FAMILY LITERACY INITIATIVES

FIRST YEAR REPORT

Prepared by
Research for Action

Aida Nevárez-La Torre

with the assistance of
Eva Gold and Guadalupe Rivera

September 1998

CONTENTS

TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Overview

In the 1997-1998 school year, PNC Bank funded Family Literacy Initiatives in four elementary schools in the Norris Square neighborhood: Hunter, McKinley, Moffet, and Welsh. The PNC grant, made to the Children Achieving Challenge, was to develop and implement programs that address the literacy needs of both children and adults in those communities. During the spring of 1997, each school submitted a proposal to the Challenge detailing its vision for a family literacy program that could serve the parents and other family members of the children in its school.

This evaluation report describes the different conceptualizations of family literacy programs that exist in the four schools. The family literacy program at Hunter followed a comprehensive approach involving the interaction of children, parents, and school and community facilitators in developing literacy skills within the family. The program provided intervention in four main areas: adult education, early childhood, support services, and parent-child interaction. The original proposal for the McKinley School family literacy program was to support and expand pre-existing programs, the Parents Book Club and Help One Student To Succeed (HOST), and to develop a new component, Take-Home Computers. Together these components form a program with a single focus on school-based academic activities to improve family literacy and children's achievement at McKinley. The focus of the "Making Friends with Books" program at Moffet Elementary School was to expand parent understanding about developing children's literacy in the home. The program's single focus stressed school-based academic activities within family contexts. The family literacy program at Welsh Elementary had a dual focus. It gave attention to school-based academic activities through the Parent Literacy Workshops and Library Visits and to adult education through a GED component.

II. Hunter Elementary/Lutheran Settlement house Family Literacy Initiative

A. Introduction

The body of the report is an in-depth study of Hunter's Family Literacy Initiative specifying its evolution, implementation process, and strengths and identifying lessons learned. The need to improve the overall academic achievement of children labeled "at risk" at Hunter Elementary School led to the development of an initiative focused on providing extra reading and writing support to children at school and at home. To this end, Hunter Elementary School in collaboration with Lutheran Settlement House (LHS), a community agency in the Norris Square neighborhood, proposed a comprehensive family literacy program.

The Family Literacy Initiative met three times a week, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., from

October 1997 through May 1998, for a total of 60 sessions. The Adult Education component provided Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to adults. The Early Childhood component offered preschool instruction to children ages three to six. The Support Services component included tutoring for school-age children through the Homework Club and counseling to families who requested it. Only children of adults participating in the adult program were allowed to attend the Preschool and Homework Club components. The three components met each week on Monday and Wednesday. The Parent-Child Interaction component brought parents and children together on Thursday afternoons to work on joint literacy activities and hands-on projects, such as role-play and arts and craft. Every month the project's staff selected a theme that was integrated into lessons across the different adult and child components. The themes were not related to the school curriculum. Rather, the purpose of the theme of the month was to provide cohesion for the program and promote communication across components and across adult and child learners.

B. Main Findings

Analysis of the data identified strengths of the literacy program at Hunter in the following areas:

1. Relationship between Staff and Participants

2. Growth in Mastery of the English Language

3. The Partnership

4. Impact on the School and the Family

Analysis of the implementation process during the first year uncovered some ways in which the Family Literacy Initiative at Hunter could be improved and expanded. These are specified below:

1. Recruitment and Retention

2. Program Format

3. Connection with Welfare Agency

4. Multiple Responsibilities

III. Areas for Further Study

The study revealed several key issues that need to be considered by the schools, the funding agency, and outside evaluators when evaluating all programs in the coming years.

A. Recommendations for Self-Assessment

1. <u>Documentation</u>. Schools should utilize a variety of ways to document participation as well as the growth and impact of programs. Some documentation instruments should be used by all sites to standardize the documentation process across programs. Other instruments should be designed to meet the specific assessment goals and needs of individual programs. One-time as well as ongoing assessment throughout the participation period of individuals could facilitate a good match between participants and programs' goals as well as reveal new ways to improve the program. In addition, the formal documentation of observations about literacy behaviors at school and at home done by program staff and school teachers is needed to identify growth trends.

2. <u>Literacy and academic progress of parents and children</u>. Schools should investigate how these programs contribute to increased student achievement and increased student and parent literacy development. The exploration should focus on the ways the components benefit the teaching and learning processes at the school. It would also be important to examine how the programs promote and facilitate educational activities at home.

3. <u>Facilitating the participation of school staff</u>. The multiple responsibilities of school staff can often prevent their effective participation in programs. The coordinators at Hunter and Welsh expressed some anxiety about the many roles they had in the school and the challenges they needed to face when assuming these roles. The literature echoes this complaint. To illustrate, Johnson (1994) cites school principals cautioning schools about stretching their staff. Principals recognize the burden on teacher performance caused by the multiplicity of roles they sometimes assume in schools. Administrators need to find creative ways to balance responsibility by involving all the school staff in these efforts. The periodic training of teachers and parent volunteers in the literacy initiative would prepare more individuals to assist in the efforts and provide greater support to those who have been involved in the efforts from the beginning. Schools need to validate the time and energy put forth by all the staff contributing to the literacy initiatives. The wise management of staff involvement would allow them to implement programs effectively and attend to the everyday demands of school.

4. <u>Using cultural diversity as a resource</u>. Durán (1996) explains literacy as a cultural concept. As such it is not only a set of skills, but a way of thinking and behaving and responding to one's environment. All the programs discussed here responded to the linguistic needs of participants by providing translators for monolingual Latino families. While this practice is commendable, family literacy programs need to be cognizant of other ways in which their schools can respond to the cultural diversity of participants. How can family literacy programs

validate the rich cultural and linguistic knowledge that already exists within the participants' families? How can programs assist these families in acquiring new cultural and linguistic knowledge that can enhance their participation in the school, community and society? Some ways in which this could be achieved are: using bilingual books; discussing topics from a multicultural perspective; and using adult learners who participated in the program the previous year to share their learnings and assist in facilitating a workshop.

5. <u>Building the home and school connection</u>. After a year of implementation the schools have a core group of parents that could be a great resource to the literacy program as well as the school. The schools need to consider ways to use the family literacy programs to promote more parental involvement in the school. How can schools make the family literacy initiative part of the school mission to expand the commitment of school staff and participants to the program? In what ways can schools involve parents in meaningful decision-making tasks about the family literacy program and the school? In what ways can programs enhance the level of *confianza* between school staff and participants? Some suggestions to accomplish this are: making the family literacy initiative an integral part of the school's mission and improvement plan; inviting past participants to assist in the coordination of recruitment and retention efforts for the program; inviting program participants to be part of the decision-making committees in the school; and inviting participants to be co-facilitators of workshops for school staff. These workshops could introduce the program, its goals and structure, and orient the audience about the adult learners' need for this type of program and their individual goals as participants.

6. <u>Programs with partnerships</u>. Alamprese (1996) argues for collaboration among education and human services agencies since addressing the literacy needs of parents and children is complex and requires the delivery of multifaceted services to meet those needs. However, it is important to identify the benefits from the partnership. Some of the specific areas that could be explored are: the type of collaboration and its effectiveness; the type and quality of relationship between partners; level and forms of support from partners; and level and forms of support from governmental agencies.

B. Recommendations for Outside Evaluation

The efforts of the outside funding agency and evaluators should focus on evaluation and capacity building of programs. Some areas to attend to are: assisting school staff in the examination of data to inform their programs; interviewing classroom teachers to explore their perception of the progress made by children of adult learners; interviewing parents to explore the ways they transfer their learnings from literacy classes to the home; and exploring the different programs' formats, from single to multifaceted focus and identifying the ways in which different formats serve the participants and respond to the educational needs of the school.

FAMILY LITERACY INITIATIVES

FIRST YEAR REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 1997-1998 school year, PNC Bank funded Family Literacy Initiatives in four elementary schools in the Norris Square neighborhood: Hunter, McKinley, Moffet, and Welsh. The PNC grant, made to the Children Achieving Challenge, was to develop and implement programs that address the literacy needs of both children and adults in those communities. During the spring of 1997, each school submitted a proposal to the Challenge detailing its vision for a family literacy program that could serve the parents and other family members of the children in its school. Appendix A describes the proposals including staff, goals, and objectives and instruments for self-assessment. These proposals were then implemented, beginning in September 1997.

Research for Action was hired by PNC and the Challenge to evaluate the first-year implementation of the Family Literacy Initiatives. The evaluation was conducted from January to June 1998 and was guided by two general research questions: (1) How does the family literacy initiative at each school enhance the literacy of children and adults? (2) How does the dual focus (school and community) of the family literacy project influence children's school achievement? Given the time restrictions of the evaluation, we could study only one program in depth. At the request of PNC, Hunter's program was chosen for the in-depth analysis because of the more comprehensive nature of its family literacy initiative. This in-depth study provides a framework for studying other projects in the future. The evaluation strategies used for the in-depth study could also assist Hunter program's staff and participants to gather, analyze, and use information for continuous growth and improvement in the upcoming years.

The evaluation design required active collaboration from program staff and participants. Documentation of the programs was gathered from February to June 1998. Appendix B includes a Calendar of Major Research Activities and Interview Protocols used for data collection. School personnel and parents shared their insights about each of the programs through in-depth interviews and focus groups lasting from 1 to 2.5 hours. Additional information was obtained through observations of program activities and written documentation, such as school improvement plans and attendance records. In order to check our "outsider" perceptions of the programs, we solicited reviews of our descriptions from some program staff. Their reviews informed our interpretation of the data.

This evaluation report describes the different conceptualizations of family literacy programs that exist in the four schools. The body of the report is an in-depth study of Hunter's Family Literacy Initiative specifying its evolution, implementation process, and strengths and identifying lessons learned. The report also includes an overview of the three other program sites, portraying some of their main characteristics. The last section of the report considers key implementation issues and potential areas of impact for all projects.

II. IN-DEPTH DESCRIPTION: Hunter Elementary/Lutheran Settlement House Family

Literacy Initiative

A. Overview

The need to improve the overall academic achievement of children labeled "at risk" at Hunter Elementary School led to the development of an initiative focused on providing extra reading and writing support to children at school and at home. To this end, Hunter Elementary School in collaboration with Lutheran Settlement House (LHS), a community agency in the Norris Square neighborhood, proposed a comprehensive family literacy program. The program involves the interaction of children, parents, and school and community facilitators in developing literacy skills within the family. The program provided intervention in four main areas: adult education, early childhood, support services, and parent-child interaction. Ms. Sachiyo Searles, school counselor at Hunter, and Ms. Antoinette Falco, Director of Education at LSH, oversaw the program.

