2003 – May 2004) of the external evaluation of the First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative. In the following pages, we describe the focus of the evaluation, data sources drawn upon for the analysis, key findings from Year 2, and next steps for the evaluation.

Overview of the Evaluation

The First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative provided funding for three interrelated components:

1. Expansion and enhancement grants to 15 family literacy programs throughout LA County providing adult education classes, parenting education classes, early childhood education (ECE) services, and parent-child interactive literacy activities (PCILA) to families with children birth to age five.

2. The Family Literacy Support Network (FLSN), which provides training and technical assistance to the grantees as well as outreach to other programs in the County and engages in advocacy work for the field of family literacy.

3. A four-year evaluation of the implementation of the First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative and its impacts on children birth to five and their families.

The Initiative-wide evaluation, being conducted through a partnership between the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and the Center for Improving Child Care Quality (CICCQ) at UCLA, is both formative (i.e., interim findings are reported on an annual basis in order to enhance implementation and program results) and summative (i.e., program impacts will be described at the end of three years of program implementation). The first year of the evaluation focused primarily on implementation issues. While the second year of the evaluation continued to explore implementation issues, we also report some short-term outcomes observed in families participating in the programs. Specifically, the second year of the evaluation addressed eight key questions, stemming from the questions outlined by the Commission at the outset of the Initiative:

1. What is the range of family literacy program characteristics?
2. What is the range of family literacy participant characteristics and experiences within the programs?
3. What were the challenges and successes in the implementation of the programs?
4. How have First 5 LA grants benefited family literacy programs?
5. What short-term changes can be observed among families participating in the programs?
6. What is the range of activities in which the FLSN has engaged?
7. What were the challenges and successes in the implementation of the FLSN?
8. What is the impact of FLSN support on the programs?

Questions outlined by the Commission at the outset of the Initiative that were not addressed in Years 1 and 2 will be addressed in Years 3 and 4.
Data Collection and Analysis

In order to assess implementation of the Initiative and impacts of the grantee programs and the FLSN, the evaluation team collected data from six primary sources in Year 2:

1. Surveys of 15 grantee program directors; 89 ECE, PCILA, parenting education, and adult education teachers; and 343 parents.

2. Interviews or focus groups with program directors; members of the FLSN staff; and family literacy program teachers, representing each of the four components.

3. Reports and documents submitted by the FLSN and the grantees (e.g., grantees Year-end Reports, FLSN quarterly reports, FLSN internal evaluation materials).

4. Observation of several FLSN training activities and technical assistance site visits.

5. Data collected for the child outcomes study (e.g., classroom observations, direct child assessments, parent interviews) on a sample of approximately 100 three- and four-year-old children and their parents participating in the family literacy programs.

6. Participant data downloaded from the online data system (e.g., attendance, demographics, Desired Results Developmental Profiles (DRDP), California Even Start Performance Information Reporting System (CA-ESPIRS), Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Reading assessment).1

Data collected from these sources were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. It should be noted that data downloaded from the online data system (most notably the attendance data) presented considerable challenges for analysis.2 Many of the data errors and problems with missing or incomplete information could be addressed with additional follow up with program staff and data recoding, though we expect attendance rates to be somewhat inflated as a result of underreporting program hours offered to participating families. This may limit our ability to detect a relationship between participant outcomes and program participation. With this caveat in mind, a summary of key findings is presented below.

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1 Two additional months (June and July 2004) were added to the end of Year 2 for all analyses of assessment data (DRDP, CASAS, and CA-ESPIRS) to ensure that the post-tests for Year 2 are captured.
2 We observed three primary problems with the attendance data which limit our ability to report accurate attendance rates and to link attendance with participant outcomes. 1) Programs used different definitions of program components when reporting hours attended (e.g., some reported PCILA hours as ECE hours for their participants while others double-counted PCILA hours as both ECE and PCILA, some programs counted child care as part of ECE while others counted it separately). Follow up with program staff enabled us to adjust for most of these differences. 2) The number of hours “offered” to each family (which is used in calculating attendance rates) varied widely for participants within programs and was sometimes less than the number of hours attended, resulting in attendance rates over 100 percent. We addressed this problem by capping monthly attendance rates at 100 percent. 3) Programs were inconsistent in their recording of attendance data when a family was absent for the entire month (e.g., instead of entering 0 hours attended, 60 hours offered, some programs counted child care as part of ECE while others counted it separately). Follow up with program staff enabled us to adjust for most of these differences. 2) The number of hours “offered” to each family (which is used in calculating attendance rates) varied widely for participants within programs and was sometimes less than the number of hours attended, resulting in attendance rates over 100 percent. We addressed this problem by capping monthly attendance rates at 100 percent. 3) Programs were inconsistent in their recording of attendance data when a family was absent for the entire month (e.g., instead of entering 0 hours attended and 60 hours offered, grantee staff often entered 0 hours attended and 0 hours offered or left both blank for the month, resulting in inflated attendance rates.)
Year 2 Findings

In this section, we highlight key findings that emerged from our analysis. Findings are organized by the evaluation questions addressed in Year 2.

What is the range of family literacy program characteristics?

Among the program characteristics examined in Year 2 were teacher qualifications, which vary widely across components.

- Eighty-one percent of all family literacy teachers surveyed reported having at least a Bachelor’s degree. There was some variability across components, though, with virtually all adult education (exclusive of parenting education) teachers (98%) reporting at least a Bachelor’s degree and 59 percent of ECE teachers surveyed reporting this level of education.

- Adult education teachers (exclusive of parenting education teachers) were also most likely to be certified; two-thirds (67%) of all adult education teachers surveyed reported having at least one Adult Education Teaching Credential.

- Half of all ECE teachers (53%) and PCILA teachers (56%) surveyed reported having at least a child development teacher permit; another six percent of ECE teachers and seven percent of PCILA teachers had an associate teacher permit or a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (equivalent to two to four college courses), authorizing them to provide instruction in a child care and development program without supervision. Four out of 10 ECE teachers (41%) and PCILA teachers (39%) have no child development permit or credential.

- As a whole, the average family literacy program teacher surveyed was very experienced. On average, adult education teachers surveyed reported nearly 11 years, ECE teachers reported 10 years, and parenting education teachers reported just over eight years of experience in their field. PCILA teachers appear to be the least experienced in their field, with an average of just under four years of experience as a PCILA teacher.

In addition to teacher qualifications, the quality of instruction in each of the four components is also dependent on the nature of the curriculum covered. ECE teachers and adult education teachers are most likely to rely on a formal curriculum; parenting education teachers are least likely to use a formal curriculum.

- More than three-quarters (77%) of the ECE teachers surveyed reported that they use a formal curriculum, such as Creative Curriculum or High Scope, in their classroom.

- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of adult education teachers surveyed reported that they use a formal curriculum; two-thirds of these teachers (63%) reported using a district curriculum or course outline.

- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of PCILA teachers surveyed reported using a formal curriculum for PCILA activities; many cited parents reading with their children as a routine activity during PCILA.

- Fewer formal curricula exist for parent educators, so it is not surprising that fewer teachers in the parenting education component (47%) reported using some formal curriculum, such as their district’s adult parenting course curriculum. Ninety-one percent of parenting education teachers surveyed reported that significant attention is
given during their parenting classes to child development, how parents can support their children’s learning, and activities that parents can do during PCILA time.

The benefits of family literacy are expected to increase with greater integration of all four components. We continued to see some variability across programs in the extent to which components were integrated with each other.

- One-third (33%) of all program directors surveyed reported that they held meetings with teachers from each of the four components to integrate instruction on at least a monthly basis; one-third (33%) reported meeting less frequently; and another third (33%) reported that these meetings did not occur on a regular basis at all. In programs where teachers from all four components did not meet, it was usually the adult education teacher who did not participate.

- More than half of adult education teachers (58%) and parenting education teachers (56%) surveyed reported that they modify their curriculum to cover topics being discussed in other components.

- Only 48 percent of ECE teachers surveyed reported that they change their curriculum to incorporate topics from other components. However, several ECE teachers noted that they keep teachers of the other components informed of their curriculum so that ECE themes can be reinforced in other components.

What is the range of family literacy participant characteristics and experiences within the programs?

Information on participant demographics collected in Year 2 was consistent with Year 1 findings. The majority of families participating in grantee programs speak Spanish as their home language, are economically disadvantaged, and have little prior formal education.

- The vast majority of families participating in grantee programs in Year 2 are Hispanic (95%) and list Spanish as their primary home language (91%). In addition, more than two-thirds of families have a household income of $20,000 or less (69%), and 76 percent receive some financial, medical, housing, or food assistance. Ten percent of families have been in the U.S. for two years or less.

- A large majority of parents (79%) have had no previous schooling in the U.S., more than one-third (36%) have an eighth-grade education or less, and only 13 percent were employed upon entering the family literacy program.

- Almost three-fourths (71%) of participating children are three to five years of age. In addition, 17 percent of participating children have been identified as having a special need (e.g., physical, language, learning, behavior). While only four percent of children were identified by their parents as having an IEP (Individual Education Plan) or IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan), parents of 13 percent of participating children indicated that they did not know if their child had an IEP or IFSP.

Families participating in the 15 family literacy grantee programs ranged widely with respect to the intensity and duration of services they received during Year 2.

- Across the Initiative, 866 children birth to age five and 687 adults participated in grantee programs, comprising 660 families participating all four components.
The average family attended program services for six to seven months during Year 2. Parents received an average of 192 hours of adult education (such as ESL, GED classes, etc.), 41 hours of parenting education, and 71 hours of PCILA while children received an average of 276 hours of ECE and 77 hours of PCILA. On average, parents attended 29 hours of adult education, seven hours of parenting education, and 10 hours of PCILA per month. Children attended an average of 41 hours of ECE and 11 hours of PCILA per month.

Attendance rates – calculated by dividing the number of hours attended by the number of hours offered for each month the family was in attendance – were very high, ranging from 79 percent for adult education to 86 percent for parenting education and PCILA. This method of calculating attendance rates (which is standard for Even Start programs) does not take into account months in which families do not attend any hours, which results in somewhat inflated attendance rates. (See Footnote 2 for more information about the interpretation of attendance data analyses.)

What were the challenges and successes in the implementation of the programs?

Year 2 challenges reported by grantee staff were consistent with those reported in Year 1, though achieving long-term program sustainability was the most prominent area of concern in the second year.

- Securing adequate funding for their programs was the challenge most commonly reported by program directors, with 80 percent reporting that this was a large or moderate challenge for them in Year 2.
- Program directors reported that staffing continued to be a challenge for their programs in Year 2, especially with regard to hiring qualified staff for their ECE component (40% of program directors surveyed identified this as a large or moderate challenge) and providing time for staff to receive training (53% reported this was a large or moderate challenge).
- Space also continued to be a challenge in Year 2. Almost half of all program directors surveyed identified as a moderate or large challenge securing appropriate space (47%) or securing permanent space (43%).
- Despite the significant problems noted with missing or incomplete data downloaded from the online data system, relatively few (27%) program directors surveyed rated issues related to data collection and reporting (“collecting data required by First 5 LA” and “using the First 5 LA database system”) as large or moderate challenges.

Program directors were asked to identify their programs’ successes, and many pointed to improvements in their programs and family outcomes as key accomplishments for Year 2.

- The majority of program directors (67%) reported successes related to changes or improvements in their programs and/or with their staff. In particular, the addition of new services – many of which provide hands-on or practical experiences – was a commonly reported success. Program directors identified parents’ satisfaction with the services provided to them and their children as an important indicator of program success.
• Program directors also identified as important program successes the achievements of their families, such as parents progressing to the next ESL level, improvements in adults’ vocational skills and job status, positive reports from kindergarten teachers about former program participants, and high attendance rates overall.

• Our analysis of participation and outcome data also highlight program successes. In particular, 660 families received comprehensive family literacy services in Year 2; adults demonstrated significant growth on measures of reading ability and parenting strategies; and children demonstrated significant growth on multiple measures of child development.

How have First 5 LA grants benefited family literacy programs?

In Year 1, First 5 LA funds helped grantees expand or enhance their programs (including funding some capital expenses such as construction). Year 2 funds helped to support those expanded program activities by funding staff time and resources for new activities, among others expenses.

• Program directors reported using First 5 LA funding in a variety of ways in Year 2 including: funding a backpack book loan program for families, continuing afternoon and Saturday program activities, supporting staff salaries, and purchasing books and supplies.

• When asked how their programs would be different had they not received the First 5 LA funds, five program directors said they would not be able to offer the number of classes currently available to families, four reported that they would have fewer program staff, and three said they would be able to serve fewer families. One program director said the program would not exist at all without the grant.

• Training and support from the FLSN has also been an important benefit of the Initiative, and four grantee program directors specifically pointed to the fact that they would not have been able to offer their staff the amount of training that has been made available to them had it not been for the Initiative.

What short-term changes can be observed among families participating in the programs?

We find significant improvements in adult education outcomes for parents participating in the family literacy programs, including significant growth from the first CASAS Reading assessments in Year 2 (Time 1) to the last CASAS Reading assessment in Year 2 (Time 2).

• Parents demonstrated statistically significant growth on the CASAS Reading assessment between Time 1 and Time 2, increasing their scores by an average of 6.6 points.

• Seventy-two percent of adults with “beginning basic skills” on the CASAS Reading assessment at Time 1 (scores of 210 or lower) achieved the Even Start target gain of five points by Time 2; 60 percent of adults at the “low intermediate to advanced” level at Time 1 (scores of 211 or higher) achieved the Even Start target gain of three points by Time 2.

• Sixty-six percent of parents surveyed reported that the program helped them “a lot” to improve their English.
Drawing on data from parent surveys, the first (Time 1) and last (Time 2) administrations of the CA-ESPIRS in Year 2, and parent interviews from the child outcomes study, we also find positive parenting education outcomes.

- A large majority of parents reported that their family literacy program helped them “a lot” to: become a better parent (91%), feel more comfortable sharing books with their children (92%), and to understand how children learn (92%).
- Parents demonstrated significant growth from Time 1 to Time 2 on 10 of 13 indicators measuring parent support for their children’s learning. For example, parents were reading a wider variety of materials, engaging in reading and writing activities more frequently, keeping a larger number of children’s books in their homes, reading to their children more often, visiting the library more often, and becoming more engaged in their children’s education.
- Interviews with parents of the child outcomes study children also revealed significant improvements in the home literacy environment (including the number of books in the home, and how often parents read, sing, or tell a story to their child) from Time 1 to Time 2.

Analyses of data from parent surveys and data from the first (Time 1) and last (Time 2) administration of the DRDP in Year 2 reveal positive child outcomes across the Initiative and across all age ranges.

- The majority of parents surveyed reported that the program helped their child “a lot” to become ready for school (91%) and to learn how to communicate and get along with other children (88%).
- Children across all age groups (0-7 months, 8-17 months, 18-35 months, 3-5 years) demonstrated statistically significant growth in all four “Desired Results” of the DRDP (children are personally and socially competent, children are effective learners, children show physical and motor competence, and children are safe and healthy).
- Children at each age group demonstrated statistically significant growth in communication and language and in emergent literacy skills as measured by the DRDP from Time 1 to Time 2.
- The percentage of DRDP items fully mastered by children three to five years old increased significantly from 15 percent at Time 1 to 59 percent at Time 2.
- The percentage of children fully mastering all 13 Even Start “reading readiness” items from the DRDP— which focus on language comprehension, language expression, reading skills, interest in books, and writing – increased from less than one percent at Time 1 to 28 percent at Time 2. Nearly two-thirds (64%) demonstrated growth on each of the items not fully mastered at Time 1.

Analyses of data from the child outcomes study reveal significant growth for three- and four-year olds on direct child assessments between the first assessment (Time 1) and the second assessment (Time 2) given five months later, on average.

- Both three- and four-year-old children participating in the child outcomes study demonstrated significant growth in their ability to solve applied problems, count numbers, and name numbers and letters from Time 1 to Time 2.
• Interviews with child outcomes study parents at Time 1 and Time 2 revealed significant growth in children’s prosocial behaviors (e.g., “makes friends easily”) and positive approaches to learning (e.g., “enjoys learning”).

• Overall, no correlations were observed between measures of child development and the number of hours of ECE service received.3

What is the range of activities in which the FLSN has engaged?

During Years 1 and 2, the FLSN provided 14 unique trainings on a variety of topics, several of which were repeated for various audiences for a total of 24 trainings over the two-year period. While some trainings focused exclusively on the needs of the grantees, others were open to non-grantee program staff.

• The FLSN held five mandatory trainings for grantees, three of which focused on improving the quality of one or more program components; the remaining two focused on reviewing grantee deliverables and requirements, clarifying FLSN services, and performance planning.

• The FLSN held nine additional training events, which covered topics such as sustainability, preparing presentations, administering the DRDP and CA-ESPIRS, and using data. The FLSN also sponsored several three-day National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) trainings on the Foundations of Family Literacy.

• In addition to the 15 grantees, staff from more than 100 non-grantee agencies attended one or more of the FLSN’s training events.

Over the course of Years 1 and 2, the FLSN engaged in a variety of technical assistance activities, the bulk of which occurred during periodic site visits to each of the grantee programs.

• According to the FLSN’s records, FLSN staff conducted 270 visits to grantee program sites to provide technical assistance during the course of the first two years of the Initiative. Some grantee programs were provided with more support than others – visits ranged by program from nine to 27 visits during this period.

• Technical assistance was customized, and topics covered by FLSN staff varied widely by grantee, though support related to First 5 LA deliverables and requirements made up a significant portion of the technical assistance provided to every grantee.

• Other topics covered during these visits included program improvement (e.g., increasing integration, providing research on best instructional practices, assistance with self study), sustainability (e.g., reviewing grant applications, suggesting funding opportunities to explore), program management or administrative issues (e.g., help with managing collaborators and partners, staffing issues), administering assessments and collecting data, and use of the online data system.

In addition to training and technical assistance, the FLSN engaged in a number of outreach, advocacy, and sustainability activities in Year 2.

3 Issues related to attendance data outlined in footnote 2 may have affected the analysis of child outcomes and attendance.
• Outreach activities in Year 2 included providing grant-writing technical assistance to several non-grantee programs; publishing and distributing the FLSN newsletter, E-News, and Sustainability Bulletin; presenting at several conferences; and meeting with Head Start staff, Ad Council representatives, and the Family Involvement Network to share information.

• Advocacy activities in Year 2 included sitting on the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) Workforce Development and Parent Engagement committees, maintaining communications with the director of California Even Start, and advocating for grantee programs on a local level upon request.

• Sustainability activities in Year 2 included pursuing a contract with the California Department of Education (CDE) to provide training and technical assistance to Even Start programs statewide, presenting information about the Initiative to the LAUP Building on Existing Infrastructures Task Team, and submitting a grant application, along with 26 partners, to the U.S. Department of Education to conduct ECE professional development training.

What were the challenges and successes in the implementation of the FLSN?

Based on interviews with FLSN staff as well as feedback from the grantees, we highlight a number of challenges faced by the FLSN in Year 2, most notable of which was the staff turnover rate.

• The staff turnover rate at the FLSN has been high, especially among consultant/facilitators. Though this has meant that the “face” of the FLSN has changed (in some cases several times) for the grantees, the grantee advisor has been able to maintain continuity and ease each transition.

• Partly due to staff turnover, the FLSN has been consistently understaffed. This, combined with the substantial scope of work, has led to FLSN staff feeling like there is not enough time to accomplish their goals.

• Another challenge noted by FLSN staff was the difficulty of translating difficult concepts and methodologies through their training and technical assistance work into a form that paraprofessionals can use in their work.

• Program directors also cited several unmet needs that the FLSN could address. For example, program directors expressed the need for more information on adult basic education (ABE), parenting education, ECE services for children birth to three, and use of the CASAS assessment. Grantee staff also indicated an interest in having more opportunities for collaboration and/or informal discussion with their peers.

• Finally, the prevalence of data problems and lack of consistency in the definition of variables related to documenting program activity suggests that additional training for grantee program staff is needed here as well.

The FLSN has achieved many successes, as demonstrated by the establishment of a more solid infrastructure and high praise from grantee program staff.

• When we asked FLSN staff about their biggest successes and accomplishments in Year 2, seven of nine interviewees cited a more solidified infrastructure or more clearly defined roles for FLSN staff and collaborators.
• All grantee program directors surveyed reported that the content of FLSN trainings was relevant, appropriate, and clear. Only seven percent felt they could just as easily have obtained the information elsewhere.

• All grantee program directors surveyed reported that the information on First 5 LA requirements provided through FLSN technical assistance was timely and complete, that the technical assistance was customized to their program, and that they were satisfied with the technical assistance overall.

• In addition, according to the FLSN’s records, the FLSN staff made contacts with almost 300 non-grantee organizations through their outreach work, extending their reach well beyond the 15 grantees.

• The FLSN has also taken steps toward achieving sustainability, for example through the development of new work with the CDE.

What is the impact of FLSN support on the programs?

Program staff’s reports of the impacts of FLSN support on their programs have been very positive overall, with support for meeting their grant requirements identified as the most helpful aspect of their training and technical assistance received in Year 2.

• Grantee program directors reported that the support they received from the FLSN helped them to improve their programs in a number of ways. Program director ratings for the FLSN were very high overall; focusing on only the highest rating (“very helpful”) helps us to identify the areas of greatest impact. Most notably, a large majority of program directors reported that they received “very helpful” support for completing their First 5 LA reports (93%) and networking with other family literacy programs (85%).

• More than half of all program directors surveyed reported that they received “very helpful” support for improving parenting education (56%), adult education (56%), and PCILA (55%). Sixty-two percent reported receiving “very helpful” support for improving ECE, an area the FLSN has given somewhat more attention in Year 2.

• Sustainability and use of data were somewhat less likely to be identified by program directors as areas where support has been “very helpful,” though grantee responses were still very positive overall.

Next Steps: Year 3 Evaluation Activities

Findings from Years 1 and 2 of the evaluation, in combination with research questions yet to be addressed, point to a number of issues to explore further in Year 3. In particular, the quality of the ECE component and the level of integration across components will be important to assess in greater depth. In addition, we will gather more information about the impact of the FLSN on organizations outside of the 15 grantees. Further analysis of family outcomes will also be conducted, using similar data sources to those used in Year 2. To this end, Year 3 will focus on the following activities:

1. Site visits to each program in the spring of Year 3 to follow up with program staff on issues raised in Years 1 and 2. Site visits will include observations and evaluations, using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), of ECE classrooms and observations of other program activities where possible.
2. Additional surveys and/or short interviews with non-grantees who have participated in FLSN activities to assess FLSN impacts beyond the 15 grantees receiving First 5 LA funds.

3. Continued data collection and analysis for the child outcomes study, including a third round of assessments, a kindergarten follow-up, and a more thorough analysis of data from a comparison group of children.

4. Continued analysis of adult and child outcome data collected by the grantees, including examination of the relationships between parenting outcomes and child outcomes.

5. Identification of the characteristics associated with “successful” programs as measured by parent and child outcomes.

In addition to the work of collecting and analyzing data for the evaluation, AIR has also begun to develop an alternative data collection system for grantee use in anticipation of the termination of the contract supporting the online data system. Combined with additional training from the FLSN, we expect that this new system will result in fewer data problems and more accurate participation data to use in the evaluation and for the continuous quality improvement work of the grantees.
Chapter 1: Introduction

The First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative is a comprehensive initiative designed to promote literacy among low-income families in Los Angeles (LA) County. Three parts comprise the $13 million Initiative: 1) grants to family literacy programs to expand or enhance their services, 2) the development of a training and technical assistance service to support family literacy programs, and 3) an independent external evaluation of the Initiative.

In June of 2002, First 5 LA awarded three-year grants to 15 agencies to expand or enhance their family literacy services. These 15 grantees were identified as “promising” family literacy programs in LA County, and were selected for their potential to serve as models and teaching sites for other programs. Each program was expected to provide services in each of the four components that comprise family literacy: 1) early childhood education (ECE), 2) parent-child interactive literacy activities (PCILA), 3) parenting education, and 4) adult education.

In addition to supporting family literacy services directly through awards to the 15 grantees, First 5 LA funded the Family Literacy Support Network (FLSN) in August of 2002. The FLSN was developed to support the 15 grantees in providing quality services and strengthening their organizational capacity, as well as to conduct outreach to two- and three-component (non-grantee) family literacy programs to support their development, and to advocate for the field of family literacy more broadly.

In October of 2002, First 5 LA contracted with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and their collaborators at the Center for Improving Child Care Quality at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) to conduct a four-year evaluation of the implementation and impacts of the Family Literacy Initiative. This report presents the findings from the second year of this evaluation. The remainder of this chapter provides an overview of the evaluation, a brief review of the preliminary findings of the study from Year 1, and a discussion of the focus of the study in Year 2.

Overview of the Evaluation

To guide the Family Literacy Initiative evaluation, the AIR/UCLA team consulted with First 5 LA, the FLSN, and the 15 grantees to develop a theory of change for the Initiative. The theory of change (presented in Exhibit 1.1) illustrates the relations between various inputs (e.g., funding from First 5 LA), outputs (e.g., FLSN training events, instruction in the four components), outcomes (e.g., improved literacy, expanded services), and anticipated long-term results of the Initiative. Identifying the components of the Initiative and the expected linkages between them has provided a framework to guide the evaluation of the Initiative.
Exhibit 1.1: First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative Theory of Change

Inputs

FLSN Outputs

Grantee Outputs

Intermediate Outcomes

Long Term Results

First 5 LA Funding for Family Literacy Initiative

Initiative Evaluator

Family Literacy Support Network

Family Literacy Grantees

Technical Assistance/Training

Outreach Activities

Advocacy Activities

Sustainability Activities

Early Childhood Education

Intergenerational Activities (PACT)

Parenting Education

Adult Education

Family Support

Child Outcomes
- Emergent literacy skills
- Social and emotional development
- Cognitive development
- Physical/motor development
- Improved health status
- Positive attitude toward learning

Adult Outcomes
- Improved English language skills
- Improved literacy
- GED/high school diploma
- Vocational skills/employment
- Positive parenting strategies
- Home literacy activities

Family Outcomes
- Increased social network
- Increased awareness of resources/services

Program Outcomes
- Improved services
- Expanded services
- Sustainability
- Increased capacity

FLSN Outcomes
- Increased awareness of importance of 4-component family literacy program among programs with fewer components
- Increased awareness of funding opportunities
- Sustainability of the FLSN
- Increased outreach to non-First 5 LA family literacy programs

Results for Children
- School readiness across developmental domains
- School success
- Reduced referrals to special education
- Increased rate of high school graduation

Results for Adults
- Parent support for children’s learning and development
- Parent involvement in schools
- Long-term stable employment

Results for Families
- Achievement of family goals
- Economic self-sufficiency
- Families access community resources as needed

Results for Communities
- Increased employment
- Reduced dependency on public support
- Increased school and civic engagement

Results for Family Literacy Programs
- Increased number of self-sustaining, high quality family literacy programs
- Increased awareness of effectiveness of family literacy programs
- Increased funding opportunities
The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the implementation and impacts of the Initiative. Specifically, the evaluation addresses the process evaluation questions, outcome evaluation questions, and policy research questions developed by the First 5 LA Commission and presented below. These questions pertain to various aspects of the effectiveness of the Initiative by focusing on grantee programs’ activities, characteristics, and impacts, as well as the role of the FLSN in supporting grantee and non-grantee programs and promoting best practices through technical assistance, outreach, and advocacy.

