



Parents as Teachers®

Baby FACE Qualitative Evaluation

Parents as Teachers National Center

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Contents

Introduction.....	1
Background.....	1
Evaluation methods.....	1
Overarching successful implementation strategies and challenges	6
Successful strategies	6
Challenges.....	8
Outreach and recruitment.....	12
Successful outreach strategies.....	12
Reasons parents participate.....	14
Outreach challenges.....	15
Program implementation.....	18
Home visits	18
Parents as Teachers curriculum	24
Health and developmental screenings.....	25
Resources and referrals.....	27
Group meetings and events.....	30
Program support.....	34
Training and professional development.....	34
Technical assistance.....	35
Supervision	35
Impacts on children and families	37
Child development.....	37
Parenting skills and confidence	39
Early identification of developmental delays	41
Family well-being.....	42
Social connections	44
Relationship with school.....	45
Conclusions and implications	46
Appendix.....	48
Focus group protocol	48
Focus group consent form.....	50
Focus group demographic survey	51
Parent educator interview	52
Supervisor interview	55

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Crow Creek Tribal Schools, Stephan, SD
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Lower Brule Day School, Lower Brule, SD
Lukachukai Community School, Lukachukai, AZ

Pinon Community School, Pinon, AZ
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Taos Day School, Taos, NM
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Introduction

Background

The Baby FACE program is a home visiting program for American Indian families with children prenatal to age three in rural, tribal communities. On October 1, 2010, the U.S. Department of Education awarded a 5-year Investing In Innovations (i3) grant to Parents as Teachers national center (PATNC) and a consortium of 20 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) funded schools to provide this program.

The Baby FACE program uses the evidence-based Parents as Teachers model and is implemented by Parents as Teachers National Center (PATNC). Families receive services from a trained parent educator: home visits, health and developmental screenings for the children, group meetings and events, and referrals, as needed. Each site has a designated supervisor, and one to three parent educators who implement the model with families.

The grant is entitled *Improving Education Outcomes for American Indian Children*. The goals are to narrow the achievement gap of American Indian children at kindergarten entry and to improve student achievement in reading and math through the third grade. The objectives are a) early identification of health and developmental issues and referral for intervention of any delays; b) increasing parental knowledge of child development; c) increasing access to literacy resources in the home; d) increasing literacy activities; e) increasing parent involvement in their child's education; and f) increasing school readiness.

Research & Training Associates is conducting an independent evaluation of the effects of the Baby FACE program on the home environment and on children's development, using a quasi-experimental design in most sites and a randomized control trial design in one site. As a complement to this quantitative evaluation, PATNC contracted with Wilder Research to conduct a qualitative evaluation with the goal of explaining the factors that promote or impede high quality implementation, and how high quality implementation fosters positive outcomes for families.

Evaluation methods

Wilder collaborated with staff at PATNC to plan the evaluation, select sites to participate and develop questions and protocols for the parent focus groups and staff phone interviews. Nineteen of the original 20 Baby FACE sites participated in the qualitative evaluation. One was not part of the quantitative evaluation due to having previously and continuously provided the PAT model.

Phone interviews with staff

Wilder conducted phone interviews with supervisors and parent educators at 18 sites about their experiences implementing the program and their observations of impacts for families. Wilder survey interviewers made up to 30 calls to schedule interviews, leaving up to 8 voice messages. Due to an initially low response rate from supervisors, the program director at PATNC emailed supervisors two weeks prior to the end of interviewing to encourage them to respond. Despite these efforts, staff at one site still did not respond.

A total of 44 interviews were completed in September and October 2014:

- 31 parent educators – 94% response rate
- 13 supervisors – 76% response rate

Most of the parent educators and supervisors interviewed had been part of the Baby FACE program for 3.7 years – since early 2011 – though a few had recently joined the program just 3-6 months prior to participating in the interview. On average, parent educators had slightly longer tenures with the program than supervisors (3.2 vs. 2.8 years). Supervisors may have had a lower response rate to the interviews because they have larger roles within the schools (many as principals or superintendents) or because they are newer to their Baby FACE position and felt they had less information to share.

1. Description of interview participants

	Parent educators	Supervisors
Years in program		
Range	0.5 – 4.0	0.25 – 4.67
Mean	3.2	2.8
Median	3.6	3.7
Mode	3.7	3.7
Number of active families on current caseload (at time of interview)		
Range	12 – 24	
Mean	19	
Median	20	
Mode	20	

Focus groups with parents

Wilder conducted parent focus groups with the eight sites list below (in alphabetical order). Since the evaluation was seeking to identify factors related to high-quality implementation, Wilder asked

staff and technical assistance providers at PATNC to assist in identifying eight exemplary sites, with additional considerations to ensure diversity of region, tribal affiliation, and size of program.

- Cherokee Central Schools, Cherokee, NC
- Crazy Horse School, Wenblee, SD
- Crow Creek Tribal Schools, Stephan, SD
- Crystal Boarding School, Navajo, NM
- Dennehotso Boarding School, Dennehotso, AZ
- Seba Dalkai Boarding School, Winslow, AZ
- Taos Day School, Taos, NM
- Tuba City Boarding Schools, Tuba, AZ

Wilder worked with staff at each of these sites to schedule and plan the focus groups. Wilder recommended that focus groups be conducted during regularly scheduled group meetings, to the extent possible, to make it as convenient as possible for participants, and attempted to schedule geographically close sites together to ease travel. Wilder gave parent educators the following guidance for whom to invite to participate:

- One adult caregiver per family that primarily participates in home visits with the child (grandparent, aunt/uncle, sibling). If multiple adults participate in the program, only one is eligible to attend. [A few exceptions to this rule were made to avoid any conflicts when two parents from the same family arrived at the group.]
- Current or previously participating families that have actively participated for at least 20 visits and/or one year.
- Families that are available during the scheduled time, able to get to the scheduled focus group, and reliable.
- Invite a total of 12-15 families with an even number from each parent educator. (That is, if two parent educators were at one site, they were each asked to invite 6-7 parents.)
- Beyond these criteria, families were selected at random.

Two members of Wilder's research team traveled to each selected site to facilitate and take notes at each focus group. Wilder asked each participant to sign a consent form at the start of the group and complete a short demographic survey at the completion of the group. Wilder also provided a \$50

cash incentive to each participant, for which participants had to sign. Documents with participants' names and/or signatures are separated from group notes to maintain anonymity.

A total of 90 parents/caregivers participated in focus groups, with between 8 and 14 attending each group. A large majority (90%) were parents of the enrolled child. Half (50%) have at least some college education. Most (42%) are stay-at-home parents, and a third (33%) are working. Seventy percent are married or living with their partner. The average age of focus group participants was 32, with ages ranging from 19 to 69. Participants have up to eight children, with an average of three children. Over half (62%) have children under three, and are likely current participants, whereas the remaining 38 percent are likely past participants, as their children have now aged out of the program. Most (71%) have children age 3 through 5, 42 percent have school-age children, 13 percent have teenagers, and 12 percent reported having adult children.

2. Description of focus group participants

	Number	Percent
Relationship to child		
Mother	74	82%
Father	7	8%
Grandmother	6	7%
Aunt	2	2%
Other	1	1%
Age		
Range	19 – 69	
Mean	32.3	
Median	29.0	
Number of children		
Range	0 – 8	
Mean	3.0	
Median	3.0	
Children's age ranges		
1 or more children ages 0 to 2	52	62%
1 or more children ages 3 to 5	64	71%
1 or more children ages 6 to 12	38	42%
1 or more children ages 13 to 17	11	13%
1 or more adult child (18 or older)	11	12%

2. Description of focus group participants (continued)

	Number	Percent
Education		
Less than a high school diploma	15	17%
High school or GED	30	33%
Some college	8	31%
2-year degree or technical college	8	9%
College degree (BA, BS)	4	4%
Post-graduate work or professional school	5	6%
Employment		
Stay-at-home parent	38	42%
Working full time	20	22%
Working part time	10	11%
Unemployed, seeking work	11	12%
On medical (maternity) leave, but will be returning to work	4	4%
Other	7	8%
Marital status		
Currently married or living with partner	62	70%
Single or divorced, not living with partner	17	19%
In a relationship, not living together	10	11%

Note: Not all focus group participants answered all questions, so counts may not equal 90. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Limitations

Parents that participated in the focus group were chosen because they were engaged with the program. As such, opinions of those parents that were dissatisfied or chose not to engage with the program are not reflected. However, since the research was aimed at understanding high quality implementation, this approach was intentional.

Quantitative data on child outcomes were not available for this report, so we could not analyze staff feedback data based on whether a site had a positive or neutral impact on child outcomes. Therefore, outreach and implementation strategies that were most successful are based on subjective staff opinions and self-report. Staff were thoughtful and reflective, however, and feedback was rich and thorough.

Though counts of staff feedback are noted in the report, given the interview questions were almost entirely open-ended, it is not possible to know the true prevalence with which a strategy was successful or challenge. Staff who did not mention specific issues may have experienced them, but did not mention them during the interview simply because they were not top of mind on that given day.

Overarching successful implementation strategies and challenges

Parent educators and supervisors were asked a series of questions about their most successful strategies and challenges to getting families to enroll, keeping families actively participating in home visits, and conducting home visits. Program staff mentioned a number of successes and challenges across all three of these topic areas. Rather than continually repeating these same strategies and challenges, they are presented in detail in this section.

Successful strategies

Incentives

Staff in 15 sites (19 parent educators and 10 supervisors) mentioned the role of incentives in recruiting and enrolling families, keeping them actively participating in the home visits, and encouraging families to attend Family Circle. Some gave out an incentive just for enrolling, such as gift cards. Programs also reached out to families by telling them about the books they would receive throughout their participation, both in the mail through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and at the home visits. To keep families actively participating, many provided basic needs items donated through organizations such as National Relief Charities and local organizations, both at home visits and Family Circle events as incentives for families that kept their scheduled home visits and attended Family Circle events. Baby FACE staff noted that the promise of these items enticed some people to enroll, while ongoing receipt of incentives kept some people participating.

I guess the incentives that we have for the families. We give out diapers for the home visits that they actually do meet. The lotion, bibs - things that the parents really need. The books they get. They like the books.

They wanted to [enroll in the program], because they knew that [other participants] got the books. In other schools, they are not doing that.

I think one of the things that helped was the gift cards that were offered for families to participate in the program.

Meaningful incentives. Sometimes [the program] gets donations that are ridiculous. Meaningful means empowering parents to go back to school, go to workshops, helping with food-based articles.

I would say incentives. The way I run my program, each family is required to do two home visits, two activities - if they do one home visit and do the completed parent page, they get Pampers.

Parents also noted how incentives played a role in their interest in joining the program and their continued appreciation for necessary household items and books. The household items met

material needs and the books contributed to parents reading to their children and children's pre-literacy skills (discussed further in the impacts section of this report).

They bring incentives because that really helps, like first aid kits, bug sprays, things we can't get, like coffee (laughs); it's like a little treat that we get.

Free books. We actually got a book case; that was surprising for me. We used to just stack books in the corner.

She brings handouts, but also dish soap, cleaning solution, pencils, aftershave, body sprays. It helped.

Most of the things they provided were things we needed. Laundry soap, diapers.

Personal relationships, trust, and rapport

Thirteen sites (13 parent educators and 5 supervisors) noted how personal rapport, relationships, and trust contributed to their ability to successfully recruit families and implement the program. Some parent educators had experience working with families previously in other jobs, and those previously established relationships helped them enroll families. Many of the communities are small and close knit, so personal relationships parent educators had with others also helped them connect with families with young children. If a personal relationship wasn't established prior to joining, the rapport and trust parent educators built with families over the course of home visits helped keep families engaged.

A lot of the families being served under Baby FACE, I had worked with them on [another program], so I wasn't a stranger coming to them, talking about what they needed to do, asking them questions, telling them about resources. It came easier to them, because I was previously known to them, not a complete stranger coming to them. It was easier for them to talk about these things.

