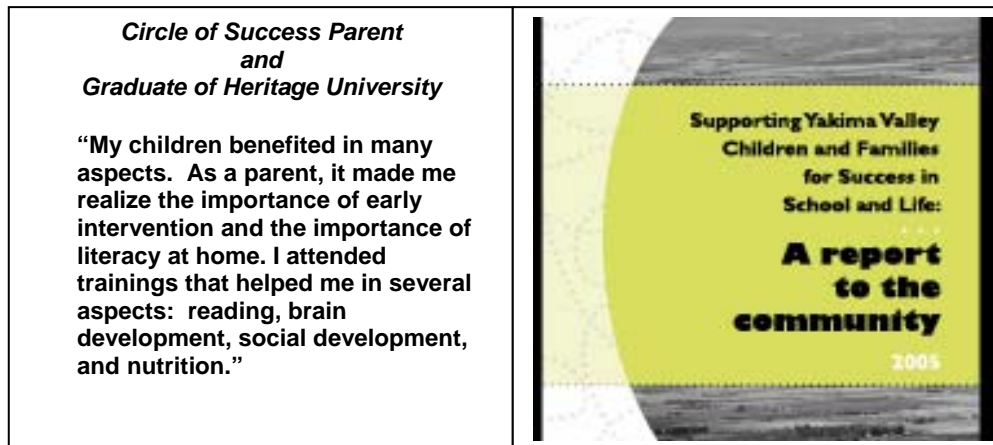


Circle of Success, Inc.®

Supporting Yakima Valley Children and Families for Success in School and Life: A Report to the Community 2005

Talking Points

12/13/05



PRIMARY MESSAGE

There is significant improvement in several areas of school readiness for Yakima Valley families that participate in the Circle of Success early education program and there are particularly impressive results for the children that have stayed with Circle of Success the longest.

TALKING POINT 1

AN INCREASE IN HEALTH MONITORING

There are substantial gains for Circle of Success families in taking their children to the dentist and in obtaining immunizations for their children.

TALKING POINT 2

BETTER PERFORMANCE ON PERSONAL-SOCIAL SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE IN THE PROGRAM LONGER

Children who are in the program longer show better performance on their personal-social skills than children who entered the program more recently.

TALKING POINT 3

INCREASED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Families who participate in the program are increasingly engaging their children in family outings and in reading regularly to their children.

TALKING POINT 4

INCREASED ACCESSING OF ECONOMIC SUPPORTS

A substantial increase was seen in the proportion of families who access food stamps and migrant assistance, bringing needed resources to these families.

TALKING POINT 5

INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS

A total of 44 scholarships have been awarded to Circle of Success College and University outreach student-workers. They are demonstrating increased expertise and leadership which they will give back to the community as professionals.

Circle of Success, Inc.®
A Report to the Community 2005
~ Talking Points ~

Circle of Success, Inc was founded in 1997 as a private, nonprofit 501-c-3 partnership of community organizations that empowers parents to prepare their children to enter school ready to learn. Circle of Success recruits and trains outreach workers in order to connect parents to community resources and learning experiences throughout Yakima County.

TALKING POINT 1 AN INCREASE IN HEALTH MONITORING

There are substantial gains in taking their children to the dentist and in obtaining immunizations for their children.

Families participating in Circle of Success home visiting show substantial gains both in monitoring of their children's oral health and in obtaining regular immunizations for their children.

- There was a 40% increase in the rate at which families were taking their children to the dentist between Fall of '04 the Spring of '05.
- There was a 50% increase in the rate at which families were taking their child(ren) in for immunizations. (*SRFS*)

THE CHALLENGE

The families who completed these assessments are more likely to be married, have stronger English skills, have more education and more income (as seen in home ownership) than the full Circle of Success population. Any needs highlighted here then are only the 'tip of the iceberg' as the neediest families often do not have the personal and family resources to participate in data gathering activities.

