



## Northland Area Family Service Center

February 10, 2015

Dear House Education Finance Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Parent-Child Home Program that we have been part of for the past 1 1/2 years. We were granted this wonderful opportunity because of past dollars designated from the state legislature.

Being able to bring the Parent-Child Home Program to Northern Minnesota has been wonderful. The Northland Area Family Center serves an 800 square mile school district. We have families that live in extreme isolation. Some of these families live 20+ miles from a town. We have one licensed daycare in this 800 square mile area. Being able to bring this program to the communities and serve families in their own homes has shown great results. We are reaching families who were receiving no services. We are linking them to other financial and educational resources while helping their parents be their first and best teacher. We have been able to identify children with special needs at an earlier age and link them to the necessary special education services to make them successful. We have 50% of our fathers participating in visits. We have also saw many of our parents go back to continue their education after starting this program.

Because of your dollars we have helped create a great first learning environment for families meeting them where they are. Speaking for the families in this area it would be an incredible loss if we were not able to continue this program. I am sorry that I could not be with you today to describe the impact this has had on the families but hope that this letter can shed some light on the greatness that it has had for the Northland Area.

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~Providing education, mentoring and support services that build strong  
individuals and families in the Northland Community School District~





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## Independent Evaluations of The Parent-Child Home Program

"Promising Program that Works," Rand's Promising Practices Network (2012) link: <http://www.promisingpractices.net/programs.asp>

"Bright Spot Program," Annie E. Casey Foundation's Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (2011) link: <http://www.gradelevelreading.net/bright-spots/bright-spot-programs/>

Top Tier of "Most Effective Early Intervention Programs," Early Intervention: The Next Steps, An Independent Report to Her Majesty's Government by Graham Allen MP (2011) link: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/early-intervention-next-steps.pdf>

"Strong Evidence of Effectiveness," National Dropout Prevention Center's Model Programs (2010) link: [http://ndpc-web.clemson.edu/modelprograms/show\\_program.php?pid=89](http://ndpc-web.clemson.edu/modelprograms/show_program.php?pid=89)

"Promising Research Evidence," California Evidence-Based Clearing House for Child Welfare (2008) link: <http://www.cebc4cw.org/program/94/detailed>

"Evidence Based Programs – Good Support," Council for Children and Families of Washington (2008) link: <http://www.ccf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/CCF%20Evidence%20Based%20Programs%20and%20Criteria%20for%20Inclusion.doc>

"Nationally Validated Educational Programs that Work," Sharing Success: New York State (1979-present) link: [http://www.sharingsuccess.org/code/eptw/pdf\\_profiles/parentchildhome.pdf](http://www.sharingsuccess.org/code/eptw/pdf_profiles/parentchildhome.pdf)

"A Program that Works," Joint Dissemination Review Panel, National Institute of Education, and the U.S. Office of Education (1978) link: <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11n.html> [Archived]

"Educational Programs that Work," National Diffusion Network, U.S. Department of Education (published 1978-1996) link: <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11n.html> [Archived]

"Successful Model Program," Center for Studies of Child and Family Mental Health, National Institute of Mental Health (1978)

"Model Compensatory Education Program," National Center for Education Communication, U.S. Office of Education (1972)





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Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis (JFCS)

## Closing the Achievement Gap by Building School Readiness at Home

**WHAT IS IT?** The national research-proven Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP) invests in economically and educationally disadvantaged children, ages 2-4 years, by successfully strengthening families and equipping parents to prepare their children for school success. The Program's intensive home visiting model addresses school readiness, child development, and parenting skills – supporting parents in becoming their child's first and most important teacher.

**WHY PCHP?** In response to the growing achievement gap in Hennepin County, JFCS worked with the National Parent-Child Home office in New York to launch a Parent-Child Home Program site in Hennepin County in 2006. PCHP targets isolated families with multiple risk factors who will most benefit from 60 curriculum-focused visits a year with additional wrap around services and connections to community based services. Over 45 years of research on this replication program show successful outcomes for BOTH parents and children.

