



Ready to Read

You Are Your Child's First Teacher



COLUMBUS  
**METROPOLITAN  
LIBRARY**

## **Phase 1 Evaluation Report**

**Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs**

**March 2012**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Voinovich School has a long history of serving the region and the state by building public leadership capacity and providing applied research and technical assistance. The Voinovich School works with a variety of local, regional and state government and non-profit agencies, helping them to better meet their mission of serving Ohio and its people. Dr. Lesli Johnson serves as the lead evaluator of this report. Research Associate Natalie Wilson and Senior Research Associate Margaret Hutzler assisted with the data analysis and organized the narrative for this report. Student Research Associates Renee Lewis, Randall Freeman, Tessa Barman, and Melissa Paptic assisted with conducting phone surveys. Randall Freeman also assisted with focus group training.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) implements the Ready to Read Corps, which developed in 2008, to educate parents and caregivers of children ages birth to five on pre-reading skills necessary for early literacy. Using a strong outreach strategy, 14 Corps staff target parents and at-risk children via workshops, home parties, train-the-trainer sessions, and waiting room visits in places such as food pantries, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) sites, government agencies, and medical offices. The intervention includes providing parents or caregivers a literacy kit, which is a tote that includes puppets, board books, foam letters, and easy tips for parents to help prepare their children for school. In formal trainings, parents and caregivers participate in a 45- to 60-minute presentation on early literacy skills and receive the literacy kit. Follow-up telephone contacts are conducted 1 to 2 months after the initial intervention and again at 3 to 9 months after. Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs researchers are evaluating the project and report the following year-one program successes:

- The library staff report that from 2009 to 2011 they have had 25,297 quality interactions which refers to an interaction between Corps staff and a customer during which the staff member introduces the Corps program and advertises library services. The quality interactions resulted in the distribution of 7,849 literacy kits via literacy intervention. Of those 7,849 literacy kits, 6,366 customers completed a post intervention survey.
- The majority of program participants who completed a post intervention survey are economically disadvantaged, indicating the program is reaching the intended population.
- The program is making progress toward the goal of 75% of children scoring in Band 2 or 3 on the KRA-L, based on a sample of 208 children assessed with the KRA-L in 2011, 63% of whom scored in Band 2 or 3.
- The Corps has developed partnerships with 88 entities such as Women Infants and Children sites (WIC), medical centers, free stores, settlement houses, schools, and government social services agencies.
- In the month or two following the intervention, the majority of surveyed parents/caregivers (77.5%) use the literacy kit at least once a week and 45% report they use the items in the literacy kit on a daily basis. Only 4.6% of parents/caregivers report never using the kit.
- After the intervention, 76.4% of parents or caregivers point out letters and numbers in signs, books and billboards to their children once a week or more, and 75.5% sing or rhyme with their children once a week or more<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that each parent or caregiver answered phone survey questions for each child that they have, so some adults are represented more than once.

- When surveyed 1 or 2 months after the intervention, 30.7% of participants report visiting the library at least once a week, and nearly double that percentage (60%) report that they read books to their child daily.
- The project is having a positive impact in that most parents/caregivers (from a sample) who report using the literacy materials continue to do so several months after the intervention. For every activity, 92% or more who practiced the activity at 1 or 2 months after the intervention still practiced it 6 to 9 months after the intervention. There was also an increase in the percent reading to their children on a daily basis and the percent visiting the library more than once a week increased from 11.9% to 22%.
- There is strong agreement among 5 of the 7 parent/caregiver focus groups that children are never too young for parents or caregivers to start working with them on early literacy skills. Responses from all of the groups reveal that participants receiving the intervention are learning literacy strategies to use with their children and are using the literacy kits.

### Challenges

- Not all data on participants and their children have been collected throughout the funding period. For example, birthdates were not initially collected. Additionally, some participants do not wish to provide requested data. Therefore, there are some challenges when aggregating, analyzing and reporting data.
- The intervention is designed to include follow-up telephone contacts with parents/caregivers. Unfortunately, reaching parents via telephone has been a substantial challenge: 28% of program participants are unreachable due to refusing participation in follow-up, disconnected telephones, and inaccurate phone numbers.
- Some parents clearly express concern about the need for bi-lingual literacy materials.
- It is a challenge to ensure availability of staff for all non-English speaking and ethnic communities.
- There was less clear understanding among English-as-a-second-language focus group respondents that children are never too young to begin early or pre-literacy activities. For example, some reported that children cannot learn when they are less than a year old. Additional emphasis on reaching and teaching these groups may be warranted.
- The Ready to Read Corps have found it challenging to balance literacy interventions along with office tasks. Allocating tasks like data entry, managing materials, and ordering literacy kits to staff members who are not in the field would reduce pressure and work load.
- Corps staff have had challenges with the technology in the field which can take time away from parents and create more post-visit office work.
- CML Ready to Read staff report that the process of issuing library cards could be made easier. They explain that more efficient and better technology would improve the process.

## EVALUATION DETAILS

### Methodology

Researchers on the Planning, Evaluation, Education, and Research (PEER) team at Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs serve as the evaluators for the Columbus Metropolitan Library's Ready to Read Corps. This first-year evaluation report will provide information on the effect of the program on the participants. Data from the Ready to Read Database, information from the program's management team, focus group findings with Ready to Read staff, and findings from 7 focus groups conducted by Ready to Read inform this report. The Ready to Read program has made substantial progress toward identified outcomes (Figure 1).