The Family Literacy Initiative met three times a week, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., from October 1997 through May 1998, for a total of 60 sessions. The Adult Education component provided Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to adults. The Early Childhood component offered preschool instruction to children ages three to six. The Support Services component included tutoring for school-age children through the Homework Club and counseling to families who requested it. Only children of adults participating in the adult program were allowed to attend the Preschool and Homework Club components. The three components met each week on Monday and Wednesday. The Parent-Child Interaction component brought parents and children together on Thursday afternoons to work on joint literacy activities and hands-on projects, such as role-play and arts and craft. Every month the project's staff selected a theme that was integrated into lessons across the different adult and child components. The themes were not related to the school curriculum. Rather, the purpose of the theme of the month was to provide cohesion for the program and promote communication across components and across adult and child learners.

The partnership between Hunter School and LSH was enhanced by clear guidelines for shared and separate responsibility. Both the Hunter School and LSH shared in the project planning and curriculum development. Hunter School facilitated recruitment of participants and counseling support, including evaluation and referral of children. Hunter provided classroom space, security for after-school access, and access to books and materials. Ms. Searles, counselor at Hunter, served as the liaison between the school and Lutheran Settlement House. The original proposal specified that Hunter would evaluate the different components of the program and their effects on children's literacy development during the first year. Since the work during the first year focused on staffing, organization, and programmatic issues, the self-evaluation will be performed during the second year of implementation.

Lutheran Settlement House was responsible for the overall management of the program and provided the ABE and Preschool components including placement, instruction, and assessment of adult learners. Ms. Nora Gutierrez was the program manager during the first half

of the year. Mr. Andrew Gephart replaced her as program manager during the second half.

B. Vignettes of Participants

The best way to understand the Hunter program is to get to know some of the adult family members who participated in it. Their voices broaden and deepen our understanding of the impact this program has had in the school and community. The following five vignettes reveal the variety and complexity of issues that participants face daily and the diverse perspectives within a community coping with urban realities.

Maribel is a 25-year-old ABE student. Since she was born and raised in Philadelphia, but her parents came from Puerto Rico she considers herself fully bilingual. She is married and has 2 children at Hunter, one in 1st and the other one in 3rd grade. Her husband is a mechanic, and she works in a meat factory; neither have their GED. She attended school through the 10th grade. They live near the school and are working hard to increase the opportunities for their children. Maribel joined the ABE program in October after she received a flier from the school inviting parents to participate. She enrolled hoping to better herself and improve her skills. Maribel plans to attend the ABE summer program at Hunter. Her belief is that the better prepared she is educationally, the better it will be for her children. "I know if I have a diploma I will have better chances of getting a good job for me and my family," she says.

Rosalyn is originally from Mexico and has been living in the United States for 8 years. She is married and has 4 children. The two oldest attend Hunter in the 1st and 4th grades. The two youngest, ages 5 and 3, are not in school yet. She does not work outside the home; her husband works in a factory. She found out about the ESL classes being offered at Hunter through a letter from the school. She enrolled because she wants to learn enough English to take driving lessons. Being responsible for 4 children requires that she learn to drive. She recognizes the need to speak English to be able to function in this society. "For example, I am the one who pays the bills in my house, so I need to be able to speak to people from the gas and electric companies." Rosalyn also hopes that learning English will enable her to help her children with their school work. "This past year my oldest had a very difficult time at school and I was not able to help. Now, I do not want my other children to be without my help in their school work. So, that is why I am learning English". Rosalyn will attend the ESL summer classes at Hunter.

Esther is a single mother of 2 children. Her children attend Hunter in grades 1st and 3rd. Born in Ohio, she has lived in Philadelphia for most of her adult life. Her parents came from Puerto Rico. Although she considers herself bilingual she feels more comfortable speaking English. She attended school through the 10th grade. Esther learned about Hunter's GED classes through a friend. She attended classes from October through May. She hopes her GED experience will help her find a secretarial job. This summer she enrolled in a GED program at a different center in North Philadelphia. She plans to attend full time for 12 weeks, take the GED exams in early fall, and then get a job.

Lidia was born and raised in Puerto Rico. For the past ten years she has lived in

Philadelphia. In Puerto Rico she attended school through the 7th grade. She has 3 children, 2 in high school and 1 attending 4th grade at Hunter. She has never worked outside the home, but she wants to. She knows that requires mastery of the English language. Lidia attended the ESL class from November to May. She explained that in this class she was able to learn a lot of vocabulary. Now that she is able to speak and understand English better, her inhibitions about communicating in English are disappearing. Her motivation to learn English is very strong. In addition to Hunter's afternoon ESL program, she attended another ESL program in the mornings at Providence House, a community center. She plans to attend the ESL program at Hunter during the summer.

Ramonita has been living in the United States for the past 6 months. She was born and raised in Puerto Rico. Before moving to the United States she completed 4 years of college, was married, and had 3 daughters. Her family came to the United States looking for better job opportunities. One of her three girls is in Special Education, one is in 7th grade, and the youngest is in 1st grade at Hunter. Ramonita learned about the ESL program through a flier from the school. She attended the program from February to May. She would like to improve her English skills in order to qualify for a job as a teacher or social worker and to help her children with school work. In May, she was hired as a teacher assistant in Julia de Burgos Middle School. During the summer she plans to attend the ESL class at Hunter and bring her oldest child as well so that she can also learn more English. "I am very motivated," she says, "Next year I might be working at Julia de Burgos from 8:30 to 3:00 pm. But even if I arrive a little late I plan to attend the ESL classes at Hunter."

As these vignettes show, many of the adult learners at Hunter struggle with low education, migration, linguistic differences, and poverty. Nonetheless, these families are striving to achieve better life conditions. Their motivation and commitment serve as their catalyst for change. The availability of Hunter's Family Literacy Initiative appears to have helped these participants focus their motivation for achieving personal education goals and improving the educational opportunities for their children. These participants were active learners who involved themselves fully in all aspects of Hunter's program.

C. Implementation

As mentioned above, the Hunter/LSH program had 4 components: adult education, early childhood, support services, and parent-child interaction. This section describes those components.

1. Adult Education Component

The Adult Education Component consisted of two services: Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language instruction.

a. Adult Basic Education (ABE) Class

Mr. Will Palacio was the ABE instructor. Although he is bilingual (English and Spanish), he taught mostly in English. The ABE class recruited a total of 25 students; at the end of the program, only 6 students remained registered. Of those recruited 19 (76.0%) were Latina women and 6 (24.0%) were African American women. The average daily attendance was 3.9 adults. Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix C of this document offer more detailed information about participation patterns of all programs.

At the beginning of the course a diagnostic test was given to assess the adults' skill levels. After every 50 hours of ABE or GED instruction the adult learners take a different version of the diagnostic test, and at the end of the program they take a post-test. The pre-test showed that the 6 women who attended throughout the year were all at the pre-GED level. Their literacy skills needed to be developed further before they were exposed to GED material. Thus, the instructor decided to change the focus of the class from GED to ABE, which emphasized basic skills development in math, reading, and writing in English. Before the last week of the program the students were tested to see if they had passed the pre-GED level. Of the 6 students only 2 had sufficient class hours to be tested. Although both students' scores for math and reading increased from the pre-test scores, only one of the students had a high enough score to move into a GED class.

The class routine was varied. During the first half hour of class Mr. Palacio usually taught a lesson on the theme of the month. Then he provided instruction in English basic skills for half an hour and math for half an hour. Writing was assigned both in class and for homework. Mr. Palacio felt that the students made the most progress in writing. He explained that when the program commenced none of the students wanted to write, but by the end of the program they were less reluctant and better able to utilize their writing skills.

Mr. Palacio has a "non-traditional" method of teaching, as he tries to relate the subject matter directly to students' lives. For example, he might discuss how to do a family budget while teaching percentages or he might discuss family portraits and murals in the context of a monthly theme on modern art. According to the instructor, this approach allowed students to work on the skills they needed to pass the GED but in a way that was more meaningful to them.

The instructor used the theme of the month to facilitate some special activities. For example, during the month that we observed this class, modern art was the topic of discussion. Mr. Palacio presented the work of the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera and painter Frida Kahlo. The students read about the artists and discussed some of their paintings. Mr. Palacio also integrated into his lessons the material presented by guest speakers invited to the Parent-Child Interaction afternoons. For instance, he asked students to read and write on the topic of community organizing after a presentation given by a community leader. His students wrote about the changes they would like to see happen in their community.

b. English as a Second Language (ESL) Class

Initially, Mr. Andrew Gephart was the ESL instructor. However, when he became the program manager in February, Glenna Harkins was hired as the instructor. Spanish is her second language. There were 12 adults recruited to attend this class; 11 (92.0%) of them were Latina women, and 1 was a Latino male (8.0%). Six adult learners remained registered for the entire class. The average daily attendance was 3.9.

This class was an advanced beginners ESL level, and the instructor used the curriculum provided by LSH. Usually the class started with an informal conversation about everyday topics such as the weekend, the weather, or children. Then they completed an exercise from the book or about the theme of the month. Speaking was emphasized at all times. As in the ABE class, this program required that, after every 50 hours of instruction in English, the ESL learners take a different version of the BEST test. In addition, in November, all the students took a pre-test called BEST, and they took a post-test at the end of the program that was designed to show their learning progress. Of the 6 adults who remained enrolled in the class, 4 took the post-test. Results indicated that all improved from the pre-test scores, although not enough to move to an intermediate ESL level.

Ms. Harkins' teaching style was personal and informal. For instance, she shared her experiences learning Spanish with the students in order to help them relax and be more open to learning English. She thought that students appreciated a teacher who had experienced problems similar to theirs. Vocabulary was developed by playing games like "word bingo" and "Simon says," which promoted interaction among class members.

2. Early Childhood Component

Mary Ruth Castellanos instructed the preschool class, for children ages 3 to 6. Twelve children attended regularly. Six of them were Mexican and spoke only Spanish, 2 children spoke only English, and 4 were bilingual in English and Spanish. For instruction Ms. Castellanos used both languages interchangeably.

Ms. Castellanos divided the afternoon into short segments. There was homework time (for those in kindergarten), story time with snack, and time for special projects, exercise, and games. During special projects time the children participated in activities based on the theme of the month, such as art and health. Ms. Castellanos emphasized oral communication and hands-on activities in order to develop the children's motor skills.

Ms. Castellanos explained that the Early Childhood component was essential to the program as some parents would not be able to participate in the Adult Education component without adequate child care. She was happy to be involved in the project because it gave her the opportunity to help children and to serve her own people.

3. Support Services Component

The program had 2 support services: the Homework Club and Case Management.

a. Homework Club

Karen Hartwick and Andrea González were the instructors for the homework club. They were 2nd grade teachers at Hunter school. Both instructors participated in the program since its inception in October 1997. They were paid through school funds.