I already had a connection with them. They were willing to sign up, because they were used to me. [The other parent educator] had not grown up here, had lived on a couple other reservations, so she had a tougher time getting people to enroll with her.

Building a strong, good, trusting relationship with the family. They invite me in and offer me coffee, juice, or water. We discuss how things are going, how many times they use the books, if they are doing the activity, getting to know the parents, building a strong relationship with my clients.

The successes that I see are the relationships I have with my parents. I have a trusting relationship with them. And then seeing the growth in the children. The attachment that I have with the families.

The energy level and interest and knowledge that the parent educators have with their parents. Then the relationships that they have with their parents. That is the strongest to keep them in the program.

I think the main reason some of these people, the families, stayed with it was the professionalism of our parent educators. Their rapport with the families. The way they assist the families. They go through much more than the program says. They have real relationships with the families. I think the families really appreciate this, and that is why they stay.

Parents also noted the trust and personal relationships they developed with parent educators. In some ways, parent educators became “like family” and were invited to join in meals and family events.

It's like going to my mom, asking her to guide me.

[My child] likes his teacher because it's his grandma. He calls “my grandma teacher is coming.”

Sometimes she'll catch us when we're cooking, and she'll wait and watch. One time we were making bread and [parent educator] got her input and participated with us.

Social networking

Facebook proved an effective communication tool for recruitment and ongoing implementation at eight sites, mentioned by both parents and staff. It also served as a way for parents to connect with each other.

We have a Facebook page, so all of our families are on Facebook. Sometimes they respond to our writings. They are connecting in a way that is more social networking.

I think through Facebook [we have success with home visits]. We let the families know that we are having visits and that if they cannot make their visits, they should contact us.

I went to high school with [parent educator] and I posted that I had a baby on Facebook and she found me.

Facebook has been a really helpful way to stay connected.

Challenges

The time commitment, scheduling, and no shows

At least one staff person at all 18 sites noted the challenges time and scheduling had on enrolling families, maintaining regular participation with families, and implementing home visits with families. Some families were reluctant to enroll because they were too busy and were unwilling to find the time; others enrolled, but had difficulty keeping their appointments, often due to medical appointments, or work or school schedules. Sometimes families simply refused to answer the door when parent educators arrived, especially when parents were doing door-to-door recruitment. Families not being home for their appointments was a challenge aggravated by transportation issues and distance between homes and offices, as discussed further below. This challenge was aggravated at the first of the month when families received benefit checks and were out shopping.

Some parents are busy. Some families don't have the time. Setting times with families and then them keeping their times [is challenging].

The majority of mine are college students; they are working at the casino. You have to squeeze it in whatever time they have to do it.

They were interested [in participating in Baby FACE], but as time went on, they were just too busy to meet their time for their home visit.

When they say they are not home, or that the baby has a doctor appointment or that they are sick. Then it is hard to reschedule sometimes. The challenge is when they know you will be there, but they are not home. We are told to always be consistent with our visits, showing up the same day, the same time, every time. But they are not there. That is challenging, frustrating.

A big one, since I started, is never do [home visits] around the first of the month or payday. It is about being able to meet around what is convenient for them, because that changes all the time, with the working moms.

Parent educators attempted to address this challenge by being consistent yet flexible about scheduling appointments, and finding creative ways to remind people of appointments, such as Facebook or connecting with other family members who may be able to remind parents of upcoming visits.

Lack of transportation and distance

In about half the sites (noted by six parent educators and seven supervisors in nine sites), lack of transportation and distance was noted as a challenge for both enrolling and serving families. It was difficult to go door-to-door for recruitment and home visits when families were dispersed, as parent educators had to spend a lot of time driving. This was further exacerbated when families weren't home or didn't answer the door and parent educators had to make return visits. In some cases road conditions made it difficult for parent educators to travel to visit families. Some families were not comfortable having parent educators in their home. Meeting families at public locations or having families come to town for Family Circles was challenging for families without vehicles or money for gas, and parent educators unable to transport families in their program-funded vehicles.

Where we are located. We are at the school away from the central hub of the reservation . . . where people come to get all the services. If we were located there, I know we would have more people.

The parent educators have to go up to 45 miles, one way, to get to some of the families.

There have been some problems in getting to the families, because they live in remote areas, and even getting there with the Jeeps sometimes is difficult, because of the weather conditions and because of the road conditions.

Some people don't want you to come into their homes for various reasons, so we will meet here or some other place in town, and many of them do not have vehicles, so transportation is difficult.

Family mobility

Similarly, 11 parent educators and eight supervisors in 12 sites reported challenges enrolling and serving parents because of family mobility. The result is that families' phone numbers also change, so parent educators are unable to follow-up with them. In many cases they move due to employment reasons, which disrupted service, but may provide much needed income to the family. A few parent educators noted how they made attempts to reengage families when/if they returned to the community or connect with families via Facebook or mail so they could still do the activities with their child.

One of the challenges was that I have parents moving in and out of the reservation, being seasonal workers or just wanting to try a job. There are not that many job opportunities here, so they have to move off the reservation to get a job. That was one of the goals they set for themselves, and we encourage them to set their goals. So that was one of the biggest challenges.

The biggest problem is the mobility issue. A lot of young parents will move out of the community, and we don't know where. It may be that the significant other found work off the reservation. Or the young mother had to go to the city to find employment. And also because of domestic violence, they may move around a lot, and we don't know where they go to.

One of the challenges is parents who are very mobile. They move here and then move somewhere else. And they keep changing their phone numbers. We use Facebook to locate them sometimes. Sometimes, they move hours and hours away. We try to stay in touch by email and Facebook. We send them lessons. Then they may move back again. They move wherever there are jobs when they are looking for jobs. When the job is over, they come back out here. A lot of times they move to big cities to find jobs.

Family stress and crises

In over half the sites (10), staff (six parent educators and five supervisors) noted the challenges of recruiting and serving families who are struggling with a myriad of other issues. While it was difficult to get families who are struggling to enroll in the program, it was especially challenging to keep them engaged and continue regular home visits with families who were dealing with ongoing struggles of lack of housing, unemployment, substance abuse, and domestic violence. These ongoing daily struggles may have been part of what made offering basic needs incentives so helpful in keeping families engaged; knowing they would get diapers may have helped some families work more diligently to keep their home visit appointments.

When you are in an underserved community, you have a lot of people who are crisis-oriented, and getting to a meeting is not their top priority.

They were concentrating on their everyday lives of what to do to provide for their families, and that hindered their participation.

Some are struggling with housing and some are running from the law. This is just one more thing to have to make happen in their day, and it is not a priority when they don't have housing, don't know where their meals are coming from.

I wish I could reduce crime, domestic violence, substance abuse, divorce. And I wish there was a better system of income coming into the house.

Lack of trust

According to eleven parent educators and seven supervisors across 11 sites, lack of trust was a challenge for recruitment and ongoing engagement. Some families were hesitant to have a stranger come into their home or talk about personal family issues. Parent educators were able to overcome some parents' discomfort of having someone in their home by having "porch visits" (three sites specifically mentioned porch visits) or holding visits at other locations, e.g., a public place or the parent educator's home. Parent educators also talk with parents in a way that doesn't shame their past experiences or parental choices, in order to get them to open up. Trust took time to develop.

[Families on our reservation] are so shy, and they don't want people to be looking at their house inside - they feel their house is dirty, or maybe it is that their drywall is not up. But once you start going back, having porch visits, you build that relationship, tell them about the program, [and] invite them to the Family Circle, where we have fun activities and presentations, and a free meal.

Having mothers trust the goals of the BIE is sometimes a challenge.

Parents had distrust for someone coming in and offering something for free. Like it was too good to be true.

The problem is that in Indian country, it takes a while for people to feel comfortable with you.

A lot were not really open to sharing their lives and stuff like that.

Parents' expectations

In seven sites, nine parent educators noted that parents had unrealistic expectations of the program that hindered enrollment and retention. Parents were expecting a program where the parent educator or "teacher" would do an activity with the child and were not interested or expecting a program in which they had to interact.

Some families would rather see me come into the home to do the activity with the child. I explain I am there to show them and to watch them interact.

When the parents just don't want to be involved, I have to say to them that I am not the teacher; they are their child's teacher, and I am just there to help them.

Parents expect one-on-one with me and the child. I remind them that it is parents as teachers, how to get to know your child more. When they realize they have to do it, they hesitate. They say they thought it was something you do for us. I tell them no, that they do the activity, and if they have difficulty, we intervene. The hard part is when they don't want to do it themselves.

Outreach and recruitment

Both parent educators and supervisors at Baby FACE sites were asked about strategies that were most successful and challenges to getting families to enroll, as well as how they attempted to enroll evaluation families (those with babies born in 2011 and early 2012) that were not interested in participating. Many of these strategies and challenges are noted in the section above on overarching strategies and challenges; those that are unique to outreach, recruitment, and enrollment are noted here. Parents were also asked about their “reasons for participating in the program.” Results are reported in order of the frequency with which it was mentioned, though it may have been a common strategy used by other sites, but simply not mentioned.

Successful outreach strategies

In-person recruitment and direct referrals

The most successful outreach strategy, mentioned by 16 parent educators and seven supervisors in 16 sites, was approaching pregnant women and families with a young child either by going door-to-door or at public places, such as hospitals and clinics, schools, or WIC offices. Many received referrals or lists from other agencies or heard about families with young children from personal connections and approached those people.

I am very outspoken, so I would just approach pregnant women and tell them about the program.

Just doing door-to-door recruitment. I went to the hospital and talked to families with newborn babies. And we also have people who recommended families through Community Health Representatives, giving us lists of who was born in 2011.

I will randomly walk up to somebody I see if they are pregnant, or if they are carrying a baby. Or if someone tells me that they know someone who has a baby.

I had to go out and recruit on my own, talking to people in the community, talking to people off the lists that were given to me. And the community is small, with everybody knowing everybody, suggesting to go ask so and so.

The [parent educators] went to different resource offices, centers, and meetings. They went to the clinics [and] WIC health.

A lot has to do with the parent educators . . . getting out and seeing the parents individually, to get them to be involved in the program. And how well they can sell the program to the parents.

We got a lot of word-of-mouth about someone who was pregnant or had a baby. We also asked people if they knew anyone pregnant or who had a new baby. Some of the employees here even had relatives in the area who were pregnant or had a young baby.

Parents in seven of the eight focus group sites recounted how the parent educator recruited them. Some noted they were recruited in the hospital after they gave birth, through the school their child attends, and through WIC.

My son brought a paper (recruiting flier) home from school

Gave birth and [parent educator] came to hospital and told her that [the baby] was enrolled in the Baby FACE program.

[Parent educator] came to my house and I didn't know who she was. She was recruiting for Baby FACE and so I called her and she told us about the Baby FACE program and told us when they're small babies, the neurons are floating around waiting for attention, so that's how we ended up putting her in the Baby FACE program.

We were right there in the [WIC] waiting area and I was there just picking up a check. She was recruiting people right there.

Word-of-mouth recruitment

Also a very successful strategy, mentioned by 13 parent educators and two supervisors in 11 sites, was word-of-mouth recruitment from parents already enrolled. These parent educators noted that the Baby FACE program is well known and respected in their communities and parents are telling other parents about the positive experiences they are having through the program.

The parents that have been enrolled in the program are sort of like the enrollment people. We don't even have to go out to recruit. People just call and want to be part of the program.

After the families become involved in Baby FACE, then it is word-of-mouth, because I get a lot of compliments on the Baby FACE program.

I enrolled one person, she was so happy that she put it on Facebook, and that night I got four more calls.

Word-of-mouth. In Indian communities, that is the quickest way.

Parents in six sites confirmed these sentiments noting that they heard about the program from friends and relatives.