"Studies in neurobiology, neurodevelopment and early intervention show that the years from birth to 5 are critically important for brain development." **From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development. Shonkoff, J and Phillips, D. 2001.**

TALKING POINT 2 BETTER PERFORMANCE ON PERSONAL-SOCIAL SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE IN THE PROGRAM LONGER

Children who are in the program longer show better performance on their personal-social skills than children who entered the program more recently.

The importance of this finding is reinforced in the National Association for the Education of Young Children's recently approved New Standards and Criteria. "Positive relationships are essential for the development of personal responsibility, capacity for self-regulation, for constructive interactions with others, and for fostering academic functioning and mastery."

- Children who are in the program longer show statistically significantly better performance on their personal-social skills than children who entered the program more recently ($p=.002$). (*ASQ*)

THE CHALLENGE

- 1) A substantially larger proportion of children are below the cut off point for this developmental screening than would be expected in the general population. We expect 2.5% of children to fall below the cutoff and instead approximately two times to four times the expected number of children were below the cutoff on the subtests.
- 2) Circle of Success children face challenges in the area of problem solving compared to other children their age.
- 3) Language Preference: About half of the families prefer English (50%) and half are either bilingual (3%) or prefer Spanish (47%). (*SRFS*) It is a challenge for many families that many early learning educational opportunities are only available in English.

"A significant contribution to the (*High Point-early learning*) program's success likely derived from growth in non-cognitive areas involving social-emotional functioning. During elementary and secondary school, Perry School participants were less

likely to be placed in a special education program and had a significantly higher average achievement score at age 14 than non-participants. Over 65 percent of program participants graduated from regular high school compared with 45 percent of non-participants.” **A.Rolnick, R.Grunewalk; Fedgazette, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, March 2003. *High/Scope Study of the Perry Preschool Ypsilanti, Michigan.***

TALKING POINT 3 INCREASED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Families are increasingly engaging their children in family outings and in reading regularly to their children.

No other factor is as powerful in the young child’s life as the relationship with his or her parents. With an understanding of the explosive development occurring in the infant and toddler years, the opportunity for parent education and providing educational resources for the home is an essential service of Circle of Success.

- Circle of Success families are generally well-connected with their community (as reported on the CLSS). Over 90% of families said they had a close friend they visited with at least once a week.
- Circle of Success families demonstrate moderate levels of use of everyday printed materials that require at least basic functional literacy skills. About 80% of families report reading a magazine or using the yellow pages at least once a month. (CLSS)
- The launch of the Circle of Success ***Let’s Read*** program with the Imagination Library book per month club will further expand literacy resources for Yakima Valley children.

THE CHALLENGE

- 1) Circle of Success families are least involved with respect to formal clubs or groups (47.4%). There are unique community building opportunity as seen in the form of PEPS groups and other group activities sponsored or cultivated by Circle of Success.
- 2) Although 64% families report having a library card only 44% of parents report visiting the library or bookmobile in the past month.

“University of Wisconsin-Madison researchers have found that when professionals bring parents into the picture, they impact long-term family outcomes.” **Work and Family Newsbriefs, March 2003.**

“With confidence, I tell parents to read to their children, secure in the knowledge that it will help their language development, help them be ready to read when the time comes, and help parents and children spend loving moments together.” **Dr. Perri Klass, Medical Director of Reach Out and Read.**

TALKING POINT 4 INCREASED ACCESSING OF ECONOMIC SUPPORTS

A substantial increase was seen in the proportion of families who accessed food stamps and migrant assistance.

Children need to be fed and have their basic needs met for them to be optimally ready to learn. Research indicates a child’s cognitive/linguistic school readiness skills will increase if they live above the poverty line.

- These gains highlight areas where Circle of Success involvement may be easing access to these economic support services. A major role performed by the student outreach workers is to explain and encourage referrals to agencies and services that families need.