The Homework Club worked with children in grades 1st through 4th. This component of the program allowed children time to work on homework assignments one on one with tutors or in small groups. It also provided time for content area instruction which supplemented in-class instruction. Additional assistance was available for second-language instruction.

Usually the teachers dedicated the first hour to homework and tutoring. Since the school required a homework notebook, it was easy to monitor the assignments given to children. Three students from Kensington High School volunteered 2 hours a week in the Homework Club. They tutored children and helped them with their homework. The high school students received 1 credit for the time they volunteered. According to the instructor these volunteers were a welcome addition, since they allowed the instructors to monitor the children's progress more effectively and to provide individual help when needed.

During the second hour, the children had snack time, story time, and a lesson. The snack was provided through funds from the school and the program. As they ate their snack (usually juice or milk with cookies) the teacher read a book. She asked some comprehension questions and encouraged them to talk about the book's illustrations. Based on the theme of the month, the lessons included hands-on activities. For example the children learned about the human body, the decimal system, and birds. When there was extra time they watched a video or played games.

b. Case Management

Ms. Sachiyo Searles served as a case manager for the program and offered counseling to families. This role allowed her to work with the families directly on social and emotional issues that affected family life and impacted the children's schooling. When parents or children were absent or stopped coming, she contacted them. Her approach was informal, and no formal records of her contact with families were maintained. She acknowledged that the family literacy program at Hunter allowed her to work with some parents who otherwise would have limited contact with the school. She was particularly pleased to be able to work with the ESL parents, whose language and cultural differences might have discouraged them from visiting the school.

4. Parent/Child Interaction Component

The Thursday afternoon sessions were spent on activities for the family. Mr. Palacio and Ms. Castellanos facilitated the sessions, which provided opportunities for children and parents to help each other in terms of language use, academics, and literacy. Activities were designed to

help the families learn in structured ways (e.g., during homework or story reading) and unstructured ways (e.g., conversing during a meal, discussing a TV program). Parents, children, and instructors met to work on special projects such as writing stories together and illustrating them. Guest speakers talked to parents about issues of relevance to them such as reading strategies to teach at home, violence prevention, community organizing, and health issues. The focus of the special projects and guest presentations was based on the theme of the month.

Ms. Searles reported that about 3 to 4 families (specifically, mother and children) came consistently. She explained that many parents did not come because they perceived these sessions as less important than the instructional sessions. Some parents wanted to have 3 days of instruction, in ABE or ESL, rather than 2 days.

D. Discussion of Main Findings

As we have seen, the Hunter Elementary/Lutheran Settlement House Family Literacy Project is a multifaceted program that focuses on providing academic, social, and personal enrichment activities for children and their families. The program is built on the belief that family members can contribute to children's literacy development (Henderson, 1987) and that providing services that are multifaceted and well coordinated is more effective than providing separate and individual services (Benjamin & Lord, 1996).

We will know draw on this in-depth look at the Family Literacy Initiative at Hunter to examine the strengths of the program as well as the lessons to be learned from the implementation process. Information for this assessment was obtained from staff and participants comments and from evaluators' observations.

1. <u>Strengths</u>

a. Relationship between Staff and Participants

Ms. Searles and Mr. Gephart perceived that the people in the program, both staff and parents, contributed greatly to building the program. Staff and parents interviewed showed considerable commitment and enthusiasm for the program. In addition, there was a positive relationship between the staff and the participants and between the school and LSH administrations. According to Ms. Searles, a guiding goal of the program was achieved:

In order to enhance the skill level of most at-risk students we needed to enlarge their
    circle of influence. There are many important people other than teachers who
    could help, thereby fostering a community beyond the classroom. That the
    parents feel at home in the school, that the children feel a community beyond their
    parents. Although the number of parents participating is small those who come
    are committed to the program and their participation is consistent.

Ms. Searles observed that parents who participated in the ESL class made connections with the school staff who worked for the program. For instance, conversations between these parents and the instructors ranged from inquiries made about their children's progress to informal chats about a community event or a personal anecdote. Another positive aspect of this program was that the children of those parents who actively participated in all of the program activities were motivated, as was reflected in their regular attendance.

b. Growth in Mastery of the English Language

Another strength of Hunter's family literacy program was the progress made by the ESL students. Informal observations by the instructor and students' own assessments indicated an increased use of oral and written English by all the ESL students.

Conversations with the ESL students illustrated the benefits of the ESL component. Rosalyn felt that her ability to understand and speak English had improved so much that she could now run errands on her own. She explained, "I know now that I can speak much better than before. It is not perfect, but I can manage. Like now I go to pay the gas bill and I can understand what they say to me and I can respond to them."

When asked about the reasons for this progress, all the students interviewed praised the use of interactive and dynamic teaching activities. Lidia explained, "I liked when the teacher spoke to us only in English and when she forced us to respond to her only in English. I feel that helped me the most." Ramonita said, "The teachers were always on time and were never absent. In the ESL class the teacher was very creative. She gave us many short dialogues to read and act out. I liked that because it forced us to speak in English. Also the students' participation was very good and the teacher reminded us to speak in English, which was good."

According to Ms. Searles one reason for the progress was that the class responded to a very specific need of the parents, which was to learn English. Every day that they attended classes they learned new words in English. When they understood something new, they felt good about themselves and the class. At a beginning ESL level the acquisition of new vocabulary made learning concrete for students, and they could see the positive results quickly.

c. The Partnership

According to the coordinator and project manager, the partnership with LSH was quite productive. They indicated that everyone involved in the program had been highly accessible and responsive to the needs of the school. For example, when the original project manager left the program, the ESL instructor, Mr. Gephart, assumed that role. His familiarity with the parents, the students, and the vision driving the program ameliorated any potential disruption of services. LSH also benefitted from this partnership as it collaborated with the school in writing grants to complement the current funding and expand the program for the second year.

d. Impact on the School

Two components, the Homework Club and the Preschool programs, have impacted the educational process at Hunter. According to Ms. Searles, the Homework Club was beneficial to the teachers at the school. The information provided by the Homework Club instructors, Ms. Hartwick and Ms. González, allowed classroom teachers to learn how children understood the content of the homework that they assigned. This information provided teachers with insights into the children's execution of the homework (e.g., consistency, difficulties, need for review) and informed their teaching strategies. For instance, the instructors reported that they talked to the teachers when a child had problems with a particular assignment. According to Ms. Hartwick, the informal sharing with other practitioners in the building prompted teachers to think of ways to improve the content of homework they assigned, as well as to identify particular problems with instructions for doing homework. Teachers began to think of ways to standardize homework throughout the school.

The Homework Club enhanced communication between the instructors and parents. Ms. Hartwick and Ms. Gonzalez felt comfortable speaking with parents about their children's progress with homework. Parents' presence in the building at least once every week resulted in greater accessibility and communication. The instructors explained to parents how to complete homework with their children and how to help children to learn more from homework.

The Homework Club had a positive impact on students as well. First, Ms. Hartwick commented on the progress of the children she observed in areas of responsibility and collaborative skills. She noticed an attitude change in many of the children toward their homework during the course of the program. Although no written documentation was provided she commented about her observations:

Before they only wanted to play when they came into the room. Now they know that

they need to do homework. For some children this is the only time in the week

that they will have a structured time to study and do homework so it is very

important to use this time wisely.

The children's attitude about collaboration also changed. Some students started to help each other with their homework. According to Ms. Hartwick, the age difference in the Club allowed the older children to help the younger. She and the high school tutors provided excellent role models for the children on how to help one another. In addition, relying on informal observations, the instructor asserted that some children improved certain skills in math and reading as a result of the individual help they received in the Homework Club.

A second benefit involved having a Preschool component in the school. Ms. Searles believed that the participant children and their parents already have a head start on others in terms of understanding some aspects of school culture, mastering motor and social skills, and dealing with issues of separation. In addition, she feels that providing high-quality child care in

a comfortable atmosphere made the adult components more inviting to parents.

　　　　e. Impact on the Family

　　　　All the parents with whom we spoke expressed their satisfaction with the Homework Club and the Preschool components of the program because these components facilitated parental participation in the program. Maribel explained that the Homework Club provided a structured time for her children. She commented,

I work, come to school, and have a family. With all this I do not have much time to give
　　　　to my kids. At home it is not as structured as it is here. My kids learned to be
　　　　more organized, they were always on task, they developed responsibility."

Esther commented about the Homework Club:
This was needed. It allowed my kids to be on task, to complete their homework and
　　　　review important things from school and stuff. I am always very busy and
　　　　sometimes I do not have time. Since I also took classes, I needed to spend time
　　　　studying, so this was a great help.

Lidia commented, "My youngest loved to do the homework in that classroom. The teacher there was very attentive and supportive." Ramonita mentioned, "The Homework Club really benefitted my special education child. The teacher gave her individual attention and I was able to reinforce at home again with her. So all the extra help really benefitted her."
Rosalyn remarked:

I do not know what I would have done without the Homework Club and the Preschool
　　　　class. I do not think I would have been able to attend. You see I have 4 children
　　　　and with this program I do not have to worry if they are learning or if they are
　　　　safe. Everything happens in the school. My older children liked doing the
　　　　homework at school and I know that they are being helped because at home I
　　　　cannot help them.

　　　　The parents who were interviewed also saw the Parent/Child Interaction Time as necessary and effective. Rosalyn stated:

The days when we did activities with the children were great. Because we are always so
　　　　busy in the home sometimes we do not have time like that, to sit with your
　　　　children and make something together or just talk. Those things I cannot do at
　　　　home.

　　　　2. Lessons Learned

Analysis of the implementation process during the first year revealed some ways in which the Family Literacy Initiative at Hunter could be improved and expanded. Testimonials from staff and participants alike identified a wealth of ideas for the future growth of the program.

a. Recruitment and Retention

Key to the long-term success of any program is the recruitment and retention of participants. At Hunter the recruitment strategies worked quite well in attracting 37 adults who expressed an initial interest in the program. The program's staff devised a vast recruitment plan which included sending letters and fliers of invitation to home, contacting parents personally before and after school in the school yard, sponsoring orientation meetings at the school, and organizing community walks giving information out about the program.

However, the program was not as successful in retaining as many participants. Table 1 (Appendix C) describes the average attendance by month for both the ABE and ESL components. The ESL component had a range of 2.8 to 5.4 average attendance by month, with 3.9 as the overall average attendance. The ABE's component range of average attendance by month was 2.0 to 5.0, with 3.9 being the overall average attendance. Thus, although the range of average attendance by month is slightly higher for the ESL than the ABE, the overall average attendance is the same. The ABE component appears to have experienced a steadier decrease in attendance each month than the ESL component, showing some fluctuation over the duration of the class.