### MINNESOTA FAMILIES RECEIVING PCHP:

- 449 Minnesota families have received PCHP services since the program started in 2006
- 140 families currently enrolled live in suburban, rural and urban areas of Minnesota
- 87% are families of color (e.g. 44% African, 28% Hispanic/Latino, 9% African American, 2% Native American Indian, 1% Asian, 3% Multi Racial, 13% White)
- 30% of parents speak "some" or no English
- 79% of families are below 100% of the poverty guidelines; 21% are between 100- 200%

### Outcome Goals:

1. **Children are ready for school** – age-appropriate in their social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical development
2. **Children live in safe, stable, nurturing environments** – families demonstrate positive parenting techniques, promote language development and access needed community services
3. **Children are healthy** – up-to-date immunizations and well child check-ups

## Measuring Outcomes:

Research-based assessment tools measure over 40 outcome indicators for PCHP children AND parents throughout the program. An 85% retention rate shows that families like and stay engaged in the program. Minnesota parents and their children consistently meet or exceed almost all goals every year:

- 90% of children demonstrate age-appropriate development by the end of year 2 in six domains: personal-social, communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and social-emotional.
- 99% of parents demonstrate positive, effective parent/child techniques such as praising child for positive behavior, and speaking calmly to diffuse a high-stress situation.
- 94% of parents increase their knowledge and awareness of their child's development.
- 100% of families receive an average of six referrals for community resources such as a food pantry, legal or medical consultation, job training, and emergency financial assistance.
- 99% of graduate children enroll in a 4 Star pre-school.

**As a certified replication site providing services with fidelity to this research proven model, outcomes for Minnesota families can be expected to be consistent with national research outcomes that show:**

- Children graduate from high school at a 20% higher rate than their socio-economic peers.
- Parents improve their own lives such as earning a GED or certification or licensure for a job; participating in job training; learning English; becoming a US citizen; obtaining employment or a better job.
- Parents continue as strong advocates for their children's education long after completion.

## Return on Investment:

\$5,000 a year per family results in an estimated \$28,500 return on investment. \$1 dollar invested in home visiting can return an estimated \$5.70 per taxpayer dollar invested by reducing future costs associated with child abuse and neglect, poor health, and academic failure.<sup>1</sup> The Minneapolis Federal Reserve's estimate is 5:1 ROI.

Minnesota Department of Education funding, 2013 – 2015, is supporting a partnership between JFCS, Way to Grow in Minneapolis, and Northland Area Family Service Center in Cass County to expand this opportunity to more Minnesota families. As a regional PCHP representative, JFCS can provide the technical support and fiscal agency to help sustain and expand PCHP services in Minnesota.

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<sup>1</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures, "Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs," <http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/home-visiting.aspx>



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## The Parent-Child Home Program's Effectiveness with English Language Learners

The Parent-Child Home Program's research has consistently demonstrated its significant outcomes for children and families, as well as its effective replication in a wide variety of communities and with a range of targeted at-risk populations, including a diverse array of **English Language Learners**.

A recent study by Dr. Virginia Mann of the University of California-Irvine demonstrates that the Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP) provided predominantly in a family's native language (the primary or only language spoken by the adults in the home) prepares children to successfully learn and utilize English once they enter school. The UC-Irvine Parent-Child Home Program replication, called HABLA (Home Based Activities Building Language Acquisition), has been serving families in Santa Ana, CA since June 2000. Dr. Mann's research on the impact of serving Spanish-speaking families with Spanish-speaking home visitors demonstrates that by working with families in the language in which they are best able to talk and read with their children, the Parent-Child Home Program is successfully preparing children to learn English. Once in pre-kindergarten, Program children scored well above the comparison group of native Spanish-speakers (recruited from the same housing projects as the Program families) on both the K-Seal<sup>1</sup> and the Pre-School Language Scale 4 (PLS-4). The Parent-Child Home Program participants, at age three, also scored much higher than the children who had not had the Program on the Spanish PLS-3,<sup>2</sup> demonstrating much stronger native language skills, a critical component of learning English successfully.<sup>3</sup>