**Process evaluation questions**

1. What is the range of program and participant characteristics, including family demographics, program goals and objectives, use of First 5 LA funds, program structure, program staffing, recruitment and retention strategies, instructional strategies, program content, and program intensity and duration?

2. What were the successes and challenges in the implementation of the programs?
   2.1. What characteristics and strategies (such as lead agency structure, program structure, program staffing, and recruitment and retention strategies) facilitate implementation of the family literacy programs?
   2.2. What are the barriers to successful implementation of family literacy programs?

3. What is the range of activities in which the FLSN has engaged, including training/technical assistance, outreach, advocacy, and efforts to become sustainable?

4. What were the successes and challenges in the implementation of the Family Literacy Support Network?

**Outcome evaluation questions**

1. What impact are the expansion and enhancement grants having on children prenatal to age five and their families in the context of other services provided in the county?

2. What impact is the Family Literacy Support Network having on the service delivery system in the context of other system improvement and capacity strengthening activities underway throughout the county?

3. What programmatic characteristics (such as program intensity and duration, instructional strategies, content, instructor qualifications, range of family support services, and community contexts) are associated with better outcomes for children and families?
   3.1. How do program characteristics and strategies differ for different groups of learners?
   3.2. How do outcomes differ for different groups of learners?

4. How have programs been able to sustain themselves and what role has First 5 LA played in that process?

**Policy and research questions**

1. What is the value of providing ongoing program support to family literacy programs?
2. What is the value of broadening the scope of the adult education component of family literacy programs to include employment skills?

3. How are the First 5 LA grants benefiting family literacy programs?

4. What role does technology play in increasing access to or effectiveness of program services?

These questions are being addressed over the course of the four-year evaluation, with greater emphasis on implementation in Years 1 and 2 and more emphasis on impacts and policy questions in Years 3 and 4.

**Overview of Year 1 Findings**

The first year of the evaluation focused on characterizing the work of the grantees and the FLSN and understanding the variability among grantee programs. Data collection activities in Year 1 included visits to all 15 grantee sites, including interviews and focus groups with program staff and parents, and observations of program activities; a review of data and reports submitted to First 5 LA; and interviews with First 5 LA staff, FLSN staff, and family literacy experts. Through a primarily qualitative analytic approach, the evaluation team identified a range of “emerging themes” from the Year 1 data, including:4

**Implementation of the family literacy programs and grantee use of FSLA funds**

- The 15 grantees expanded or enhanced their family literacy programs in a variety of ways, including adding new services such as computer or GED classes, increasing the number of families served, adding evening classes and activities to reach working parents, adding infant and toddler classes, and upgrading facilities and materials.
- All programs provided ECE services for preschoolers and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) instruction for adults. Programs also offered PCILA and parenting education, though the nature of these services (i.e., frequency, duration, curricula), as well as services for infants and toddlers and supplementary support services, varied widely across programs.
- Two of the most frequently cited implementation challenges grantees reported facing in Year 1 were obtaining adequate and affordable space, and hiring and retaining adequate staff.
- Few programs reported having common planning time for staff, though staff at approximately half the programs reported using common curricular themes or topics as a way of integrating the four components. Staff also indicated that adult education was the most difficult component to integrate with the other three program components.

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4 The preliminary findings from Year 1 of the study are discussed in detail in the Evaluation of the First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative Year 1 Report (2004).
Implementation of the Family Literacy Support Network (FLSN)

- Much of the FLSN staff’s time in Year 1 was devoted to establishing its infrastructure, defining the roles of staff and collaborators, and providing staff development experiences for the FLSN team.
- The FLSN provided training and technical assistance to grantees in Year 1, with particular attention given to supporting grantees in developing their performance plans and collecting data.
- The greatest challenge faced by the FLSN in Year 1 was recovering from the delayed start of its contract, which came three months after the grantees had received their grants.

Parent reports of outcomes for families

- The majority of parents in focus groups stated that, as a result of participating in First 5 LA family literacy programs, they learned to provide better care and learning opportunities for their children, improved their English skills, increased their self-confidence, acquired a support network, and/or spent more quality time with their children.
- Many parents stated that since enrolling in First 5 LA family literacy programs, their children have learned skills that will prepare them for school.

The primary focus of the Year 1 evaluation was to explore the process evaluation questions outlined earlier and the preliminary perceived impacts of the Initiative for families.

Focus of the Year 2 Study

In the second year of the evaluation, we continued to investigate the themes identified in Year 1, quantifying them where possible with survey and other data from program directors, teachers, and program participants. We also focused more on the training and technical assistance activities of the FLSN, since we had more data documenting the amount and focus of their support to the grantees in Year 2. In addition to continued exploration of the process issues raised in Year 1, we also focused more intensively on the outcome evaluation questions. Early impacts of participation in the program on children and families were investigated by analyzing participation and assessment data collected by the grantees and entered into the online data system, as well as data collected through a focused child outcomes study involving direct assessments of a sub-sample of children.

A detailed accounting of Year 2 evaluation activities and findings is presented in the chapters that follow. Chapter 2 explains the study methodology and data collection activities. Chapter 3 describes the characteristics of the 15 Family Literacy Initiative grantees and the implementation issues confronted in Year 2. Chapter 4 presents early outcomes for children and adults. Chapter 5 describes the activities of the FLSN and grantee program staff’s perspectives on the outcomes that have resulted from the support they have received from the FLSN. Chapter 6 provides an overall summary of these findings and outlines steps for the remainder of the four-year evaluation.
Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used by the AIR/UCLA evaluation team during the second year of the First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative Evaluation. In Year 1 of the study, the evaluation team addressed key implementation questions, focusing primarily on characterizing the 15 grantee programs, describing the participating families and their perceptions of the programs’ impacts on themselves and their children, and exploring the early implementation of FLSN. Common themes emerged from the primarily qualitative data collected in Year 1 and were summarized in the Year 1 report. The second year of the evaluation focused on further examining – and quantifying – these emerging themes and other implementation issues, and on investigating in greater depth early outcomes of the Initiative for programs and participating children and families. To this end, we collected data from a variety of sources, including:

- surveys of grantee program directors, teachers, and participating parents;
- telephone interviews with program directors and members of the FLSN;
- observations of FLSN technical assistance and training activities;
- a focus group with teachers from each of the four components (PCILA, ECE, parenting education, and adult education) conducted via conference call;
- reports and documents submitted by the FLSN and the grantees (e.g., grantee year-end reports, FLSN quarterly reports, FLSN internal evaluation materials);
- participant data downloaded from the First 5 LA online data system (e.g., attendance, First 5 LA participant profiles, Desired Results Developmental Profiles (DRDP), California Even Start Performance Information Reporting System (CA-ESPIRS), Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Reading assessment); and
- an in-depth child outcomes study (including individual child assessments, classroom observations, parent interviews, and teacher surveys).

These data collection activities provided information on the continued implementation of the expansion and enhancement grants to programs, the work of the FLSN, the impacts of grantee programs on participating families, and the impacts of FLSN training and technical assistance on the programs’ capacity to serve families.

The remainder of this chapter provides a detailed account of our data collection and analysis activities, including a discussion of issues with the quality of data downloaded from the online data system, which have affected our analysis.

Surveys

Surveys administered to program directors, teachers, and parents provided substantial information about program implementation as well as parents’ reports of impacts on themselves and their children. Each of these surveys is described below.
Program Director Survey
The main source of implementation data for Year 2 was a survey administered to each of the 15 grantee program directors in March 2004. The survey consisted of two parts. Part I requested detailed information about the structure and nature of services offered by each program, including:

- number of classes offered in each of the four components,
- number of students served in each class,
- number of teachers and instructional aides in each class,
- hours per week each class is offered,
- location of PCILA, adult education, and parenting education classes (i.e., classroom-based, home-based, or distance learning),
- types of adult education class offered (e.g., GED, ESL, ABE),
- other regularly scheduled services (e.g., home visits, child care), and
- additional services offered on an occasional or as-needed basis (e.g., referrals to community services, social work services, mental health services).

Part II of the program director survey requested information about the program director’s background and experience, as well as additional responsibilities beyond the role of program director he or she may have within the program or larger organization. The survey also requested information about the program itself, including:

- the frequency of meetings with staff from all four components,
- types of collaborations with other agencies/organizations,
- challenges faced by the program,
- changes to the program resulting from First 5 LA funding,
- FLSN training events and technical assistance, and
- areas where additional training or technical assistance is needed.

All 15 program directors returned Part II of the survey (response rate: 100%), and 14 of the 15 returned Part I of the survey (response rate: 93%). Responses to survey items were coded and analyzed, and results are presented throughout Chapters 3 and 5. A summary of all item responses is provided in the Appendix.

Teacher Survey
Surveys were also administered to teachers in each of the four components to obtain information about teacher qualifications and instruction. In Part I of the program director survey, program directors provided the names of all teachers who were responsible for ECE, PCILA, parenting education, and adult education classrooms.  

5 Program directors distributed surveys to each of these teachers in May 2004. The information collected from teachers in this survey included:

- education, certification, and teaching experience;
- curricula used in their classrooms;

5 In some cases, program directors mistakenly identified instructional aides as teachers on their surveys. Follow up via e-mail or phone helped to clarify the role of the individuals who completed surveys to ensure that only responses from teachers were included in our results.
Program directors were given surveys to distribute to 145 teachers, and 89 completed and returned their surveys (overall response rate: 61%). One program did not return any teacher surveys. Eliminating this program from our sample increases the response rate to 67 percent. Responses to the teacher surveys were coded, analyzed and summarized in Chapters 3 and 5. A summary of the responses to each item is presented in the Appendix.

Parent Survey

Surveys were distributed to parents in June 2004 to obtain information about the families’ perspectives on their participation in Year 2. Program directors were asked to distribute the surveys to parents whose families were participating in all four components of their family literacy program. Grantee program staff decided whether to distribute an English or Spanish version of the survey to each parent based on parent preference. After completing the surveys, parents returned them in sealed envelopes to grantee staff who then returned the surveys to AIR. The survey asked parents for the ages of their participating children and for information on how long they have been participating in the program. In addition, parents were asked to indicate the extent to which the family literacy program has helped them and their family members in the following areas:

- their children’s communication skills and readiness for school,
- their own English skills,
- their parenting skills,
- their understanding of how to support their child’s learning,
- communication among family members, and
- their awareness of community resources.

Parent surveys were distributed to parents at each of the 15 programs and a total of 343 surveys were completed and returned. Parents from all 15 programs completed and returned surveys. A response rate cannot be calculated for parent surveys, since we do not know exactly how many parents received surveys but did not return them. Approximately 687 parents participated in all four components during Year 2, but it is unlikely that all of these parents had an opportunity to complete the survey. A summary of the results from these surveys is provided in Chapter 4. A sample survey is also included in the Appendix.

Program Staff Interviews and Focus Groups

To supplement the information provided through surveys with qualitative information, we conducted interviews with program directors from 14 of the 15 family literacy programs in June/July 2004. The remaining program director was not interviewed because she was recently hired for the position and did not feel capable of answering our questions. Despite repeated attempts, we were unable to contact the previous program director for this program.

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6 The remaining program director was not interviewed because she was recently hired for the position and did not feel capable of answering our questions. Despite repeated attempts, we were unable to contact the previous program director for this program.
areas addressed in the Year 2 program director survey. The interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes and addressed the following topics:

- funding,
- uses and impacts of the First 5 LA grant,
- key partnerships and collaborations,
- vocational classes and services offered,
- use of technology in the program,
- collection and use of data for program improvement,
- the impacts of FLSN-sponsored training and technical assistance on the program, and
- program successes and challenges.

In addition, to obtain the staff perspective and place the findings from the teacher survey in context, we conducted one focus group with four program teachers, representing each of the four components, in September 2004. The discussion took 90 minutes and covered topics such as:

- perceived impacts of the programs on the families served,
- services offered by the programs,
- integration across the four components,
- collection and use of data, and
- training and technical assistance provided by the FLSN.

Though a second teacher focus group was scheduled, none of the teachers who agreed to participate called in at the appointed time.

**Data Submitted by Grantees**

As a condition of their First 5 LA grant, grantees are required to collect and report data on their programs and participating families each year. Data collected through First 5 LA participant profile forms, the CASAS Reading assessment, the Desired Results Developmental Profiles (DRDP), and California’s Even Start Family Literacy Performance Information Reporting System (CA-ESPIRS), as well as participant attendance data, were entered into the online data system by grantees in Year 2 of the Initiative. We downloaded this information for each of the grantees and analyzed the data in the aggregate.7 In addition, we reviewed various documents submitted by grantees to First 5 LA, such as year-end reports and performance plans.

**Participant Profile Forms**

The First 5 LA participant profile forms provided information on each family, child, and adult participating in grantee programs. The family’s demographic information (e.g., income, family size, language spoken at home) is covered on the family form, questions specifically about the participating adult(s) (e.g., level of education, employment status and history) comprise the adult form, and the child form covers information specific to the participating child/children (e.g., age, gender, other services received).

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7 Participant data received by AIR did not contain the names of any participants.
Participant profile data were analyzed for families who participated in all four components in Year 2 of the Initiative. A summary of these results is presented in Chapter 3. In addition, some participant information (e.g., income, level of education) was also analyzed in conjunction with the assessment data; these analyses are presented in Chapter 4. Profile forms are included in the Appendix.

**Attendance**

To assess the intensity and duration of families’ participation in the grantee programs, we analyzed attendance data for adults and children participating in Year 2 of the Initiative as recorded by grantees in the online system. Grantees were asked to track ECE and PCILA attendance for participating children ages birth to five, as well as adult education, parenting education, and PCILA attendance for participating adults. For each component, grantees recorded the hours attended by each participant each month, as well as the number of hours of service offered to each participant each month. We analyzed attendance data for families participating in all four components in Year 2 of the Initiative (June 1, 2003 through May 31, 2004).

Through this analysis, we noted a number of issues with the attendance data downloaded from the First 5 LA online system. In particular, missing data and varying interpretations of data fields limit the precision of our attendance analysis. Analysis of attendance rates, calculated by dividing the number of “hours attended” by the number of “hours offered” for each individual were especially problematic. For example, instead of entering zero hours attended out of a set number of hours offered for a participant who was absent during a month, program staff frequently left “hours attended” and “hours offered” blank for that month. When this occurred, we were unable to determine whether the participant was absent for the month or whether the class was not offered to that individual during that month. As a result, attendance rate calculations are based only on the months in which the participant attended for at least one hour. This likely results in an overestimate of attendance rates throughout the year and across programs.

In other cases, program staff entered “extra credit” hours for some participants. That is, they entered more hours attended than offered in a month. To calculate an attendance rate under these circumstances, we increased the number of hours offered to meet the number of hours attended, resulting in an attendance rate of 100 percent.

Finally, we observed some differences in the ways that programs interpreted the attendance categories (e.g., ECE, PCILA, enriched child care). For example, distinctions between ECE and PCILA varied by program. While most programs recorded children’s ECE attendance under ECE and children’s PCILA attendance under PCILA, some programs counted some of their children’s PCILA attendance under ECE (since they were viewed as part of the child’s learning experience) and some of the hours under PCILA. Other programs double-counted PCILA attendance by recording children’s PCILA hours under PCILA as well as under ECE. Programs’ definitions of ECE and enriched child care also varied. Where possible, members of the evaluation study team confirmed and/or clarified ambiguous data with the individual programs.
A summary of the results from analyses of attendance data is provided in Chapter 3.

**CASAS Reading Assessment**

To assess adult education outcomes, we analyzed data from the CASAS Reading assessment. All 15 grantees administered the CASAS Reading assessment, which is designed to measure adult basic reading skills in English, to adults participating in their family literacy programs. According to guidelines provided by the FLSN, grantees were instructed to administer the first CASAS Reading assessment “when an adult has been continuously attending the program for three weeks.” They were instructed to administer a second CASAS Reading assessment after the participant had attended 100-150 hours of adult education.

We examined CASAS Reading scores for adults whose families participated in all four components in Year 2 of the Initiative (June 1, 2003 through May 31, 2004). For each adult participant, we examined the first CASAS Reading score between June 1, 2003 and July 31, 2004, referred to as “Time 1,” and the last CASAS Reading score within the same timeframe, referred to as “Time 2.” We excluded participants who had less than 100 hours of adult education attendance between Time 1 and Time 2. A total of 247 adults were included in the analysis of CASAS Reading scores.

Several programs did not adhere to the CASAS guidelines in the FAQs. A possible explanation is that adult schools collaborating with some family literacy programs assess students on their own schedule. These grantee programs often have little or no influence on adult school testing schedules. As a result, some CASAS Reading assessments were administered as little as 5 days apart, and a total of 158 participants’ had less than 100 hours of ESL and ABE instruction between Time 1 and Time 2 assessments. Other adults were given the same version of the CASAS assessment multiple times, which threatens the validity of observed growth. In addition, some scores fell out of the CASAS “accurate range” for the form being administered, which indicates that these participants should have been re-tested with a more appropriate CASAS form.

Analysis of the CASAS Reading assessment is presented in Chapter 4.

**Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)**

To assess children’s development, we analyzed information recorded by teachers using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) and downloaded from the online data system. The DRDP is an assessment tool designed to measure children’s progress toward

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8 We included data from June and July 2004 in addition to Year 2 data to ensure that a second CASAS administration would be captured for participants.

9 In addition, we excluded participants whose changes in score were improbably large (more than four standard deviations from the mean change in score) from the analysis.

10 CASAS scores were excluded if they fell well out of the CASAS “accurate range” for the CASAS form being administered. A score was excluded if it was the lowest possible score for the CASAS form administered or the highest possible score for the administered form. Scores were also excluded if they fell out of the possible range of scores for the administered form.
achieving the four desired results for children (children are personally and socially competent, children are effective learners, children show physical and motor competence, and children are safe and healthy). Profiles are available for the following age ranges: birth through seven months, eight through 17 months, 18 through 35 months, 36 months through pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten through 7 years. Grantees were instructed to have ECE teachers complete a DRDP for each child birth to five years of age enrolled in the early childhood education component. According to the FLSN FAQs, the first profile should have been completed after each child had been enrolled and participating in the program for three weeks, but prior to the child’s sixtieth day in the program. The second profile should have been completed prior to the end of the year (or earlier if the child was going to move out of the age range of the first profile administered).

AIR analyzed DRDP data from June 1, 2003 through July 31, 2004. We examined the first DRDP administered within this timeframe, “Time 1,” and the last DRDP administered in this timeframe, “Time 2.” We excluded any children who only had one recorded DRDP, as well as any children three to five years of age who attended less than 100 combined hours of ECE, child care, and PCILA between Time 1 and Time 2 in order to be consistent with the Even Start performance indicators. In addition, we excluded any children whose families did not participate in all four components in Year 2.

Though the majority of programs administered the DRDP according to the FLSN guidelines, we found some problems with the Year 2 DRDP data. In some cases children were either too old or too young for the profile form they were given. We were unable to determine whether teachers used the wrong profile form for these children or whether their dates of birth were incorrectly recorded. As a result, the DRDPs for these children were not included in the analysis. Also, 22 children (all from one program) did not have a date of birth recorded in the online system. In the absence of conflicting information about their age, we assumed the correct DRDP form was used for these children and kept them in the analysis. Finally, 216 children only had one DRDP administration during Year 2, limiting our DRDP analysis of change over time.

Analysis of the DRDP data is presented in Chapter 4. DRDP forms used by programs are also included in the Appendix.

**CA-ESPIRS**

To assess changes in parents’ support for their children’s learning and the home literacy environment, we analyzed data from the CA-ESPIRS. Grantees were asked to administer

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11 We included data from June and July 2004 in addition to Year 2 data to allow for a second DRDP administration for some participants.
12 ECE, child care, and PCILA hours were combined for the purposes of DRDP analysis due to discrepancies in program’s practices for recording attendance in these three components. See the attendance data section for more information on this.
13 We included children ages birth to three who attended less than 100 hours of service due to the small number of children in these age ranges with two DRDP administrations.
14 One program provided data from only one DRDP administration per participating child. As a result our analysis contains data from 14 out of the 15 programs.
the CA-ESPIRS to each newly enrolled parent within the participant’s first 30 days in the program. A second CA-ESPIRS could be administered after 50 hours of parenting education, but the FAQs stated that it was preferable to conduct the second CA-ESPIRS at the end of the program year. AIR downloaded and analyzed CA-ESPIRS data from June 1, 2003 through July 31, 2004.\(^{15}\) We examined the first CA-ESPIRS administered in this timeframe, “Time 1,” and the last CA-ESPIRS administered in this timeframe, “Time 2.” We included participants who had at least two completed CA-ESPIRS within the timeframe and whose families participated in all four components in Year 2. We excluded 68 participants who had less than 50 hours of parenting education and PCILA between Time 1 and Time 2 to be consistent with Even Start analyses. In addition, we found some parents were given the CA-ESPIRS three or more times between Time 1 and Time 2. Note that this frequency of administration may have caused these parents to become more familiar with the CA-ESPIRS questions and the desired responses.

Analysis of the CA-ESPIRS is presented in Chapter 4, and the form itself is included in the Appendix.

**Family Literacy Support Network (FLSN) Data**

Data on the FLSN came from a variety of sources, ranging from interviews with staff and direct observations of FLSN activities to the FLSN’s own records of their work with grantee and non-grantee program staff.

**Interviews and Observations**

To explore the nature of the FLSN’s work, we conducted interviews with FLSN staff and observed technical assistance and training activities sponsored by the FLSN. Nine members of the FLSN team (staff and collaborators) were interviewed during the summer of 2004.\(^{16}\) Interviews lasted 60 to 90 minutes and participants responded to questions regarding their background, their role at the FLSN, and their work within the FLSN’s four domains of activity (training/technical assistance, outreach, advocacy, and sustainability).

Additional interview questions were tailored to the specific role of each individual. For example, the Consultant/Facilitators and Grantee Advisor who work closely with the grantees were asked more detailed questions about the strengths and needs of the programs, as well as the challenges that grantees faced in Year 2 of the Initiative, while other staff were asked more detailed questions about their specific areas of expertise. Additional topics covered in the FLSN interviews included:

- the internal evaluation of the FLSN,
- successes and challenges in Year 2,
- the FLSN’s sustainability, and
- the function of the First 5 LA Leadership Team.

\(^{15}\) We included data from June and July 2004 in addition to Year 2 data to allow for a second CA-ESPIRS administration for some participants.

\(^{16}\) One of the FLSN staff interviewees was a Consultant/Facilitator in Year 2, but was no longer working at the FLSN at the time of the interview.
Throughout Year 2, members of the evaluation team observed training and technical assistance activities conducted by the FLSN, including:
- Year 2 Grantee Kick-Off (October 2003),
- Unlocking the Door to School Readiness (January 2004),
- Foundations in Family Literacy (January 2004),
- Parent Education and PCILA training (April 2004), and
- site visits/grantee meetings with four grantees (May 2004).

Interviews with FLSN staff and observations of their training and technical assistance activities provided the evaluation team with information about their activities within the four domains, as well as the nature of their training events and customized technical assistance. This information was analyzed qualitatively and summarized in Chapter 5.

**FLSN Documents**

In addition to the data collected by the evaluation team, we also reviewed various documents submitted to First 5 LA by the FLSN or provided directly to the evaluation team. Among the documents reviewed were FLSN quarterly reports outlining FLSN activities in the four domains, FLSN training event agendas, the FLSN Internal Evaluation Report, and the Consultant/Facilitator Handbook, which is given to new Consultant/Facilitators when they join the FLSN. In addition, the Grantee Advisor, who had consistent contact with grantees during site visits, provided a document summarizing her site visits to grantees. The document contained information about issues addressed during site visits and progress or outcomes to date. These sources of data provided information about the activities and impacts of the FLSN in Year 2.

Unfortunately, the most inclusive and detailed data source on FLSN activities that we anticipated using was not available. We had thought that FLSN staff would maintain a service log, documenting their contacts with grantee and non-grantee programs. This log would have provided evaluation staff with a comprehensive record of FLSN technical assistance and training activities for all staff, including the amount of time FLSN staff spent on a given task, the content areas addressed, the grantees involved, and the format of the grantee contact. Though this service log was never used, the FLSN Grantee Advisor agreed to provide us with documentation of all of her technical assistance work. Therefore, the discussion in this report of FLSN technical assistance offered to grantees is based largely on analysis of the data received about the work of the Grantee Advisor.

**Child Outcomes Study**

In addition to the analysis of DRDP data collected by grantee programs, the evaluation team at the Center for Improving Child Care Quality (CICCQ) at UCLA has been conducting an in-depth child outcome study to assess the impacts of the Family Literacy Initiative on children in a broad range of developmental areas (e.g., social, emotional, language, and cognitive development) using a variety of assessment tools. The study consists of direct child assessments, classroom observations, parent interviews, and teacher surveys across different time points for a sample of participants in the 15 grantees.
programs. This longitudinal study facilitates understanding developmental growth across time for children participating in the Family Literacy Initiative grantee programs.

CICCQ staff recruited families and children by visiting each grantee program and providing information about the study and procedures to all families of eligible children. Written consent was collected from parents willing to participate. Among families who agreed to participate, four to eight children per classroom were randomly selected within gender and age categories. That is, children were selected such that there were approximately equal numbers of boys and girls and children in the two age ranges – those who were expected to enter kindergarten in one year (age four to five years) and those who were two years away from kindergarten entry (age three to four years). A total of 111 children in 23 classrooms were selected for the study.

Data collection for Time 1 was conducted from November 2003 to May 2004, and data collection for Time 2 occurred between May 2004 and January 2005. The average time interval between Time 1 and Time 2 was about five months. Each of the measures is described below.

**Child Assessments**

Assessments were administered to children in 20-30 minute one-on-one sessions, in English or Spanish, as appropriate. The assessments included measures of a broad range of children’s developmental outcomes, including:

- **The Pre-Language Assessment Scales (Pre-LAS, Duncan & De Avila, 1985)** which measures children’s oral English language proficiency and consists of six subtests. In this study, three subtests were used to determine whether the child should be assessed in English or Spanish.
- Receptive language was measured by the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT, Dunn, & Dunn, 1997), version III (English)/Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody (TVIP) (Spanish)*. These assessment tools are designed to assess children’s language development. These are standardized measures.
- **Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement –Revised (WJ III ACH)** is another standardized measure designed to assess intellectual abilities and academic achievement. In this study, we used the Applied Problems subtest to measure children’s cognitive development. *Batería Woodcock-Muñoz Pruebas de Aprovechamiento-Revisada* is the Spanish version.
- **A Letter Naming** measure developed by the National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) for the Multi-State Study of Pre-Kindergarten.
- **A Numerical and Counting Awareness** measure (NCEDL)
- **A Color Naming** measure (NCEDL).
- **An Early Writing** measure (NCEDL).
- A measure of **Story and Print Concepts** developed for the Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) to measure children’s emergent literacy.
These measures were administered to each child at Time 1 and Time 2. A total of 110 children were assessed at Time 1, and 83 were assessed at Time 2 for a 75 percent continuation rate.