Although these attendance averages are lower than expected, the data suggest that for those who remained enrolled, attendance was better. Hunter's family literacy program had a the highest number of session meetings of all the programs; a total of 60 sessions during the academic year, 3 sessions per week for 20 weeks. Table 2 (Appendix C) details the number of sessions attended by participants. It illustrates that the six participants who remained in the program attended more than half of the total number of sessions (30+ sessions) and of those, 2 attended 55+ sessions. This attendance rate of participants is impressive considering the high number of sessions in the program. Twenty adults attended 15 or fewer sessions and 9 attended between 16 to 25 sessions.

Analysis of these findings reveal a variety of reasons for the low retention rates. First, when the scope of the program is comprehensive in nature, issues of organization, such as funding, staffing, and programming, often take precedence over recruitment and retention. This might have influenced the participation rates at Hunter's program in its first year. Ms. Searles and Mr. Gephart explained that extensive preparation time was needed in order to get the program off the ground. Multiple efforts were dedicated to coordinating events with the partners, identifying instructors, acquiring materials, and setting up a curriculum for the different components. The replacement of the program manager in mid-year brought some unexpected changes to the daily routine of the program.

Second, the program needed to design a retention plan that could develop more direct relationships between participants' goals and the program's objectives and curricula and nurture long-term self-motivation. Ms. Searles explained that some follow-up calls were done by instructors when students stopped attending, but not on an ongoing basis. These calls were not effective in retaining most students. Ms. Searles reflected on what was learned:

We needed to work with them [parents] early on at an individual level to help them connect what they wanted to do with what was offered. Just because we have a good program, that does not mean parents will come. If they do not see that this program is useful to their lives they will lose interest.

She felt that the program should have prepared motivational activities at the beginning of the year to help parents set short-and long-term goals and to help them understand that success often takes time. In addition, she felt that the program staff needed to know more about the individual goals of participants and possible life situations that could become participation obstacles. She explained:

Sometimes it is hard not to judge others. We [the program's staff] need to learn to recognize when to push parents and when to respect parents' decision to drop from the program. Not all of them are in the same situation. Some need the more short-term rewards to keep them motivated.

Third, the feedback from the program coordinator and ABE students suggested that retention of students in the ABE class presented some special challenges. The main reason, according to Ms. Searles, is that an immediate feeling of success was not present in the ABE class. Due to the broad scope and difficulty of the content covered in ABE, the rewards of learning take longer to reap than they do in other classes, such as beginning ESL. Thus, some participants lost interest and did not continue attending. In addition, the ABE instructor and students may have had different expectations for the class. Two ABE student interviewees felt that they wanted to learn more in the class. Maribel stated:

I got a lot out of it. Not everything I wanted, but a lot. I know I have improved in my writing skills. I still have to work on the other parts of the GED more but it did help me. I want to improve more in math skills.

When the instructor changed the focus of the class from GED to ABE some students were disappointed. For instance, Esther felt frustrated by the fact that the instructor did not cover enough GED material and spent a great deal of time discussing things that according to her were not relevant to the class. She thought that the teacher should have been more responsive to what the students wanted. In Esther's case, this meant taking GED classes. She felt that "the special topics we discussed monthly were a waste of time because they took time away from the GED class." Esther decided to enroll in a different GED program over the summer to continue

taking classes.

The fourth and final issue to consider is that the research literature on family literacy programs nationwide confirms low participation rates as a reality in many programs. For instance, Hayes (1996) maintains that perhaps over 50% of participants who enroll in adult education programs do not remain to the end. Thus, low participation is not an isolated problem of Hunter's Family Literacy Program but rather has a wider context that needs to be considered when exploring possible solutions.

b. Program Format

Comments from program's staff and participants indicated that at times it was not apparent to adult learners how the different components of the program were connected and related to each other and to the school. For example, Mr. Palacio indicated that some ABE students thought that the special theme of the month was not relevant to what they wanted to learn in class. The explanations given by the instructor seem not to have offered students concrete connections between the theme and the content of the class. Another example of lack of connection was indicated by Ms. Searles. She acknowledged that some adult learners did not attend Thursday's Parent/Child Interaction component because they did not see it as an instructional activity, and consequently did not see it as useful.

Some participants suggested expanding the instructional time from two to three days a week as a way to improve the program. "The more classes we have the more we will learn and the more help our children receive with their school work." Another student commented:

I think I am a little more advanced than the other students in the class since I took
    English in Puerto Rico. However, the review helped me not to forget what I had
    learned before and that was good. By having more class days I will be able to
    learn more new things.

Lastly, connections between the program's and the school's curricula were not identified by any of the interviewees. The theme of the month and special projects were not seen as related to any school-wide themes or projects. Conversations with the program's staff did not reveal how the Family Literacy Initiative was part of the school mission.

c. Connection with Welfare Agency

An area of deep frustration for Ms. Searles was the new welfare reform regulations. In her opinion, the reform's definition of being productive was limited to either work or looking for a job using welfare program training. Both activities made it difficult for parents to participate in educational programs provided in their own community, as these programs did not fit the specifications. The staff also found it frustrating that Hunter's program, although more comprehensive in working with the family unit than other available programs, was not

considered by welfare as an approved site because it did not meet the minimum hour requirements. Thus, many parents that could have benefitted from adult education at Hunter could not participate. "It does not make much sense to us. I have contacted the Welfare Office to see whether a dialogue could be initiated to mitigate this problem, but so far we have not received their support."

d. Multiple Responsibilities

Everyone at the school and at LHS was extremely busy. The consequent lack of time for meetings and discussions on programmatic issues affected communication. Mr. Gephart, who organized the activities, was instrumental to the organization and everyday functioning of the program. However, Ms. Searles felt that the manager needed to be at the school more often. The demands of implementing a comprehensive family literacy program require additional time and energy, which the school staff may not be able to contribute. "As a group the staff [of the Family Literacy Initiative] needed time to meet, plan together, be informed about new procedures, and problem solve....My time at the school is so limited because I have to attend to many things that it is hard to then add the role of coordinator to the program."

3. Next Steps

The school received a grant from the Office of Language and Equity Issues of the School District of Philadelphia in order to fund the program for the summer, beginning in the second week of July. Ms. Searles thought that the continuity of the program was important for the parents who had already started. The summer sessions may also provide more visibility in the community. She explained that although the school staff need time off in the summer to relax and re-energize for the upcoming year, they all agreed that there was a need for this program in the community during the summer.

During the 1997-1998 the Homework Club instructor was paid through general school funds. However, for the upcoming year the budget does not cover a stipend for this position. Consequently, Hunter and LSH staff will have to search for funds to pay for this important position.

Ms. Searles, in collaboration with LSH, plans to continue to look for ways for the Welfare Office to become involved with the program in order to give more adults the choice of attending Hunter's ABE and ESL classes. She fears that many parents will not attend the family literacy program at Hunter, if her collaboration with the Welfare Office fails, because of the new DPW regulations.

E. Recommendations

As we have seen, the Hunter Family Literacy Initiative offered a variety of components implemented by a partnership between a school and a community agency. The program addressed the academic, social, and personal issues of participants within a school setting. The

value of a comprehensive approach to family literacy is discussed in the research literature. Research on school-based family literacy programs describes coordinated and multifaceted programs, such as Hunter's Family Literacy Initiative, as effective and beneficial to participants (Benjamin & Lord, 1996). By giving attention to children's literacy education, parent education and support, adult basic education, early childhood interventions, and joint interactive activities for parents and children, the comprehensive approach attempts to address needs in a variety of essential areas (Mikuleky, 1996). Ultimately, to enhance the educational conditions for children, this approach proposes that schools must confront the complexity of issues faced by families in urban areas with strategies that cover a wide range of goals (Farber, 1998).

However, the effects of multifaceted programs, such as Hunter's, must be examined over time. After only 8 months of implementation we have offered only some initial insights about ways the program has evolved and about areas that need to be reconsidered. Specifically, the data collected does not furnish enough information to analyze the program's impact on children's achievement. Since children have so many different academic experiences, a causal connection can be very difficult to establish. Indeed, the research literature addresses the limitations of this kind of data in identifying causal relationships (see, for example, Hayes 1996).

The research literature suggests that data must be gathered longitudinally to make informed interpretations and decisions about a program's success. Thus, efforts in devising a longitudinal self-assessment design should be part of the work plan for the second year of implementation. The literature offers some useful advice in this area. Some researchers argue that certain goals of any family literacy initiative will need to be evaluated on a long-term basis (Hayes, 1996; Layzer, 1996). The long-term notion of goals (e.g., children's school success) proposes that these will manifest themselves long after families have left the program. Thus, researchers encourage the meaningful documentation of programs, while cautioning against short-term interpretations. The documentation should use both formal instruments, such as a comparison of children's grades and tests scores from year to year, as well as informal assessments, such as documenting observations of children and interviews with participants of the program. Careful documentation and analysis of data for the duration of the program, rather than showing causality, may be useful in showing patterns of short-and long-term effects. Moreover, it may reveal important factors to consider in rethinking the program for future implementation.

Concerted efforts during the second year of implementation should also be directed toward recruitment and retention. Appendix C specifies ways in which this may be achieved. Further, energies need to be dedicated to connecting the different components of the program and assisting participants to appreciate the interdependent nature of learning in a program that has a comprehensive scope. Connections between the program and the school's curriculum and mission need to be made more explicit to participants as well as to program and school staff.

III. A BRIEF LOOK AT THE OTHER LITERACY PROGRAMS

This section describes briefly the other programs funded by PNC to illustrate the diversity of conceptualizations about family literacy. The programs at McKinley, Moffet, and Welsh were surveyed to identify the components being implemented during the first year and highlight some of the issues regarding their growth and development.

A. William McKinley Elementary School

The original proposal for the McKinley School family literacy program was to support and expand pre-existing programs, the Parents Book Club and Help One Student To Succeed (HOST), and to develop a new component, Take-Home Computers. Together these components form a program with a single focus on school-based academic activities to improve family literacy and children's achievement at McKinley. The Parent Book Club started in 1994 under the research initiative of Dr. Susan Newman, a faculty member at Temple University. During the second year of implementation a teacher from the school was assigned to coordinate the efforts. The format for the sessions with parents has remained the same since this component began. Parental participation was described as low at the program's beginning but has increased through the years, achieving a 16.0 overall average attendance for the 1997-1998 academic year. HOST, the second component of the McKinley program, begun in March 1997. In addition to its main focus of mentoring students academically, this component also includes parental involvement. The third component, lending computers to parents who participate in the Parent Book Club, was proposed as a new initiative. Since Ms. Linda Panetta, the school principal, was on leave from January to June of the first year of the PNC grant, this component will be implemented in the second year.