A recently concluded quasi-experimental evaluation of the Philadelphia Public Schools PCHP site, conducted by Lehigh University, with a comparison sample matched according to PCHP enrollment criteria for age, income level, and residence in targeted regions within the city revealed that the rate of enrollment among the PCHP children, who are largely Latino, exceeds national trends for early childhood education program enrollment for this population of children. PCHP children were also more likely to enroll in early childhood education programs at the age of three than were comparison children in Philadelphia.<sup>4</sup>

Independent researchers from New York University also evaluated the effects of The Parent-Child Home Program on a group of primarily Latino Program participants in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, New York when the children reached kindergarten, comparing 68 Program graduates with 48 randomly-selected non-Program children from the same kindergarten classrooms. Comparison group parents were better educated (59% vs. 27% had gone to college), were less likely to be Latino (33% vs. 71%), and worked for pay more hours per week (25 vs. 16). "Despite the challenges of limited English proficiency, low parental education, immigrant status, and poverty, children who had participated in the

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<sup>1</sup> The K-Seal is a Pearson school readiness measure focused on language development.

<sup>2</sup> Mann, V., Sandoval, M., Garcia, L., & Calderon, D. (2009). Using Spanish in the home to promote school readiness in English. In A. Harrison (ed.), *Speech disorders: Causes, treatment and social effects* (pp. 97-118). USA: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

<sup>3</sup> Figueroa, L. (2006). Using the known to chart the unknown: A review of first language influence on the development of English-as-a-second-language spelling skill. *Reading and Writing*, 19, 873-905.

<sup>4</sup> Manz, P., Bracalietto, C. B., Pressimone, V. J., Eisenberg, R. A., Zuniga, C., & Curry, A. (2011). Examining vocabulary outcomes in home visiting: Preliminary findings and methodological considerations. Unpublished manuscript.

home visiting intervention were performing similarly to their peers on the majority of measures... Teachers' reports of children's early literacy indicated no differences between the intervention and comparison groups, and there was no difference on tests of early literacy administered by research staff" including the Language and Literacy subscale of the Academic Rating Scale, Story and Print Concepts and Color Names and Counting measures from FACES, Kochanska battery."<sup>6</sup> The Parent-Child Home Program had bridged the achievement gap, these Program graduates were as ready for school as children from high income, better educated homes, English-speaking homes.

In a study of the Program's Seattle sites, conducted by independent evaluator Organizational Research Services (ORS), participation data shows that the Program is reaching its target population of ethnically diverse, low-income families and that the vast majority of families completed the full two-year program (85% of enrolled families). ORS's research, consistent with past dosage studies of the Program, finds that the Program has optimal effects on families who complete the full two-years. Since 2006, when the study began, 467 families enrolled in Seattle's Parent-Child Home Program across four completed cohorts. Almost 90% of enrolled families had an income below the 2010 poverty line; **almost 70% of families spoke a language (10 non-English languages were reported) other than English at home**, and about 22% of families were African American. Between each data collection point, caregivers exhibited statistically significant increases in the frequency of positive behaviors and interactions on all PACT<sup>6</sup> assessment items and in their average score across items, providing strong and consistent evidence of enhanced caregiver-child interactions and increases in caregivers' use of positive parenting behaviors as a result of the Program. By the end of the second year of the Program, over 90% of caregivers exhibited positive parenting behaviors and interactions with an average frequency of "most of the time" or greater. Between the end of the first and second years of the program, children also exhibited statistically significant increases in ratings of their pre-literacy skills on the Teacher Rating of Language and Literacy (TROLL) items.<sup>7</sup> These significant increases held true for an overall average score as well as for each of three TROLL subscales: Language Use, Reading, and Print Concepts; all of these domains are critical components of school readiness.<sup>8</sup> The results of this evaluation demonstrate the Program's effectiveness with culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

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<sup>6</sup> Allen, L., Sethi, A., & Astuto, J. (2007). An evaluation of graduates of a toddlerhood home visiting program at kindergarten age. *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Intervention Field* 10(1), 36-57.

