



ecclesiastical

A Guide for Grant Writing

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Introduction

Most charities are operating on a tight budget, and the need to look for grant opportunities is becoming increasingly important. Also, the demand for accountability and the expectation to demonstrate how their work makes a difference is increasing. Therefore, when approaching a prospective funder, the goal is not only about securing the necessary resources, but also creating and telling the impact story. Charities need to demonstrate that their work will make a difference in the lives of the individuals, families, and communities they serve.

Many charities are affected by the shrinking pool of grant opportunities. It is not easy for a charity to find a prospective funder whose objectives align with theirs. This makes access to grants highly competitive. It is particularly difficult for those with limited to no staff capacity to prepare strong grant applications, even when they have good ideas that meet a real need in their communities. The requirements associated with the granting process also poses challenges for small charities. Although some funders provide some training to assist grant applicants, it is not always possible for small charities to send a staff person to attend. On top of that, grant writing can be challenging, particularly for small charities with limited to no internal capacity to write grant proposals. Understanding these challenges, EIG has contracted Ghebray Consulting to create a simple grant writing guide to assist the charities they support.

How to Use the Guide

This guide is simply written. It outlines the process of grant writing with the aim of enhancing the knowledge and skill of the user to write a strong grant proposal. The guide explains the steps involved in the writing process – from how a program/project idea is developed, to searching for a prospective funder and writing the various sections of a grant proposal. Where appropriate, the guide provides examples for each of the major grant application sections. The guide also explains reporting expectations and provides concrete examples of what reporting entails. The best time to use it is when a charity is in the process of preparing a grant proposal. This encourages the application of lessons into the grant writing in real-time.

How the Guide is Organized

The guide is organized into three sections. Each section starts with a description of the topic to provide a foundational understanding. Section one describes what a charity needs to know before approaching a prospective funder. Section two describes the grant writing process and how the sections of a grant proposal are written. Section three describes the reporting and provides concrete examples of what reporting looks like and what stakeholders, including funders, are looking for. To illustrate the process of grant writing and reporting, the examples used throughout the guide are based on a School Readiness Program. The guide concludes with a Glossary of Terms, References, and Appendix.

Guiding Principles

1. When applying for grants, it is crucial to understand the funder's key priorities and goals, before investing time and energy. It is important to ensure that a proposed program or project is aligned with a charity's mission and the funder's key priorities and goals.
2. When applying for a grant, the focus should be to meet the needs of a target group or a community, as a charity is a means, not an end.
3. There is a risk for mission-drift. A charity should be clear about why funding is needed and what it is for. This approach supports and leads to mission-directed work and successful grant writing.
4. Grant writing is fifty percent art and fifty percent science. While various grant writers may each tell a compelling story differently, what is being proposed needs to be logical and evidence based.
5. When applying for grant, it is essential for a charity to have a sustainability plan that assures the funder the work will continue beyond the funding period. Most funders want to know that their grant will have a long-term impact. How a charity plans to continue the work beyond the funding period is crucial information.
6. Reporting is one way for a charity to meet its accountability requirement. Most funders require financial reporting and want to know how a charity used the grant they provided. They also want to see that a charity is complying with legal and funder-specific requirements. A charity must conduct program evaluation and manage its finances in order to credibly and effectively meet its reporting requirement.
7. Program evaluation provides critical feedback to charities about what is and is not working, and what improvements need to be made. Learning what works for whom, and why, leads to development of best practices that can be shared with funders or more broadly to the charitable sector.
8. Learning is a form of accountability. When a charity presents a funder with a proposed solution to a particular need or problem, often it is testing an assumption to see what works and how it can be scaled up. When a program or project fails or partially succeeds, important lessons are learned. It is by constant reflection and learning that the lessons can be applied and sustainability is ensured.

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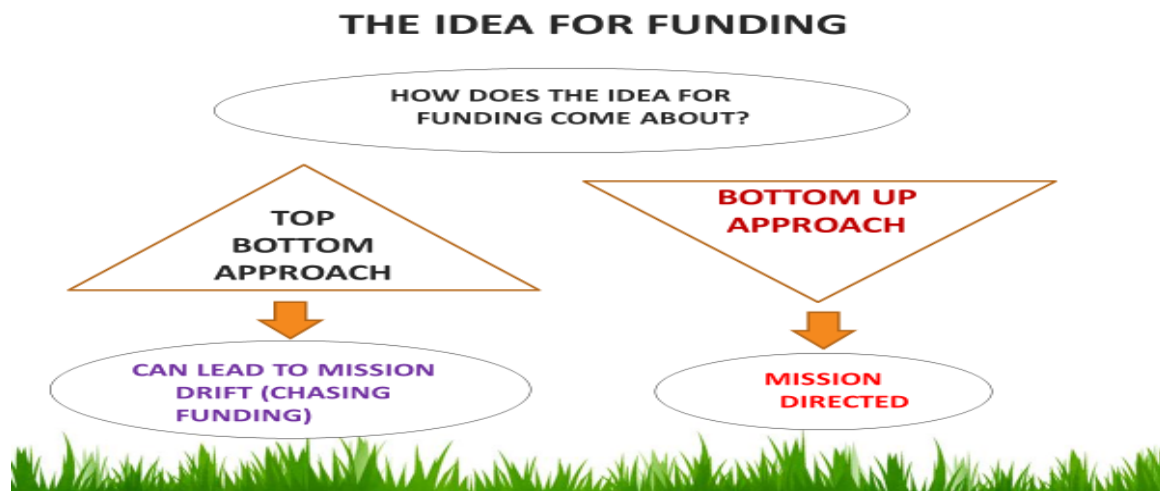
BEFORE APPROACHING A PROSPECTIVE FUNDER

First Things First

It is important for a charity to demonstrate their proposed program or project is aligned with its mission when applying for grants. It should be clear that a charity is a means to an end. The goal should clearly be to bring about change or improve conditions in the communities it serves. In other words, when preparing for grant writing, the focus should be to meet the needs of the community rather than a charity's need. If a charity has a need, it should be expressed within the context of serving a community or a target group. For instance, a charity may identify improving its social media presence as a need, but a funder may view the need as less important. In this case, a charity must demonstrate how improving its social media presence can improve visibility and attract strategic partnerships, thereby enabling it to expand the services it offers.

Similarly, it is important to pay attention to the perennial question fundraising experts and funders ask: "What is the money for or why do you need funding?" In order to answer this question clearly and credibly, a charity must look at the process by which it conceives program or project ideas for funding. Some charities keep abreast with community needs by conducting ongoing needs assessment and/or consultation or review existing literature. This helps to inform the kind of program or project ideas they need to develop for funding. This approach supports and leads to mission-directed work and often leads to successful grant writing.

There are some charities who are tempted to do a quick scan of available funding opportunities and try to fit their program or project ideas to the funder's requirements or priorities. More often than not, this approach leads to mission drift. Even if a charity is successful in securing funding, its ability to advance its mission and contribute to a funder's priorities can be compromised. The diagram below illustrates the two approaches.



Getting Ready

Before approaching a prospective funder, a charity should answer the following questions:

1. What is the need or problem?
2. Whom does it primarily affect?
3. Does addressing the need or problem fit with our mission?
4. Do we have the capacity to address it?
5. What evidence exists to support questions 1 to 4?
6. What exactly is the funding for (e.g. staffing, program expenses, etc.)?

Answering these questions is very important not only to establish that there is a valid need or problem, but also to ensure that a program or project idea is aligned with a charity's mission and with that of a prospective funder's priority. This helps to ensure that the work is mission-directed and evidence-based or evidence-informed. Once a need or problem is identified and supported by evidence, and a program or project is developed, it is time to search for a prospective funder(s).

Assessing "funder fit" before approaching a funder is very important and can save a charity a lot of time and energy. It is common for charities to spend a lot of time and energy preparing a grant proposal only to find that they don't meet the funding criteria. It is important to research and understand a prospective funder before investing time and energy in preparing a grant proposal.

Researching and Understanding a Funder

Many funders have a website that outlines most of the information a charity needs to know. They can also be contacted by phone or email for additional information. By simply reading their funding criteria, a charity can learn if their proposed program or project idea is aligned with a funder's priorities and criteria. Funders have their own goals and expectations when they are considering how to allocate resources. It is crucial that a proposed program or project idea is perceived as important to your charity and the population served. It is equally important that a prospective funder is convinced that it is in their interest to fund your proposed program or project. One way of understanding a prospective funder is to examine:

1. The types of charities and programs/projects supported at the present and in the past
2. The stated goals, objectives, and geographic focus
3. The types of funding available (e.g. program/project, seed, capital, capacity building, core funding)
4. The range of funding available (e.g. less than \$5,000, \$5,000 to \$10,000 etc.)
5. The specific criteria for funding (e.g. restrictions on how funding should be used)
6. The nature of the application process, application deadline, and proposal format
7. The requirements for matching funding and recognition

Remember this! A grant proposal has a better chance of being funded if it meets the expressed criteria of a funder and is aligned with a charity's mission. Of the chief reasons many funders cite for declining a funding request, failure to meet funding criteria is the most common.

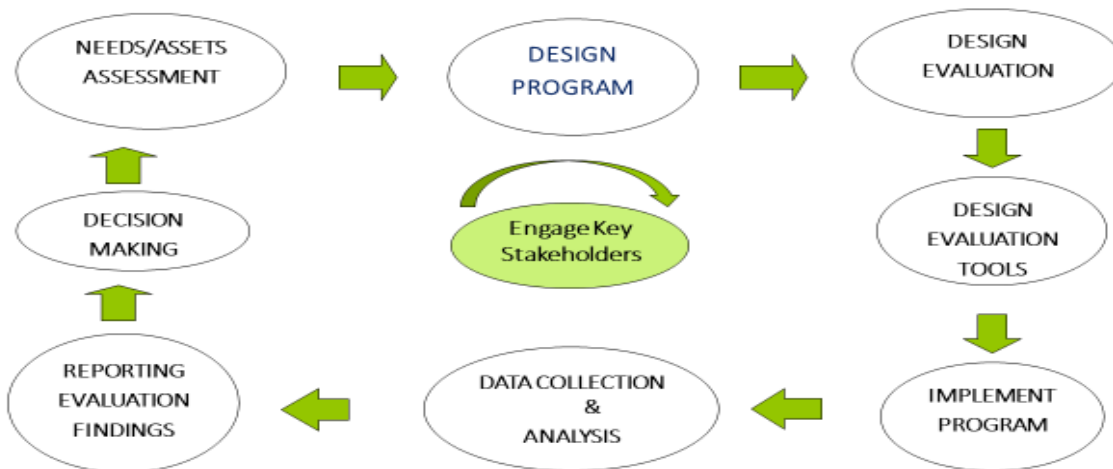
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WRITING THE GRANT PROPOSAL

Writing Grant Proposal

Once a charity has identified a need and found a suitable funder, then it is time to begin writing. Grant writing involves the use of technically sound planning, implementation, and evaluation of language to tell a compelling story. Essentially, grant writing is fifty percent art and fifty percent science. While different grant writers may tell a compelling story differently, the technical aspect needs to be logical and evidence based. Grant writing follows a planning and evaluation cycle. The questions most funders ask in their funding application mirrors the program planning cycle. The diagram below shows the planning and evaluation cycle which is also known as PDSA; Plan, Do, Study, Act.