1. Parent Book Club

Initially Maribel Camps, a basic skills teacher at the school, was in charge of the Parent Book Club assisted by Sonia Ortiz, a parent and support services assistant at the school. During the fall of 1997 Ms. Camps left McKinley to work on a special assignment at the Kensington Cluster Office. Ms. Panetta asked Carmen Rodriguez, a bilingual secretary at the school, to replace her because the experience would complement Ms. Rodriguez' participation in a teacher certification program at Temple University.

The Parents Book Club met every Wednesday from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. during the academic year. At each session parents were coached by Ms. Rodriguez on how to read most effectively to their children. She explained:

Well, I usually read a book to them and ask them about the pictures and the cover and suggested ways that the story could be extended to the children's own lives. During the second half-hour the children join the workshop. Then the parents read to their children right there, and Sonia and I can coach them. And the last thing we do is an activity with them like drawing, arts and crafts, or special projects like planting.

Each year the books are selected by Ms. Panetta based on a school-wide theme. The school had a science focus during the 1997-1998 academic year. Following each session, Ms. Rodriguez and Ms. Ortiz suggested a project idea that parents could work on with their children at home. In addition, parents could take the books home to start a reading library. The Home and School Association of the school has contributed funds for a snack and supplies for special projects. The Book Club has a bulletin board in the school that displays samples of the projects that parents and their children make together.

The Book Club was held in the Pit, a space on the first floor of the school designed as an amphitheater with wide steps in a circle leading down to the center platform, which is the stage. During the sessions the parents sitting on the steps each received a regular size book while Ms. Rodriguez read to them from a larger copy of the same book. Afterwards, the parents went to some nearby tables to read with their children and work on a special project.

The Book Club met for a total of 21 sessions during the school year. While about 72 adults attended at least 1 of the sessions, only 10 attended more than half of the sessions. Of the total number of adults who came to the program, 59 (82.0%) were Latina women, 10 (14.0%) were African American women, and 3 (4.0%) were men. The Book Club had an average daily attendance of 16.0. Although attendance records from previous years were not available, Ms. Rodriguez believes that through the years parents have become more responsive to the activities done in the Club. She states,

It is encouraging to see that when parents cannot come they call to excuse themselves.
> Even though all the books we read are in English, the parents show a lot of
> enthusiasm. When we read in English someone translates into Spanish, either
> Sonia or another parent. This year the response of parents has improved from
> other years. Parents talk about the enthusiasm of the children who want their
> parents to read to them....I do not know exactly why, but it has improved. Maybe
> the reason they come to the Book Club is that it is for parents of younger kids and
> it is easier to engage them, or because our program is ongoing--it is every
> Wednesday--or maybe it is that parents do not want to come to school to talk
> about problems, they want to deal in private with their problems.

2. HOST Component

The HOST component is coordinated by Mr. Bill Hopkins, a special education teacher on special assignment for this position. HOST is a specially funded program and has its own curriculum and room. The classroom has two computers, several small tables, and desks organized in pairs. This component of the McKinley family literacy program focuses on 2 main areas, mentor training and workshops for parents.

The main focus of the HOST component is Mentor Training. This activity trains

volunteers who serve as mentors in the school. During the 1997-1998 academic year there were a total of 38 children at McKinley grades K through 5th participating in HOST. These were students who demonstrated potential in reading, as shown by their better performance in phonics, comprehension, and study skills. Mr. Hopkins mentioned that the school wanted to use HOST to raise the academic work of students working at a basic level, according to the SAT9 tests, to a proficient level.

The tutoring assists students in learning how to monitor their own learning and how to evaluate themselves at the end of each activity. It also introduces students to social and academic strategies. The intent is to develop students as problem solvers and to let teachers know that they can become more knowledgeable about how to use these strategies in their classroom instruction.

Each student participating in the HOST program was matched with a mentor. The mentors were trained volunteers from businesses or the wider community, such as Jefferson Hospital, Temple University, Americorp, and school staff. Mr. Hopkins trained volunteers to be mentors and trained teachers to utilize mentors in their classrooms. He indicated that one problem they have experienced is mentor retention. Since the program began, every month they have had to recruit and train new mentors. This is very time-consuming and affects the continuity of the program.

The design of the HOST component also includes a Parent Focus, which offers workshops for parents on how to help their children academically at home. This activity functioned separately from the Book Club during the 1997-1998 academic year. Mr. Hopkins explained that parents' attendance at the workshops was very low compared to the Book Club participation rates. It is "an uphill battle and we are not winning," he says. Workshops for parents have not been able to attract more than 6 parents at a time. The recruitment strategies that they employed, such as door-to-door recruitment and sending letters of invitation home, have not been successful in increasing numbers. Although Mr. Hopkins does not have a complete understanding of the low participation, he suggested that some parents might not feel comfortable in the school. They may not come because of some teachers' lack of involvement with parents. He also indicated the possibility of a lack of receptivity on the part of the parents:

It is difficult to do things like HOST because they [parents] don't monitor/mentor at
      home. People have to be taught how to do this and they have to be open to this.
      We haven't developed enough trust to ensure their self-esteem as they work to do
      this.

In the upcoming year he wants to try a different strategy to involve parents by connecting with other school-wide initiatives that already work with a core group of parents. For example, over the summer Mr. Hopkins will work with a group of parents one day a week for 5 weeks. This group of parents has been active in the Alliance Organizing Project activities at McKinley and hopes to expand their involvement in the school. He will train them on mentoring

techniques that they can use with the HOST students as well as at home with their own children. School teachers will be invited to attend these sessions as well. In addition, next year he wants to work more closely with the Book Club on literacy activities for parents and on the recruitment of these parents as mentors for the HOST component.

Both components of the family literacy program are documenting their progress. The Book Club keeps attendance forms. The HOST component uses self-assessment done by students and Reading Inventories (IRI and ORI) given as pre and post tests. All instruments are provided by the HOST curriculum. In addition, the HOST corporation will conduct a quality assurance program to see how the program is being implemented and whether it is servicing the target population the best way it could.

One area to work on during the second year of implementation will be collaboration between the components. This will allow for a more supportive and coordinated effort in working with parents. Another area to develop is to expand the ways in which the Book Club documents growth. Instruments such as participant surveys, journals to record literacy activities at home, and participant exit interviews could provide rich information about participation and its effect on literacy development at the home. For an expanded list of instruments see Appendix D.

B. John Moffet Elementary School

The focus of the "Making Friends with Books" program at Moffet Elementary School is to expand parent understanding about developing children's literacy in the home. The program's approach stresses school-based academic activities within family contexts. This program was facilitated by Ms. Arlene Goldsmith and Mr. George Terry, two basic skills teachers, and Ms. Nydia Estrada, a trained bilingual parent leader. Ms. Goldsmith teaches basic skills in reading and Mr. Terry in math. They decided to work together on this project to connect all the basic skills areas in concrete ways. They both believe that their partnership has worked extremely well and has set an example of collaboration for other teachers in the school.

The "Making Friends with Books" program ran from October 1997 to May 1998 for a total of 19 sessions. It was held once a week on Thursdays from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. A total of 45 adults attended sessions at least once. Of this number 37 (82.2%) were Latina women, 4 (8.9%) were Caucasian women, and 4 (8.9%) were males. While seven adult learners attended a maximum of 6 sessions, the average daily attendance was 7.9.

During the weekly sessions the two facilitators would demonstrate a reading technique to parents and work with them individually and in small groups. Ms. Estrada was trained by the facilitators to be a parent leader in the program. She served as an interpreter during the sessions, and, additionally, she went out into the community, making home visits to reinforce the techniques taught at the workshops for parents who were absent.

Originally, it was intended that the program would be organized into 3 cycles of 6 weeks

during the academic year. Each cycle would be dedicated to parents of a different grade, K through 2nd. During the first year of implementation some changes needed to be made to the proposed plan. The first cycle, for parents who had children in kindergarten, took 14 weeks to implement mainly because of low attendance at the beginning of the program and the time it took to receive materials that had been ordered. The second cycle, for parents with children in 1st grade, met for 5 weeks toward the end of the school year.   For the second year of the program the facilitators hope to build on the first year's parental participation by involving parents from the first and second cycles in the recruitment and retention process. This involvement could assist in the implementation of a third cycle during the 1998-1999 academic year. The facilitators believe that the cycles could allow them to work with more parents and more grades in an individualized manner. Six reading techniques were taught, with one being the focus for a week. These included echo reading, choral reading, paired reading, story-retelling, reader's theater, and chanting. The first half-hour was used to demonstrate to parents the specific technique. During the second half-hour the parents' children joined the meeting to read together with their parents. As a follow-up to the session, practice books were taken home so parents could work daily with their children on this type of reading together. A snack was served at the end of every session.

The facilitators used informal ways to document the growth of the program. They kept attendance records, and parents were encouraged to keep a reading journal at home and a list of vocabulary words that they discuss with children. An informal review of the Title I Reading Assessment showed an improvement in the pre and post test scores of children whose parents participated in the program. Further analysis of the test scores could be helpful for the implementation of the program during the second year. In addition, the facilitators and parent leader did informal observations during the sessions. From these observations the facilitators have discovered that many of the parents attending the sessions have started to come to the home and school meetings. Ms. Estrada suggests that the "Making Friends with Books" program has allowed parents to get to know the facilitators and the school better, leading to a more comfortable feeling about attending events. At first, she explained, the parents felt intimidated by the school and specifically by the facilitators, Ms. Goldsmith and Mr. Terry:

But then they got to know them and began to feel more confident about coming to the school they developed that "confianza" [mutual trust], and they began to see the administration at the school as regular people and in that way established a relationship with the school.

The element of *confianza* is basic to Latino households. The mutual trust developed within the members of the household supports the context in which learning can occur. Hidalgo (1997) explains that *confianza* exerts a lot of control in delimiting the parameters of the socialization that occurs in and between families. Thus, *confianza* with people in institutions outside the family is a prerequisite for many Latino families' involvement and participation in programs.

Ms. Estrada's home visits allowed the program to reach out to parents who cannot come

to school on a regular basis. She explained that all of the parents whom she has visited have received the information very enthusiastically. Most parents who do not come during the regular hours have daytime responsibilities including work or appointments with doctors and welfare case workers.

Moffet's literacy initiative focused its first-year efforts on recruitment and programmatic issues. Its approach emphasized a single component--teaching literacy strategies to parents. This approach provided a firm structure on which to build participation in the school and in the community. For the second year Moffet will continue to refine its single-focus approach and expand participation by including a 3rd cycle to its program. It will be important to document how community outreach through home visits can further support these efforts. Additional insights about the program's effect on learning at home and on children's literacy growth at school could be obtained from careful analysis of the reading journals and the results of tests given to children.

