

# Reading for Healthy Families Final Evaluation Report

*Submitted to:*

**Iris Bell**  
Interim Transition Director  
Oregon Commission on  
Children and Families  
530 Center St. NE, Suite 100  
Salem, OR 97301

*Submitted by:*

**Jerod M. Tarte, M.A.**  
**Jennifer A. Aborn, B.S.**

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5100 SW Macadam Ave., Suite 575  
Portland, OR 97239-3867  
(503) 243-2436  
[www.npcresearch.com](http://www.npcresearch.com)



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*Submitted by*  
NPC Research

*Research Team*  
Jerod M. Tarte, M.A.  
Jennifer A. Aborn, B.S.

For questions about this report or project, please contact Jerod Tarte at  
(503) 243-2436 x 103, or [tarte@npcresearch.com](mailto:tarte@npcresearch.com).

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**R**eading for Healthy Families (RFHF), a partnership of the Oregon State Library and the Oregon Commission on Children and Families was supported by collaborative grants from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and The Oregon Community Foundation.

The goal of the RFHF project was to train Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon home visitors (referred to as FSWs in prior reports) and children's library staff to implement the Every Child Ready to Read @ your Library® early literacy curriculum in their work with parents. By training staff to deliver this curriculum to parents, it was expected that parents, in turn, would improve their ability to foster early literacy development in their children.



### A Training Resource

Prior to the RFHF Training, only 27% (24% of home visitors and 32% of librarians) of the participants reported having received training in early literacy curriculum in the past 2 years.

- This striking low percentage of staff reporting prior curriculum training speaks to the current project's value as a training resource to those professionals providing early literacy training to families.

### Program Implementation

The goal of the RFHF project was to train 300 Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon home visitors and Oregon State Library children's library staff. Further, it was expected that within 12 months of the final RFHF training (April 2012), these staff would present the RFHF curriculum to 4,500 families in Oregon. During the course of this project:

- A total of 294 staff, **98% of expected**, were trained.
  - 177 home visitors and 117 children's librarians participated in one of the 13 RFHF curriculum trainings<sup>1</sup> provided during the project.
- A total of 8,348 education sessions, **186% of expected** and 3,933 families, **87% of expected**, received an education session.
  - Children's librarians presented 2,804 education sessions to approximately 2,329<sup>2</sup> families.
  - Home visitors presented 5,544 education sessions to 1,604 unique Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon families.

<sup>1</sup> Additionally, staff from two community agencies not part of the current RFHF project sent staff to audit the training, including three staff from Coos County Even Start and one staff from Lane County Relief Nursery.

<sup>2</sup> The number of families is a "best guess." Librarians were not required to keep actual names of families served, so it was difficult to know from the library logs how many families were recorded multiple times.

- When asked (prior to the end of their evaluation commitment) if they would continue presenting the curriculum once their program requirements were met, 77% of trained staff said they would continue.
  - Of those staff completing the end of project survey, 96% indicated that they continued to present at least some aspects of the training to families.
- Librarians reported an increase in the activities provided by their library, specifically:
  - 93% reported their library provided book lists and early literacy brochures to families (from 82% prior to the training)
  - 88% reported having/adding a preschool component to the summer reading program for ages 0-5 (from 81% prior to the training), and
  - 88% reported having age-specific story times (from 81% prior to the training).
  - Perhaps the most startling overall increase was the report of 82% providing early literacy training for parents (from 48% prior to the training).
- Home visitors reported an increase in frequency of engaging in a variety of different early literacy activities with families, with 90% or more reporting they:
  - Provided opportunities for babies to play with books (95%; from 89% prior to the training),
  - Helped children learn to open and practice handling a book (92%; from 84% prior to the training).

## Service Delivery

Of the 8,348 education sessions presented by trained children's librarians and home visitors, it was clear that a variety of session content areas were being presented to families. For both types of staff, the most frequently presented education sessions reported were "Print Motivation" and "Reading Books." These two education session types were also reported by both staff as the easiest to present and which families were most likely to engage.

Home visitors, on average spent about 15 minutes per education session, whereas librarians tended to spend a bit longer—about 30 minutes per education session.

### Giveaway Books & Library Outreach Funds

- In all, 2,699 unique families received a total of 4,116 books.
  - 93% of staff reported that the family/child seemed interested/excited in the giveaway book.
  - 71% of staff felt that the giveaway book "corresponded well" to the education session being presented to the family.
- 32 Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon programs and 37 libraries submitted plans for using library outreach funds. The use of funds included:
  - Transportation vouchers (gas cards, bus tickets) so that families could travel to the library,
  - Offsetting fees for a library card some families had to pay because of their address proximity to the library,

- Reducing/eliminating existing library fines for families who were prevented from checking out materials,
- Reimbursing staff mileage for travel to family groups in which presentations about early literacy were delivered

## **Child and Family Outcomes**

Changes in early literacy behavior were compared for parents who had received at least one RFHF Education Session versus those families who had not received any. Parent surveys were completed every 6 months by parents participating in the Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon program, and provided confidentially to NPC for analysis. Results found that families whose home visitors presented the RFHF curriculum to them were significantly more likely to be engaged in several key early literacy activities at the focus of the RFHF project compared to families who have not received RFHF education sessions. In general, these families tended to receive about three education sessions, on average, so some of these outcomes may be due to the family receiving a “higher dosage” of the program than originally conceived. Specifically, parents who received at least one RFHF education session were significantly more likely to:

- Tell stories and talk about activities with their child,
- Read or look at books together with their child,
- Have a library card for their child,
- Attend a story time at the library in the last month,
- Check out materials from the library for their child,
- Ask the child what will happen next in a story, when reading together,
- Help the child learn new words from a book,
- Relate the story they are reading to something in the child’s experience,
- Have a child that pretends to read along (when parent reads with child), and
- Have a child participate in reading by asking questions, turning pages, or acting out parts of a book.

## **Agency Partnerships**

The majority (77%) of staff reported partnering with the other agency ‘at least once’ when providing literacy information to families. “Coordinating a story time effort at the library” was the most frequently reported activity by both staff.

Staff described both advantages and obstacles to developing partnerships between Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon and the State Library during this project. Common advantages to the partnerships included:

- Reaching families that wouldn’t otherwise become engaged with the library,
- The opportunity for families to participate in events and other resources offered by the library and/or sharing in the events of the other agency,
- The professional relationship-building that occurred among staff in the two agencies, and
- The opportunity for families to receive multiple sources of education around early literacy.

Staff also discussed obstacles they encountered that hindered their partnerships, including:

- The time and coordination efforts that needed to occur (for both library and Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon staff) in order to hold a simultaneous event or coordinate a library visit with a Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon family,
- Feeling that the other agency in the partnership was not interested in partnering together, and
- Additional barriers such as families disinterest in the library, language barriers, and/or obstacles families faced in obtaining a library card.

## **Sustainability**

- Managers reported that the majority of their current employed staff (86%) had received ECRR training during the RFHF trainings.
  - Of the new staff joining after the trainings, 83% had received some type of training and or materials to familiarize themselves with the ECRR curriculum.
- About half (47%) of the managers reported that there was a curriculum other than ECRR that they encouraged their staff to use. Most frequently this curriculum was “Parents as Teachers (PAT)” (62%).
- Despite the support of many managers in the use of other curricula, 96% of staff said they continued to present some aspects of the ECRR curriculum to families. However, two-thirds reported that they also used the PAT curriculum.
- As attributed to the RFHF program, staff reported more confidence engaging in various types of early literacy education activities including:
  - Answering parents questions about early literacy (80% of staff reported feeling more confident)
  - Talking about and advocating for early literacy to peers, supervisors and stakeholders (78% felt more confident), and
  - Working with high-risk families around reading and early literacy (70% felt more confident).
- While a majority of staff (62%) continued partnerships with the other agency they trained with (despite the project being “officially” over), a notable percent (42%) reported partnering with new agencies to provide early literacy activities.

## Conclusions

Outcomes for RFHF show a number of successes: training 294 staff (of whom only 27% reported receiving any early literacy training in the past 2 years), presenting 8,348 education sessions to 3,933 families, and providing 4,116 books to 2,699 families!

Staff made changes to ensure the sustainability of early literacy education for families. Specifically, children's librarians reported more early literacy resources available at their libraries (including book lists and early literacy brochures as well as early literacy training for parents, child-care providers, and teachers). Home visitors reported that they provided more opportunities for babies to play with books and help children practice how to use and handle books. Additionally, managers for Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon and the library assured that early literacy knowledge found its way into the hands of new staff. Managers reported that 83% of staff hired after the RFHF trainings received some form of the ECRR training or materials.

Further, and possibly most strikingly, results showed that families who received RFHF education sessions were significantly more likely to be engaged in several key early literacy activities as compared to families who had not been exposed to the curriculum. These activities included telling stories and talking about activities with their child, reading and looking at books together with their child, and having a library card for their child. While some of the changes in staff behavior and knowledge between the pre and post-test were less pronounced, the changes in family's early literacy behavior may speak to continuous quality improvement by the programs. Specifically, these family outcomes may in part reflect more subtle but ongoing changes in staff understanding early literacy, and how early literacy topics and activities are integrated into ongoing work with families.