Booths and advertisements

Five parent educators and three supervisors in eight sites mentioned holding booths or tables at school or tribal events, such as tribal functions, the library, community events, or school registration. A supervisor noted that public events were more effective in his/her community than door-to-door recruitment because, "When we go to visit families at home and ask them if they would like to enroll they don't come to the door. It is a lot easier to reach them in public. . . . In public, a lot of people ask the same questions that they want to ask, too."

A less common strategy, mentioned as effective by four parent educators and three supervisors in seven sites, was publicizing the program via advertisements, flyers, and notices. They posted flyers, sent notices home with children, put advertisements in the newspaper, and did radio announcements.

Reasons parents participate

Though staff were not directly asked why parents joined the program, ten parent educators and four supervisors at 12 sites noted how they explained the program to potential participants, including the logistics of where and how the visits worked, the activities and content they would learn by participating, and how their children would benefit. Parents liked the facts that they would learn about child development, the time commitment was minimal (two hours per month), the scheduling was flexible, and the group events.

We had to keep telling them the benefits to the program - picking up good parenting skills; getting a book every visit.

I talk about the learning experience. I bring the stem of grapes - it looks like the connections of the brain - and if you don't work with your child, it is like the synapses dry up and break off.

[Their children] will build literacy skills. By the time they enter kindergarten, they will be able to read some words and be able to associate the pictures with the print. That is one of the outcomes their children will be getting. As a parent, they will be able to know what developmental skills their child is acquiring, using the milestones.

I go over what the program is about. The home visits, the [group events], the screenings. And then the resources that are out there that they will be able to use and connect with.

Having them understand what the program is about, showing them the lessons and the activities and the tools available to them

I think that once they talked to our parent educators and found out what the incentives were. That we put the emphasis [on reading was] a huge incentive. And that they guide where we will meet, that empowers them.

Parents themselves (described below) reported joining the program because of the program model, including the support they would receive as parents and the benefits their child would receive.

Parent education and support

The most reported reason for participation, stated by parents at five sites, was the education and support they received for parenting. Many parents explained they felt underprepared to raise a child and the assistance the program offered helped them become better equipped for parenting.

When you first have a child, it's not like you were raised to be a mother. There's a lot of questions you want answers, things you have to do on your own that there's no one to teach you.

So they've [program educators] been visiting me, helping me to know what to expect. When I had my daughter. We didn't know what to do. We were just getting advice here and there but this program stuck with us and she's 3 and just exited the program.

One day Loretta came and I was like welcome! Where's the book to raise a child? I had to learn the whole thing, you know, the ropes to talking care of a child. I had to learn everything.

Child development

Another primary reason parents joined the program was to ensure the positive development of their children. Parents at five different sites mentioned that their child's early development as well as ensuring that they had a better start, motivated them to enroll in Baby FACE. Parents particularly emphasized the "head start" in education, interpersonal skills, and physical development their child was getting.

Knowing our kids could excel and get a head up/jump start on the other kids. Giving them a first block to start building on.

I think Baby Face is really good - it taught her a lot. It helped her jump from that baby phase to the 6-7 year old. I keep joking with her by the time she's 5, she'll really make good bread (in reference to the child's domestic skills).

...the activities that they do for the children, for the baby, they get them to fine tune social [and] motor skills. It's great to see how they grow and learn in the program, see how quickly they catch up and grown.

His mind [referencing the child] is not into education as far as learning numbers. We're hoping this program will help.

(When a parent was asked why they joined the program) Speech therapy program [for their child].

Outreach challenges

In about half the sites (8), the the parent educators (15) reported not having any challenges enrolling families. In two cases, parent educators noted that Baby FACE was the only program serving young children, which may have contributed to parents' willingness to enroll. A few of their comments included:

I never had anybody that wasn't interested. Whoever I spoke to, I hooked them real easy.

I didn't come across anybody that was not interested. I was looking for babies born in 2010 and 2011. If they lived in the area, I talked with them about enrollment. They seemed all open and interested in the program.

There is no Head Start out here in our area, so this is it.

Site-specific challenges

The challenges that occurred across most sites are noted in the section above on overarching challenges. A few sites experienced some unique challenges that are noted here.

Two supervisors and one parent educator across three sites also noted that enrolling families was not difficult but finding families with children under age three was more difficult. One supervisor noted they would have trouble finding out where the families on their lists lived. One site enlarged their enrollment area because there were not enough babies born in the original outreach area.

In three sites, there were other competing programs in the area offering similar services. As one noted, “There are multiple agencies drawing from the same pot of children.”

Four parent educators said they had challenges enrolling parents with older children that said they “already know how to raise children” or said they “don’t need that stuff.”

Recruitment challenges and strategies specific to evaluation families

Seven parent educators and three supervisors in seven sites noted they did not necessarily have difficulty enrolling families, but it was challenging that some families were **ineligible** or they had more demand for the program than they could accommodate.

I think the only thing is not having enough slots.

The bad part was, we had some who wanted to enroll but didn’t qualify. The dates that the program had given me, the children were too young or too old.

We didn’t have a choice of who to recruit. We had to just go with whoever was on that list. [There were] families who wanted to be in the program who were chosen as a non-participant [comparison group families].

Seven parent educators and four supervisors at eight sites discussed how they outreach to inactive evaluation families, those with a child born in 2011 or early 2010, on a regular basis even if they had not had success in enrolling the families previously. Parent educators would leave books or other household necessities, as well as curriculum materials. These consistent, ongoing visits and materials helped to show families how the program would benefit them, thus encouraging some to enroll.

My instructions were to keep at it. Make regular visits, maybe once a month, to see if they have changed their minds. But not to the point you are becoming a nuisance. So they can become aware of the benefits of the Baby FACE program.

I still go back about once a month, maybe every two weeks, I give them a book. We call them “Books Only.” One of them, it was over a year until she joined. She decided [to join] because she got the books. We never give up on them. We share [the books], and an activity every month, even if they are not interested. I kept going, and then some of them said they would join.

We just kept checking back with them. We encouraged them that it was a good program for them that would help their child to be school ready for Head Start.

Three parent educators and one supervisor reported that they did not pursue families that were not interested. The door was always open for them to join later. As one supervisor noted, “If you are not getting a response, it is difficult to go in and push it again.”

Aging out

Four parent educators and five supervisors noted frustrations and challenges of meeting families’ needs once the child ages out of the program. In many communities, no other programs serve young children and it will be at least two years until they go to kindergarten.

I can tell you one of the frustrations I have had, that the families voice, is that our program ends at age 3, and many families don’t want to go. In our community, not all qualify for a low-cost pre-school and cannot afford to pay out of pocket. Now their child is transitioned and has to wait until kindergarten. That has been a frustration for many of my families.

I wish we could continue the program and that we would have a similar program that would take them from age 3 right into kindergarten.

Similarly, parents across four sites wished for an ongoing home-based program or a center-based program as a continuation of the Baby FACE program.

Maybe a next step, [such as] a small little pre-preschool.

Make it like a home base and center base. Once they’re 3 they’re off to a building, and the parents attend. They’re letting go, getting them ready to go to school.

Extend the age [to 5]. I have an issue of trying to get my son into preschool. I’ve tried and tried and tried and haven’t had any response. It’s frustrating. I do want my child to continue to learn, but it’s just sad that there’s nothing out here.

Program implementation

Implementation of the Baby FACE program involves four main components: 1) home visits using the Parents as Teachers curriculum, 2) health and developmental screenings for the children, 3) group meetings and events, and 4) referrals for resources and services.

Home visits

Bi-weekly visits are scheduled with families. Parent educators partner with parents, and other caregivers, to help them to be the first and most important teachers of their children. Each visit includes: age-specific information about parenting issues and child development, and an educational activity between the parent and the child that is often adapted to emphasize the local culture and language. Each month families receive high-quality age-appropriate children's books and tips on using them effectively.

Successes

Activities and handouts

The biggest success of the home visits, mentioned frequently by both parent educators and parents, was engaging parents and children in the activities. Parent educators (21) noted how much parents liked doing the activities and especially being able to create toys and activities from items they already had in their homes. The activities were often what kept parents engaged and participating in the program.

[Parents] like doing the activities. Like what they can do with a paper bag, just things around their home, to make toys for their child.

The activities are really fun for the kids. The parents I work with seem to enjoy doing the activities with the kids. The handouts just fit that visit each and every time. It is a very resourceful curriculum.

And there are the multi-age activities. There is a lot of choice as far as the activities. The books kind of go along with the activities, and we share those at the same time. Everything flows together. And I like thinking of the different ways to do things. There are forms for you to include your own ideas. That made me feel that my ideas mattered, with forms to use for that. I don't have to re-generate or create - it is all there.

Parents in six focus groups echoed these sentiments. They appreciated the activities, especially that most of them could be done with inexpensive or homemade items.

The things [parent educator] brought over, toys are expensive, but we could make Playdoh from our house. Using our wipe box, she used that as a tool for fine motor skills - learning to open it. Just simple activities that we can do at home - that helps.

It helps you too to realize things you could use at home to teach your child. Who knew you could use that oatmeal container for sensory play. She tells you if you have this in your house, you can use it like this.

I like that they come and facilitate something for my kids to be focused on.

Parent educators (6) also noted the value of the handouts, like a toolkit for parents.

With the handouts, we have families that are first-time parents, and are teenage parents, with questions on feeding and on sleeping. The handouts are right there. If they need help with childcare, we pull out the handouts.

[Parents] express that the handouts teach them things that they had never thought of.

Parents in four focus groups agreed. The materials were not only helpful in providing tactics for handling challenging parenting situations, but also gave some parents comfort knowing they weren't the only ones dealing with that challenge, that someone else had thought about it before. Some had binders full of all the handouts they referred to on an ongoing basis.

I have these papers stacked from when we first started in a binder and I be going through that every other day to see if I'm doing it right and I am right.

The papers they're giving you, there's information about growing up I still have that. I was pregnant with my third child and I was looking back at that binder, at all those paper. That helped a lot.

I don't think it matters if you are a new or old mom, but it doesn't matter how many you have, whether it's your first or last, there are certain things you didn't have to deal with your other kid. [Parent educators] bring handouts, you feel like it's not just me, you're not going crazy, not just my kid throwing temper tantrums. The handout they give you, they ask you what you want, you read through them, you think you can do it, oh, I see, that does make sense. I think those handouts are the most helpful for me. There are parents going through same thing, I realize I'm not a crappy mom, I don't have to say you take him I'm going for a walk.

She's been saving a binder for me of ideas for past two years; it's a treasure.

Comfortable and convenient

Parents in all eight focus groups reported that home visits were comfortable and convenient for them. Some noted the logical conveniences of not having to pack up their child and arrange transportation, while others reported their child was “shy” or more comfortable in his or her home environment.

It's comfortable because you're home they can see how you live and how you have your structure and they know you in your home.

My daughter is very shy; it helped [being at home]. [When we're] at home, she's comfortable to run around and be herself.

Works better because my son is really attached to me. It is hard to bring him places.

We have a ranch and cattle and a lot of times we can't leave. For [the parent educators] to come out was a big plus. At times we didn't have a vehicle so for them to show up at your doorstep was pretty nice, convenient.

Parent engagement and individualization

Parent engagement or lack of it proved to be both a success and challenge of conducting home visits. When parents were engaged in the activities, home visits were successful; whereas, when parents didn't want to engage with the activity, it was challenging for parent educators to complete the home visit. (More on the challenges to engaging parents is in the section above on parent expectations and more on the successes is in the section below on parent-child interactions.)

The very young teen moms didn't understand why we were doing these things with them, providing the lessons, the development. They thought it was always just about them. They thought it was going to be us and their child. But we showed them that it was going to be them learning to observe their child, to play with their child, to do activities with their child. They then would turn off their things and come and get involved with us. They learn to do those things with their child, and they get all excited that their child can do these things and that they can do these things with their child.

To help get parents engaged and interested, 14 parent educators noted how they worked to make sure they were addressing the parents' specific issues and linked content to the previous visit. This not only individualized the content to meet each child's needs, but helped build trust and continuity so families stayed interested.