C. John Welsh Elementary School

The family literacy program at Welsh Elementary has a dual focus. It gives attention to school-based academic activities through the Parent Literacy Workshops and Library Visits and to adult education through a GED component. Two of these components, the GED and the Parent Literacy Workshops, were implemented during the 1997-1998 academic year. The third component, visits to the library, will be implemented during the second year of the program. The coordinator of the program at Welsh School is Ms. Barbara Sklar, the school counselor.

1. Parent Literacy Workshop

The Parent Literacy Workshop presented parents with different reading strategies that could be used to support literacy development at home. Ms. Sklar facilitated this component with the assistance of Mr. Garcia, a bilingual counselor assistant at Welsh School.

The program met for a total of 26 sessions from October 1997 to May 1998. A total of 84 adults visited the program at least once, of which 56 (66.7%) were Latina women, 22 (26.2%) were African American women, and 6 (7.1%) were males. Of this number only 8 adults attended more than half of the total sessions. The average daily attendance was 13.6.

The sessions were held on Wednesday from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. During the first half-hour the facilitator read two selected books modeling a particular reading strategy and engaged parents in a discussion of the books' contents. Mr. Garcia translated the information from English to Spanish for monolingual Spanish-speaking parents. During the second half-hour the parents picked up their children from class and brought them to the Workshop room. There parents read the book to their children using the particular strategy learned that day and did one follow-up activity (e.g., an art project) related to the book.

As incentives for attending these weekly meetings, refreshments were served and parents

received a book every week for their home library. Parents participants also earned "Welsh Bucks" (paper money) for attending sessions. "Welsh Bucks" were then used by parents to purchase additional books at the school's twice-a-year book fairs. Ms. Sklar gave the children small toys and games as treats for participating in the sessions.

Ms. Sklar explained that the original proposal did not specify any forms of documenting the implementation process. She kept a binder with attendance sheets, sample fliers, financial information, and a running log. In the log she tried to document the daily activities, but it was not maintained with regularity. She observed that the many roles she has in the school at times precluded her from documenting the program's growth. Parents were encouraged to have a reading journal where they could write about their reading activities at home: what they read to children, when and where, the children's reactions to the book, and a personal statement about what the parents were learning. The parents were supposed to keep the journal at home and bring it to school for the meeting. However, many parents forgot the journals and others did not write every time they did a literacy activity with their children.

Conversations with participants, both parents and children, revealed that they found the Literacy Workshop component most helpful. Haydee Delgado, the school community liaison at Welsh School, observed children reminding their parents in the morning to pick them up for the Workshops. Another positive aspect was the interest of parents in receiving books. When parents needed to be absent they would call to excuse themselves and request the book that they missed. Several parents spoke about why they participated in the program and what they have gained from it. One woman commented, "My child wants me to read to her and we are closer now. Also, there is a family atmosphere here with all the women who come." Another woman stated, "I have been able to teach my granddaughter more at home. Also, I have increased my vocabulary in English."

2. <u>GED Classes</u>

To further the education of parents Welsh Elementary established GED classes in collaboration with the Community Women's Education Project (CWEP). CWEP was to provide four hours of GED instruction per week at the school. Using an interdisciplinary approach and small group instruction, instructors were to address critical thinking, writing, reading, math skills, computer literacy, and career exploration. Since the CWEP program included familiarizing parents with computer technology and used computer-based instructional methods, the program purchased three computers to be used exclusively by participating parents. The computers were housed in the school library where the GED classes were held.

The GED classes were offered on Wednesday from 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. Cynthia Clark from CWEP coordinated the GED component at Welsh and was the math instructor. Marie Smith, another CWEP instructor, taught writing, reading, grammar, and English. Both worked with computers on word processing, encyclopedia search, and basic computer skills.

This component functioned independently of the parent Literacy Workshops. The CWEP

coordinator acknowledged that the GED program had a rough start. Initially, about 10 students came regularly. At the end of the academic year, 7 were still officially registered but only two attended regularly. Although no records of attendance or exit interviews were provided, the coordinator shared her beliefs about the low attendance. At the beginning they needed to change instructors and meeting days. In her opinion these changes might have discouraged some students. Other students might have left the program because they wanted to study on their own. After the students were pre-tested it was determined that some needed ABE instruction before starting the GED classes; the need to take ABE classes may have prolonged the process more than the students had anticipated. Also there were some parents that needed GED instruction in Spanish, since their English was limited, and this was not offered at Welsh School.

For the second year of implementation Ms. Sklar wishes to continue developing a comprehensive approach to family literacy but wants to restructure as well as diversify the efforts. She plans to recruit more staff from the school to assist in the implementation of the program. It will be important to monitor how the programmatic changes envisioned develop and support family literacy at Welsh Elementary. Careful documentation of literacy activities and behaviors at home and at school need to be developed to assess the program's effect on participants and children's literacy growth.

IV. AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following outlines key issues that need to be considered when evaluating all programs in the upcoming years. The issues emerge from the evaluation of the first year of implementation at Hunter and the overview of the programs at McKinley, Moffet, and Welsh. Part A identifies issues that schools could consider in order to self-monitor their own development and progress during the second and third years of implementation. The staff of programs should examine the recommendations and adapt them to their program's goals, scope, and resources. Part B identifies issues for the funding agency and outside evaluators to focus on future evaluations.

A. Recommendations for Self-Assessment

1. Documentation. Schools should utilize a variety of ways to document participation as well as the growth and impact of programs. Some documentation instruments should be used by all sites to standardize the documentation process across programs. Other instruments should be designed to meet the specific assessment goals and needs of individual programs. One-time as well as ongoing assessment throughout the participation period of individuals could facilitate a good match between participants and programs' goals as well as reveal new ways to improve the program. In addition, the formal documentation of observations about literacy behaviors at school and at home done by program staff and school teachers is needed to identify growth trends. A list of different instruments is included in Appendix D for consideration. For specific recommendations in terms of recruitment and retention see Appendix C.

2. <u>Literacy and academic progress of parents and children</u>. Schools should investigate how these programs contribute to increased student achievement and increased student and parent literacy development. The exploration should focus on the ways the components benefit the teaching and learning processes at the school. It would also be important to examine how the programs promote and facilitate educational activities at home.

3. <u>Facilitating the participation of school staff</u>. As was documented earlier, the multiple responsibilities of school staff can often prevent their effective participation in programs. The coordinators at Hunter and Welsh expressed some anxiety about the many roles they had in the school and the challenges they needed to face when assuming these roles. The literature echoes this complaint. To illustrate, Johnson (1994) cites school principals cautioning schools about stretching their staff. Principals recognize the burden on teacher performance caused by the multiplicity of roles they sometimes assume in schools. Administrators need to find creative ways to balance responsibility by involving all the school staff in these efforts. The periodic training of teachers and parent volunteers in the literacy initiative would prepare more individuals to assist in the efforts and provide greater support to those who have been involved in the efforts from the beginning. Schools need to validate the time and energy put forth by all the staff contributing to the literacy initiatives. The wise management of staff involvement would allow them to implement programs effectively and attend to the everyday demands of school.

4. <u>Using cultural diversity as a resource</u>. Durán (1996) explains literacy as a cultural concept. As such it is not only a set of skills, but a way of thinking and behaving and responding to one's environment. All the programs discussed here responded to the linguistic needs of participants by providing translators for monolingual Latino families. While this practice is commendable, family literacy programs need to be cognizant of other ways in which their schools can respond to the cultural diversity of participants. How can family literacy programs validate the rich cultural and linguistic knowledge that already exists within the participants' families? How can programs assist these families in acquiring new cultural and linguistic knowledge that can enhance their participation in the school, community and society? Some ways in which this could be achieved are: using bilingual books; discussing topics from a multicultural perspective; and using adult learners who participated in the program the previous year to share their learnings and assist in facilitating a workshop.

5. <u>Building the home and school connection</u>. After a year of implementation the schools have a core group of parents that could be a great resource to the literacy program as well as the school. The schools need to consider ways to use the family literacy programs to promote more parental involvement in the school. How can schools make the family literacy initiative part of the school mission to expand the commitment of school staff and participants to the program? In what ways can schools involve parents in meaningful decision-making tasks about the family literacy program and the school? In what ways can programs enhance the level of *confianza* between school staff and participants? Some suggestions to accomplish this are: making the family literacy initiative an integral part of the school's mission and improvement plan; inviting past participants to assist in the coordination of recruitment and retention efforts for the program; inviting program participants to be part of the decision-making committees in the school; and

inviting participants to be co-facilitators of workshops for school staff. These workshops could introduce the program, its goals and structure, and orient the audience about the adult learners' need for this type of program and their individual goals as participants.

6. <u>Programs with partnerships</u>. Alamprese (1996) argues for collaboration among education and human services agencies since addressing the literacy needs of parents and children is complex and requires the delivery of multifaceted services to meet those needs. However, it is important to identify the benefits from the partnership. Some of the specific areas that could be explored are: the type of collaboration and its effectiveness; the type and quality of relationship between partners; level and forms of support from partners; and level and forms of support from governmental agencies.

B. Recommendations for Outside Evaluation

The efforts of the outside funding agency and evaluators should focus on evaluation and capacity building of programs. Some areas to attend to are: assisting school staff in the examination of data to inform their programs; interviewing classroom teachers to explore their perception of the progress made by children of adult learners; interviewing parents to explore the ways they transfer their learnings from literacy classes to the home; and exploring the different programs' formats, from single to multifaceted focus and identifying the ways in which different formats serve the participants and respond to the educational needs of the school.

V. FINAL THOUGHTS

Data analyzed in this report provides an emerging profile of school initiatives that attempt to influence academic achievement of children through family literacy programs. To achieve this goal these schools are exploring ways to engage families, community agencies, school staff, and children in a collaborative venture. The information gathered from the initial year of implementation suggests that these efforts represent a necessary and promising feature of effective school restructuring.