Program Planning and Evaluation Cycle (PDSA)



Plan: refers to what a charity proposes to do.

Do: refers to implementation of a proposed program or project plan.

Study: refers to conducting evaluation and sharing results.

Act: refers to making decisions.

A charity that uses a planning and evaluation cycle is likely to write successful grants. Note that the cycle begins with needs and assets assessment followed by program and evaluation design, program implementation and reporting to stakeholders. Most funders want a grantee to tell them what the need or problem is; what a charity proposes to do to address the need; how a grantee will know if they have been successful in addressing the need; and how they plan to report the results.

Sections of a Grant Proposal

Most grant proposals can be divided into five sections that describe the:

1. Charity or agency
2. Need the charity or agency hopes to address
3. Existing community assets and how they can be used or leveraged in addressing the need
4. Program or project description (the “what and how” of the proposed program or project)
5. Monitoring and evaluation
6. Budget

Describing the Charity or Agency

This focuses on establishing a charity or agency’s credibility. It outlines a charity or agency’s:

1. History, vision, mission and values, achievements, qualification and experience of staff and commitment of volunteers
2. Operations and how they are aligned to its vision, mission, and values
3. Fiscal management and accountability to stakeholders
4. Scope of work and reach (i.e. services it provides and the populations it serves)
5. Ability to use existing community assets to address pressing urgent needs
6. Connection to the communities it serves

Example of Describing the Charity or Agency

Nakura Family Services has been serving parents/caregivers and their children (ages 0-6) who reside in our service catchment area since 1990. Over the years, our board, staff and volunteers have developed a collaborative working relationship with stakeholders, including the population we serve. This has helped us to become aware and proactive to respond to emerging issues, such as changes in the demographic makeup of our community and the challenges that come with that. For instance, we are aware of the transitory nature of the people we serve and a trend that more and more of the families we serve are forced to move to the outskirts of the city due to the skyrocketing rent in the downtown core. This has resulted in the expansion of our service catchment area and we have opened satellite offices in Mississauga, Markham, and Vaughan to respond the need of the population.

Our mission has evolved and the diversity of community partners we work with to address the needs of those we serve has also changed. We made a commitment to support low-income parents/caregivers and their children wherever they are. Our mission is to strengthen parents’/caregivers’ capacity to be able to take control of their family’s wellbeing. We have 15 full time and 20 part time staff from diverse cultural backgrounds with extensive experience and expertise in early childhood education and community development.

We are sought for our expertise in parenting programming and early childhood education by government and community partners. In the recently released report, Bridging the Gap in School Readiness, we were one of the key sources. We advised the authors of the report on how to meaningfully engage low-income families and include their voice in the report. Our board

members, staff, and volunteers reflect the communities we serve. The ultimate test of our mission is how we work with our community partners to strengthen the capacity of those we serve to take control of their family's wellbeing.

Describing the Need & Community Assets

This section describes a need that is negatively impacting a particular population or community, and the community assets that can be leveraged to address the need. When describing a need, it is important to connect the local to the global. For example, the problem newcomer families face is connected with global migration issues and government policies. In addition, simply describing a need and its impact on the target population or community is not sufficient. It needs to be supported by evidence from the charity's work, a needs assessment and/or secondary sources, such as needs assessments conducted by governments, academic institutions, community foundations or Statistics Canada. A review of the Vital Signs Report by Toronto Community Foundation is a good example of a secondary evidentiary source. Whereas conducting a series of focus groups or consultations with parents/caregivers and school personnel to find out why some children are not ready for school is a good example of a primary source of evidence.

Describing community assets is as important as describing the need, as the assets can be leveraged to address it.. Community assets can include the talents and resources a target population may possess and/or the strategic partnerships and infrastructure a community may have that can be utilized or leveraged in addressing a need or problem.

Describing the Need & Community Assets Example

Over the past decade the gap between rich and poor Canadian families has widened substantially. Many families are struggling to make ends meet and poverty remains a persistent reality. In Toronto, 36.8% of families live in poverty and this rate is even higher in low-income neighborhoods where many of the parents/caregivers we serve live. The impact of poverty is visible, particularly with low-income families' quality of life, including family stability and healthy development of children (Council Report, 2017).

We see the impact of persistent poverty on a daily basis. For example, poverty forces many of the parents/caregivers we serve to choose between caring for their children and putting food on the table. Many of them work 2-3 jobs to make ends meet. This leaves them with little to no time and energy to engage with their children in a positive manner. We also know that many of the parents/caregivers did not have opportunity to obtain education and it is thus difficult for them to help their children. Some of the parents/caregiver we serve come from war-torn countries. They have experienced trauma and struggle to care for their families and become a positive source of support. Others come from broken homes and have experienced neglect and abuse. One of the most serious consequences is the impact on family stability and healthy development of children. More specifically, this could lead to unhealthy relationships with their children and/or partner. In addition, due to parents'/caregivers' inability to support their children, many children lack the necessary skills to engage with other children and learn in school. Our consultation with the local

schools also indicated that there are many children who are not ready to learn when they start school.

What we have observed through our work and interaction with parents/caregivers is consistent with evidence from the field. A research study by Asmara University in 2015 found that children from low-income families are lagging behind in school readiness due to lack of positive support at home and lack of access to community supports. Further, a study by Weki School Board (2012) found that preschoolers from low-income families who did not have access to community resources scored low on measures of social, emotional, and cognitive skills. While we are aware that there are available community resources that families can access, many of them told us that they experienced social exclusion, racism and discrimination when they tried to access these community resources.

Despite the impact of poverty and other challenges, many of the parents/caregivers we serve are resourceful and have tremendous capacity for resilience. Many of them care deeply about the future of their children and have shown the willingness and determination to support them, especially when treated with respect and dignity. We recognize their assets and are committed to utilize these in tackling the challenges they face. That said, access to a safe and welcoming space where parents/caregivers and their children are engaged and supported is crucial. We are aware of the impact of poverty in destabilizing families and stunting their children's healthy development. More concretely, the evidence above shows that poverty creates unstable families. Unstable families may lack the capacity/opportunity to create a positive home environment for children. As the result, children fail to develop the necessary social, emotional, and cognitive skills to learn and succeed in school. Failure to address the consequences of poverty will have a far-reaching effect on children, their parents/caregivers, and the society at large. As the evidence suggests, enhancing parents'/caregivers' capacity to support their children and connecting them to supportive community resources can reduce the impact of poverty.

Describing the Program or Project

In this section, a charity describes its proposed solution or response to address the need. It outlines what the program or project intends to offer and how it will be offered. It also outlines why the proposed approach or strategy for program or project delivery is expected to be successful in addressing the need. Furthermore, this section describes the intended short and long-term outcomes a program or project is expected to achieve. Here, it is important to make a distinction between short and long-term outcomes. A program or project's short-term outcomes are those that can reasonably be achieved within the duration of the program, project or funding cycle. Whereas a program or project's long-term outcomes are difficult to measure within the period of a funding cycle. There are multiple contributing variables that make it difficult to directly measure the long term of impact of a program or project. A better way of describing a long-term outcome is to link it to a charity's mission. This can be done by demonstrating how the achievement of short-term outcome(s) contributes to the long-term outcome, which in turn contributes to a charity's mission.

Whether a funding request is for staffing or not, a clear description of the characteristics of the staff and/or volunteers tasked to implement and evaluate a proposed program or project should be included in the program or project description. This includes their qualifications, experience, roles and responsibilities, and demonstrate how and why these are essential for the successful implementation of the proposed program or project.

Example of Describing the Program or Project

In response, we are proposing to develop and implement a School Readiness Program. This program will engage parents/caregivers and their preschool children in a series of learning engagements. This includes parenting education workshops, interactive play, learn and bond activities, access to home visits from Certified Early Childhood Educators (ECE) and a mobile library to borrow reading, audio, and visual resources.

We start from the premise that meaningful engagement of parents/caregivers is crucial for their full and active participation. There are no quick fixes when it comes to addressing the consequences of poverty. Our work with parents/caregivers and their children is long term and we know that parenting and school readiness programs **that deployed a long-term engagement strategy have produced better outcomes for children (Bridging the Achievement Gap Task Force, 2015)**. We also believe that if we are going to meet the needs of parents/caregivers and their children, we need to work with them collaboratively. **For instance, in a School Readiness Program in Gua County, collaborative work with parents/caregivers was found to be effective in meeting their needs (Gua Town Crier, 2015)**.

Further, we know and recognize that parents/caregivers are the primary teachers of their children and they can use their knowledge to address the challenges they face (Nakura Family Services Evaluation Report, 2011). We believe that improving their parenting capacity can enhance their ability to support their children to develop the skills they need to be successful in school. A systematic review of School Readiness Programs shows that children who have positive home and community environments scored better in school readiness measures. They showed better social, emotional, and cognitive skills **(Bela et.al, 2015; Senu, 2013; Kusa, 2011)**.

The lessons from our programs with parents/caregivers and the evidence outlined above tells us that **we need to engage parents/caregivers and other stakeholders meaningfully**. We need to have a long-term strategy and provide comprehensive support in order to effectively empower parents/caregivers to play an important role in the healthy development of their children.

Staffing and Other Resources (Program Inputs)

In order to successfully implement the program, **we plan to hire two full-time Early Childhood Educators (ECEs)** and recruit/train five volunteers who will be responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of the School Readiness Program. In addition, our Programs and Strategic Partnerships Director will dedicate 10 hours per week to oversee the program and supervise the two Early Childhood Educators. **We are also in the process of establishing**

partnerships with Shiro Family Centre, Hazhaz Mobile Library, and Lomi Parents Group. Our partners will play an active role in shaping the planning, implementation, evaluation of the program, and will help the program to be grounded in the community. The staff and volunteers we plan to hire will be required to have a relevant educational background with extensive experience working with low-income parents/caregivers and children. They are expected to be well-versed in community development strategies and anti-oppressive practices, as these skills and approaches are crucial to engaging with low-income parents/caregiver and their children in empowering ways.