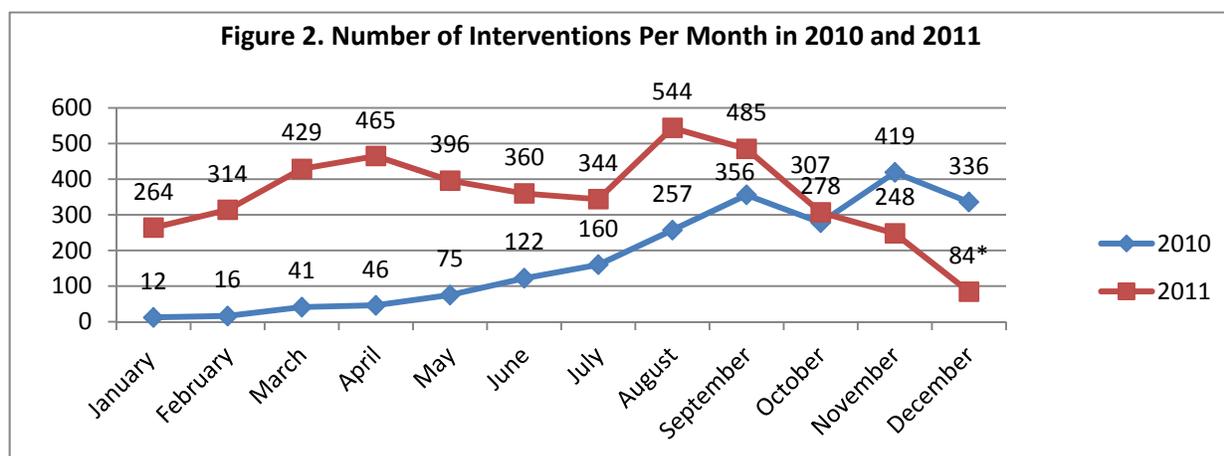
<b>Figure 1. Progress Toward Ready to Read Corps Identified Outcomes</b>	
<b>Identified Outcomes</b>	<b>Progress</b>
90% of parents/caregivers who participate in R2R will have increased knowledge of early literacy skills as measured by a post workshop survey.	Most parents/caregivers ( <b>84%</b> ) said they learned something from the intervention.
75% of parents/caregivers who participate in R2R will report that they intend to use the materials in the literacy kit at least three times per week.	<b>89.5%</b> of parents/caregivers report such intentions, exceeding the target.
There will be an increase in the number of library cards issued to parents with children birth to age five.	The R2R Corps issued <b>6,471</b> library cards between 2010 and March 13, 2012 (See Appendix 1). Further, the Westside, which staff report has historically had a lower usage rate, has one of the higher rates (46%) as of March 2012.
There will be an increase in the use of library cards by parents of young children who have participated in the R2R program.	6 to 9 months after the intervention, <b>10% more</b> participants report visiting the library with their child more than once a week. (Among a sample of 73 participants)
Within the targeted neighborhoods, there will be a decrease in the number of children entering kindergarten who rank in Band 1 on the KRA-L.	It is early to assess progress toward this goal because for the majority of sites only baseline data is available at the time of this report.
Among a random sample of children whose parents/caregivers participated in the program when the child was 3 or 4 years old, 75% of those children will be assessed in Band 2 or 3 as they enter kindergarten.	<b>63%</b> of a sample of 208 CPS children assessed with the KRA-L in 2011 scored in Band 2 or 3.

## Interventions

Corps staff members not only document the total number of interventions, but at the point of the intervention they also ask parents/caregivers to complete a post intervention evaluation and a survey that asks for demographic and contact information. Not all parents/caregivers agree to complete the evaluation or surveys. Therefore, the number who actually received the literacy intervention is higher. Corps staff report that they have distributed 7,849 literacy kits from 2009 to December of 2011. 6,366 participants did complete the surveys and the following information was culled from these contacts. A small number of parents/caregivers may have received the intervention more than once, so some of the 6,366 participants may be duplicates.

Library staff also report that there is substantial effort put forth to inform potential participants about the program and attempt to recruit them. For example, staff members report that they have had over 25,000 such interactions with the public from 2009 to 2011. Further, Ready to Read Corps has developed partnerships with 88 organizations and agencies that work with low socioeconomic families. These partnerships are vital to the program's ability to reach at-risk children. The two oldest Corps, Weinland Park-Parsons and Linden have developed the greatest number of partnerships (22 each) while the newest two Corps have the fewest. Corps staff continuously work to engage more partnerships to ensure the success of the program.

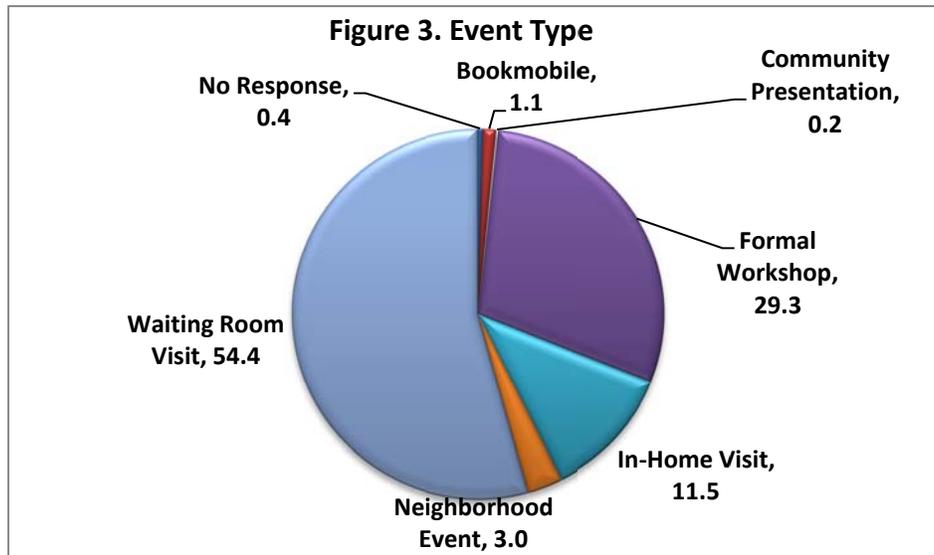
Corps staff is conducting numerous interventions each month and the expansion with additional



service areas and staff is evident (Figure 2).

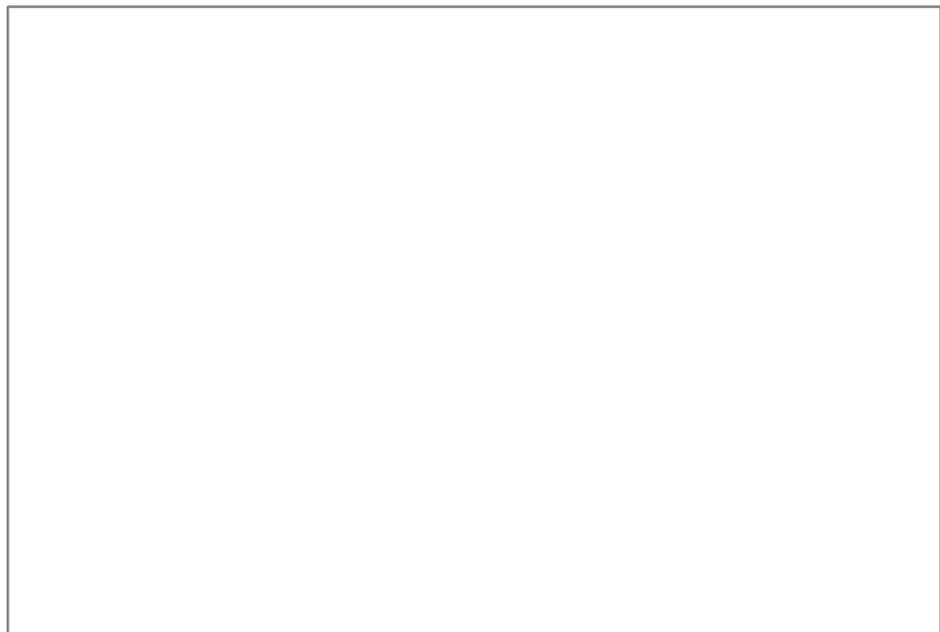
\* Note that some interventions that occurred in December 2011 were not yet entered into the database at the point of data extraction and therefore are not included.