Partnerships among the two agencies, despite the time consuming nature of partnerships, continued to occur. The majority of staff (77%) reported successfully partnering with the other agency during the course of the evaluation, and many (62%) reported those partnerships were still in place, as well as partnerships with new agencies. Staff believed these partnerships provided opportunities for parents to engage in library services they otherwise would not have sought out, introduced new families to the library, and provided professional support among librarians, home visitors, and other professionals with a vested interest in bringing early literacy to Oregon families.



## INTRODUCTION

**R**eading for Healthy Families (RFHF), a partnership of the Oregon State Library (OSL) and the Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) was supported by collaborative grants from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and The Oregon Community Foundation. Program staff from two statewide organizations participated in this project: (1) OCCF's Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon Program— a Multi-Site System fully accredited by Healthy Families America (HFA)<sup>3</sup>, and (2) staff from the Oregon Library Association's Children's Services Division, which provide support and continuing education for Oregon's children's librarians and support staff who work in children's services.



The purpose of RFHF was to ensure that every Oregon child entering kindergarten is ready to learn to read. The project taught parents how to help their children develop early literacy skills that are critical components of school success.

Parents spend more time with their child than anyone else, and thus they have the greatest potential to impact their child's development and learning. The goal of the RFHF project was to train Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon home visitors and children's library staff to implement the Every Child Ready to Read @ your Library® curriculum in their work with parents. By training staff to deliver this curriculum to parents, it was expected that parents, in turn, would improve their ability to foster early literacy development in their children. After being trained in RFHF, home visitors and children's library staff would be better able to teach parents:

- What early literacy skills children need to have before kindergarten.
- How children learn those skills.
- How to read to babies and active young children.
- How to provide other experiences that develop early literacy skills.
- How to access resources that can help them support their children's early literacy.

RFHF training for Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon home visitors and children's library staff began in October 2008 and continued through April 2011. Staff participated in two trainings over a 4-month period. At the time of this report, ongoing support for Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon home visitors and children's library staff is provided via Web site resources, an electronic discussion list, and consulting services provided by the OSL.

The evaluation documented program implementation and parent outcomes. Indicators of program implementation included: the quality of training provided to participants, the number of participants trained, the number of families who received training from the home visitors and librarians, and identified barriers and facilitators to delivering the curriculum to high-risk families. Parent outcomes included the frequency of parent-child literacy activities, family engagement with books, and family use of library services.

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<sup>3</sup> HFA accreditation was granted to HS/HFO for following HFA's evidence-based home visiting model that is shown to reduce child abuse and neglect, as well as impacting outcomes related to school readiness, child health, wellness and safety and family self- sufficiency.

## The Reading for Healthy Families Training Curriculum

The first session was a 2-day training during which an adapted Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library (ECRR) curriculum<sup>4</sup> was presented by a standardized trainer. Volunteer Site Coordinators facilitated networking and communication for the attending home visitors and children's library staff, as well as provided logistical recommendations and support to the RFHF project coordinator during the trainings. Home visitors and children's library staff practiced how to deliver Parent Education Sessions either during home visits or at library programs. Parent Education Sessions focused on six early literacy skills (describing why they are important and how children learn) and developmental skills (providing things parents can do with their children with books related to reading books, dialogic reading, and phonological awareness games) including:

- Print Motivation: a child's interest in and enjoyment of books,
- Vocabulary: knowing the names of things to help children understand what they've read,
- Print Awareness: knowing how to follow the words on a page, and knowing how to handle a book,
- Narrative Skills: the ability to describe things and events, and to tell stories,
- Phonological Awareness: the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words,
- Letter Knowledge: knowing that letters are different from each other, that they have different names and sounds,
- Reading Books: how to enjoy reading books by selecting age-appropriate books for the child,
- Dialogic Reading: how to read picture books with 2- and 3-year-olds to increase language development and develop pre-reading skills in children,
- Phonological Games: how to help children hear the different parts or syllables that make up words and to improve children's ability to say whether or not two words have the same or different first sound.
- Early Brain Development: healthy brain development and how it relates to learning.

Approximately 4 months after the first training, participants reconvened for another 2-day training that focused on various special topics including: bilingual language development, media literacy, special-needs children, difficult to engage parents (Year One), early brain development and media literacy (Years Two & Three). These special topics were specifically requested by participants during the first training session. Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon and library supervisors attended the second training specifically to work on developing and strengthening partnerships between programs, including a special presentation on "The Basics of Partnerships, Advocacy and Marketing." During the training, participants developed strategies designed to sustain their partnerships long term, and to improve the connections between the organizations. RFHF gave all supervisors Public Relations kits which were used in the training to review useful information on advocacy, fund development, and partnership-building for RFHF success.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/ecrr/index.cfm>



## CERTIFIED EVERY CHILD READY TO READ TRAINING

During the course of the RFHF project there was increased interest from members of the early childhood community to be part of the Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) training. A state level meeting during the second year of the project culminated in an agreement to open the Training of Trainers to Oregon Registry trainers, Head Start, and the child care system. Thirty-five community members (representing libraries, Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon programs, Head Start, child care resource and referral programs, child care centers, and independent trainers and consultants) received the training to become Every Child Ready to Read Standard Trainers.

At the ECRR Training of Trainers, participants received information about the RFHF project history, information about the Oregon Registry Professional Development/Training system, and ECRR curriculum and resources. The trainers met the State of Oregon child care and education criteria for certified Oregon Registry ECRR Standardized trainers. As a certified ECRR trainer, these community members are now able to provide ECRR workshops to any audience in any Oregon location.



## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES

### Trained Staff

Upon completion of the third year of the project, it was expected that a combined total of 300 children’s librarians and home visitors would have attended the RFHF curriculum training.

**Trainings were provided to 294 staff—98% of expected.** Table 1 describes the number and program/library location of participants trained.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1. Participants Trained**

Counties Trained	Initial Training Date	# Children’s Librarians	# Home Visitors
Washington	October 2008	24	25
Benton, Lincoln, Linn, Polk	October 2008	9	15
Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler	November 2008	10	9
Grant, Harney, Morrow, Umatilla	January 2009	11	12
Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, Yamhill	October 2009	7	10
Douglas, Lane	November 2009	8	20
Coos, Curry	December 2009	5	8
Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake	January 2010	15	13
Multnomah	October 2010	7	25
Clackamas, Marion	November 2010	12	23
Jackson, Josephine	December 2010	7	11
Baker, Malheur, Union, Wallowa	January 2011	2	6
<b>Overall Total</b>		<b>117</b>	<b>177</b>

### Staff Training Surveys

At the beginning of the first training, children’s librarians and home visitors were asked to complete a pre-training survey. This survey was designed to assess participants’ initial understanding of developmental milestones as they related to early literacy, to allow participants to describe other trainings they had recently received in early literacy, and to either describe activities their li-

<sup>5</sup> Additionally, staff from two community agencies not part of the current RFHF project sent staff to audit the trainings, including three staff from Coos County Even Start and one staff from Lane County Relief Nursery. These participants were not included in the participants training counts in Table 1.

brary currently offered in order to engage children in the library (library participants) or describe early literacy activities that currently took place with families (home visitors).

Approximately ten months after their initial training, all participants were emailed a link to complete a post-training web-based survey. The survey inquired about the literacy activities participants had been doing with families, knowledge about key early literacy activities and child development, which resources participants found helpful, and participants' experiences partnering with other agencies. Multiple follow-up emails were sent to staff, encouraging them to complete the survey. Data comparing participants' knowledge and behavior at pretest to follow-up are described below.

At the time of analysis, 165 home visitors and 119<sup>6</sup> library staff completed the pre-training survey on the first day of the training. Of those staff, 70 (42%) home visitors and 67 (56%) library staff completed the post-training survey. An additional 13 home visitors and eleven library staff submitted post surveys that could not be matched to pre-training surveys either because (1) a pre-training survey was not submitted, or (2) a participant used a different name or worker ID number on the two different surveys. While not included in pre-training/post-training comparisons, these additional surveys are included in analyses unique to just the post-training survey.

### EARLY LITERACY TRAININGS

On the pre-training survey, participants were asked to list any early literacy curriculum trainings they had received in the past 2 years. Approximately one fourth of all participants (27%<sup>7</sup>) reported having received an early literacy curriculum training within the past 2 years. From this data, it was clear that the Every Child Ready to Read @ your Library® curriculum was filling a much needed training gap.

"I applaud the people who put so much thought and energy into this program."