Program Strategies/Activities

The School Readiness Program will have three major components. 1) Parenting Education and Play, Learn, Bond Activities 2) Home Visiting 3) Access to a Mobile Library. We plan to offer the School Readiness Program over a period of 2 years and the primary target group will be low-income parents/caregivers and their children ages 2-4 years.

Parenting Education and Play, Learn, and Bond Engagement

This component of the program will focus on delivering a weekly 3-hour interactive parenting education workshops and child-centered playing, learning, and bonding activities. This component will cover the following major themes:

1. Recognizing parents/caregivers as equal partners and experts in identifying and addressing the needs of their children
2. Developing healthy family relationship skills including, positive perception/feeling for partner and children, win-win mentality and valuing interdependence, and collaborative conflict resolution/management skills
3. Cultivating assertive parenting styles, such as assertive communication with the child, including helping children to develop life skills and positive disciplining of children
4. Understanding the value of child's play in learning and forming a healthy relationship
5. Developing children's social, emotional, and cognitive skills

We recognize that the needs of individual parents/caregivers and their children may vary and while these are the major themes, the actual sessions will be tailored or customized to meet the needs of parents/caregivers and their children.

Home Visiting

This component will be delivered in partnership with Shiro Family Centre. Shiro Family Centre will assign home visitors, who are Certified Early Childhood Educators. They will conduct monthly home visits to observe how parents/caregivers are applying parenting skills they learned in the program at home. The home visits will also include discussions to affirm and strengthen parenting approaches parents/caregivers use; and offer assistance as parenting needs arise. After each home visit, our staff will meet with home visitors to debrief and make necessary adjustments or improvements.

Mobile Library Access

This component will be delivered in partnership with Hazhaz Mobile Library. The Mobile Library will provide weekly access to a variety of reading, audio and visual resources that parents/caregivers can borrow. The intention is to make access and selection of relevant resources easy and encourage parents/caregivers to read with and for their children.

Our plan is to deliver the three components in a coordinated and integrated manner. Active and frequent participation of parents/caregivers is essential in order to enjoy the intended benefits from the program. Our staff and volunteers will make a concerted effort to **remove barriers** and work with parents/caregivers to create a safe learning space for them and their children. We also recognize that parents/caregivers bring valuable parenting perspectives and can learn from each other and possibly, develop peer support.

Program Outputs

Over two years, we plan to achieve the following service targets:

- **Engage and serve up to 50 parents/caregivers and 80 preschoolers**
- **Provide up to 40 interactive parenting education and child-centered play, learning, and bonding activities**
- **Complete up to 80 home visits**
- **Organize weekly access to reading, audio, and visual resources through Hazhaz Mobile Library (each parent/caregiver borrows at least one reading or audio or visual resource weekly)**
- **Recruit and train 5 volunteers**
- Establish and maintain a partnership with Shiro Family Centre, Hazhaz Mobile Library, and Lomi Parents Group and sign partnership agreement

Short-term Outcomes (within 2 years)

1. Parents/caregivers enhance their parenting capacity
2. Parents/caregivers develop healthy relationships with their children and partners
3. Preschoolers improve their social, emotional, and cognitive skills

Long-term Outcomes or Impact (within 3 years and beyond)

1. Strengthen family stability
2. Preschoolers are ready for school and thrive in school

Program Logic Model

Some funders may request a program logic model to be submitted along with a grant proposal. **A program logic model is a visual illustration of a program's inputs, strategies/activities and expected outcomes and the relationship between them.** A program logic model should align with the description of the proposed program or project. A strong program logic model shows the underlying theory of change. It articulates how and why a School Readiness Program for instance, is expected to work, by pointing to causal assumptions or evidences. For example, if an underlying theory suggests that improving knowledge of child development stages leads to improved

parenting skills, a logic model shows the assumption or evidence for that theory. As well, a good program logic model can serve as a foundation for developing a clear evaluation plan, which is essential for assessing a program or project's effectiveness. See an example of a logic model based on the School Readiness Program in [Appendix A](#).

Work Plan

Some funders ask a grantee to submit a work plan. A work plan shows in some detail the work that needs to be done and its flow. It demonstrates how a nonprofit or charity intends to achieve the specific tasks and targets over the life of the program or project or funding period. It also specifies a mechanism for accountability. A work plan is usually prepared in a table format. See work plan example in [Appendix B](#).

Program or Project Sustainability

It is important to assure a prospective funder that there is a sustainability plan. This is related to mission-directed planning discussed earlier. Most funders want to know that their grant will have a long-term impact. They want to know how a charity plans to continue the work beyond the funding period. A charity can demonstrate its sustainability plan by sharing:

- [A specific plan for raising dollars or in-kind contributions](#)
- [Introduction of nominal service fees](#)
- [Developing a strategic fundraising plan with targets](#)
- [Strengthening the capacity of volunteers](#)

[Such sustainability plans are likely to convince a prospective funder that their support will have a long-term impact.](#)

Program or Project Sustainability Example

The School Readiness Program aligns with our mission and sustaining it is one of our strategic focus. One of the objectives of our strategic plan is to increase the resources we need to advance our mission. We have been able to hire a part-time fundraiser with funding received from Funi Foundation. The staff is working closely with one of our board committees to develop and implement a resource development strategy. This strategy will help us to increase the resources we need through ongoing fundraising efforts and targeted responses to governments and community foundations grant opportunities. This will help us to continue the School Readiness Program beyond the funding period.

Describing the Monitoring and Evaluation

Before describing the monitoring and evaluation section, it is important to understand why program evaluation is important. [First, and perhaps most importantly, is to facilitate program improvement. Program evaluation gives a charity critical feedback about what is and what is not working and what needs to be done to improve a program or project.](#) The second, perhaps related to the first, is to generate and deepen knowledge. Learning what works, for whom, and why contributes to the development of best practices that can be shared with funders or more broadly

with the charitable sector. The third reason is to ensure accountability to stakeholders, which includes the funder.

Funders are interested to know if a program or project they have supported has made a difference, as its success is expected to contribute to the funder's stated goals. Program evaluation can be divided into formative and summative evaluations. The key difference between formative and summative evaluation is how the evaluation data is used. Data collected from formative evaluation is used primarily to improve a program or project, whereas data collected in summative evaluation is used to make judgement about the effectiveness of a program or project and make decisions (e.g. continue, replicate, or terminate a program or project).

Formative evaluation consists of monitoring and process evaluations and focuses on program implementation rather than outcome. For instance, monitoring evaluation assesses whether a program or project:

- Deployed resources appropriately
- Served the intended target group or population
- Delivered the services it promised.

Whereas, process evaluation assesses the extent to which:

- The program or project was implemented as envisioned
- The program or project met quality standards
- Participants are satisfied with their experience.

Summative evaluation on the other hand, consists of outcome and impact evaluation. It assesses a program's or project's effectiveness or efficacy in addressing the needs. For instance, outcome evaluation assesses the extent to which:

- The program or project has effectively addressed the need
- The program or project has improved participants' knowledge, behavior, attitude, skill, status
- The program or project has expanded its services through effective partnership

Whereas, impact evaluation assesses the extent to which:

- The program or project has contributed towards a broader community or social change or improvement
- The program or project has contributed towards best community practices

The monitoring & evaluation section of a grant application describes how a charity plans to evaluate a proposed program or project. It can be written in a narrative or table format. See the table format in Appendix C. This section includes the following:

1. The goal(s) of evaluation
2. The types of data to be collected and data sources

3. The method(s) of data collection
4. The timeline for data collection and analysis
5. The staff person(s) responsible for data collection, analysis, and reporting
6. The audience and to whom evaluation findings will be reported

Finally, to clearly describe the monitoring & evaluation section, evaluation capacity is necessary. It is important for a charity to determine from the outset if it is going to use its staff or hire an external evaluator to assist with evaluation planning and implementation. While it is more beneficial to develop internal capacity to conduct program or project evaluation, it may be necessary to hire outside expertise in the absence of internal capacity. Some funders do allow grantees to budget 5-10 percent of the total funding request for evaluation. Charities should also consider forging collaborative partnerships with academic institutions to assist them with evaluation to develop internal evaluation capacity in the long run.

Describing the Monitoring & Evaluation Example

The monitoring and evaluation section can be written in a narrative or table format. Based on the School Readiness Program described above, an example of a narrative format is provided below:

We plan to conduct periodic evaluations to assess the overall success of the School Readiness Program. Our first goal of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the School Readiness Program is serving the intended target group, meeting service targets, and delivering the services promised. We will collect data on:

- The number of parents/caregivers and preschoolers served (our target is 50 parents/caregivers and 80 preschoolers)
- The number and type of services delivered (up to 40 interactive parenting education and child-centered play, learn, and bond session of 3 hours each and 80 home visits)
- The number of weekly access to mobile library organized and the number and type of reading, audio, visual resources borrowed/used).

We will use program records, such as intake forms, attendance, and activity tracking sheets to collect the above data on a weekly basis. Our two ECE staff and volunteers will be responsible for data collection, analysis, and reporting to supervisor, the board, and funders as needed.

Our second goal of evaluation is to assess the extent to which the School Readiness Program is delivering quality service, and that parents/caregivers are satisfied with their experience in the program. We will collect data on:

- The level of service quality (i.e. service meets quality standard)
- Rate of satisfaction among parents/caregivers (i.e. staff/volunteers are knowledgeable & responsive, non-judgmental & respectful, safe learning environment, interactive

educational activities, ample opportunity to interact with other participants; opportunity to apply learnings in and outside the program; easy access to mobile library resources)

- The process and quality of volunteer recruitment and training
- The number of partnerships established and maintained (i.e. partnerships with Shiro Family Centre, Hazhaz Mobile Library, and Lomi Parents Group and sign partnership agreement).

We will use a survey questionnaire and staff observation to collect data on a quarterly basis from participants and staff. Our two ECE staff and volunteers will be responsible for data collection, analysis and reporting to supervisor, the board and funders as needed.

Our third goal of evaluation is to assess the extent to which the School Readiness Program has effectively addressed the need (i.e. achieved the intended short-term outcomes). We will collect data on:

- Parenting capacity (i.e. parenting confidence, knowledge and use of available supports and services; awareness of the importance of literacy for self and child; presence of supportive social networks; knowledge of and practice in parent-child interaction, children's nutritional needs, age appropriate activities for children, ages and stages of development)
- Quality of family relationship (i.e. attachment with child, caring, kind, accepting, empathic relationship)
- Preschoolers' level of social, emotional, and cognitive skills (i.e. ability to get along with other children, exhibition of positive play, ability to express feeling & healthy attachment with parent/caregiver, literacy and numeracy skills).

We will use survey questionnaires and staff observations to collect data once a year from participants and staff. Our two ECE staff and volunteers will be responsible for data collection, analysis and reporting to supervisor, the board, and funders as needed.

