

Rochester Even Start (Hand in Hand) parent survey

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Summary

This report describes findings from a parent survey that addressed the impacts of and satisfaction with the Rochester Even Start (Hand in Hand) program. The telephone surveys were conducted by Wilder Research Center staff in English, Spanish, and Somali. Twenty-nine parents participated in the survey.

Survey highlights

Survey results suggest that the Hand in Hand program has been very successful in providing education and support to parents and young children. Adult participants rated the program highly in all areas.

- All of the parents reported being “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the services they received.
- All of the parents rated the intake worker as “very helpful” and nearly all rated the intake home worker as “very helpful.”
- All eight parents interviewed who were attending the adult GED/Diploma class reported being satisfied with the progress they were making towards the completion of their credits.
- Twenty-one parents were in the adult English class. Most rated the various class activities as “very helpful” and almost all of the rest rated them as “a little helpful.”
- Parents reported a variety of things they liked about Parent and Child Together (PACT) time, including the parent-child activities, playing with their children, and reading with their children. None of the parents reported anything they disliked about PACT.
- All of the parents reported doing activities with their children at home to help them learn, and nearly all parents reported that what they learn in the parent education classes helps them to teach their children new things.

Potential areas for program improvement

Several areas to consider for possible improvement emerged from parents' suggestions.

- **Expanded program.** While participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive, a handful of parents did offer suggestions to improve the program. Common feedback included a request for more program time, both longer days and more days per week. A few parents also requested an increase in the number of teachers or in program funding so that more families in need could be served.
- **More information to parents from child's teacher.** Although parents reported being very informed about their children's progress in Hand in Hand, one-third indicated they would like more information from their children's teacher. When asked about what information they'd like, the responses varied considerably. It might be useful to talk further with parents in the program about what additional information they'd like to receive about their children.
- **More computer time.** Two parents in the GED/Diploma class indicated that more time should be spent using computer technology, although the other parents reported being satisfied with the current amount of time spent on it. It might be useful to explore this suggestion by checking further with current class participants.

Introduction

Program information

The Rochester Even Start (Hand in Hand) program is designed to provide better coordinated services and fill gaps in family literacy programming for families living in poverty and for non-English speaking families. Eligibility to enroll in the program was determined by several factors which included: 1) low family income; 2) adults (parents) lacking a high school diploma/GED or adults (parents) who were non-English speakers (eligible for English Language Learning services); and 3) parents with children ages 7 or younger.

The program offers the four Even Start components: 1) adult education, which includes a GED/Diploma class and an adult English class; 2) early childhood education; 3) parenting education; and 4) parent-child interaction time.

Survey methods

As part of the Rochester Even Start (Hand in Hand) program evaluation, Wilder Research conducted a parent survey in March and April 2005. The purpose of the survey was to obtain current participants' perspectives on program components and the program overall. The interview with parents was conducted by telephone. Thirty-four parents were eligible to be interviewed, based on being enrolled in the program for at least two months. Twenty-nine parents completed the interview, for a response rate of 85 percent. Surveys were conducted in Spanish (n=15), English (n=10), Somali (n=3), and Arabic (n=1).¹ The lengths of time survey respondents had been in the program were as follows: 2 to 9 months, 39 percent; 12-14 months, 31 percent; 24-30 months, 24 percent; and 36-48 months, 7 percent. In adult education, a different set of survey questions were asked of English class participants than GED/Diploma participants. Reasons for incomplete surveys included disconnected phones, language barriers (Arabic), and being out of town at the time of the survey. Survey questions can be found in the Appendix.

¹ One of the interviews completed in English was conducted through the respondent's daughter, who translated the questions. Another respondent spoke Arabic as her first language, and was moderately proficient in English but was able to complete the survey with rephrasing and simplification of the survey questions.

Survey results

Parents were asked to rate the program overall, as well as give feedback on various program components including the intake process and home visits, adult education, early childhood education, and parent education. Parents reported a high level of satisfaction with the program as a whole, as well as with each of the components. Results are described within each program component.