Classroom Observations

The children were observed in their classrooms using two observation tools. The Emergent Academic Snapshot (Ritchie, Howes, Kraft-Sayre, & Weiser, 2001) was used to measure child engagement, adult engagement, and teacher-child engagement. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System: Pre-K Version (CLASS, La Paro, Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2003) measured the overall classroom quality. We conducted 110 classroom observations at Time 1 and 81 at Time 2, each lasting approximately three hours.

Parent Interviews

Additional information on children’s social skills, behavior problems, and pre-academic skills, as well as parenting behaviors and the home environment, was collected through interviews with parents of the participating children. Parent interviews were completed for 110 parents at Time 1 and 85 parents at Time 2 (77%).

Teacher Surveys

Teachers of the study children were asked to complete two different types of self-administered questionnaires. Each teacher was asked to complete one “Child Questionnaire” for each study child in their classroom. These surveys were used to obtain information about the study children, specifically, the individual children’s social skills, behavior problems, status of receiving special education services, and school readiness skills (e.g., language, literacy, mathematical thinking, and social skills). More than two-thirds (68%) of the child questionnaires were completed and returned.

Each teacher was also asked to complete one “Self and Classroom Questionnaire” to gather information about the classroom (e.g., type of program, number of children, range of child age, usage of curriculum, etc.) and teachers’ demographic characteristics (e.g., educational background, ethnicity, professional experience, beliefs about children, and mental health). Fourteen teachers (74%) completed self and classroom questionnaires.

A summary of the results of the child outcomes study can be found in Chapter 4.
Chapter 3: Characteristics of the Families and the Programs that Serve Them

This chapter describes the characteristics of the 15 First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative grantees and participating families. Building on the Year 1 evaluation report, which drew on qualitative data from site visits to each of the grantees, we present the results from an analysis of survey data that helps quantify some of our qualitative findings. Updated information from interviews is also provided. Grantee programs are described in terms of the nature of instruction in each of the four components, the extent to which components are integrated with each other, their use of technology, and funding and collaborations. We also describe some of the implementation challenges program staff have continued to face, as well as some of the successes they reported having accomplished at the end of Year 2. Before discussing program implementation, though, we describe the families that these programs served in Year 2.

Family Characteristics

Information about participating families was gathered through the administration of the First 5 LA Participant Profile Forms, which asked about demographic characteristics of children and families. Program staff completed these forms at the beginning of the program year, or soon after enrollment. Data from these forms confirmed what we heard from program staff in Year 1: that the vast majority of adult participants (96%) were women. Most (87%) were married or living with a partner at the time the survey was administered. Information on the ethnic and cultural background, education, income, and employment status of these parents is presented below, along with child characteristics.

Ethnic and Cultural Background

The vast majority (96%) of parents served by the 15 programs in Year 2 were Hispanic or Latino, with a small number of African American (1%), Asian (1%), White (less than 1%), and American Indian (less than 1%) participants. The majority of parents (91%) spoke Spanish as their primary language at home.

Exhibit 3.1: Ethnicity of Parents Participating in Year 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent (N) of Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Participant profile forms

Ninety-six percent of parents in the family literacy programs were born outside the United States, though only 10 percent have been in the country for 2 years or less (see Exhibit 3.2). Two-thirds (65%) immigrated to the U.S. six or more years ago.
Exhibit 3.2: Number of Years Participating Parents Have Been Living in the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Participating</th>
<th>Percent of Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 Year</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 Years</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 Years</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 Years</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 Years, but Not Entire Life</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire Life/Born in the United States</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Participant profile forms

**Socioeconomic Status**

The family literacy grantees continued to serve an economically disadvantaged population in Year 2. As Exhibit 3.3 demonstrates, participants generally had little formal education prior to their participation in the family literacy programs. Just over a third (36%) of the adults participating in the program had an eighth-grade education or less; another third (35%) had some high school education, but no diploma. In addition, the majority of participants (79%) had received no schooling once in the United States.
Exhibit 3.3: Highest Education Achieved Among Parents Participating in Year 2

![Bar chart showing the distribution of highest education achieved among parents.](chart)

Source: Participant profile forms

As Exhibit 3.4 demonstrates, the largest portion of families surveyed (54%) reported a total household income of between $10,001 and $20,000 a year; another 23 percent of families fell in the $20,001 to $40,000 range at the time of the survey. Three-quarters (76%) of families reported receiving some form of financial, medical, housing, or food assistance. The two most common forms of support reported by family literacy participants were food assistance (food stamps, WIC, food pantry, or other food supports) and health care (MediCAL, Healthy Families, or other publicly supported health coverage), reported by 42 percent and 37 percent of families, respectively. On the whole, adults participating in the family literacy programs tended to be women who were not in the labor force. Of the adult participants with profile data in Year 2, 87 percent reported being unemployed.
Exhibit 3.4: Average Total Household Income for Families Participating in Year 2

![Average Total Household Income for Families Participating in Year 2](chart)

Source: Participant profile forms

**Characteristics of the Children**

Though some programs also served older children, all of the children included in this evaluation were in the birth-to-five age range. As in Year 1, most (71%) of the children were in the three- to five-year age range; 29 percent were age two or younger (see Exhibit 3.5).
About equal proportions were girls and boys, and parents reported that they were generally healthy. Most child participants were described by their parents to be in “excellent,” “very good,” or “good” physical health; only three percent of participating children were described as having “fair” or “poor” health.

Seventeen percent of children participating in the programs had been identified as having some special need, such as a health/physical, vision, hearing, language/speech, learning, or behavioral need. A small number (4%) of participating children also had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), which are written plans for meeting children’s special education needs, at the time the profile form was completed.

**Instruction in Each of the Four Components**

The families described above attended program services in each of the four family literacy components: early childhood education (ECE), parent-child interactive literacy activities (PCILA), parenting education, and adult education. Next we examine aspects of instruction in each of these components. As described in Chapter 2, program directors were asked to identify the teachers for each of these components and distribute a survey to them. Aides were also identified, but surveys were only distributed to teachers with
A total of 89 teachers returned surveys; 41 percent taught ECE in Year 2, 42 percent taught PCILA, 26 percent taught parenting education, and 47 percent taught adult education (see Exhibit 3.6). These percentages do not sum to 100 because 38 teachers taught multiple components. Exhibit 3.7 shows the percentage of teachers who taught various combinations of components. Most of the adult education teachers taught only adult education. However, only two percent of ECE teachers and PCILA teachers taught only that component. In fact, 25 percent of teachers surveyed taught both ECE and PCILA, and 10 percent taught these two components plus parenting education. Due to these overlaps, the results presented in this chapter that are disaggregated by component necessarily include duplicate responses.

Exhibit 3.6: Percentage of Surveyed Teachers Who Taught in Each of the Four Components in Year 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percent of Surveyed Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECE (N=36)</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCILA (N=37)</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Ed (N=23)</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Ed (N=42)</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Teacher survey

17 In two cases, we received surveys from individuals who were identified as aides by program directors after the fact. For discussions of teacher qualifications, these two individuals were omitted from the analysis.
18 Throughout this report, adult education refers to all adult education classes (ESL, ABE, GED, and vocational education/job training) except parenting classes, which are counted separately. Teachers who taught any of these classes are referred to as adult education teachers. Parent educators, although they may have adult education certification, are counted separately as parenting education teachers.
Exhibit 3.7: Percentage of Surveyed Teachers Who Taught Individual Components and Various Combinations of Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Assignments</th>
<th>Percentage (N) of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECE only</td>
<td>2% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCILA only</td>
<td>2% (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting ed only</td>
<td>10% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult ed only</td>
<td>43% (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>43% (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE+PCILA</td>
<td>25% (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE+PCILA+parenting ed</td>
<td>10% (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCILA+parenting ed</td>
<td>3% (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combinations</td>
<td>4% (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Teacher survey

In this section, we review the characteristics of teachers for each of the four components as well as curricula and planning for each of the components.

Teacher Characteristics

Since the quality and nature of instruction depends heavily on the person providing that instruction, we begin by examining characteristics of the teachers in each of the four components. The evaluation team examined several aspects of teacher quality: level and field of education, certification, and years of teaching experience.

Education level

As shown in Exhibit 3.8, 81 percent of all teachers reported having at least a Bachelor’s degree. There was some variability across components, though, with virtually all adult education teachers (98%) reporting at least a Bachelor’s degree and 59 percent of ECE teachers surveyed reporting this level of education. Given the overlap in roles among ECE and PCILA teachers, it is not surprising that PCILA teachers have similar levels of education, with 63 percent reporting having at least a Bachelor’s degree. Parenting education teachers fell in between the ECE and adult education teachers in terms of education, with 82 percent indicating that they had at least a Bachelor’s degree.
While a Bachelor’s degree is an important benchmark in the consideration of teacher quality, it is also important to consider the field in which the degree is held. Sixty-two percent of all ECE teachers surveyed reported holding at least an Associate’s degree in the field—either early childhood education, child development, or human development (see Exhibit 3.9). One quarter of ECE teachers surveyed (27%) reported having a degree in general education. PCILA teachers had similar educational backgrounds.

### Exhibit 3.9: Percentage of Teachers Who Reported Having at Least an Associate’s Degree in the Following Fields

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>ECE (N=34)</th>
<th>PCILA (N=35)</th>
<th>Parenting Ed (N=22)</th>
<th>Adult Ed (N=42)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood education, child development, or human development</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education or ESL</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Teacher survey

Among adult education teachers, 43 percent reported that they had a degree in adult education or English as a second language (ESL) education; 43 percent reported a degree in general education.
As a group, parenting education teachers were more varied in their educational backgrounds. Like ECE and PCILA teachers, about one-third (36%) reported having a degree in a child development-related field. Nearly equal proportions of parenting education teachers reported having degrees in adult education or general education (27 percent and 32 percent, respectively), similar to the adult education teachers.

**Certification**

In addition to level and content of educational background, teachers should be appropriately certified to provide instruction in their field. Surveyed teachers were asked to indicate which, if any, credentials or teaching permits they currently held. Half of all ECE teachers (53%) and PCILA teachers (56%) surveyed reported having a child development teacher permit or higher (see Exhibit 3.10). Another three percent had an associate teacher permit or a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (equivalent to two to four college courses), authorizing them to provide instruction in a child care and development program without supervision. Four out of 10 ECE teachers (41%) and PCILA teachers (39%) had no child development permit or credential.

**Exhibit 3.10: Percentage of ECE and PCILA Teachers with a Child Development Permit**

Nearly three-quarters (74%) of all ECE teachers surveyed reported holding a Bachelor’s degree or a child development teacher permit; 26 percent had neither. While ECE teacher qualifications are lower than the recommended standard for exemplary program quality
(i.e., lead or master teacher with a BA and 24 units in ECE or child development in every classroom, and a second teacher with an AA degree and appropriate units in ECE or child development within 5 years), the teacher qualifications among ECE component teachers mirror those of the majority of child development programs across the state and nation. With a relatively low pay standard, early childhood programs in general find it difficult to attract highly qualified teachers for their programs.

Among adult education teachers, certification rates were higher (see Exhibit 3.11). For example, two-thirds (67%) of all adult education teachers surveyed reported having at least one Adult Education Teaching Credential. A full 45 percent reported having an Adult Education Teaching Credential in English as a Second Language (ESL), the most common adult education class provided to adults in the family literacy programs.

**Exhibit 3.11: Percentage of Adult Education and Parenting Education Teachers with a Credential or Certificate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adult Ed (N=42)</th>
<th>Parenting Ed (N=20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult Ed Teaching Credentials:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Ed Teaching Credential: ESL</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Ed Teaching Credential: Parent Education</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Ed Teaching Credential: Vocational Ed</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Ed Teaching Credential: Other</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one of the above adult ed credentials</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Teaching Credentials/Certificates:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Subject Teaching Credential</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Subject Teaching Credential</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLAD/BCLAD certificates</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Teacher survey

Parenting education teachers were somewhat less likely to report having an Adult Education Teaching Credential, with 45 percent reporting at least one credential, and 30 percent reporting holding a parent education credential specifically. A handful of adult education and parenting education teachers reported holding a multiple or single-subject teaching credential (typical of K-12 teachers). One in ten reported having a Cross-Cultural, Language and Academic Development (CLAD) certificate or a Bilingual Cross-Cultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) certificate, which indicates that they were authorized to teach in linguistically diverse settings.

**Teaching experience**

The number of years of teaching experience in the field is another important teacher characteristic to consider. We found some variability in the number of years of teaching experience by component (see Exhibit 3.12). PCILA teachers appeared to be the least experienced in their field, with an average of only 3.6 years of experience as a PCILA teacher. Teachers in the other three components had more years of teaching experience, on average: parenting education teachers reported 8.4 years, ECE teachers reported 9.9 years, and adult education teachers reported 10.6 years.
Exhibit 3.12: Average Years of Experience Among Teachers in Each of the Four Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Average Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECE (N=35)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCILA (N=37)</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Ed (N=19)</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Ed (N=41)</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Teacher survey

**Curricula and Planning**

In addition to teacher characteristics, having sufficient planning time and a developed curriculum also contribute to program and component quality. Time spent planning ranged from component to component, with adult education teachers reporting the most time spent planning: an average of 6.1 hours per week (see Exhibit 3.13). ECE teachers reported spending 4.2 hours per week, on average; PCILA and parenting education teachers spent just over two hours per week on average (2.3 and 2.5 hours respectively).
The use and nature of curricula also varied by component, and are discussed below.

**Early childhood education (ECE) curricula**

More than three-quarters (77%) of the ECE teachers surveyed reported using a formal curriculum in their classroom. More than half of these teachers (56%) indicated that they used Creative Curriculum, 28 percent reported using High Scope, and 12 percent used Parents as Teachers. Other formal curricula mentioned by ECE teachers included Open Court, Letter People, Everyday in Every Way, and Born to Learn. Among ECE teachers who reported developing their own curriculum for use in the program, common activities covered in the classroom included “learning letters of the alphabet, numbers, and shapes,” “learning routines,” “learning how to play together,” “using manipulatives,” and other aspects of social and academic development.

As part of the child outcomes study, we observed 23 ECE classrooms. During the observations, children’s engagement in learning activities was observed and coded in the following ways (Ritchie, Howes, Kraft-Sayre, & Weiser, 2001):

- *Child was being read to:* the child was being read to by an adult.
• **Child was pre-read/reading**: the child was involved in any activity related to language (e.g., reading, playing language games, recognizing whole words, etc).

• **Child was working on letters/sounds**: the child was practicing rhymes, talking about letter-sound relationships, identifying letters, or sounding out words (phonemic awareness).

• **Child was engaging in oral language development**: the child was involved in an activity or an interaction where a teacher was taking action to draw communication from the children to build expressive language.

• **Child was writing**: the child was writing, pretending to write, or incorporating writing into play, such as writing grocery lists or taking orders.

Adult-child engagement – when teachers interact with the observed child in the classroom – was also observed and coded in the following ways (Ritchie, Howes, Kraft-Sayre, & Weiser, 2001):

• **Teacher was engaged in literacy**: the teacher was engaged in literacy practices with the observed child.

• **Teacher scaffolded child**: the teacher showed awareness of the observed child’s needs and responded in a way that supported and expanded the child’s learning.

• **Teacher engaged in didactic manner**: the teacher provided instructions or gave information without interacting with the child.

• **Teacher spoke second language**: the teacher was speaking in a language other than English.

• **Teacher facilitated peer interactions**: the teacher was trying to facilitate the child’s peer interaction.

The percentage of time spent in each of these activities is presented in Exhibit 3.14. In general, children spent little time engaged in literacy activities. The most frequent literacy activities that children did engage in were oral language activities and reading. Children spent very little time working on letters and sounds, pre-reading, or writing. These children spent more time in aesthetic activity (19%), fine motor activity (15%), and social studies (13%) (data not shown). Teachers were also more than twice as likely to instruct the children in a didactic way as they were to work with the children’s knowledge to enhance learning (i.e. scaffolding).
Exhibit 3.14: Average Percentage of the Observed Time Children Were Engaged in Various Activities in the Classrooms at Time 1 (N=110 observations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child was being read to</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>0-30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child was pre-reading/reading</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>0-28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child was working on letters/sounds</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>0-38.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child was engaging in oral language development</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>0-38.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child was writing</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0-9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult-child engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher was engaged in literacy</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>0-47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher scaffolded child</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>0-57.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher engaged in didactic manner</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>7.4-67.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher spoke second language</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>0-62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher facilitated peer interactions</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0-3.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Child outcomes study

**Parent-child interactive literacy activities (PCILA) curricula**

Nearly two-thirds of PCILA teachers surveyed (63%) reported using a formal curriculum for PCILA activities. Many of these teachers reported using the same curricula as for their ECE classes: Creative Curriculum, High Scope, and Parents as Teachers. Twenty-nine percent reported that they created their own PCILA curriculum consisting of “theme-based activities,” “parents’ or children’s choices,” or other play and learning activities. Eight percent of PCILA teachers surveyed indicated that they did not use a curriculum.

When asked about what parents and children actually did during PCILA time, 45 percent of surveyed PCILA teachers reported that they were engaged in reading. Other frequently reported activities included art (26%), writing (16%), playing with blocks (16%), movement/singing (13%), dramatic play (10%), working with puzzles (10%), language arts (10%), and computers (6%). One teacher reported that “parents are given proven, effective skills to encourage responsible, cooperative children and diminish power struggles in the home.” Teachers often described PCILA routines, which included activities like signing in, “circle time” or whole-group activities, choice activities, and “clean up time.”

When asked about the nature of PCILA activities, 61 percent of PCILA teachers reported that they were, to a large extent, child-directed (see Exhibit 3.15). Far fewer PCILA teachers surveyed reported that activities were, to a large extent, parent-directed or teacher-directed (14 percent and 15 percent, respectively).
Exhibit 3.15: Percentage of PCILA Teachers (N=36) Reporting That Their Instruction Was Child-directed, Parent-directed, or Teacher-directed to a “Large Extent”

Source: Teacher survey

**Parenting education curricula**

In the parenting education component, fewer teachers reported using a formal curriculum. Just under half (47%) reported that they used some formal curriculum, such as their district’s parenting course curriculum, Parents as Teachers, or Parents Helping Parents. Other teachers reported that they designed their own curriculum based on the needs of their students or the resources that were available to them. Only one teacher indicated that she did not use any formal curriculum for her parenting education classes.

In general, parenting education classes covered a wide array of topics. When asked how much coverage they gave to various topics, teachers reported that significant attention was given to child development, how parents can support their children’s learning, and activities that parents can do during PCILA time; 91 percent of parenting education teachers reported that they cover each of these topics to a large or moderate extent (see Exhibit 3.16). Discipline, health and nutrition, and anger management were also common topics in parenting education classes. Providing information on accessing social services or resources was less often a focus, though nearly two-thirds (64%) of parenting education teachers surveyed reported covering this to a large or moderate extent in their classes. A range of other topics was mentioned, including women’s development, self-
esteem, family dynamics and development, domestic violence, alcoholism, emergency preparedness, understanding the school system, and current events.

Exhibit 3.16: Percentage of Parenting Education Teachers (N=22) Reporting That Various Topics are Covered to a “Moderate” or “Large Extent” in Their Parenting Classes

![Bar chart showing the percentage of Parenting Education Teachers reporting the coverage of various topics.]

Source: Teacher survey

**Adult education curricula**

When asked about the curriculum they used, 73 percent of adult education teachers surveyed reported that they used a formal curriculum. Two-thirds of these teachers (63%) responded that they used their district’s course outline – either the district’s ESL outline or the district’s life skills curriculum. Other formal curricula mentioned by adult education teachers included CASAS Competencies, Oxford Picture Dictionary, Expressways, Collaborations, and New Vistas. Of the adult education teachers that reported creating their own curriculum, common topics covered included computer skills, reading and writing, learning language in context, basic skills for everyday life (e.g., shopping, housing, money, banking, weather, and transportation), working toward attaining a High School diploma; and self-improvement.
Component Integration

The integration of educational experiences for children and parents is at the heart of family literacy program design. The interweaving of these four components makes family literacy programs unique. However, full integration is often difficult to achieve. In Year 1, we observed substantial variability in the level of integration and the strategies programs used to achieve program integration. We found some variability in the levels and nature of integration in Year 2 as well.

Curriculum Integration

One aspect of integration involves making linkages between curricula in each of the four components. In Year 1, we found that some teachers felt constrained in their ability to adjust their curriculum to address topics in other components. In Year 2, surveyed teachers of ECE, parenting education, and adult education classes were asked if they ever changed their curriculum to cover topics being covered in other components.

Forty-eight percent of ECE teachers reported that they modified their curriculum to cover topics being discussed in other components. For example, one teacher explained, “We integrate information from High Scope, CASAS assessment, parent survey and home visits.” Forty-four percent of the ECE teachers surveyed reported that they did not adjust their curriculum to better integrate with other components. However, three of these teachers reported that they informed other teachers about what they were covering in ECE classes, and teachers in the other components were then expected to develop their lessons around ECE activities. Others indicated that they did modify their curricula, but the changes were intended to better meet student needs, rather than integrate with other components.

Modifying their curriculum to integrate with other components appeared to be more common among parenting education teachers. More than half of parenting education teachers surveyed (56%) reported that they changed their curriculum; only 13 percent reported that they did not make adjustments to their curriculum for integration purposes. Others indicated they may made modifications but not necessarily for the purposes of integration.

Since adult education teachers are more likely than any others to have students in their classes that are not family literacy program participants, it may be more difficult for them to tailor their instruction to integrate with the other three components. However, a relatively high proportion of adult education teachers surveyed (58%) reported that they modified their curriculum to cover topics addressed in other components. Those who were able to integrate topics from other components stayed abreast of the information covered through regularly scheduled meetings with other teachers, newsletters, or communication directly with students about the topics they are studying in other components. One-third of adult education teachers surveyed reported that they do not modify their curriculum to integrate with other components.
Cross-Component Planning Meetings

One strategy for ensuring that teachers from all four components are aware of what is being covered in each component and can integrate with each other is to hold regular integration meetings. When asked how often teachers from all four components met together to coordinate instruction or activities, 66 percent of program directors surveyed reported that these meetings were held on a regular basis: 20 percent met weekly, 13 percent met once or twice per month, and 33 percent met less frequently (see Exhibit 3.17). One-third (33%) of all program directors who responded to this question reported that teachers from all four components did not meet on a regular basis.

Exhibit 3.17: Percentage of Program Directors Reporting Regular Integration Meetings with Teachers from All Four Components

Overall, 64 percent of program directors reported that the amount of time that teachers spent meeting with each other to integrate components had increased since the beginning of the Initiative. According to program directors, integration meetings lasted 30 to 45 minutes for the weekly meetings, about an hour for the monthly meetings, and up to two and a half hours for the less frequent meetings. These meetings were considered part of the teachers’ jobs, and they were paid for at least part of their time to attend the meetings. At 60 percent of the programs that held these meetings, the program directors reported
that all meeting time was paid. The remaining 40 percent reported that some of the meeting time was covered for the teachers.

**Other Strategies for Integration**

Program staff may integrate program components in other ways as well. Program directors gave examples of the ways in which teachers shared ideas for integrating instruction or activities across components, including distributing weekly newsletters; using “integration sheets”; participating together at training workshops, conferences, and district in-service programs; and engaging in informal discussions with each other throughout the day.

**Enrollment and Attendance Patterns**

In order to determine the total number of families participating across the 15 grantees and their level of participation, the evaluation team downloaded attendance data from the online data system. Only families participating in all four components with children birth to five were included in the analysis. Data issues described in Chapter 2 limit our ability to provide accurate estimates of attendance information; attendance rates are the most problematic. In addition, programs defined services for children – ECE, child care, and PCILA – in different ways, which makes it difficult to determine accurately the breakdown of service hours by type of service across programs. For this reason, in addition to providing attendance information for each activity separately, we provide information on the sum total of children’s participation in family literacy activities. With the data issues as a caveat, this section provides our best estimates of families’ participation in the family literacy programs.

**Enrollment**

In Year 2 (June 2003 through May 2004), 660 families participated in all four components of the family literacy programs.\(^{19}\) These families had a total of 687 adults and 866 children birth to age five. Although accurate counts of participating families prior to the Initiative are not available, our best estimates (based on interviews with program directors in Year 1) indicate that Year 2 enrollment reflects a 40 to 50 percent increase since the beginning of the Initiative. The number of families served by grantee programs in Year 2 varied by program, with five programs serving 40 or fewer families and one program serving 102. The majority of the programs (nine) served between 41 and 55 families.

Most children (76%) were enrolled in preschool (ECE for ages three to five or Head Start) (see Exhibit 3.18), 28 percent were in ECE classes for two- to three-year olds, and 13 percent were in an infant/toddler program (ECE, ages birth to two). In addition to these ECE services, 18 percent of children received “enriched child care” services, and at least one child in each family attended PCILA.

\(^{19}\) Families in which the child did not participate in ECE but instead participated in “enriched child care” were also included in our analysis, since definitions of child care versus ECE varied from program to program.
**Exhibit 3.18: Percentage of Child Participants Enrolled in Various Early Childhood Education Classes in Year 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Description</th>
<th>Number of children enrolled</th>
<th>Percent of children enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECE, ages 0-2</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE, ages 2-3</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE, ages 3-5</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriched Child Care</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grantee online data system

In addition to attending parenting education classes and PCILA, the majority (86%) of adult participants were enrolled in ESL for their adult education component. Twenty-eight percent participated in job training, 11 percent in adult education, five percent in a general education degree course (GED), and one percent were enrolled in college.

**Exhibit 3.19: Percentage of Adult Participants Enrolled in Various Adult Education Classes in Year 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Description</th>
<th>Number of adults enrolled</th>
<th>Percent of adults enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English as a second language (ESL)</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job training</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult basic education (ABE)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General educational development (GED)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grantee online data system

**Hours and Duration of Attendance**

On average, adults and children across the 15 programs attended program activities for approximately seven months in Year 2. Given that most programs have rolling enrollments, many families entered the programs mid-year, thereby reducing the average period of participation. During this time, the average parent attended a total of 192 hours of adult education instruction, 41 hours of parenting education, and 71 hours of PCILA (see Exhibit 3.20). In the same time period, children attended an average of 304 hours of services (ECE, PCILA, and enriched child care combined).

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20 Note that age categories overlap. When a child was exactly two or three years old, program staff decided which category the child was placed in.
Exhibit 3.20: Average Total Number of Hours Attended by Participants in Year 2, by Program Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Average total hours for Year 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adults</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting education</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCILA</td>
<td>679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE</td>
<td>771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCILA</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriched child care</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE, PCILA, and enriched child care</td>
<td>865</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grantee online data system

Parents attended an average of 29 hours of adult education instruction per month, and seven hours per month of parenting education. Parents attended an average of 10 hours of PCILA per month. In the same time period, children attended an average of 41 hours of early childhood education per month, 12 hours of PCILA per month, and 18 hours of enriched child care per month. Exhibit 3.21 presents the average number of hours of attendance by participants each month, by component.

