

The Parent Involvement Project

Report of Parent Experiences, 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Parent Involvement Project (PIP) is designed to yield a number of beneficial effects for children’s learning and development. By working directly with parents to facilitate their child’s school readiness, PIP promotes high-quality early learning experiences beginning when the child enters preschool.¹ With a focus on children from underserved families, PIP nurtures parents’ critical role as their child’s first and most important teachers using a model of four essential, linked, and integrated components: 1) parent education workshops, 2) parent classroom participation, 3) home visits, and 4) enrichment activities.

WestEd recently completed a study to gather input about how parents’ views of their child’s learning and development have changed as a result of their participation in PIP, as well as how they put into practice what they learn from the program.

Study Methodology

The study took place in spring 2017 in two parts: a parent survey followed by focus groups. The parent survey was distributed to those participating in PIP programs within the Fremont Unified School District, South San Francisco Unified School District, and the San Mateo–Foster City School District. The survey assessed frequency and perceived value of participation in PIP activities, perceptions about the overall quality of the program, and understanding of children’s learning and development and parents’ role in that process. Across all three districts, 420 children and their families were enrolled in PIP as of April 2017, and one parent



I loved the **home visits** because they are in an environment we really know. I learned more activities that I can do with my child. *(PIP parent)*

from each of 284 families (68 percent of enrolled families) completed the survey.² The typical survey respondent was a mother, between 28 and 36 years old, Hispanic or Latino, married, reporting a family

income of less than \$25,000, holding a high school diploma or GED as highest level of education, living in a household with two children and two adults, and speaking Spanish as a primary language.

The subsequent focus groups, conducted with a smaller subset of parents, allowed more in-depth exploration of the same themes. Forty-two parents participated in the focus groups.

¹ <https://www.wested.org/project/parent-involvement/>

² Survey response rates ranged from 38 percent to 85 percent across districts; in one district, PIP services were extended to include full-day preschool classrooms just one month prior to survey administration, which may have lowered the response rate because parents were new to the program.



Results

Parent Perceptions of Four PIP Components

- » A high percentage of parents indicated on the survey that all four PIP components gave them new ideas for supporting their child's learning and development: 96 percent indicated classroom participation; 93 percent indicated parent education workshops; 92 percent indicated home visits; and 87 percent indicated field trips.
- » Across focus groups, parents valued all four PIP components as part of a comprehensive program, noting that each activity built on the next one.

A lot of parents don't know what they need to know [for Kindergarten], **but through this program I am learning.** (PIP parent)

Parent Perceptions of How PIP Helps Them

- » The majority of parents perceived PIP as helping them support their child's learning and fostering their confidence as parents. There was strong agreement, by percentage, with the following statements:
 - Since my child has been in preschool this year, I have conversations with my child about what he or she is learning at school. (95 percent)
 - Preschool PIP helps me feel that I am my child's most important teacher. (94 percent)
 - I am better able to support my child's learning at home because of Preschool PIP. (92 percent)
 - I am more confident parenting my child because of Preschool PIP. (92 percent)
- » Across focus groups, parents reported using what they learned through PIP in their everyday lives.

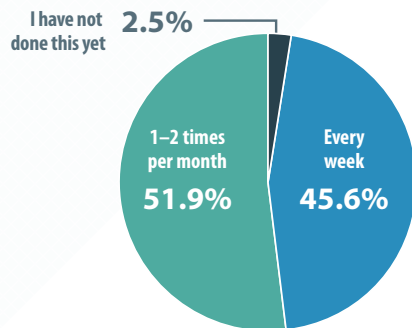


When we are in the classroom, I can see what the teacher is doing and then I can do the same thing at home. **Seeing it and then adapting it to home has helped me a lot.** (PIP parent)

Parent Perceptions of PIP Staff and Teachers

- » More than 95 percent of parents reported a positive view of PIP classrooms, teachers, and staff.
- » Almost all parents reported frequent contact with their child’s teachers about their child’s preschool experience (figure 1).

Figure 1: Parents are in frequent contact with their child’s teachers.

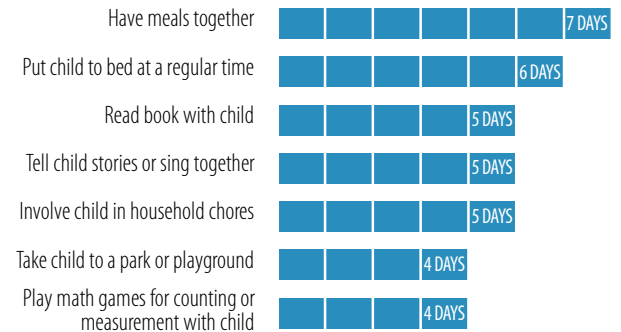


I’ve shared a lot with my son on the **field trips**. He has more to talk about and he learned about animals on a farm, and plants like pumpkins. I appreciated being a part of this. I had a lot of contact and experience with nature as a child, and now my son has had that experience. (PIP parent)

Family Activities with Children

Parents reported participating in family activities that supported their child’s learning and development (figure 2).

Figure 2: Parents frequently engage their child in routine activities.



Volunteering in class is good too. I like to be **involved in the classroom and interacting with the teacher.** (PIP parent)

Benefits to School Districts

PIP's multi-faceted approach shapes an environment that lets parents feel welcomed, forge partnerships, and participate fully in their children's education and growth. Through four linked components, PIP offers value to school districts that want to foster a more involved and connected parent community and to improve outcomes for young children.

PIP aims to create an informed, connected parent community that is better equipped to work in partnership with a school toward the academic success of children. In offering PIP, schools demonstrate that they honor and support parents as children's first teachers in life. PIP provides multiple opportunities that draw parents into, and help build, a community of parent leaders. Parents are empowered by the knowledge they derive from participating in PIP's educational workshops and home visits, which also promote internal family strength, resilience, and more confident parenting. PIP staff work collaboratively with teachers to create relationships with families that are responsive to their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Teachers and PIP parents build strong relationships through parents' in-class participation and enrichment activities. These relationships lead to more frequent and comfortable communication, which occurs in an atmosphere of respect and shared understanding.



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