~ Home Visitor

### AGE-SPECIFIC LITERACY ACTIVITIES

On both the pre- and post-training survey, children's librarians and home visitors were asked to identify the age range most appropriate to begin eight different early literacy activities with children. While there was a slight decrease in the number of staff correctly identifying the most appropriate age for children to read a picture/board book or for encouraging a baby to babble and mimic sounds, the majority of staff correctly identified the most appropriate age for both of these activities. Fewer staff correctly identified the most appropriate age for the remaining six activities (10-32%); however for five out of the six remaining activities, staff increased their correct identification of the most appropriate age over time. In general, participants tended to underestimate the ages that children could be expected to engage in early literacy activities.

It is important to consider that different children may have the ability to engage in different literacy activities at different developmental stages, however, the stages and activities described on the survey are typical of those discussed in the RFHF curriculum trainings. Further, it may be that because of the lag between receiving the training and the follow-up survey, participants were less likely to recall these age-specific details. Table 2 describes the ages participants identified as

<sup>6</sup> According to training data, only 117 children librarians have been trained. It is possible that the librarian pre-survey was completed by two home visitors or staff from other agencies and submitted on the wrong form in error.

<sup>7</sup> Approximately 24% home visitors and 32% children's librarians reported receiving trainings in the prior two years.

being appropriate to begin the various early literacy activities. Appendix A, Table A1 shows the differences between home visitor and librarian responses.

**Table 2. Participants Identification of Appropriate Ages for Early Literacy Activities**

Activity	Most Appropriate Age Range	Pre-Survey	Post Survey	Knowledge Change?
		% Correct	% Correct	
Read a picture/board book to a child	0-12 months	99% (134)	96% (132)	Decrease
Encourage a child to babble and mimic sounds	0-12 months	98% (130)	97% (131)	Decrease
Look at a cover of a book and ask the child what he/she thinks the story will be about	37-48 months	18% (24)	32% (43)	<b>Increase</b>
Ask a child to think of a word that rhymes with another	49+ months	19% (25)	27% (37)	<b>Increase</b>
Ask a child to “read” you a story to see if he/she knows how to handle a book	25-36 months	23% (31)	20% (27)	Decrease
Ask child to name objects in illustrations	19-24 months	14% (18)	19% (26)	<b>Increase</b>
Ask a child to tell you a story	37-48 months	9% (12)	15% (20)	<b>Increase</b>
Ask a child to point out specific letters in text	49+ months	5% (6)	10% (14)	<b>Increase</b>



## PARTICIPANT CHANGES IN EARLY LITERACY ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

When presented with a list of 11 different early literacy activities and asked which activities they engaged in most frequently with families, it was clear that many home visitors already engaged in a variety of the activities with families at the time of their pre-training survey. On the post-training survey, home visitors reported an increase in the frequency of performing 5 of the 11 activities with families. A majority (90+%) were providing opportunities for babies to play with books, helping children learn how to handle books, encouraging families to use the library, and read with young children. Fewer (less than half) of the home visitors reported inviting children to tell stories, act out stories, or identify letters. While home visitors traditionally work with younger (0-3) children, for whom some of the activities may not be age appropriate, these results provide useful information about some areas in which home visitor practices related to early literacy supports could be strengthened. Table 3 describes the frequency of activities home visitors reported engaging in with children and families.

**Table 3. Home Visitor Self-Reports of “Frequent or Very Frequent” Activities with Families**

Activities currently engaged in with families	Percent doing activity (Pre Survey)	Percent doing activity (Post Survey)	Change over time?
Provide opportunities for babies to chew on, pat, grab, and play with books (n=64)	89%	95%	<b>Increase</b>
Help children learn how to hold or open a book and let them practice handling a book (n=64)	84%	92%	<b>Increase</b>
Encourage families to check out books from the library (n=63)	84%	89%	<b>Increase</b>
Read with children 0-2 years old (n=64)	84%	89%	<b>Increase</b>
Sing songs, do finger-plays, say nursery rhymes, or play phonological games to help children hear and play with smaller sounds in words (n=64)	70%	70%	No Change
Identify items in pictures and ask “what” questions to help children learn new words and their meanings (n=64)	58%	52%	Decrease
Help children notice print in books and in the world around them (n=64)	42%	50%	<b>Increase</b>
Ask children open-ended questions when reading to them (n=63)	52%	51%	Decrease
Invite children to describe things and activities in their own lives to practice telling stories and ask follow-up questions to expand their narrative skills (n=64)	36%	36%	No Change
Invite children to participate in stories by asking them to help you list items in cumulative stories, do a hand motion during the refrain of repetitive stories, or act out the story in some way (n=64)	44%	34%	Decrease
Identify letters, talk about their similarities and differences, and ask children questions about letters to help them learn about letters (n=63)	22%	22%	No Change



When presented with a list of 14 activities their library could offer to young children, only four activities were reported by at least 80% of the librarians, however, on the post training survey, the number of activities reported by at least 80% of the librarians increased to eight. In fact, librarians reported increases in eleven of the 14 library activities. Perhaps the most striking change occurred in activities geared towards early literacy training for parents, childcare providers, and teachers. On the pre-training survey, only 48% of librarians reported their libraries offered this service, compared to 82% on the post-training survey (approximately ten months later)! This data, in addition to demonstrating that many libraries provide multiple activities for families, also identified areas libraries could provide additional support to families. Table 4 describes the frequency of activities libraries offered to young children.

Even though staff collectively showed positive changes in behavior and knowledge between the pre and post-test, some of the changes may seem less pronounced than expected. However, it is important to note that improving early literacy among Oregon families has been a focus of these agencies for some time. The positive changes in family outcomes related to early literacy behavior (described later in this report) may be due, in part, to the continuous quality improvement by these programs and their staff in the work they do with families.



**Table 4. Librarian Self-Reports of Activities for Young Children**

<b>Activities currently provided by the library (n=67)</b>	<b>Percent doing activity (Pre Survey)</b>	<b>Percent doing activity (Post Survey)</b>	<b>Change over time?</b>
Book lists and early literacy brochures, handouts, and bookmarks are located in a highly visible spot and available for parents to take	82%	93%	<b>Increase</b>
Preschool component to the summer reading program for children 0-5 years old who listen to books read aloud by their caregivers	81%	88%	<b>Increase</b>
Family story times for parents to bring children 0-5 years old	90%	88%	Decrease
Age specific story times (baby lap-sit, toddler time, pre-school story time)	81%	88%	<b>Increase</b>
Outreach to childcare providers, preschool teachers, or Healthy Start where you present story times, provide early literacy training, circulated library books or other service	75%	84%	<b>Increase</b>
Early literacy training for parents, childcare providers, and teachers	48%	82%	<b>Increase</b>
Library cards for everyone (babies, toddlers, and preschoolers too!)	73%	81%	<b>Increase</b>
Educational toys (puppets, doll house, puzzles, table-top toys, etc.)	73%	78%	<b>Increase</b>
Special programs appropriate for children 0-5 years old: baby signs, puppet shows, musical guests, holiday or special occasion events	78%	78%	No Change
Book and activity kits containing a variety of material (books, DVD, music CD, toys, etc.) on a particular topic such as animals, transportation, going to the doctor, or making friends	66%	73%	<b>Increase</b>
Computer designated for children with early literacy games for children 4-5 years old	63%	73%	<b>Increase</b>
Bilingual programs/programs in other languages	52%	54%	<b>Increase</b>
New baby kits to all children born in your community (kits may include early literacy information, library information, library card application, free book, etc.)	30%	24%	Decrease
Audio book center (cassette/CD player, headphones, and space to sit to listen to and look at books)	10%	19%	<b>Increase</b>

## EFFECTIVENESS OF RFHF MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

On the post-training survey, home visitors and children’s librarians considered the effectiveness of 14 different resources available to trained participants as part of the RFHF curriculum training. The majority of all respondents (92%) indicated that the giveaway books were the most effective resource from the trainings, followed by children’s books (non-giveaway) used for illustrating concepts (69%) and workshop handouts (67%). Few of the materials and resources were described as being the “least” effective, including the six skills mini posters (37%) and workshop scripts (24%). Interestingly, there were some differences in the rating of materials by staff type. For instance, home visitors were more likely to rate children’s books more effective than library staff (80% compared to 58%), whereas library staff were more likely to rate workshop handouts as more effective than home visitors (76% compared to 58%). A description of the effectiveness ratings of each resource by staff type is presented in Appendix A, Table A2.

“I appreciate all the planning, adaptation, and effort that went into this program. It deepened the knowledge base for many individuals serving families in our community.”

~ Children’s Librarian

**Table 5. Participant Ratings of RFHF Training Material/Resource Effectiveness**

Resource	Most Effective	Least Effective
Giveaway books	<b>92% (148)</b>	0% (0)
Children’s books	<b>69% (111)</b>	1% (1)
RFHF workshop handouts	<b>67% (107)</b>	10% (16)
Felt board and felt stories	47% (75)	9% (14)
Music CD	45% (73)	3% (4)
Finger puppets	40% (64)	4% (7)
Point of contact parent activities	37% (60)	7% (11)
Professional books/resource books	37% (60)	9% (15)
RFHF workshop scripts	37% (59)	<b>24% (38)</b>
Local library information/card application	36% (58)	5% (8)
RFHF brochures	33% (53)	8% (13)
Early literacy DVDs	27% (44)	14% (23)
Travel vouchers	22% (36)	11% (18)
Six-skills mini-posters	12% (20)	<b>37% (60)</b>



## PRESENTATION OF EDUCATION SESSIONS

Home visitors and children’s librarians reflected back on the ten different education sessions they could have presented to families and described (1) how frequently they presented the different session types, (2) how easy was it to present the session, and (3) how engaged families were with the education session.