<sup>6</sup> Replication sites are required to collect pre-program and post-program data regarding parent-child interactions and the child's social and emotional development, using the Parent and Child Together (PACT), a validated assessment provided as part of the Program. The tool consists of twenty items, each of which rates on a 5 point scale the frequency of behaviors considered to be positive parent-child interaction behaviors (parent behaviors).

<sup>7</sup> This rating system measures skills critical to the New Standards for Speaking and Listening. TROLL can be used to track children's progress in language and literacy development, to inform curriculum, and to stimulate focused communication between parents and teachers.

<sup>8</sup> Organizational Research Services (2010). Evaluation of the Parent-Child Home Program/Play & Learn Group Demonstration Project 2005-2010: Final Report. Seattle: Business Partnership for Early Learning.

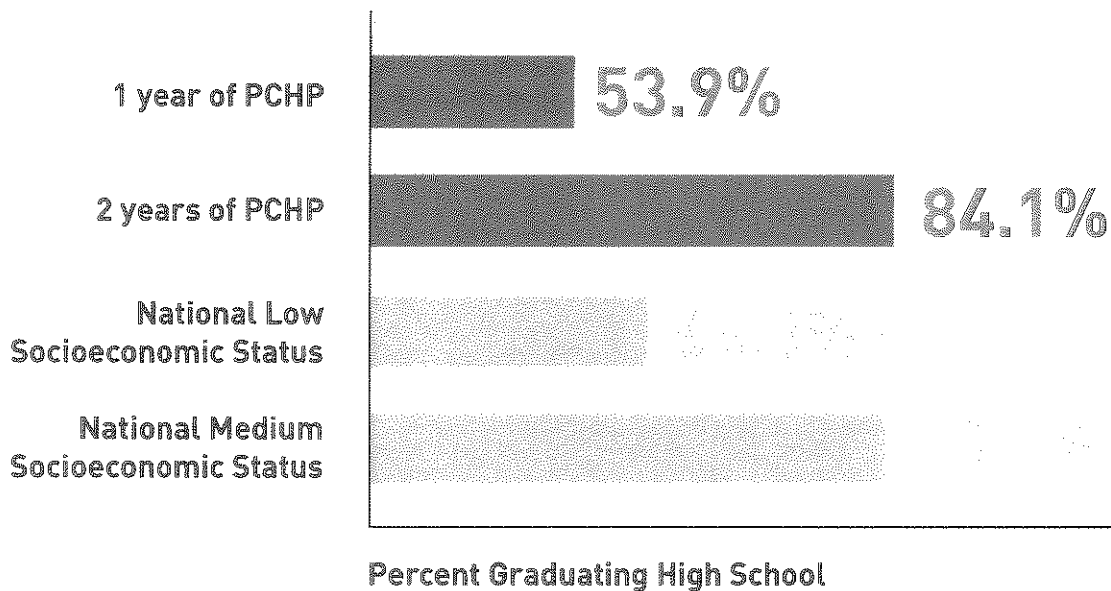




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## Increasing High School Graduation Rates for Low-Income Children



Levenstein, P., Levenstein, S., Shiminski, J. A., & Stolzberg, J. E. (1998). Long-term impact of a verbal interaction program for at-risk toddlers: An exploratory study of high school outcomes in a replication of the Mother-Child Home Program. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*; 19, 267-285.

