

January, 2009

Summary of Research Findings

PIE's integrated services, four-component approach has had significant positive effects on the parents, children, schools, and partners involved. The impact on families is meaningful, global, and lasting.

Recruitment and Retention

- ⇒ Parents who speak English at home were attracted to PIE because they wanted to support their children, to understand the school and curriculum, and to belong to a community. They maintained participation due to a sense of belonging, the benefits to their children, the benefits of connecting to the school, and their increased self-confidence.
- ⇒ Parents who are speakers of languages other than English were attracted to PIE because they wanted to learn English in order to communicate with their children and integrate into Canadian society, they wanted

to understand the Canadian school system, and they wanted to reduce their isolation. They maintained participation due to the positive results for their English language skills, and because of their connection to the school, the growing importance of the Community of Learning, and the value of role-modeling learning for their children.

Impact on Parents as Learners

- ⇒ All parents experienced an increase in confidence and self-esteem. Other significant impacts on parents' personal growth included: developing the ability to trust others, developing emotional skills, gaining a positive attitude to life, exploring creativity, integrating more fully into Canadian society, and improving mental and physical health and health literacy.
- ⇒ All parents, regardless of education level, experienced an improvement in their attitude towards learning, leading to increased interest in formalized educational opportunities. Other significant impacts on parents' learning included: experiencing leadership, taking ownership of the program and of their own learning, connecting to new learning resources, and expanding their horizons intellectually, geographically, and culturally.
- ⇒ All parents, regardless of their literacy or education levels, valued



Summary of Research Findings *continued...*

PIE's opportunities for informal academic learning, especially in the context of being their children's first teachers.

- ⇒ Parents who are speakers of language other than English significantly increased their English language skills.
- ⇒ PIE was successful in motivating parents to inquire about and get assessed for formalized upgrading. PIE's continued support as parents committed to formalized upgrading and post-secondary education was instrumental to their success.
- ⇒ PIE had positive effects on parents' employment readiness, and supported parents in getting, keeping, and excelling in paid positions within and beyond the program,
- ⇒ PIE parents consistently set higher personal, academic, and employment goals for themselves over the course of their participation.

Impact on Parents as Parents

- ⇒ Being parents was a unifying factor for a diverse group. Parents predominantly learned from each other; they also learned from staff, external resources, schoolteachers, and from their children.
- ⇒ PIE had positive effects on the psycho-emotional aspects of parenting. Parents had greater patience for and increased their praise for their children, increased mutual communication and support in learning, and experienced stronger bonds with their children.
- ⇒ PIE had positive effects for active aspects of parenting. Parents increased participation in their child's school and education, increased their understanding of child development, learned and used techniques to enhance child literacy development, and were more consistent in disciplining their children.

Impact on Children

- ⇒ PIE had positive effects for reducing isolation and for socializing children through the child-minding program, by having children's parents come into their class, and by family participation in communal meals.



- ⇒ The child-minding program significantly improved school readiness in pre-school aged children.
- ⇒ Bonds strengthened as children saw their parents step out of their parental role to be learners and



community members; this opened lines of communication and enabled family members to identify with each other.

- ⇒ PIE boosted children's confidence and self-esteem through critical transitions. By participating in the child's classroom, the parent emphasized the child's worth and witnessed their success. By supporting their child's literacy and learning at home, the parent enabled feelings of ability.
- ⇒ Children's attitude to school and learning improved significantly. Parents' presence in the classroom and membership in the school community emphasized the value of learning. Children also witnessed their parents' commitment to life-long learning through their participation in the four components.
- ⇒ PIE strengthened home-school connections for children. Parents were in constant contact with teachers. They worked together to address issues at school as they arose and created strategies for children's learning.
- ⇒ PIE children enjoyed reading. Families' use of the library and number of books in the house increased, and parents engaged in active or "dialogic" reading techniques.

- ⇒ PIE children enjoyed school, performed well, and wanted to graduate and continue with their educations, in contrast to their parents' school experiences.

Impact on Schools

- ⇒ School staff at all levels perceived PIE as an essential linking and integrating mechanism between families and schools. They recognized the advantages for their students of strengthening the home-school connection.
- ⇒ PIE allowed principals, teachers, and support staff greater access to parents, who were more present and visible in the school. This access goes two ways, as PIE also supported parents in accessing teachers, principals, and resources in the school. This resulted in improved communication about the children and a stronger School Community.
- ⇒ PIE contributed to the School Community and engendered a School Community of Learning. All school staff recognized PIE parents' increased involvement in and ownership of the school.
- ⇒ PIE provided opportunities for teachers and principals to learn about family literacy and connect to other community resources.



Summary of Research Findings *continued...*

⇒ Potential challenges were met and addressed by the flexibility of PIE's integrated services, four-component model.

Impact on Partners

⇒ PIE partners are a diverse group who are involved at different levels in different ways. The main reasons they partnered with PIE were to concentrate resources, maximize on expertise, serve families better, strengthen the Service Provider Community, access our expertise in family literacy, and connect to our other partners and each other's networks.

⇒ Practicum students valued PIE because they "lived" the concepts they learn in school, and created meaningful relationships in the communities where they will work. These future professionals understood how literacy relates to their profession and factored it into their service delivery models.

⇒ Volunteers gained opportunities for important personal growth and professional development, worked on new skills, and gave back to the community by making valued human connections.

⇒ Working together sent a strong message to the public about the value of literacy, and enabled us to role-model teamwork and community building for PIE families.

Connecting Families to Schools and Communities

⇒ PIE demystified school by getting parents into the classroom, and personalized school as parents developed adult-to-adult relationships with teachers, principals, and support staff. PIE put parents and teachers "on the same team."

⇒ PIE assisted families who are speakers of languages other than English in adjusting to a new school system, school culture, and educational philosophy. Children recognized their parents' involvement and open up their school world.

⇒ PIE increased parent involvement in school programs other than PIE, and encouraged them to join their school's PAC and to volunteer in the school. Many PIE families participated in CFEC's other barrier-free programs, accessed other services or programs in their local community centres, and learned of and made use of new resources.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of...

Canucks for Kids Foundation

The Vancouver Sun,
Raise-a-Reader Program

Vancouver School Board

Burnaby School Board

BC Ministry of Education

Office of Literacy and
Essentials Skills, HRSDC



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