Generally, participants all reported that “Reading Books” and “Print Motivation” were most frequently presented, the easiest session to present, and the session which elicited the most family engagement. Table 6 describes the ratings of each education session in detail.

There were some differences by staff. For instance home visitors clearly had several education sessions that they presented most frequently, whereas library staff seemed to present a little bit of everything. Appendix A, Table A3 describes the frequency, ease and engagement ratings of the ten education sessions by staff type.

**Table 6. Participant Ratings of Education Session Presentations**

Education session	N	Presented frequently	N	Ease of presentation	N	Family engagement
Reading books	148	70% (104)	146	71% (104)	142	74% (105)
Print motivation	150	61% (92)	150	65% (98)	147	68% (100)
Early brain development	148	55% (82)	148	56% (83)	144	66% (95)
Vocabulary	150	55% (82)	150	63% (95)	147	63% (93)
Phonological awareness	148	41% (61)	146	53% (77)	144	58% (83)
Print awareness	149	55% (82)	150	62% (93)	145	65% (94)
Dialogic reading	145	37% (53)	145	49% (71)	141	52% (73)
Narrative skills	148	41% (61)	149	52% (77)	145	57% (83)
Phonological games	142	32% (45)	144	23% (59)	140	41% (57)
Letter knowledge	144	34% (49)	142	51% (73)	140	52% (73)

## BOOK GIVEAWAY AND TRAVEL VOUCHERS

### *Book Giveaway*

At the initial RFHF training, each participant received 15 “giveaway” books so that each of the expected 15 families receiving the curriculum would have a book as part of their participation in the education sessions. The number of giveaway books presented to families is reported in the section “Service Delivery,” below. However, two follow up questions about the giveaway books were included on the post-training survey:

- 71% of participants (73% of home visitors, 68% of children’s librarians) felt that the giveaway book “corresponded well” to the education session being presented to the family, and
- 93% of participants (94% of home visitors, 93% of children’s librarians) felt that the family/child seemed “interested/excited” in the giveaway book.

### ***Library Outreach (Travel Voucher) Funds***

At the RFHF training, participants and program supervisors were informed that \$200 for each participating Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon program and library was available for the purpose of helping provide library services to families and to get families to the library. During Year 1, transportation request forms described allowable travel costs as including:

- Bus tickets for Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon families
- Taxi vouchers for families
- Renting a bus or other vehicle to transport families to the library, and
- Mileage reimbursement for library staff traveling to provide library services to Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon families

Year One participants described barriers to families using the library, including families avoiding the library because they owe late fees and families not using the library because the library charges for a library card. In the subsequent years, the request for “transportation funds” was expanded to allow programs to use the funds for “library outreach” by applying the funds to (1) help pay for library cards for those families who would not normally obtain one due to cost, and (2) pay off (or help reduce) the fines incurred by families (see Service Delivery later in results for additional information on library outreach funds).

**Table 7. Number and Amount of Library Outreach Awards**

<b>Cohort year</b>	<b># HS/HFO programs</b>	<b># Libraries</b>	<b>Amount awarded</b>
1	11	6	\$3,300
2	10	17	\$5,600
3 <sup>8</sup>	11	14	\$5,000
Total	32	37	\$13,900

According to reports from the RFHF Program and State Coordinators, library outreach funds were provided to 32 Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon programs and 37 libraries. Outreach funds were typically awards of \$200 per program for use in removing barriers to families using the library. During Years Two & Three, programs submitted a summary of how they planned to use their outreach funds. The use of funds included:

<sup>8</sup> One community program attending the training, Even Start, requested and received library outreach funds although they were not part of the original study.

- Transportation vouchers (gas cards, bus tickets) or transportation reimbursement (program vehicle) to bring families to the library
- Offsetting out-of-district fees for obtaining a library card
- Reducing/paying off outstanding library fines
- Staff mileage reimbursement for transporting families/driving to program events
- Other incentives (such as giveaways or snacks during story time)

## PARTNERING

Part of the rationale for training home visitors and children's librarians together was to help establish a forum for creating partnerships among professionals focusing on early literacy work with children and families. As part of the post-training survey, participants reported on the partnerships they developed with the other agency.

- 77% of staff reported partnering with the other agency "at least once" when providing literacy information to families.

"I have nothing but high regard for the program and its values around early literacy and reading for children."

~ Home Visitor

Participants were asked to describe the types of activities that they successfully partnered on together. The most frequently reported partnership activity for staff was "organizing a story time effort at the library (50% of all respondents). Table 8 describes the frequency of successful partnership activities as described by participants within each agency.

**Table 8. Frequency of Successful Partnership Activities**

Partnership activity	% (n) home visitors reporting successful partnership	% (n) children's librarians reporting successful partnership
Coordinating a story time effort at the library	64% (53)	36% (28)
Organizing a library tour with parents	41% (34)	22% (17)
Organizing another library event with parents	33% (27)	28% (22)
Coordinating a story time at a non-library location	11% (9)	26% (20)
Organizing a library tour with staff	11% (9)	12% (9)
Presenting early literacy information to other staff	5% (4)	13% (10)

## CONTINUED PRACTICE

Within 12 months of the initial training, it was expected that participants would have provided at least one early education session to 15 different families. As a final part of the post-training survey, participants were asked whether they planned to continue implementing the RFHF education sessions with families once their expectations were met. Approximately 77% of the participants plan to continue delivering education sessions.<sup>9</sup>

## Service Delivery (Presentation of Family Education Sessions)

Two processes were implemented in order to monitor the number of families being presented the early literacy education curriculum.

First, because home visitors were already required to complete evaluation forms monitoring families' progress, an additional form for reporting Parent Education Sessions was added to existing data collection procedures. This Service Delivery Log identified the family by their Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon ID number<sup>10</sup> and described whether or not an Education Session was presented during a home visit in a given month. The form also recorded the duration of the Education Session, whether or not the family received a free book during the visit, and whether the family received a transportation voucher to get to the library.

"This was a wonderful opportunity to learn more about ways to reach families...A lot of helpful information to bring to families to encourage early literacy."

~ Home Visitor

Librarians record somewhat parallel information on an Excel spreadsheet. These spreadsheets were electronically submitted monthly to the State Library. The RFHF coordinator at the State Library compiled and shared information submitted on the spreadsheets with the evaluation team.

By June 2012 it was expected that 4,500 "unique" families in Oregon would have been presented an education session from either a children's librarians or home visitors who attended the RFHF curriculum training. **The project came close to meeting its expectation: 3,933 families--87% of expected—have received an education session.** However, the number of education sessions presented to families doubled the expected amount—**8,348 education sessions were delivered!**

## HOME VISITOR LOGS

Of the 177 home visitors trained, 157(89%) submitted data on families. Based on information submitted by the home visitors, 5,544 Education Sessions were presented to 1,604 different families—about three Education Sessions per family, and nine families per home visitor (submitting forms). On average, home visitors spent about 15 minutes presenting the Education Sessions (about 77% of session were 15 minutes).

<sup>9</sup> It is possible that some staff, despite not continuing to deliver "education sessions", may continue to implement strategies learned in the trainings such as using songs/rhymes and using finger puppets as a way to engage children and families in reading.

<sup>10</sup> Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon families are identified to the evaluation team using a unique ID number; family names are not disclosed to the evaluation team on surveys.

During those sessions, 1,301 families (81%) received at least one “giveaway book” (a total of 2,503 books were distributed, averaging about two per family)<sup>11</sup>, and 57 families (4%) benefited from funds reserved for library outreach.

The most frequent Parent Education Sessions presented were Print Motivation (24% of the sessions presented) and Reading Books (22%). Letter Knowledge was the least frequently presented Session (3%). See Table 9 for frequency Parent Education Sessions presented by home visitors.

**Table 9. Education Session Frequency (Home Visitors)**

Education session	Frequency of sessions	Percent of sessions
Print Motivation	1,317	24%
Reading Books	1,235	22%
Vocabulary	831	15%
Early Brain Development	561	10%
Narrative Skills	487	8%
Print Awareness	459	8%
Phonological Awareness	386	7%
Dialogic Reading	223	4%
Phonological Games	237	4%
Letter Knowledge	196	3%

## LIBRARY LOGS

Of the 117 children’s librarians trained prior to the end of the data collection period for this report, 99 (85%) submitted family training logs for inclusion in the evaluation. Based on the logs, 2,804 Education Sessions were presented to approximately 2,329 families (about one Education Session per family and approximately 24 families per librarian). It is important to note, however, that the number of families reported by library staff is not a unique count. Many families who attended library activities only listed a first or last name and some librarians coded families by a number rather than a name (so identifying unique families was difficult). Additionally, the same family may have been presented education sessions by different librarians over time, so each librarian would be able to count that family as unique for them.