Interventions take place in a variety of settings, but waiting room visits make up over half of them (Figure 3).



One outcome of the Ready to Read program is that *75% of adults (parents and/or caregivers) who participate in the program will report that they intend to use the materials in the literacy tote at least three times per week.* After the Ready to Read staff member provides intervention, either in a workshop or one-on-one contact, participants are asked how often they plan to use the materials provided in the literacy kit on the Post Workshop Evaluation Survey. The majority

of parents or caregivers, 67%, report that they would use the material at least every day, and 89.5% report that they would use the material at least three times per week, surpassing the program's outcome goal (Figure 4).



Following the Ready to Read intervention, parents and caregivers were also asked to answer an open-ended question on what they learned from the presentation. The answers were overwhelmingly positive, with 84% of participants (5,349 out of 6,366) indicating something that they learned (See Sample of Responses).

**Sample of Parent/Caregiver Responses to  
What they Learned From the Ready to Read Intervention**

*“I am going to work with rhyming. - We read but I never thought of doing rhyming.”*

*“The packet I received from the rep of the metro library will help prepare my son and niece for kindergarten. Start early with reading and follow the six pre-reading skills.”*

KRA-L Scores

An intended impact of the program is that *among a random sample of children whose parents participate in the program when the child is three or four years old, 75% of those children will be assessed in Band 2 or 3 as they enter kindergarten.*

The KRA-L was developed by the Ohio Department of Education to identify early reading skills. This assessment is required of all children entering kindergarten in public schools for the first time.<sup>2</sup> The evaluation team identified all of the children (2,431 children) in the dataset age four and five as of July 1, 2011 as this group of children could have been assessed with the KRA-L. This list of children was then sent to Columbus Public Schools (CPS) staff who attempted to match the students by name and/or parents’ names to the school’s dataset of students. CPS staff matched a sample, and de-identified KRA-L scores were available for 208 children, all of whom were age five. This represents 18% of the R2R population of five year olds at the point in

<b>Figure 5. Sample of Child Participants’ 2011 KRA-L Scores</b>		
KRA-L Band	Number	Percent
Band 1 (score 0 -13)	77	37.0
Band 2 (score 14 - 22)	92	44.2
Band 3 (score 23 - 29)	39	18.8
Total	208	100

time that scores were obtained. Within this sample, 63% scored in Bands 2 or 3 (Figure 5). This is somewhat lower than the program’s target of 75% of a sample scoring in Bands 2 or 3 on the KRA-L, but it could be indicative of progress. Raw composite KRA-L scores for this sample of children average 16.3 (SD= 6.9).

<sup>2</sup> Ohio Department of Education Learning Supports. *Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy (KRA-L)*. 29 July 2010. Retrieved 28 June 2011 from <http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=778&ContentID=3930>

Another intended impact of the program is that *within the targeted neighborhood/community there will be a decrease in the number of children entering kindergarten who rank in the Band 1 group on the Ohio Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy (KRA-L).*

To address this outcome the KRA-L aggregate scores by Corps service area are considered. Band 1 is the lowest score ranking; students with that score require intervention.

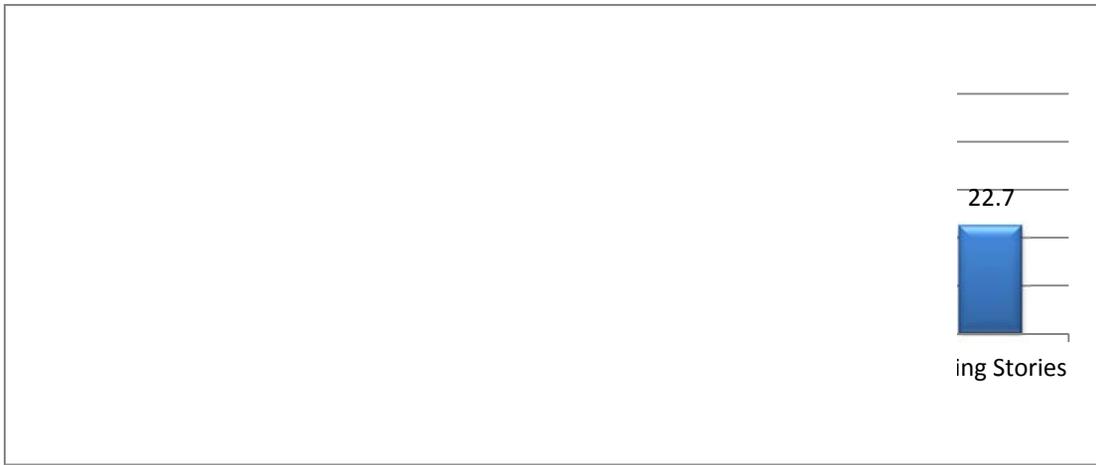
*“The puppets are so great! He loves them so much, he perks up when he sees them. They are his favorite toy. I didn't know that he could learn words this early - he just turned one yesterday.”*

Parent/Caregiver at follow-up call

Because Band 1 is the lowest KRA-L score grouping, a decrease in the percentage of children in this grouping is movement in the desired direction. Three of the sites, Hilltop-Franklinton, Whitehall-Livingston and Groveport began in May 2011, thus 2010 data is baseline data. Linden and Northland began in April and November of 2010, respectively, and Linden has a decrease (37.1% to 35.7%), while Northland has an increase (35.1% to 37.2%) in the percentage of children scoring in Band 1. Weinland Park-Parsons, the oldest site, began in November 2009 and from 2009 to 2010, there is a very slight increase (37.6% to 38%) of children scoring in Band 1. Additional years of aggregate KRA-L assessment data by Corps service area will help toward evaluating the program's long-term impact on kindergarten readiness. Note that there are children in the aggregate KRA-L data whose parents/caregivers likely did not receive the literacy intervention.

