

**FUNDING**: Visions for Early Learning (VEL)

LOVE.TALK.PLAY. Family Engagement mini-grant

**AGENCY**: Centralia College

**REPORTING PERIOD:** Winter-Spring 2015

**Program Name:**

Bilingual Learning and Playing- Villa Los Milagros and Villa San Juan Bautista, Centralia

**Program Director:**

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**Program Description:**

The Spanish/Bilingual *Learning and Playing (LeaP)* class is designed to provide parents and their children, birth through four, an opportunity to grow and learn together. Through everyday interactions and fun activities that build the parent-child bond, adult students learn to recognize, understand and support their child’s physical, mental, social, and emotional needs. Adult students gain important parenting support and become familiarized with child development and guidance tools in a culturally informed context.

Curriculum is based in attachment and brain research which shows that children, in their earliest years, learn best by having everyday culturally relevant experiences that are fun, with people they love and trust. These positive interactions provide an optimal foundation for children to build trust, a positive sense of self and loving and empathic relationships. They also model constructive behaviors that create a basis for healthy lifelong learning which leads to positive adult outcomes.

The first years of life are a critical period in which specific sensory and social emotional experiences are needed for optimal organization and brain development. This is achieved when there is a responsive caregiver who is available to support and provide a secure base. It is linked to outcomes such as better mental and physical health, better school performance and higher educational achievement, less at-risk adolescent behavior, increased employment opportunities and less involvement with social service systems as adults.

Parent-child class sessions are two and one-quarter hours in length. Fourteen adult students were registered for the Bilingual Learning and Playing class with their children, birth through four. The classes were held at Villa los Milagros and Villa San Juan Bautista, two of three Catholic Community affordable housing communities for farm workers and low income families in Centralia, WA.

**What changes did you anticipate originally in regard to knowledge, skills, attitudes or behaviors?**

It was expected that the participants in our class would be able to demonstrate the following:

1. Improved parent-child relationships
2. Improved understanding of children’s development, ages birth-four
3. Increased sense of parenting competence
4. Reduced parent-child conflict

**What were your actual results/changes and how were they measured?**

Parents/caregivers completed a satisfaction survey on the last evening of class designed to gather anecdotal information from those participating in the program. Results were printed at the end of this document.

**Describe Program Successes**

* Villa los Milagros and Villa San Juan Bautista are Catholic Community affordable housing communities for low income migrant and farm workers. Over the past year, both communities have invited Centralia College Child and Family Studies to hold LeaP classes in their community rooms. Both classes have continued because of the expressed need of the parents in the class.
* Two of the adult students attending the Tuesday morning program have children with disabilities. This class offers an opportunity for these mothers and children to be in a natural classroom that includes typically developing children and children with disabilities. The instructor, who is the parent of a child with disabilities, is able to model language and behavior that supports these parents and children.
* The children were actively engaged in activities and pulled their parents into play as modeled by the instructor and her assistant.
* Parents shared experiences and talked about struggles they were dealing with in raising their children. Often they were able to problem-solve situations as they discussed development and guidance of young children each session.
* The Love Talk Play funding allowed us to purchase materials to enhance parent-child activities. Parents and children did many projects and activities that increased parent-child engagement. Supplies were purchased for these projects with this funding
* Parents were excited to participate in bringing recycled materials for art activities. One mother brought recycled pop bottles and the children and parents turned them into painted flowers. A fun parent-child activity.
* One parent said she realized during a parent-child cooking activity that there were ways her child could be involved in the kitchen and in appropriate cooking experiences. They began engaging more at home with cooking opportunities.
* Over the quarter parents became more and more comfortable playing with the children in the classroom setting and indicated that they now played with their children at home as well.
* Thursday mornings, parents and instructor met the first 20-30 minutes to talk about child development and guidance. To have this parent time, two Early Childhood Education Specialists were hired to be with the children in another area of the room. This worked quite well and students said the time was valuable.
* Parents had many questions and concerns about child guidance. A number of them had come from backgrounds where corporal punishment was used. The parent time offered an opportunity to talk about positive redirection, limits, choices and problem solving as parenting alternatives to corporal punishment. Parents stated that this was very beneficial.
* During class check-in, parents who had problem-solved or asked for ideas the previous week, shared how the ideas and suggestions had worked for them during the week. This became an important part of the beginning of each class.