The average time the Education Sessions were presented was about 30 minutes (about 63% of the sessions were 15-30 minutes). During those sessions, 1,613 “giveaway books” were distributed to 1,398 unique fami-

“It was great training. Although I had always advocated reading to babies, I didn’t realize until this training how absolutely ESSENTIAL it is. Thank you for the RFHF program and training.”

~ Children’s Librarian

<sup>11</sup> Program managers reported that for some families, the giveaway book was the first book the family owned for the child. Home visitors occasionally made decisions to give an additional book to those families with the greatest need for literacy materials in the home.

lies (approximately 60% of the families)<sup>12</sup> and 76 library outreach funds were distributed to 33 unique families (approximately 1% of families). The most frequent Parent Education Sessions presented were Print Motivation (28% of the sessions presented) and Reading Books (19%). Dialogic Reading, Vocabulary and Phonological Games were the least frequently presented sessions (4% each). Librarians reported an additional 95 session with families, but did not define which education session was emphasized. Table 10 describes the frequency of the Parent Education Sessions provided by children’s librarians.

**Table 10. Education Session Frequency (Children’s Librarians)**

Education session	Frequency of sessions	Percent of sessions
Print Motivation	764	28%
Reading Books	517	19%
Phonological Awareness	291	11%
Print Awareness	258	10%
Early Brain Development	188	7%
Letter Knowledge	188	7%
Narrative Skills	176	6%
Dialogic Reading	115	4%
Phonological Games	107	4%
Vocabulary	105	4%

## Parent Survey

As part of the Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon statewide evaluation, parents complete a survey when their child starts the program (typically at birth), and again when their child is 6 months, 12 months, 24 months, 36 months, 48 months, and 60<sup>13</sup> months old. So families could provide more information about early literacy activities they were doing with their child, the evaluation team added questions to the Parent Survey (for children ages 6 months and older). In addition to the existing questions about the frequency of telling stories and reading books, the revised Parent Survey asked parents whether they had a library card, how often they attended a story time, checked out materials from the library, engaged in certain early literacy activities with their child, and how their child responded to early literacy activities. Note that these outcomes were tracked only for parents served by the Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon program. Results from the Parent Surveys are described below.

<sup>12</sup> Since each trained librarian was given 15 books, if a librarians’ event exceeded 15 participants, there were occasions in which decisions were made to not disperse books to attendees (in order to prevent some families from not receiving one) but rather distribute some books as “door prizes” for answering questions right or volunteering for examples.

<sup>13</sup> Many Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon programs only serve children through age three.

## CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES

To examine differences in the frequency parents engaged in early literacy activities with their children, we constructed a matched comparison group using data from Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon families who had not received the RFHF curriculum, that is, no “Service Delivery” form was submitted on the family. We compared the frequency of early literacy activities of these parents to a matched group of families who had received at least one RFHF session (the “program” group). Many families (88%) whose workers presented parent education sessions to them had a 6-month or later parent survey submitted to the evaluation team. Research has shown that on tests of language development, children who were actively involved in the reading process had more advanced language and pre-reading skills.<sup>14</sup>

In order to determine the impact of the RFHF Education Sessions on families, Parent Survey responses were compared across the two groups. Of the 13 literacy-related items asked on the Parent Survey, ten of the 13 items showed a significant difference when comparing families who received RFHF education sessions to families who had no evidence an education session was delivered to them. The literacy-related items are described in Table 11. It is important to note, however, that these families received about 3 education sessions each (on average). It is possible then, that the impressive outcome results described here may be due to the family receiving a “higher dosage” of the program than expected.

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<sup>14</sup> Whitehurst, G. J., et al. (1994). “A Picture Book Reading Intervention in Day Care and Home for Children from Low-Income Families.” *Developmental Psychology*, 30(5), 679-689.

**Table 11. Literacy Outcome Differences for Parents Presented RFHF Education Sessions Versus Parents not Receiving Education Sessions**

Outcome indicator	RFHF mean	Comparison mean	Statistically Significant
<b>Response scale ranged from (1) not at all to (6) more than once a day</b>			
Sang songs	5.2	5.1	No
Told stories or talked about activities you are doing with your child	5.5	4.8	Yes
Read/looked at books	5.1	4.8	Yes
Play games (like peek-a-boo, finger-games, etc.)	5.5	5.5	No
<b>Response scale= yes/no</b>			
Have a library card for you or your child	57%	51%	Yes
<b>Responses ranged from (0) never to (3) more than once; Percent reported = At least once</b>			
Attended a story time at the library in the last month	23%	16%	Yes
<b>Response scale ranged from (0) never to (3) weekly; Percent reported = At least once</b>			
Check materials out from the library for your child	43%	32%	Yes
<b>Response scale ranged from (0) never to (3) often; Percent reported = At least sometimes</b>			
Ask child what will happen next in a story (when reading together)	67%	60%	Yes
Point out and talk about pictures in a book (when reading together)	97%	96%	No
Help child learn new words from a book (when reading together)	91%	86%	Yes
Relate the story you are reading to something in child's experience	76%	67%	Yes
Child pretends to read along (when reading together)	84%	74%	Yes
Child participates in reading by asking questions, turning pages, or acting out parts of a book	89%	80%	Yes



## Sustainability

In March 2012, all staff involved in the RFHF project were contacted via email to ask for feedback about their continued involvement with the RFHF project and the ECRR curriculum in general through a final online survey.

### SUPERVISOR/MANAGEMENT FEEDBACK

By May 2012, 41<sup>15</sup> individuals classified as supervisors and/or managers of staff trained by the RFHF project provided information about how their agencies continued to implement the ECRR curriculum.

- Supervisors reported that the majority (86%) of their staff trained in the ECRR curriculum were trained through the RFHF trainings.
- Almost two-thirds (64%) reported that new staff joined the agency since the original training. Training for these new staff was most frequently accomplished by:
  - Receiving copies of the current trained staffs' "binder materials" from the original training (22%)
  - Receiving a one-on-one training from one of their trained peers (17%)
  - Attending another RFHF training session during another cohort's training (15%)
  - Receiving other training opportunities (such as Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon New Staff Training, observing trained staff, participating in webinars/reviewing other materials available as part of ECRR V2 (15%).
  - Downloading resources from the RFHF Web site (10%).
- Approximately 7% of the supervisors reported no training plans for their new staff, and another 10% reported that staff hadn't been trained, but there was a plan to train those staff (mostly involving one-one training/"shadowing" with currently trained staff, and reviewing materials from the binders given to staff in the original training).
- Almost half (47%) of the supervisors reported that there was a curriculum other than ECRR that they encouraged their staff to focus on, including: Parents As Teachers (PAT) (62%), Raising A Reader (23%), Mother Goose Asks Why (8%), and Early Literacy Story Time (8%).
- When describing the proportion of time staff are encouraged to spend on ECRR versus other types of early literacy curriculum, supervisors reported that, on average, about 30% (range = 5% - 75%) of the time is spent on ECRR, with 61% of the time spent on other curriculum (range = 20% - 95%).
- The majority of supervisors (97%) reported they would support their staff participating in an annual early literacy webinar. While a similar proportion would also support their staff attending an annual early literacy meeting, 65% felt they could support it only if out of area travel for staff was not involved.

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<sup>15</sup> Twenty-seven respondents were from Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon programs, 14 respondents were from library programs.

## STAFF FEEDBACK

Eighty-two staff (42 home visitors, 40 librarians) completed the final online survey inquiring about continued early literacy practices and sustainability efforts for the ECRR curriculum in their agency.

The majority of staff (96%) reported continuing to present at least some aspects of the ECRR curriculum to parents, including:

- Encouraging the family to visit the library (90%)
- Teaching parents how to use songs, rhymes and other activities as reading tools (90%)
- Helping parents read to their child regularly (84%)
- Bringing books to the parent and child that they could keep (70%)
- Distributing parent handouts and/or the point-of-contact activities from the RFHF binders (62%)
- Teaching parents how to use finger puppets, felt boards, and other materials to use as reading tools (56%)
- Presenting the RFHF PowerPoint slides to parents (23%)
- Assisting families with transportation to the library (22%)

Fewer staff reported no longer presenting the curriculum to the parent. Reasons included:

- “I stopped using the curriculum after I satisfied the evaluation reporting requirements” (10%)
- “There are other curricula that I use that I/my families like better” (20%)
  - Two thirds (67%) of staff using other curricula reported using “Parents as Teachers”, and 25% reported creating their own materials from the parts of the ECRR curriculum that worked best for them.
- “I did not feel like I had the support of my co-workers and/or supervisors to continue implementing the curriculum” (2%)
- Additionally, some staff provided additional comments for no longer using the curriculum. Most frequently, those issues fell into three general categories: (1) Reductions in staff time/changes in staff made adhering to the curriculum difficult (five respondents), (2) curriculum was overwhelming and required too much prep time (four respondents), and (3) parents had other preferences about what they wanted to cover (three respondents).