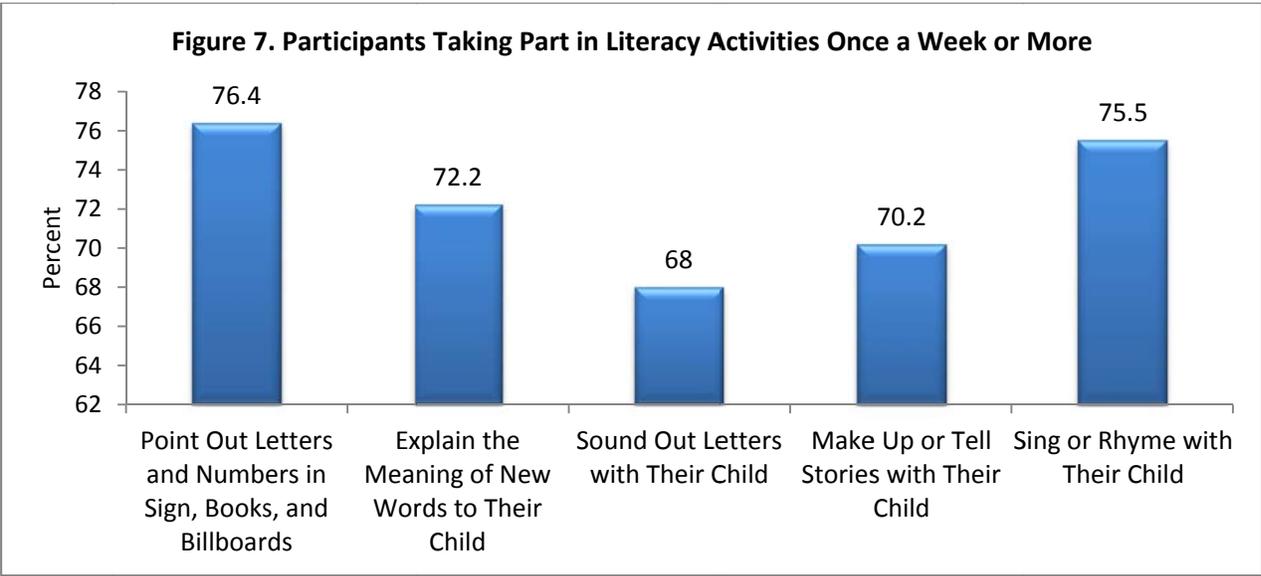
### Follow-up Contacts

Parents and caregivers are telephoned typically one to three months after receiving the Ready to Read intervention and asked questions about what they learned in the intervention and how often they use the early-literacy activities with their child. The average number of days between the intervention and the first phone call was 52.3. If the participant had more than one child, they would take the survey for each individual child, ensuring that the data reflect each individual child whose caregiver or parent participated in the program. When participants and caregivers are referenced in the figures below, they may be represented more than one time based on how many participating children they had. 948 initial follow-up phone calls were made. Respondents were given a list of early literacy elements and asked to say what they considered to be the most important items they learned through the intervention. More than one item could be selected. Even the two lowest ranking items showed nearly 25% of parents or caregivers recognizing them as most important, indicating that all elements of the intervention are valued by participants (Figure 6).



The sample telephoned is representative of the total population served by the program, lending additional credence to the data. Specifically, demographic information for the participants called reflected the demographics of the total group of participants in all areas (race, ethnicity, language, income, education, and child’s relationship to the respondent). The only new demographic information recorded was gender: 87.8% of parents/caregivers called were female, 9.2% were male and 3.1% did not reveal a gender. The service area in which interventions took place, as well as the type of event where contact was made, were also reflective of the total participant data.

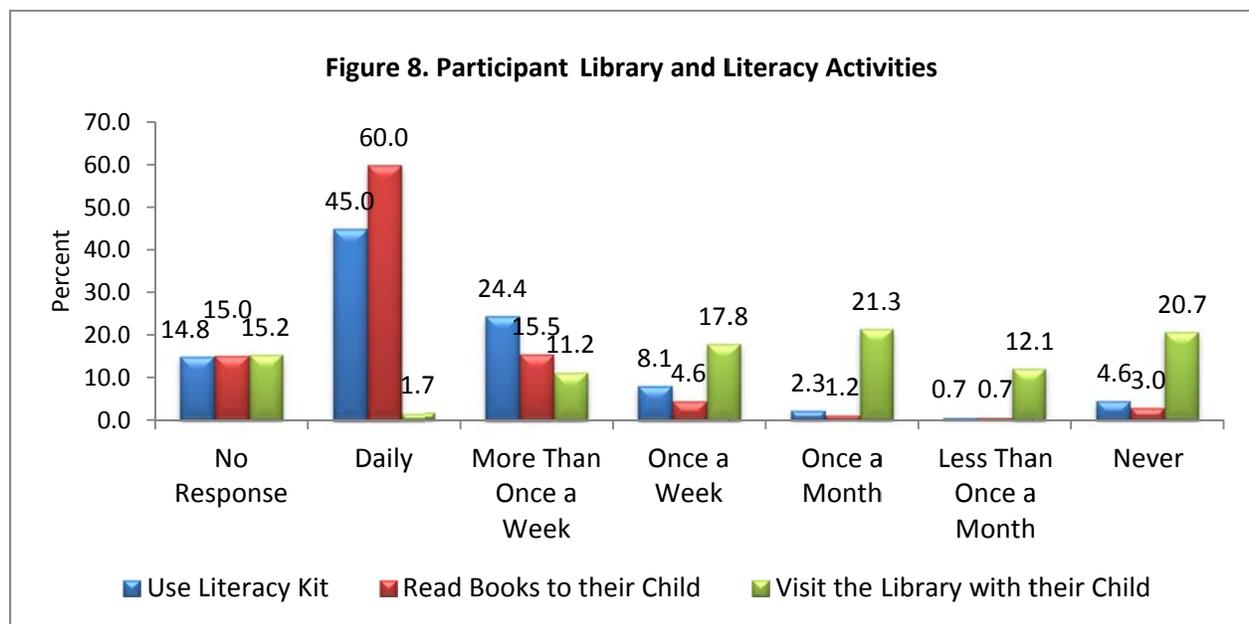
Participating adults were also read a list of productive early-literacy activities and asked to say how often they perform those activities. The majority of respondents report using all five activities at least once a week or more (Figure 7).