Exhibit 3.21: Average Number of Hours Attended by Month in Year 2, by Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Average hours per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adults</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting education</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCILA</td>
<td>679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE</td>
<td>771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCILA</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriched child care</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE, PCILA, and enriched child care</td>
<td>771</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grantee online data system

**Attendance and Retention Rates**

Exhibit 3.22 shows the average attendance rate, by program component, across the 15 family literacy grantees. Adult PCILA and parenting education had the strongest average attendance rate (86%), followed by child PCILA (85%) and ECE (81%). These attendance rates are substantially higher than those reported in the national Even Start

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A family was included if one adult in the family participated in the adult education component and the parenting education component, one child in the family participated in ECE and/or enriched child care, and one family member participated in PCILA. Therefore, because some families have an additional adult participating in adult education but not parenting or a second child who attended child care but not ECE, the number of participants in each component does not match the number of total adult and child participants reported earlier.
evaluation, which found that “in 2000-2001, parents and children actually participated in only a small fraction of the hours offered: 30 percent of adult education, 24 percent of parenting education, 25 percent of parent-child activities, and 30 to 62 percent of early childhood education (depending on the age of the child)” (St. Pierre et al., 2003). As discussed in Chapter 2, however, attendance rates are likely to be somewhat inflated due to the tendency of some programs to underestimate the number of hours of service offered to families (the denominator for the attendance rate).

Exhibit 3.22: Average Participant Attendance Rates in Year 2, by Component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Attendance rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adults</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting education</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCILA</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCILA</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grantee online data system

To calculate a retention rate for participants across the Initiative, we took into account the total number of families enrolled at any point during Year 2 and the total number of families that continued to be enrolled by the end of the year (May 2004). We divided the number of families still enrolled at the end of Year 1 by the total number of families ever enrolled in Year 2. This calculation results in a retention rate of 69 percent (i.e., 454 families enrolled at the end of the year divided by 660 total families). We were not able to use the Even Start formula for calculating a retention rate, which takes into account families who met their goals and successfully “exited” the program, due to data quality issues.22

Use of Technology

Because the use of technology in family literacy programs can facilitate learning in the classroom as well as help program staff monitor family progress and manage program activities, we gathered some information about how program staff utilized (primarily computer) technology in their programs. Most prominently, all 15 programs used an online data system in Year 2 to record information on student performance over time. This information was a key source of data for the outcome analyses presented in Chapter

22 The Even Start formula for calculating retention rates is:

\[
\text{Retention rate} = \frac{\text{total } \# \text{ of families enrolled during the year} - \text{total } \# \text{ of families that exited the program}}{\text{total } \# \text{ of families enrolled during the year} - \text{total } \# \text{ of families that exited after meeting their goals}}
\]

We were not able to use this formula because we lacked sufficient information to distinguish between families that have exited the program because they met their goals and families who dropped for other reasons. As a result, we used the following formula instead:

\[
\text{Retention rate} = \frac{\text{total } \# \text{ of families that were enrolled at the end of the year (May 2004)}}{\text{total } \# \text{ of families that were enrolled at any point during the year (June 2003 - May 2004)}}
\]
Another important use of these data is to help programs track the progress of their participants.

Through individual interviews and surveys, program directors were asked questions about how their program staff use the assessment and attendance data they collect; specifically, they were asked how they track participant progress and whether they have ever made changes to their programs based on data. Overall, program directors reported that they felt participation in the First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative changed the way data are collected at their programs. Eight program directors reported that they were collecting additional or more rigorous data as a result of First 5 LA requirements; two of those program directors indicated that they did not collect data at all prior to First 5 LA funding.

In addition to collecting more data, program directors reported that they are also using data more. Ninety-three percent of program director survey respondents reported that their use of data to track participants’ progress and to evaluate and improve their program had increased since receiving First 5 LA funding. The majority of program directors (64%) confirmed in interviews that they have used data to track participants and make changes to their programs. For most, this has taken the form of closely monitoring attendance. Two program directors noted that as a result of tracking attendance data, they have revised their attendance policies and are now better able to encourage consistent attendance. Two other program directors noted that they have used attendance data to determine the best times to offer certain classes. One program director reported that she shared attendance and assessment data with her parents to help them understand the importance of attending regularly.

Though the majority of program directors cited examples of using attendance data, when asked how they use data, only four program directors stated that they made changes to their programs based on achievement data. Two specifically mentioned changes to curriculum – one program director noted that the data helped them to meet the needs of children with special needs, and one reported that they could more accurately place parents in the appropriate classes.

Two program directors said that they were still getting used to collecting and inputting the data required by First 5 LA and had not begun to use the data for program improvement.

In addition to using technology as a data management tool, program directors reported direct instructional uses for computers as well. For example, of the 14 program directors we interviewed, 8 reported that they offered computer-based ESL or GED classes for parents, 2 reported that all students have regular access to computers, and 5 reported that parents use computers occasionally for word-processing and to do research on the Internet. Computers were also available in ECE classrooms in five programs. Four program directors explicitly stated that they do not have computer access in ECE classrooms – three because there is not enough space and one because child-appropriate software is not available to them.
Three program directors reported that computers were used by teachers to collect information for their classes or research topics for parents, and two reported that teachers use their laptops for recordkeeping. One program reported using a digital camera to photograph families and pin up family pictures to make them feel more a part of the program.

First 5 LA funding facilitated programs’ use of technology in a number of ways. Four programs purchased new computers or created a computer lab with funds from First 5 LA. As a result, more students had access to computers for learning computer skills as well as supporting their learning in other areas.

Collaborations

Program directors from all 15 First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative grantees reported collaborating with other agencies and organizations to enhance their services. The most common type of collaboration, reported by 14 program directors surveyed, was with a local adult school. At 13 of these programs, adult schools provided direct instruction to family literacy program participants. Other organizations providing direct instruction to program participants include local elementary schools and Head Start (each reported by six program directors); and mental health organizations, Community-Based English Tutoring (CBET) programs, and Even Start (each reported by four program directors).

Program directors also reported numerous collaborations with agencies providing additional support services to their families, such as abuse shelters or violence prevention agencies (reported by nine program directors), mental health agencies (eight program directors), hospitals or clinics (seven program directors), and housing assistance agencies (six program directors). In addition to providing services to families and programs, collaborators also made space or material contributions to grantee programs. The most common types of organizations making space or material contributions, reported by four program directors each, are libraries and local businesses.

First 5 LA Funding

First 5 LA funds enabled programs to expand or enhance their services in a number of ways. In their individual interviews, program directors were asked to describe how they were using their second year of First 5 LA funding. Sixty-four percent reported that they were using the funding to support the same activities as in Year 1 (for example, funding a backpack book loan program for families, continuing the afternoon and Saturday program activities, supporting staff salaries, and purchasing books and supplies). Three program directors indicated that the funding was being used to add new staff in Year 2, including more teachers for ESL or GED classes, a family literacy coordinator, tutoring support, and a data entry clerk. One program director added transportation for families using second year funds. Another director reported using First 5 LA funds to support substitute teachers so that staff could attend trainings or workshops in Year 2.

Exhibit 3.23 shows a breakdown of First 5 LA grant expenditures for all grantees by category. According to expenditure data provided by First 5 LA, more than two-thirds
(69%) of First 5 LA grant funds covered personnel costs for grantee programs. Each of the other costs – such as contracted services (7%), equipment (6%), and supplies (5%) – account for less than 10 percent of the overall budget.

**Exhibit 3.23: Percentage of First 5 LA Funds Spent by Grantees on Various Costs**

![Pie chart showing the distribution of funds]

Source: Grantee budgets

When asked how their programs would be different had they not received the First 5 LA funds, five program directors said they would not be able to offer the number of classes currently available to families, four reported that they would have fewer program staff, three said they would be able to serve fewer families, and four said they would not be able to offer their staff the amount of training they have been getting as part of the Initiative. One program director said the program would not exist at all without the grant.

In fact, program directors identified a range of benefits their programs experienced since receiving First 5 LA funds (see Exhibit 3.24). When asked how things have changed since receiving First 5 LA funds, all program directors (100%) reported increases in the availability of technical support, and 93 percent reported increases in the amount of training staff have received. The role of the FLSN is clearly a significant factor in program directors’ judgments about the impact of the Initiative.
Exhibit 3.24: Percentage of Program Directors Reporting that Various Aspects of Their Programs Have Changed Since Receiving First 5 LA Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>Not Changed</th>
<th>Decreased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to recruit family literacy participants</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount or quality of instructional materials available</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of data to evaluate and improve your program</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of data to track participants’ progress</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on administrative activities</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of training staff receive</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of extra services offered to participating families</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to secure funding</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time instructors meet to integrate component activities</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to recruit family literacy participants</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to retain family literacy participants</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriateness of program space</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanence of program space</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Program Director survey

As noted earlier, most program directors reported that their use of data to track participants’ progress (93%) and to evaluate and improve their programs (93%) had increased since receiving First 5 LA funds. Again, support from the FLSN, as well as the data requirements stipulated by First 5 LA and the evaluation, have no doubt influenced programs’ data use. The downside is that 93 percent of program directors reported that the amount of time they have spent on administrative activities has also increased since receiving First 5 LA funding, though one program director reported experiencing a decrease in administrative activities. This added burden is likely due, at least in part, to the time required to meet data requirements.

Nearly all program directors (93%) reported that other resources, such as the amount or quality of instructional materials available to the programs, had increased since the beginning of the Initiative. And, as mentioned earlier, two-thirds of program directors surveyed (64%) reported that teachers were meeting to integrate program components more than they were before receiving First 5 LA funds.
Areas that seemed to change less with the addition of First 5 LA funds were programs’ ability to recruit and retain family literacy participants and the appropriateness or permanence of their program space.

**Successes and Challenges**

In Year 1, program directors counted staffing and securing program space among their top challenges in implementing their expanded and enhanced programs. In Year 2, we examined the extent to which these challenges persisted for the grantees through their second year of implementation. Program directors were provided with a list of potential challenges on a survey and asked to rate each as a large challenge, moderate challenge, small challenge, or not a challenge. Exhibit 3.25 presents the percentage of program directors that identified various factors as large or moderate challenges for their programs.

**Exhibit 3.25: Percentage of Program Directors Reporting Moderate or Large Challenges Experienced by Their Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Percent of Program Directors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Securing adequate funding</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing appropriate space</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing ECE classes</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing PCILA classes</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retaining families</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating four components</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting data for First 5 LA</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing adult ed classes</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing parenting ed classes</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Program director survey
Sustainability

As shown in the graph above, securing adequate funding for their programs was the challenge most commonly reported by program directors. Twelve out of 15 program directors (80%) reported that this was a large or moderate challenge for them in Year 2 of the Initiative. During interviews with program directors, this challenge was mentioned on several occasions. As one program director noted, fiscal stability is “a present and constant concern.” While several program directors reported that the FLSN had been helpful in identifying potential funding sources, one program director indicated that the trainings were not specific enough for their program. That same program director also said that it was difficult to both run the program and pursue funds. She explained the trade-off this way: “you either have to have someone else doing it here for you or give up quality services.”

When asked about challenges that they were anticipating facing in Year 3, sustainability was again the most common response. Seven of the 14 program directors interviewed included securing enough funding to maintain their program in their list of anticipated challenges for Year 3.

Challenges related to funding needs, both current and anticipated, were clearly of great concern to the program directors. The persistence of this concern is a considerable change from the challenges noted by programs in Year 1. Securing and/or continuing funding was not included among the top challenges reported by program directors in Year 1. This is likely due to the fact that in Year 1 programs had just received their First 5 LA grants and were focused on incorporating the funds into their programs. In Year 2, however, program directors were much more aware of the approaching end date for their First 5 LA grants and were concerned with ensuring the sustainability of their expanded programs. Looking ahead to Year 3, program directors were beginning to think about the potential loss of First 5 LA funds and were concentrating on how to replace these funds in their programming budgets. One program director reported that these funding concerns were exacerbated by the fact that the program’s other funding sources were also expiring at the same time as the First 5 LA funds.

Staffing

In reporting about their challenges in Year 1, 10 of the 15 program directors reported challenges related to hiring and retaining adequate staff. These concerns continued (albeit to a lesser extent) in Year 2, but varied greatly depending on the particular component under discussion. For example, staffing their ECE component with qualified staff was reportedly more challenging (with 40 percent of program directors identifying this as a moderate or large challenge) than staffing their parenting education component with qualified staff (where only 13 percent, or two, program directors identified this as a moderate or large challenge). This greater concern over staffing the ECE component is not surprising given the relatively low proportion of “highly qualified” ECE teachers (with Bachelor’s degrees or teacher permits).

A greater staffing challenge seemed to be providing release time or substitute teachers to enable staff to attend training; 53 percent of program directors reported that this was a
Program directors reported various strategies for working around this problem. One program director explained that she might have one staff member attend a training session and then report back to the other teachers in the program. Another program director relied on a collaborating agency to cover classes while her program teachers attend training sessions.

Program Space
Nine of the 15 programs reported challenges related to program space in Year 1, and securing appropriate and permanent space remained commonly reported challenges in Year 2. Half (47%) of program directors surveyed reported that securing appropriate space was a large or moderate challenge, while 43 percent reported that securing permanent space was a large or moderate challenge. In interviews, one program director explained that the growth of the program over the past two years has left them short of space, and, as a result, has limited the services that they have been able to offer. “We need more mental health offices because we only have one mental health worker for the entire program. She is not enough – she has a huge waiting list.” A second program director noted that they had four levels of ESL and GED all sharing the same classroom and that they would be able to serve “so many more” people if they had more space. All four of the program directors that identified space as a challenge in their individual interviews reported that they did not see any immediate solution to their space issues, but were working around the problem as best as they could by being flexible and creative.

While this is an important – and ongoing – challenge for programs, the program directors acknowledged that this was one area in which the FLSN could not help, aside from advocating for increased Family Literacy funding.

Collecting and Reporting Data
It is interesting to note that the items related to data collection and reporting (“collecting data required by First 5 LA” and “using the First 5 LA database system”) were only rated as large or moderate challenges by 26 percent of program directors surveyed. One program director explained that finding the staff time to get all of the data entered into the database was overwhelming. Another echoed that sentiment, noting that “trying to get through all of the evaluations – the DRDP, ESPIRS, intake – and inputting and trying to find teaching time” was a challenge. A third program director explained that since the adult school did not fall under the umbrella of the family literacy program, it was a struggle to obtain data on her adult participants from the adult school.

Despite the relatively small number of program directors reporting challenges with data collection and reporting, there have been significant inconsistencies noted with the data downloaded from the online data system. Interviews with FLSN staff also suggest that challenges related to the collection and use of data is primary for grantees. In fact, working with data was cited by FLSN staff as the biggest challenge for the grantees. Six of the nine individuals interviewed included issues with collecting data, reporting data in the online data system, and using the data to improve their programs among grantee challenges. FLSN staff attributed most of these challenges to functional problems with the data system itself and lack of adequate training for grantees on using the data system.
These reports were consistent with the problems that the evaluation team found with the data, but incongruous with the grantees’ own reports about their greatest challenges. This suggests that even though grantee staff may not view the collection and use of data as a significant challenge, more training might be necessary to ensure that programs are collecting and entering their data correctly.

**Challenges Faced by Teachers**

Teachers’ perspectives on program challenges are also important to consider (see Exhibit 3.26). When asked to rate a series of potential challenges, surveyed teachers pointed to the lack of planning and coordinating time as their top challenges; with 52 percent of teachers identifying the lack of paid planning time as a large or moderate challenge, and 46 percent of teachers reporting that the lack of paid time to meet with teachers from other components was a large or moderate challenge. These results are consistent with statements made by program staff in Year 1, where a lack of time to plan and coordinate with other teachers was identified as a key challenge.

**Exhibit 3.26: Percentage of Teachers Reporting That They Experience Various Factors as Moderate or Large Challenges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percent of Surveyed Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of paid planning time</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of paid coordinating time</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of English proficiency levels</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of appropriate space</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of paid training opportunities</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor attendance rates</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of instructional materials</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support staff</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing participants</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large class sizes</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District/agency policies</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting attendance data</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Teacher survey
While large class sizes were not viewed by teachers as especially challenging (only 17 percent of teachers reported that this was a moderate or large challenge), the range of English proficiency levels was identified as a moderate or large challenge by 42 percent of the teachers surveyed. This was even more commonly reported by adult education teachers, among whom 61 percent said that this was a moderate or large challenge (data not shown).

Another challenge reported by adult education teachers in Year 1 was the presence of young children in the adult education classes. Although all programs offered early childhood education for preschool-aged children, not all programs had the resources to provide child care for infants or toddlers. In fact, half of the adult education teachers surveyed in Year 2 (50%) reported that at least one of their students (and in some cases, as many as 15 or 20 students) brought their infants or toddlers to class, suggesting that a lack of child care is still an issue for adult education teachers. Distractions created by having young children in the classroom can make it difficult for teachers to meet the needs of all students.

A significant minority of teachers also identified the lack of program resources, such as appropriate space (41%), appropriate instructional materials (29%), and support staff like translators or aides (27%) as large or moderate challenges. More than one-third of all teachers surveyed (35%) reported that a lack of paid training or professional development opportunities was a large or moderate challenge for them as teachers. Given the focus that the FLSN has placed on providing training to program staff, it may be that some program staff are having to go to these trainings on their own time.

Program Successes

In their individual interviews, program directors were also asked to report on what they viewed as the major successes or accomplishments in Year 2. Program directors reported two kinds of successes: those related to achievements in program implementation, and those related to family outcomes.

Implementation successes

The majority (10 out of 14) of program directors interviewed reported successes related to changes or improvements in their programs and/or with their staff. In particular, the addition of new services – many of which provided hands-on or practical experiences – was a commonly reported success. For example, three program directors reported successes related to technological advances in their programs: one program launched a new computer curriculum for participating families; another brought computers into the classroom for the first time; and a third program had a laptop give-away for families. Program directors identified as successes the introduction of other services as well: one grantee program initiated a new job training program, and another started a service learning program.

Similarly, maintaining or improving relationships with collaborators was another success mentioned by two program directors. In one case, the program improved its connection to
their partner elementary school; in another, the program began collaborating with a local medical clinic to offer additional services or referrals to families.

As in Year 1, programs also identified staff or staff qualities as one of their most important assets or successes. For example, one program director noted the general attitude and work ethic of program staff as a success, while another focused on the professional manner in which their program staff adapted to a change in leadership.

Four program directors reported that an important success for their programs involved the response from families to their services. For example, three program directors cited parent satisfaction as a critical indicator of success, and another touted high attendance rates among participating children.

**Successes in family outcomes**

Eight program directors shared success stories related to the parents they serve in their programs, primarily regarding achieving educational milestones. Four grantees mentioned student successes in ESL classes, either progressing to the next level, receiving their ESL competencies, or general improvement in parents’ ability to understand English. Higher education was another area commonly mentioned by program directors. One program has had parents graduate from the program and enroll in college; another reported a parent receiving an Associate’s degree in graphic design. For one grantee, a parent passing the GED was a major success; another program had two parents receive their eighth grade diplomas. One program had three students receive scholarship money in Year 2.

Improvements in students’ vocational skills and job status were also commonly reported program successes. One program director mentioned that the fathers involved in their program were getting better jobs. Two grantees had students or former students working at the program; in one case a former student became a parent educator at the program. For one program, the improved computer skills of the mothers in the program have helped them get jobs. Additional parent successes reported by grantees included becoming citizens, obtaining a drivers license, fathers becoming more involved with their children, and improved stability in the home.

Four program directors reported successes related to the children in their program. Two noted the number of children that graduated from the program during Year 2; two other program directors pointed to the positive reports that they received from kindergarten teachers about their former students, suggesting positive effects of program participation.

**Summary**

Building on the emerging themes identified in Year 1, the evaluation team continued to explore – and quantify – implementation issues experienced by the 15 First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative grantee programs. We began by characterizing instruction in each of the four components. This analysis revealed wide variation across components in terms of teacher qualifications. In particular, virtually all adult education teachers (98%) reported that they held at least a Bachelor’s degree, while only 59 percent of ECE
teachers reported having this level of education. Certification rates were also lower among ECE teachers, with about half (53%) of ECE teachers surveyed reporting that they held a teacher permit. While ECE teacher qualifications are lower than the recommended standard for exemplary program quality (i.e., lead or master teacher with a BA and 24 units in ECE or child development in every classroom, and a second teacher with an AA degree and appropriate units in ECE or child development within 5 years), the teacher qualifications among ECE component teachers mirror those of the majority of child development programs across the state and nation. With a relatively low pay standard, early childhood programs in general find it difficult to attract highly qualified teachers for their programs.

We also found some variability in the types of curricula teachers used in each of the four components, with 77 percent of ECE teachers, 63 percent of PCILA teachers, and 73 percent of adult education teachers reporting using a formal curriculum, such as those available from publishers or developed by their districts. Parenting education teachers were somewhat less likely to report using a formal curriculum, though this is not surprising given the limited range of curricula available to parent educators. As a way of integrating program components, two-thirds of program directors reported holding regular meetings with teachers from each of the four components, where modifying curricula to incorporate themes in other components could be discussed.

Program staff identified a number of implementation challenges experienced in Year 2. While some of the challenges grantees faced in Year 1 – such as finding adequate or appropriate space for program activities and providing substitutes to enable staff to attend trainings – continued to be issues in Year 2, sustainability became the number one challenge confronting program directors. Eighty percent of program directors reported that this was a large or moderate challenge for their program. By the end of Year 2, grantees were beginning to look ahead to the end of the Family Literacy Initiative and seeking to replace those funds.

First 5 LA funds helped grantees to expand or enhance their programs in a number of ways, including hiring additional staff in order to offer more services to more families. In addition, program directors highlighted the increased availability of training and technical assistance, and their increased use of data to track participants’ progress and to evaluate and improve their programs. Overall, grantee reports suggest substantial impacts of the Initiative on family literacy services available to families in LA County. The next chapter explores some of the impacts that programs appear to be having on participating families.
Chapter 4: Outcomes for Family Literacy Participants

The evaluation team examined child and family outcomes in three areas: adult education outcomes, parenting outcomes, and child outcomes. For each of these areas, we analyzed changes in participants’ performance between two points in time. This chapter describes the data, analysis, and overall findings for each of these outcome areas. It should be noted that because this evaluation does not utilize an experimental design, changes observed among children and families participating in the family literacy programs cannot be directly attributed to program services. However, positive results in each of the three outcome areas do show that overall, children and adults participating in family literacy grantee programs are making progress toward desired outcomes.

Adult Education Outcomes

Information on the impacts of adult education on parents participating in grantee programs in Year 2 was collected through the CASAS reading assessment, which measures adult basic reading skills in English, and a survey of parents, which provided information on the extent to which parents felt they were meeting various participation goals. The First 5 LA participant profile forms also provided information on family literacy participants, including demographics and reasons for joining a family literacy program. Each of these measures was administered by grantee program staff.

Parent Reports

According to the First 5 LA participant profile forms, learning English was a main reason for participating in family literacy programs for the majority (80%) of parents enrolled in Year 2. This was the most popular response among parents participating in Year 2 and is consistent with parent focus group responses in the first year of the evaluation. In Year 1, parents stated overwhelmingly that their primary goal for themselves was to read, write, and speak in English. Parents explained that they wanted to learn English in order to better prepare for the GED, become a U.S. citizen, qualify for a good job with benefits, be involved in their community, or to go to college.

In June 2004, the evaluation team distributed a parent survey, in English and Spanish, to all 15 programs in order to collect information on the extent to which parents felt they were making progress toward meeting various participation goals. A total of 343 surveys were completed by parents. Sixty-six percent of parents completing the parent survey indicated that the program had helped them “a lot” to improve their English, while 21 percent reported that the program helped “some” (see Exhibit 4.1). While a majority of parents did indicate that the program had helped them “a lot” to learn English, parent responses to other survey items indicate that parents may feel that programs have had even greater success in helping them attain parenting-related goals (described later).

23 Answer choices included “a lot,” “some,” “a little,” “not at all,” and “I already knew English.”
### Exhibit 4.1: Percentage of Parents Reporting the Extent to Which Programs Helped their Families Make Progress Toward Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Percent of Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helped you become more comfortable sharing books with your child</td>
<td>92% 7% 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taught you how to help your child learn</td>
<td>92% 7% 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped your child to become ready for school</td>
<td>91% 7% 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped you to be a better parent</td>
<td>91% 8% 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped your child learn how to communicate and get along with other children</td>
<td>88% 10% 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped you to communicate better with members of your family</td>
<td>81% 17% 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped you to get to know other parents in your community</td>
<td>77% 18% 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped you to improve your English</td>
<td>66% 21% 8% 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped you to know where to go in the community if you need services</td>
<td>58% 29% 7% 4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Parent survey

### CASAS Reading Assessment

In Year 2, all 15 grantee programs administered the CASAS reading assessment, which measures adults’ basic reading skills in English, to participating parents. We examined CASAS assessments administered between June 1, 2003 and July 31, 2004 to parents whose families participated in all four components in Year 2. We analyzed the first CASAS reading assessment administered to each parent between June 1, 2003 and July 31, 2004, referred to below as “Time 1,” and the last CASAS reading assessment administered to each parent in this timeframe, referred to below as “Time 2.” In addition, we limited our CASAS analysis to parents who participated in at least 100 hours of ESL.
and ABE between Time 1 and Time 2 in order to allow for sufficient time in the program to demonstrate growth. On average, the difference between Time 1 and Time 2 was 7.4 months.

Overall, parent achievement on the CASAS reading assessment indicates that parents are making progress toward their goal of becoming more literate in English. Specifically, we found that parents demonstrated statistically significant growth \( (p<.001) \) on the CASAS between Time 1 and Time 2, increasing their scores by an average of 6.6 points (see Exhibit 4.2). Adults with Time 1 scores of 210 or lower (classified as beginning basic skills) demonstrated a statistically significant increase of 10.1 points, and adults with Time 1 scores of 211 or higher (low intermediate to advanced) showed a statistically significant increase of 3.6 points.

Exhibit 4.2: CASAS Reading Assessment Scores at Time 1 and Time 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Parents***</td>
<td>212.8</td>
<td>219.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Basic Skills***</td>
<td>199.0</td>
<td>209.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Intermediate to Advanced***</td>
<td>224.5</td>
<td>228.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grantee online data system; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Seventy-two percent of adults with “beginning basic skills” (scores of 210 or lower at Time 1) achieved the Even Start target gain of five points between Time 1 and Time 2. Sixty percent of those adults with Time 1 scores of 211 or higher (low intermediate to advanced) showed a statistically significant increase of 3.6 points.

24 For additional information on the CASAS analysis, please see Chapter 2.
advanced) achieved the Even Start target of gaining 3 points between the Time 1 and Time 2 CASAS reading assessments.