**Describe Program Challenges**

* The community room was quite small at Villa San Juan Bautista. This limited the opportunity for parents to meet together without children. In light of this Donna did more one-on-one instruction with parents discussing ages and stages of their particular children. Though it was a positive experience for parents, it was a less than ideal classroom setting for parent group discussion time.
* Thursday mornings there was less individualized time to talk with parents about ages and stages of their particular children. Ideally, the instructor would like a balance between one-on-one and group parenting opportunities.
* The biggest challenge at the beginning of the quarter was helping parents feel comfortable being at their children’s level and engaging in play with them. Through the efforts of the instructor and assistants in mentoring and working with the parents, they became more comfortable over time. (note comments from Satisfaction Survey below)
* Throughout the course of the past year, it has become clear that there is a need for some kind of an onsite program for the school aged children in these communities. In the evening class, they often watched through the windows to see what our class is doing. Some asked to participate, but this is not workable unless their parent and sibling under four is attending. It was difficult to see these young people playing with no adult supervision in the play yard, often-times a less than positive atmosphere.

**Specific components of this program made possible with the Love. Talk. Play. funding.**

* With this funding the instructor was able to purchase materials for fun art and cooking activities for children and their parents.
* Children received a healthy snack each week.
* Child-sized chairs were purchased.
* Quality bilingual and Spanish children’s books were purchased for the parents to read with their children.

**LeaP Student Satisfaction Survey Spring 2015**

Translated directly from Spanish

1. What is one difference you see in yourself or your parenting as a result of this class?

**¿Has notado alguna diferencia en ti como resultado de esta clase para padres de familia?**

* In my person it has helped me because I have more patience with my son and that is really good for him and for me.
* I have more creativity on how to spend time with my daughters and overall your comments have helped me be more patient.
* To be more understanding
* Be more understanding with my daughters and have more patience
* *Have learned to be more understanding on how to talk to my daughter.*

2. In what ways did the parent/child activities help your relationship with your child?

**¿En qué sentido las actividades para padres e hijos ayudaron en tu relación con tu niño/a?**

* It helped me a lot in how to communicate with him and be more creative in his activities
* As I have been creative it has helped me to make arts and crafts and we can spend more time together
* To do things together
* It has helped me be more involved with my family and make arts and crafts and play together
* To have better communication, be closer in the family for example. Cook together

**3.** Explain at least one thing you learned about child development that helps you understand your child better?

**¿Describe al menos una cosa que tu hayas aprendido acerca del desarrollo infantil, que te ayude a entender de una mejor forma a tu hijo/a?**

* Yes I have learned to be more responsable with him and also that communication is important
* My daughter express hersself better and she tells people what she wants
* Yes. There are different stages for children and we need to be more patient with them
* I have learned that all childrens are different and learned about their developent stages but we have to help them.
* I have learned to communicate better and to talk to her and that we have to learn that everybody has different ways to do things

4. Explain one thing you learned about guiding or disciplining your young child?

**¿Describe una cosa que hayas aprendido acerca de cómo guiar y disciplinar a tu hijo/a?**

* + Sometimes we are hard with them because when they are little and it is difficult to educate them, but if they understand when we are talking to them it helps us to be more understanding.
  + To be more understanding when my daughter, it has helped me to gain their trust and then the tranquility of my daughters
  + Yes there is occasions when we have to say “no”. Not everything can be “yes”
  + I have learned that when my daughters get angry we can give them time to themselves so they can think about it and calm down.
  + I have learned how to understand them better from early age and to older age.

5. What questions about young children do you still have after this class?

**¿Tienes alguna pregunta acerca del desarrollo de tu hijo después de esta clase?**

* No
* no
* no
* No because everything I have learned has helped me to talk to them.
* I would like to learn how to help children to calm down when they are having a temper tantrum and how to teach them how to write.

**6.** What would you improve about this class?

**¿Qué es lo que te gustaría mejorar en esta clase? ¿Tienes alguna sugerencia?**

* Yes
* I would like more interaction
* I like it this way
* Thank you
* Everything is good;that continue like this it is very good with the information I get
* To teach how to hold a pencil and to start to write numbers, alphabet and trace
* Continue as it is because all the information we have received until now has helped me talk to my children in a better way