One area of interest was whether staff felt more confident about engaging in various types of early literacy activities after engaging with the curriculum. Large proportions of respondents reported feeling more confident answering parent questions, talking to others about early literacy, and working with high risk families. Fewer staff (but over half) reported increased confidence in using the more specific techniques and approaches. It is possible that staff feel more confident working and speaking more generally in regard to early literacy, but have more difficulty with the specifics involved in some of the approaches (such as “phonological” games and “dialogic” reading). Interestingly, library staff typically reported higher levels of confidence compared to home visitors (see Appendix A, Table A4).

**Table 12. Reports of Increased Confidence with Early Learning Activities**

<b>Changes in staff confidence with various early literacy activities</b>	<b>Proportion Reporting “Somewhat more confident” or “A lot more confident”</b>
	<b>Overall</b>
Answering parents’ questions about language development, early literacy, school readiness, education media, etc.	<b>80%</b>
Talking about and/or advocating for early literacy to your peers, supervisors, or key stakeholders	<b>78%</b>
Working with high-risk families around reading/early literacy	<b>70%</b>
Conducting story-time/sharing books with caregivers	69%
Doing phonological games and word play with children	67%
Using techniques of dialogic reading with caregivers	66%
Using techniques of dialogic reading with children	65%
Doing phonological games and word play with caregivers	64%
Helping parents find age-appropriate books for their children	64%
Singing songs, doing finger plays, and/or using flannel boards/puppets as early literacy tool with children	63%
Singing songs, doing finger plays, and/or using flannel boards/puppets as early literacy tool with caregivers	63%
Conducting story-time/sharing books with children	59%

Staff were also asked to identify areas in which they felt the RFHF program impacted the most families. Fewer staff than expected reported that the RFHF program impacted their families in some of the more “tangible” ways described on the survey. However, it is possible that since library staff tended to work primarily with families already going to the library, the impact of the program was less pronounced. Additionally, if librarians typically provide education sessions to “groups” of parents, knowing specific information about each family (such as if the session was the first library event, or if the giveaway book was the child’s first book) is more difficult to ascertain, especially given that a single librarian may see a family only once in this type of setting. Home visitors on the other hand, typically began their work with families either prenatally or at birth, so the home visitor was there to help shape the first early literacy endeavors for the family (such as the child receiving his or her first book and the parent sharing a book with the child for the first time). Additionally, home visitors typically worked with a family in the home, so it was possible they had more opportunity to discover specific information about that family.

**Table 13. Proportion of Staff Reporting RFHF Impact on the Majority of Families in Early Literacy Areas**

Impact of RFHF on children/families	Proportion Reporting “More than half” or “Almost all”		
	Overall	Home visitor	Librarian
<b>Home visitor Only:</b> Proportion of new families received ECRR curriculum	55%	55%	na
Giveaway book was the child’s first book	26%	43%	8%
Parent shared a book with their child for the first time	19%	29%	8%
Family became a “library user”	11%	14%	8%
Parents attended a library event for the first time	11%	10%	13%
Families received a library card	6%	5%	8%

Both home visitors and librarians were asked about their sustainability plans and any additional partnerships created to enhance and advance their agencies early literacy approaches.

- Almost two-thirds (64%) reported that their agency implemented the plan their supervisors began developing at the trainings for sustaining early literacy activities, and almost all of them (98%) continued to implement that plan.
- Almost two-thirds (62%) of the staff still partnered together on early literacy activities including:
  - 51% conducted story times or other special literacy events
  - 32% conducted parent library tours
  - 31% stayed in contact with staff they met at the training
  - 27% shared literacy event information with the other agency
- Just under half (42%) reported establishing partnerships other agencies. These agencies included:
  - Head Start (40%)
  - Child care centers/providers (26%)
  - Teen parent programs (19%)
  - Relief Nursery (17%)
  - WIC (7%)
  - Approximately 36% reported partnering with another type of agency not listed above. A review of the responses filled in showed that 73% of the “other” agencies written in were schools and/or daycares.
- The staff reporting partnerships with other agencies also provided information about the types of activities they did as part of those partnerships. The reported activities included:

“RFHF has opened my eyes to early literacy...I have had a wonderful experience and will continue to spread the word about the importance of early education and RFHF.”

~ Children’s Librarian

- Conducting story times (57%)
- Providing “giveaway books” for the families/providers to keep (43%)
- Presenting early literacy education sessions (40%)
- Distributing early literacy information (26%)
- Helping families get to the library/get a library card/check out materials (14%)
- Sharing books that have to be returned to the agency/library (14%)
- Hosting special early literacy events (12%)
- Conducting play groups (2%)

Finally, staff had the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback on a few questions. A summary of those responses follows:

**Tell us about a special early literacy event that you or your agency hosted to reach families in the community (what did you do/who did you reach?).**

A large proportion of both librarians and home visitors reported hosting events where at least a portion of the event time was devoted to story time for children and their families. Many of these events also included the opportunity for parents to receive free books and/or library cards for their children. Events and early literacy information sharing were conducted at various locations such as hospitals, high schools, libraries, Head Start programs, county fairs, and day cares. Those reached ranged from pregnant and teen moms to Relief Nursery and Head Start families to child care providers.

Several creative events were hosted to encourage parents to come to the library. One example was a Baby Dance Party where parents could come to the library and connect with their children through music, story and dance. Another special event aimed at getting moms and their babies to the library was a baby shower for new moms. Library staff did an infant story time, provided shower gifts that included board books, and introduced the new moms to the services available to them through their local library.

Many library and home visitors commented on their RFHF training impacting these special events. One library staff reported that they host story times where they “use Reading for Healthy Family information to teach parents and care givers how to turn everyday living into early literacy opportunities”. Another noted that “...because of the RFHF training, I was able to confidently and clearly articulate the importance of early literacy in our community and get our director and foundation members excited about early literacy.”

**Tell us about a recent literacy success story with a family**

Both home visitors and librarians widely reported that not only are parents more interested in reading to their children and reading more frequently, they shared stories about how much the children are interested in and enjoying the literacy experiences with their parents. Other noted success stories indicated that parents tend to be getting library cards more frequently and actually visiting the library more often, parents are demonstrating the effectiveness of singing to their infants, and parents understand the benefit to reading to their infant children.

One home visitor noted: “Many of my families proudly post pictures of their children enjoying books and speak often of their children's ‘love of books’.” Another home visitor said that during a home visit a child greeted her at the door with a book to read together, and that this particular family had previously thought reading to children was an activity that was just for older children.

Another success expressed by a librarian was the observation of many families returning to the library because of their outreach to preschool children.

### **What strategies have you used to successfully engage “high risk” families in early literacy?**

Several librarians indicated that connections and partnerships with other agencies, such as Relief Nursery, WIC, and Head Start, was one of their best strategies for reaching and engaging the high risk families. Some of these partnerships involved activities such as bringing a trained story time person into a Head Start classroom, having WIC conduct story time at a local library, libraries going into local preschools to conduct story time, and workshops presented at Head Start parent meetings. As one librarian noted, “The agencies that work directly with the families have the connection to build trust, and they are the greatest bridge to help our library reach out to families, so partnering on events has really worked.”

Other librarians commented on the benefit of connecting with families on a personal level as a good strategy, such as sharing information in a way that doesn’t make parents feel they are doing things wrong, and giving information in small doses. One librarian said: “The best strategy I have found is having families who are already successful coming alongside the high risk families and treating each other on equal footing.”

### **FOLLOW UP TRAININGS WITH TRAINERS**

According to documentation provided by the project coordinator, 18 individuals were trained in the ECRR curriculum and participated in at least one training event for the RFHF project during its 3 years of trainings. These trainers were contacted at the end of the project to determine if they conducted additional trainings to new audiences, not related to the RFHF curriculum.

Of the 18 individuals, 2 did not have working email addresses. Of the remaining 16, 7 (44%) had not provided any additional trainings; 4 (25%) did not respond. The remaining 5 (31%) reported providing a variety of trainings, including training staff from various agencies serving parents and young children, public trainings at the library, parent-child workshop trainings, and trainings through community and state colleges.

### **SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS OF THE STATE LIBRARY**

With the funding for the RFHF project ending in June 2012, continued support for local early literacy efforts will be provided indefinitely via resources on the Oregon’s State Library’s Web site, an electronic discussion list, and consulting services for Oregon librarians and Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon staff. Additionally:

- The RFHF Web site transitioned from providing support explicitly to RFHF participants (around training schedules and meeting their commitment to the program/evaluation) to an early literacy Web site that provides information and resources to all early childhood professionals interested in learning about and providing early literacy activities.
- The RFHF listserv has been transitioned from being restricted to RFHF participants to being open to any early childhood professional interested in networking and sharing resources related to early literacy. Since this transition about a dozen people (who were not original participants of RFHF) have joined the list.
- The Youth Services Consultant at the Oregon State Library continues to provide early literacy consulting to both library staff and Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon staff.