In addition to assessing overall change from Time 1 to Time 2, we also took a closer look at parents showing high growth on the CASAS to determine if these individuals had experiences that differed from others that enabled them to excel. “High performers” were identified as those whose change in score from Time 1 to Time 2 ranked them in the top 20 percent in terms of growth. Although high performers did not differ from other adults in terms of demographic characteristics (income, employment status, education, or years spent in the U.S.), high performers had a significantly lower pretest score (mean score of 202) compared to other adults (mean score of 216). This means that the participants that demonstrated the greatest growth entered the program with the most room to grow.

Growth on the CASAS reading assessment does not appear to be related to the number of hours of adult education instruction received, at least as measured by the attendance records kept by program staff. There was no correlation between change in CASAS scores and hours of ESL and ABE attended between Time 1 and Time 2. Moreover, high performers and other adults participated in statistically equal numbers of program hours (237 hours and 229 hours respectively). The lack of evidence of a relationship between program attendance and achievement should not be over-interpreted, however, as we have documented concerns about the quality of the attendance data that have implications for data use and analysis (see Chapter 2). In addition, quality of instruction within the adult education component was not incorporated into this analysis and may vary from program to program.

**Parenting Outcomes**

In addition to supporting parents’ development of English literacy skills, grantee family literacy programs also endeavor to foster adult participants’ parenting skills through parenting education classes and parent-child interactive literacy activities (PCILA). Information on the impacts of parenting education on Year 2 participants was collected through the AIR parent survey and the California Even Start Performance Information Reporting System (CA-ESPIRS, adopted for use by all 15 grantees), measuring parents’ support of their children’s learning at home and at school. Additional information about parent learning goals was collected through the participant profile forms. These data collection tools were administered by grantee staff. In addition, as part of the child outcomes study, we collected information on the home literacy environment and discipline strategies of parents whose children participated in the child outcomes study.

**Parent Reports**

Data from First 5 LA participant profile forms show that many adults also join family literacy programs hoping to improve their skills as parents and as teachers to their children. Seventy-five percent of parents participating in grantee programs in Year 2 indicated that becoming “a better parent” was among their main reasons for participating.

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25 “High performers” were not compared to other adults in terms of gender, ethnicity, home language, or marital status due to the lack of variability in these characteristics.
Only a desire to learn English was cited more frequently by parents in Year 2. Sixty-eight percent selected becoming “a better teacher to my child” as a primary goal.

Overall, participants in grantee programs feel that they are making great progress toward their goal of improving their parenting skills. A vast majority of parent survey respondents reported that they have increased their parenting skills as a result of participating in grantee programs. Over 90 percent of parent survey respondents reported that their family literacy program helped them “a lot” to become a better parent (91%), to become more comfortable sharing books with their children (92%), and helping their children learn (92%) (see Exhibit 4.1).²⁶

**CA-ESPIRS**

In Year 2, all 15 grantee programs administered the CA-ESPIRS, an in-person survey of parents that measures parents’ support of their children’s learning and the home literacy environment. As with the CASAS reading assessment, we analyzed the first (Time 1) and last (Time 2) CA-ESPIRS administered between June 1, 2003 and July 31, 2004 to parents whose families participated in all four components in Year 2. In addition, we limited our analysis to parents who participated in at least 50 hours of parenting education and PCILA between Time 1 and Time 2 to allow for enough time in the program to demonstrate growth.²⁷ On average, the difference between Time 1 and Time 2 was 8.7 months.

Overall, we find that parents’ achievement on the CA-ESPIRS supports their perceptions that family literacy programs have helped them to improve their skills as parents and teachers to their children. Across the 15 grantee programs, there was statistically significant growth in the percentage of parents meeting or exceeding the Even Start benchmarks from Time 1 to Time 2 on 10 of the 13 CA-ESPIRS indicators.²⁸ This indicates that participating parents read a wider variety of materials, engaged in reading and writing activities more frequently, kept a larger number of children’s books in their homes, read to their children more often, visited the library more often, and were more engaged at their children’s schools. Each of these items is described below.

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²⁶ Answer choices included “a lot,” “some,” “a little,” and “not at all.”
²⁷ For additional information on the CA-ESPIRS analysis, please see Chapter 2.
²⁸ Note that the “Time 1” administration is the first administration after June 1, 2003, regardless of how long a parent participated in a grantee program prior to that administration. As a result, a large number of respondents met the Even Start benchmarks at Time 1.
Parents demonstrated significant growth in the variety of reading and writing activities in which they were engaged between Time 1 and Time 2. As Exhibit 4.3 illustrates, the percentage of parents reading at least two materials (such as newspapers, books, magazines, or information sent from a teacher or school) grew significantly from 89 percent to 99 percent between Time 1 and Time 2. Similarly, the percentage of parents engaging in at least two types of writing activities (such as writing notes, memos, letters, or stories) grew from 78 to 90 percent. This indicates that parents are increasingly modeling good literacy practices.

**Exhibit 4.3: Percentage (and Number) of Parents Reporting Engaging in Multiple Reading and Writing Activities at Time 1 and Time 2**

Source: Grantee online data system; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
A key indicator of parents’ support for children’s learning is the number of children’s books the family has at home. As shown in Exhibit 4.4, there was a statistically significant increase, from 43 percent to 66 percent, in the percentage of parents indicating they have 26 or more children’s books at home between Time 1 and Time 2.

Exhibit 4.4: Percentage (and Number) of Parents Reporting at Least 26 Children’s Books in their Home at Time 1 and Time 2

Source: Grantee online data system; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Parents also demonstrated significant growth in their engagement in some interactive literacy activities. There were statistically significant increases in the percentage of parents reading to their children at least three times per week and using three or more interactive reading strategies with their children (Exhibit 4.5). However, the percentage of parents telling their children stories at least three times per week did not increase significantly from Time 1 to Time 2.

**Exhibit 4.5: Percentage (and Number) of Parents Reporting Engaging in Interactive Literacy Activities at Time 1 and Time 2**

Source: Grantee online data system; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Parents’ support for their children’s learning at home was also measured by whether parents indicated they have a library card, visit the library once per month, brought books home in the past week, and provide a variety of age-appropriate literacy materials (e.g., crayons or magic markers, paints, paper for drawing or painting). As demonstrated in Exhibit 4.6 below, the percentage of respondents meeting the targets for each of these indicators increased significantly between Time 1 and Time 2.

Exhibit 4.6: Percentage (and Number) of Parents Supporting Children’s Learning at Home at Time 1 and Time 2

Source: Grantee online data system; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
The CA-ESPIRS also addresses children’s television viewing in the home. Parents reported the number of hours of television their children watch per day and whether they use television as a learning tool (by selecting their children’s television programs, watching television with their children, and asking their children questions about the programs). Overall, television viewing by children appears to be declining (the percentage of parents who reported that their children watch fewer than two to three hours of television per day increased from Time 1 to Time 2), though this difference was not statistically significant. Similarly, though the percentage of parents using the television as a learning tool seemed to increase from Time 1 to Time 2, this increase was not statistically significant (Exhibit 4.7).

**Exhibit 4.7: Percentage (and Number) of Parents Reporting Positive Television Use at Time 1 and Time 2**

![Bar chart showing percentage of parents reporting positive television use at Time 1 and Time 2.]

*Source: Grantee online data system; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001*
Finally, parents’ participation in their children’s schooling increased, as measured by having participated in a conference with his or her child’s teacher, attending a school event at their child’s school, observed classroom activities, and volunteered for a school project or trip on at least one occasion during the past year. As Exhibit 4.8 illustrates, there was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of parents reporting that they participated in these activities in the past year.

**Exhibit 4.8: Percentage (and Number) of Parents Reporting Participating in Various Activities at Their Child’s School at Time 1 and Time 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time 1 (%)</th>
<th>Time 2 (%)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended Parent/Teacher Conference in Past Year***</td>
<td>83% (245)</td>
<td>93% (274)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed Classroom Activities in Past Year***</td>
<td>70% (227)</td>
<td>90% (265)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended School Event in Past Year***</td>
<td>77% (207)</td>
<td>90% (266)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteered for School Projects/Trips in Past Year***</td>
<td>52% (146)</td>
<td>70% (197)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grantee online data system; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

**Parent Outcomes from the Child Outcomes Study**

Parents of children participating in the child outcomes study were asked a series of questions about the home literacy environment, such as how many children’s books they have at home, how often they read to their child, how often they tell a story, and how often they teach a song. These items were combined to form a home literacy environment scale, with 23 being the highest possible score. Families of both three- and four-year-old children scored higher at Time 2 than at Time 1, however, only families of three-year-old children made statistically significant gains (see Exhibit 4.9).
Parents of children in the child outcomes study were also asked about the kinds of discipline strategies they used with their children to determine whether harsh discipline strategies would decline over time. Strategies that comprised the “harsh discipline” index included: hitting back, giving chores, and sending the child to his or her room alone. Parents of both three- and four-year old children used fewer harsh discipline strategies at Time 2 than at Time 1 (see Exhibit 4.10); however, use of these harsh discipline strategies showed significant declines only among parents of four-year old children.
Exhibit 4.10: Mean Scores of Harsh Discipline as Reported by Parents at Time 1 and Time 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-year olds</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year olds*</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Child outcomes study; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Child Outcomes

In addition to supporting parents’ development of English literacy and parenting skills described above, grantee programs also support children’s learning directly. Information on how the family literacy programs support children’s learning and development was gathered from responses from the AIR Parent Survey, and from the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), which measured children’s progress toward achieving four desired results for children (children are personally and socially competent, children are effective learners, children show physical and motor competence, and children are safe and healthy). The First 5 LA participant profile forms also provided information on parents’ goals for their children’s learning. All of these data were collected by grantee staff. In addition, we conducted an in-depth child outcomes study, which included direct assessments of a sample of children at two points in time, observations of teacher-child interactions, interviews with parents, and a survey of teachers.

Parent Reports of Children’s Learning

Data from participant profile forms show that a critical reason families join family literacy programs is to support their children’s learning and development. Seventy-four percent of parents participating in Year 2 indicated that one of their main reasons for participating in a family literacy program was “to improve my child’s chance of future school success.” In addition, 69 percent of parents selected “to get my child into an infant/toddler/preschool program” as one of their main reasons for participating.
Parent survey respondents indicated that the programs were helping their children to achieve a variety of goals. Ninety-one percent of parents responding to the survey indicated that the family literacy program helped their child “a lot” to become ready for school and 88 percent reported that the program helped their child “a lot” to learn about how to communicate and get along with other children.

**Desired Results Developmental Profiles (DRDP)**

In Year 2, all 15 grantee programs\(^{29}\) used the Desired Results Developmental Profiles (DRDP), a teacher observation tool that tracks children’s development across four desired results (DR):

- DR 1: Children are personally and socially competent,
- DR 2: Children are effective learners,
- DR 3: Children show physical and motor competence, and
- DR 4: Children are safe and healthy.

For each of the Desired Results, ECE teachers assessed children on multiple measures, rating them on a four-point scale (1-4): “not yet,” “emerging,” “almost mastered,” and “fully mastered.” We compared performance on the first DRDP administered for each child between June 1, 2003 and July 31, 2004, referred to as “Time 1,” to the last DRDP administered to each child in this timeframe, referred to as “Time 2.” For children aged three to five, we limited our DRDP analysis to children who attended 100 or more hours of ECE, child care, and PCILA combined between Time 1 and Time 2 to allow for sufficient time in the program to demonstrate growth. We did not apply this restriction to children in the other three age groups (birth to 7 months, 8 to 17 months, and 18 to 35 months) due to the small numbers of children with DRDP data in these age ranges.\(^{30}\) On average, the difference between Time 1 and Time 2 was 5.8 months for children in the 3 to 5 year and 18 to 35 month age ranges, 4.1 months for children in the 8 to 17 month age range, and 3.1 months for children in the birth to 7 month age range.

**Overall Desired Results outcomes**

Consistent with reports from parents, children in each of the four age groups demonstrated significant growth on each of the four Desired Results (DR).

First, we observed significant growth among children in each age group on DR 1: “children are personally and socially competent” (Exhibit 4.11). For example, average scores (on a four-point scale) for three- to five-year olds grew from 2.4 at Time 1 to 3.5 at Time 2, a statistically significant change.

\(^{29}\) One program provided DRDP data for children enrolled in their program, but only one DRDP was administered for each child. As a result, the data presented in this section include only 14 out of the 15 family literacy grantees.

\(^{30}\) For additional information on the DRDP analysis, please see Chapter 2.
Exhibit 4.11: Mean Ratings for Desired Result 1 at Time 1 and Time 2 for All Age Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desired Result 1:</th>
<th>0-7 Months*** (N=8)</th>
<th>8-17 Months** (N=19)</th>
<th>18-35 Months*** (N=66)</th>
<th>3-5 Years*** (N=250)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children are Personally and Socially Competent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Rating</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1 Mean Rating</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: Grantee online data system; *p&lt;.05, **p&lt;.01, ***p&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also analyzed the DRDP data at the indicator level for the largest group of children—those in the three- to five-year age range. These children demonstrated significant growth on each of the five indicators that make up DR 1 from Time 1 to Time 2. The largest increase was observed for the indicator “children show growing abilities in communication and language,” with an average increase of 1.1 points on a four-point scale from the first to the last DRDP administration.

Children in each age group demonstrated significant growth on DR 2: “children are effective learners” (Exhibit 4.12). Among the three- to five-year olds, scores grew from an average of 2.2 at Time 1 to an average of 3.3 at Time 2. Children three to five years of age also showed significant growth on each of the four indicators that make up DR 2. The largest increase in scores was observed for the indicator “children demonstrate emerging literacy skills,” with an average increase of 1.1 points on a four-point scale from Time 1 to Time 2.
Exhibit 4.12: Mean Ratings for Desired Result 2 at Time 1 and Time 2 for All Age Groups

Performance on DR 3 – “children show physical and motor competence” – also improved significantly for children in all age groups (Exhibit 4.13). For example, the scores of children in the three- to five-year age range increased from an average of 2.7 at Time 1 to an average of 3.6 at Time 2. For DR 4 – “children are safe and healthy” – children in each of the age ranges assessed (8 to 17 months, 18 to 35 months, and 3 to 5 years) demonstrated statistically significant growth from Time 1 to Time 2 (Exhibit 4.14). DR 3 and DR 4 consist of one indicator each. Thus, the average indicator rating is the same as the average DR rating and is therefore not presented here.

Source: Grantee online data system; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

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31 The DRDP does not include DR 4 for children in the birth to seven month age range.
Exhibit 4.13: Mean Ratings for Desired Result 3 at Time 1 and Time 2 for All Age Groups

Desired Result 3:
Children Show Physical and Motor Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-7 Months*** (N=8)</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-17 Months* (N=19)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-35 Months*** (N=66)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 Years*** (N=210)</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grantee online data system; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Mastery of DRDP items among children three to five years of age

We conducted further analysis of the DRDP data to explore children’s mastery of individual DRDP items. Only children in the largest age group – the three- to five-year olds – were included in this analysis. First, we find that the percentage of items fully mastered increased significantly from Time 1 to Time 2. Across the 14 family literacy programs with data for two or more points in time, children fully mastered an average of 15 percent of all of the DRDP items (55 in total) at Time 1. At Time 2, children fully mastered an average of 59 percent of all of DRDP items, a statistically significant increase.

In addition, we examined a subset of 13 items, identified by Even Start, which address children’s “reading readiness,” including language comprehension, language expression, reading skills, interest in books, and writing. Of the 236 children included in the analysis, less than one percent fully mastered all of the 13 reading readiness items at Time 1. At Time 2, 28 percent of children fully mastered all of the 13 reading readiness items.

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32 We limited our analysis to children in the three to five year age range because they account for more than 70 percent of the children participating in the family literacy programs.
33 One of the 14 programs used a shortened DRDP instrument; therefore, some data for individual measures are missing for this program.
34 Due to missing data, only 12 reading readiness items are evaluated for two programs.
items. In addition, 64 percent progressed at least one or more ratings (for those items not already fully mastered on the first DRDP) on all of the reading readiness items between Time 1 and Time 2.

In addition to examining the percentage of children who mastered all of the 13 reading readiness measures, we reviewed the percentage of children who progressed on each of the five reading readiness subscales: language comprehension, language expression, reading skills, interest in books, and writing. Exhibit 4.15 shows the number of children (three to five years of age) for whom at least two DRDPs were administered for each subscale, the Time 1 mean score, the Time 2 mean score, and the difference between the two scores. Scores could range from 1 (“not yet”) to 4 (“fully mastered”).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRDP Reading Readiness Subscales</th>
<th>Number of children aged 3 - 5</th>
<th>Time 1 Mean Score (100+ Hours)</th>
<th>Time 2 Mean Score (100+ Hours)</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Comprehension (max score = 4)</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Expression (max score = 4)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Skills (max score =4)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in Books (max score = 4)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing (max score = 4)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Score of Reading Readiness Items (max = 4)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Grantee online data system

Between Time 1 and Time 2, children’s ratings increased by an average of 1.1 points for language comprehension, language expression, reading skills, and interest in books, and 1.0 point for writing. These increases were statistically significant.

Although we see significant growth from Time 1 to Time 2 on a variety of measures, we find no significant correlation between the level of children’s program attendance (across ECE, child care, and PCILA) and their DRDP ratings. The lack of evidence of a direct relationship between hours of service attended and performance on the DRDP may be related to the attendance data quality issues, including some inconsistent documentation of child attendance across programs, and variation in the quality of instruction within the ECE component not captured in this analysis.

**Child Outcomes Study**

The child outcomes study assessed a sample of children from each of the 15 Family Literacy Initiative grantee programs on a variety of developmental measures, covering language and emergent literacy, problem-solving and early mathematics skills, and social and behavioral skills. To assess children’s development over time, we compared scores on standardized and unstandardized measures between Time 1 and Time 2 for all children who completed assessments at both time points. As age is an important developmental factor, all analyses are broken out by age group (i.e., 3-year olds and 4-year olds). Prior
to discussing growth from Time 1 to Time 2, we provide a brief overview of the characteristics of the study children.

**Characteristics of the study children**

At the beginning of the study, children were divided into two age groups based on their age at kindergarten entry in Fall 2004. The average age of the “3-year olds” was 43 months by December 2003, and the average age of the “4-year olds” was 53 months. Demographically, study children and parents were representative of the program population. Specifically, 98 percent of the children were Hispanic/Latino, and five percent had an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or had been referred for an IEP evaluation. Thirty-five percent of the parents participating in the study had less than a high school diploma, 66 percent had an income of $20,000 or less, and 87 percent spoke Spanish as their home language.

As Exhibit 4.16 illustrates, study children performed somewhat below the norm group average of 100 on standardized measures of language and cognitive development (e.g., language/vocabulary, solving applied problems) administered at Time 1. Study children scored 5 to 15 points below the norm, depending on the measure and age group. A standard score below 85 is often considered to be an indicator of being developmentally “at risk.” Except for the three–year-old PPVT scores (N=4), average scores for children in grantee programs at Time 1 were above this cutpoint. Overall, 68 percent of three-year-old children and 53 percent of four-year-old children scored 85 or above on the PPVT or TVIP, and 54 percent of three-year-olds and 65 percent of four-year-olds scored 85 or above on the Woodcock-Johnson or Woodcock-Muñoz.

**Exhibit 4.16: Mean Scores for Children’s Language and Cognitive Development at Time 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standardized scores (N) for 3-year olds</th>
<th>Standardized scores (N) for 4-year olds</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPVT (English)</td>
<td>75.5 (4)</td>
<td>85.8 (8)</td>
<td>82.4 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVIP (Spanish)</td>
<td>89.9 (51)</td>
<td>86.3 (41)</td>
<td>88.3 (92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodcock-Johnson (English)</td>
<td>88.5 (2)</td>
<td>95.3 (7)</td>
<td>93.8 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodcock-Muñoz (Spanish)</td>
<td>84.1 (54)</td>
<td>85.4 (41)</td>
<td>84.6 (95)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Child outcomes study

**Changes in children’s language development and emergent literacy from Time 1 to Time 2**

We assessed children on a variety of measures related to language development and emergent literacy skills. First, we found that children demonstrated significant growth on

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35 Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) children identified as having special needs are entitled to an IFSP (for children from birth to 3 years) or an IEP (for children 3 years and older) that becomes the child and family’s contract for specialized services.

36 Standardized scores use a publisher’s norms to provide a norm-referenced measure of a child’s developmental level relative to the population.
language/vocabulary development (as measured by raw scores on the TVIP\textsuperscript{37}; see Exhibit 4.17). Three-year old children scored 10.5 at Time 1 and 18.7 at Time 2, and children in the four-year old group scored 15.7 at Time 1 and 19.0 at Time 2. While these improvements are statistically significant, since they are standardized scores they take into account expected growth for normal development. When expected growth due to normal maturation is taken into account, there is not a statistically significant change from Time 1 to Time 2 (Exhibit 4.18). Specifically, three-year-old children scored 88.9 at Time 1 and 89.9 at Time 2, and four-year-old children scored 83.5 at Time 1 and 82.1 at Time 2. The lack of statistical change from Time 1 to Time 2 means that the study children’s rates of growth in language development were the same as rates of normal growth for average children with no intervention.

\textbf{Exhibit 4.17: Mean Raw Scores for Children on the TVIP at Time 1 and Time 2}

\begin{center}
\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart}
\caption{Mean Raw Scores for Children on the TVIP at Time 1 and Time 2}
\end{figure}
\end{center}

Source: Child outcomes study; *p<.05. **p<.01, ***p<.001

\textsuperscript{37} The PPVT – the English version of this assessment – is not included in this analysis because only 12 children total were assessed using this instrument.
Exhibit 4.18: Mean Standardized Scores for Children on the TVIP at Time 1

In addition to vocabulary development, we also assessed children’s familiarity with the names of letters and colors, which is an indication of emergent literacy and language development. The average number of letters children could name at Time 1 and Time 2 increased from 3 to 6 letters for three-year olds and from 7 to 15 letters for four-year olds (Exhibit 4.19). Changes for both age groups were statistically significant. Similarly, children in the three-year old group named an average of 4 colors at Time 1 and 5 colors at Time 2, a significant increase. Children in the four-year old group did not show growth on this measure, though. They named the same number of colors at Time 1 (6) and at Time 2 (6) (Exhibit 4.20). Since four-year-old children were able to name close to the maximum number of colors in this task (7) at Time 1, there was little room for them to grow at Time 2.
Exhibit 4.19: Mean Number of Letters Children Could Name at Time 1 and Time 2

![Graph showing mean number of letters named by 3-year olds and 4-year olds at Time 1 and Time 2.]

Source: Child outcomes study; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Exhibit 4.20: Mean Number of Colors Children Could Name at Time 1 and Time 2

![Graph showing mean number of colors named by 3-year olds and 4-year olds at Time 1 and Time 2.]

Source: Child outcomes study; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Skills in story comprehension and print concepts (e.g., knowing how to hold a book, knowing where to start reading) were also examined to assess children’s emergent literacy skills. Both age groups made significant growth in story comprehension, though they did not demonstrate any growth in their understanding of print concepts (Exhibit
4.21, Exhibit 4.22). In addition, the story comprehension and print concepts subscales were combined to form an emergent literacy scale. While children in both age groups grew on the emergent literacy scale, this growth was not significant (Exhibit 4.23). These findings may be influenced by a change in the assessment from Time 1 to Time 2. The book children were assessed with at Time 1 was potentially culturally inappropriate. As a result, children were assessed with a different book at Time 2, which may have been more difficult for children.

**Exhibit 4.21: Mean Scores on Story Comprehension for Children at Time 1 and Time 2**

![Bar chart showing mean scores on story comprehension for children at Time 1 and Time 2.](image)

Source: Child outcomes study; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Exhibit 4.22: Mean Scores on Print Concepts for Children at Time 1 and Time 2

![Bar chart showing mean scores on print concepts for children at Time 1 and Time 2.]

Source: Child outcomes study; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Exhibit 4.23: Mean Emergent Literacy (Story and Print Concepts) Scores for Children at Time 1 and Time 2

![Bar chart showing mean emergent literacy scores for children at Time 1 and Time 2.]

Source: Child outcomes study; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Children who were four years old also completed an early writing task which involved writing their names. This task was scored by summing scores of three activities (e.g., writing from left to right). Although average scores for the early writing measure
increased slightly from Time 1 (2.6) to Time 2 (2.7) (see Exhibit 4.24), this growth was not statistically significant. It should be noted that the time between the two assessments may not have been long enough to observe growth in children’s writing skills.

Exhibit 4.24: Mean Scores on a Writing Task for Children at Time 1 and Time 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Task</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-year olds</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Child outcomes study; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Changes in children’s problem-solving skills and numerical awareness

We also assessed children’s early mathematical skills using a variety of measures. On the Woodcock-Johnson/Woodcock-Muñoz measure of applied problems, which assesses children’s mathematical problem-solving ability, children in both age groups demonstrated significant growth in raw scores (Exhibit 4.25). Mean scores increased from 3.6 to 7.1 for three-year-olds, and from 6.7 to 9.9 for four-year-olds between Time 1 and Time 2. On standardized scores, which adjust for expected development, children in the three-year-old group made greater gains between Time 1 and Time 2 relative to average children (Exhibit 4.26). This suggests that the improvement in mathematical problem-solving skills of children in the three-year-old group was greater than that of the published norms. Changes in four-year-old children’s standardized scores from Time 1 to Time 2 do not reflect higher-than-average gains.

Exhibit 4.25: Mean Raw Scores on Applied Problems for Children at Time 1 and Time 2

![Bar chart showing mean raw scores on applied problems for children at time 1 and time 2.](image)

- **3-year olds***
  - Time 1: 3.6
  - Time 2: 7.1

- **4-year olds***
  - Time 1: 6.7
  - Time 2: 9.9

Source: Child outcomes study; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Counting and numerical awareness were measured by asking children to count objects and name numbers. Children in both age groups demonstrated significant growth on both of these measures. The number of objects children counted increased from 6.5 to 11.1 objects for three-year olds and from 12.8 to 17.8 objects for four-year olds (Exhibit 4.27). Similarly, children in both age groups were able to name more numbers at Time 2 than Time 1 (see Exhibit 4.28).
Exhibit 4.27: Mean number of Objects Counted by Children at Time 1 and Time 2

![Bar chart showing mean number of objects counted by children at Time 1 and Time 2 for 3-year olds and 4-year olds.]

Source: Child outcomes study; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Exhibit 4.28: Mean Number of Numbers Named by Children at Time 1 and Time 2

![Bar chart showing mean number of numbers named by children at Time 1 and Time 2 for 3-year olds and 4-year olds.]

Source: Child outcomes study; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Changes in children’s social and behavioral skills

Social and behavioral skills are also important indicators of school readiness. Parents of the study children rated seven items assessing the frequency with which their child
engaged in “prosocial” behaviors (e.g., “my child makes friends easily”) and positive approaches to learning (e.g., “my child enjoys learning”) during two months prior to testing. These items – each rated from 1 “Not True” to 3 “Often or Very True” – were combined to form a scale assessing overall prosocial skills. Children in both age groups demonstrated significant growth on this scale from Time 1 (average score of 2.7 for three- and four-year-olds) to Time 2 (average score of 2.8 for all children) (Exhibit 4.29).

