

The applicant, Parents as Teachers National Center (PATNC), is a non-profit organization of national scope, whose mission is supported by over 2000 active Parents as Teachers (PAT) affiliates and 30 state offices nationwide. For nearly 30 years, affiliates across the United States have implemented the PAT evidence-based home visiting model¹ with hundreds of thousands of families of children prenatally through Kindergarten entry, significantly impacting outcomes in the model's four goal areas: increasing parent knowledge of early childhood development and improving parenting practices; providing early detection of developmental delays and health issues; preventing child abuse and neglect; and increasing children's school readiness and school success. **The proposed project addresses the Absolute Priority by implementing a high-quality approach to literacy, supported by scientifically valid research, that includes book distribution and additional resources to expand and enhance the capacity of PAT programs to impact early and emergent literacy development of high needs children.** The proposed project is for a 24 month period, and the total federal request is for [REDACTED].

A. Significance

This project is designed to support 60 PAT parenting education and family support programs in expanding and improving the literacy-promoting services they already provide to the high needs families they serve. The project will accomplish this by providing:

- **High quality age-appropriate books to children in participating families** -- the books provide opportunities for parents to practice literacy-enriching strategies and parent-child activities shared by parent educators during home visits.
- **Training and professional development focused on promoting literacy** – to enhance

¹ www.hrsa.gov/grants/manage/homevisiting/sir02082011.pdf

parent educators' skills in working with families to create a literacy-rich home environment.

- **Literacy-focused group meetings for families** -- these are designed to increase families' connections to community literacy resources (e.g., the local library), and help families gain additional knowledge and skills related to promoting literacy at home.
- **A high quality hearing screening tool** — used by parent educators trained in use of and protocols for the tool to screen children for possible hearing delays – delays which, if not detected and treated early can significantly negatively impact emerging language and literacy skills

As noted above, the project combines and builds on two existing promising strategies: parent education provided through the PAT model and book distribution through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program. Scientifically valid research supports the use of each of these as stand-alone strategies, and studies already indicate that enhancing the PAT model by incorporating Imagination Library also is effective. The evaluation component of the project will add to and build on this evidence base in ways that will inform the early education field.

The evidence-based PAT home visiting model has four interrelated and integrated components: personal visits, group connections, child screenings, and resource network. The approach to personal visits, which is the cornerstone of the model, focuses on parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting, and family well-being.

PAT has been extensively evaluated since its inception. There have been four randomized controlled trial studies and seven peer-reviewed published outcome studies. Literacy is a strong focus of the PAT curriculum. Several scientifically valid studies in diverse setting have shown

that PAT parents engage in more home literacy activities and that children are better prepared at kindergarten entry.^{2, 3, 4, 5}

In 2007, the University of Idaho's literacy content analysis of the Parents as Teacher curricula (for ages prenatal to three and ages three to kindergarten entry) documented the extensive literacy content in the curricula that emphasizes early skills that the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) have determined reliably predict literacy development in the school years.⁶ This content analysis provides a very strong endorsement of the appropriateness of the PAT curriculum for this particular literacy-focused project.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library promotes early childhood literacy for children by providing free developmentally appropriate books from birth to age 5, one book a month. Books

² Albritton, S., Klotz, J., & Roberson, T. (2004). The effects of participating in a Parents as Teachers program on parental involvement in the learning process at school and home. *E-Journal of Teaching and Learning in Diverse Settings*, 1, 188-208

³ Pfannestiel, J.C., Seitz, V., & Zigler, E. (2002). Promoting school readiness: The role of the Parents as Teachers program. *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Intervention Field*, 6, 71-86.

⁴ Research and Training Associates (2002). BIA Family and Child Education Program: 2001 Report.

⁵ Zigler, E., Pfannenstiel, J.C., & Setiz, V. (2008). The Parents as Teachers program and school success: A replication and extension. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 29, 103-120.