**MORE EFFORTS OF NOTE**

- Reference to RFHF Web site in Children's book: Heather McNeil's (Deschutes Public Library Youth Services Manager, RFHF alum and ECCR master trainer) forthcoming book, "Read, Rhyme and Romp" cites both the RFHF Web site, as well as Oregon State Library's early literacy Web site.
  - <http://www.abc-clio.com/product.aspx?id=2147511254>
- ECCR curriculum adapted by local "Reading for All" programs: With permission from the American Library Association, Yamhill County *Reading for All*, in partnership with the McMinnville and Newberg Public Libraries, has created an early literacy modeling DVD (in English and Spanish) for parents entitled, "Growing Readers: Helping your child get ready to read". The DVD's are based on the five key activities outlined in the Every Child Ready to Read at your library program and include: Talking, Singing, Reading, Writing and Playing. They are intended to be a message from parents to parent, modeling behaviors that can help prepare their child to be ready to learn upon entering kindergarten.
  - YouTube links forthcoming at: <http://www.maclibrary.org>
- RFHF Materials Used Beyond Oregon: Early childhood education instructors at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College provide printed copies Characteristics of Books and Book Sharing for Each Early Literacy Skill to their students in the Art, Music, and Language Arts courses.
  - <http://www.oregon.gov/OSL/LD/youthsvcs/reading.healthy.families/rfhf.manual/11c.resources/11c.1thr8.resources.pdf>



## CONCLUSIONS

The combined 4-year results of the RFHF project showed a number of successes. The project essentially reached the targeted number of staff trained (98% of expected), the number of education sessions presented to families well exceeds the minimum expectation by double (8,348 sessions), and the majority of families (87% of expected) has been presented an education session at least once. Trained staff reported an increase in engaging families in early literacy activities, and those families in turn, have shown greater literacy outcomes compared to families who have not received education sessions.

### Staff Trained

At the end of this project, all 12 scheduled RFHF curriculum trainings as well as an unplanned 13<sup>th</sup> (make up training) occurred. As planned, at least one staff from all 36 Oregon counties has been trained; with rare exception at least one Children's Librarian and one Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon Home Visitor from each county participated in the trainings. Over the course of this project, Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon programs faced major program budget cuts affecting the number of staff employed. These cuts were most evident in the second year of the project, as the number of staff trained dipped below that of expected. However, despite these cuts, the number of combined library and Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon staff who received the training (294) is just slightly below the expectation of the project (300), resulting in 98% of expected staff trained—due in part to diligent recruiting efforts on the part of the project coordinator and program stakeholders.

### Families Served

Because of this project, 3,933 families received the curriculum—about 87% of the expected 4,500 (expectations were based on 15 families per 300 trained staff). However, the number of education sessions provided (8,348), far exceed the number expected—by about double. Further, the percent of families reached is slightly higher (90%) when compared to the *actual* number of staff trained. Closer examination of the data shows that librarians, in general, exceeded the number of expected families (about 20 families per librarian<sup>16</sup>). However, because librarians were not required to keep names of parents participating in their curriculum, it is unknown how many of the families counted as “unique” were in fact be duplicate families. Also, librarians were able to count the same family more than once, if the family worked with two different librarians on two different occasions. The data from Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon presented a different picture: home visitors presented the curriculum to about 60% the expected number of families (approximately nine families per home visitor). FWS have unique families assigned to them, so duplication of services to families between home visitors would not occur in this context. One reason for home visitors serving fewer families may be related to more staff departures than anticipated during project planning. As noted above, Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon budget cuts resulted in an overall reduction of staff across the state. Many of these staff attended the training and were in the process of attaining their 15 families at the time of their lay off. Therefore, it is not expected that these staff could fulfill their training expectations. Additionally, when the estimates were suggested, it was assumed each trained home visitor would have at least 15 families on her or his

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<sup>16</sup> It is unknown from the data how many of the families receiving education sessions at the library would be considered “high-risk families” compared to those families that may have already been engaged in and attending library services.



caseload to work with. During the course of the evaluation we learned this was not the case for those staff either not working full time, or staff employed by programs located in counties with small service populations. Further, due to the high-risk nature of the clients they work with, home visitors were given the option to not present the curriculum to families dealing with difficult life situations that would make benefiting from the curriculum a challenge--this may also account for the lower than expected rate of families receiving the curriculum from home visitors. Home visitors may benefit from additional assistance identifying appropriate families on their caseload, as well encouraging supportive child development activities concurrently with activities designed to reduce family risk. However, despite the fact that home visitors presented education sessions to fewer families, they averaged more education sessions to each family—approximately three sessions per family. This suggests that Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon staff perhaps “offset” the number of families they were able to reach with the curriculum by providing the curriculum more intensively to those families they were able to reach.

At the training, staff were given 15 giveaway books each (one for each of the 15 families they would work with), a total of 4,380 books. Staff reported distributing approximately 4,116 books. Of the 3,933 families receiving the curriculum, approximately 2,699 families received at least one giveaway book. Staff frequently commented that for some of the families, the RFHF book was the first book that the child (and in some cases the family) owned. Feedback from program managers suggested that staff occasionally made decisions to provide more than one giveaway book to those families in the greatest need for literacy material in the home.

## **Staff Early Literacy Activities & Comprehension of Age Appropriate Behaviors**

On the first day of training, only 27% of participants reported having received an early literacy curriculum training within the past 2 years. It was clear from staff surveys administered prior to the first training session that many library and Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon staff were already engaged in several early literacy activities with children and families. However, the survey administered ten months after the first training session showed that staff engaged in even more of those activities. Some of the biggest changes for home visitors occurred in helping children notice print in books and in the world around them (50%, up from 42%), and helping children learn to hold or open a book and let them practice handling a book (92%, up from 84%). Children’s librarians reported the largest changes in their library providing early literacy training for parents, childcare providers, and teachers (82%, up from 48%), and having book lists, early literacy brochures and other literature available for parents (93%, up from 82%). These positive staff changes are encouraging for a couple of different reasons. First, the change (which was a behavioral practice for some and an organizational practice for others) occurred in a relatively short amount of time (10 months). Second, both librarians and home visitors are typically part of larger organizations that potentially have their own bureaucratic systems in which rapid change, such as that seen here, is not typically expected.

Librarians and home visitors also identified the most appropriate age to begin eight different early literacy activities. The activities geared towards very young children (reading a book to a child, encouraging babbling and sounds) were correctly identified by the majority (96%<sup>+</sup>) of staff on both the pre- and post-training surveys. The largest accuracy improvements were made in identifying the best time to look at the cover of a book and ask the child what he/she thinks the story will be about (32%, up from 18%), and asking a child to think of a word that rhymes with another (27%, up from 19%). In general, staff seemed to underestimate the ages most appropriate to begin various early literacy activities with children. Because children are different, a staff per-

son's experience with children who may be more advanced in skill—and thus can begin these activities earlier—may explain some of these results. Further, it may be that staff are (appropriately) offering activities that are slightly ahead of children's developmental trajectory in order to support and encourage their development, a technique known as “scaffolding.” This is appropriate as long as staff are careful not to build unrealistic developmental expectations in parents. A more in-depth review of the RFHF curriculum and how it presents developmental milestones to participants related to these activities should be conducted.

## Children and Family Outcomes

Families who received at least one RFHF education session from their home visitor were significantly more likely to (1) tell stories and talk about activities with their child, (2) read and look at books with their child, (3) have a library card for their child, (4) attend a story time at the library, (5) check out materials from the library for their child, (6) ask the child what will happen next in story, (7) help the child learn new words from books, (8) relate the story they are reading to something in the child's experience, (9) have children that pretend to read along when being read to, and (10) have a child that participates in reading by asking questions, turning pages, or acting out parts of a book.

While a few of the other items did not show significant differences between the families who received an education session from their home visitors and those who had not, it is notable that all of the items having to do with library use were significantly better for RFHF families.

Further, when considering the parent-level outcomes, it is important to remember that parents received (on average) only three 15-minute Parent Education sessions (less than an hour of early literacy training per family). The average “intervention” time of 45 minutes over a 12-month period is an unusually light “dosage” for a literacy program and should not be expected to have comprehensive or large impacts on parent's behavior—especially in the short term. However, these families received a “higher dosage” of the program (3 education sessions on average) than expected, which may account for some of these results. Further, improving early literacy among Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon families has been a focus for some time, so it's possible that these results speak to the continuous quality improvement by the programs in its work with families.

## Collaboration and Agency Partnership

Encouraging partnerships among Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon programs and the libraries was a key component of the RFHF project. Despite the fact that many staff commented that partnering was a time consuming process, 77% staff reported successfully engaging at least once in that partnership, and 62% reported continuing those established partnerships. Additionally, 42% of staff reported establishing additional partnerships with new agencies. The advantages of partnering were clear to staff: the partnerships allowed them to reach new families, introduce families to events and resources at the library, provide multiple opportunities and ways to educate families about early literacy, as well as to promote professional relationships among the other agency's staff.