Considering that very few parents or caregivers report never practicing the activities above and that the majority report practicing the activities at least once a week or more, we can answer in the affirmative the evaluation question: *Is there an increase in knowledge among workshop participants in terms of early literacy skills and activities?* Because participants are practicing early literacy activities, they understand that the activities are important to children’s early literacy development. The focus groups conducted with parents or caregivers who participated in the program also show that there is an increase in knowledge because participants from every group were able to say something that they learned or an early literacy activity they do with their child or children.

*Parent/Caregiver Library and Literacy Kit Use*

A high percentage of parents/caregivers (60%) who responded in follow-up calls report that they read to their child every day, and 80.1% read books to their child at least once a week (Figure 8). Only 3% report that they never read to their child, although 20.7% report they never visit the library with their child and 33.4% visit once a month or less. This difference suggests that parents and caregivers generally read to children whether or not they visit the library with them. Participants were asked how often they visit the library with their child, and although 30.6% report visiting the library at least once a week, nearly double that percentage (60%) report that they read books to their child daily. A high portion of parents or caregivers, 45%, report using the items in the literacy kit on a daily basis, 32.5% use the kit at least once a week and only 4.6% report never using the kit.



Two race categories make up the majority of those called: African American (47.9%) and Caucasian (28.6%). There was no substantial difference in the frequency that parents or caregivers in these race categories use items from the literacy kit, read to, or visit the library with their children.

Parent/caregiver responses to open ended questions about which items from the literacy kit they had used are overwhelmingly positive and indicate the program is having a positive impact. A total of 797 responses were received from 672 parents or caregivers. Note that some answered multiple times because they were asked to respond for each child if they have more than one. Although a small number (approximately 20) indicated they were not using the literacy kit, most indicated they were and named specific items they were using. Further, 155 parents or caregivers indicated they are using everything provided in the literacy kit. The individual quotes from parents or caregivers found throughout this document come from the first follow-up phone call.

*"I love the program, I hope they keep doing it. It was very helpful the fact that they go into WIC offices. If I had not been there, I never would have known about the program. When I know we'll be idle for long periods of time, I take the bag with me to keep her occupied and people around me ask where I got it from. I love that you're taking the time to do this program and helping parents learn how to get their children ready for kindergarten."*

Parent/Caregiver at follow-up call

### Preliminary Longitudinal Study Results

Six to nine months after the initial follow-up phone calls, members of the evaluation team make second follow-up calls to a random sample of parents/caregivers and ask the same interview questions about current early literacy activities and library use. The longitudinal study is ongoing, but as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, there are 73 participants who were called two times. Participants receive a \$5 Kroger giftcard as an incentive to respond. There have been a number of challenges encountered with the calls including disconnected phones, wrong numbers, no answer (multiple attempts), and substantial language barriers. In 2010 and 2011, 28% of program participants were unreachable due to refusing participation in follow-up, disconnected lines, and inaccurate numbers. Further, calls may be reaching families who are more stable, thus skewing the data somewhat. Nonetheless, the results of the calls are discussed below.

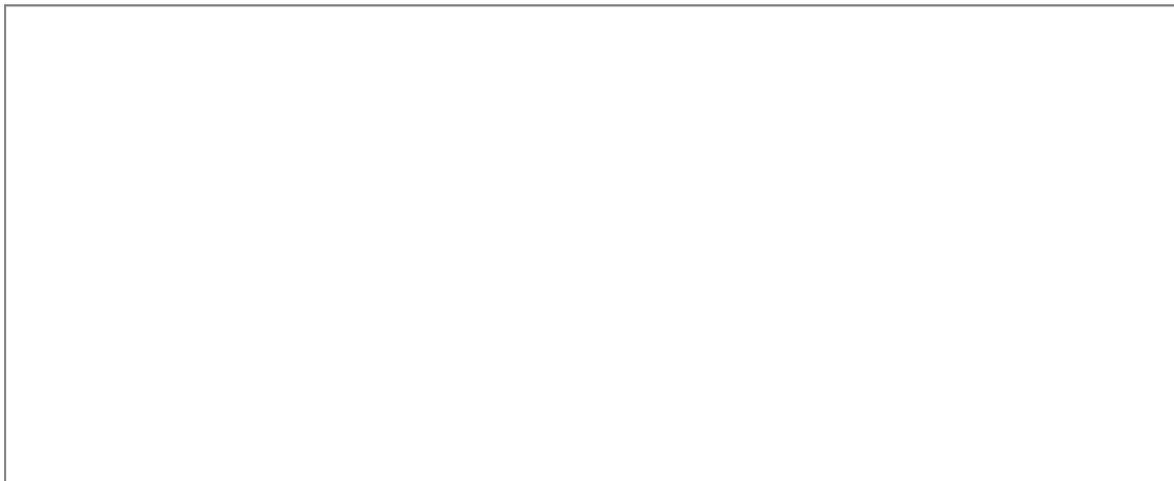
A very high percentage of parents or caregivers who indicate they use the literacy activities with their child continue to do so months later. Although for two activities slightly fewer

parents/caregivers report practicing them at the second call than the first, for two other activities somewhat more parents/caregivers report practicing them at the second call than the first. Note that parents/caregivers who did not respond to one or more of the five questions on how often they use early literacy activities with their children were removed, leaving 59 valid responses.

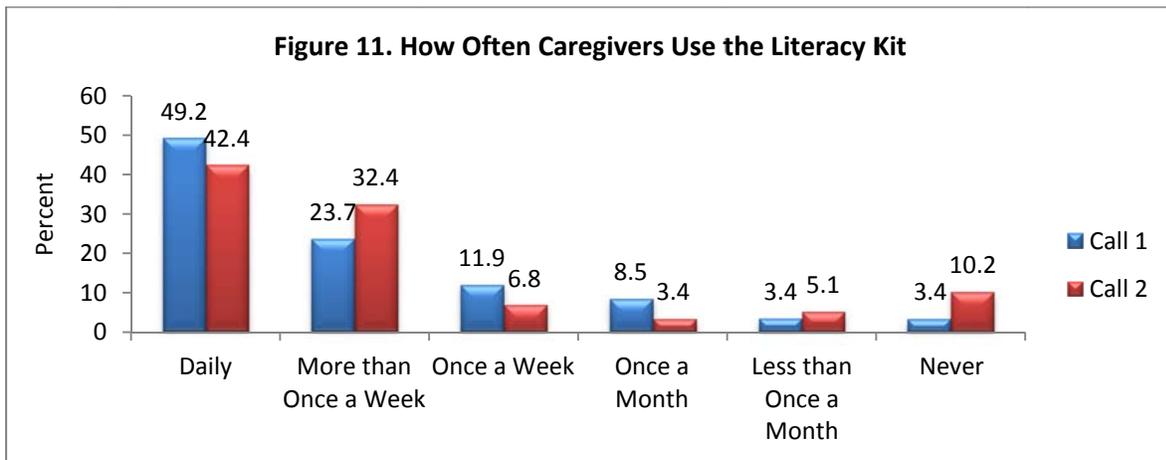
Of those participants responding that they had taken part in the literacy activities in the first phone call, the number who again responded that they had taken part in these same activities in the second phone call was calculated (Figure 9). Over 92 percent of participants continued to take part in each of the five activities in the second follow-up call.