⁶ NELP: National Early Literacy Panel (2006). Findings from the National Early Literacy Panel: Providing a focus for early language and literacy development. Presented at the National Conference on Family Literacy, Louisville, KY.

selected by a panel of early childhood experts incorporate themes that target age-appropriate developmental milestones. Many of the book titles are available in both English and Spanish. Each book includes a printed card with suggestions for developmentally appropriate parent-child activities that parents can engage in before, during and after reading the books with their child. Studies have demonstrated the potential of Imagination Library impacting children's literacy outcomes.^{7, 8} Imagination Library participation leads to families reading more to their children. Furthermore, the lower the families' income the greater the impact on frequency of reading. For many families in these studies, the Imagination Library was the primary source of books in the home, and increased exposure to Imagination Library (i.e. increased access to books) was associated with more frequent child-directed reading and discussion of the story.

The proposed strategy of enhancing the PAT model by adding the Imagination Library book distribution program has been tested out as part of an adaptation of the PAT model implemented with Bureau of Indian Education schools across the country called Family and Child Education (FACE). Through FACE, families with children birth to three receive PAT services and enroll their children in Imagination Library. A summary of two FACE impact studies conducted in 2004 and 2008 shows that 1) participating in Imagination Library clearly results in an increase in the number of books in the home, which is particularly significant for Native American households that tend to have fewer than average books in the home and 2) participation in FACE results in increased literacy activities in the home: parents reading to their

⁷ High Scope Educational Research, 2003. Evaluation of Imagination Library. Ypsilanti, MI.

⁸ Ridzi, F., Sylvia, M.R. & Singh, S. (2011). Imagination Library: Do more books in hand mean more shared book reading? A CURAR working paper. Le Moyne College Center for Urban and Regional Applied Research (CURAR)

children daily or almost daily, children engaging in literacy –related activities such as looking at books, reading or pretend reading, writing or drawing pictures.⁹

Additional rationale for the approach, including the fit for the targeted population, is provided in Section B, Project Design (pp. 9-10) and Section C, Project Services (p. 12).

B. Project Design

This section addresses the quality of the project design selection criterion and provides the details related to how the project addresses the Absolute Priority.

The project addresses the following research question: Does combining book distribution with a parenting education home visitation program improve the overall literacy environment in the home and increase the literacy skills of children by promoting early literacy and preparing young children to read?

The project goals are to: 1) increase parent-child literacy activities among parents with children ages birth through 4 and 2) improve oral language skills of children at 4 years of age.

The measurable objectives are to:

- Demonstrate the impact on children’s oral language and emergent literacy skills and on parent’s literacy-promoting behavior of a combined strategy of providing books in the home (one book a month) and providing high quality parenting education through bi-weekly personal visits, bi-monthly group meetings, annual screening and ongoing resource network, with a strong emphasis on parent-child literacy promoting activities
- Provide online training, professional development and a learning community for the parent educators implementing the project to ensure high quality implementation.

⁹ Research and Training Associates (2010). Family and Child Education (FACE) Impact Studies: Synthesis of 2004 and 2008 findings. Overland Park, KS.

- Positively impact literacy outcomes for 2000 children who will be under the age of five at the end of the project period in 60 PAT programs in five states across the country.

Outcomes to be measured are:

- Parents' frequency of reading to children and frequency of other language and literacy related activities (rhymes and songs, word play games, asking open ended questions, longer conversations), and use of library resources
- Number of children with possible language delays identified through hearing and developmental screening and referred for evaluation, or follow-up services
- Children' oral language at age 4 (in their home language)
- Children's knowledge of books and print
- Number of age appropriate books in the home

To meet the objectives, PATNC will implement this innovative program of high quality services designed to improve the literacy skills of preschool aged children and the literacy-promoting skills of their parents consisting of the evidence based PAT home visiting model that will provide parenting education and child development information for parents, with a focus on information related to enhancing literacy through parent-child activities, group activities linking families and local libraries, annual screening, and a resource network, enhanced with the Imagination Library book distribution program. A logic model illustrating how the project activities and outcomes are linked is included in the Other Attachments section of the application.