Intake process and home visits

Parents were asked about their experiences during the intake process. All of the parents reported that the intake worker was “very helpful.” Almost all of the parents reported that the intake home visitor was also very helpful (93%), with two (7%) responding somewhat helpful. Parents were also asked about the intake process and if all of their questions were answered. Nearly all of the parents (93%) reported that all their questions were answered during the intake process. Of the two parents who said no, one reported not being able to remember, while the other parent reported having unanswered questions about the teachers, transportation, and whether a child in Head Start could participate in Hand in Hand.

Parents were asked about how many home visits they had while in the program besides the intake home visit. Over half the parents reported four or more visits. The range was from 0 to 50, with an average of 5.8 (see Figure 1).

1. Number of home visits besides at intake

Number of home visits (n=29)	Number	Percent
0	3	10%
1	3	10%
2	3	10%
3	4	14%
4	7	24%
5	2	7%
6	2	7%
8	1	3%
9	1	3%
10	1	3%
19	1	3%
50	1	3%

Source: Parent Satisfaction Survey, Spring 2005.

Note: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Parents were also asked if there was anything they would like to talk more about or an activity they would like to do more often during home visits. While most parents (89%) said no, three said yes. When asked a follow up question about what they'd like to talk more about or do more of, they offered different responses:

I would like to know more about what my kids are good at. Also, how well they are progressing.

More activities and hopefully more time, too. But, I'm happy with all their time and services I have received from them.

It would help if they would bring in an interpreter. The lack of interpreter helps me to practice my English but I don't understand all they are saying.

Adult education

Parents interviewed had participated in either the GED/Diploma class or the adult English class. The GED/Diploma class helped parents to earn the necessary credits to receive a diploma or to prepare to take the GED test. The adult English class assisted parents who were learning English as a second language. Eight of the parents attended the GED/Diploma class and 21 attended the adult English class. Parents were asked several questions specific to the type of adult education class they attended.

GED/Diploma class

When asked if they had enough time to complete their school work while at Hand in Hand, seven of the eight respondents indicated they did. Parents were also asked about the teachers, and all eight reported that the teachers were "very helpful." All of the parents reported being satisfied with the progress they are making towards completing their credits. When asked why they were satisfied, responses included the following:

I am going to graduate and receive my diploma.

The teachers are supportive and help out with things you're struggling with.

Because I have struggled in school for a long time due to my disability. My teachers have gone out of their way to give me what I need – one-on-one instruction.

Parents were also asked about the amount of time spent on certain activities in class. Five parents reported the time spent using computer technology was the right amount, while two reported it was too little. All of the parents indicated the right amount of time was spent on workplace skills and expectations.

2. GED/Diploma class feedback

Do you think too little, too much, or the right amount of time is spent: (n=7)	Too little	Too much	Right amount
Using computer technology?	2	0	5
Learning about workplace skills and expectations?	0	0	7

Source: *Parent Satisfaction Survey, Spring 2005.*

Finally, parents were asked to make suggestions regarding changes that would make the GED/Diploma class better. Three had no suggestions to offer, while two recommended more time in class. One parent recommended having more teachers while another suggested it was important for people to practice the GED test in their native language first.

Adult English class

Parents who participated in the adult English class responded to questions about various class activities. All of the parents reported the teacher's explanations were "very helpful." and nearly all reported that working in small groups was "very helpful." None of the parents rated any of the activities as "not helpful," with the exception of one parent rating learning and reviewing grammar as not helpful.

3. Adult English class activity feedback

How helpful is... (n=21)	Very helpful	A little helpful	Not helpful?
The teacher's explanations?	100%	0%	0%
Working with other students in small groups?	95%	5%	0%
Practicing pronunciation?	81%	19%	0%
Learning and reviewing grammar?	80%	15%	5%
Reading practice?	80%	20%	0%
Speaking activities?	80%	20%	0%
Listening exercises?	75%	25%	0%
Taking tests?	75%	25%	0%
Writing and spelling?	75%	25%	0%
Learning about jobs in the U.S.?	68%	32%	0%

Source: *Parent Satisfaction Survey, Spring 2005.*

Early childhood education

Parents were asked if they were familiar with the goals their children were working on in the early childhood class. All but one parent reported being aware of their children's goals (see Figure 4). All of the parents also reported being aware of how well their child was doing in the program. When asked if they'd like more information from their child's teacher, 34 percent indicated they wanted additional information. Of those who indicated they would like to know more, responses included wanting more information about: their child's progress, when their child's diapers were last changed, information on potty training and healthy snacks, and how parents could better assist the program.

