

Criminal Justice Organization of Hampden County

Mother/Child Reading Program

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CJOHC Program Overview

- ▶ Students attending education classes and/or the Turning Point parenting program were asked to complete a survey to determine interest in the program
- ▶ Applications were screened; cohort was selected
- ▶ TABE was administered to determine mother's reading level (pre-/post-test given)
- ▶ Care giver letters were sent requesting permission for child to participate (schedule of meeting times included)
- ▶ An age-appropriate book series (5 books) was selected and mailed to the child
- ▶ Zoom meetings were scheduled on Saturday morning from 10:00 - 10:30 am
- ▶ Reading Strategies classes met weekly and included:
 - An overview of child development
 - Age-appropriate strategies to practice
 - Modeling and practice of the selected book
 - Discussion of breaking down the 30-minute session into manageable chunks of time
 - Reflection from the interactive reading session
- ▶ An in-person Celebration of Literacy was held at the end of each cycle

CJOHC Program Design

- ▶ Voluntary sign up for this 7-week program which involved a commitment to attend a weekly 75-minute Reading Strategies class and Saturday morning virtual visits with the child
 - ▶ Reading Strategies class teaches students to engage their child in the chosen book
 - ▶ Promotes recognition of colors, letters, numbers and other skills for preschoolers
 - ▶ Promotes critical thinking skills, analytical skills, story extension skills for older kids
 - ▶ Fosters creativity and engagement to write/tell an original story
 - ▶ Virtual visits allow the mother to read to the child or share turns reading
 - ▶ Allows private time for the mother and child to engage in reading
 - ▶ Promotes the importance of literacy in a fun and interactive way
 - ▶ Allows time for meaningful discussion to check on comprehension and spark imagination
 - ▶ End of session Celebration of Literacy
 - ▶ Brings mother and child together for a 90 minute in-person visit
 - ▶ Children are able to interact with one of the therapy dogs

Successes and Challenges

Successes

- ▶ Twenty-four women enrolled in the program
 - ▶ One of the moms enrolled for all three sessions and had two of her children participate
- ▶ Post test scores on the TABE indicated a slight improvement for 50% of the women who participated
- ▶ Five women passed some of the GED subtests making good progress towards earning their high school equivalency credential
- ▶ Mothers reported that the program made a difference in their state of well-being because of the positive interaction with their child
 - ▶ Having fun, laughing, being silly during the virtual sessions helped ease anxiety
 - ▶ Hearing their child read to them instilled a sense of pride and lessened the worry that their child was having problems learning

Challenges

- ▶ Some of the mothers were unexpectedly released or transferred to a different facility - 67% completion
- ▶ Disciplinary factors prevented participation in the Saturday morning zoom sessions
- ▶ Program conflicts interfered with regular attendance in the Reading Strategies class
- ▶ Rapid movement within the facility would have impacted completion, so the program was adjusted to run for 7 weeks instead of 12
- ▶ Original invitation to the caregiver was originally sent in English only but a Spanish letter needed to be added
- ▶ Technical difficulties with Zoom breakout rooms
- ▶ Some caregivers were unreliable / forgot to log into zoom
- ▶ Unexpected circumstances prevented the child from attending the in-person visit
- ▶ Staffing challenges: lack of interns for Zoom sessions and staff on leave