Our network of state offices will help identify 60 programs (at least 25% of which serve rural communities) that meet predefined criteria consistent with addressing the Absolute Priority and Competitive Preference Priorities 3 and 4 (Early Learning Outcomes and Serving Rural

LEAs). Programs will need to serve high needs families in the attendance boundary of High Needs LEAs and/or rural LEAs (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications). Recruitment of sites will take place primarily in Colorado, North Carolina, South Carolina, Illinois, Texas and Virginia. The state offices in these 5 states have agreed to assist with the recruitment process (see letters of support in the Other Attachment section).

Participating families (either newly enrolled or previously enrolled in PAT) with children aged 3 ½ or less at the project onset will receive PAT services for 18 months consisting of bi-weekly personal visits, at least bi-monthly group connections, annual developmental and health screening, and ongoing resource network, delivered with fidelity to the PAT model. The target child in the family will be enrolled in Imagination Library and will receive one book each month for 18 months. Children will receive an annual high quality hearing screening using the otoacoustic emissions (OAE) screening tool

The parent educators in the participating PAT programs will receive online literacy training and professional development via webinar on topics related to enhancing literacy such as Dialogic Reading (an evidence-based parent-child reading technique where the adult uses a series of structured prompts during shared book reading to help the child become the teller of the story), how to promote shared book-reading, journaling to promote literacy, activities to build on the Imagination Library books. Other interested early educators in the community and local librarians will be invited to participate also. (This activity addresses Competitive Preference Priority 2 - Technology). The parent educators also will participate in an online learning community to share best practices with one another. This learning can be shared with other PAT programs. (This activity also addresses Competitive Preference Priority 2 – Technology.) The participating PAT program will receive the standard program support package from PAT

national center to ensure quality implementation of the model and adherence to the PAT quality standards. Each program will receive an annual honorarium for participating (to cover staff time to attend training, recruit families, complete paperwork, and compile report, and the costs associated with receiving annual PAT program support). The honorarium will be paid out subject to the program meeting project benchmarks (recruiting families, submitting enrollment information to evaluator, enrolling children in Imagination Library, participating in training and professional development, and submitting required service delivery reports according to a defined schedule.)

Each program will be provided with an OAE screening tool plus training in how to use it, and with additional funds to provide bi-monthly group meetings in collaboration with local libraries or community literacy resources.

The rationale for the proposed activities includes the following:

- The proposed activities are supported by the cited studies. The two main components of the project – Parents as Teachers and Imagination Library – both have evidence to support their effectiveness as summarized in the section A.
- Studies show that the number of books in the home is a strong predictor of children’s later success in school.¹⁰ High needs families (particularly low income families) may lack the resources to provide many high quality, developmentally appropriate books in the home. Rural families may not have easy access to local library resources. Imagination

¹⁰ Evans, M.D. R., Kelley, J. Sikora, J. & Trieman, D.J. (2010). Family scholarly culture and educational success: Evidence from 27 nations. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 28(2), 171-197.

Library brings the high quality books to the family; the books are theirs to keep, allowing them to build a home library.

- Book distribution alone is unlikely to have enduring impact. However, when partnered with an evidence-based parenting education model that teaches parents about the importance of their role in promoting their child's early literacy skills, gives them additional tools and resources to create a literacy-rich home environment, addresses the development of the whole child, and focuses on the parent-child relationship, the impact is expected to be much greater.

Addressing the Competitive Preference Priorities. The details about how the design/strategies address the Absolute Priority and Competitive Preference Priority 2 – Technology - have been provided above (pp. 5-9).

Competitive Preference Priority 3 (Improving Early Learning Outcomes) is addressed through the project's design and intent to improve the early literacy home environment and the oral language skills of high needs children through age 4. Both of these outcomes are linked to later school readiness and success for high need children.