APPENDIX A
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSALS

APPENDIX B
CALENDAR OF MAJOR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES
INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

RESEARCH FOR ACTION
FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM EVALUATION
CALENDAR OF MAJOR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

<u>FEBRUARY</u>
Orientation meeting
        PNC, Children Achieving Challenge, and Research For Action
        Design evaluation plan

<u>MARCH</u>
Initial observations of and interviews with staff of McKinley, Moffet, Welsh, Hunter programs
Qualitative data analysis

<u>APRIL</u>
Follow-up interviews and observations of McKinley and Welsh Family Literacy Programs
        Individual interviews with program staff
        Observations of programs
Follow-up observations and interviews of case-study school: Hunter
        Individual interviews with program staff and teachers
        Observations of program
Qualitative data analysis

<u>MAY</u>
Follow-up interviews and observations of Moffet and Welsh Family Literacy Programs
        Individual interviews with program staff
        Focus groups with program participants
        Collect attendance and assessment documentation
        Observations of programs
Follow-up observation and interviews of case-study school: Hunter
        Individual interviews with program staff and teachers
        Focus groups with program participants
        Collect attendance and assessment documentation
        Observations of program
Qualitative data analysis

<u>JUNE/JULY</u>
Follow-up interviews of Hunter Family Literacy Program
      Telephone interviews with program participants
      Individual interview with project coordinator
Qualitative data analysis

<u>AUGUST</u>
Completion of report
Oral feedback to participating Family Literacy Programs

<u>SEPTEMBER</u>
Distribution of report

RESEARCH FOR ACTION
FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM EVALUATION

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Program Coordinators
(Initial Visit)

I. How does the family literacy initiative at each school enhance the literacy of children and adults?

    1.   What does the family literacy program at this school look like? What are the components of the program?

    2.   What is your understanding of literacy? Why was the program developed?

    3.   How was the program developed?

    4.   What are the main goals and expectations of the family literacy program? How are they being achieved?

    5.   What goals and priorities does the school have to improve the reading and writing of its students? How does the family literacy program support those goals and priorities?

    6.   If a collaborative, who are the partners? How was the partnership developed? What does the partnership look like? How does the partnership support the reading and writing goals of the school?

    7.   How is the program staffed and what incentives and training are provided?

    8.   Who has participated in the program? How many participants enrolled at the beginning? How many participants are still enrolled today? About how many participants attend each session?

    9.   How have participants been recruited? What ways of recruitment have been effective and not effective? What ways of contact have been used to follow-up with participants who stop attending the program?

    10.   Which program component has been most effective in attracting participants? In motivating participants to be actively involved? In changing reading and writing activities at home and at school?

    11.   What forms of program documentation have you kept? What have you learned from them so far?

II.   How does the dual focus (school and community) of family literacy influence children's school

achievement?

1.   In what ways has the program been successful? Why? In what ways do the program need to change and improve?
2.   What aspects of the community -- neighborhood organizations, neighborhood leaders, individuals -- have helped the program's implementation and development? What aspects have not helped?
3.   What aspects of the school -- staff, administration, organization, curriculum -- have helped the program's implementation and development? What aspects have not helped?

RESEARCH FOR ACTION
FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM EVALUATION

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
<u>Participants</u>

A. About the Participants and their Goals:
       Tell me a little about yourself. Were you born here in Philly? If not in Philly, where?
       How long have you lived here for? Why did you moved to Philly?
       How many children do you have?
       What do you want your children to do in school?
       How do you think attending school helps your children?
       What do you think your children need to graduate from school?
       What do you want your children to do or be when they grow older?

B. About their Learning in the Program:
       Why are you participating in this program?
       What do you usually do at home that uses reading and writing?
       Is this the same or different from what you did before participating in this program?
       What have you learned in this program?
       Do you think that by you being in this program your children could do better in their school work? If so, why?
       How have your children reacted to you being in this program?
       Have you noticed any changes in their reading and writing behaviors since you started in the program?
       What do you plan to do at home in terms of reading and writing after the program is finished?

C. About the Program:
       What do you like best of the program?
       Is there anything that could be different about the program? If so, what?
       Do you have any ideas on how to make the program better?
       Have you learned anything new about the school your children attend by coming to this program? If so, what?

D. About the School:

What do you like best about the school your children attend?
Is there anything you wish could be different about that school? If so, what?
Do you have any ideas on how to make the school better?
When you visit the school, why do you usually go?
When was the last time you visited the school? Why did you go?
How many times a week do you visit the school?
Which is your favorite place to visit in that school?
Who in the school do you feel most comfortable talking to?

RESEARCH FOR ACTION
FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM EVALUATION

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
<u>Staff</u>

A. About the Participants and their Community:
What do you know about the participants of the Family Literacy program?
What community(ies) do they represent (ethnic, socioeconomic, other)?
Why do you think they come to this program?
Why do you think some have not come regularly or have stopped coming?
What has been done to keep in touch with them?
What is the neighborhood like?
Is the neighborhood people aware of the program? If so, have they been involved in any way (i.e., development, implementation, recruitment)?
What do you like best about this neighborhood?
Is there anything that could be improved about this neighborhood? If so, what? Why?

B. About the Staff's participation in the program:
What is your role in the program?
How do you work with participants? If relevant--With teachers? With administrators?
What do you think you can contribute to the success of this program?
What do you think this program wants to achieve in this school?
How are the participants involved in the program?

C. About the Program:
Why do you think this program is needed in this school?
Have you noticed anything different in the participation of parents (i.e., attendance, inquiries, volunteerism) in the school since the program started? If so, what?
Have you noticed anything different in students' academic behavior (i.e., reading, writing, homework) since the program started? If so, what?
What do you like best about this program?

Do you have any ideas on how to make this program better?
What goals and priorities does the school have to improve the reading and writing of its students? How does the family literacy program support those goals and priorities?

D. About the School:
What aspects of the school -- staff, administration, organization, curriculum -- have helped the program's implementation and development? What aspects have not helped?
How are the teachers and administrators involved in the program?
What do you like best about this school?
Is there anything you wish could be different about that school? If so, what?

APPENDIX C
DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPATION

A. Overview

The following discussion analyzes the participation rates of all programs for the first year of implementation. The discussion here is preliminary and not conclusive since the data only reflects attendance after one year of implementation and sample populations were in some cases too small to be statistically significant. However, this section may help programs make better use of the information that attendance documentation can provide for recruitment and retention efforts. The evaluation research looks at attendance in programs to establish trends in participation and make recommendations for programs as they rethink recruitment and retention strategies for next year.

B. Findings

Table 1 describes average participation rates across programs by month and by school. The attendance data gathered was from each of the components at the sites that involved adult learners. Attendance records from the GED component at Welsh and Hunter's Parent-Child Interaction Time, Homework Club, and Preschool components were not available for this report.

TABLE 1
AVERAGE ATTENDANCE IN LITERACY PROGRAMS BY MONTH

	McKinley Book Club N=72	Welsh Literacy Workshop N=84	Moffet Making Friends N=45	Hunter ESL N=12	ABE N=25
October	18.0	20.0*	***	***	4.2
November	18.3	14.2	8.5	2.8**	5.0*
December	21.0*	10.0**	6.3	3.0	4.3
January	15.0	11.5	4.0**	5.4*	4.9
February	13.3	14.0	8.3	4.9	4.1

March	12.5**	12.0	10.0	4.6	3.7
April	16.0	13.0	6.0	3.4	3.1
May	14.0	14.0	12.0*	3.5	2.0**

_____

–

Overall Avg.	16.0	13.6	7.9	3.9	3.9
Std. Dev.	2.9	3.0	2.7	1.01	0.98
Avg. Rate of Participation	22.2%	16.2%	17.6%	32.5%	15.6%

*   Highest avg. by month

**   Lowest avg. by month
***   Programs began in November 1997

Table 1 illustrates that McKinley had the highest overall average attendance (16.0), followed by Welsh (13.6) and Moffet (7.9). Hunter had the lowest overall average attendance in both the ESL and the ABE programs (3.9). This difference might be a result of length of program implementation and duration of recruitment efforts. In addition, the target population was different at Moffet because parent recruitment concentrated on one grade level per cycle while other programs did school-wide recruitment.

It is also interesting to observe that all programs experienced fluctuations in attendance throughout the year. Fluctuation in attendance was due to attrition as well as to irregular attendance patterns of participants. This trend suggests a need to further investigate the reasons for attrition and irregular attendance patterns. An exit interview could reveal participants' reasons for continuing or discontinuing in the program. In addition, a participant survey given in person or by phone, two or three times a year, could uncover reasons for the sporadic attendance of some participants who remain in the program.

It is important to note that programs had a very different range of attendance among them. For instance, McKinley's highest was 21.0 and the lowest was 12.5. This appears to contrast with Hunter's ABE highest attendance of 5.0 and lowest of 2.0. However, taking the average rate of participation into account we find that there is little difference between the programs. Hunter's ESL higher rate appears to be affected by the fact that its sample population (12) is very small. When sample populations are that small the attendance rate is affected more significantly by the presence or absence of an individual. Information from comparisons made between the programs is inconclusive because Hunter's ESL and ABE sample population (taken separately) is much smaller than that of the other programs. Participant surveys could reveal possible reasons for the range.

In addition to average attendance, the frequency of the number of sessions attended by participants can also provide useful information about participation. Table 2 describes the number of sessions that individual participants attended.

TABLE 2
TOTAL NUMBER OF SESSIONS ATTENDED BY PARTICIPANTS

	Number of Sessions														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60
Hunter (60)	2	5	3	3	0	2	1	1	1	0	8	3	0	4	2
McKinley (21)	22	13	7	4	3	4	3	1	0	2	8				
Moffet* (19)	17	7	5	5	4	7	0	0	0	0	0				
Welsh (26)	39	8	2	6	4	3	1	2	2	1	4	5			

( ) Specifies the number of total sessions per program.
* For this school the sessions were split into 2 cycles of 14 weeks and 5 weeks respectively.

Table 2 shows that in all the programs there was a significant drop-off in the number of sessions that participants attended after 2 sessions. However, it also indicates that attendance was consistent enough among a small group for the program to have a core group of parents to work with. For example, Hunter had about 6 parents who attended more than 40 sessions and Welsh had 5 who attended more than 20 sessions. This group of parents could be a great resource to use in the second year of implementation of the programs. They can build the continuation of the program and help in the recruitment of new participants by talking about their experiences in the first year.

Another important trend to observe is that most programs (McKinley, Moffet, and Welsh) had a larger number of individuals who attended one or two times only. Based on the information from Table 2 we can see that for these schools recruitment efforts were successful. Every school reported making concerted efforts to recruit parents and family members for the different programs. Fliers giving information about the program and inviting them to enroll were sent home. In addition, announcements were made at Home-School Association meetings and when parents visited the school. In some programs, staff also made phone calls to parents to add encouragement, explain the program, and answer questions. Community walks allowed some programs to recruit through personal contact. Grade specific recruitment might work better in some schools rather than school-wide recruitment. For instance, this strategy seems to have benefited Moffet's recruitment efforts.

However, Table 2 also shows that despite similar recruitment efforts at Hunter they were not as successful in attracting as large as an initial group of parents to their program. This table

also suggests that retention efforts in all the programs need to be looked at more carefully. As mentioned before, a survey of parents who discontinued their participation may help programs understand their reasons for that decision.

