Parents Make the Difference:
A Research Briefing on Early Childhood Literacy

September 8, 2021
Today’s Presenters:

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Book Harvest

Kenitra Williams, MSW
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Moderator: Claudia Barrett, Executive Director of Imprints Cares
BOOK BABIES:

Co-Creating a Home Literacy Environment from Birth, with Parents

- Literacy Coaching: Quarterly home literacy coaching sessions
- Book Provision: 100 books by kindergarten
- Parent-to-Parent: Connecting with and supporting each other
- Bridge from Home to School: Transitioning to Pre-K, K, and beyond
Click to watch a video featuring Book Babies families and advocates.

(https://youtu.be/MLqI80FB9m0)
Centering Parents in Early Childhood Research
Book Babies
Randomized Control Trial (RCT) Evaluation

Iheoma U. Iruka, PhD,
Principal Investigator

Research Professor, Department of Public Policy
Fellow, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG)
Founding Director, Equity Research Action Coalition at FPG

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Book Babies RCT Evaluation: Research Questions

• Do Book Babies parents utilize dialogic reading practices and behaviors that optimize early childhood language development (e.g., open-ended questions, pointing to text when reading with their child), etc.?

• Do Full Intervention Group children show more growth in their early language production and comprehension scores than the Books Only Group and Control Group?
Book Babies RCT Evaluation: Study Design

- Book Babies: Full Intervention Group
- Books Only Group: Partial Intervention Group
- Cash Incentives: Control Group

Sample
- Durham Site: ~420 @ 140 per group
- Winston-Salem Site ~300 @ 100 per group
Book Babies RCT Evaluation: Findings

More Full Intervention Group parents are engaging in literacy-promoting activities compared to parents in the Books Only and Control Groups.

Children in the Full Intervention Group show stronger early literacy skills, especially in Spanish-speaking families.
Full Intervention Group parents in both locations reported the same or higher level of parent-child literacy practices than the Books Only and Control Groups.
Full Intervention Group parents in both locations reported higher rates than the Books Only and Control Groups in ease in their

- ability to read,
- engage in daily reading, and
- point at text
Book Babies RCT Evaluation: Findings

Spanish-speaking children in the Full Intervention Groups in both locations showed more growth in their production and comprehension scores compared to the Spanish-speaking children in the Books Only and Control Groups.
Book Babies RCT Evaluation: Recommendations

• Follow the science about the critical importance of investing in families and their children, especially in the first few years of life.

• Ensure that child-focused programming is centered around families and caregivers to sustain the investment.

• Mitigate opportunity gaps through culturally responsive and sustaining programming and approaches.
Book Babies
Analysis of Parent Focus Groups

Cristina Gillanders, PhD
Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education
University of Colorado, Denver

Meytal Barak, MEd
Associate Director for Early Literacy
Book Harvest
The purpose of this qualitative study was to better understand parents’ perceptions of the impact of the Book Babies program in their ability to support their children’s early literacy and language development at home.
Analysis of Parent Focus Groups: Study Design

43 Participating Parents
- 39% Black and 53% Latinx
- 46% Spanish at home, 32% English

Procedure
- 12 focus groups interviews were facilitated by the Book Babies Coaches in English and Spanish over Zoom.
- Each session lasted one hour.
- All participants received a $50 gift card for their time and participation.
Analysis of Parent Focus Groups: Research Questions

- What do parents perceive to be the benefits of their participation in Book Babies?
- What literacy practices do parents report engaging in with their children at home?
- What behaviors do parents report observing in their children at home?
- What are parents’ views of programs to support children and families’ transition to PreK and kindergarten?
Analysis of Parent Focus Groups: Findings

Parent/caregivers report a positive impact of Book Babies on:

• their knowledge about childhood development.
• their children’s interest in books
• their participation in new activities that promote early literacy and language development.
Parent/caregivers report a positive impact of Book Babies on:

• their ways of reading to their children

• their observation of early literacy and language behaviors in their children.

• their ability to navigate the application and enrollment process for Pre-K and kindergarten.

• an unexpected result was parents reporting on the benefits of the relationship between BB coach and parents for staying engaged.
Analysis of Parent Focus Groups: Recommendations

• **Emergent Writing:** Provide more opportunities for parents to practice writing with their children.

• **Frequency of Literacy Coaching Sessions:** Design more customized home visits schedules

• **Social networking:** Create more opportunities for parents to interact with other parents
Book Babies
Parent Survey Findings

Kenitra Williams, MSW
Book Babies Lead Coach
Book Harvest
Book Babies Parent Survey Design

• 99 parents responded to the 2021 Book Babies Parent Survey (198 sent).
  • 48 were English-speaking parents
  • 51 were Spanish-speaking parents

• 31 parents responded to the 2021 End of Program Parent Survey (47 sent)
  • 14 were English-speaking parents
  • 17 were Spanish-speaking parents
Book Babies 2021 Parent Survey Responses

97% reported that books provided by the program make reading routines at home easier.

99% reported that early language and literacy knowledge is impacted by the Book Babies program.

94% reported that Book Babies helps create a daily reading routine at home.
Thanks to this program, my daughters like reading, even I am thrilled to receive new books and to be able to read them with my daughter.
Book Babies 2021 Parent Survey Responses

- **98%** reported that Book Babies supports them in including early literacy strategies at home.
- **96%** reported that Book Babies has an impact on how satisfied they feel about helping their child develop an interest in books/reading.
- **93%** reported that they trust their Book Babies coach.
I love that my coach informs me on other questions when I have them. She also reassures me in my tactics.

I like that they have good guidance counselors to be a good parent and teach our children.
Book Babies Parent Surveys: Recommendations

• Families respond well to virtual visits - continuing to feel connected to their coach - and most have a desire for a hybrid model of virtual and in-person visits in the future.

• Families do not feel as connected to other families. The lack of connection may be due to being unable to have in-person events. We need to explore ways to enhance the family support network while virtual.

• Families trust their Book Babies Coach. We should continue our model of delivering our program in partnership with families co-creating spaces in which a family’s specific culture and language are honored and encouraged.
"You all are awesome and I really appreciate all the effort to help me help my kid - thank you."

"Thanks a thousand for programs like this one, our culture is enriched every day because this program has provided us not only with books in English, but also in our own language, it is because I loved being part of this program!"

"I like the interest they have in children learning. I like the way the counselor treats us."

"The books in Spanish they provide us are wonderful."
Q&A

Moderator: Claudia Barrett
Executive Director, Imprints Cares
Final Reflections

Ginger Young
Founder and Executive Director
Book Harvest
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