4. Early childhood education feedback

	Number Yes	Percent Yes
Do you know what goals your children are working towards in Hand in Hand? (n=29)	28	97%
Do you know how well your children are doing? (n=29)	29	100%
Would you like more information from your children's Hand in Hand teacher? (n=29)	10	34%

Source: *Parent Satisfaction Survey, Spring 2005.*

Parent education

Parent and Child Together (PACT)

Parents were asked to rate their experiences with Parent and Child Together (PACT) time. When asked about what they like best about PACT, slightly more than half reported liking the parent-child activities. Other common responses included playing with their children (46%), reading with their children (29%), and getting to know other parents (11%). None of the parents reported disliking anything about PACT time. A complete list of responses can be found below (Figure 5).

5. Parent and Child Together (PACT) feedback

What did you like about PACT time? (n=28)	Number	Percent
Parent-child activities/spending time with my children	15	54%
Playing with my kids (games, singing, dancing)	13	46%
Reading with my children	8	29%
Getting to know other parents	3	11%
Children sharing their feelings with each other	1	4%
Parenting advice	1	4%
Video on how to install a child car seat	1	4%
Getting to know teachers/ asking questions	1	4%
Eating with my kids	1	4%

Source: Parent Satisfaction Survey, Spring 2005.

Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response, so percentages may not total 100%.

Parent-child activities at home

Parents were also asked about their at-home activities with their children. All of the parents reported doing activities with their children at home to help them learn new things. When asked how often, the most common response was every day, followed by 2-3 times per week, and one reported at least once a week. Nearly all parents reported that what they learn in the parent education classes helps them to teach their children new things (see Figure 6).

6. Parent-child activities at home

	Number	Percent
How often do you do activities at home with your children to help them learn new things? (n=29)		
Everyday	18	62%
2-3 times a week	10	35%
At least once a week	1	3%
At least once a month	0	0%
Less than once a month	0	0%
Does what you learn at parent education classes help you to teach your children new things? (n=29)		
A lot	26	90%
Some	2	7%
Not much	1	3%

Source: Parent Satisfaction Survey, Spring 2005.

Parents who reported that the parent education classes helped them teach their children new things were asked to describe how the class helped. The most common response was that the class taught them new ideas, games, and activities to teach to their children. A complete list of responses can be found below (Figure 7).

7. Impact of parent education class

How does what you learn in parent education classes help you to teach your child/children new things? (n=27)	Number	Percent
Helps me learn different ideas/games/activities to teach my children	8	30%
Understanding how small children learn and play	5	19%
Food and nutrition	4	15%
How to get children's attention	3	11%
I can read and write now so I can help my kids read	3	11%
How to discipline my son without spanking	3	11%
Knowing how to make home-made toys	2	7%
Able to explain signs, movie ratings	1	4%
Home security and safety for my kids	1	4%
Building up my kids' vocabulary	1	4%
How to take care of my kids when they are sick	1	4%
Learning English with my child	1	4%
Do worksheet together	1	4%
Videos- I am a visual learner	1	4%
Potty training advice	1	4%

Source: Parent Satisfaction Survey, Spring 2005.

Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response, so percentages may not total 100%.

Parent-teacher contact: School-age children

Parents were asked if they had any children who were currently attending elementary school. Twelve of the parents reported having school-age children; all of these parents attended the adult English class. When asked if they talked with the teacher about their child's progress in school, all but one of the parents reported they had talked to the teacher at least once since the start of the current school year. The average number of reported contacts was 3.9, with a minimum of two and maximum of ten contacts. All but one of the respondents reported that what they learned in the adult English class made it easier to talk with the teachers. When asked what made it easier, all cited improvements

in their ability to understand and communicate in English. Examples of parent responses included the following:

- My improvement in English and greater exposure to written materials has taught me how to listen better to the teacher.
- I talk to my children’s teachers without having an interpreter.
- At first I was very quiet because of my lack of confidence, but that changed thanks to Hand in Hand and now I talk a lot with teachers – very involved. I talk to the teachers about how my kids are doing.
- I can understand English better now because of Hand in Hand and that makes it possible for me to communicate with the teacher.