## Sustainability

Several months before the end of the RFHF project, all participants and their managers/supervisors were contacted to respond to a survey related to the ongoing involvement with the RFHF materials and the ECRR curriculum.

Managers reported that the majority of their staff (86%) received the training, and 83% of new staff received some type of training or materials to familiarize themselves with the curriculum. Despite the large proportion of new staff receiving information about ECRR, a notable proportion (47%) of managers reported that there was another early literacy curriculum they encouraged their staff to use (PAT being the most frequently reported).

The majority of participants (96%) reported continuing to present some aspect of the ECRR curriculum. Additionally, almost two thirds (62%) of participants reported that they continued to partner with the other agency, and almost half (42%) have evolved their partnerships to include new agencies not part of the original trainings. Overall, staff report increased confidence in engaging in various types of early literacy activities, including answering parents questions about early literacy (80% of participants), talking about and advocating for early literacy to peers, supervisors, and stakeholders (78% of participants), and working with high-risk families around reading/early literacy (70% of participants).

## Summary

The overall outcomes for RFHF are positive given that some of the limitations of the available data/methodology (i.e., potential differences in characteristics of families served by Healthy Start/Healthy Families Oregon compared to the library, limited individual data available for library families, and statewide budget reductions impacting staff retention). The number of trained staff and served families was fairly congruent with the project expectations. Staff reported doing more literacy activities with families, and those families were more likely to be engaged in many key early literacy activities. Inter-agency partnerships among the two agencies provided opportunities for parents to engage in library services they otherwise would not have sought out, introduced new families to the library, and provided professional support among librarians and home visitors in bringing early literacy to Oregon families.

A few areas continue to need further attention. For instance, both home visitors and librarians seem to underestimate the ages most appropriate to begin various early literacy activities with children. Training materials should be reviewed to make sure these developmental milestones are given sufficient discussion during the trainings to assure staff don't have unrealistic expectations as to when children should be able to engage in literacy material. Additionally, participants consistently reported that the training materials were lengthy and took a lot of time to work through. Future training plans may want to consider using more concise background information and more specific "education session training" plans for staff. It is important to note, however, that during the course of the project, stakeholders used the feedback received about the materials and made adjustments to the materials for the next year's training<sup>17</sup>. Participants also consistently reported that successful partnering among agencies was time consuming. Agency supervisors need to work at identifying additional supports to encourage and enhance these partnerships, including additional clarity around the most appropriate staff to communicate with for establishing those partnerships.

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<sup>17</sup> See "Reading For Healthy Families Summary of Year 2 Evaluation Findings" for a description of changes made to materials for the Year 2 training, and "Reading for Healthy Families Year 3 Summary of Findings" for project stakeholder input into additional changes made for the Year 3 training materials.



## **APPENDIX A**



**Table A1. Identification of Appropriate Ages for Early Literacy Activities, by Staff <sup>18</sup>**

Activity	Participant	Pre-Survey	Post Survey	Knowledge Change?
		% Correct	% Correct	
Read a picture/board book to a child	Home visitor	99%	100%	Increase
	Librarian	100%	93%	Decrease
Encourage a child to babble and mimic sounds	Home visitor	100%	100%	No Change
	Librarian	95%	94%	Decrease
Ask a child to think of a word that rhymes with another	Home visitor	28%	33%	Increase
	Librarian	9%	21%	Increase
Ask child to name objects in illustrations	Home visitor	17%	23%	Increase
	Librarian	9%	15%	Increase
Look at a cover of a book and ask the child what he/she thinks the story will be about	Home visitor	17%	26%	Increase
	Librarian	19%	39%	Increase
Ask a child to read you a story to see if he/she knows how to handle a book	Home visitor	20%	19%	Decrease
	Librarian	27%	22%	Decrease
Ask a child to tell you a story	Home visitor	13%	12%	Decrease
	Librarian	5%	19%	Increase
Ask a child to point out specific letters in text	Home visitor	7%	10%	Increase
	Librarian	2%	11%	Increase

<sup>18</sup> For the above table, matched assessments were collected from 70 home visitors and 67 children's librarians.

**Table A2. Ratings of RFHF Training Material/Resource Effectiveness by Staff<sup>19</sup>**

Resource	Participant	Most Effective	Not Effective
Giveaway books	Home visitor	96% (80)	0% (0)
	Librarian	87% (68)	0% (0)
Children's books	Home visitor	80% (66)	1% (1)
	Librarian	58% (45)	0% (0)
Finger puppets	Home visitor	47% (39)	2% (2)
	Librarian	32% (25)	6% (5)
RFHF workshop scripts	Home visitor	19% (16)	34% (28)
	Librarian	55% (43)	13% (10)
RFHF workshop handouts	Home visitor	58% (48)	15% (12)
	Librarian	76% (59)	5% (4)
Felt board and felt stories	Home visitor	48% (40)	7% (6%)
	Librarian	45% (35)	10% (8%)
Music CD	Home visitor	55% (46)	4% (3)
	Librarian	35% (27)	1% (1)
Six-skills mini-posters	Home visitor	55% (46)	17% (14)
	Librarian	59% (46)	8% (6)
Local library information/card application	Home visitor	47% (39)	10% (8)
	Librarian	24% (19)	0% (0)
Point of contact parent activities	Home visitor	30% (25)	8% (7)
	Librarian	45% (35)	5% (4)
RFHF brochures	Home visitor	22% (18)	12% (10)
	Librarian	45% (35)	4% (3)
Professional books/resource books	Home visitor	29% (24)	16% (13)
	Librarian	46% (36)	3% (2)
Early literacy DVDs	Home visitor	28% (23)	15% (12)
	Librarian	27% (21)	14% (11)
Travel vouchers	Home visitor	21% (17)	15% (12)
	Librarian	24% (19%)	8% (6)

<sup>19</sup> Data included in this table are from 83 home visitors and 78 children's librarians.



**Table A3. Participant Ratings of Education Session Presentations by Staff**

<b>Education session</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Presented frequently</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Ease of presentation</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Family engagement</b>
Reading books	Home visitor	76	<b>83% (63)</b>	75	<b>80% (60)</b>	72	<b>75% (55)</b>
	Librarian	72	57% (41)	71	62% (44)	70	73% (51)
Print motivation	Home visitor	77	70% (54)	76	67% (51)	76	58% (44)
	Librarian	73	52% (38)	74	64% (47)	71	<b>79% (56)</b>
Early brain development	Home visitor	76	<b>83% (63)</b>	75	69% (52)	75	71% (53)
	Librarian	72	26% (19)	73	43% (31)	69	61% (42)
Vocabulary	Home visitor	77	66% (51)	76	62% (47)	76	55% (42)
	Librarian	73	43% (31)	74	65% (48)	71	72% (51)
Phonological awareness	Home visitor	75	39% (29)	73	47% (34)	74	47% (35)
	Librarian	73	44% (32)	73	59% (43)	70	69% (48)
Print awareness	Home visitor	77	64% (49)	76	62% (47)	75	57% (43)
	Librarian	72	46% (33)	74	62% (46)	70	73% (51)
Dialogic reading	Home visitor	74	34% (25)	74	45% (33)	73	37% (27)
	Librarian	71	39% (28)	71	54% (38)	68	68% (46)
Narrative skills	Home visitor	76	42% (32)	75	44% (33)	75	43% (32)
	Librarian	72	38% (29)	74	60% (44)	70	73% (51)
Phonological games	Home visitor	72	35% (25)	74	41% (30)	74	38% (28)
	Librarian	70	29% (20)	70	41% (29)	66	44% (29)
Letter knowledge	Home visitor	73	29% (21)	72	46% (33)	73	44% (32)
	Librarian	71	40% (38)	70	57% (40)	67	61% (41)

**Table A4. Increased Confidence With Early Learning Activities by Staff**

<b>Changes in staff confidence with various early literacy activities</b>	<b>Proportion Reporting “Somewhat more confident” or “A lot more confident”</b>	
	<b>Home visitor</b>	<b>Librarian</b>
Answering parents’ questions about language development, early literacy, school readiness, education media, etc.	76%	85%
Talking about and/or advocating for early literacy to your peers, supervisors, or key stakeholders	71%	85%
Working with high-risk families around reading/early literacy	68%	72%
Conducting story-time/sharing books with caregivers	64%	74%
Doing phonological games and word play with children	60%	74%
Using techniques of dialogic reading with caregivers	62%	69%
Using techniques of dialogic reading with children	63%	67%
Doing phonological games and word play with caregivers	57%	72%
Helping parents find age-appropriate books for their children	67%	62%
Singing songs, doing finger plays, and/or using flannel boards/puppets as early literacy tool with children	62%	64%
Singing songs, doing finger plays, and/or using flannel boards/puppets as early literacy tool with caregivers	64%	62%
Conducting story-time/sharing books with children	60%	59%