We focus on what they would like to hear. It might be toilet training, stuff like that. We ask if there is anything we talk about that they are more interested in. They are interested in when they should stop breastfeeding, and how they can stop the breastfeeding and introduce whole milk to them.

With every family, they have their different questions, and you make sure you come with the next lesson ready to talk about that.

They may ask [when] you come out, they want help with learning social skills, like maybe sharing. So we look for something that matches that and provides an activity.

I go off the milestones that we check off in our folder, observing from previous visits to help determine the activities to use. Like for speech and language, based on what vocabulary the child has been using on earlier visits.

Parents had varying opinions about the frequency and length of home visits. The program model specifies that families should receive 24 visits per year (two visits per month) and home visits should last 45-60 minutes. Many parents were happy with the every other week visit, stating that the number and length of visits was "just right." Others wanted more visits, either once a week or even twice a week. Parents noted how much their child looked forward to the visits and activities, and that they lost interest in the activities after two weeks.

I think more visits would be a lot better also because children tend to lose interest in what they're being taught. They get side tracked real quick. If you keep doing the same activity with them for 2 weeks, they don't want to do it anymore. More visits, more activities, more learning.

Parents had few comments on the length of visits, with several noting that the parent visit took as much time as needed, whether it was 30 minutes or two hours. Three parent educators mentioned feeling rushed for time to complete a full visit according to the curriculum. Some parents noted that a parent educator would follow-up if they were unable to complete a visit in the allotted time.

Consistent scheduling

Most of the challenges related to conducting home visits are noted in the section above on overall challenges related to transportation, scheduling, and lack of trust.

To overcome these issues, seven parent educators and four supervisors noted the success of having consistent schedules with families. That assisted parent educators in logistically planning visits, but was also easier for parents to know when their scheduled visit was. Overtime, as parent educators consistently showed up at the same time, parents became more comfortable and prepared for their home visits.

Consistent visits; keeping the dates with them. That you will come every other Wednesday at a specific time, for example, so they could plan things around that. That was the strategy I took.

My strategy was keeping my schedule. I scheduled them on week one and a week two basis. I give them a calendar every time I visit, [with the dates of] when I will come again, and when the Family Circle is. Then they know that I am showing up that day. It reminds them. And when I do come, it is always a good visit with the families. They just kind of keep the schedule with me. If I am not going to be there, I contact them and let them know, and then reschedule with them. I think that scheduling really, really works.

Parents at two sites also reported that having a consistent day and time made it easy for families to plan and accommodate the parent educators' visits, whether it was cleaning the house or preparing children that she would be coming.

Flexibility

Parents in three sites noted they did not want to meet in their home, and the parent educator was flexible to schedule meetings at the office location or another public location. This flexibility was another way parent educators could build relationships with families.

I actually do not meet in my home. I work at the school, so [parent educator] works with me to meet somewhere so I don't have to run all the way home when it would be crazy to do that at my home.

She's very flexible. We've met at library and the kids love it.

I liked home visits, but when I was able to come here during the week, I would meet with her here at the office.

If I'm not home [the parent educators] make arrangements to meet somewhere else. I've met them at my mom's home, that flexibility is comforting.

Parents at four sites appreciated how flexible parent educators were to accommodate a schedule change or adjust the curriculum so home visits could happen more or less often, as requested. Parents appreciated not being forced into a single method.

They let you choose, once a week, every other week. They're not pushy about it; they're focused on you and your needs.

The respect is there, always respecting, always flexible, not telling us that you should have gone, in a bad way. There are lots of reasons, circumstances, that we can go or not go, they don't demand explanation from us, I give them lots of kudos.

Parent educators and parents both noted parent educators used any and all available approaches to remind parents of their scheduled home visits. They would call, text, email, connect via social networks, send home flyers from school, or print calendars.

Challenges

Family dynamics

Ten parent educators noted how family dynamics made actually conducting a home visit challenging, such as when older siblings were at home disrupting the visit (2), when families were living with other families (3), or grandparents raising grandchildren (6). Though parent educators noted that grandparents were doing the activities with the children and the curriculum was adaptable for grandparents, they also reported that they lost connections with the parents.

Parents at two sites reported some challenges with scheduling and meeting with their parent educator. They noted their parent educator was inconsistent initially, just dropped off materials and didn't conduct a visit, or had an irregular schedule.

Sometimes they would contact me out of the blue, other times we would be waiting and no one came. That is why it would be nice to have a more regular visits and scheduled times.

Job challenges

Four parent educators noted personal safety concerns that made home visits challenging, including bad roads that made driving difficult (muddy, icy, snowy, or otherwise unmaintained);

2), dogs at family's homes (2), or in one site, a supervisor reported that both parent educators were stalked, creating an unsafe situation.

Two parent educators and one supervisor noted how the parent educator position was very demanding and much more like being a social worker or therapist.

Most of the time, we are like therapists, trying to make the best of the situation we are in. That can impact, with us feeling very drained at the end of the visit. It is almost like we are doing social work. I was unaware of that piece of it when I went into this job.

Administrative challenges

Parent educators (10) and supervisors (2) at 10 sites noted some challenges with paperwork and technology. Accessing the curriculum and printing materials was challenging due to unreliable internet connections. Completing all the required documentation in Visit Tracker was time consuming and took away time with families.

It is trying to access them when the internet is messed up and we can't get on. I have to go to the library of the community center to print things out.

I would rather just go out and do the home visits than to do the reports. Maybe have someone that could do the reports for me. I would like to be out there spending more time with my parents.

Parent educators (8) and supervisors (3) at seven sites experienced difficulties getting reimbursements or access to program funds for meals and presenters at Family Circle events or for activities for the home visits. In some cases this was because only one person was able to purchase supplies; in other cases, requisitions had to be made so far in advance, money couldn't be accessed when it was needed. One supervisor also felt as though their local Baby FACE site was not adequately reimbursed from PATNC given the amount of paperwork and reporting that was required.

The business tech is the only person who has the credit card, and has to go out with us to purchase items. That can be the hardest part.

The only challenge is to have the stuff you need to do that activity. We have a grant to go get it. You have to put in a requisition for it, and sometimes you can't use them right away if you don't have the materials for the activity, but that is a planning thing. Sometimes, you make things for the activity, and then the child wants to keep it, so you have to make it again.

Three parent educators noted challenge keeping families engaged due to staff turnover. Given the significant role trust played in building relationships to families, this change in parent educators was disruptive, if unavoidable.

In my group, there has been a lot of turnover. For some families I am their third PE.

The biggest challenge is having the families allow me to come in when there was a change in PEs. I have a fair bit of trouble in them just allowing me access when you are starting out a new relationship.

Parents as Teachers curriculum

Successes

Well designed, comprehensive, and easy to use

The parent educators were asked about the Parents as Teachers curriculum. Seventeen parent educators found it easy to use, detailed, and comprehensive.

It is a no brainer. Everything I need is in the curriculum.

To me, it is a bible, very detailed, very well-laid out.

The structure and formatting to follow. Even if you have other things you throw in, you still have the structure to follow. You may branch out a little, but you have the plan, the format. That is very beneficial.

Adaptable

Most parent educators also found the curriculum adaptable to individualize content for families and/or adding or adapting materials for their culture.

Seven parent educators noted how they adapted or added to the curriculum to support Native teachings or language. They translated the activities in the curriculum into their native language, especially colors, numbers, and body parts, or added additional activities that were culturally appropriate.

What we did was make some activities similar to activities in the curriculum. We made a block with colors and the [Native] language on it, and you role model that. We have had our language people translate a couple of books into [Native language].

I do implement our culture, the [Native] language. Like with the body parts, I put them in English and [Native language]. I had the parents do [the activities] in both languages.

One family was working with the child, learning the Native language. I told the mother we could adapt it so that we do certain things in [the Native language]. One day, we just met at the corral. We had the child look at the cattle. Mom asked the child how many were in there, and their color, and we counted in [the Native language] and did the color in Navajo and English. That is what we did. The child was actually communicating with me in [the Native language], and I was communicating with her. I also brought books written in [the Native language]. I had to reach out and get resources in [the Native language], and the mom really liked that. And now the child is fluent in [the Native language] and can communicate with the grandmother. You have to do things like that to make it more comfortable for the mom.

Six parent educators noted how they used the curriculum to find developmentally appropriate activities for children that were born premature or delayed.

If the child was born premature, I can back it up a bit to accommodate things. We can look at the age appropriate skills or at the level that the child is functioning at.

If [the child is] delayed, I look for information in the curriculum and the lesson plan.

With children with disabilities, it was very flexible to be able to go back a couple of months. You were able to help any child, going back a couple of months and starting from there again.

Challenges

Logistics

Though most parent educators felt positively about the curriculum and found it easy to use and adaptable, some had challenges with the curriculum.

Three noted frustrations switching from the previous version to the current version or changes. They noted that the new version lacked page numbers, or components were added or changed without them being notified.

Lack of content in specific areas

Though most found the curriculum adaptable and appropriate for their community, four parent educators felt it was too rigid or not appropriate for their community.

People don't know how it is out here on the reservation. They expect for their methods to work everywhere, and sometimes that is just not the case. I can appreciate that they have a long history of success in that regard. But there are different dynamics out here on the reservation that I don't think people understand. [On] one occasion I had to say white people do it this way, because they are not like us.

There is not a lot that pertains to things that are set out for the reservation. There are a lot more problems here than was [in the curriculum]. Maybe more things that target a single mother; not like divorce or a mother or father being deployed, but a mother or father struggling to support their family.

Three parent educators noted a lack of activities, specifically on involving fathers, and science activities, while two felt that the activities started to become repetitive for families that stayed involved for the full three years.

Health and developmental screenings

Children's developmental progress is checked twice a year, usually during a home visit. Parents are included in this look at their child's development because they know their child best and

because the screening is also used as parent education about child development. Each child's hearing and vision is checked annually. A Health Record is used to look for red flags, and to urge parents to get all of the necessary immunizations for their child.

Successes

Identifying progress on developmental milestones

Overall, parent educators noted that screenings were successful. Four parent educators noted that parents were excited to find out how their child was doing, and looked forward to it to be able to track milestones. A few supervisors noted that the screenings served as an additional educational tool to help parents better understand typical child development and developmental milestones.

Screenings were particularly successful in helping to identify potential developmental delays or disability diagnoses early (discussed in more detail in the impact section below), and either referring parents to community resources to address the issue or providing the parent with additional activities to do with their child.

If we had a child with a delay, I would know from the ASQ, and we would have the intervention activity for it for each age.

Parents are excited to find out how their child is doing. You write it up for them, and you give them activities that they can work on with their child.

If they need services beyond the screening, we refer them to specialized services. And I also find activities that will be based on their needs.

Challenges

Hearing screenings

The hearing screening proved a challenge for ten sites (mentioned by 10 parent educators and four supervisors) for the following reasons: wax build-up in children's ears, difficulty with the machine, children removing the ear plugs, and resistance from parents wanting to do these types of medical screenings they felt should be done by doctors. Some parent educators overcame this resistance from parents by referring them to clinics or hospitals for the vision and hearing screenings, or obtaining copies of these medical screens from other sources to avoid duplicative screenings.

The hearing and the vision screenings. The majority [of parents] don't want us to do the hearing and the vision. They would like a real doctor to do those.

I think the OAE machine, the hearing machine not working properly. Sometimes I have a hard time using that machine. It is a very sensitive device, so lugging it around with me, I was not very comfortable.

The only challenge is when we do the hearing screening. They get antsy [and] they start taking the earplugs out of their ears. I try to do the hearing test on the babies when they are sleeping. Giving them the hearing test, they start crying.

Parent resistance

Parent resistance to screenings was mentioned as a challenge for seven sites (mentioned by seven parent educators and two supervisors). Parents were reluctant to have their child screened because of the length of the assessment, the child had already been screened at a clinic, or in some cases, they were in denial about a possible developmental delay.

One of the reasons behind that is that I think parents don't really want to know - being in denial that there are issues, so not really wanting to know. The fear of exposure, that others will find out what their situation really is.