Our fourth and final goal of evaluation is to assess the extent to which the School Readiness Program has contributed towards family stability and school readiness. We will collect data on:

- Family stability (i.e. healthy relationship with child and partner)
- Preschoolers' school readiness (i.e. children's readiness, ability to thrive in school, overall wellbeing in school).

We will use the interview guide to collect data three years after the start of the program from participants, our staff and school personnel. Our two ECE staff and our Programs and Strategic Partnership Director will be responsible for data collection, analysis and reporting to the board, funders and the community at large.

Data Collection Tool(s)

Although most funders do not ask grantees to submit a data collection method as part of their evaluation plan, developing one and submitting it along with your grant proposal shows that your charity is well prepared. The most commonly used data collection methods are survey questionnaires, interviews, focus group guides, and direct observation. A good data collection method should:

- Be written simply and should help you collect the type of data identified in your evaluation plan
- Be sensitive to potential barriers related to literacy, access to technology, or other barriers participants may have.

See an example of a survey questionnaire and an interview guide based on the School Readiness Program in Appendix D.

Budget

The budget section of a grant application can be difficult. The most important thing to remember is that your budget needs to align with the narrative of your grant. If numbers are not your strong suit, it is important to consult with a financial professional. The budget should be presented in a manner that will leave a good impression on a prospective funder. The story you told in the various sections of your grant must match with the numbers in your budget.

Some funders have their own guidelines on how the budget section should be prepared and may provide you a budget template with the required categories. Make sure that the budget costs are reasonable and are allowed. For instance, if a prospective funder does not allow a purchase of equipment, do not allocate an amount for equipment from the funding you are requesting. To summarize, here are the key things to remember when preparing the budget section:

- Use appropriate budget template
- Align your numbers correctly
- Check your numbers for accuracy and round off the numbers to make it easier to read
- Be sure to have a revenue and expense sections with categories, and budget notes to explain some budget items

See an example of a simply prepared budget based on the School Readiness Program in Appendix E.

3

REPORTING TO FUNDERS

Reporting

Reporting to funders can be perceived by some as a burden. However, it is more than fulfilling a requirement. It is an opportunity to demonstrate a charity's credibility and accountability. Quality reporting can help with future grant opportunities from the same funder or other funders. Some funders may require periodic reporting, but most expect a report at the end of the funding period. With respect to reporting format, some funders may require a formal evaluation report. Some others may require a synopsis or a brief summary of what was learned from the implementation of the funded program or project. Few others may have their own reporting template and may require a charity to report on:

- The number of individuals or families served
- The number and type of services delivered
- The number and percentage of clients who have benefited from a funded program or project
- The broader impact of the funded program or project

Regardless of the reporting format a prospective funder requires, a charity must conduct evaluation in order to credibly and effectively meet the reporting requirement from funders and other stakeholders. By conducting monitoring, process, and outcome evaluation, a charity will be able to generate a comprehensive report and submit it to a funder, or extract the required data from the report and upload it into a funder's reporting template or a database.

Multiple Reporting

Some charities are funded by multiple funders and the reporting requirement may pose a challenge for some. However, there is commonalty among funders with respect to program reporting. Most funders want to know the following:

1. Whether the planned activities or services were delivered as planned and if there were changes, they want explanation
2. Most funders value partnership and want to see that a charity is making the most out of their investment. If a charity delivered the planned activities or services in partnership with others and how the partnership was leveraged; and how it contributed to successful service delivery
3. Whether the proposed program or project has made a difference in the lives or conditions of those served
4. The lessons a charity learned from the implementation of the program or project, including what did not work and the plan to do better next time

Therefore, by conducting evaluation, a charity will be able to meet the reporting requirement of multiple funders.

Beyond Accountability

In addition to fulfilling a reporting requirement, conducting program evaluation helps a charity to contextualize the results with participants' need. Qualitative data, such as direct quotations or stories, add depth and meaning to reporting. While reporting is about showcasing a charity's success, reporting should also include:

- What did not work
- The lessons learned along the way
- What will be done differently in the future

When a charity approaches a funder with a proposed solution to a particular need or problem, more often than not it is testing an assumption. Most funders are beginning to understand that one of the ways to maximize impact is to test assumptions and see what works and how it can be scaled up. As well, most funders understand that when a program or project fails or partially succeeds, important lessons are learned. Therefore, the purpose of reporting lessons learned is to support the future success of a charity and to help other charities benefit from the knowledge generated. To paraphrase Mark Friedman, evaluation helps a charity to report on what it did well, what it did not do well, and what it will do to get better.

Finally, a charity should be candid and transparent with its reporting. Most funders understand social and community change is challenging, but it is by constant reflection and learning that the lessons learned can be applied and sustainability is ensured. See a reporting example based on the School Readiness Program in Appendix F.

Glossary of Terms

Capacity Building: Refers to a variety of efforts a nonprofit organization may undertake to strengthen its operations including evaluation, technology, financial management, human resources, fundraising, advocacy, communications, governance, leadership development, volunteer recruitment and development.

Capacity Building Funding: Refers to the funding provided to support a nonprofit or charity's need to build its management systems and programs. By improving its systems and operations, a nonprofit or charity strengthens its ability to serve its target population.

Capital Funding: Refers to the funding provided to support the purchase or renovation of buildings or land, or the purchase of vehicles, computers and computer systems, and other equipment.

Core Funding: Refers to the funding that covers the "core" organizational and administrative costs of a nonprofit or charity, including salaries of staff, rent, equipment, utilities, and communications. Core funding is generally understood as funding that covers expenses required to keep the nonprofit or charity functioning.

Formative Evaluation: Refers to the monitoring and process evaluations that focus more on program process and implementation than on outcomes.

Impact Evaluation: Refers to the evaluations that assess the changes or improvements attributed to a particular program, or that assess a program's contribution to a broader change or improvement. Impact evaluation can assess both the intended and unintended changes or improvements.

Needs Assessment: Refers to a systematic appraisal to address the nature and scope of a social or health problem that a program may intend to address.

Population: Refers to a larger, more inclusive list of participants that attended or used a program.

Process Evaluation: Refers to an evaluation that determines how a program is being implemented and how it is being experienced by those that attend the program.

Program: Refers to a strategy or a set of activities or services planned for a group of people to achieve a desired outcome.

Need Statement: Refers to the major conditions or reasons that prompt a nonprofit or charity to develop a program or service. For example, increasing number of families particularly those who are new to Canada have limited or no ability to advocate for their children.

Program Activities: Refers to what the program does with its inputs to achieve intended outcomes. For example, providing mental health or family counseling or therapy, parenting classes, mental health promotion classes, or single session therapy.

Program Evaluation: Refers to the use of research methods to assess the planning, implementation, and outcomes of a social or health or educational program.

Program Funding: Refers to funding provided for a limited period of time to design program deliverables and achieve desired results or outcomes. The use of the funding is restricted as per the terms of the funding agreement

Program Goals: Refers to the broad outcomes the program hopes to achieve that will need to be measured in an evaluation.

Program Impact: Refers to the cumulative effect that accrues from the achievement of outcomes for individuals, families and communities. For example, improved family stability or children becoming ready for school or thriving in school.

Program Inputs: Refers to the amount of resources committed to or used to implement or operate a program. For example, number and types of staff, volunteers, partnerships, program space, equipment, and supplies.

Program Logic Model: Refers to a schematic representation that describes how a program is intended to work by linking activities with outputs, immediate outcomes and longer-term outcomes or impacts. It also aims to show the intended causal links for a program.

Program Outcomes: Refers to the benefits to program participants as the result of program activities. For example, improved parenting capacity or improved social, emotional, and cognitive skills.

Program Outputs: Refers to the direct products of a program's activities, usually measured in terms of work accomplished or units produced, and clients served. For example, number and types of parenting education sessions or classes offered, number of parents/caregivers and preschoolers served.

Program Rationale or Assumption: Refers to the beliefs or theories we have about people affected by a problem or need and why we think or believe a program we are proposing will address it. For example, research shows that timely access to community-based mental health resources improves children's' mental health and their ability to function at home, school and in their community.

Seed Funding: Refers to a short-term funding provided to test new ideas or strategies and collect preliminary data to apply for a longer-term funding

Stakeholders: Refers to parties that have an interest in the development of a particular program including frontline and management staff, the board, program participants, funders, the community, and the public.

Summative Evaluation: Refers to a goal or outcome-oriented evaluation that focuses on program outcomes then program process or implementation. It determines the efficacy of a program in achieving its stated or desired outcomes.

Target Population: Refers to the potential clients and clients who are thought to benefit most from a program.

Theory of Change: Refers to a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen by mapping out what a program does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved. Theory of change first identifies the desired long-term outcomes and then works back to identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place (and how these related to one another causally) for the outcomes to occur.

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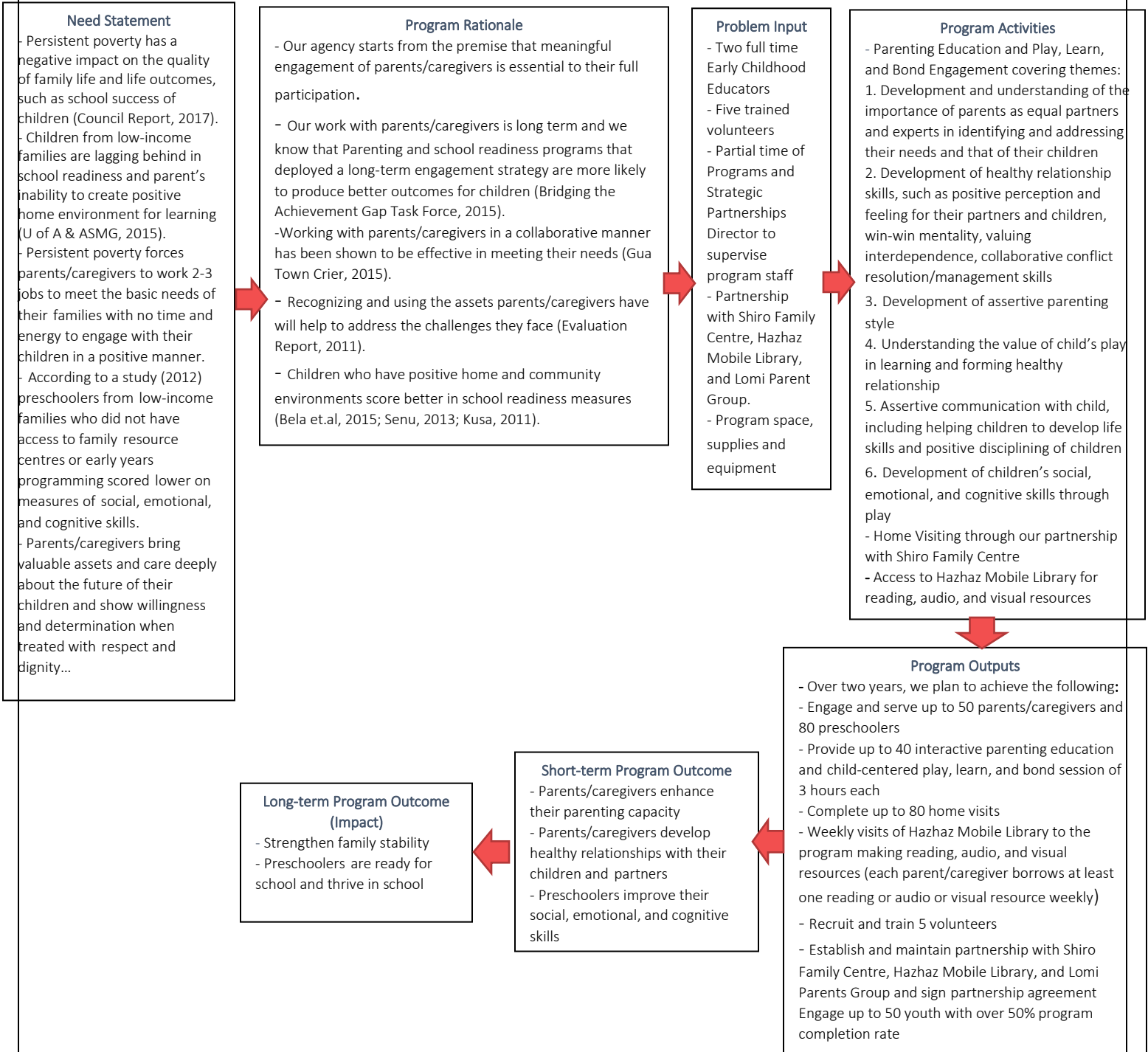
www.nwliteracy.ca