Competitive Preference Priority 4 (Serving Rural LEAs) is addressed through the subset (at least 25%) of the participating PAT sites that will be ones that serve high needs children located in the attendance boundaries of rural local educational agencies (as defined in the notice). In 2010-2011, fully 41% of reporting PAT programs served families living in rural communities.

The proposed project is coordinated with other resources in that the local PAT services being provided to the families are already being funded either by local school districts, community sources (private grants), or state or federal resources. This project is leveraging

those resources to provide even better programming to families to further enhance literacy outcomes.

Performance feedback and continuous improvement are incorporated into the project design. We will collect data from participating families at baseline, at the end of Year 1 and again at the end of Year 2. The Year 1 performance data will provide information on whether outcomes are trending in the expected direction. If there are any unexpected variances, we will examine the possible causes and use this analysis to inform the content and direction of targeted mid-course technical assistance.

Programs document service delivery through use of a web-based tool called Visit Tracker. We will get Visit Tracker reports at least quarterly from the sites documenting the level of service delivery they have provided to participating families. If there are issues with their level of service delivery, programs will be contacted by the PATNC program support team who will provide technical assistance and develop action plans if needed. If or when fidelity of implementation issues occur that apply across the sites, the professional development webinar topics can be targeted to address those issues.

Payment of the honorarium will be tied to the sites meeting certain project benchmarks related to service delivery, reporting, and data collection. If benchmarks aren't met, payment will be withheld until the program is in compliance.

Lastly, the on-line learning community will be a resource for assessing the need for and providing support and strategies for continuous improvement.

C. Project Services

The proposed project services – Parents as Teachers and Imagination Library - have already been shown to be appropriate for the target population for this project; both have

demonstrated impacts for high needs children and families. The Parents as Teachers home visiting model was named by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as meeting the evidence standards needed to implement the Maternal, Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting Initiative, which is targeted at families in very high needs communities across the country.

The project will ensure access for underrepresented groups by recruiting programs that already serve a high percentage of high needs families and that serve families in the attendance boundaries of high needs LEAs. Only high needs families as defined in the NIA (examples listed include living in poverty, English learners, new immigrants, or children with disabilities) will be eligible to participate in the project.

Children in high needs families often have lower literacy skills at the start of kindergarten, including much smaller vocabularies.¹¹ They typically are exposed to much less language in print and oral forms. Parents in high needs families often are lower literate as well, and may be uncomfortable reading to children. High needs families have fewer resources to purchase books and often lack access to libraries, so the children have limited access to appropriate reading materials in the home. They may also lack resources to have children screened so would be less likely to have hearing issues identified early enough to get them taken care of before child starts school. The services proposed for this project are appropriate for the target population in that they:

- encourage the use of simple, effective strategies for promoting literacy that all parents can use, regardless of ELL status, literacy levels, reading level, or income level

¹¹ Hart, B. and Risley, T. (2003). The early catastrophe: The 30 million word gap by age 3, *American Educator*, 27, pp 4-9.

- involve a home visitor who will suggest and modeling literacy promoting activities for parents and children, provide resources, and connect the activities to the child's school readiness and success
- are delivered over 18 months, giving families time an extended length of time to incorporate the knowledge and skills they acquire into their parenting practices.
- bring parenting information and print materials right into the families' homes
- provide group meetings at local libraries so that families will get better connected with the library and will increase their use of those resources.

The project services include a significant amount of training and professional development for the parent educators implementing the project. The main training for parent educators is a 3-hour on-line Literacy training. In addition, there will be approximately 9 hours of professional development delivered bi-monthly via webinars. The webinars will focus on literacy promotion activities, Dialogic Reading, and understanding how development of the whole child, family well-being, quality of the parent-child relationship, and development-centered parenting all can contribute to achieving literacy outcomes for children.

The amount of training and professional development to be provided exceeds the standard number of in-service hours required of PAT parent educators annually in order to renew their PAT certification and maintain the quality of service delivery, and contributes to ensuring high quality products and services from the proposed project.