Most of my families say that the tribe did the screening when they come to the clinic, so they really don't care for the screening, when it has already been done.

Timing and scheduling

While some parent educators conducted screenings as part of their regular home visit, three specifically noted they did not want to take up valuable home visit time to conduct a screening. In addition, parent educators had to conduct screenings on children who were not actively participating, because of the design of the quantitative evaluation. Nine sites (eight parent educators and two supervisors) noted challenges to scheduling screenings that needed to be conducted at a certain time interval or age. Some parent educators noted that parents would miss these sessions, in particular, because they knew the screenings involved lots of questions about their child.

If families are not home, getting them done. I have families that are inconsistent attenders. So getting [the screenings] done in the time period [is challenging].

Trying to make appointments to do the screenings, because the parents know that they are coming up, and that there will be all the questions for them to answer.

Resources and referrals

Parent educators link families with Tribal and other resources, as needed. These may include resources specific to a child's health or development, as well as resources needed for more general family well-being. Discussions of needs, goal-setting and referrals occur during home visits.

Unlike the previous sections which are broken down by successful strategies and challenges, this section is divided up into two sections: one on how parent educators built relationships with

community resources and one how they connected families to those resources. This reflects the questions that were asked of staff (see Appendix).

Connecting and building relationships with agencies

Parent educators worked hard to build relationships with potential referral agencies, most successfully by visiting or attending meetings with agencies, as noted by 22 parent educators and eight supervisors across 13 sites. Some went directly to agency offices to make connections, whereas others attended community meetings to meet other agencies and share information, or attended resource fairs where they could get information on multiple agencies in one place. In many cases the referral relationship was reciprocal in that they accepted referrals into the Baby FACE program as well as referring Baby FACE families to the agencies.

Just actually going up to their office, telling them I am from the Baby FACE program, serving young mothers, [and] seeking information on what resources they have, handouts that you can give [parents].

I went out into the community. I am on the [blank] advisory board for their oral health study. I sat on that board and attended those meetings. We all shared numbers and emails.

You just reach out to them. You know the people in the various departments. You just bond with the resources that are similar to the resources you are offering to the families.

We have an inter-agency community committee. They invite all the resource folks that are in your community. Those are monthly meetings during the school year. You can make pretty good connections, going to those meetings.

At the beginning, one of the first things the parent educators did was spending a lot of time making contacts with community agencies. They have a wide range of resources in the community. There are inter-agency meetings monthly, which is a time when all the different agencies, different tribal organizations, police, IHS, all those sorts of people come. They have lunch, have speakers, and get to meet each other and talk.

Six of the parent educators specifically noted success in building on previous connections they had from other jobs or relationships in the community.

I have developed relationships with people over my professional career. I am not afraid to ask people for something. I have been a program manager and have supervised people. I know how to network. I just have kept on doing what I always have been doing in building partnerships.

Being a parent myself, way back, when my kids were in school, so knowing the district then. . . . Basically, just being out there and being involved, being an active community member.

Two parent educators noted that they developed agreements or compacts with agencies to clearly specify the roles each organization will play in serving families.

Three parent educators noted doing personalized searches for families who needed or wanted a specific resource.

First, getting to know the families well, and then getting them the information they are wanting to know about. I go and find that information. I look for information from a pediatrician, for example.

Referring families to resources

One of the main ways parent educators helped link families to resources was through Family Circle events (mentioned by staff at 10 sites). Through interacting with invited presenters at events, families both learned about a new topic and were able to connect to a resource they may have not heard about before. Topics mentioned included: domestic violence, car seat safety, vision and dental health, parenting skills and activities, school information (e.g., Head Start and IEPs), CPR, diabetes and nutrition, injury prevention and home safety, substance abuse, and cultural education.

Parent educators also invited resources to set up mobile vans or participate in resource fairs, as another way to bring resources to families. This was especially effective for linking families to public health resources, such as early intervention, oral health exams, and car seat safety, which most families would benefit from. Resource fairs allowed families to learn about a multitude of resources all in one place.

We let them know in advance that, for example, that the mobile van is going to be here. We have it on the calendar ahead of time. We have our phone, Facebook - all the families are on Facebook - so we will post there, and they get it and come out [to the mobile van].

I also do a Family Circle every month, which varies every month how many come. Last month I had the Circle of Smiles, where they would look at their teeth. A lot of parents don't have any rides, so it is hard for them to get their child to a dental appointment across on the other reservation.

We had [a resource] fair. At every booth there are all the different resources.

Parent educators (as noted by seven parent educators) also maintained lists of resources and provided the lists or guides to each parent.

One of our requirements is to build a resource network for our families. We compiled a list, laminated it, put magnets on the back, and give them out.

Families have a phone log booklet of resources that we give out at the beginning. They use that information to contact those offices.

We give the families a resource guide, and we update those phone numbers - so they have that information on all the resources in the community.

Four parent educators specifically noted using referral forms or release forms (available as part of the PAT curriculum) to help families make a connection to a necessary resource and transfer information to the other agencies, such as screening reports.

We have them sign release forms that allow us to share information or resources with the other agency. We get numbers for the different programs. We may get information for them or let them make phone calls for themselves.

We have a referral process we have to use. We fill out the referral forms and then will give them handouts, and if you have a flyer or brochure on that program, you would give it to the family.

Four parent educators went with families to meet with the referred resource or help transport them there, if they could gain access to a school vehicle.

With Early Intervention, I participate with them, so when they go, they see me there. They email me about their meeting and what it is going to be about. I tell our parents about it. I think it is also about them just seeing you there, supporting them. A number of them are shy and don't want to go. If they see you there, they will feel comfortable in going in.

If it is something they want to do, I will give them a ride to sign up. I would get them set up for rides in the morning if they need it.

Group Connections and events

At least once a month families are invited to a group event which is held at the school in most cases. They hear speakers, make books and toys for their children that often include the local culture and language, do parent-child activities, and learn to feel good about being at the school. The PAT curriculum includes refers to these as Group Connections, which are called Family Circles in most Baby FACE programs.

Successes

Group activities

Parent educators at nine sites noted the group activities held at Family Circles were successful. Many noted specific hands-on activities related to holidays, such as wreath-making, or cultural activities, such as dream catchers. Group activities also included field trips to the zoo or amusement parks, or fitness and nutrition activities, such as Zumba or cooking classes. These group activities allow parents more opportunities to interact with their children and do an activity together, but also for families to interact with each other. Kids can play and interact with other kids their same age, and parents have an opportunity to share parenting experiences and get to know each other.

Parents at four sites also noted the activities that were part of Family Circle events. Several noted that the activities were new opportunities for their family, and some took the activities they did in Family Circles and built upon those activities at home.

There were activities. One was taking the kids to the zoo, museum - interacting in public. Some of us don't go to these things, so it was an eye opener.

One of the activities my daughter liked, they brought in soil and they learned how to plant flowers. We still have it. That's where she learned how to plant and we went to the hardware store and she wanted seeds, so we planted squash, watermelon over the summer, and that was her plant. It taught her responsibility; she'd water them.

Presenters

In addition to linking families to new resources, presenters provided parents an opportunity to learn about a new topic. The most memorable presenters from the parents' perspective were practical and hands on, such as car seat demonstrations and fittings, appropriate kissing, dental health and techniques for getting your child to brush their teeth, nutrition and getting your child to eat, college representatives to help parents enroll, and traditional healers.

Meals

Ten parent educators and three supervisors at nine sites noted incorporating meals into Family Circles was successful. Some organized a potluck; others provided a pre-prepared meal, while a few noted meal preparation as part of the event. Serving a meal helped encourage families to attend, while also building community. Families had opportunities to mingle and share during meal times.

Challenges

Low attendance

Over 30 staff members (parent educators and supervisors alike) at 17 sites mentioned attendance being a challenge in implementing Family Circles, either initially or on an ongoing basis. Transportation and distance were primary reasons (as detailed above), but scheduling around families' busy schedules was also difficult. In cases where families were juggling work and school schedules, it was difficult to get families to attend an evening event, even if a meal was provided, and still be home at a reasonable hour to bathe and put their kids to bed. Parent educators experimented by scheduling Family Circles at different times. To overcome transportation issues, some parent educators were able to use school vehicles to transport families since they were not allowed to transport families in program-funded vehicles.

We had tried initially to change the meeting times to see if that would help attendance. But we wanted it to be as predictable as possible.

A lot of families do not have transportation to come to the Family Circle. That [parent educators] cannot transport their families.

Most of them want to participate, but they don't have any type of transportation to come to the school. We have talked about whether we could do the Family Circle closer to home. But people live distances apart, and then there is the condition of the roads and the availability of transportation. The biggest challenge is in trying to get the parents to come together. I see that the parents who come are within a radius of two or three miles. So there is the challenge of getting this to the parents that can most benefit from it.

We have tried to do meetings in the mornings, in the daytime. We can't really fit the needs of all our parents, because everyone has a different working schedule.

Parents in the focus groups who had not attended Family Circles noted similar reasons – busy schedules or transportation challenges.

Planning and logistics

Five parent educators and two supervisors noted that some aspects of planning and the logistics of holding Family Circles were challenging. They either had difficulty finding a time or place to hold Family Circles, or finding presenters to come to Family Circles. A supervisor noted how time consuming it was for parent educators to plan and coordinate Family Circles.

Setting the date right. We haven't always figured that out. And not being able to meet in the building, because there is a funeral or something, and then it is difficult to reschedule.

Trying to find the presenter for that month.

We can have a real hard time coming up with educational things to work into it.

We want consultants to come out to do presentations, but we have no way to pay them. The majority want to be paid. The majority of the time, we stick with like the IHS, because they are already on payroll. The consultants on traditional ways, we may look around to see if the school will help us to pay to do the presentation. That is always a challenge, to get the pay for them to provide their services.

To overcome this, three parent educators noted that they scheduled their Family Circles around other activities.

When I started, we hardly got anybody, but then we got better attendance because of the location. We combined it with the school parent night. We started having it at the community center. The expense of gas was a big issue.

[We] incorporate our Family Circle into the parent/teacher conferences, so that there is only one meal to be fed.

Piggybacking on other tribal things [was successful]. So many of our children are in ECLC, and they have things going on, and we know our families will be there.

Desire for adult-only interaction

Some parents in five sites noted opportunities to improve Family Circles. They noted the need for child care and adult-only interactions. While most enjoyed Family Circles, they felt that group activities were often too chaotic and it was difficult to listen to the presenter or engage with other adults while also tending to their children.

The presentation that I came to, I wish we had a babysitter because we all sit in a group and the kids are running around.

Maybe more activities at night, maybe a sewing class, or a meditation class for moms or dads to bring more people in.

Program support

Training and professional development

Thirteen parent educators said that PATNC's conference is helpful, but four parent educators were not able to go due to government policy and funding issues. Parent educators mentioned that the national training provided them the opportunity to interact with others in the field. Talking about successes and challenges was one of the most helpful aspects of the training. Many took that knowledge back to their own communities to improve their programs.

I really like the national conference every year. They bring in a lot of people nationally, giving us a lot of information.

By virtue of the fact that we are government employees, they couldn't travel to the recent conference, because they couldn't get approval to travel as federal employees.

I think the professional development was very helpful-the calls and going to the conferences. We would have a share day where we shared information and activities, getting different ideas. That was really good, because you want to do something different. I brought some of those things back with me.

Four parent educators felt the national trainings were repetitive. They reported almost all the trainings have had extensive information on some of the same topics each time. However, some pointed out that repetition was not necessarily a bad practice, since new people were coming to the trainings all the time.

I think a lot of times information may be repeated. I think that is necessary for the new people and the new programs.

Any time they are giving us new information, it really works for us. Sometimes, I do feel like we talk about the same stuff over and over again...Just about every time we have come to Saint Louis, there is a session on how to enter stuff in Visit Tracker or on how to plan a Family Circle.