www.socialsolutions.com

Appendices

Appendix A

Program Logic Model Example



Appendix B

Work Plan Example

January 2019 to December 2020					
Project/program Activities	Timelines	Staff Responsible	Accountability to Staff	Persons to be Communicated	Persons to be Informed
<u>I. Outreach and Orientation</u>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare outreach materials (i.e. flyers, brochure, social media) and distribute Connect with identified community partners; firm up their contribution to program/project implementation; sign partnership agreement and schedule planning meetings Book venue, purchase or firm up in-kind support for supplies and equipment need for program implementation Document, communicate, and resolve challenges that emerged during outreach and orientation 	Jan – Mar 2019	2 ECE Staff & 5 Volunteers	Programs and Strategic Partnerships Director	Staff Identified by Partner Agencies	Executive Director
	Jan – Feb 2019				
	Jan 2019				
	Jan – Mar 2019				
<u>II. Finalizing Program/Project Implementation Plan</u>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and finalize training materials in consultation with partner agencies Recruit, train, and orient volunteers Present program/project plan to community partners and seek feedback Present the purpose of the program/project to participants during in-take to ensure goal alignment and seek feedback Finalize data collection tools for monitoring, process, outcome, and impact evaluation Document, communicate, and resolve challenges that emerged during finalizing program/project implementation plan 	Jan – April 2019	2 ECE Staff	Programs and Strategic Partnerships Director	Staff Identified by Partner Agencies	Executive Director
	Jan – April 2019	2 ECE Staff			
	Mar 2019	2 ECE Staff			
	April 2019	2 ECE Staff & 5 Volunteers			
	April 2019	2 ECE Staff			

	Jan – April 2019	2 ECE Staff & 5 Volunteers			
III. Program/Project Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver planned activities (e.g. parenting workshops, play, learn, and bond, conduct home visits and provide access to mobile library services) Conduct parenting workshop and play, learn and bond evaluation, monitor parents/caregivers' experience after home visits and access to mobile library; and conduct debrief meetings with home visitors. Analyze data collected, present findings, and make adjustments/improvement based on monitoring and process evaluation findings Document, communicate, and resolve challenges that emerged during program/project implementation 	May 2019 – Sept 2020	2 ECE Staff & 5 Volunteers	Programs and Strategic Partnerships Director	Staff Identified by Partner Agencies	Executive Director
	Aug, Nov 2019 & Feb, May 2020	2 ECE Staff & 5 Volunteers			
	Dec 2019 & June 2020	2 ECE Staff & 5 Volunteers			
	May 2019 – Aug 2020	2 ECE Staff	Grant Officer		
IV. Mid and Final Program/Project Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize data collection tools for outcome evaluation Conduct mid and final program/project evaluation Analyze data collected, present findings to internal and external stakeholders (e.g. program team, participants, agency board, funders etc.) Document, communicate, and resolve challenges that emerged during mid and final program/project evaluation Document and communicate key lessons learned with internal and external stakeholders 	Mar, Aug 2020	2 ECE Staff	Programs and Strategic Partnerships Director	Staff Identified by Partner Agencies	Executive Director
	April, Oct 2020	2 ECE Staff & 5 Volunteers			
	May, Nov 2020	2 ECE Staff & 5 Volunteers	Grant Officer		
	Mar – Nov 2020	2 ECE Staff			

	Mar – Nov 2020				
V. Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify reporting requirements to various stakeholders Gather information necessary for reporting regularly Prepare, finalize, and submit reports to various stakeholders in a timely manner Document, communicate, and resolve challenges emerged during reporting 	Jan – Feb 2019 Jan'19 – Sep'20 Sept, Dec 2019 Mar, June, Dec 2020 Sept 2019 – Dec 2020	2 ECE Staff 2 ECE Staff 2 ECE Staff & 5 Volunteers 2 ECE Staff & 5 Volunteers	Programs and Strategic Partnerships Director Grant Officer	Staff Identified by Partner Agencies	Executive Director

Appendix C

Monitoring & Evaluation in a table format

Evaluation Goal	Type of data to be collected	Data Sources	Method of Data Collection	Timeline for Data Collection & Analysis	Staff Responsible for Collection & Analysis	Reporting to Stakeholders
The extent to which the program is: 1. Serving the intended target group 2. Meeting service target 3. Delivering the services promised	- # of parents/caregiver and preschoolers engaged/served (i.e. 50 parents/caregivers and 80 preschoolers) - # and type of services provided (i.e. up to 40 interactive parenting education and child-centered play, learn, and bond session of 3 hours each, 80 home visits) - # of weekly visits of Hazhaz Mobile Library to the program; and # & type of resources borrowed/used	ECE staff and volunteers	Program records	Weekly	ECE staff and volunteers	Programs & Strategic Partnership Director The Board Funders
The extent to which the program has: 1. Delivered all activities as planned (i.e. high-quality service, volunteers recruited/trained, partnerships	- Level of service quality (i.e. service meets our charity's service delivery standard) - Rate of satisfaction among parents/caregivers (i.e. knowledgeable & responsive staff/volunteers, non-judgmental & respectful learning environment, interactive educational activities, ample	Program & Strategic Partnership Director Parents/caregivers	Service Quality Checklist Survey Questionnaire	Quarterly	ECE staff and volunteers	Programs & Strategic Partnership Director The Board

<p>established, and parents/caregivers are satisfied with their experience in the program)</p>	<p>opportunity to interact with other participants; opportunity to apply learnings in and outside the program; easy access to mobile library resources)</p> <p>- # of volunteers recruited and trained (i.e. 5 volunteers)</p> <p>- # of partnerships established and maintained (i.e. partnerships with Shiro Family Centre, Hazhaz Mobile Library, and Lomi Parents Group and sign partnership agreement)</p>	<p>ECE staff and volunteers</p>				<p>Funders</p>
<p>The extent to which the program has:</p> <p>1. Effectively addressed the need (i.e. achieved the intended short-term outcomes)</p>	<p>- Level of parenting capacity (i.e. parenting confidence, knowledge and use of available supports and services; awareness of the importance of literacy for self and child; presence of supportive social networks; knowledge of and practice in parent-child interaction, children's nutritional needs, age appropriate activities for children, ages and stages of development)</p> <p>- Quality of relationship with children & partner (i.e. attachment with child, caring, kind, accepting, empathic relationship)</p> <p>- Level of social, emotional, and cognitive skills (i.e. ability to get along with other children, exhibit positive play, ability to express feeling & healthy attachment with parent/caregiver, literacy and numeracy skills)</p>	<p>Parents/caregivers</p> <p>ECE & partner agencies' staff</p>	<p>Survey Questionnaire</p> <p>Debrief notes</p>	<p>Once a year</p>	<p>ECE staff and volunteers</p>	<p>Programs & Strategic Partnership Director</p> <p>The Board</p> <p>Funders</p>
<p>The extent to which the program has:</p> <p>1. Contributed towards family stability and school readiness</p>	<p>- Family stability (i.e. healthy relationship with child and partner)</p> <p>- Level of preschools' school readiness (i.e. children's readiness, ability to thrive in school, overall wellbeing in school)</p>	<p>Parents/caregivers</p> <p>ECE & partner agencies' staff</p>	<p>Interview guide</p>	<p>Three years after the start of program</p>	<p>ECE staff and Program & Strategic Partnership Director</p>	<p>The Board</p> <p>Funders</p>

Appendix D

- Through social media
- Through friends
- Through program staff
- Other (list) _____

8. Program activities or services attended (check all that applies)

- Parenting Education
- Home Visits
- Mobile Library

II. Experience in the Program

1. Please tell us the extent to which you agree with the following statements (if you are unsure or don't have enough information, skip the question):

Experience in the program	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Program staff/volunteers seem knowledgeable					
Program staff/volunteers understood my need and/or my child's need					
Those who facilitated the parenting education sessions were responsive to my need					
Home visitors were responsive to my need and/or my child(ren)					
When I needed support, it was provided in a timely manner					
I felt safe/respected in the program					
It was easy to access the mobile library service					
I borrowed the resources my child(ren) needed from the mobile library					
The parenting education sessions were highly interactive					
I was given time/opportunity to interact with other parents/caregivers					
I was given opportunity to apply what I learned in and/or outside the program					
I would recommend the program to a parent/caregiver in similar situation					

2. Please tell us the extent to which you are satisfied with your participation in the program:

Overall satisfaction	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
My overall satisfaction with the program is					

3. Please provide comments to explain the rating of your experience and level of satisfaction.

Survey Questionnaire Example 2

By completing this questionnaire, you will be helping us to understand the extent to which your participation in the School Readiness Program has benefited you and your child(ren). Your responses will inform the decisions we make about how the program can be sustained moving forward. Please be candid with your feedback. Your responses will be kept confidential. It will take you about **30 minutes** to complete this questionnaire. Thank you for your time and feedback.