Overall program satisfaction

When asked to rate their satisfaction with the services they received from Hand in Hand overall, nearly all of the parents (97%) indicated they were “very satisfied,” followed by one parent who indicated being “satisfied.” No parents reported being “dissatisfied.” When asked what they liked best about Hand in Hand, the most common response was learning English (28%), followed by the teachers (21%), and PACT time/having a place where my kids and I learn together (17%).

8. Parent satisfaction with Hand in Hand, overall

What do you like best about Hand in Hand?	Number	Percent
Learning English	8	28%
The teachers (resourcefulness, skilled, pleasant, respectful)	6	21%
PACT time/a place where my kids and I learn together	5	17%
Children’s activities/children’s interactions with one another	4	14%
Day care	4	14%
I can learn while my children are learning	3	10%
The discussions/ Thursday talks	3	10%
Learning math	1	3%
Knowing what is going on in my kids school	1	3%
They helped fix our home	1	3%
Christmas gifts	1	3%
My children are doing better in school	1	3%
Parenting advice	1	3%
Comfortable environment	1	3%

Source: Parent Satisfaction Survey, Spring 2005.

Note: Respondents were able to give more than one response, so percentages may not total 100%.

Parents were also asked if Hand in Hand gives them the support they need to accomplish their goals. All of the parents responded with either “always” (83%) or “almost always” (17%). Finally, parents were asked for suggestions for how Hand in Hand could be better. Sixteen parents had no suggestions, although several took the opportunity to praise the program:

No, but I want to say that Hand in Hand has really helped me to make a better life for myself and my children.

I hope the program lasts because it is extremely helpful to people like me – people immigrating to the United States.

No, I enjoy all the activities and feel that things are great the way they are now.

The remaining 13 parents had a variety of suggestions. Four parents requested an increase in class time or for the program to be available five days a week. Two parents recommended an increase in program funding, one wanted this to reduce the waiting list. Other suggestions, each offered by one respondent, included more writing activities, more early childhood teachers, for teachers not to play favorites with certain children, and being able to submit written requests for assistance in adult English class.

Appendix

Parent satisfaction survey

Parent satisfaction survey

**Rochester Even Start
Hand in Hand/Children's Trust Fund
Parent Satisfaction Survey**

We would like to ask you some questions about your experience with Hand in Hand.

1. How long have you been in the Hand in Hand program?

_____ Number of months

2a. Thinking back to when you started in Hand in Hand, were all your questions answered about the program during the intake process – that is, during the period before you started classes when paperwork was being done and you were tested?

Yes (GO TO Q. 3a)..... 1

No..... 2

2b. What questions were not answered?

3a. How helpful was the intake worker Barb Hauber? Would you say...

Very helpful, (GO TO Q. 4a)..... 1

Somewhat helpful, or (GO TO Q. 4a)..... 2

Not helpful? 3

Refused..... (GO TO Q. 4a)..... 7

Don't know (GO TO Q. 4a)..... 8

3b. What wasn't helpful?

4a. How helpful was the intake home visitor Ann Riebel? Would you say...

Very helpful, (GO TO Q. 5)..... 1

Somewhat helpful, or (GO TO Q. 5)..... 2

Not helpful? 3

Refused..... (GO TO Q. 5)..... 7

Don't know (GO TO Q. 5)..... 8

4b. What wasn't helpful?

5. Beside the intake home visit, about how many other home visits have you had while in the program?

_____ Number of visits (IF "0" SKIP TO Q. 7)

6a. Is there anything you would like to talk more about or an activity you would like to do more often during home visits?

Yes 1
No..... (GO TO Q. 7)..... 2

6b. What would you like to talk more about or do more of?