Additional training requested

When asked what could be improved, 20 staff members requested additional training on the following topics:

- Working with families and children experiencing domestic violence
- Working with children with special needs (including autism, impaired hearing, developmental disabilities, fetal-alcohol syndrome, and socio-emotional issues)
- Traditional teachings, especially around birth rituals and childcare
- Screenings and identifying client needs

- How to train parents on the basics of parenting
- Computer literacy for Parent Educators

A few also would like the opportunity to go to trainings in their area.

Technical assistance

Eight parent educators had no suggestions for improvement regarding the technical assistance. Five staff members (4 supervisors, 1 parent educator) would like the technical assistants to do more frequent site visits, and three staff members (2 parent educators, 1 supervisor) would like to see more communication on changes in paperwork protocols. Two parent educators referenced a lack of cultural and historical understanding of Native groups on the part of the technical assistants and recommended more cultural competence training be required of those providing TA.

It is impressive how the national office could do it so well from a long distance. They weren't here, but it was almost like they were here looking over you.

It would be nice if they would come out once a month to make sure we are doing everything. It would be nice to see them a little bit more. We [see] them every three months or so, but not as often as we would like to see them.

Personally, I feel there is some type of disconnect between the evaluators and what happens within the borders of the reservation. It would be really nice to get evaluators that understand reservation life and the dynamics of the community.

Eight staff members (seven parent educators and one supervisor) mentioned the assistance provided during the monthly calls. While most found them helpful, at least to a point, a few respondents felt the monthly phone calls were less helpful than other components.

On a teleconference, you can't hear everyone or everything. I think the monthly calls were very helpful, [but only] to a certain point because there were times you couldn't really hear anything at all.

Supervision

Twenty-three of the parent educators across 14 sites reported that their supervisors were helpful and supportive of them. When asked, parent educators cited a number of ways their supervisors supported them, including: regular check-ins; the supervisor's general knowledge of the parent educator's caseload and day-to-day activities, as well as the culture in which they work; assistance with logistical items such as requisitions, ordering/purchasing materials, and spot-checks to Visit Tracker; assistance with brainstorming or offering suggestions when faced with challenges or

questions that arise; emotional support or encouragement; and the ability to advocate for their parent educator(s).

She/he is really busy [but] if we have a dilemma or something that comes up, she/he has always taken the time. Compared to how busy he/she is, he/she does a really good job of supervising us.

We have a great supervisor. She/he is always available. He/she checks in with us every day. We feel comfortable in seeing him/her. She/he is really awesome.

In addition, about half the supervisors (6 of 13) had accompanied their parent educators on a home visit. Of those that had not (7), all but one, who was very new to the role, had attended at least one Family Circle event. Parent educators reported these visits as another very helpful mode of support.

Additional supervision

Seventeen parent educators reported no improvements were needed in supervision. Of those that did have suggestions for improvement, the most common complaint involved supervisors being too busy or “wearing too many hats.” Supervisor turn-over was also mentioned as a difficulty for the program.

I think they should have another person appointed as supervisor, so I could go to her when I want to, who I know would be there and who would check in on me.

She wears too many hats in her department. We are kind of put last on her agenda.

I had a couple of supervisors, about 3 or 4 of them. There have been so many changes. They have all been very, very supportive.

Recommend the program to other communities

Parent educators and supervisors were asked how strongly they would recommend the program to a site considering a Parents as Teachers program for their community. Overall, 77 percent of staff would “definitely recommend” the program to another community.

3. Program ratings

	Parent educators	Supervisors
Years in program		
Mean	4.7	4.8
Rating of 5	74%	85%
Rating of 4	23%	15%
Rating of 3	3%	0%

Impacts on children and families

Child development

At least one staff member, if not all, at each site where data were collected noted how the Baby FACE program is having an impact on some or all areas of child development.

Staff noted over and over again how the program is preparing children for kindergarten. Pre-literacy skills and language development were mentioned most frequently, as staff referenced the free books and parents reading to their child as key aspects of the program. Children are interested in books, are learning how to turn pages and talk, and are developing large vocabularies.

I believe an example is a family where one child now aged out, four years old, and she is reading the books . . . to her little baby brother [who is] 6 months old. It enhances the cognitive skills. She was pointing to the pictures of what the book said. She is definitely school ready.

Because we were giving out books and were really emphasizing on reading, one of the huge impacts was giving the books and building their library. I see their bookcases with 3-4 shelves full of books, over 100 books. Reading to their children every day is really getting their children ready.

I think that the parents, just reading to their children, exposing them to vocabulary, they will be ready to learn when they start going to school. They will be more aware of their environment.

I see an increase in our kids, all the way across. They are more excited about books, about writing their names. The ones I really know and have done a lot of visits with, I can see big growth and that it is helping.

Through reading. Even though the parents don't have high potential to read themselves, they work very hard to read to their children. They are working hard on the side themselves, just so they will be able to read well enough to be able to read to their kids. And that carries over even into them being able to help their kids with their homework.

Staff also noted that the program is contributing to the development of motor skills, as evidenced by children writing their names, and social-emotional development, including attachment to parents, and learning to play with other children. Again, these skills were being enhanced because of the activities parents were doing with their children. Social skills were being developed through Family Circles.

You know that the activity has worked, because you see growth in gross motor skills or in fine motor development.

Learning different ways to hold a pencil for writing and for drawing; those fine motor skills.

They have learned how to socialize with other children, doing pretend things and playing.

The kids in this program are not shy and not intimidated. Those kinds of kids are easier to teach. They will ask questions. The program has opened up communication between parent and child, and they are more comfortable around different people. Socially, emotionally, all around, they are doing a better job.

Several staff members provided examples of how children in Baby FACE are doing better than other children in the community, as seen by preschool and kindergarten teachers when children from Baby FACE enter other programs.

The kids in the program have a larger vocabulary than the ones not in the program. So having the books, and having parents talking with them. The child is picking up language from all of that.

I would say the children who have gone through FACE would be more ready to enter kindergarten. One of the biggest challenges is accepting children who do not have a large vocabulary, do not know how to hold a pencil, not being able to converse. But the babies who come through this program are able to do all of that.

Some are not in our program but are in Head Start. Those teachers know that the ones that know their colors and numbers and such are from our program.

Sometimes we help in the kindergarten classroom here, and we see that those who have not been to any Head Start or to Baby FACE, they are struggling, but that for our kids, it is going to be an easy transition. And that it is going to be a big impact on the school. The preschool they are going to, the teachers there are all excited about seeing them.

Parent participants reported, only second to their own personal growth, that their child's general development was a key impact of the program. Across all eight focus group sites, parents mentioned that the program helped their children developed cognitively, grow in personal autonomy, and learn basic life skills.

The program itself teaches patience and [how] to do things on their own. They're more independent at a young age.

He (child of parent) started doing potty training on his own. He learned how to do the beads like she said. He likes to cut with the scissors, and write on the papers with crayons.

They (Baby FACE) are helping my child's cognitive therapy. They help with the work necessary to complete cognitive development.

In addition, parents from eight sites also specifically cited the impact of the program on their child's preparation for schooling. Parents highlighted that Baby FACE helped their child learn how to read, write, and speak. Furthermore, parents indicated that the general enthusiasm of their children towards school also increased.

He's (child) all excited and wants to go to school.

My daughter's always excited every morning thinking she's going to school. I think that's the main thing.

They (parent educators) help do projects with them (the child) to get ready for school.

Ever since he's (child) been in the program; he's been learning a whole lot of new words, especially from books.

My daughter learned so much from the books - reading, writing, and coloring.

[My] grandson [is] learning to sit and listen when [parent educator] works with him. He knows how to better listen to the teacher and do class activities.

Parenting skills and confidence

Contributing to child development and school readiness is that parents in the program are learning and gaining confidence as a parent, as noted by 21 parent educators and seven supervisors across 16 sites.

The home visits, activities, handouts, Family Circle speakers, and even screening materials are helping parents learn the developmental milestones, and what activities they can be doing with their child at each stage of development. They also learn basic parenting skills, such as breastfeeding, choosing child care, discipline, and potty training techniques.

Some families wouldn't know what the next developmental steps would be, without this. That has been a great help to many families.

It teaches parents the basics of having a child. It helps with tips, with breast feeding, with childcare, with child development - some things that some families just don't know about.

There is the change in parenting skills. You have families with older children, and they say how they have changed, like now sitting down and talking with their children, rather than yelling at them, or doing activities with them or reading to them.

I have had a lot of mothers say they didn't know certain information about a child, or things like speech and talking with them properly, or information on discipline.

Five parent educators reported how the program is contributing to parents' awareness of their role as the child's "first teacher."

Basically, this whole thing, everything works well to promote that parent engagement. When you focus on family well-being, they want to be engaged. From prenatal to now three, understanding the important role of development, and knowing that they are their child's first teacher, that everything they do with their child is so important.

A lot of families, before the program, didn't know that they are their child's first teacher. [Parents] now don't think that it is somebody else's job all the time. As a tribal member, they may be used to things being done for them, but now they know the responsibility is on them for their child.

[Success] is knowing that the parent has taken the role [of] the child's first teacher, and they are guiding them, disciplining them, showing them activities, reading to them, playing games with them. And when the child gets the activity, picks up the lesson, then they are all excited, and you know you have done something well. And getting the feedback from the families on the next visit. They tell you what they did, and they show you; you know that they understand what that whole activity was about. You are giving it back to them and helping them look for ways they can do things. They have resources right there, in their homes, to make things. And they can make up their own stories, without always having an actual book in their hand. The excitement is there.

Three parent educators and two supervisors explicitly mentioned an impact on parents' confidence in parenting and ability to advocate for their child.

Parents become more sure of themselves, building their confidence.

[The program] prepared them to be advocates for their children.

Seeing families, like a new mom with no clue about what to do with a new baby - seeing their confidence grow as to what they can do, seeing that they can do this. That has been my favorite part.

Parents most frequently mentioned that the program impacted their own personal development. At seven sites, parents expressed that Baby FACE increased their confidence, patience, ability to be a responsible parent, and taught them how to advocate for their child.

She's (parent educator) reassured me and led me and was able to guide me- this was her line of work. I didn't know how to be a parent.

I (parent) learned a big word- I learned responsibility. I am responsible for myself, my actions, and my child. Whatever my child needs, everything, it's my responsibility to take care of these things...Also being an active parent...not just telling your child how to act and be-[but] going both ways...It's my responsibility to teach my children about drugs, alcohol, sex, peer pressure, so that's why I am taking this class, because I don't know how to do things, but it is my responsibility to go out there and do these things.

I (parent) didn't have patience, now I have patience.

Overall, it gives confidence, a lot of times we don't have the confidence to raise young children. It's stressful. Having Baby FACE as a stepping stone builds confidence in us to strive to do more.

I (parent) think it also teaches you to advocate for your kids.

[Baby FACE gives] you something to aim for yourself, not just your kids.

Parent-child interactions

By participating in home visits and engaging with the curriculum, parent educators are observing that parents, and in some cases whole families, are interacting more with their children (noted by nine parent educators and two supervisors).

I see an improvement in how the mother interacts with the child.

I think it is making families realize the importance of interaction with your child. There is a bigger difference from their older children to the younger child in how they are raising them. The parents can see a brighter future for their children, the more they can be involved and interact with their child.

I think it is knowing that the parent has taken the role that they are the child's first teacher.

At seven sites, parents stated that the program had a positive impact on their interactions with their child. Parents referenced how much they played with the child, how they changed the style of their conversations, and started reading to them.

I've learned a lot about how you can just play with your kids- even as small as they are you can interact with them.

Before we didn't know what was safe, unsafe, how to play with him, now we have stuff and my parents have knowledge too and my parents can interact with him (child).

Right off [parent educator] said you need to talk to her like a normal person, and she really helped my daughter talk.

When I read to him, I get into the book and express (through sound effects and voices) what story they're talking about and he'll be laughing and say read it again. That's what got us together, those books.