PATNC has established quality standards for delivery of the PAT with fidelity to the model. The ongoing program support and technical assistance around model implementation to

be provided to the participating programs will help ensure the overall quality of PAT services being delivered.

D. Project Resources

Because existing local, state or federal funding streams already support the participating PAT programs, most of the direct service delivery costs associated with this project are already covered, greatly reducing the cost of implementing the project.

Most of the other major direct expenses associated with this project are either one-time costs (such as the cost of the OAE machines) or costs necessitated by this particular project (the honoraria for the participating sites, the project management costs and the evaluation costs). Ongoing costs to maintain this project at the 60 participating sites would be minimal (primarily the costs of the Imagination Library books, at approximately [REDACTED] per child per year).

Through this project, there is the potential to identify children with possible hearing delays and refer them for further assessment and treatment. The upfront costs associated with providing the OAE screening tool are small compared to impact and long term costs of not identifying or treating hearing loss early.

Similarly, the cost of providing books through Imagination Library is very small ([REDACTED] per child per year) compared to the costs of providing remedial reading for kids that start school not ready to read or the costs associated with children who are held back in school because of low academic performance resulting in part from having poor reading skills..

In general, home visiting is a strategy that has a strong return on investment. When well implemented and targeted to families who benefit most, as is the intent with this project, it has

been shown to return up to ██████ for every tax dollar invested¹², making this a very reasonable investment. The enhancement to the PAT home visiting model being demonstrated through this project will likely yield additional returns for very little additional investment.

The impacts on the parents and children who participate will endure beyond the grant period in terms of the improved parenting strategies and increased parent-child literacy promoting activities. Parents would be expected to continue to implement the strategies once the children enter kindergarten and beyond, continuing to reinforce literacy skills and positively impacting children's academic performance.

Lastly, the training and professional development provided to the parent educators will benefit all current families in their caseloads, not just those participating in the project, both during and after the project period.

E. Project Management Plan

Included in the Other Attachments is a project timeline with responsibilities and timeframes. The overall timeline includes a 3 month start up period to finalize site selection, recruit families, collect pre-test data and train parent educators, an 18-month implementation phase to provide the program services, conduct the professional development and ongoing program support activities, and collect mid-project data, and a 3 month ramp-down period for post-test data collection.

PATNC has extensive experience in designing and managing large projects with multiple sites and in managing and executing federal grants of the size and scope of the proposed project.

¹² http://www.pewstates.org/uploadedFiles/PCS_Assets/2011/The_Business_Case_for_Home_Visiting.pdf

PATNC has managed the replication of the Parents as Teachers service model in all 50 states and seven other countries. We currently are implementing a five-year Department of Education Investing in Innovations (i3) validation grant (awarded in 2010) and are completing a three year Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Education grant. We have previously received managed other multi-year and multi-million dollar federal grants and contracts from the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services and Defense and from private philanthropies such as the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We have both the expertise and capacity to manage the Innovative Approaches to Literacy grant.

To accomplish this project, the core Management Team will consist of a full time (1 FTE) project manager, supervised part-time (.25 FTE) by the Senior Manager for Special Projects, and supported by a Training Director (.2 FTE) and a Research Director (.10 FTE). We will contract with the Center for Early Education Evaluation at HighScope to conduct the evaluation for the project. The evaluator will consult regularly with the Parents as Teachers Director of Research and Quality and the Manager of Research and Evaluation. The project manager will be hired specifically for this project. A job description for this position and resumes for the other key personnel and the evaluator are attached in the Other Attachments, as are additional documents supporting the qualifications of the evaluators.