Exhibit 4.29: Mean Scores on Prosocial Skills of Children at Time 1 and Time 2

Parents also responded to a series of items measuring the frequency with which their child demonstrated problem behaviors during past two months (e.g., “my child has temper tantrums or a hot temper” and “my child can’t concentrate, can’t pay attention for long”). As with the prosocial scale, response options for these items ranged from 1 “Not True” to 3 “Often or Very True” and combined in an overall “problem behavior” scale. Average scores on this scale did not change from Time 1 to Time 2 for either age group (Exhibit 4.30).
Correlations between classroom activities and child outcomes

We also analyzed the relationships between classroom activities observed at Time 1 and child outcomes at Time 1 and 2 and found that classroom activities and teacher interaction styles were related to children’s outcomes on a number of measures. For example, we found that children who were able to identify more letters at Time 2 spent more time working on letters and sounds and had teachers who spent more time engaged in literacy activities at Time 1. We also found that the amount of time children spent reading or engaging in pre-reading behaviors at Time 1 was positively related to the number of objects children could count at Time 1.

In addition, children whose teachers spent more time facilitating peer interactions at Time 1 had higher scores on the TVIP at Time 2. On the other hand, in classrooms where the teachers spent more time interacting with the children in a didactic manner, the children were less likely demonstrate prosocial skills at Time 1.

Comparison data for child outcomes study sample

We used two comparison groups in order to further understand Time 1 and Time 2 findings for children’s standardized measures of pre-academic school success. Children included in Study A and Study B were Latino and had mother’s educational levels comparable to the children in the family literacy child outcomes study sample. Children in Study A are 3-year-olds who had participated in a home visiting program and children in Study B are 4-year-olds who participated in a center-based preschool program.
Exhibit 4.31 presents standardized scores from all children who were assessed in the family literacy and comparison study samples, not just those who completed assessments at both time points (i.e., data are not shown for matched pairs at Times 1 and 2, as were presented in earlier tables for the family literacy child outcomes study sample, but rather for all children who were assessed at either point in time). Time 1 and Time 2 data are presented for Study B; however, only Time 1 PPVT and TVIP data were available for Study A. Standardized scores on language development (TVIP) for 4-year-old children in the family literacy study at Time 1 were higher (86.3) than those of children in Study B (77.0). At Time 2, the 4-year-old children from the family literacy program did not show a statistically significant change (increase or decrease) when examining the subset of matched pairs for these two points in time. Likewise, there was a higher proportion (61.5%) of 4-year-olds at Time 2 in the family literacy study who scored below 85 and were therefore considered to be “at risk” than in Study B, where 27.5% were considered to be at risk at Time 2. Possible explanations for the lack of change observed from Time 1 to Time 2 for 4-year-olds in the family literacy study include the fact that less than an optimal period of time had lapsed between Time 1 and Time 2 assessments (ideally 6 months is considered sufficient to see expected changes, whereas the family literacy study was constrained to a 5-month period between Time 1 and Time 2). Also, the family literacy program had twice the proportion of total children considered at risk at Time 2 than did the comparison program. However, given these preliminary comparison data that do show change in standardized scores for 4-year-olds in a center-based program and the findings from the family literacy study classroom observations that relatively little time was spent on literacy-related activities, strengthening of literacy-related instructional activities for 4-year-olds should lead to improved results.

Standardized scores on mathematical skills (Woodcock-Johnson) of 4-year-old children in the family literacy study were similar to those of children in Study B. However, only a small number of children in the family literacy child outcomes study were assessed with the English version (n=6), and data from the Spanish version (Woodcock-Muñoz) were not available for Study B. As a group, matched pairs of 3-year-olds in the family literacy study showed statistically significant progress in cognitive development from Time 1 to Time 2, and 4-year-olds showed progress in cognitive development on the Woodcock-Johnson (English) but not the Woodcock-Muñoz (Spanish) measures, which did not show a statistically significant change for matched pairs. We will continue to examine these standardized measures for children in the family literacy programs over time, and will compare them to findings from similar studies, as available.

The proportion of children with developmental risks (defined as those with standardized scores lower than 85) in the family literacy programs at each data point was compared to that of both comparison groups (scores between 85 and 115 are considered to be normative). As shown in Exhibit 4.31, significant proportions of the children in the family literacy programs were scoring “at risk” at both time points on both the language and cognitive development measures. For these reasons, and given the preliminary findings using standardized measures and classroom observations as described above, increased focus on strengthening the early childhood language development and cognitive instructional activities of the family literacy programs is recommended.
Exhibit 4.31: Descriptive Statistics for Language and Cognitive Developmental Scores of the Family Literacy Child Outcomes Study Sample and Comparison Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Family Literacy Study Children</th>
<th>Comparison Group A</th>
<th>Comparison Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-year olds (N=56)</td>
<td>4-year olds (N=44)</td>
<td>3-year olds (N=49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean PPVT (English) scores (SD)</td>
<td>75.5 (14.4)</td>
<td>84.9 (12.9)</td>
<td>85.9 (14.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean TVIP (Spanish) scores (SD)</td>
<td>89.9 (9.8)</td>
<td>89.3 (15.0)</td>
<td>86.3 (17.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent scoring below 85 on PPVT or TVIP</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Woodcock-Johnson (English) scores (SD)</td>
<td>88.5 (31.8)</td>
<td>97.0 (13.7)</td>
<td>95.3 (19.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Woodcock-Muñoz (Spanish) scores (SD)</td>
<td>84.1 (13.8)</td>
<td>90.6 (12.3)</td>
<td>85.4 (15.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent scoring below 85 on Woodcock-Johnson/Woodcock-Muñoz</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with at least one developmental risk</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Child outcomes study

Summary

Across all 15 family literacy programs in Year 2, a majority of parents reported that the family literacy program helped them "a lot" to improve their English and to be better parents. A majority also said the program helped their children "a lot" to become ready for school. In addition to collecting parent perceptions, the evaluation team examined outcomes of adult education, parenting education, and child participation by analyzing assessment data for families enrolled in grantee programs in Year 2 of the Initiative.

In Year 2 we found that participating adults increased their scores on the CASAS reading assessment by an average of 6.6 points. Seventy-two percent of adults with “beginning basic skills” achieved the Even Start target gain of five points on the CASAS, while sixty percent of adults with “low intermediate to advanced” skills achieved the Even Start target of gaining 3 points. This growth indicates that the majority of parents increased their English language skills during their time in grantee programs. In addition, parents demonstrated significant growth on 10 of the 13 California Even Start Performance Information Reporting System (CA-ESPIRS) indicators. This growth indicates that family literacy parents read a wider variety of materials, engaged in reading and writing activities more frequently, kept a larger number of children’s books in their homes, read to their children more often, visited the library more often, and were more engaged at their children’s schools.
Overall, we found that children birth to five years of age participating in family literacy programs increased their teacher-reported scores across all four Desired Results on the Desired Results Developmental Profiles (DRDP) in Year 2. The largest increases were observed in two indicators: “children show growing abilities in communication and language” and “children demonstrate emerging literacy skills” among children ages three to five. In addition, after participating in the family literacy program for at least 100 hours, children three to five years of age fully mastered an average of 59 percent of all DRDP items, a significant increase over the 15 percent of items fully mastered on the first DRDP administered in Year 2. In particular, children ages three to five showed strong increases in the “reading readiness” measures, with average increases of approximately one level across five subscales (language comprehension, language expression, reading skills, interest in books, and writing).

Children participating in the child outcomes study also demonstrated positive growth on a variety of measures. These children demonstrated significant growth in language/vocabulary development, the number of letters and numbers they could name, mathematical problem solving ability, and the number of objects they counted. In addition, children’s prosocial behaviors, as reported by their parents, significantly increased. We also found some relationships between child outcomes and classroom activities. For example, we found that children who were able to identify more letters at Time 2 had spent more time working on letters and sounds in their classrooms and had teachers who spent more time in literacy activities at Time 1.

In relation to a comparison group of 4-year-olds in a center-based program, children in the family literacy programs had higher standardized scores at Time 1, but did not demonstrate the gains made by the comparison group of children in a center-based program. However, the family literacy program included over twice the proportion of children considered “at risk” at Time 2 (standardized scores lower than 85) than did the comparison program. Among the sample of children included in the child outcomes study, significant proportions were considered at risk. Increased focus on the language development and cognitive instructional activities of the early childhood component of the family literacy programs should serve to strengthen child outcomes in these areas.

Data from a variety of sources suggest that the family literacy programs are supporting parents’ and children’s learning and development in ways that have been reported by the parents themselves. In Years 3 and 4 of the evaluation we will continue to explore outcomes for children and parents. In addition, we will examine the relationship between adult outcomes and child outcomes.
Chapter 5: Activities and Impacts of the Family Literacy Support Network (FLSN)

A major component of the First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative is the Family Literacy Support Network (FLSN), which was designed to provide training and technical assistance to the 15 grantees and engage in outreach and advocacy work to expand the number and quality of family literacy programs throughout the county. A partnership between the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Division of School Improvement and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) received nearly $4 million from First 5 LA to establish the FLSN. In Year 2, the evaluation team explored 1) the range and nature of FLSN activities, 2) the successes and challenges in the implementation of the FLSN, and 3) the preliminary impacts of the FLSN on the service delivery system.

To address these questions, we analyzed information from a variety of sources, including interviews with nine FLSN staff and collaborators, surveys and interviews or focus groups with grantee program staff about their experiences with the FLSN, a site visit summary report documenting each visit to grantee program sites, and numerous FLSN documents (e.g., quarterly reports, the internal evaluation report, leadership team meeting notes, training event agendas and evaluation form summaries).

This chapter describes FLSN activities and challenges in establishing an infrastructure and conducting work in the four domains outlined in the FLSN scope of work (training and technical assistance, outreach, advocacy, and sustainability). The chapter concludes with a discussion of the preliminary outcomes of the FLSN’s work and its impacts on First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative grantees.

Establishing the FLSN Infrastructure

When we asked FLSN staff in interviews about the FLSN’s biggest accomplishment in Year 2, seven of nine cited a more solidified infrastructure or more clearly defined roles for staff. “We’ve developed clear definitions of what we should be doing and the grantees are aware of those definitions…that’s a big improvement over last year,” said one FLSN staff member. Another stated, “A major accomplishment for this year is that people are clearer about their roles.”

Roles of FLSN Staff

Overall, the FLSN consists of six main roles:

1. Senior Project Director (Liz Guerra), who is responsible for overseeing the work of the FLSN,
2. Consultant in Charge (Judy Sanchez), who works with the Senior Project Director in a management role,
3. Consultant/Facilitators (Lloyd Kajikawa, Esther Yasui, Faith Bade), who have responsibility for contact with and ongoing support for grantees,
4. Grantee Advisor (Michele Perry), who, in collaboration with the Consultant/Facilitators, works with the grantees to support their performance plan goals,
5. Internal Evaluation Contractor (Eloise Appel), who is responsible for supporting the work of the FLSN and conducting the internal evaluation, and the
6. National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) staff, who provide technical assistance and resources to the FLSN staff and training to grantee staff.

At the May 2004 FLSN Leadership Team meeting, written descriptions of these roles were discussed, with each FLSN staff member identifying his or her primary roles and responsibilities. This information, together with responses to follow-up questions during interviews with FLSN staff, helps to clarify the organization of the FLSN.

**Senior Project Director**

From among the many roles and responsibilities listed in her job description, Senior Project Director for the FLSN Liz Guerra selected the following as primary: “directing and coordinating the activities of FLSN staff and collaborators to ensure that FLSN goals and activities are accomplished according to the FLSN scope of work.” Ms. Guerra noted that the focus of her efforts had shifted somewhat since Year 1, from getting the FLSN up and running to ensuring its sustainability: “My priority has become how to continue to grow the organization within LACOE.”

Ms. Guerra estimated that she spends about 50 percent of her time working on issues related to the sustainability of the FLSN, about 25 percent continuing to build the infrastructure of the organization through staffing and communication with partners, and another 25 percent “keeping a finger on the pulse of grantees,” which involves reading site visit notes to track trends and challenges among grantees and acting as a Consultant/Facilitator to one grantee site.

**Consultant/Facilitators**

There was significant turnover and restructuring of roles among FLSN Consultant/Facilitators over the course of Year 2. Former Consultant/Facilitators Judy Carey and Bea Travaglia left the FLSN, and Faith Bade and Judy Sanchez moved into slightly different roles at the FLSN. Esther Yasui and Lloyd Kajikawa are the primary individuals serving as Consultant/Facilitators, though Faith Bade and Judy Sanchez still provide some direct individualized support to grantees, and Ms. Guerra is assigned to one grantee site in a Consultant/Facilitator capacity. The specific responsibilities of the Consultant/Facilitator vary from individual to individual. The proportion of time allocated to the Family Literacy Initiative also ranges considerably, from 20 to 100 percent, and the number of Family Literacy Initiative grantees assigned to Consultant/Facilitators varies from one grantee to nine grantees.

Consultant/Facilitators identified as their primary role “to function as a facilitator, liaison, and coach to FLSN designated grantees” or “to work with the FLSN Grantee Advisor to
provide or obtain technical assistance and support through ongoing communication, contact, and training.” In Year 2, Consultant/Facilitators visited grantee sites monthly or bi-monthly, though this varied by quarter and by site (see Exhibit 5.4 later in this chapter). Typical day-to-day Consultant/Facilitator activities included answering grantee questions about First 5 LA deliverables and deadlines, helping grantees to collect and enter data, assisting grantees with research or finding resources, and assisting in the development of training events. Consultant/Facilitators told us that the most valuable use of their time was supporting grantees in answering key questions, teaching grantees about the importance of using data, and providing training or technical assistance directly to grantees to assist them in improving instruction in each of the components.

**Consultant-in-Charge**

In her new role as Consultant-in-Charge, Judy Sanchez dedicated 20 percent of her time to the Family Literacy Initiative. From her written job description, Ms. Sanchez identified “assisting with the administration of day-to-day operations of the FLSN, assisting in monitoring the progress of FLSN efforts as they relate to the scope of work, and assisting the Senior Project Director in program implementation and evaluation” as her primary responsibilities. She also engaged in outreach activities, including serving on a number of state committees and presenting at conferences, and supported Consultant/Facilitators with their assigned grantees by accompanying them on visits to grantee sites, reviewing and commenting on site meeting notes, and providing suggestions for improving services to grantees. Over the course of Year 2, Ms. Sanchez also assisted in the development of several FLSN training events. Looking ahead to Year 3, Ms. Sanchez indicated that she saw the focus of her role shifting toward the support of grantees, as the infrastructure of the FLSN has become more solidified in Year 2.

**Grantee Advisor**

The primary role of Grantee Advisor Michele Perry was to “function as a mentor and advisor to all First 5 LA designated grantees, as it relates to the development and implementation of performance plan goals.” Ms. Perry was responsible for coordinating with FLSN Consultant/Facilitators to conduct monthly or bi-monthly site visits to grantees, observing classroom teaching strategies and techniques, assisting grantees in developing a self-study, attending grantee team planning meetings with program staff, assisting grantees with their data analysis, and answering grantee questions and requests for information. Ms. Perry spent roughly 80 percent of her time working for the FLSN. Although she was based in Texas, much of that time was spent in the field visiting grantees.

Given the amount of turnover among Consultant/Facilitators, providing consistency to grantees has become a crucial part of the Grantee Advisor’s role. Most grantees have had more than one Consultant/Facilitator assigned since Year 1, but the Grantee Advisor has remained constant since the outset of the initiative. FLSN staff agree that Michele has had more contact with grantees than any other staff member, though she views her role as distinct from that of Consultant/Facilitator: “The Consultant/Facilitator is the first contact and the main contact. If there’s an issue, the grantee contacts the Consultant/Facilitator."
My role is more in the background, more in guidance, and to see that the performance plan is moving forward.”

**National Center for Family Literacy**

Kathy Zandona of the NCFL described the primary role of the NCFL in their partnership with the FLSN as “to serve on the FLSN Leadership Team and provide technical assistance in developing organizational capacity and infrastructure for the FLSN.” The NCFL also conducted trainings for the FLSN, including the Foundations in Family Literacy training and the Day of Advocacy workshop. The NCFL has also been instrumental in developing the framework of criteria for exemplary programs, providing research and resources and facilitating meetings to enable the Leadership Team to move forward more quickly. Though the amount of time NCFL staff spent working with the FLSN varied by month, Kathy Zandona estimated that, on average, she spent two or three days per month on FLSN-related work.

**Internal Evaluation Contractor**

The role of Internal Evaluation Contractor Eloise Appel evolved considerably in Year 2. In Year 2, she spent less time working with grantees, and focused her time (approximately 50 hours per month) reviewing FLSN staff interviews and documents for the internal evaluation. Throughout the development of the FLSN, she also served on the FLSN Leadership Team, provided technical assistance for developing organizational capacity and infrastructure for the FLSN, and assisted in the creation of the performance plan template for grantees. According to Dr. Appel, the internal evaluation is designed to “document progress related to the FLSN Scope of Work and answer key questions of interest regarding the FLSN organization, services, and impact.” (Findings from Dr. Appel’s preliminary report are presented throughout this chapter.)

**Leadership Team**

All of the individuals described above also serve on the FLSN Leadership Team, which meets monthly to provide updates on progress and discuss new directions. Some FLSN staff view Leadership Team meetings as an opportunity to communicate with collaborators and with the rest of the FLSN. One FLSN staff member referred to Leadership Team meetings as “essentially large staff meetings,” and another said the meetings “facilitate communication among all the partners.” Other FLSN staff see the Leadership Team as providing guidance: “The Leadership Team helps the FLSN to define its role. It keeps the FLSN on track and helps us work over thoughts about direction and thoughts about personnel.” The Leadership Team helps ensure open communication between collaborators and allows each collaborator to give input into next steps.

**Characterizing the Work in Each of the Four Domains**

The FLSN statement of work outlines four domains for FLSN activities: training and technical assistance, outreach, advocacy, and sustainability. Though the responsibilities of individual staff varied widely in Year 2, the FLSN estimated that, overall, two-thirds of staff time was dedicated to training and technical assistance and one-third to the other
three domains. Drawing clear distinctions between the work in each of these domains is difficult, however. FLSN staff each have slightly different definitions of the work in each area. For example, one FLSN staff member described advocacy as lobbying for funding for family literacy in the community. Another defined it as working directly with grantees to assist them with their own sustainability, such as with the Day of Advocacy workshop, though most FLSN staff members described these workshops as training and technical assistance activities rather than advocacy. One staff member defined outreach as “technical assistance to non-grantees,” though “outreach” and “non-grantee technical assistance” are two separate categories of activities in FLSN quarterly reports. These inconsistencies affirm, as several FLSN staff reported, that work in each domain overlaps with work in the others.

For the purposes of describing FLSN activities, the four domains have been defined as follows: training and technical assistance involves providing direct support to grantees through individualized technical assistance and training to grantees and non-grantees at group training events, regardless of the topic; outreach involves providing technical assistance and/or information about family literacy to non-grantee programs; advocacy involves seeking out potential funders and advocating for funding to family literacy programs; and sustainability refers to ensuring FLSN work is maintained at the conclusion of First 5 LA funding. The following is a discussion of FLSN work in each of the four domains.

**Training and Technical Assistance**

As mentioned above, the majority of FLSN staff time is dedicated to training and technical assistance activities for the 15 Family Literacy grantees.

**Goals for Training and Technical Assistance**

During their August 2004 interviews with AIR, FLSN staff identified four key goals for Year 2 in the training and technical assistance domain: program improvement, providing opportunities for networking, assisting grantee program staff with data-related processes, and grantee program sustainability.

Six of eight FLSN staff members who addressed the topic of training and technical assistance identified program improvement as a primary goal. One person specified improving the quality of individual instructional components at grantee sites by enhancing the qualifications of grantee instructional staff. Another stated that she aimed to “increase the level of expertise of these programs, and provide grantees with practical strategies for doing that.” Consultant/Facilitators told us they were working to help grantees “put all the nuts and bolts securely in place, so that they can look at bigger picture things, like their key questions and sustainability,” and “look at weak areas, so that they can create model programs.”

One FLSN staff member identified “providing opportunities for peer teaching and networking between groups” as a primary goal, and several others mentioned it as a secondary goal or an added benefit of FLSN training events. Staff also identified helping grantees learn to collect, input, or use data. “I want grantees to learn to look at every
individual and also look at patterns and the question marks to ask themselves what the attendance data says about their programs,” said one staff member. Another mentioned a desire to “help grantees move past inputting data.”

Two FLSN staff members also identified advocacy- or sustainability-related goals for Year 2. One described efforts to assist grantees with advocacy by giving them tips or strategies for advocating for their programs, bringing in new partners, providing new resources to parents, and using the media in their communities. Another described efforts to assist grantees with Even Start applications.

**Training Activities in Years 1 and 2**

Over the course of Years 1 and 2, the FLSN coordinated 14 unique training events for grantee and non-grantee program staff. Five of these events were mandatory for First 5 LA Family Literacy grantees; four were networking meetings with a specific focus, of which the grantees were required to attend at least one; and five were voluntary. Several of these trainings were offered multiple times, making a total of 24 trainings offered in Years 1 and 2. Each of these trainings is listed in Exhibit 5.1 and described in more detail below.

FLSN staff reported that the grantee staff were the primary targets for FLSN trainings and were notified of upcoming trainings through “save the date” announcements, the FLSN newsletter, and reminders during site visit meetings. Non-grantee program staff were also often invited to attend and were recruited from mailing lists of local school districts, Even Start programs, Head Start programs, migrant education programs, and family literacy programs that applied for, but did not receive, a First 5 LA grant. Examples of non-grantee organizations served through training events include Alum Rock Educational Foundation, Cambodian Association of America, Center for Community & Family Services, New Horizons Even Start, Ocean View School District, Pomona Unified School District, Venice Family Clinic, and many others. Staff from approximately 100 non-grantee programs attended one or more of these training events. Exhibit 5.1 below indicates the number of grantee and non-grantee organizations represented at each FLSN training event. It is followed by an exhibit illustrating the percentage and number of surveyed teachers from grantee sites attending each FLSN training event.
Exhibit 5.1: Number of Grantee and Non-grantee Organizations Represented at FLSN Training Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Grantees</th>
<th>Non-Grantees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mandatory Trainings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Planning (December 2002)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2 Grantee Kick-Off (October 2003)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlocking the Door to School Readiness</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(January 2004)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Education and PCILA Training (April 2004)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education Training (May 2004)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Networking Meetings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Literacy Learning Luau (August 2003)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Blocks of a Winning Sustainability Plan (December 2003)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing Presentations for Results (April 2004)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day of Advocacy (May 2004)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voluntary Trainings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even Start RFP/RFA workshops (March 2003, May 2004)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESPIRS Trainings (March 2003 January 2004)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRDP Trainings (May, July, October, December 2003)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Data (March 2004)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations in Family Literacy (January, June 2003, January, April 2004)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FLSN event evaluation summaries

Exhibit 5.2: Percentage of Surveyed Teachers Attending Each FLSN Training Event or Workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Percent of Surveyed Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundations in Family Literacy (January, April, or June 2003, or January 2004)</td>
<td>39% (N = 32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRDP training (May, July, October, or December 2003)</td>
<td>23% (N = 19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education training (May 2004)</td>
<td>22% (N = 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Education and PCILA training (April 2004)</td>
<td>20% (N = 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Literacy Learning Luau (August 2003)</td>
<td>19% (N = 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education training (January 2004)</td>
<td>18% (N = 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESPIRS training (March 2003)</td>
<td>14% (N = 12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Teacher survey
The events most highly attended by teachers were the multiple presentations of the Foundations in Family Literacy trainings, attended by 32 of the 82 teachers who answered the question. The most heavily attended single events were the Adult Education training (attended by 18 of the respondents) and the Parent Education and PCILA training (attended by 16 of the respondents).

**Mandatory trainings**

While the first two mandatory training events focused on developing performance plans and reviewing the role of the FLSN and its services, the remaining three offered guidance for improving program components. Fourteen of the 15 grantees attended all five mandatory trainings.

The first mandatory training offered by the FLSN (in December of 2002) was on performance planning. This training introduced grantees to the First 5 LA deliverable schedule for Year 1 and the principals of successful performance planning. Similarly, in Year 2, the FLSN held the Year 2 Grantee Kick-Off in October 2003, and was attended by a representative of each of the 15 grantee sites. Agenda items included a review of FLSN Year 2 services and clarification of Year 2 deliverables, due dates, and data collection.

The third mandatory training, a one-day early childhood education (ECE) conference called Unlocking the Door to School Readiness – Keys to Promoting Language and Literacy Development for All Young Children, was held in late January 2004. The conference was designed to highlight the best practices in ECE, and was attended by representatives of 14 grantee sites and 27 non-grantee sites, including several school districts and community-based children and family centers. Conference participants attended workshops on topics such as fostering the development of a first and second language, and supporting language development and literacy though science. Sharon Darling, President of the NCFL, and staff from two grantees programs were among the presenters.

The fourth mandatory training, Language and Literacy Development: The Roles of Parenting Education and Parent & Child Interactive Literacy Activities (PCILA) in Family Literacy Programs, took place in April 2004. This training was attended by representatives of all 15 grantee programs, and was not open to non-grantee program staff. FLSN staff reviewed definitions of parenting education and PCILA, presented the California Department of Education (CDE) Program and Performance Indicators, and made suggestions for establishing linkages between parenting education and PCILA. Bonnie Lash Freeman of NCFL presented scientifically based reading research articles and reviews, as well as examples of high-quality lesson plans for parenting education and PCILA component instruction. Grantees were then led through an activity demonstrating how hours of PE and PCILA instruction should be entered into the First 5 LA database.

The final mandatory training was held in May 2004. Adult Education: Developing Tools and Strategies to Support Instruction for Adults Learning English as a Second Language was attended by representatives of 14 grantee sites, and featured a presentation on adult
learner-centered teaching, a review of adult education program indicators, a discussion on distance learning, and an overview of the CASAS reading assessment.

In addition to providing information to grantees at these trainings, each of the mandatory meetings and two of the voluntary meetings also had a “swap shop” to allow program staff to share resources or information with one another. Meeting attendees were instructed to bring enough copies of their materials (such as funding contacts, marketing and public relations, and Family Literacy Day celebration ideas) for every other attendee to take one back to their agency.

**Networking training events**

FLSN-sponsored networking meetings were intended to provide opportunities for peer teaching and networking among those working in family literacy or related fields. Grantee attendance at these meetings ranged from 3 to 13 programs. Representatives of between 6 and 39 non-grantee organizations attended each meeting as well. Topics covered included ECE, advocacy, sustainability, and preparing presentations.

The first networking meeting was the August 2003 Family Literacy Learning Luau. The Learning Luau was preceded by an informal dinner for program directors, during which grantees’ key questions and the FLSN’s mission were discussed. The Luau was attended by 60 individuals. Approximately 20 of these individuals were from First 5 LA Family Literacy grantee sites; program directors and lead teachers from 12 grantee sites reported attending the event on the AIR surveys. Breakout session topics included enhancing early childhood education component instruction, helping establish a Los Angeles County student speakers bureau, and preparing for National Family Literacy Day. Staff from one grantee program gave the keynote presentation.