<b>Figure 9. Caregivers Who Continued to Take Part in Literacy Activities</b>		
<b>Literacy Activity</b>	<b>Ratio First Call/Second Call</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Point out letters and numbers in signs, books, billboards	56/58	96.6
Explain the meaning of new words to their child	54/55	98.2
Sound out letters with their child	48/51	94.1
Make up or tell stories with their child	51/55	92.7
Sing and rhyme with their child	55/57	96.5

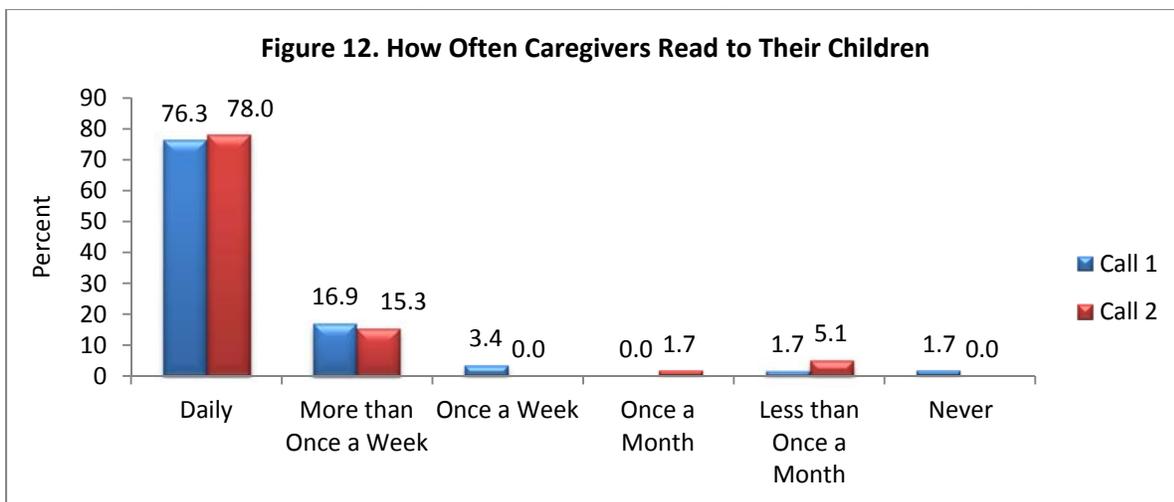
42.4% more participants in the second call indicated that ABC's or letter knowledge was one of the most important things they learned (Figure 10). Three of the four other literacy elements were noted as important more frequently in the second call. Based on data in the first and second phone calls, there appears to be an affirmative answer to the evaluation question: Is there an increase in knowledge among workshop participants in terms of literacy skills and activities? Working with their child after the intervention, parents and caregivers better understand the importance of early literacy elements.



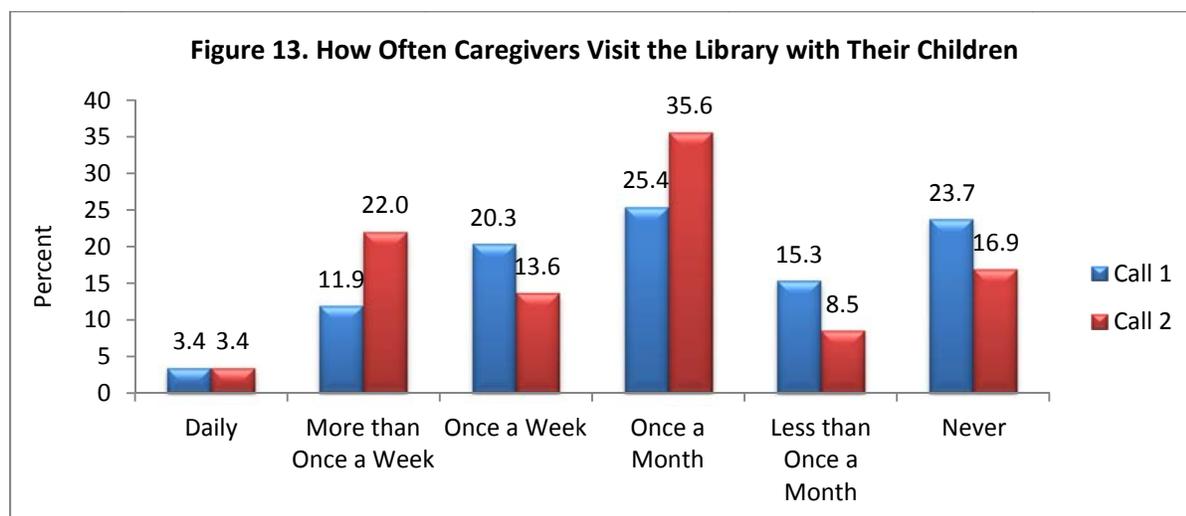
Parents or caregivers are also continuing to use the literacy kit even more than six months after they received it (Figure 11). When asked how often they use the literacy kit, how often they read to their child, and how often they visit the library with their child during the second follow-up phone call, the majority of parents or caregivers for both calls report that they use the kit more than once a week or daily. The percent of participants reporting daily use went down 6.8% from the first to the second call, and the percent reporting never using the kit went up 6.8%, but the percent reporting using the kit more than once a week went up 8.7% from the first to the second call.



The percent of participants reading to their children daily went up slightly from the first call to the second call (Figure 12). The percent of participants reporting that they read to their child less than once a month went up 3.4% from the first call to the second call. Still, over 90% of participants at each call (93.2% in the first call and 93.3% in the second call) reported reading to their child daily or more than once a week.



The percent of parents or caregivers who visit the library more than once a week with their child increased by slightly over 10% (Figure 13) from the first call to the second call, and the percent reporting that they never visit went down 6.8%, suggesting an affirmative answer to the evaluation question: *Is there an increase in library use by patron type for participants?* Two parents or caregivers report visiting the library daily at both phone calls, although these were not the same two participants, as shown by the matched data.