The Key Personnel, primary responsibilities, qualifications and experience are as follows:

Senior Manager for Special Projects (.25 FTE). Kate McGilly, PhD, Kate McGilly, Ph.D. will serve as project director. She will supervise the project manager, produce and submit grant and budget reports, oversee budget expenditures and ensure that they are allowable, ensure compliance with federal regulations, work with the accounts payable specialist and the CFO to

support A-133 audits. She will serve as the main point of contact with federal program officer and grants officer. Dr. McGilly has 16+ years' experience managing grants and project at the National Center. She is responsible for monitoring and reporting on all federal grants and contracts. Currently these include a \$14 million dollar 2010 i3 validation grant and a Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Education grant. She has managed multi-year and multi-million dollar grants and contracts from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense. Dr. McGilly holds a doctorate in developmental psychology from Carnegie Mellon University

Project Manager (1 FTE) (to be hired). The project manager will be expected to have a Bachelors degree or Masters degree in education or related field, at minimum 3-5 years experience in literacy programming, experience with home visitation and early childhood education, project management experience, excellent oral and written communication skills, and strong organizational skills. The project manager will be responsible for overseeing the project implementation. S/he will be the main point of contact with sites, will communicate expectations and timelines and will monitor progress, will ensure that training (literacy and OAE) and professional development is delivered, will assist the evaluator with data collection issues, will support the Senior Manager with producing grant reports, will work with PATNC program support staff to make sure technical assistance needs that have been identified are addressed.

Director for Training, Curriculum and Program Innovations. (0.2 FTE) Donna Hunt O'Brien will supervise the training manager. She will oversee the updating of the online literacy training and the conversion to new LMS platform, and will oversee the development of the bi-monthly professional development webinars. She also will deliver some of the content of

the webinars. O'Brien has a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and Child and Family Development from the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Director of Research and Quality. (0.1 FTE). Karen Guskin, Ph.D will provide consultation and support to the evaluator throughout the project. She will also oversee the analyses of the quarterly Visit Tracker reports from the sites to identify potential quality of implementation issues and areas where sites are in need of technical assistance. Dr. Guskin has a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from Stanford University.

Additional project staff include:

- Training Manager (.15 FTE) to review and update the content of the online literacy training, do content development for the professional development webinars, and provide support to the sites on the use of the OAE instrument.
- Accounts Payable Specialist (.2 FTE) to assist with managing the accounting responsibilities associated with this grant. Ensuring necessary accounting practices are implemented to ensure a clean A-133 audit
- Manager of Research and Evaluation (.2 FTE) to support Director of Research and Quality, assisting with summarizing quarterly Visit Tracker reports to provide performance feedback and providing participating sites with Visit Tracker technical assistance to ensure correct reporting. She will also provide research support for the content of the online literacy training and professional development webinars.
- Chief Financial Officer (.1 FTE) will work closely with the Senior Manager for Special Projects and will supervise the Accounts Payable Specialist staff and will be responsible for drawing down grant funds and maintaining all financial records related to this project.

The 2.2 FTEs budgeted for project management is consistent with the personnel costs associated with our other federal grants that have been similar in scope and size.

Lead Evaluator. Tomoko Wakabayashi, Ed.D., Director of the Center for Early Education Evaluation at HighScope, will supervise staff, and work with HighScope's finance department to manage the budget. She will be the primary liaison with the Parents as Teachers National Center project staff and the partner sites. Dr. Wakabayashi has an Ed.D. in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard University Graduate School of Education and also holds a Ed.M in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard and M.A. in Child Study from Tufts University. Aside from her role as the Center Director, she is the Principal Investigator for the Michigan Department of Education funded Great Start Readiness Program Evaluation and Assistant Principal Investigator for the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) funded Numbers Plus Efficacy Study.

The management plan includes numerous mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project. Most of these have already been described in the Project Design and Project Services sections. In sum, they include:

- Selecting programs to participate that can confirm that they are meeting essential requirements for model fidelity. Their most recent annual Affiliate Performance Report data will be reviewed to substantiate what the programs report
- Providing ongoing program support to address TA needs
- Providing high quality training and regular professional development focusing on promoting literacy
- Having quality assurance guidelines and blueprints for programs to follow to ensure quality of services

- Linking payment of the program sites' honoraria to meeting performance benchmarks
- Collecting performance feedback mid-project
- Regularly reviewing Visit Tracker reports to validate that aspects of model fidelity are being adhered to
- Partnering with Imagination Library, which is known for distributing high-quality, age-appropriate books.
- Contracting with a very high quality evaluator, High Scope Educational Research Foundation, to ensure the quality of the evaluation component.

