

Raising A Reader

Article for County Library staff newsletter

We're Raising Readers!

Prenatal to Three (Pre - 3) recently presented their evaluative study which included information about the effects of Raising a Reader "Books for Babies" and Raising a Reader "Book Bag Program". These two library programs, funded by the Peninsula Community Foundation, were spotlighted as key components that not only promote the obvious benefit of early literacy and brain development, but also contribute to the development of infant/caregiver attachment, which is essential for a child's healthy maturation.

Key findings:

Participants

- 145 families participated and finished the project
- Mothers' education averaged 9.5 years; 12.6% had less than 6 years formal education
- 82.5% spoke Spanish; 16.4% English and 1.45 spoke other languages
- Average age of the infant was 9.4 months old

Early Literacy:

- Families in Pre-3 exhibited more behaviors that promoted literacy and attachment than families not enrolled in Prenatal to Three
- Pre-3 families showed a picture book to their infants 45% more than non Pre-3 families
- Pre-3 families read a book to their infants 40.4% more than non Pre-3 families
- Pre-3 families receiving home visits (caseworkers bring book bags to home visits) report doing activities that promote attachment 73.7% compared to those who did not receive a home visit
- Pre-3 families receiving home visits report doing activities that promote literacy and language development 54.5% compared to those who did not receive home visits

Library use:

- Pre-3 families visited the library in the past 6 months 33% more than non Pre-3 families
- Pre-3 families visited the library 41% more often than non Pre-3

The evaluator who presented the data was very excited about the findings and noted the relatively low cost of the programs (books, t-shirts, book bags) in relation to the high impact on the well-being of the families. In short, we're making a difference in the lives of San Mateo County families. We are RAISING READERS! --Jeanine Asche