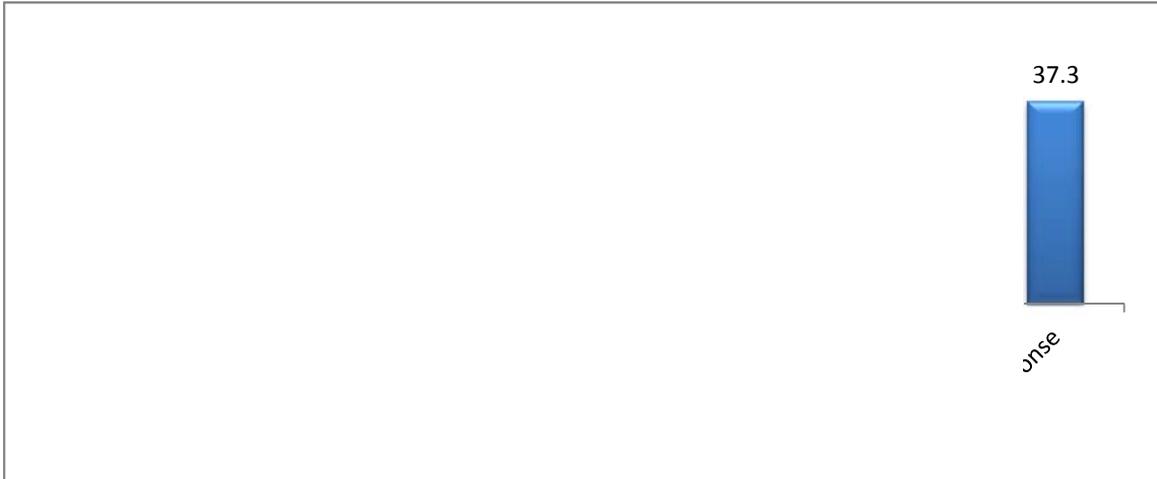


### *Participant Demographics*

In regards to race, nearly half of participants are African American, and 22.9% are Caucasian. Five percent are African, and 3.1% report being multi-racial. Combined, 1.3% of participants report either Asian or Indian American race. Seven percent reported “other” and 11.2% did not respond. Many participants did not respond to the question of ethnicity (43.2%) while 47.9% are not from Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin, but 8.9% are from Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. Slightly over 78% of participants speak English, 7.7% speak Spanish, and 3.9% speak Somali. In a focus group, Ready to Read staff expressed the importance of having individuals who can serve those populations who do not speak English as a first language. This was also stressed in two focus groups held with participants who do not speak English or who speak English as a second language. These parents or caregivers voiced that they need assistance and resources to help teach children in both English and their native language. Further detail about the parent/caregiver data can be found in Appendix 2.

A substantial portion of parents/caregivers report very low incomes, indicating that the program is serving the target population of at-risk children (Figure 14). Further, based on the reported

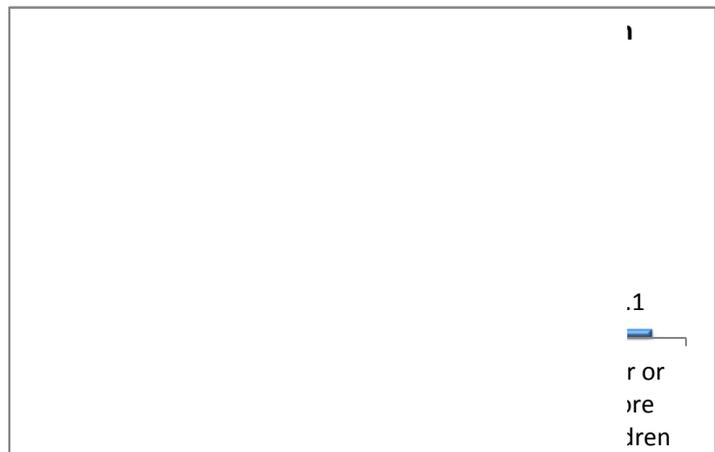
incomes many are in extreme poverty. Of the total participants, 23% make less than \$5,000 each year. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the poverty guideline for 2012 for a two person household is \$15,130. At least 32.4% of participants may be considered to be living in poverty if they have at least one child (or other person) in their household.<sup>3</sup>



26.8% of participants report having attended some college, 16.7% report they have no formal education or have only some high school education and 24.6% have a high school diploma or GED.

*Participants' Children*

89.1% of adults receiving the intervention report having at least one child under five years old, and among the 89.1%, 34.3% have two to four children under five years old (Figure 15). 73.4% of participants report that they are parents, 11.8% are relatives, 3.9% are child care providers, and 3.1% are agency staff.



<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2012 Poverty Guidelines. From the Federal Register Online via the Government Printing Office. 3 February 2012. Retrieved 3 March 2012 from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/12fedreg.shtml>.

## Child Data

Over 90% of the 8,296 children whose parent/caregiver received the literacy intervention are within the target age range of birth to age 5 at the time of intervention, indicating that the target population is being reached (Figure 16). Nearly 7% of children (568 out of 8,296) are enrolled in the Columbus Kids (CK) project. It is important to note that the Corps staff did not start recording CK enrollment until summer 2011. Also, the CK project only serves 2½ -4 year olds, which is a small subset of the Corps audience of birth to 5.

<b>Figure 16. Ages of Participating Children</b>		
Age Range	Number of Children	Percent of Children
Less than one year	1,446	17.4
One year olds	1,284	15.5
Two year olds	1,376	16.6
Three year olds	1,312	15.8
Four year olds	1,316	15.9
Five year olds	761	9.2
Six year olds	108	1.3
Seven to nine year olds	62	0.7
Ten to eighteen year olds	51	0.6
Valid age not given	580	7.0
Total	8,296	100.0

## Focus Groups

In June 2011, two focus groups were conducted with twelve Ready to Read staff members at the Columbus Metropolitan Library. The focus groups were utilized to model what focus groups are and to talk with staff members about how they might use focus groups for program development and evaluation. Later, Corps staff members were trained on conducting focus groups. A focus group script was created by the Voinovich School, and changes were made based on input from Ready to Read staff members.

Between January 23<sup>rd</sup> and February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Columbus Metropolitan Library's Ready to Read Corps staff held seven focus groups with 62 total participants. One group was a Somali-speaking group, one was a Spanish-speaking group, one was a group of African immigrant teen mothers, and the remaining four groups were mixed populations consisting of mostly native-English speaking individuals.