F. Project Evaluation

The proposed evaluation activities are designed to examine how the proposed innovative literacy approach of enhancing the Parents as Teachers home visiting model with the Imagination Library's book distribution program meets the goals, objectives and outcomes as set forth and illustrated in the logic model (see Other Attachments). The goals of the project are to: 1) increase parent-child literacy activities among parents with children aged birth through 4 and 2) improve oral language skills of children 4 years of age.

Data on home literacy activities and fidelity indicators (e.g., dosages and content of intervention) will be collected for all participating families. In accordance with the GPRA measure for this grant, the proposed evaluation will examine the percentage of 4-year-old children participating in the project who achieve significant gains in oral language skills.

Methods

Participants. The project evaluation includes both an overall evaluation of all the participating children as well as a focal evaluation of a subgroup of the participating children.

In the overall evaluation, we will recruit 2,000 children ages 3;6 or less from families who are already or newly enrolled in Parents as Teachers affiliates in 5 states and who will receive the enhanced programming including the Imagination Library program.

For the focal evaluation, a subgroup of families and their children ages 2;6 to 3;5 at the beginning of the project will be recruited to participate. We anticipate this number to be 400 children distributed across five states.

Data Collection.

Overall Evaluation. The following data will be collected from all enrolled families who consent to participate in the evaluation:

- Parent/Child Demographics
- Date of enrollment
- Home Literacy Checklist

As a part of the project, parent educators will be trained to complete the Home Literacy Checklist. The checklist will contain questions that parent educators will ask parents about frequency of reading, use of dialogic reading, number of age-appropriate books in the homes, additional purchase of books, use of library, and other language/literacy related activities. The checklist will be developed based on parent surveys used in the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2007¹³, the FACE (The Family and Child Education Program) impact study, and the 2003 Imagination Library evaluation conducted by HighScope. Parent surveys have been reliably used to collect information about home literacy activities. The checklist will be

¹³ O'Donnell, K. (2008). *Parents' Reports of the School Readiness of Young Children from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2007* (NCES 2008-051). Washington, DC:

U.S. Department of Education, NCES.

completed three times with all participating families—at the beginning of Year 1 and Year 2, and the end of Year 2. For the 1600 families not part of the focal evaluation, the Home Literacy Checklist will be completed by parent educators all three times. For families selected to participate in the focal evaluation, the Checklist will be completed by trained child assessors at 2 of the 3 time points (beginning of Year 1 and the end of Year 2 together with child assessments). The parent educator will complete the Checklist once (at the beginning of Year 2).

An experienced researcher will conduct five focus groups at the end of the project. Each focus group will involve 10 parents randomly chosen from among the multiple participating sites. Sites will be chosen to represent the diverse families served by the project (e.g. Spanish-speaking, urban/rural, etc.). Parents will provide feedback on their experiences with the program. The results will provide in-depth qualitative data on implementation and perceived outcomes of the program.

Focal Evaluation. Additional data will be collected from a subset of 400 families whose children are between the ages of 2;6 and 3;5 at the beginning of the project) and who consent to participate in the evaluation:

- Woodcock-Johnson-III Normative Update Test of Cognitive Abilities (Extended Oral Language)—Test 3, story recall subtest; Test 4 Understanding Directions, Test 14 Picture Vocabulary, and Test 15 Oral Comprehension.
- Home Literacy Checklist

Woodcock-Johnson III will be used to assess children’s oral language skills. WJ-III is a norm-referenced, individually administered ability and achievement test which is both valid and

reliable.¹⁴ Widely used in early childhood evaluations (for children age 2 and above), it provides age-based or grade-based norm-referenced individual test and broad ability and achievement scores. The subscales chosen is a comprehensive set of norm-referenced tests for measuring extended oral language skills , and is estimated to take about 5 minutes to administer.¹⁵ The WJ-III has good evidence of internal consistency (above $r=.8$ for all scales), reliability (test-retest for extended oral language measures after less than one year $r=.90$), and validity (McGrew & Woodcock, 2001). The achievement subtests have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. A Spanish version of WJ-III will be used for Spanish-speaking participants.

