

**SONOMA COUNTY
FAMILIES LEARNING AND GROWING
(F.L.A.G.SHIP)**



INTERIM EVALUATION FINDINGS

June 2008



Fit with First 5 Sonoma County's Strategic Plan

- **Primary Goal:**
Parent Support and Education
- **Priority Outcome:**
Parents will be educated and supported to create safe and nurturing environments for children.
- **Pathways to Results Indicator:**
Parents read more to children to support literacy development.

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Program Theory

Program Purpose

The F.L.A.G.ship provides children and families in an isolated community with literacy materials and literacy-building activities.

Early literacy research states that:

- Language, reading, and writing skills develop at the same time and are intimately connected
- Early literacy is a continuous developmental process that begins in the first years of life
- Early literacy skills develop in real-life settings through positive interactions with literacy materials and other people

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Early literacy research cited by the BrainWonders project of Boston University Medical Center (Source: www.zerotothree.org/BrainWonders)

Program Overview

Program Design

- Teaching Pre-Literacy Skills and Activities
 - Circle time, stories, songs, arts and crafts
 - Lending library
 - Book giveaway

- Building Family Awareness of Community Health Resources
 - Healthy workshops for parents
 - Quarterly storytimes on health-related issues
 - Community bulletin board

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Sonoma County F.L.A.G.ship Interim Evaluation Findings

Mobile bus parked at Bodega Bay trailer park (and Recreational Vehicle park) every Friday morning for 1.5 hours

Staffed by FLAGship Coordinator and driver, as well as Marin County Family Advocate who comes along to provide information to parents and providers about available community resources and services

Day schedule:

- Half hour free play on bus
- Clean up to prepare for circle time
- Circle time (storytime, songs sung in English and Spanish)
- Art activity or supervised outdoor game

Process Evaluation Findings

Project Achievement of Process Measures

January 1 – December 31, 2007

Process Measures	Target	Actual	Notes
Health Workshops	4 Health Workshops/Year	5 Workshops presented	Target exceeded
Quarterly Storytimes	4 storytimes presented on health issues	6 storytimes related to workshop topics presented	Target exceeded
Lending Library	Minimum of 30 books related to health	Exact number not reported	Status unknown - F.L.A.G.ship staff note that the bus' "large lending library is stocked with health-related books"
Community Bulletin Board	Update board quarterly	Board is updated quarterly	Target met
Book Giveaways	Each child receives 1 book each month	Gift-books are provided each month	160 books given away to children and families between August 2006 and December 2007
Teaching Pre-Literacy Skills and Activities	Storytimes and school-readiness skills presented at each visit	Storytimes, songs, arts & crafts activities are offered each week	Target met

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Sonoma County F.L.A.G.ship Interim Evaluation Findings

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- According to staff, “approximately six children” come to the F.L.A.G.ship storytime and activity in any given week out of a group of ten regularly-attending children.

- Process data exported from First 5 Marin’s Persimmony system:

First 5 Marin uses the Persimmony data system to store grantee evaluation data. F.L.A.G.ship received funding from First 5 Marin before it began receiving funding from First 5 Sonoma County, and thus has been set up in the Persimmony system. To minimize data-related burdens on the program, First 5 Sonoma County is using available information from Persimmony for this program evaluation.

Process Evaluation Findings

Populations Served by Sonoma F.L.A.G.ship

July 2007 – December 2007 (Q1-2 of FY 2007-08)

Population Served	Number Served	Percentage of Total Served
Prenatal	1	2%
Children 0-3	14	26%
Children Over Age 3*	28	51%
Parents/Guardians	9	16%
Other	3	5%
Total	55	100%

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• The total number of people served in the first two quarters of the 2007-08 fiscal year is illustrated in the table above

TO NOTE: First 5 Marin does not track race/ethnicity or primary language of the participants in the F.L.A.G.ship program. Staff note that participants are for the most part Hispanic/Latino and speak Spanish as their primary language.

Key Findings on Process Measures:

• Program staff track all children served, including children over age five, but do not distinguish 3-5 year olds in the “children over age 3” category. The true number of unduplicated children 0-5 served is unknown. According to staff, “about 20 of the 28 children served over age three are school age.”

• The F.L.A.G.ship appears to serve a small number of children and families in an isolated community in Sonoma County. According to staff, numbers “increased somewhat” over time at Marin stops. Because F.L.A.G.ship is a relatively new presence in Bodega Bay, it is reasonable to expect that the numbers may similarly trend slightly upward over time.

• The bus provides an hour and a half each week of age-appropriate activities to preschool-age children.