The second networking meeting, The Building Blocks of a Winning Sustainability Plan, took place on the morning of December 5, 2003. The 28 attendees came mostly from First 5 LA Family Literacy grantee sites. The meeting began with a panel discussion of sustainability, which included panelists from two grantee programs, and was followed by breakout sessions on foundation funding and using evaluation data to support sustainability.

The third networking meeting, Preparing Presentations for Results, was presented by LACOE staff and took place over two days in late April 2004. The training was designed to assist participants in building presentation skills, and was attended by 16 individuals, three of whom came from First 5 LA Family Literacy grantee sites.

The final networking meeting, A Day of Advocacy, took place in May 2004. The meeting began with legislative updates from Tony Peyton, Policy Director of NCFL, who provided the national perspective, and First 5 LA Commissioner Renatta Cooper, who provided the local perspective. Break-out sessions focused on creating core messages, successful collaborations, effective writing tips, and Even Start grant information. The meeting ended with a 30-minute networking reception. Forty-one people were in attendance and 13 grantee sites were represented.
Voluntary trainings

The FLSN also held a number of voluntary trainings, many of which were offered at multiple times for different audiences. Ten to 15 grantee programs were represented at each of the five FLSN-sponsored voluntary training events. Attendance by representatives of non-grantee agencies ranged from none to 58. Topics covered administering assessments and use of data, Even Start funding, and NCFL's Foundations in Family Literacy.

Most of the voluntary trainings addressed family and child assessments and data use. The first of two FLSN-sponsored trainings on the ESPIRS was offered in March 2003. These training events were designed to familiarize participants with the assessment tool and teach them to correctly administer it to parents at their program sites. The FLSN also sponsored training events on the DRDP assessment tool, which was offered four times between May and December 2003. Participants at the March 2004 Use of Data training were shown how to use the First 5 LA Data System to produce reports, how to examine data for trends and patterns, and how to use data to improve classroom instruction.

In March of 2003 (and again in May of 2004), the FLSN also offered two Even Start RFP/RFA workshops to assist grantees and non-grantees in putting together successful applications for funding.

In addition, grantees had four opportunities from January 2003 to April 2004 to attend the NCFL/FLSN Foundations in Family Literacy training. This three-day training provided a comprehensive overview of family literacy components and the operation of family literacy programs. The training was provided by certified NCFL trainers, including one FLSN staff member. Program directors or teachers from all 15 grantee programs attended at least one of these training events.

Grantee evaluations of training events

As recipients of the training provided by the FLSN, grantee program directors were asked on AIR’s Program Director survey to judge the quality and appropriateness of the training events discussed above. As shown below in Exhibit 5.3, program directors gave very positive evaluations of FLSN-sponsored training events and workshops. Overall, survey respondents most strongly agreed with the statements “The information was presented in a way that was clear and understandable” and “The presenters/presentations were well prepared;” 73 percent of program directors strongly agreed with each of these statements. Moreover, only 1 of the 14 program directors who responded to the item strongly agreed with the statement “I think I could just as easily have received the information elsewhere;” 57 percent (eight program directors) strongly disagreed with this statement.

Though responses were complimentary across the board, a small minority of program directors disagreed with two of the positive statements about FLSN-sponsored training events and workshops: roughly 13 percent (two program directors) disagreed or strongly disagreed that “The trainings were offered at convenient locations” or “at convenient times.”
At the conclusion of each FLSN-sponsored training event, participants were asked to complete an event evaluation form developed by the FLSN, which asked participants to rate the event as “excellent,” “good,” “adequate,” “fair,” or “poor,” on five criteria: achievement of training goals and objectives, training content, presentation strategies, quality of materials, and overall rating of experience. Summaries of these evaluation forms produced by FLSN staff are overwhelmingly positive, with the vast majority of participants at each event rating the event as “excellent” or “good” on all criteria. Although the evaluation forms are not strictly confidential, as participants are asked to give their title and agency zip code, and evaluation summaries for some events include input from individual FLSN staff in addition to the training recipients, the results are generally consistent with AIR survey results.

When asked how event evaluations are used, FLSN staff told us that the evaluations inform plans for future training events. They provide staff with feedback on workshop format and content, and yield suggestions for topics to cover with future trainings.
Exhibit 5.3: Program Director Perceptions of the Quality of FLSN Trainings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information presented was clear &amp; understandable.</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters/presentation were well prepared.</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used the information to improve my program.</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information provided was relevant and appropriate.</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainings were offered at convenient times.</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainings were offered at convenient locations.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think I could just as easily have received the information elsewhere.</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Program Director survey
Technical Assistance Activity in Years 1 and 2

According to the FLSN Internal Evaluation Contractor, FLSN staff conducted 270 site visits during Years 1 and 2. The number of site visits from technical assistance providers varies widely by grantee, from nine to 27 visits. This variation may have been due to variation in needs identified by the FLSN as well as variation in grantees’ interest in and openness to the FLSN’s support.

Exhibit 5.4: FLSN Visits to Grantee Sites in Years 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Name</th>
<th>Total Number of Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers’ Club Community Center</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Bureau</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Learning Center</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Tokyo Service Center</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfax/Hamilton Community Adult School</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Beach Unified School District</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUENTE Learning Center</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawthorne School District</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reseda Adult School /Lemay Early Ed Center</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyler Adult Learning Center</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLASC</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbor Adult School/15th Street Elementary</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kedren Community Health Center</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope Street Family Center</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowland Unified School District</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FLSN Internal Evaluation Contractor

Topics covered through FLSN technical assistance

The onsite technical assistance provided by the FLSN during these site visits was customized to the needs of individual grantees, with reported needs and topics covered by the FLSN varying widely from grantee to grantee. However, across grantees, support related to First 5 LA deliverables and requirements made up a significant portion of the technical assistance provided during site visits. According to the Grantee Advisor’s site visit summary, First 5 LA deliverables and requirements were the first or second most frequently raised issues at each grantee site and accounted for over one quarter of the identified needs the FLSN addressed onsite. Examples of the types of assistance provided around First 5 LA deliverables and requirements include issuing reminders about the First 5 LA deliverable schedule, answering questions about how to complete year-end reports and other First 5 LA deliverables, reviewing performance plan objectives, and relaying questions about how to count component activities.

The First 5 LA online data system and data collection issues more generally also account for a significant portion of the technical assistance provided to grantees. Roughly 15 percent of the instances of need for support documented in the site visit summary involved database or data collection-related issues, such as discussing missing data, reversed ID codes for families with the same last name, difficulties obtaining attendance data or CASAS scores, and routine “data pulls” to see if grantee data look accurate.
Roughly 15 percent of the issues documented in the Grantee Advisor’s site visit summary involve improving one of the four family literacy program components. In general, the FLSN seemed to focus their technical assistance attention on a program’s weaker component or the component identified by the grantee in the performance plan as a target of expansion efforts. Examples of technical assistance provided by the FLSN to help grantees improve one of the four components include discussing establishing a book loan program for ECE, discussing shifting from a weak distance-learning ESL program to a more viable on-site program model, providing research on best instructional practices, and providing lists of videos on parenting and PCILA.

Another 10 percent of needs addressed by FLSN onsite technical assistance centered on improving overall program quality. Examples of this type of support include suggestions for increasing integration, assistance finding resources for self-evaluations, advice on recruitment/retention, assistance developing relevant key questions, and suggestions for using student feedback to improve the program.

Roughly 10 percent of the issues documented in the site visit summary involved program management and administration, such as mediating disagreements among the grantee team, discussing turnover of program staff, and discussing the need to hire a data clerk. Issues related to sustainability, including partnerships and collaborations, make up fewer than 10 percent of the total support documented in the site visit summary. Where sustainability is addressed, it is more likely to be a grantee-identified need than an FLSN-identified need. Examples of sustainability issues raised include Even Start and other grant applications and meetings with potential collaborators.

The smallest portion of FLSN onsite technical assistance is dedicated to needs related to administering assessments. Examples of support provided in this area include responding to a request that the CASAS be administered every 120 hours of instruction, responding to a concern that the ESPIRS is inappropriate for parents of children ages birth to three, and answering questions about the correct administration of the DRDP.

**Grantee reports of the quality of FLSN technical assistance**

To assess the quality of FLSN technical assistance work, we asked program directors about their views on the technical assistance they had received from the FLSN. Program directors were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements about FLSN technical assistance in Years 1 and 2. As the results in Exhibit 5.5 illustrate, program directors reported very positive experiences with FLSN technical assistance.

For the most part, program directors reported that they felt the “FLSN staff were available” (93 percent strongly agreed with this statement), “the role of FLSN staff was clear” (80 percent strongly agreed), and they “knew what types of technical assistance were available from the FLSN” (67 percent strongly agreed). One program director, however, was unclear on the role of the FLSN and the types of technical assistance available to them.
Regarding the quality of technical assistance provided, most were “satisfied with the technical assistance provided by the FLSN” (80 percent strongly agreed with this statement) and felt that “the amount of technical assistance was sufficient” (67 percent strongly agreed). The statement program directors were least likely to strongly agree with was “The technical assistance provided by the FLSN was customized to my program.” Only 47 percent of respondents (seven of 15 program directors) strongly agreed with this statement, though none disagreed.

**Exhibit 5.5: Program Director Perceptions of the Quality of FLSN Technical Assistance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Percent of Program Directors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FLSN staff were available to my program staff and me</td>
<td>93% (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was satisfied with the TA provided</td>
<td>80% (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of FLSN staff was clear</td>
<td>80% (13%) (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLSN provided timely &amp; complete info on F5LA requirements</td>
<td>73% (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew what types of TA were available from the FLSN</td>
<td>67% (27%) (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount of TA was sufficient</td>
<td>67% (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The TA was customized to my program</td>
<td>47% (53%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Program Director survey

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*American Institutes for Research*
Outreach, Advocacy, and Sustainability

In addition to the training and technical assistance work that the FLSN conducted in Years 1 and 2, they also engaged in a variety of activities in the other three domains in their scope of work: outreach, advocacy, and sustainability.

Outreach Goals and Activities

When asked about goals for Year 2 in the outreach domain, FLSN staff cited increased information dissemination efforts and a desire to “get the word out about the FLSN and the services we have available.” The FLSN also aimed to provide one-, two-, and three-component programs with information on implementing four-component family literacy programs.

Though on-site technical assistance is generally restricted to the 15 Family Literacy grantees, the FLSN has provided technical assistance to several non-grantee programs and agencies, including grant-writing support for an Antelope Valley Even Start program and the Pacific Asian Community Agency. Consultant/Facilitator Judy Carey also conducted two trainings on PCILA for the City of Los Angeles Housing Authority, and most FLSN-sponsored trainings were open to non-grantees as well as grantees.

Other FLSN outreach activities over the past year include publishing and distributing the FLSN newsletter; making presentations at the California Council of Adult Learners Conference, the NCFL National Conference, and the California Family Literacy Conference; and presenting the First 5 LA Family Literacy model to the First 5 Riverside Commission. FLSN staff have also met with Head Start staff to explore future collaborations, with Ad Council representatives to discuss outreach issues, and with the Family Involvement Network to share information and network. In addition, FLSN staff sent several letters of support to non-profit agencies, including the Barbara Bush Foundation, the Stuart Foundation, and 21st Century Schools, on behalf of non-grantee programs.

Advocacy Goals and Activities

Liz Guerra defined advocacy as “sustainability for the grantees,” and stated that the FLSN’s advocacy work is done through training and technical assistance of grantees, as well as direct communication with outside organizations. FLSN staff listed the following among their goals for Year 2 in the advocacy domain: to help grantees find new funding sources; to help grantees increase the number of partners in the community and the number of advocates among parents; and to help grantees learn to use evaluation findings to secure funding.

One Consultant/Facilitator spoke of a desire to shift the efforts of the FLSN into the advocacy domain, so that it becomes their main focus in Year 3 of the Initiative. Another FLSN staff member reported that their priority should be to “continue helping programs improve services, so that external evaluation outcomes are supportive of the model.”
In support of these goals, the FLSN staff described working with school readiness networks and county and state organizations to underscore the importance of the four-component model. Liz Guerra and Faith Bade sit on the First 5 LA Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Workforce Development committee, Lloyd Kajikawa sits on the First 5 LA Universal Pre-Kindergarten Parent Engagement committee, and FLSN staff described “constant communication” with the director of California Even Start over the past year. NCFL staff also put together a list of local and national politicians in positions to advocate for funding for family literacy programs.

As described above, some of the FLSN’s work in the advocacy domain involves working directly with grantees. Examples of this include technical assistance in grant writing, the Sustainability Newsletter, and FLSN-sponsored training events like the Building Blocks of a Winning Sustainability Plan, the Day of Advocacy Workshop, and Preparing Presentations for Results. Consultant/Facilitators mentioned advocating for individual programs on the local level upon request, such as accompanying a grantee program director to a meeting to negotiate with a school-site principal.

**Sustainability Goals and Activities**

Increased attention was given to the sustainability domain of the FLSN’s work in Year 2. The FLSN’s primary goal for sustainability was to identify and pursue contracts and grants to keep their work funded at the conclusion of the initial three-year funding cycle from First 5 LA.

FLSN activities in the sustainability domain over Year 2 include signing a contract with the California Department of Education to provide training and technical assistance to Even Start Family Literacy projects state-wide, presenting the Family Literacy Initiative to the LAUP Building on Existing Infrastructures Task Team, being identified by LACOE as the lead fiscal agent for the Region 11 School Readiness Network, meeting with Superintendent Robles and First 5 LA Commissioner Cooper to discuss LACOE involvement with First 5 LA, and submitting a grant application with 26 partners to conduct ECE professional development training for the U.S. Department of Education.

**Outcomes and Perceived Impacts of the FLSN**

To examine the impacts of the FLSN’s work, we focused primarily on grantee reports of their experiences with the FLSN through the training and technical assistance domain. Grantee reports of the impact and usefulness of FLSN support are overwhelmingly positive. Results from surveys and interviews or focus groups, with program directors as well as teachers, indicate consistently positive perceptions of the impacts of FLSN support.

Survey respondents were asked how helpful FLSN training events and technical assistance were in several different categories. Exhibits 5.6 and 5.7, below, show the percentage of program director and teacher respondents receiving assistance in each area who rated FLSN support “very helpful,” “moderately helpful,” “somewhat helpful,” or “not at all helpful” in that area. Note that survey respondents were given an option to indicate that support was “not received.” All respondents reported that support was
received in two of the 14 categories: “completing reports for First 5 LA” and “identifying funding sources;” at least one respondent indicated he or she had not received assistance in the other 12 categories.

**Exhibit 5.6: How Helpful to Program Directors was FLSN Technical Assistance and/or Training in the Following Areas?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>Moderately helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat helpful</th>
<th>Not at all helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completing reports for First 5 LA</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>N=15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking with other family literacy programs</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>N=13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracking participant attendance</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>N=13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding opportunities for staff development</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>N=14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving ECE</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>N=13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving parenting education</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>N=9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving adult education</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>N=9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving PACT</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>N=11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using data to track participant progress</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>N=12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating the four components</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>N=11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using data for program improvement</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>N=14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administering assessments and collecting data</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>N=10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying funding sources</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting with grant writing</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>N=8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Program Director survey
### Exhibit 5.7: How Helpful to Teachers was FLSN Technical Assistance and/or Training in the Following Areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>Moderately helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat helpful</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving my early childhood education (ECE) classes</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving my PCILA/PACT time classes</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using data to track participants’ progress</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing my curriculum to coordinate with other components</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing ideas with teachers from other family literacy programs</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving my adult education classes</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using data to adjust my teaching to meet participants’ needs</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning or coordinating with teachers from other components</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving my parenting education classes</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Teacher survey

As shown in Exhibits 5.6 and 5.7, program directors and teachers found FLSN support to be very helpful in many areas.

**Completing First 5 LA reports**

The majority of program director survey respondents (93%) found FLSN assistance to be “very helpful” for completing their reports and other deliverables for First 5 LA. When asked to describe the support they received from the FLSN, five program directors emphasized assistance with First 5 LA requirements. A few program directors even
explained how the FLSN helped them learn to use these deliverables, particularly the
performance plan, as tools for program improvement. One program director noted, “The
FLSN has helped with doing lots of paperwork and using the paperwork constructively.
We’ve used our performance plan to make our program better.”

Using data
Helping programs to use data was another area of impact identified by program staff.
Sixty-nine percent of program directors who received assistance tracking participant
attendance reported that it was “very helpful.” In addition, 58 percent of teachers who
received assistance tracking participant progress also found it “very helpful.” In
interviews, several program directors also spoke favorably of FLSN assistance with their
data needs. Specifically, four program directors described one-on-one attention while
learning to use the First 5 LA online data system.

Somewhat smaller percentages of program directors and teachers indicated FLSN
assistance was “very helpful” when it came to “using data for program improvement,”
“administering assessments and collecting data,” or “using data to adjust my teaching to
participants’ needs,” though the majority reported that FLSN support was at least
“moderately helpful” in these areas.

In response to the open-ended survey question, “Which FLSN training was most useful to
you? Why?” three program directors ranked the Use of Data Training among the most
useful. One wrote, “We are now able to see by way of the assessment data how our
program is progressing.” Another program director cited the Use of Data training as the
least useful, writing, “All [training events] were appropriate, however, data training in a
group was least helpful – needed to have it at our site, hands on.” While this was only one
respondent, this concern might be worthy of consideration.

Component improvement
An important focus of the FLSN support in Year 2 has been on supporting program staff
to improve individual components. All 14 (100%) of the program directors who reported
receiving FLSN support in finding opportunities for staff development found that it was
“very helpful” or “moderately helpful.” Program directors and teachers were also asked
specifically about the helpfulness of FLSN support for strengthening each of the four
components.

Sixty-two percent of program directors (eight of 13) and 69 percent of ECE teachers (11
of 16) who received assistance improving their ECE component said it was “very
helpful.” In fact, when interviewed, three program directors cited the ECE or Learning
Luau training events as particularly helpful. One program director described how the
ECE training directly influenced changes made to her program: “We came back and
changed the set up of the center, even the way we were setting up with books in the
different areas, and making sure we had pens and paper in all of the areas. I used to think
it should only be in the art area, but that’s not so anymore.”
Though some described benefiting from the ECE-related trainings, two program directors named the ECE or Learning Luau trainings as the least useful of all the FLSN’s training. One wrote, “Learning Luau – fun but not worth the time.” Another wrote, “Early childhood. I did not learn anything new, it was all info I had heard before.”

Half of the program directors (56%) and 43 percent of the teachers who received assistance improving adult education reported that it was very helpful for this purpose. Two program directors specifically mentioned FLSN support for adult education during their interviews. One noted that the presenter at the Adult Education training “had some good ideas about multi-level ESL,” and another described how customized technical assistance from the FLSN influenced the adult education component of her program: “our adult ed piece was the weakest link and we were trying to better encourage the moms and dads to participate in those classes . . . [one of the FLSN staff members] had a book designed by one of the other agencies called Passport to Literacy, and she had the books remade for us so that the parents could track their own growth in literacy.”

As with the adult education component, nine program directors and seven teachers reported having received assistance improving parenting education. Though five program directors found FLSN support with parenting education to be “very helpful,” only one teacher did. Note that “improving adult education” and “improving parenting education” are two of only three areas where any program director respondents found FLSN support to be “not at all helpful.” Just over half (55%) of the program directors and 60 percent of the teachers found FLSN assistance improving PCILA to be “very helpful.”

Creating an integrated family literacy program

Compared to component improvement, a smaller percentage (45%) of program directors who received support for integrating all four components found FLSN assistance to be “very helpful.” A greater percentage (57%) of teachers found the FLSN support to be “very helpful” for “changing [their] curriculum to cover topics being covered in other components” of the family literacy program.

The Foundations in Family Literacy training, however, was deemed especially helpful by program directors. Three program directors felt it was the most useful of the FLSN’s training events. One program director explained, “foundations really pieced together the four components . . . it wasn’t until the foundations that we really understood family literacy.” Another program director noted the Foundations training “helped give us a framework for what a four-component program looks like.”

Ensuring sustainability

Though FLSN support for “assisting with grant writing” and “identifying funding sources” were the two areas on the survey that program directors were least likely to characterize as “very helpful,” some program directors spoke highly of FLSN support around sustainability during their interviews. Program directors expressed appreciation for the “sustainability bulletin,” and for help reviewing grant proposals. One program director recounted FLSN staff encouraging her to collaborate with an elementary school on an Even Start grant. She even “ran the proposal by the FLSN, got their input and used...
their recommendations.” Three program directors ranked the Sustainability or Advocacy trainings among the most useful FLSN workshops. One program director said, “it got me thinking of creating future partnerships...and everyone becomes a future funder.” Another said the sustainability training helped her “to keep current on what grants are available.”

**Networking**

Eighty-five percent of the 13 program directors who felt the FLSN provided opportunities to network with other family literacy programs found them to be “very helpful” in this regard. Just under half (48%) of surveyed teachers found FLSN trainings to be “very helpful” for “sharing ideas with teachers from other family literacy programs.”

**Areas Where Additional Support is Needed**

Although grantee staff were generally very pleased with the support they received from the FLSN in Years 1 and 2, areas where further support could be useful were also identified. On the survey, program directors were asked to indicate the extent to which they needed additional training or technical assistance in several areas, including identifying funding sources, completing reports for First 5 LA, administering assessments, and integrating the four components, among other topics. Exhibit 5.8 shows how many program directors reported that they needed additional support to a “large extent,” “moderate extent,” “small extent,” or “not at all” in each area.

**Sustainability**

As the exhibit illustrates, program directors perceive “identifying funding sources” to be the area where continued support from the FLSN is needed most. Two thirds (67%) of the program directors reported that they felt they needed additional training or technical assistance on this topic to a large extent. An additional 27 percent reported needing it to a moderate or small extent. Forty percent also reported that they needed additional support with grant writing to a large extent. This is consistent with the survey results presented above, which indicate that program directors found FLSN support in these areas less helpful than FLSN support in other areas.


**Exhibit 5.8: Extent to Which Program Directors Would Like Additional Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Large extent</th>
<th>Moderate extent</th>
<th>Small extent</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying funding sources</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networking with other family literacy programs</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant writing</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding opportunities for staff development</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using data for program improvement</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using data to track participant progress</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving adult education</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administering assessments and collecting data</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing reports for First 5 LA</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating the four components</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving PACT</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving ECE</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving parenting education</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracking participant attendance</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Program Director survey

**Networking**

Though most program directors reported FLSN support for networking with other programs was very helpful, they continued to feel a need for additional opportunities to network. Forty percent reported needing more networking opportunities to a large extent, and another 27 percent reported needing this to a moderate extent. When asked to identify other training events or types of technical assistance they would like the FLSN to provide, one program director wrote, “We need time to share with other programs and
learn from each other.” Another program director said in an interview that she would like
the FLSN to “Provide more opportunities for collaboration and informal discussion
among the grantees.” A third program director suggested dividing grantees into small
groups based on geography to allow for more frequent networking opportunities.

Improving individual program components

Ten program directors (67%) reported needing additional support with their adult
education component to at least a small extent (13 percent reported needing this support
to a large extent). Specific requests mentioned during program director interviews
included “Provide more CASAS training,” “Focus adult education training on
curriculum,” and “I’d like more information about ABE.” One teacher requested training
in the use of computer software for ESL instruction. As noted above, improving the adult
education and parenting components are the areas where the fewest program directors
and teachers reported receiving assistance from the FLSN. Although a majority of
program directors indicated some need for support in this area, a full third of program
directors felt that they did not need help in this area at all.

Program directors’ reports of need in the other three components were more consistent,
with about one-third reporting a moderate need for support for ECE (33%), PCILA
(33%), and parenting education (27%), about half reporting a small need (47 percent for
PCILA and ECE and 53 percent for parenting), and 20 percent reporting that they do not
need help in this area at all. No program directors reported needing additional support for
improving any of these three components to a large extent.

Specific ECE needs included support for enhancing or developing services for children
from birth to three to support families with children during these stages of development.
One teacher expressed a need for information on how to address the behavior of children
with special needs. In addition, one program director said in an interview that she would
like to have access to “more hands-on materials for parenting ed.,” and three teacher
survey respondents requested further training or support with parenting education. Two
teachers mentioned PCILA or PACT, one specifying an interest in training on how to
approach parents and engage them in PACT time.

Managing and using data

Support for managing and using data was another topic area where program director
responses were somewhat ambivalent. Few program directors reported needing
substantial support for tracking participant attendance; 33 percent reported that they did
not need any help in this area. A small minority of program directors reported needing
support (to a large extent) for administering assessments and collecting data (13%) and
for using data to track participant progress (20%), though others reported that they did
not need any help in these areas (40 percent and 33 percent, respectively). The one area
where grantees seemed to feel more consistently in need of support was with using data
for program improvement, clearly a more advanced use of the information they have been
collecting. One-third of program directors surveyed reported needing support in this area
to a large extent; another 46 percent reported needing this support to a small or moderate
extent.
Suggestions for FLSN trainings

In addition to the substantive needs mentioned above, program directors also expressed an interest in learning more about general management topics, such as managing staff, developing leadership skills, and time management. Teachers and program directors also made suggestions about the structure of FLSN trainings.

For example, one suggested videotaping future trainings so that teachers who were not able to attend could still benefit from the information. The FLSN also collected feedback from training participants in order to improve the services they provide. Suggestions offered by at least two participants at a minimum of two different events (as reported in the FLSN Internal Evaluation Report) include:

- longer sessions/more time for presentations and discussion,
- more hands-on or interactive activities,
- more opportunity to network,
- customizing content based on levels of expertise and experience in family literacy, and
- more topics/choices.

Implementation Challenges

The FLSN staff reported confronting a number of challenges in their work during Year 2. A few key challenges are highlighted below.

Staffing Issues

Perhaps the single largest obstacle to establishing the infrastructure of the FLSN is continued understaffing. During interviews with FLSN staff, respondents repeatedly stated that the biggest challenge they faced in Year 2 was finding enough time to attend to the various responsibilities associated with their roles. One staff member said, “The Network needs to hire. Retention and turnover are big issues.” Though two FLSN Consultant/Facilitators were certified as trainers through the NCFL in Year 1, those individuals were no longer working at the FLSN by the end of Year 2.

Some FLSN staff felt there were simply not enough people at the FLSN to complete all the tasks outlined in the Scope of Work. Understaffing, combined with the lack of a planning period prior to Year 1 of the Initiative, resulted in delays in some crucial FLSN tasks, according to FLSN staff. For example, several members of the Leadership Team expressed regret that there was not an opportunity at an earlier time to develop the criteria for exemplary programs. “How can we hold grantees to this standard when we haven’t decided what it is?” said one team member. In addition to staff leaving the FLSN, several staff members experienced some change in their roles. These changes were cited as a challenge by at least one staff member.