Children will be assessed by trained child assessors at the beginning of the project, and at the end of the project. No new children will be added once the sample is chosen. All efforts will be made to follow children and families who drop out of the program during the project.

Children's assessment outcomes will be compared to the national standards/norms, as indicated in the measurement tools chosen. We therefore conceptualize the success of the proposed innovative literacy program in terms of children's gains in standardized scores as compared with a nationally representative sample, at the beginning of the project (at age 2) and the end of the project (at age 4).

For the focal evaluation families, the Home Literacy Checklist will be completed by the trained child assessors at 2 of the 3 time points (beginning of Year 1 and the end of Year 2

¹⁴ Woodcock, R. W., McGrew, K. S., & Mather, N. (2001b). *Woodcock-Johnson III tests of achievement*. Itasca, IL: Riverside Publishing.

Woodcock, R. W., Munoz-Sandoval, A. F., McGrew, K. S., & Mather, N. (2005). *Bateria III Woodcock-Munoz*. Itasca, IL: The Riverside Publishing Company.

¹⁵ <http://www.riverpub.com/products/wjIIICognitive/index.html>

together with child assessments), at the same time they complete the child assessments. The parent educator will complete the Checklist once, at the beginning of Year 2.

Quality and Fidelity of Implementation. In order to better understand the impact of the proposed approach, we will examine the fidelity of the project design as implemented across sites. In any program evaluation, it is common that the results of a well-intended evaluation cannot be reliably interpreted because of variability in the implementation of a program. In order to address this, quality and level of implementation will be measured and monitored (see logic model in Other Attachment). We will measure the following fidelity indicators:

- Percent of parent educators receiving the online literacy training and literacy-related professional development webinars
- Percent of literacy-related personal visits and group connections completed as intended (numbers offered, numbers attended, duration, literacy content)
- Percent of children screened for language related delays
- Percent of participants receiving intended number of Imagination Library books.

Data on the above fidelity indicators will be obtained three times—at the beginning of Year 1 and 2, and at the end of Year 2.

Data Analysis

Analysis will be conducted to answer the following research questions:

- Is the treatment implemented as designed?
- Do parents report increase in knowledge and practices surrounding home literacy activities?
- Do children's oral language skills from ages 2 to 4 show greater gains, compared to national norms?

- Is fidelity of the intervention/program (e.g., parent educator training, home visit dosage and quality, number of books distributed) related to the degree of gains observed in parents who participate in the program?
- Do parents' knowledge and practices surrounding home literacy activities relate to gains in child oral language skills?

Each fidelity indicator (i.e., dosage, quality) will be assessed against its designed level as indicated in the logic model (see Other Attachments) to answer the first question.

Home Literacy Checklist responses will be used as parent outcomes. Responses from the beginning of Year 1 (pretest) and the end of Year 2 (posttest) for selected families in the focal evaluation will be examined using paired t-tests to answer the second question. Gains across the three time points for all families will also be examined.

WJ-III scores provide the child outcomes. Children's standardized scores at age 2 and 4 will be compared using paired t-test to answer the third question. Significant gains from age 2 to 4 in standard points represents an increase in national normed standing, adjusted for the growth expectation between age 2 and 4.

Regression analysis will be conducted to answer the fourth question, with parent outcomes at posttest modeled as a function of the intervention variables, and adjusted for 1) pretest scores, 2) family demographics, 3) parent educator background, and 4) clustering effects of parents within parent educators.

To answer the last question, each child outcome will be modeled as a function of parent literacy activities, adjusted for child age 2 score, and family socioeconomic differences.