Outcomes Evaluation Methods

- **Staff Interview**
- **Participant Follow-up Survey**
- **Site Visit Observations**

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This interim evaluation includes process data from First 5 Marin's Persimmony system* and progress reports submitted to First 5 Sonoma County, as well as analysis of the following:

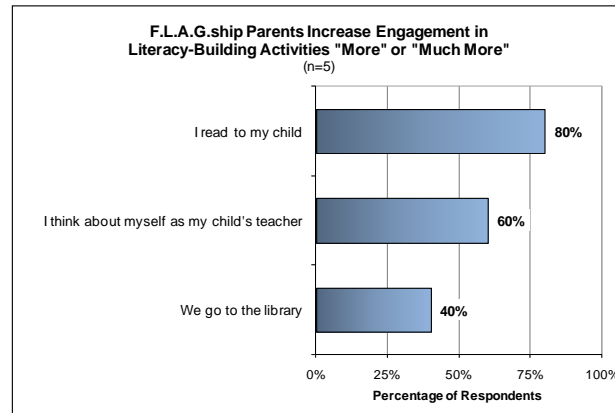
Staff Interview – Evaluators conducted a phone interview with the F.L.A.G.ship Coordinator to gather information on participants served, program activities, major challenges and successes of the program.

Participant Follow-up Survey – Evaluators worked with F.L.A.G.ship staff to modify an existing parent survey to include a question about change in literacy activities parents engage in with their children as a result of program participation. Five of nine participating families (56%) completed a Parent Survey measuring their satisfaction with the program, engagement in family literacy activities, interest in receiving further literacy and health information, and suggestions for program improvement.

Site Visit Observation – Evaluators visited the F.L.A.G.ship mobile van in Bodega Bay to observe staff lead literacy activities with participants. The site visit also served as an additional opportunity to gather further information from staff on the program and their suggestions for improvement.

Outcomes Evaluation Findings

- Parents report increased reading time with their children since participating in the F.L.A.G.ship program.



Data Source: Participant Follow-Up Survey

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Key Findings

- Four of five parents report reading to their child “more” or “much more” than before participating in the F.L.A.G.ship program.
- Three of five parents report thinking of themselves as their child’s teachers “more” or “much more” after participating in the F.L.A.G.ship program.

Outcomes Evaluation Findings

- Parents receive information from F.L.A.G.ship about community resources, child development, health and safety, and school readiness.

5 out of 5 parents who responded to the participant follow-up survey report learning information about:

- How children develop
- Health and safety
- Community resources
- Nutrition
- School readiness activities

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Sonoma County F.L.A.G.ship Interim Evaluation Findings

According to the Coordinator, parents “have expressed interest in parenting tips, information on dealing with depression, dental care, possible play-group opportunities/sites, and day-care provider support.”

Demonstrates that parents have specific desires for additional information and resources.

Outcomes Evaluation Findings

- Parent participants express satisfaction with the program

Characteristics of Program	Percentage of Parents “Very Satisfied” (n=5)
Background and experience of the staff	100%
Languages spoken by staff	100%
Equipment and materials	100%
Environment	100%
How the program promotes your child’s learning and development	100%
Interaction between staff and children	100%

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Sonoma County F.L.A.G.ship Interim Evaluation Findings

Survey respondents were all (100%) “very satisfied” with the program staff’s background and experience, languages spoken by staff, equipment and materials, the environment, the program’s promotion of children’s learning and development, and the interaction between staff and children.

Conclusions

- The F.L.A.G.ship offers children an hour and a half of literacy activities, including storytime, songs, and other activities.
- The F.L.A.G.ship appears to increase the amount of time parents read with their children.
- Data collection and tracking can be improved to better represent the actual number of children ages 0-5 reached.

Additional Questions

- Is F.L.A.G.ship reaching as many children 0-5 in the community as need the service? Might further outreach yield additional children and families not yet reached?
- How can Sonoma County service providers use the F.L.A.G.ship bus to improve service accessibility?
- What are the most appropriate ways to enhance participant data collection, given the brief nature of the intervention?

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Sonoma County F.L.A.G.ship Interim Evaluation Findings

Question 1: Is F.L.A.G.ship reaching as many children 0-5 in the community as need the service? Might further outreach yield additional children and families not yet reached?

Next step: To discuss with program staff and First 5 Sonoma County staff

Question 2: How can Sonoma County service providers use the F.L.A.G.ship bus to improve service accessibility?

Next step: Connect F.L.A.G.ship staff with River to Coast Child Care Services for materials and information-sharing

Question 3: What are the most appropriate ways to enhance participant data collection, given the brief nature of the intervention?

Next step: To discuss with program staff and First 5 Sonoma County staff