C. Discussion of Findings

There are several factors that can assist in the interpretation of the information presented in Tables 1 and 2. These factors are: the length of time the program has been operating; program initiation problems; and family stress imposed by socioeconomic reality. These factors may shed some light on what influences the lower than expected attendance rates in some of the programs. One factor to consider in order to understand the difference in average attendance is the length of time a program has been in existence. It is not surprising that McKinley's Book Club had the highest overall attendance since this program has been functioning the longest. Begun in 1994, the program has had time to develop its structure and format, to become well known as a school program for parents, to nurture a following among parents, and to cultivate *confianza* and rapport among parents and neighborhood adults. These factors have allowed the program to mature and to grow. Although, as Ms. Rodriguez explained, the school staff wants the program to grow further and to increase the number of parents involved even more, they are encouraged by the small gains they have made each year.

The research literature documents growth patterns similar to those at McKinley. For example, Gadsden (1996) and Johnson (1994) suggest that the success of family literacy programs in building participation needs to be considered longitudinally. Thus, it would be very important to continue tracing the implementation of each family literacy program over the next four years in order to portray growth patterns in daily attendance accurately.

A second factor to consider in interpreting Tables 1 and 2 is that the first year of implementation usually is the hardest. Program initiation imposes special burdens, many of which are unforseen. Changes from what was planned force staff and participants to readjust the programs' goals, activities, and processes. These unplanned events often affect participation by forcing program's staff to give secondary importance to recruitment and retention during the initial year of implementation. As data from Hunter's program suggest, the more components a program has the more complex and demanding the implementation process becomes during the first year. Accounts of some of the kinds of difficulties that programs might experience during their first year are also provided in the research literature (see, e.g., Pierre and Layzer, 1996; Moore and Stavrianos, 1994) and correspond to the experience of the Family Literacy Initiatives.

The third factor to consider is the effectiveness of the program in meeting participants' expectations. The best school efforts in developing quality adult literacy intiatives may fall short if partcipants perceive that the program activities and structure do not help them to achieve their individual goals. Also, any program may experience high attrition if participants do not understand how the program will meet their literacy needs. For instance, Maribel and Esther at Hunter declared disatisfaction with changing the focus of the course from GED to ABE. Apparently these adult learners did not understand or agree with such a change and felt

disconnected with the process of decision-making. The efforts programs make to identify and understand the personal and professional goals of participants and to use these insights in shaping their intiative can influence participation rates (Gadsden, 1996; Strickland, 1996).

The fourth factor is the variety of burdens that families may experience. Johnson (1994) explains:

People for whom school was a painful experience in childhood, or whose children are having academic or social problems in school are not anxious to go into schools...people less likely to come are those under the constant stress of poverty or personal problems, including concern about meeting basic needs for food, shelter, health, safety, and clothing (p. 33).

The staff of the literacy programs need to make a concerted effort to know and understand the target population they wish to reach. As mentioned above information about participants' educational goals is important. In addition, being aware of the social reality as well as the previous educational experiences of participants may contribute necessary information in a variety of areas. For instance, that understanding may cest new light on attendance rates as well as on realistic participation goals. In addition, this knowledge can help increase participation by making programs more responsive to participants.

D. Recommendations

By examining attendance we have attempted to reveal patterns of participation in each program that can inform strategies for recruitment and retention in the second year of implementation. The recommendations detailed below are strategies that have worked well for other programs and that have been suggested in the research literature. We present them as suggestions for schools as they reflect upon how to build the recruitment and retention capacity of their literacy programs.

First, programs may want to expand their definition of parent participation. Usually, the idea of participation is limited to parents attending the school site for children's events and adult classes. A variation on that narrow conceptualization of involvement was illustrated by Moffet's school literacy program. Their parent leader visited the homes of parents who enrolled in the program but could not come to school for the literacy sessions. The parent leader was knowledgeable about reading strategies as well as the culture and language of parents. The visits done by Ms. Estrada seemed to have worked well at Moffet to develop *confianza*. By reaching out into the community and expanding the network of communication about the program, her visits helped the school become sensitive to some of the obstacles that impede parental participation and created a way for parents to participate from the home. Johnson (1994) found home visits to be effective in reaching out to families and promoting involvement in the school.

Second, programs that have a comprehensive view of family literacy may want to implement different components gradually. The complexities of issues in establishing a family

literacy initiative may be compounded by the size of the program. Using a developmental model will allow programs to develop and implement components in stages, reducing the burden of responding to multiple responsibilities at once. This model will allow staff to prioritize and give specific attention to different areas of the program gradually. In addition, implementation of new components can make use of the knowledge gained from the development of earlier ones, thus building the capacity of the program's staff. To illustrate, Moffet's program model offered literacy workshops to one grade at a time. This allowed them to do grade-specific recruitment and work with a small group of participants. In turn, the participants recruited from kindergarten helped to build participation for the next set of workshops with first-grade parents.

Third, in addition to offering incentives, like snacks and giving out books, already used by schools, programs could develop other ways to encourage parent attendance by linking the amount of time spent in the program to the acquisition of products that would expand the educational resources of the family. For instance, Welsh Elementary rewarded parents for their participation by dispensing Welsh Bucks, which could be used to acquire extra books at the book fair. All parents who were interviewed at the school expressed their satisfaction with building their home libraries. As one parent stated, "If I do not come, I won't get the buck and I'll have less chances to get books for my children." Johnson (1993) chronicles how some school-based family centers encourage participation by validating the contributions parents make to the program.

Fourth, although documentation of attendance rates indicates trends in participation, they do not suggest how programs can improve. Exit interviews and surveys can provide information about why participants attended or stopped attending the program. In addition, ongoing needs assessment, through in-person or phone surveys, could help programs stay current with the changing needs of the community. All programs reported surveying some parents in the school about their needs and interests in a family literacy program as a program planning strategy. Some of the literature research (Farber, 1997; Lynn, 1997) suggests that continuous, rather than one-time, needs assessment benefits programs because it provides information that helps programs be reponsive to parents as well as to the school. Unplanned events, such as families relocating or a teacher retiring bring changes in the goals set by families as well as school staff. Designing an information system that is continuous and that participants feel comfortable with could help programs be more sensitive to changes and flexible in responding to them.

Fifth, involving parents in planning for recruitment and retention of participants has been suggested in the literature as an effective strategy (Johnson, 1994; Epstein, 1996). Parent input usually provides insights into issues parents face that schools may not be familiar with. In addition, the use of participants' input in the decision-making process may nurture an atmosphere of trust between the parents and the school and build the reputation of the program in the community.

Sixth, in order to promote long-term meaningful parent involvement for the purpose of improving the educational achievement of children, the family literacy programs need to be part of the school's mission and of a larger school-wide effort to welcome parents into the school.

Mapp (1997) argues that the entire school community (parent volunteers, teachers, principal, secretaries, and custodian) needs to join in activities to welcome parents and validate the different contributions parents can make. Mapp's research suggests that welcoming environments at school can motivate parents to participate in specific school-based programs.

Each school program illustrates the diversity of activities that are being developed and implemented to involve families through literacy efforts in enhancing of the schooling of children. These efforts are not without challenges. These challenges point toward areas for further study.

APPENDIX D
DOCUMENTATION INSTRUMENTS

The following is a suggested list of ways that programs can use to record programs' activities and growth.

     1. Attendance sheets

     2. Data forms including background information about participants as well as their participation goals

     3. Evaluation of children's English language skills (pre-post)

     4. Assessment of children's listening/reading comprehension (pre-post)

     5. Evaluation of parents' basic educational achievement (pre-post)

     6. Participant journals of literacy activities at home

     7. Participant checklists/surveys assessing the effect of the program--e.g., confidence levels, increased time spent at home on literacy activities, their learning, their children's learning

     8. Participant checklists/surveys evaluating the program--e.g., strengths of activities, areas in need of change, activity that contributed the most/the least, suggestions for improvement

     9. Sign-ins indicating participants' levels of participation as classroom volunteers, attendance to school-community meetings

10. Participant exit interviews

11. Program staff and classroom teachers logs documenting observations

REFERENCES

Alamprese, J. (1996). Integrated services, cross-agency collaboration, and family literacy. In L.A. Benjamin and J. Lord (eds.), Family literacy: Directions in research and implications for practice. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

Benjamin, L.A. and Lord, J. (1996). Family literacy: Directions in research and   implications for practice. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

Durán, R. (1996). English immigrant language learners: Cultural accommodation and family literacy. In L.A. Benjamin and J. Lord (eds.), Family literacy: Directions in research and implications for practice. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

Epstein, J. L. (1996). Perspectives and previews on research and policy for school, family, and community partnerships. In A. Booth and J. F. Dunn (eds.), Family-school   links: How do they affect educational outcomes. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum   Associates.

Farber, P. (1998). Full-Service schools respond to families' needs. The Harvard Education Letter, 14(4), pp. 4-5.

Gadsden, V.L. (1996). Designing and conducting family literacy programs that account for racial, ethnic, religious, and other cultural differences. In L.A. Benjamin and J. Lord(eds.), Family literacy: Directions in research and implications for practice. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

Hayes, A. (1996). Longitudinal study of family literacy program outcomes. In L.A. Benjamin and J. Lord (eds.), Family literacy: Directions in research and implications for practice. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

Henderson, A. (1987). The evidence continues to grow: Parent involvement improves student achievement. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Hidalgo, N.M. (1997). A layering of families and friends: Four Puerto Rican families' meaning of community. Education and Urban Society, 30(1), pp. 20-40.

Johnson, V. R. (1993). Parent/Family centers: Dimensions of functioning in 28 school in 14 states. Report No. 20. Boston, MA: Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning.

Johnson, V. R. (1994). Parent centers in urban schools: Four case studies. Report No. 23. Boston, MA: Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning.

Layzer, J.I. (1996). Building theories of change in family support programs. Harvard   Family Research Project, 2(1), pp. 10-11.

Lynn, L. (1997). Family involvement in schools: It makes a big difference, but remains rare. The Harvard Education Letter, 13(5), pp. 3-5.

Mapp, K. (1997). Making the connections between families and schools. The Harvard Education Letter, 13(5), pp.1-3.

Mikulecky, L. (1996). Family literacy: Parent and child interactions. In L.A. Benjamin and J. Lord (eds.), Family literacy: Directions in research and implications for practice. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

Moore, M. and Stavrianos, M. (1994). Adult education reauthorization: Background. Washington, D.C.: Mathematica Policy Research.

St. Pierre, R. and Layzer, J. (1996). Informing approaches to serving families in family literacy programs: Lessons from other family intervention programs. In L.A. Benjamin and J. Lord (eds.), Family literacy: Directions in research and implications for practice. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

Strickland, D. (1996). Meeting the needs of families in family literacy programs. In L.A. Benjamin and J. Lord (eds.), Family literacy: Directions in research and implications for practice. Washington, DC: US Department of Education.