A final challenge related to staffing involved the distance that separated NCFL partners from the rest of the FLSN team. One team member reported that this was sometimes a challenge: “Any time you try to plan and coordinate training from a distance, it’s a challenge.”
Lack of Time

Clearly related to the problem of understaffing, FLSN staff consistently identified as a critical challenge the lack of time available to conduct their work in each of the four domains. Interview respondents repeatedly stated that they wished they had time to address more of the grantees’ needs. “I would like to have more time to focus on zero to three,” said a member of the FLSN staff. Another stated, “Too little time is the main challenge. There just isn’t enough time to do it all.” Lack of time was the most common response to questions about challenges when conducting training and technical assistance as well as outreach, advocacy, and sustainability. When asked about challenges faced in their advocacy work, one FLSN staff member stated that the challenges were “the same challenges faced elsewhere – not enough time, not enough FLSN staff to go around, needing to focus on the nuts and bolts basics and not having time to think beyond that.”

Challenges Related to the Content of the FLSN’s Work

FLSN staff reported having high hopes for the work they could accomplish, especially with the grantees. Although staff can point to a number of important successes in their work, meeting their own expectations was identified as a challenge by at least two FLSN staff members. For example, one FLSN staff member stated that she had hoped in Year 2 to focus grantees on their key questions to a greater extent, but day-to-day program management needs of the grantees often took priority. She explained, “I’m not always able to focus on key question areas, or strengthen areas noted on the performance plans. They’re still bogged down in database issues.” Dealing with the online database was identified as a challenge by at least two FLSN staff members.

Another response highlighted the difficulty of communicating complex concepts in practical terms: “A lot of times it’s challenging to translate some of the difficult concepts, theories, methodologies, and to translate them to a real practical form where a paraprofessional is going to use them.”

The FLSN has been juggling a wide-reaching scope of work and has had to set priorities for their work. One FLSN team member reported frustrations with how the work has been prioritized; some suggestions for services or supports for the grantees have not been implemented.

Summary

In Year 2, the evaluation team continued to examine the implementation of the FLSN and its impact on grantee programs. FLSN staff agree that their biggest success in Year 2 of the Initiative was solidifying the infrastructure of the FLSN and establishing more clearly defined roles for themselves. In addition to developing the infrastructure of their organization, FLSN staff continued to move forward on their work in training and technical assistance, outreach, advocacy, and sustainability.

Approximately two-thirds of FLSN staff time in Year 2 was dedicated to training and technical assistance. Across both Years 1 and 2, the FLSN coordinated 14 unique training events (24 total training events) for grantee and non-grantee program staff.
Trainings covered a variety of topics including performance planning, the four family literacy components, sustainability, and use of data. Program directors gave very positive evaluations of FLSN-sponsored training events and workshops, with a majority of program directors strongly agreeing that the presenters/presentations were well prepared. In addition to coordinating training events, FLSN staff conducted 270 site visits during Years 1 and 2, ranging from 9 to 27 visits per grantee. Technical assistance provided during these site visits focused on a variety of issues, including First 5 LA deliverables and requirements, the First 5 LA online data system and data collection issues, and improving one of the four family literacy program components, among others. As with training events, a majority of program directors reported that they were satisfied with their experiences with FLSN technical assistance. Overall, the majority of program directors indicated that FLSN support was very helpful in a variety of areas, including completing reports for First 5 LA, networking with other family literacy programs, and tracking participant attendance.

The remaining one-third of FLSN staff time in Year 2 was devoted to the other three domains of the FLSN, outreach, advocacy, and sustainability. As part of its outreach efforts, the FLSN provided grant writing technical assistance to several non-grantee programs and agencies, published and distributed the FLSN newsletter, and made presentations to a variety of audiences including attendees at multiple national and state conferences and the First 5 Riverside Commission. FLSN staff also served on First 5 LA UPK committees and provided advocacy-related technical assistance to grantees as part of their advocacy effort. FLSN activities in the sustainability domain included signing a contract with the California Department of Education to provide training and technical assistance to Even Start Family Literacy projects state-wide and meeting with Superintendent Robles and First 5 LA Commissioner Cooper to discuss LACOE involvement with First 5 LA, among other activities.

Although grantee staff reported positive experiences with the FLSN, program directors identified areas where additional support would be useful. At least forty percent of program directors indicated that they would like additional support in identifying funding sources, networking with other family literacy programs, and grant writing to a large extent. In addition, FLSN staff identified challenges they confronted in Year 2, including continued understaffing and a lack of time available to conduct their work.

In spite of continued struggles with understaffing and staff retention, the FLSN provided hundreds of hours of technical assistance, organized several large training events, made outreach contacts to many non-grantee organizations, and continued to pursue contracts and awards to ensure its own sustainability in Years 1 and 2. Over the course of Year 2, the FLSN has begun to shift the focus, for themselves and for grantees, from implementation to sustainability, and this shift is anticipated to continue in Year 3.
Chapter 6: Summary and Next Steps

In the second year of the evaluation, we continued to investigate the themes identified in Year 1, quantifying them where possible with survey and other data from program directors, teachers, and program participants. We also focused more on the training and technical assistance activities of the FLSN, since we had more data documenting the amount and focus of their support to the grantees in Year 2. In addition to continued exploration of the process issues raised in Year 1, we also focused more intensively on the outcome evaluation questions. Early impacts of participation in the program on children and families were investigated by analyzing participation and assessment data collected by the grantees and entered into the online data system, as well as data collected through a focused child outcomes study involving direct assessments of a sub-sample of children. This report describes the Year 2 evaluation activities and summarizes key findings that emerged from analysis of the data we collected. This chapter summarizes these findings and describes plans for the third year of the evaluation.

Findings from Year 2

Drawing on data from surveys of program directors, teachers, and parents; interviews or focus groups with program directors, teachers, and FLSN staff; grantee and FLSN documents; attendance and assessment data downloaded from the online data system; and data from the child outcomes sub-study, we addressed many of the research questions outlined by the Commission at the beginning of the evaluation. In this section, we highlight key findings that emerged from our analysis, organized by evaluation question. The research questions that have not yet been addressed will be a focus of evaluation activities in Years 3 and 4.

Findings Related to Implementation/Process

As in Year 1, we focused on addressing each of the process evaluation questions, characterizing the family literacy programs and families, documenting the work of the FLSN, and identifying implementation successes and challenges.

Process Question #1: What is the range of program and participant characteristics?

Program and participant characteristics are described in detail in Chapter 3. The following section highlights some of the findings from this chapter.

Grantee Program Characteristics

Among the program characteristics examined in Year 2 were teacher qualifications, which varied widely across components. Eighty-one percent of all family literacy teachers surveyed reported having at least a Bachelor’s degree. There was some variability across components, though, with virtually all adult education (exclusive of parenting education) teachers (98%) reporting at least a Bachelor’s degree and 59 percent of ECE teachers surveyed reporting this level of education. Adult education teachers (exclusive of parenting education teachers) were also most likely to be certified. Half of
all ECE teachers (53%) and PCILA teachers (56%) surveyed reported having at least a child development teacher permit; another six percent of ECE teachers and seven percent of PCILA teachers had an associate teacher permit or a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (equivalent to two to four college courses), authorizing them to provide instruction in a child care and development program without supervision. Four out of 10 ECE teachers (41%) and PCILA teachers (39%) have no child development permit or credential.

In addition to teacher qualifications, the quality of instruction in each of the four components is also dependent on the nature of the curriculum covered. ECE teachers and adult education teachers were most likely to rely on a formal curriculum; parenting education teachers are least likely to use a formal curriculum. More than three-quarters (77%) of the ECE teachers surveyed reported that they use a formal curriculum, such as Creative Curriculum or High Scope, in their classroom. Classroom observations conducted as part of the child outcomes study revealed that very little time was spent on literacy-related activities in ECE classrooms. In the classrooms observed, children rarely had the opportunity to engage in letter/sound activities, “pre-reading,” or writing activities. More emphasis was given to aesthetic activity, fine motor activity, and social studies.

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of PCILA teachers surveyed reported using a formal curriculum for PCILA activities; many cited parents reading with their children as a routine activity during PCILA. Fewer formal curricula exist for parent educators, so it is not surprising that fewer teachers in the parenting education component (47%) reported using some formal curriculum, such as their district’s adult parenting course curriculum. Ninety-one percent of parenting education teachers surveyed reported that significant attention is given during their parenting classes to child development, how parents can support their children’s learning, and activities that parents can do during PCILA time.

The benefits of family literacy are expected to increase with greater integration of all four components. We continued to see some variability across programs in the extent to which components were integrated with each other. One-third (33%) of all program directors surveyed reported that they held meetings with teachers from each of the four components to integrate instruction on at least a monthly basis; one-third (33%) reported meeting less frequently; and another third (33%) reported that these meetings did not occur on a regular basis at all. In programs where teachers from all four components did not meet, it was usually the adult education teacher who did not participate. More than half of adult education teachers (58%) and parenting education teachers (56%) surveyed reported that they modify their curriculum to cover topics being discussed in other components. Only 48 percent of ECE teachers surveyed reported that they change their curriculum to incorporate topics from other components. However, several ECE teachers noted that they keep teachers of the other components informed of their curriculum so that ECE themes can be reinforced in other components.
Family characteristics and experiences in the programs

Information on participant demographics collected in Year 2 was consistent with Year 1 findings. The vast majority of families participating in grantee programs in Year 2 were Hispanic (95%) and listed Spanish as their primary home language (91%). In addition, more than two-thirds of families reported having a household income of $20,000 or less (69%), and 76 percent received some financial, medical, housing, or food assistance. Ten percent of families had been in the U.S. for two years or less.

A large majority of parents (79%) had no previous schooling in the U.S. when they joined the programs, more than one-third (36%) had an eighth-grade education or less, and only 13 percent were employed upon entering the family literacy program.

Almost three-fourths (71%) of participating children were three to five years of age. In addition, 17 percent of participating children had been identified as having a special need (e.g., physical, language, learning, behavior). While only four percent of children were identified by their parents as having an IEP (Individual Education Program) or IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan), parents of 13 percent of participating children indicated that they did not know if their child had an IEP or IFSP.

Families participating in the 15 family literacy grantee programs ranged widely with respect to the intensity and duration of services they received during Year 2. Across the Initiative, 866 children birth to age five and 687 adults participated in grantee programs, comprising 660 families participating all four components. The average family attended program services for six to seven months during Year 2. Parents received an average of 192 hours of adult education (such as ESL, GED classes, etc.), 41 hours of parenting education, and 71 hours of PCILA while children received an average of 276 hours of ECE and 77 hours of PCILA. On average, parents attended 29 hours of adult education, seven hours of parenting education, and 10 hours of PCILA per month. Children attended an average of 41 hours of ECE and 11 hours of PCILA per month.

Process Question #2: What were the successes and challenges in the implementation of the programs? What characteristics and strategies facilitate implementation? What are the barriers to successful implementation?

Program directors were asked to identify their programs’ successes, and many pointed to improvements in their programs and family outcomes as key accomplishments for Year 2. The majority of program directors (67%) reported successes related to changes or improvements in their programs and/or with their staff. In particular, the addition of new services – many of which provide hands-on or practical experiences – was a commonly reported success. Program directors identified parents’ satisfaction with the services provided to them and their children as an important indicator of program success. Program directors also identified as important program successes the achievements of their families, such as parents progressing to the next ESL level, improvements in adults’ vocational skills and job status, positive reports from kindergarten teachers about former program participants, and high attendance rates overall.
Our analysis of participation and outcome data also highlight program successes. In particular, 660 families received comprehensive family literacy services in Year 2; adults demonstrated significant growth on measures of reading ability and parenting strategies; and children demonstrated significant growth on multiple measures of child development.

Year 2 challenges reported by grantee staff were consistent with those reported in Year 1, though achieving long-term program sustainability was the most prominent area of concern in the second year. Specifically, securing adequate funding for their programs was the challenge most commonly reported by program directors, with 80 percent reporting that this was a large or moderate challenge for them in Year 2.

Program directors reported that staffing continued to be a challenge for their programs in Year 2, especially with regard to hiring qualified staff for their ECE component (40% of program directors surveyed identified this as a large or moderate challenge) and providing time for staff to receive training (53% reported this was a large or moderate challenge). Space also continued to be a challenge in Year 2. Almost half of all program directors surveyed identified as a moderate or large challenge securing appropriate space (47%) or securing permanent space (43%). And despite the significant problems noted with missing or incomplete data downloaded from the online data system, relatively few (27%) program directors surveyed rated issues related to data collection and reporting (“collecting data required by First 5 LA” and “using the First 5 LA database system”) as large or moderate challenges.

Process Question #3: What is the range of activities in which the FLSN has engaged?

During Years 1 and 2, the FLSN provided 14 unique trainings on a variety of topics, several of which were repeated for various audiences for a total of 24 trainings over the two-year period. While some trainings focused exclusively on the needs of the grantees, others were open to non-grantee program staff. The FLSN held five mandatory trainings for grantees, three of which focused on improving the quality of one or more program components; the remaining two focused on reviewing grantee deliverables and requirements, clarifying FLSN services, and performance planning. The FLSN held nine additional training events, which covered topics such as sustainability, preparing presentations, administering the DRDP and CA-ESPIRS, and using data. The FLSN also sponsored several three-day National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) trainings on the Foundations of Family Literacy. In addition to the 15 grantees, staff from more than 100 non-grantee agencies attended one or more of the FLSN’s training events.

Over the course of Years 1 and 2, the FLSN engaged in a variety of technical assistance activities, the bulk of which occurred during periodic site visits to each of the grantee programs. According to the FLSN’s records, FLSN staff conducted 270 visits to grantee program sites to provide technical assistance during the course of the first two years of the Initiative. Some grantee programs were provided with more support than others – visits ranged by program from nine to 27 visits during this period.

Technical assistance was customized, and topics covered by FLSN staff varied widely by grantee, though support related to First 5 LA deliverables and requirements made up a
significant portion of the technical assistance provided to every grantee. Other topics covered during these visits included program improvement (e.g., increasing integration, providing research on best instructional practices, assistance with self study), sustainability (e.g., reviewing grant applications, suggesting funding opportunities to explore), program management or administrative issues (e.g., help with managing collaborators and partners, staffing issues), administering assessments and collecting data, and use of the online data system.

In addition to training and technical assistance, the FLSN engaged in a number of outreach, advocacy, and sustainability activities in Year 2. Outreach activities in Year 2 included providing grant-writing technical assistance to several non-grantee programs; publishing and distributing the FLSN newsletter, E-News, and Sustainability Bulletin; presenting at several conferences; and meeting with Head Start staff, Ad Council representatives, and the Family Involvement Network to share information. Advocacy activities in Year 2 included sitting on the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) Workforce Development and Parent Engagement committees, maintaining communications with the director of California Even Start, and advocating for grantee programs on a local level upon request. Examples of sustainability activities in Year 2 included pursuing a contract with the California Department of Education (CDE) to provide training and technical assistance to Even Start programs statewide, presenting information about the Initiative to the LAUP Building on Existing Infrastructures Task Team, and submitting a grant application, along with 26 partners, to the U.S. Department of Education to conduct ECE professional development training.

Process Question #4: What were the successes and challenges in the implementation of the FLSN?

The FLSN has achieved many successes, as demonstrated by the establishment of a more solid infrastructure and high praise from grantee program staff. When we asked FLSN staff about their biggest successes and accomplishments in Year 2, seven of nine interviewees cited a more solidified infrastructure or more clearly defined roles for FLSN staff and collaborators. The FLSN has also taken steps toward achieving sustainability, for example through the development of new work with the CDE.

All grantee program directors surveyed reported that the content of FLSN trainings was relevant, appropriate, and clear. Only seven percent felt they could just as easily have obtained the information elsewhere. All grantee program directors surveyed also reported that the information on First 5 LA requirements provided through FLSN technical assistance was timely and complete, that the technical assistance was customized to their program, and that they were satisfied with the technical assistance overall. In addition to support for grantee work, according to the FLSN’s records, the FLSN staff made contacts with almost 300 non-grantee organizations through their outreach work, extending their reach well beyond the 15 grantee programs.

Based on interviews with FLSN staff as well as feedback from the grantees, we highlight a number of challenges faced by the FLSN in Year 2, most notable of which was the staff turnover rate. First, the staff turnover rate at the FLSN has been high, especially among
consultant/facilitators. Though this has meant that the “face” of the FLSN has changed (in some cases several times) for the grantees, the grantee advisor has been able to maintain continuity and ease each transition. Partly due to staff turnover, the FLSN has been consistently understaffed. This, combined with the substantial scope of work, has led to FLSN staff feeling like there is not enough time to accomplish their goals. Another challenge noted by FLSN staff was the difficulty of translating difficult concepts and methodologies through their training and technical assistance into a form that paraprofessionals can use in their work.

In addition to the challenges identified by the FLSN, program directors also cited several unmet needs that the FLSN could address. For example, program directors expressed the need for more information on adult basic education (ABE), parenting education, ECE services for children birth to three, and use of the CASAS assessment. Grantee staff also indicated an interest in having more opportunities for collaboration and/or informal discussion with their peers. Finally, the prevalence of data quality issues and lack of consistency in the definition of variables related to documenting program activity suggests that additional training for grantee program staff is needed here as well.

Findings Related to Outcomes

Compared to the first year of the evaluation, which primarily emphasized implementation issues, evaluation activities in Year 2 also focused on outcomes – child and family outcomes, as well as grantee program staff’s reports of impacts of the work of the FLSN.

Outcome Question #1: What impact are the expansion and enhancement grants having on children prenatal to age five and their families in the context of other services provided in the county?

We find significant improvements in adult education outcomes for parents participating in the family literacy programs. Specifically, parents demonstrated statistically significant growth on the CASAS Reading assessment between Time 1 and Time 2, increasing their scores by an average of 6.6 points. Seventy-two percent of adults with “beginning basic skills” on the CASAS Reading assessment at Time 1 (scores of 210 or lower) achieved the Even Start target gain of five points by Time 2; 60 percent of adults at the “low intermediate to advanced” level at Time 1 (scores of 211 or higher) achieved the Even Start target gain of three points by Time 2. In addition, 66 percent of parents surveyed reported that the program helped them “a lot” to improve their English.

Drawing on data from parent surveys, the first (Time 1) and last (Time 2) administrations of the CA-ESPIRS in Year 2, and parent interviews from the child outcomes study, we also find positive parenting education outcomes. For example, a large majority of parents reported that their family literacy program helped them “a lot” to: become a better parent (91%), feel more comfortable sharing books with their children (92%), and understand how children learn (92%). Parents demonstrated significant growth from Time 1 to Time 2 on 10 of 13 indicators measuring parent support for their children’s learning. For example, parents were reading a wider variety of materials, engaging in reading and writing activities more frequently, keeping a larger number of children’s books in their homes, reading to
their children more often, visiting the library more often, and becoming more engaged in their children’s education.

In addition to results from analyses of grantee data, interviews with parents of the child outcomes study children also revealed significant improvements in the home literacy environment (including the number of books in the home, and how often parents read, sing, or tell a story to their child) from Time 1 to Time 2.

Analyses of data from parent surveys and data from the first (Time 1) and last (Time 2) administration of the DRDP in Year 2 reveal positive child outcomes across the Initiative and across all age ranges. The majority of parents surveyed reported that the program helped their child “a lot” to become ready for school (91%) and to learn how to communicate and get along with other children (88%). On the DRDP, children across all age groups (0-7 months, 8-17 months, 18-35 months, 3-5 years) demonstrated statistically significant growth in all four “Desired Results” of the DRDP (children are personally and socially competent, children are effective learners, children show physical and motor competence, and children are safe and healthy). Children at each age group demonstrated statistically significant growth in communication and language and in emergent literacy skills as measured by the DRDP from Time 1 to Time 2. In fact, the percentage of DRDP items fully mastered by children three to five years old increased significantly from 15 percent at Time 1 to 59 percent at Time 2, and the percentage of children fully mastering all 13 Even Start “reading readiness” items from the DRDP— which focus on language comprehension, language expression, reading skills, interest in books, and writing – increased from less than one percent at Time 1 to 28 percent at Time 2. Nearly two-thirds (64%) demonstrated growth on each of the items not fully mastered at Time 1.

Analyses of data from the child outcomes study reveal significant growth for three- and four-year olds on direct child assessments between the first assessment (Time 1) and the second assessment (Time 2) given five months later, on average. For example, both three- and four-year-old children participating in the child outcomes study demonstrated significant growth in their ability to solve applied problems, count numbers, and name numbers and letters from Time 1 to Time 2. Interviews with child outcomes study parents at Time 1 and Time 2 revealed significant growth in children’s prosocial behaviors (e.g., “makes friends easily”) and positive approaches to learning (e.g., “enjoys learning”).

We also found that the nature of classroom activities was related to child outcomes. For example, children who were able to identify more letters at Time 2 had spent more time working on letters and sounds and had teachers who spent more time in literacy activities at Time 1. However, overall, no correlations were observed between measures of child development and the number of hours of ECE service received.38

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38 Issues related to attendance data outlined in footnote 2 may have affected the analysis of child outcomes and attendance.
Outcome Question #2: What impact is the FLSN having on the service delivery system in the context of other system improvement and capacity strengthening activities underway throughout the county?

Program staff’s reports of the impacts of FLSN support on their programs have been very positive overall, with support for meeting their grant requirements identified as the most helpful aspect of their training and technical assistance received in Year 2. Grantee program directors reported that the support they received from the FLSN helped them to improve their programs in a number of ways. Program director ratings for the FLSN were very high overall; focusing on only the highest rating (“very helpful”) helps us to identify the areas of greatest impact. Most notably, a large majority of program directors reported that they received “very helpful” support for completing their First 5 LA reports (93%) and networking with other family literacy programs (85%). More than half of all program directors surveyed reported that they received “very helpful” support for improving parenting education (56%), adult education (56%), and PCILA (55%). Sixty-two percent reported receiving “very helpful” support for improving ECE, an area the FLSN has given somewhat more attention in Year 2. Sustainability and use of data were somewhat less likely to be identified by program directors as areas where support has been “very helpful,” though grantee responses were still very positive overall.

Policy and Research Findings

Although the policy and research questions will be a greater focus of Years 3 and 4, some attention was given to these issues in Year 2. Some of the main findings that address these questions are highlighted below.

Policy/Research Question #1: What is the value of providing ongoing program support to family literacy programs?

Program staff have had the opportunity to attend a range of trainings and receive customized technical assistance from the FLSN to support the implementation of their programs that would otherwise not have been available if it had not been for the Initiative. When asked how things have changed since receiving First 5 LA funds, all program directors (100%) reported increases in the availability of technical support, and 93 percent reported increases in the amount of training staff have received. This level of support is unavailable in most other communities, and the fact that grantees do not have to pay for their staff to attend trainings makes it feasible for programs to participate in the FLSN’s offerings. Given the range of teacher qualifications and instruction and the unique demands of integrating the four family literacy program components, engaging teachers in ongoing professional development will be important to enhance the impact of program services on participating families.

The role of the FLSN is clearly a significant factor in program directors’ judgments about the impact of the Initiative. Program directors reported a range of benefits of the support they received from the FLSN, including helping them to improve the quality of individual program components. When asked about changes they have experienced since the Initiative began, most program directors also reported that their use of data to track participants’ progress (93%) and to evaluate and improve their programs (93%) had
increased. Again, support from the FLSN has no doubt influenced programs’ data use – an important tool for continuous program improvement.

While grantees have continued to enhance their programs, there is still room for improvement. Achieving program sustainability, improving the quality and integration of program components, and further developing programs staff’s skills in managing and using data for program improvement are all areas where continued support from the Initiative through the FLSN can benefit family literacy programs.

**Policy/Research Question #3: How are the First 5 LA grants benefiting family literacy programs?**

In Year 1, First 5 LA funds helped grantees expand or enhance their programs (including funding some capital expenses such as construction). Year 2 funds helped to support those expanded program activities by funding staff time and resources for new activities, among others expenses. For example, program directors reported using First 5 LA funding in a variety of ways in Year 2 including: funding a backpack book loan program for families, continuing afternoon and Saturday program activities, supporting staff salaries, and purchasing books and supplies. When asked how their programs would be different had they not received the First 5 LA funds, five program directors said they would not be able to offer the number of classes currently available to families, four reported that they would have fewer program staff, and three said they would be able to serve fewer families. One program director said the program would not exist at all without the grant.

When asked about changes that had occurred in their programs since receiving First 5 LA funds, nearly all program directors (93%) reported that other resources, such as the amount or quality of instructional materials available to the programs, had increased since the beginning of the Initiative. And two-thirds of program directors surveyed (64 percent) reported that teachers were meeting to integrate program components more than they were before receiving First 5 LA funds.

**Policy/Research Question #4: What role does technology play in increasing access to or effectiveness of program services?**

The primary use of technology among the grantees was through the online data system. All 15 programs used the online data system in Year 2 to record and track information on family participation and performance over time. Although program staff expressed frustration with the system, overall, program directors reported that their participation in the First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative (and the requirement to use this system) changed the way data were collected and used at their programs. In particular, as noted above, nearly all program directors surveyed reported that their use of data to track participants’ progress and to evaluate and improve their program had increased.

Understanding families’ needs through tracking attendance patterns and performance on assessments, can help program staff to adjust their services to better meet these needs. Several programs reported that they were actually using what they learned from the data to update attendance policies, enhance attendance rates, or adjust the timing of course offerings to better match families’ schedules. Use of data through the online system has
also helped two grantees to more appropriately place parents in classes or to meet the needs of children with special needs.

In addition to using technology as a data management tool, program directors reported direct instructional uses for computers as well, such as offering computer-based ESL or GED classes for parents. Giving parents the opportunity to use computers during class time can help to increase job-related skills to support financial stability. Another benefit of technology reported by one program was the use of a digital camera to photograph families and pin up family pictures to make them feel more a part of the program.

**Next Steps: Plans for Years 3 and 4 of the Evaluation**

Findings from Years 1 and 2 of the evaluation, in combination with research questions yet to be addressed, point to a number of issues to explore further in Years 3 and 4. In particular, the quality of the ECE component and the level of integration across components will be important to assess in greater depth. In addition, we will gather more information about the impact of the FLSN on organizations outside of the 15 grantees. Further analysis of family outcomes will also be conducted, using similar data sources to those used in Year 2. To this end, Years 3 and 4 will focus on the following activities:

- Site visits to each program in the spring of Year 3 to follow up with program staff and parents through interviews and focus groups on issues raised in Years 1 and 2. Site visits will include observations and evaluations, using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), of ECE classrooms and observations of other program activities where possible.

- Additional surveys and/or short interviews with non-grantees who have participated in FLSN activities to assess FLSN impacts beyond the 15 grantees receiving First 5 LA funds.

- Continued data collection and analysis for the child outcomes study, including a third round of assessments, a kindergarten follow-up, and a more thorough analysis of data from a comparison group of children.

- Continued analysis of adult and child outcome data collected by the grantees, including examination of the relationships between parenting outcomes and child outcomes.

- Identification of the characteristics associated with “successful” programs as measured by parent and child outcomes.

In addition to the work of collecting and analyzing data for the evaluation, AIR has also begun to develop an alternative data collection system for grantee use in anticipation of the termination of the contract supporting the online data system. Combined with additional training from the FLSN, we expect that this new system will result in fewer data problems and more accurate participation data to use in the evaluation and for the continuous quality improvement work of the grantees.
References