Early identification of developmental delays

The program plays a significant role in identifying potential developmental delays, as mentioned by 19 parent educators and eight supervisors. Identification of developmental delays and physical or mental disabilities was largely a result of the health and development screenings being conducted as part of the program; but the increased awareness and knowledge parents had of developmental milestones and the presence of parent educators in the home on a regular basis also contributed to identifying potential delays.

If a potential delay was identified either through a formal screening or simply suspected by the parent or parent educator, parent educators took multiple approaches to work with the family. In some cases, parent educators provided recommendations on additional activities parents could do with the child. Other times, children were re-screened or referred to other resources. As several staff members mentioned, without this early identification, the developmental delay may not have been caught until the child entered kindergarten, at which point the delay would have been exacerbated.

The screenings play a big role in early intervention for things like hearing problems or if there are any vision problems, even social-emotional problems. All are very good at detecting for early intervention before the child gets to school.

Just finding children who had some delays, they were red-flagged. Then having activities with the parents that they could do with their children. They were able to see the assessment themselves.

We can catch if there is a delay in a child. We can catch it early enough to be able to work on it. And if there are resources in the community, we can get them to help them with their child.

I think the screenings pick up a lot of developmental delays. And then traumatic injuries. They are then able to intervene at a much younger age. Otherwise the screenings don't begin until they are five years old. So it begins at a much younger age, and we are able to begin doing something about it.

Helping parent to see where their child actually is. Sometimes, parents think [their child is developmental] behind and they are not, or that [their child is] not [developmental behind] and they are. We have caught some things early and they are doing great. If we had not caught it, they would be entering school with that delay, [such as] speech issues, extreme motor delays, spots on teeth, or language delays.

Family well-being

Parents' education and employment

Twelve parent educators and two supervisors noted how the program helped parents continue their education or get jobs. Some parents were motivated by the parent educator to get additional education, or became more motivated to go to school after seeing how their child was learning and growing through the program. The goal setting aspects of the program was helpful for some parents to set that long-term goal of a diploma or degree, then work towards achieving it. Parent educators also assisted with educational goals by linking parents with educational resources, in some cases even going with a parent to visit or enroll in a degree program.

One family, a single parent home, dropped out of high school. I encouraged her to continue in school. Now three years later, she just aged out her child and is ready to get her AA degree in college.

One got into a justice program. One got her BA degree. I have had about 8 who got their AA degree, 2 who got their high school diploma. That is all built on goal setting.

[Parent educators are] motivating parents to go to school or find jobs. We have had a lot of parents that have gone that way. That has been a big plus, for families to be more financially secure, or better educated to become more secure. That is going to have a big impact on the families, is going to help the kids. If you get out of poverty, you are going to have a better chance in life. Parents have taken the advice of the parent educators to better themselves.

I had one who started with me [that] was in an abusive relationship...I worked with her to get her into college. She is going to be graduating college in 2015 and has a home now. I would say she is one of my first, number one, success stories. She has been recognized by the tribal college and nationally for being on the Dean's list. She is a tutor with students at the college. She wants to start her own business as a CPA. She will have to go to a four-year college someplace after she finishes up this spring.

I have taken a few of the families to the colleges and introduced them to the Native American advisor. We toured three colleges.

Parents from three sites also expressed how the program helped them with their education and job skills.

This program helped me to get my high school diploma. I tried 9, 10 years...to get that done. Until we got on this program . . . it only took me 3 months to get finished with my high school diploma.

It did help me get going and to further myself and my kids. I'm planning on going into Army National Guard next year to take another step forward.

...and you can get back in school. And if you take advantage of it, you get somewhere.

Parents' communication

Through helping mothers and fathers positively relate to one another, the program positively impacted parent participants. At seven sites, parents reported that the program helped them work through problems, improve communication, and navigate major family decisions.

My husband and I, we did have problems, we did have to work through those things and we're finally all together, and we're a unit and have accomplished all these things.

[Parent educator] brought us together more with my husband. [Parent educator] helped us talk more with one another and interact.

Family stability

Parent educators and supervisors said that linking parents to resources and providing basic needs items also helped families become more stable. The parent educators also provided ongoing encouragement to help families make changes to increase family stability.

As far as establishing that rapport, they share information about their personal goals. After they share that info with you, you ask them what they are going to do first. You give them ownership of how they are going to start working on their goals.

Just having a parent educator in the home kind of brings the supports they don't always have. A lot of families are strengthened just in having someone to talk to. And bringing them information.

Other examples of family well-being

The goal setting aspects of the program, as well as parent educators' ongoing emotional support, contributed to family well-being in a number of other ways. Thirteen parent educators and five superiors reported that families involved in the program have:

- Obtained stable housing through homeownership or financial assistance to rent
- Developed routines, e.g., consistent bedtimes and mealtimes
- Ended abusive relationships
- Increased father's involvement with the family or child
- Gone to treatment or become sober
- Resolved court cases
- Obtained employment

- Increased family hygiene and home cleanliness
- Improved their finances
- Improved interactions between parents, and between parents and children

Parents from five sites shared that the program helped them set as well as achieve their personal, parental, and professional goals.

We got married. That was a goal on the form.

The program helped me make goals. That was the main focus for myself. At the beginning of the program, I made a goal, and slowly each one of those separate goals, I've achieved, and the last goal I achieved was getting my high school diploma.

She (parent educator) also asks us about our goals. What goals do you have for the next visits for the next year? My schooling I had [to] make As and Bs. And not just with school - we just got a new home and we want to decorate it.

Social connections

Family Circles were the primary way in which social connections were built between families (noted by 26 parent educators and 4 supervisors), though some families connected outside of Family Circles and about four sites had active Facebook pages that helped link families. The large geographic area being served in some communities did hinder some parents' ability to attend Family Circles and make those social connections.

It is through Family Circle. They are all clients. They all come together, and they share information. If their child is the same age group, they observe what the different children can do. They visit with each other and share information like that about their child's development - what they are doing and learning.

I think this is during the Family Circle, and also through Facebook, because everyone out here has Facebook. And families that live in close proximity, they connect with each other.

If they come to the Family Circles, by interacting with each other. They realize they aren't the only ones with questions that relate to why their child is the way he is, that their child is developing. They see that other parents are interested in the same things that they are.

I guess just making the Family Circle fun and relaxing. You are not coming for a lecture, but you are going to socialize, and meet other families, your kids are going to meet other kids, and you are going to interact with them.

Two parent educators also noted occasionally meeting with multiple families at one time, which gave parents an opportunity to connect with one another and children a chance to interact.

I also have three or four sets of sisters. We will sometimes have their visits together, when their kids can play together and interact, and we can talk.

There are . . . siblings who have kids . . . and they live in the same house. I [visit] both at the same time. They each hear what to do with the other's child. And that way they are being raised as a family.

Parents from seven sites shared that the program positively impacted their personal, as well as their child's socialization. Through exercising, talking about struggles, and discussing how to improve care for their children, parents were able to have meaningful connections with other participants. Additionally, parents referenced general benefits their children experienced from the program from interacting with others.

I (parent) like the one at the park to exercise, that's hard for me to do, it's a nice break to meet other parents, you know you're not the only one in this program.

You learn from other parents, you're not the only one struggling with things, you learn you knew them in high school, or you talk about joining track. [This is] nice because parents are from all different walks, they're talking to your kids, like a big group taking care of each other, putting families together, we are all one whether you like it or not, we can all help each other.

People talk about how to better themselves in life, if you have difficulty, you talk about it and it makes you feel better. It's almost like this [focus group] but everybody talks.

My kids interact with people they would not normally talk to.

Fun to see them (children) grow-up with each other. Playing around.

My daughter really enjoyed the program because...she met quite a few [people] here.

Relationship with school

In general, supervisors observed more impacts on parents' feelings toward school than parent educators. Parent educators tended to report that they were simply housed in the school or that parents were already familiar with the school because their older children attended. Ten parent educators and five supervisors across 11 sites did note that parents in Baby FACE had increased familiarity with the school, which may ultimately ease the transition to kindergarten.

There is more acceptance of coming into the schools. When we have a book fair, etc., they will bring their kids down to get them used to the school, whereas before, they wouldn't show up.

I think the view of the school is that it is a place they can turn to for help. That it is a place that has a genuine concern for them and for their children. For them to be responsible community members. That the school values their input and their well-being. That school is not a place that takes away your children, is not an organization that you need to stay away from.

I think they are more comfortable with the school setting. A lot of Native people have not had a good experience with schools, particularly public schools, so they have just laid back. So it has been good for them to experience it as a welcoming place for learning.

We are getting to know more parents. Before, parents, for some reason, were afraid to come into the school building and be visited. But now, there is more openness between the parents and the people who are working here. We are becoming like a family. We are not strangers anymore.

Conclusions and implications

Feedback from parent educators, supervisors, and parents indicates the Baby FACE program has an impact on families in the following ways:

- **Child development.** Parent educators and parents both reported observing children meeting developmental milestones, including social-emotional and physical development, as well as pre-literacy and school readiness skills, as indicated by health and development screenings. Several parent educators also provided specific examples of how children in the program were outperforming other children their age in terms of pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills. The curriculum's activities, as well as the books provided through the program and parents' engaging with their children in reading and other activities are all contributing to children's development.
- **Parenting skills and confidence.** Parents are learning about developmental milestones and activities that can be done with their child to promote their child's growth in each developmental area. Parents and other family members are talking with and engaging with their children. Parents are feeling more confident as parents and advocating for their children. They are also learning other parenting strategies to address discipline, feeding, potty training, sleeping, and choosing child care or preparing for kindergarten transition.
- **Family well-being.** Encouragement from parent educators and the goal-setting done through the program has played a role in helping some parents obtain diplomas and degrees, increase stability through regular routines, stabilize their housing, or improve communication between parents.

Several lessons emerged through the interviews with staff and parent focus groups as hallmarks of successful programs and challenges to achieving expected outcomes:

- **To be effective, programs need time to establish trust with participants.** To successfully achieve these impacts, parents and parent educators must develop trusting personal relationships. Some parents were more hesitant to trust a stranger in their home and were not expecting a program in which they had to actively participate. Parent educators that were already well known in their communities or had a previous job that connected with families had a head start in developing trusting relationships. Through persistence, parent educators were able to reach less willing parents by continuing to visit or mail information. Parent educators were able to engage some unwilling families after months, or even years, of dropping off materials and holding "porch visits."

- **Families experiencing multiple family crises challenge parent engagement.** Families immersed in meeting their basic needs and addressing their crises cannot fully engage in the program. Parent educators were challenged to serve families that were not home for their appointments, or moving constantly to obtain jobs. Some found creative ways to serve these families by mailing materials, connecting via text messages, or reconnecting with families when they were ready. Parent educators had a challenging job, often similar to that of a therapist or social worker, to work with families not only on child development activities, but also addressing other difficult personal issues.
- **Families benefit from group activities.** When transportation barriers were removed and families were able to attend Family Circles, they were able to connect with other parents. Through these connections parents could share effective parenting techniques and receive support and encouragement to help them overcome parenting challenges. Family Circles also provided opportunities for children to interact and develop social skills.
- **Books and necessary household items engage families and promote school readiness.** Families were, in part, drawn to the program for the free books and other baby items and household supplies that were offered as incentives. Children and adults alike loved receiving books and in many cases, the books children received through the program were the only books in the home. Having books in the home encouraged children's interest in reading and also increased parents reading to their children, a key stepping stone to school readiness.

Appendix

Focus group protocol

Parents as Teachers – Baby FACE program Parent focus group protocol

Hello. My name is _____ from Wilder Research. I am here [PURPOSE]. I will facilitate today's group and _____ is here to take notes. Please make sure you speak loud and clearly enough so she can accurately capture what you are saying.