1. Please tell us the extent to which you agree with the following statements (if you are unsure or don't have enough information, skip the question):

As the result of participating in the School Readiness Program...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I understand child development stages					
I am able to recognize appropriate behaviors of children in relation to their development					
I am using parenting skills I learned to cope in stressful situations					
I am able to cope with children's stressful behaviors					
I use appropriate disciplining techniques					
My child/children benefited from reading resources I borrowed from the mobile library					
I noticed improvement in my child's ability to recognize colors, numbers, alphabets					
My child/children played well with other children					

2. Please provide comments or examples of how you have benefited or have not benefited from participating in the program.

Interview Guide Example

By participating in this interview, you will be helping us to understand the extent to which your participation in the School Readiness Program contributed to your family's stability and your child's or children's readiness for school and their ability to thrive in school. Your feedback and the lessons learned will be shared with community stakeholders. Your feedback will be kept confidential. No specific comment(s) will be attributed to individuals without their permission.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (1 minute)

- Thank you for making the time to participate
- Thank for your time and sharing your feedback

DISCLOSURE (2 minutes)

- No names will be used in the report
- We are interested not in "who said what" but "what was said"
- We have about 60 minutes to talk

1. In what ways if any, has participating in the School Readiness Program helped with stability in your family?

Probe:

Can you give some examples?

2. After completing the program, did you continue to use what you learned in the program? If yes, what skills did you continue to use? If no, why?
 Probe:
 Can you provide some examples?

3. What is your relationship like with your child(ren) and your partner? In what ways if any, Probe:
 Can you think of any examples?

4. In what ways if any, did participation in the program help your child(ren) become ready for school?
 Probe:
 What did you see in your child(ren) that told you they were ready when they started school?
 Probe:
 Can you give some examples?

5. Overall, how is/are your child(ren) doing in school?
 Probe:
 What did you see that indicated to you they are doing well or not doing well?

CLOSING (1 Minute)

Is there anything you would like to add before we end this interview?

**Appendix E
 Budget Example**

Expenses		January 2019 – December 2020
Staffing		\$
2 ECE Staff ¹		104,000
5 Volunteers ² (In-kind contribution)		72,000
1 Program & Strategic Partnership ³ (In-kind contribution)		42,640
Staffing from Shiro Family Centre (home visitors)		4,000
Staffing from Hazhaz Mobile Library		3,600
Total staffing		226,240

¹ Annual salary of \$26,000 for each ECE staff x 2 ECE staff x 2 years + benefits = \$104,000

² \$16/hour x 5 volunteers x 5 hours/week x 90 weeks = \$72,000

³ 28% of program & strategic partnership director's salary to supervise program staff over 2 years = \$152,000x0.28 = \$42,640

Other Expenses	
Space rentals/utilities ⁴ (in-kind contribution by partner agency)	10,400
Equipment rental & Supplies	1,200
Transportation ⁵	10,400
Promotion/Marketing	800
Printing	400
Refreshments	6,240
Total Other Expenses	39,840
Total Expenses	255,680
Revenue/Income	
EIG	25,000
Requested from Funi Foundation (Conditional)	35,000
Ontario grants (Pending)	35,000
Teku Foundation (Pending)	26,000
In-kind contribution ⁶	135,440
Total Revenue/Income	256,440
Projected Surplus/(Deficit)	760

⁴ Space rental provided by partner agency at \$50/hour x 2 hours/week x 104 weeks = \$10,400

⁵ TTC at \$3.25 x 2 (round trip) x 50 parents/caregivers x 104 weeks = \$10,400

⁶ In-kind contribution from space rental + contribution from 5 volunteers + 28% of Program & strategic partnership director's salary = \$135,440

Appendix F

Reporting Example

Using the School Readiness Program, the reporting example below illustrates how reporting data is generated from evaluation. In this example, quantitative and qualitative data collected at various stages of the evaluation process is used to prepare the report. The evaluation addresses the evaluation questions identified in the evaluation plan (see Evaluation Plan Example). The evaluation assesses the extent to which the School Readiness Program has:

1. Served the intended target group and delivered the services it promised
2. Engaged participants effectively and delivered high quality service
3. Enhanced parents'/caregivers' parenting capacity and preschoolers' social, emotional, and cognitive skills
4. Contributed to family stability and preschoolers' school readiness and success

Evaluation Process

As proposed, the School Readiness Program served a total of 50 parents/caregivers and 80 children ages 2-4 years. Forty parents/caregivers with at least 75% attendance rate were selected to participate in the evaluation. A total of 30 participants completed a survey questionnaire and their responses (both quantitative and qualitative) are organized below:

Collated Responses (Experience in the Program)

1. Please tell us to what extent you agree with the following statements about:

Your experience in the program... N=30	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Program staff/volunteers seem knowledgeable	2	3	8	10	7
Program staff/volunteers understood my need and/or my child's need	5	5	2	12	6
Those who facilitated the parenting education sessions were responsive to my need	5	5	2	12	6
Home visitors were responsive to my need and/or my child(ren)	6	7	2	10	5
When I needed support, it was provided in a timely manner	2	4	7	12	5
I felt safe/respected in the program	6	7	2	10	5
It was easy to access the mobile library service	2	4	7	12	5
I borrowed the resources my child(ren) needed from the mobile library	2	4	4	12	8
The parenting education sessions were highly interactive	2	4	7	12	5
I was given time/opportunity to interact with other participants	1	2	1	16	10
I was given opportunity to apply what I learned in and/or outside the program	2	4	4	11	9
I would recommend the program to a parent/caregiver in similar situation	3	2	6	10	9

2. Please tell us to what extent you are satisfied with your experience in the program.

Your overall experience in the program... N=30	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
The overall experience in the program	7	10	7	4	2

Collated Responses (Program Outcomes)

1. Please tell us to what extent you agree with the following statements about

As the result of participating in the School Readiness Program... N=30	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have a better understanding of child development stages	2	3	9	10	6
I am able to recognize appropriate behaviors of children in relation to their development	3	4	8	11	4
I am using parenting skills I learned to cope in stressful situations	4	6	5	9	6
I am able to cope with children's stressful behaviors	1	2	2	18	7
I use appropriate disciplining techniques	4	5	9	8	4
My child/children benefited from reading resources I borrowed from the mobile library	1	1	2	16	10
I noticed improvement in my child's ability to recognize colors, numbers, alphabets	2	5	6	11	6
My child/children played well with other children	3	4	5	11	7

Summary of Qualitative Responses

I felt that the program has helped me understand the different stages of child development and the behaviors children show in relation to their development stage. I found the staff to be respectful and I felt that I could ask them anything. Particularly the one ... I forget her name [gives description] really made me feel good about myself and I feel like I can trust her with the stuff I am going through. I think meeting other parents who are going through similar struggles was helpful for me. I learned a lot from other parents. I developed friendship with one parent and we talk a lot on the phone and sometimes we take our kids to the park together.

I think the discussion on parenting styles was very helpful because I did not know about it before. I did not understand the developmental stages discussion very well. When the speakers gave some examples, I couldn't relate to my experience as a new parent. One of the speakers, tall with a short blond hair, spoke very fast and did not understand the big words she used. I think the speakers were ok, but I am not sure if they understood why I was there. I don't think they [the speakers] had any clue about the things I am dealing with and the other moms. Sometimes, it feels like they [the staff] are speaking with children. I did not feel comfortable talking to them [staff]. But I found the resources from the mobile library very helpful for me and my child. I really like it.

I don't think the program helped me or my children. I have too many things to worry about, but I had to come to the program because I have to do what I have to do. What the speakers were talking about went over my head. It was hard for me to concentrate. The home visit was ok. They keep sending me different visitors for the first few weeks, it was frustrating. Then this worker, I forget her name – we really started to make progress. She seems to understand and tried hard to work with me. My children loved her. But then, another worker came and she was the opposite. She did not seem comfortable to come to my apartment. I felt judged – she did not say anything bad to me, but the way she interacted with me and my children tell me that she did not want to be there. One thing I can say I really enjoyed was meeting people from diverse cultural backgrounds and it is interesting to talk about different things.

I liked the program because it fills up my time and I have something to go to every Tuesday morning. It gives me a reason to get out of the house. It was interesting to listen to the speakers talk. I tried to understand, but it is hard for me to remember everything. I met one parent and she speak my language. Sometimes I sit with her and she explains – she understands. I am happy because I can speak with her and we talk on the phone. I am happy.

I also think that the personal connections I made in this program have helped me to cope better. The openness of staff to discuss issues related to my day to day parenting challenges was very helpful. I really think that the parenting tips and styles were very helpful – helped me to make changes to how I discipline my kids and manage and understand their behavior. The mobile library was also very helpful – I do access reading resources from the local library, but I found the resources from the mobile library to be relevant to my need and my children's needs. I found the staff to be very respectful and went above and beyond to help participants. I also enjoyed working with the home visitor, Fawzia. She was very knowledgeable and very respectful. The way she explained things and the way she spoke with my children was very pleasant. It seemed very natural. I looked forward to her visit.

The program provided the opportunity to meet other parents who are in similar situation and I was able to learn a lot from other participants. I am not sure if staff and some of the speakers fully understood the needs of participants. All participants did not have the same needs and I didn't think most of the information was relevant to my need.

I think this program help me improve my parenting skills. It really made me think about my parenting – the way I discipline my children. I am willing to try new things – the suggestions the speakers and staff shared. The visitor was also very helpful in giving me suggestions to try. I love my children and parenting suggestions I got from the worker and staff and other parents really helped me enjoy my children – I am playing with them and talking with them differently. They seem very close to me now and I am calmer now. Even my children have said to me I am different. I am using the resources from the mobile library and we are enjoying the readings. My children love the books – my younger one is running to me with a book and asks me to read with him.

I think using the mobile library improved my language skills – I am reading with my children more. I wish we can keep the books for more than a week. They come [the mobile library] every Friday and we can only keep the books for a week because we have to return the books the following Friday. Sometimes we do not finish reading them. I also enjoy talking to other parents – we laugh together – I see them [other parents] in school, sometimes the park. We say hello to each other and we talk. I really enjoy the program.

Reporting from Monitoring Evaluation

Our monitoring evaluation assessed the extent to which the School Readiness Program has served the intended target group and delivered the services promised.

Findings

For the most part, the program served the intended target group. Participants came from culturally diverse communities with ages ranging from 16 to 40 years. The majority of participants learned about the program through program staff (i.e. direct outreach efforts). Some reported learning about the program from friends and few others reported being referred by external agencies. Over 60 parents/caregivers enrolled in the program, but only 50 attended the program with consistent frequency. The program has:

- Served 50 parents/caregivers and 80 preschoolers
- Delivered 40 parenting education sessions and weekly child-centered play, learn, and bond activities
- Completed 80 home visits through our partnership with Shiro Family Centre
- Provided weekly access to reading, audio, and visual resources through our partnership with Hazhaz Mobile Library to parents/caregivers and their children
- Enabled parents/caregivers and their children to borrow and return over 500 reading, audio, and visual resources from Hazhaz Mobile Library

Reporting from Process Evaluation

Our process evaluation assessed the extent to which the School Readiness Program has engaged participants effectively and delivered high quality service.