7. Thinking about Hand in Hand overall, how satisfied are you with the services you have received? Would you say...

Very satisfied,..... 1
Satisfied, 2
Dissatisfied, or 3
Very dissatisfied? 4
Refused..... 7
Don't know 8

8. What do you like best about Hand in Hand?

9. Do you feel Hand in Hand gives you the support you need to accomplish your goals? Would you say...

Always,..... 1
Almost always, 2
Sometimes, 3
Almost never, or 4
Never?..... 5
Refused..... 7
Don't know 8

GED/Diploma class participants only--

Now I'm going to ask you about GED/Diploma class.

- 10a. Are you satisfied with the progress you are making toward completing your credits?
- Yes (GO TO Q. 10b)..... 1
- No..... (GO TO Q. 10c)..... 2

10b. Why are you satisfied?

10c. Why are you not satisfied?

- 10d. Do you have enough time to complete you school work during the time you are at Hand in Hand?
- Yes 1
- No..... 2

- 10e. The teachers are...
- Very helpful, 1
- A little helpful, or 2
- Not helpful? 3

10f. In the GED/Diploma class, do you think too little, too much, or the right amount of time is spent:

	Too little	Too much	About right
(1) using computer technology?	1	2	3
(2) learning about workplace skills and expectations?	1	2	3

10g. Are there any changes that would make the GED/Diploma classes better?

Adult English class participants only--

10. Now I'm going to read a list of activities that you do in your adult English class. For each one, please tell me how helpful it is, very helpful, a little helpful or not helpful.

(How helpful is...)	Would you say...				
	Very helpful,	A little helpful, or	Not helpful?	REF	DK
a. Practicing pronunciation?	1	2	3	7	8
b. Speaking activities?	1	2	3	7	8
c. Listening exercises?	1	2	3	7	8
d. Reading practice?	1	2	3	7	8
e. Writing and spelling?	1	2	3	7	8
f. Learning and reviewing grammar?	1	2	3	7	8
g. Working with other students in small groups?	1	2	3	7	8
h. The teacher's explanations?	1	2	3	7	8
i. Taking tests?	1	2	3	7	8
j. Learning about jobs in the U.S.?	1	2	3	7	8

- All respondents -

11. What do you like about Parent And Child Together (PACT) time?

12. Is there anything that you dislike about PACT time?

13. Do you know what goals your child/children is/are working toward in Hand in Hand?

Yes 1
 No..... 2

14. Do you know how well your child/children is/are doing in Hand in Hand?

Yes 1
 No..... 2

15a. Would you like more information from your child's/children's Hand in Hand teacher?
 Yes 1
 No..... (GO TO Q. 16a)..... 2

15b. What would you like to know more about?

16a. Do you do activities with your child/children at home to help them learn new things?
 Yes 1
 No..... (GO TO Q. 17a)..... 2

16b. What activities do you do with them?

16c. How often do you do these activities? Would you say...
 Everyday, 1
 2-3 times a week,..... 2
 At least once a week,..... 3
 At least once a month, or 4
 Less than once a month?..... 5
 Refused..... 7
 Don't know 8

17a. Does what you learn in Hand in Hand parent education classes help you to teach your child/children new things?
 Would you say it helps you...
 A lot, 1
 Some, or..... 2
 Not much?..... (GO TO Q. 18a)..... 3
 Refused..... (GO TO Q. 18a)..... 7
 Don't know (GO TO Q. 18a)..... 8

17b. How does it help you?

18a. Do you have any children currently attending elementary school – that is, kindergarten to sixth grade?
Yes 1
No..... (GO TO Q. 19)..... 2

18b. Since the beginning of the school year, have you talked to your school-age child's/children's teacher about how they are doing in school and what they are learning?
Yes 1
No..... (GO TO Q. 19)..... 2

18c. About how many times have you talked to the teacher(s)?
_____ Number of times

18d. Did what you learned in Hand in Hand make it easier for you to talk to the teacher(s)?
Yes 1
No..... (GO TO Q. 19)..... 2

18e. What did you learn that made it easier?

19. What other suggestions do you have for how Hand in Hand could be better?

THANK YOU.