Before we get started, I'd like to propose a few guidelines to follow for this discussion. First, there are no right or wrong answers. The purpose of this discussion is to get different perspectives and points of view, so please be open and honest. Second, please take turns so everyone gets a chance to talk. Third, to protect everyone's privacy, please do not repeat what you hear in this group to anyone outside of this group. Also to maintain your confidentiality, when Wilder reports what was learned in this group, we will do so by summarizing what was shared. We will not report any names or other information that will identify you. With that said, we would like to record today's discussion in case we miss anything in the notes. Is that okay with everyone?

Warm-up question [10 mins]

1. Let's go around the room. Please introduce yourself and tell us something that you are proud of about your child.

Baby FACE Program [50 mins]

My next set of questions is about your experience with the Baby FACE program and working with your Parent Educator. Just a reminder that you may each have a different opinion and that is okay.

2. What were your reasons for participating in the program?
3. What have you liked or not liked about having a Parent Educator come to your home and talk to you about your child's development, parenting and family well-being? [Probe for negatives if they only talk about positive and vice versa.]
4. How has the Parent Educator addressed your family's individual needs during home visits?
5. What do you think about the number and length of home visits? Did you have too many or too few home visits? Were the home visits too long or too short?
6. If you have attended Family Circle, what have you liked or not liked about the Family Circle events? [Probe for negatives if they only talk about positive and vice versa.]
7. How has the Parent Educator helped connect your family to community resources and what was your experience working with these other resources?

Benefits/impacts [40 mins]

Next, I'd like to hear about how your family has benefited from the program, if at all.

8. How is the program helping your child developmentally prepare for school?
9. What have you learned about child development and parenting since being involved in the program?
10. How has the program helped you connect with other families with young children?
11. What changes has your family experienced since participating in the program? For example, has your family experienced any major life changes that you feel the program helped you achieve or deal with?
12. How do you feel about the school the Baby FACE program is located in (or connected with)?

Wrap-up [10 mins]

13. What could the program do to improve the experience?
14. To close, does anyone have anything else they want to say about the Baby FACE program?

I want to remind everyone to respect each other's confidentiality. Please do not discuss what others have shared in this room with people outside this room.

To thank you for your time, we have a thank you gift for you. For accounting purposes, we need you to sign your name on this sheet to acknowledge that you received the gift. This sheet with your names on it will be stored separately from the notes taken during the focus group, so that no one will know what you said in the focus group. We also have a brief demographic survey to help us describe who attended the group. Please do not put your name on this form.

Thank you so much for your time!

Focus group consent form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A FOCUS GROUP

You are being invited to join a focus group (group discussion) because you currently participate or have participated in the Baby FACE program. We are having eight groups as part of an evaluation study to learn about how the Baby FACE program is effective.

The focus group is about your experience in the Baby FACE program. Wilder Research is conducting the focus group. The group will take about 90 minutes. Everyone who agrees to be part of the group will get \$50 at the end. During the focus group, a facilitator from Wilder Research will ask about 15 questions about why you decided to participate in the Baby FACE program, your experience having a Parent Educator come to your home, and how your family may have changed since participating in the Baby FACE program.

The focus group is not part of the Baby FACE program. You do not have to participate in the group if you do not want to. If you decide not to participate, it will not affect your relationship with your Parent Educator or the Baby FACE program. If we ask a question during the group that you do not want to answer, you do not have to say anything. You may leave the group at any time.

What you say during the focus group is confidential. No one from Wilder Research will tell anyone who came to the group discussion. We will not write your names on the notes we take or in the report that we write. We will record this conversation because what you say is important and we do not want to miss anything. After we type a report on what was recorded, we will erase the recording. We will only report what all of you said as a group, not what a certain parent said. All of your answers will be put together as a group, and we will not attach anyone's name to what they say.

If you have any questions about the focus group, please ask them before you sign this form. If you agree to be part of the focus group, please sign your name on both of the consent forms you were given. One of them is for you to keep. Please give the second form to the focus group facilitator.

Participant signature

Date

Group site/location

If you have any questions about the focus group or evaluation, you can contact:

Jennifer Valorose, Wilder Research, 651-280-2654 or Jennifer.valorose@wilder.org

Focus group demographic survey

Parents as Teachers – Baby FACE program Focus group survey

1. What is your relationship with the child?
 - ¹ Mother
 - ² Father
 - ³ Grandmother
 - ⁴ Grandfather
 - ⁵ Sister
 - ⁶ Brother
 - ⁷ Aunt
 - ⁸ Uncle
 - ⁹ Other: _____

2. How many children do you have? _____
 - a. What are their ages? _____

3. How old are you? _____

4. What is your current employment status?
 - ¹ Working full time
 - ² Working part time
 - ³ On medical (maternity) leave, but will be returning to work
 - ⁴ Unemployed, seeking work
 - ⁵ Stay-at-home parent
 - ⁶ Other _____

5. What is your highest level of education?

<input type="checkbox"/> ¹ Some high school or lower	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁴ 2 year degree or technical college
<input type="checkbox"/> ² High school graduate or GED	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁵ College graduate (BA, BS)
<input type="checkbox"/> ³ Some college	<input type="checkbox"/> ⁶ Post-graduate work or professional school

6. What is your marital status?
 - ¹ Currently married or living with partner
 - ² Single or divorced, not living with partner
 - ³ In a relationship, not living together

Parent educator interview

Activity code: 71793

ID: _____

Parent as Teachers – Baby FACE Parent educator interview

Hi. This is _____ calling from Wilder Research. I am calling to conduct an interview on behalf of Parents as Teachers about how the Baby FACE program is working in your community. The purpose of the interview is to gather more information about the successes and challenges of implementing the Baby FACE program to help to help build and improve upon the program and to document successes for sustainability. The interview will take about an hour.

To maintain your confidentiality, when Wilder reports what was learned from the interviews, we will summarize what was shared. We will not report any names or other information that will identify you. Please be open and honest.

IF R CANNOT COMPLETE THE INTERVIEW NOW, RECORD CALLBACK/ APPOINTMENT INFORMATION ON CALL RECORD AND APPOINTMENT CALENDAR.

IF R REFUSES, ASK THE REASON AND RECORD REASON ON CALL.

1. How long have you worked with the Baby FACE program? _____ years OR
month/year started: _____
2. How many actively participating families are currently on your caseload? _____

Family recruitment

I would like to ask you a few questions about recruiting families to participate in the program.

3. What strategies are most successful at getting families to enroll in the program?
4. What challenge do you have getting families to enroll in the program?
5. Because of the evaluation design, initially only families with babies born in 2011 and early 2012 could participate. How did you attempt to enroll evaluation families that were not interested in participating?

Family engagement/retention

My next set of questions is about keeping families actively participating.

6. Which strategies are most successful at keeping families actively participating in home visits?
7. What challenges do you have keeping families actively participating in home visits?

Program implementation

Next, I have some questions about how the program is implemented in your community. Please provide specific examples, if possible.

8. How have families responded to having someone come into their home and talk with them about their child's development, parenting and family well-being?
9. What works well about using the Parents as Teachers curriculum?
10. What challenges do you have using the Parents as Teachers curriculum?
11. How do you individualize home visits for the families you serve? [Probe if not mentioned: individual services for native language and culture, children with delays or special needs]
12. How do you build relationships with community resources?
13. How have you successfully connected families to community resources that help them meet their needs or reach their goals?
14. Overall, what successes do you have conducting home visits?
15. Overall, what challenges do you have conducting home visits?
16. What successes do you have implementing Family Circle?
17. What challenges do you have implementing Family Circle?
18. What successes do you have conducting screenings?
19. What challenges do you have conducting screenings?

Program outcomes

My next set of questions is about the impact the program is having for families and the community.

20. How is the program impacting children's school readiness, including pre-literacy skills, language, cognitive, and social-emotional development? [Probe: how are parents supporting their child's school readiness?]
21. How is the program helping families connect with other families with young children?
22. How is the program strengthening family functioning, resiliency, and goal setting?
23. How do families who participate in the program feel about the school and how are their opinions of the school different than those families who do not participate in the program?
24. What other changes that we haven't already talked about have you observed in parents, children and families who have participated in the program?

Supervision, professional development and technical assistance

Now I have some questions about supervision, professional development, and technical assistance.

25. How has your supervisor supported you?
26. What additional support could your supervisor provide that would help you better serve families?
27. How has the professional development and technical assistance provided by Parents as Teachers National Center and by your TA provider helped you administer the program and work with families?
28. What additional professional development or technical assistance would be helpful?

Overall

29. If you were talking to a site that was considering a Parents as Teachers program for their community, on a scale of 1-5, how strongly would you recommend the program where 5 is definitely recommend and 1 is definitely would not recommend?
 - a. Please explain your response.
30. Is there anything else you'd like to share about the Baby FACE program?

Supervisor interview

Activity code: 71793

ID: _____

Parent as Teachers – Baby FACE Supervisor interview

Hi. This is _____ calling from Wilder Research. I am calling to conduct an interview on behalf of Parents as Teachers about how the Baby FACE program is working in your community. The purpose of the interview is to gather more information about the successes and challenges of implementing the Baby FACE program to help to help build and improve upon the program and to document successes for sustainability. The interview will take 45 minutes to an hour.

To maintain your confidentiality, when Wilder reports what was learned from the interviews, we will summarize what was shared. We will not report any names or other information that will identify you. Please be open and honest.

IF R CANNOT COMPLETE THE INTERVIEW NOW, RECORD CALLBACK/ APPOINTMENT INFORMATION ON CALL RECORD AND APPOINTMENT CALENDAR.

IF R REFUSES, ASK THE REASON AND RECORD REASON ON CALL.

31. How long have you worked with the Baby FACE program? _____ years OR
month/year started: _____

Family recruitment

I would like to ask you a few questions about recruiting families to participate in the program.

32. What strategies are most successful at getting families to enroll in the program?

33. What challenge do you have getting families to enroll in the program?

34. Because of the evaluation design, initially only families with babies born in 2011 and early 2012 could participate. How has your site attempted to enroll evaluation families that were not interested in participating?

Family engagement/retention

My next set of questions is about keeping families actively participating.

35. Which strategies are most successful at keeping families actively participating in home visits?

36. What challenges does your site have keeping families actively participating in home visits?

Program implementation

Next, I have some questions about how the program is implemented in your community. Please provide specific examples, if possible.

37. Have you accompanied a parent educator on a home visit or attended a Family Circle event?
38. How have families responded to having someone come into their home and talk with them about their child's development, parenting and family well-being?
39. How has your BabyFACE program built relationships with community resources?
40. How has the school community and community at-large shown support for the program?
 - a. How has the community's support changed over time or remained the same?
41. Overall, what successes does your BabyFACE program have conducting home visits?
42. Overall, what challenges does your BabyFACE program have conducting home visits?
43. What successes does your BabyFACE program have implementing Family Circle?
44. What challenges does your BabyFACE program have implementing Family Circle?
45. What successes does your BabyFACE program have in conducting screenings?
46. What challenges does your BabyFACE program have in conducting screenings?

Supervision, professional development and technical assistance

Now I have some questions about supervision, professional development, and technical assistance.

47. How have you supported your parent educators?
48. What additional support could have been provided to help parent educators serve families? What would be needed to provide this additional support?
49. How has the professional development and technical assistance provided by Parents as Teachers National Center and by your TA provider helped you administer the program?
50. What additional professional development, technical assistance or support could the staff at your site use to better serve families?

Program outcomes

My next set of questions is about the impact the program is having for families and the community.

51. How is the program impacting children's school readiness, including pre-literacy skills, language, cognitive, and social-emotional development? [Probe: how are parents supporting their child's school readiness?]
52. What other changes have you observed in parents, children and families who have participated in the program?
53. How do families who participate in the program feel about the school and how are their opinions of the school different than those families who do not participate in the program?

Overall

54. What feedback have you received about the program from participating families?
55. If you were talking to a site that was considering a Parents as Teachers program for their community, on a scale of 1-5, how strongly would you recommend the program where 5 is definitely recommend and 1 is definitely would not recommend?
 - a. Please explain your response.
56. Is there anything else you'd like to share about the Baby FACE program?