Findings

We successfully recruited and trained 5 volunteers who were instrumental in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program. We established and maintained a supportive working relationship with Lomi Parents Group. Lomi Parents Group played an important role in assisting us with volunteer recruitment and providing input during program planning. We also established and maintained a well-functioning partnership with Shiro Family Centre and Hazhaz Mobile Library. We jointly delivered the program and parents/caregivers and their children largely benefited from our partnership. The partnership agreement we signed was reviewed twice over the two-year period. We learned about the commitment required to maintain a well-functioning partnership. We also learned the importance of having a mechanism for resolving issues at the outset. These lessons will certainly help us in future partnerships.

With respect to participants' experience in the program, we aggregated the responses to see whether the overall experience was positive or negative. We interpreted "neutral responses" as negative experience. The tables below show the aggregated data categorized into negative experience (i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, and neutral) on one side and positive experience (i.e. strongly agree and agree) on the other. Similarly, the responses for the overall satisfaction were

aggregated into not satisfied (i.e. very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, and neutral) on one side and satisfied (i.e. very satisfied and satisfied) on the other. See table below:

Aggregated responses on participants' experience in the program... N=30	Negative Experience (Strongly Disagree, Disagree & neutral)	Positive Experience (Strongly Agree or Agree)
Program staff/volunteers seem knowledgeable	13	17
Program staff/volunteers understood my need and/or my child's need	12	18
Those who facilitated the parenting education sessions were responsive to my need	12	18
Home visitors were responsive to my need and/or my child(ren)	15	15
When I needed support, it was provided in a timely manner	13	17
I felt safe/respected in the program	15	15
It was easy to access the mobile library service	13	17
I borrowed the resources my child(ren) needed from the mobile library	10	20
The parenting education sessions were highly interactive	13	17
I was given time/opportunity to interact with other parents/caregivers	4	26
I was given opportunity to apply what I learned in and/or outside the program	10	20
I would recommend the program to a parent/caregiver in similar situation	11	19

Your experience in the program... N=30	Satisfied (Very Satisfied or Satisfied)	Not Satisfied (Very Dissatisfied, Dissatisfied & Neutral)
The overall experience in the program	17	13

The one measure of positive experience that produced an overwhelming positive report was the item "I was given time/opportunity to interact with other participants." While the response for the remaining items was positive, it was only sixty percent. Similarly, a little over 55% reported satisfaction with their experience in the program. The overall experience and level of satisfaction is summarized in various forms below:

Table Form:

Overall experience in the program		
Responses (N=30)	(#)	(%)
Positive experience in the program	18	60
Negative experience in the program	12	40
Total	30	100

Overall satisfaction with the program		
Responses (N=30)	(#)	(%)
Satisfied with experience in the program	17	57

Not satisfied with experience in the program	13	43
Total	30	100

Narrative Form:

Overall, about 60% (18 out of 30) respondents reported that their experience in the program was positive, while 40% (12 out of 30) reported their experience was negative. Similarly, about 57% (17 out of 30) respondents reported higher level of satisfaction with the program, whereas 43% (13 out of 30) reported lower level of satisfaction.

Graphic Form:



We noted that the number of those who did not have positive experience in the program and expressed lower levels of satisfaction was significant. When we reviewed the notes from debrief meetings; staff observation; and the qualitative feedback from respondents, we saw a trend that concerned us. The majority of those who did not have positive experience and expressed lower level of satisfaction appeared to be newcomer and court mandated parents/caregivers. This seemed to point to a relationship between respondents' identity and the quality of their experience. We reported this relationship in various forms below:

Table Form:

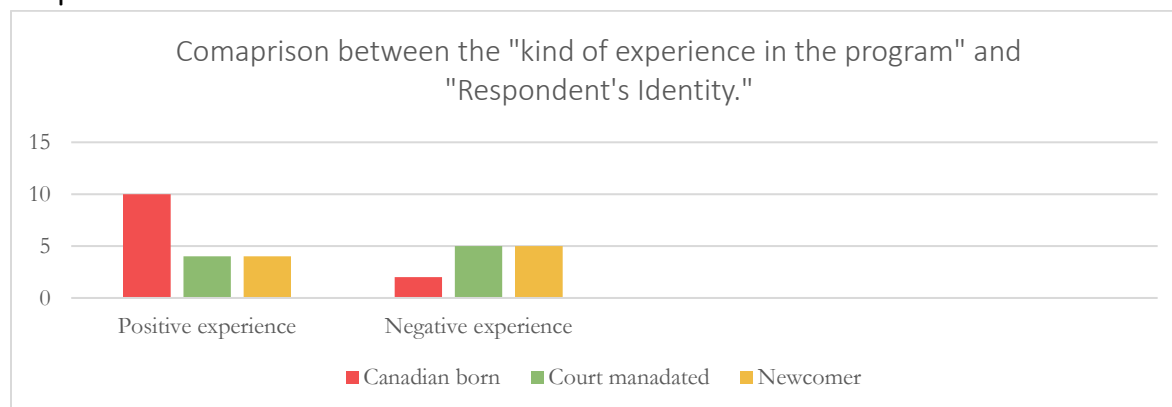
Comparing "experience in the program" with "Respondent's identity"							
Response	Canadian born		Mandated		Newcomer		Total
	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	
Positive experience in the program	10	83	4	44	4	44	18
Negative experience in the program	2	17	5	56	5	56	12
Total	12	100	9	100	9	100	30

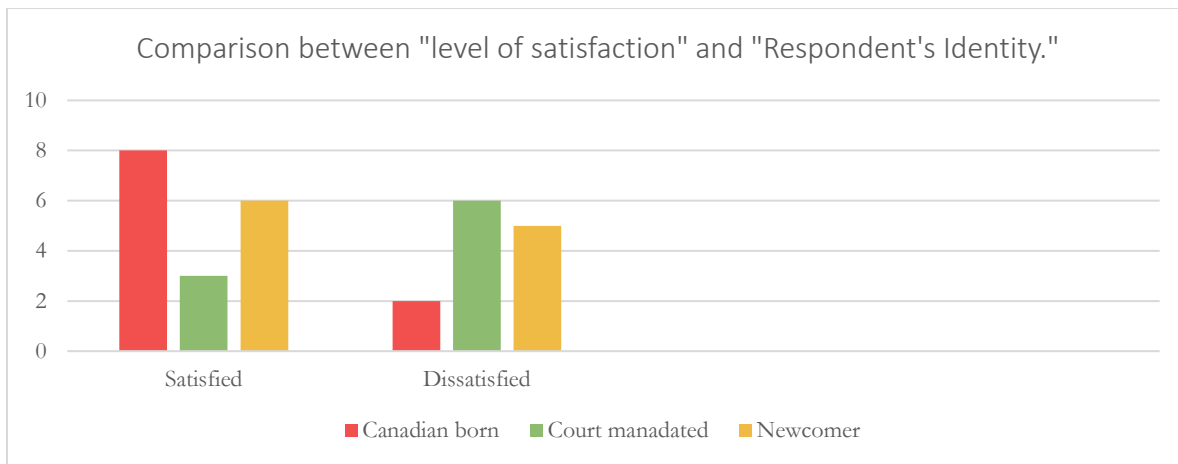
Comparing "overall satisfaction with the program" with "Respondent's identity"							
Response	Canadian born		Mandated		Newcomer parents		Total
	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	
Satisfied with the program	8	80	3	33	6	55	17
Not Satisfied with the program	2	20	6	67	5	45	13
Total	10	100	9	100	11	100	30

Narrative Form:

Of those who reported positive experience, 56% (10 out of 18) were Canadian born, while only 22% (4 out of 18) and 22% (4 out of 18) were newcomer and court mandated respectively. However, of those who reported negative experience in the program, 42% (5 out of 12) and 42% (5 out of 12) were court mandated and newcomer respectively compared to only 16% (2 out of 12) Canadian born. Further, among those who reported greater satisfaction with their experience in the program, 47% (8 out of 17) were Canadian born and 35% (6 out of 17) were newcomers parents reported satisfaction with the program, compared to 18% (3 out of 17) court mandated. Interestingly, of those who expressed dissatisfaction with the program, 46% (6 out of 13) were court mandated and 38% (5 out of 13) were newcomers, compared to only 16% (2 out of 13) Canadian born.

Graphic Form:





Overall, those who did not have good experience and expressed dissatisfaction with the program were disproportionately higher among court mandated and newcomer parents/caregivers. Further, 50% of respondents did not feel safe/respected and did not believe the home visitors were responsive to theirs or their children’s needs. We have reason to believe that most of them are likely to be among court mandated and/or newcomers. We think that the program may have worked for some more than others. We will be working with our partners to examine and rectify practices that may have contributed to the negative experiences and feelings some parents/caregivers expressed.

Reporting from Outcome Evaluation

Our outcome evaluation assessed the extent to which the School Readiness Program has enhanced parents’/caregivers’ parenting capacity and preschoolers’ social, emotional, and cognitive skills. We organized and aggregated the responses to gage whether there was improvement in parenting capacity and preschoolers’ social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Likewise, we interpreted “neutral responses” as “did not improve.”

