

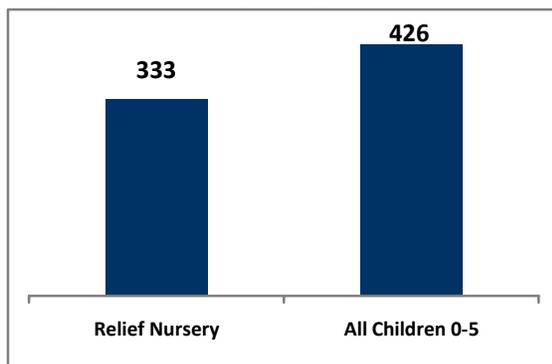
OREGON RELIEF NURSERY FY 2008 KEY FINDINGS

Relief Nurseries Improve Child Welfare Outcomes

One of the key goals of the Relief Nurseries is to reduce families' level of involvement with the child welfare system, by working to reduce risk factors for child maltreatment, and helping to stabilize families so that children can live safely with their parents. While the number of Relief Nursery children involved with child welfare is relatively small, data provided by the Department of Human Services showed that:

- **Relief Nursery children spent fewer days in costly out-of-home placements**, on average, than other similar children (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Average Days in Foster Care



- **Relief Nursery children were less likely to be abused following their enrollment in the program.** Only 2% of Relief Nursery children had a founded abuse report subsequent to enrollment, compared to 13% prior to enrollment.
- **Relief Nursery children were more likely than children statewide to be reunified with their parents.** 100% of the nine children placed in foster care while involved with the Relief Nurseries were reunified, compared to 64% statewide.



Relief Nurseries Serve Oregon's Highest-Risk Families

In FY 2008, at least 779 families and 954 children were served by Oregon's Relief Nurseries. These families are characterized by high levels of demographic and psychosocial risk:

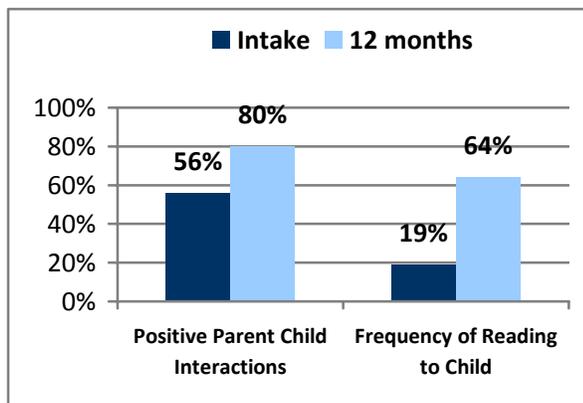
- 50% of primary caregivers were abused or neglected as children;
- 91% were at or below the Federal Poverty Level;
- 71% of primary caregivers were unemployed at intake;
- Over 60% of families had at least one risk factor in each of the following areas: family violence, poverty, mental health and lack of child care;
- On average, families had 11 risk factors (out of 33 possible) at program intake; however, **families that spent 12 months in the Relief Nursery reduced their level of risk by 21%**

Relief Nurseries Have Positive Outcomes for Families

Parenting: Relief Nurseries work to stabilize families and improve the quality of parent-child interactions. Research on early brain development has clearly documented that engaged, nurturing parenting supports the early attachment relationships that are critical to children's healthy development, while harsh, disengaged, and unpredictable parenting is associated with child maltreatment and other negative outcomes (Zeanah, Boris, & Larrieu, 1997).

Relief Nurseries improved parenting among parents who received services for one year (see Figure 2). Parents in Relief Nurseries also showed a 117% increase in how often they read to their young children, a critical activity that provides the foundation for later language and literacy outcomes.

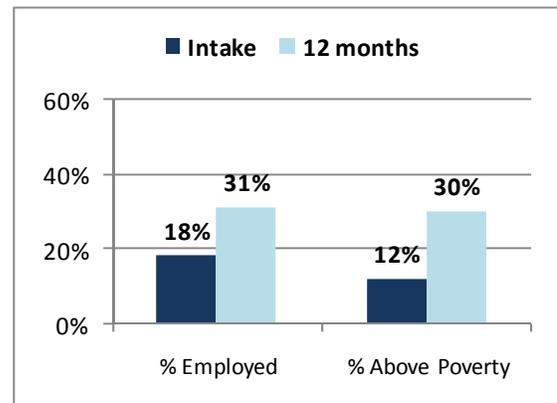
Figure 2. Increased Positive Parenting: Intake to 12 Months



Self-Sufficiency & Health Care. Results from this year's evaluation (see Figure 3) found that Relief Nurseries are having considerable success helping families achieve self-sufficiency, nearly doubling the number of families that are employed, and helping to pull families out of poverty.

Relief Nurseries are also successful in linking families to health care resources, resulting in a 27% reduction in use of costly emergency room services by Relief Nursery families who participated for at least 12 months.

Figure 3. Family Self-Sufficiency Outcomes: Intake to 12 Months



About the Relief Nurseries

Founded in 1976, there are currently 11 Relief Nurseries in Oregon, and four more in development. Relief Nurseries provide services to families at high risk of involvement with the child welfare system, including some who have current or previous child welfare involvement. While services vary among the Relief Nurseries, all Nurseries provide therapeutic early childhood education in classroom settings, home visits, parent education, support groups, respite care, case management, and assistance accessing other community services.

The results presented in this report are based on evaluation by NPC Research of data submitted for Fiscal Year 2008-09. Data were collected through a web-based data system developed by 2hSystems. The database provides a framework that allows Relief Nurseries to enter a consistent set of information about children and families. NPC Research worked with individual Relief Nurseries to standardize data collection protocols and tools and to improve data quality.