THE CHALLENGE

- 1) Only about two-thirds (69%) of parents report that they have a bank account. (CLSS) Given the disparity in home ownership numbers between this smaller sample and the Circle of Success community as a whole (32% vs.25%), this number is considered a substantial under-estimate of the extent to which there is an ‘un-banked’ problem for the larger Yakima community. (SRFS)

“Since 1993, the percentages (of 3 to 5 year old children to have the three or four cognitive/linguistic school readiness skills) have increased for children above the poverty threshold (from 40 percent to 45 percent) and decreased for children below the poverty threshold (from 23 to 19 percent).” **Child Trends Data Bank website.**

“The average child growing up in a middle class family has been exposed to 1,000 to 1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book reading before entering school. The average child growing up in a low-income family, however, has only been exposed to 25 hours of one-on-one reading during this same time period.” *Packard and MacArthur Foundation.*

TALKING POINT 5 INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS

A total of 44 scholarships have been awarded to Circle of Success College and University outreach student-workers. They are demonstrating increased expertise and leadership which they will give back to the community as professionals.

- The launch of Heritage University’s **STEP UP** parent education and school readiness program, with trained and supervised scholarship students, will continue and expand early learning outreach services.
- Since 2002, 44 scholarships have been awarded to Circle of Success, Inc.® scholars. Students have attended Heritage University, Washington State University, Central Washington University, and Yakima Valley Community College and overall have maintained a grade point average of 3.3.
- Since 2003, there have been 16 Americorps service volunteers assisting and supporting the outreach work of the Circle of Success program.

CHALLENGE

Sustaining scholarship support for professional development is a challenge for the future.

“Research showed that early childhood educators are willing to take a more active part in prevention, but they need more training and resources to do so effectively.” **National Association for the Education of Young Children.**

"Young children's cognitive/literacy school readiness skills are higher among those with more educated mothers." *Child Trends Data Bank website*

TALKING POINTS ADDENDEM

DATA ANALYSIS AND TECHNICAL NOTES:

- **Timeline** This report includes findings that are a result of assessments and data collected by 31 Circle of Success outreach workers from September 1, 2004 through July 31, 2005.
- **Report and Evaluation Consultant** Dr. Sheri L. Hill, Developmental Policy Specialist and faculty at the University of Washington, has been contracted by Circle of Success as a data analysis and reporting consultant. Dr. Hill has assisted in the data gathering strategy development, data analysis, and advised on the presentation of the data collected by the Circle of Success outreach workers.
- **Measurement Tools** The organization’s enrollment form and three screening tools were used for analyses in this report analyses. The *Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ) A Parent Completed Self Monitoring System, Second Edition*, provides a system to screen infants and young children for developmental delays during the first five years of life (N=133). The *Community Life Skills Scale (CLSS)* measures use of community resources. (N=116). The *School Ready Family Survey (SRFS)* was developed by Circle of Success to account for the program objectives of the family school ready environment (N=228).
- **Data Analysis Strategy** Data was analyzed on one CLSS administration, two SRFS administrations, and two ASQ administrations conducted between 9/1/04 and 7/31/05. Scores on all tests were standardized so that we could evaluate for change compared to other children in their age range.
- **ASQ Analysis Strategy** Other than reports on children falling below screening cutoffs, all ASQ analyses pulled out those children whose performance at the first assessment was excessively low (ASQ scores ≥ 4 standard deviations below the mean). These children were presumed to be most likely to be in need of early intervention services and not expected to demonstrate benefits from Circle of Success participation in the same way as other children. This was done by subtest.
- **Participants** All findings reported are being limited to families who participated in the home visiting aspect of Circle of Success, Inc.® (COS) after 9/1/04.
- **Advisory Committee** A local advisory committee from the Yakima Valley has reviewed and made recommendations about this report.
- **Reference** Details on assessment instruments, data gathering, procedures and analyses are available 1/1/06 at www.circleofsuccessinc.org.