Findings

Overall, slightly over 50% of respondents reported improvement in parenting capacity and social, emotional, and cognitive skill in their children. There was a significant improvement reported in two specific areas [i.e. ability to cope with children’s stressful behaviors (83%) and children benefiting from reading books borrowed from the mobile library (86%)]. See table below:

As the result of participating in the School Readiness Program...	Not Improved	Improved
N=30		
I have a better understanding of child development stages	14	16
I am able to recognize appropriate behaviors of children in relation to their development	15	15

I am using parenting skills I learned to cope in stressful situations	15	15
I am able to cope with children's stressful behaviors	5	25
I use appropriate disciplining techniques	18	12
My child/children benefited from reading resources I borrowed from the mobile library	4	26
I noticed improvement in my child's ability to recognize numbers, alphabets, and simple words.	13	17
My child/children get along well with other children	12	18

Note that the table above shows improvement for parents/caregivers and their children that is, "my parenting skills have improved" on one side and "my parenting skills have not improved" on the other. Also, "my child's social, emotional, and cognitive skills have improved" on one side and "my child's social, emotional, and cognitive skill have not improved" on the other. This is reported in various forms. See below:

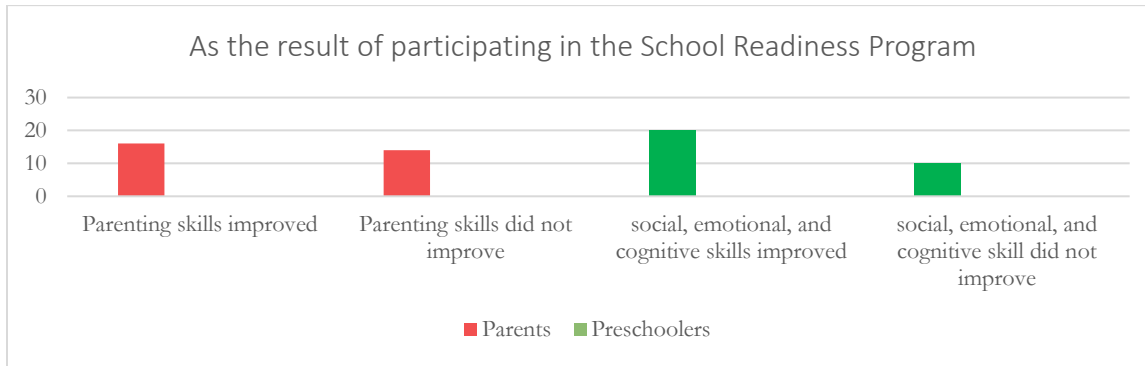
Narrative Form:

As the result of participating in the School Readiness Program, 53% (16 out of 30) of respondents felt that their parenting skills have improved, while 47% (14 out of 30) did not feel their parenting skill have improved. A higher percentage, 67% (20 out of 30) of respondents reported that the program helped their children improve their social, emotional, and cognitive skills, while 33% (10 out 30) did not believe so.

Table Form:

As the result of participating in the School Readiness Program...		
Aggregated Response (N=30)	(#)	(%)
My parenting skills have improved	16	53
My parenting skill have not improved	14	47
My child's/children's social, emotional, and cognitive skills have improved	20	67
My child's/children's social, emotional, and cognitive skills have not improved	10	33

Graphic Form:



We noted that although more than half of the respondents reported improvement in their parenting skills and their children’s social, emotional, and cognitive skills, a significant number of them did not. This was worrisome. When we looked at the qualitative responses, debrief, and observation notes, we saw a similar trend that we observed in participants’ experience in the program and level of satisfaction. Among those who did not report improvement, most seemed to be court mandated and newcomer parents/caregivers and their children. This is reported in various forms. See below:

Table Form:

Comparison between “improved parenting skills” and “participant category”							
Response	Canadian born		Mandated		Newcomer		Total
	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	
Improved parenting skills	11	85	2	22	3	38	16
Did not improve parenting skills	2	15	7	78	5	62	14
Total	13	100	9	100	8	100	30

Comparing “improved social, emotional, and cognitive skills” with “participant category”							
Response	Canadian born		Mandated		Newcomer		Total
	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	
Children’s social, emotional, and cognitive skills improved	12	92	3	38	5	56	20

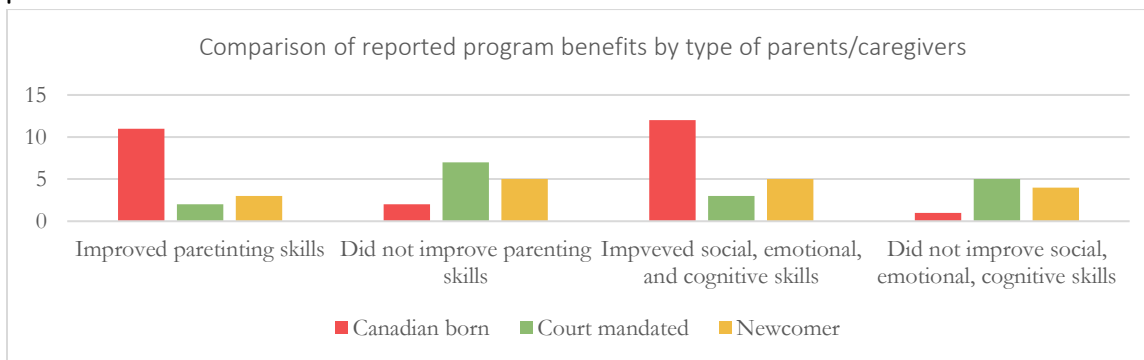
Children’s social, emotional, and cognitive skills did not improve	1	8	5	62	4	44	10
Total	13	100	8	100	9	100	30

Narrative Form:

Overall, a little above 50% of the respondents appeared to have benefited from the program. However, we are concerned that significant number of respondents did not seem to have benefited from the program. In addition, some appeared to have benefited more than others. For instance, of those who reported improved parenting skills, 69% (11 out of 16) were Canadian born, while only 18% (3 out of 16) and 13% (2 out of 16) were newcomer and court mandated parents/caregivers respectively. On the other hand, of those who did not report improved parenting skills, only 14% (2 out of 14) were Canadian born, while 50% (7 out of 14) and 36% (5 out of 14) were court mandated and newcomer parents/caregivers respectively.

With respect to those who reported improvement in their children’s social, emotional, and cognitive skills, 60% (12 out of 20) were Canadian born, while 25% (5 out of 20) and 15% (3 out of 20) were newcomer and court mandated parents/caregivers respectively. But among those who did not report improvement in their children’s social, emotional, and cognitive skills, only 10% (1 out of 10) was Canadian born, while 50% (5 out of 10) and 40% (4 out of 10) were court mandated and newcomer parents/caregivers respectively.

Graphic Form:



Overall, the findings indicated that a little over half of the respondents had positive experience in the program; improved their parenting skills; and observed improvement in their children’s social, emotional, and cognitive skills. However, the remaining respondents (a significant number) had the opposite experience and did not seem to have benefited from the program. Some found the parenting education sessions to be interactive and the various activities for children to be engaging and stimulating. Most found the books from the mobile library to be useful. One parent/caregiver said, “My children love the books – my younger one is running to me with a book and asks me to read with him.” Some also indicated that they have enhanced their parenting skills. For instance, one parent/caregiver commented, “I am calmer. Even my children said to me I am different.”

Many found the staff to be effective in meeting theirs and their children's needs. This was evident in the favorable comments some of them shared. One parent/caregiver remarked:

"I found the staff to be very respectful and went above and beyond to help participants. I also enjoyed working with the home visitor, Fawzia. She was very knowledgeable and very respectful. The way she explained things and the way she spoke with my children was very pleasant. It seemed very natural. I looked forward to her visit."

All in all, the program appeared to have helped parents/caregivers to apply what they learned in parenting education sessions and home visits in their daily lives. For many parents/caregivers, the program offered practical tips to improve their parenting skills and relationship with their children.

However, others found the program to be less helpful. A number of parents/caregivers did not appear to be satisfied with the quality and accessibility of the parenting education sessions. Some expressed concerns around the way in which information was delivered. Others complained about the approach and ability of some home visitors to connect with them and their children. For instance, one parent/caregiver said, "What the speakers were talking about went over my head" while another expressed frustration with the quality and lack of continuity/consistency of home visitors. A comment one parent/caregiver shared summed up the feeling:

"They [the program] keep sending me different visitors for the first few weeks, it was frustrating. Then this worker, I forget her name – we really started to make progress. She seems to understand and tried hard to work with me. My children loved her. But then, another worker came and she was the opposite. She did not seem comfortable to come to my apartment. I felt judged – she did not say anything bad to me, but the way she interacted with me and my children tell me that she did not want to be there. "

Implications

Although some parents/caregivers were generally satisfied with the program, others found that the way information was delivered did not meet their needs. Some staff also seemed to be incapable of connecting with parents/caregivers and their children. The relationship between some parents/caregivers and some staff seemed to be difficult at times. Some parents/caregivers felt that some staff did not appear to be at ease to work with them and/or their children. We know that to effectively work with parents/caregivers and their children, staff must understand the specific needs of parents/caregivers and children and know how to interact with them in caring ways. If staff are not sensitive and well equipped to understand the needs, the support they provide and their interaction with parents/caregivers and their children can be negatively impacted. We understand that this can be a frustrating experience for parents/caregivers, and if we don't address the gaps, the services we offer may not make a difference and achieve the goal of the program.

Recommendations

1. The experiences some parents/caregivers shared points to a need for the re-examination of the capacity of some staff to support the parents/caregivers and the children we serve. We need to look into how we can provide staff with additional training, support and supervision to improve the experience of all program participants.

2. Given that most of those who expressed dissatisfaction with their experience in the program appear to be newcomer and court mandated parents/caregivers, we need to reassess how we are engaging participants and our approach to service delivery. More specifically, we need to review our service delivery methods (parenting education sessions) and the overall staff interaction with parents/caregivers and their children (home visits) and make the necessary adjustment/improvement moving forward.
3. Although a slim minority, some parents/caregivers did not appear to understand the purpose of the program. We need to review the criteria for enrolling in the program to ensure that parents/caregivers understand the goal of the program, and that their goal is aligned with that of the program.

Reporting from Impact Evaluation

We conducted follow up interviews three years later with some of the parents/caregivers who attended the program and some teachers who taught some of the preschoolers to understand the impact of the program. We interviewed eight parents/caregivers and three teachers. Six out of the eight parents/caregivers we interviewed reported that they continued to apply some of the parenting tips/strategies they learned from the program. Despite the difficult role of parenting, most of them reported finding a new joy in their role as parents/caregivers. When asked how their children are doing in school, most of them indicated that their children did not face a lot of challenges when they started school. One parent/caregiver compared one of her older children with one that attended the School Readiness Program and said:

"I remember the challenges with my older son, Najib when he started school. He cried for two weeks. It took him a long time to feel comfortable with his teacher and make friends. But my younger one, Caleb, did not have any trouble. He loved his teacher and in the first week, he made 3 new friends. He was popular."

The teachers we interviewed spoke about the children in glowing terms. They indicated that the children displayed better social and emotional skills; self-regulation; and fewer behavior problems. One of the teachers described Caleb as a well-liked and helpful student. The teacher described a situation where Caleb demonstrated conflict resolution/mediation skills in the playground.

While the comments from parents/caregivers and teachers seem to suggest that program had a positive impact, it is difficult to draw a causal link solely based on the interview. However, we believe the School Readiness Program has contributed in preparing the preschoolers that attended the program to become ready for school. We also believe that the program has played an important role in improving parenting capacity and family stability. This in turn helped to create a positive home environment, which we believe contributed to school readiness. Having said that, a more rigorous evaluation is needed to establish a strong evidence that our School Readiness Program contributes to school readiness. We are currently exploring opportunities to work with academic institutions to design and implement robust evaluations to help us understand the long-term impact of the School Readiness Program.