Participants were asked to fill out a survey at the beginning of each group. The responses show that the vast majority of respondents are women and the highest concentration is in the 18 to 35 age range. Over half of responding participants report an income of below \$5,000. The majority of responding participants are black (25), followed by Hispanic (12), Somali (9), white (9), and Asian (1). 33 respondents have not completed high school, 11 have a diploma or GED, 10 report attending some college, one respondent has a Bachelor's degree and one has a Master's degree. The majority of responding participants (49) are parents.

- Responses in the focus groups reveal that participants receiving the intervention are learning literacy strategies to use with their children and are using the literacy kits.
- There is strong agreement among five of the seven groups that children are never too young for parents or caregivers to start working with them on early literacy skills.
- Although it is unclear whether the literacy intervention brings about more library use, Corps staff facilitate use by helping participants take care of fines, issuing new library cards, and letting participants know that they have allies at the library.
- The Somali-speaking group and the group of immigrant teen mothers do not have as clear of an understanding that children are never too young for parents or caregivers to start working with them on literacy skills as participants in the other groups.
- Spanish and Somali-speaking groups want materials like books, word games, pencils or DVDs that will help teach their children English as well as the parents' or caregivers' native languages.
- The group of immigrant mothers, Somali-speaking, and Spanish-speaking participants expressed that their children's experiences learning early-literacy skills would be different from their own experiences for different reasons than the other groups. These three groups focused on learning the language and being in a better atmosphere to learn while the other groups focused on better technology and interaction and that their children would learn more skills earlier in life.
- The Spanish and Somali speaking groups did not name as many things from the literacy kit that they use regularly as the other five groups collectively.
- When asked about advice for other parents on getting their child ready to read, the Spanish-speaking group said to start early and use the library as a resource. Somali-speaking participants also say to use the library's programs. Teen mothers who responded to the question put emphasis on parents continuing their education and trying to learn English. "I would say as a young parent, if you continue your own education, you will be a better teacher for your child."

*"To me it always made sense to read to your kids, but the Ready to Read program gave me ideas on how to do it. I didn't think to let him hold the book and let him try to read it. That's something I'm doing different now."*

Focus group participant

- Participants from a women’s care center focused more on reading to their child and pointing out things in the car while the rest of the groups mentioned items in the kit more specifically.
- The following are some things the participants suggested should be included in the kit: DVDs were mentioned by multiple individuals across all seven groups, a booklet with suggestions on how to use all the items in the kit, puzzles, stencils so that children can trace letters, stuffed animals, and a cloth book for babies.
- When asked what else would be helpful to get their child ready for kindergarten, many participants said that the library should hold story times more often or at better times, and that there should be more “mom and me” activities. Other things mentioned were help teaching children how to write, information on specifically what children need to know before entering kindergarten, help on potty training, and a DVD with information for parents.
- On a survey that all the focus group participants took before the conversation, one question asked if the participant has used the library less, more or about the same since receiving the literacy kit. Counting all seven groups, 42 individuals answered the question, with 25 reporting their use stayed the same, 12 reporting more use, and five reporting less use.

## CONCLUSION

The Ready to Read literacy program has numerous successes to celebrate.

Successes include:

- Building relationships with a variety of community agencies
- Reaching the target population of at-risk children and providing their parents/caregivers with strategies and hands-on materials to develop early literacy skills
- Parents/caregivers are using skills they learn in the intervention to help their child or children develop early literacy skills
- Parents/caregivers are learning new ways to help their children prepare for kindergarten from the intervention, and follow-up contact shows that they continue to practice early literacy activities in the months following the intervention
- Most important, 63% of a sample of 208 child participants scored in Bands 2 or 3 on the KRA-L

The program approach is wide distribution of a relatively short intervention (1 session and 2 follow-up phone calls) with the intention of increasing parent/caregiver use of literacy activities.

Recommendations to current evaluation and practice:

- Larger sample size for second follow-up call, increasing the likelihood that the sample is reflective of the population served
- Investigate ways to maintain relationship with parents/caregivers; instead of follow-up phone calls, consider other methods of communication
- Staff members need reliable technology in the field
- Additional research should be done on the efficacy of the Corps implementation plan
- Streamlined process to ensure a broadened commitment from school systems to share KRA-L data with CML

Appendix 1: Library Card Data

2010 – 2012

Patron Type	Corps	Library Cards	Hard Block Overdue	Group 1 Adult	Group 2 12-17	Group 3 0 - 11
R0	Division	130	16	120	1	9
R1	Parsons	2503	494	1892	49	562
R2	Linden	1467	326	982	9	476
R3	Northland	661	65	539	8	114
R4	Westside	526	50	296	24	206
R5	Whitehall	573	65	363	13	197
R6	Groveport	326	31	216	3	107
R9	Bookmobile	285	40	111	8	166
Total	Corps	6471	1071	4519	115	1837
Total	System Wide	762,738	92,174	0	0	0

Recent Card Usage by Corps Team\*

Patron Type	Corps	Total Cards issued	Number of total cards with recent usage	% of Total Cards with Recent Usage
R0	Division	130	59	45%
R1	Parsons	2522	954	38%
R2	Linden	1467	488	33%
R3	Northland	671	237	35%
R4	Westside	528	242	46%
R5	Whitehall	576	241	42%
R6	Groveport	330	127	39%
R9	Bookmobile	286	142	50%

\*Due to limitations in customer account interface, this data is only current as of 3/14/2012.

Appendix 2: Participant/Visit Data

Originally, 6,522 entries were recorded. However, 109 were removed due to lack of recorded data (names and addresses were unknown). An additional 47 were removed due to identical names and addresses. These were entered into the system more than one time by mistake. A total of 6,366 items remain for analysis.

Factors that have a strong influence on a child’s academic success:

Education Level of Participants		
Education Level	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
No Formal Education	168	2.6
Some High School	897	14.1
GED	462	7.3
High School Diploma	1,102	17.3
Some College	1,708	26.8
Bachelor’s Degree	497	7.8
Master’s Degree	206	3.2
PhD	9	0.1
No Response	1,317	20.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,366</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Income Level of Participants		
Income Level	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
Below \$5,000	1,489	23.4
\$5,000 – \$9,999	573	9.0
\$10,000 - \$19,999	723	11.4
\$20,000 - \$39,999	727	11.4
\$40,000 - \$59,999	264	4.1
\$60,000 and Up	213	3.3
No Response	2,377	37.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,366</b>	<b>100.0</b>



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