This subject-randomized controlled trial in Pittsfield, Massachusetts found that participation in The Parent-Child Home Program improved high school graduation rates. Among 123 young adults who were eligible for the Program as toddlers, those who completed the full two years were significantly less likely than those from a small group of randomized non-program controls to have dropped out of high school (15.9% vs. 46.2%,  $p = 0.03$ ) and more likely to have graduated (84.1% vs. 53.9%,  $p = 0.01$ ). Their graduation rate matched the nationwide rate (83.7%) of middle-income students. When children who completed only one year of the Program were included, the gains over controls remained statistically significant. The Odds Ratio for high school graduation (a measure of the advantage of Program participants over controls), adjusted for baseline IQ, was 2.12 for the entire group assigned to receive the Program, 2.23 for those with baseline IQ of  $< 100$ , and 2.40 for those with baseline IQ of  $< 90$ , indicating that The Parent-Child Home Program provided the greatest advantage for the lowest-IQ toddlers. Initial acceptance rate for the Program had been 100%.

The key findings are:

1. Socio-economically disadvantaged toddlers who complete an authentic two-year Parent-Child Home Program replication bettered their chances of achieving high school graduation.
2. Even incomplete Parent-Child Home Program participation may improve student's chances of graduation.
3. Those toddlers who started in The Parent-Child Home Program with the lowest IQs reaped the most benefit.

Despite design limitation (small N of controls), there are important findings from this study. It was published in a juried journal, and, therefore, was reviewed by academic experts in the field prior to publication and deemed by the reviewers to be sufficiently compelling to be published. With regard to the issue of the sample size of the control group, it is important to emphasize that while the sample is small (n=15), we did manage to re-engage 71% of the initial sample (n=21) 16 or more years later. This percentage is well within the range of acceptable re-engagement of subjects in other longitudinal studies. In addition, each of the other cohorts in the study, larger to begin with, had re-engagement rates of over 60%, again well within the acceptable range for randomized control group studies spanning 16-20 years. Other studies of early childhood education interventions with similar designs have been accepted as evidence of effectiveness, while also reporting similar limitations in their designs (Schweinhart et. al., 1993; Reynolds & Temple, 2006).



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## The Program Model:

**Evidenced-based Replication Model = Quality Assurance**

### **The importance of Parent-Child interaction**

All children's first years should be filled with verbal stimulation to build language and literacy skills. Each day should be full of discovery and offer opportunities to gain new skills and learn new concepts. Fostering verbal interaction between parents and their young children is a critical component of healthy and successful development (Bruner, 1964 and 1966; Vygotsky 1962). The importance of this interaction has been further validated by the brain and language development research (Hart & Risley). Formative research on The Parent-Child Home Program's 1965 pilot project (then The Mother-Child Home Program) affirmed that this critical parent-child interaction could be strengthened by modeling reading, play, and conversation for parents and children in their own homes (Levenstein and Sunley 1968). Please see Proven Outcomes for more information.

### **School readiness: Bridging the preparation gap**

Across the country, millions of children begin kindergarten unprepared. They are "left behind" as early as the first day of school. These children have not adequately experienced quality verbal interaction or books. They have not been exposed to play and interactive experiences that encourage problem-solving and appropriate social-emotional development. They do not have the language skills they need to successfully interact with their teachers and their classmates. They may not be able to control their behaviors or emotions as well as other students. They may have heard more discouragements than encouragements. Without the skills they need to successfully adjust to the classroom, they begin their academic careers behind their peers. Many of these children will never catch up.

The Parent-Child Home Program bridges this "preparation gap" by helping families challenged by poverty, limited education, language and literacy barriers, and other obstacles to school success prepare their children to enter school ready to be in the classroom.

### **The approach: Modeling vs. teaching**

The Parent-Child Home Program utilizes a non-directive, non-didactic approach, modeling behaviors for parents that enhance children's development rather than teaching behaviors. Home Visitors help parents realize their role as their children's first and most important teacher, generating enthusiasm for learning and verbal interaction through the use of engaging books and stimulating toys. Parents are never given homework or assignments to complete but are encouraged to continue quality play and reading between visits with the books and toys they receive each week. The "light touch" employed by Parent-Child Home Program Home Visitors is non-intimidating and empowers parents, allowing them to prepare their children for school success, and take pride in their commitment to, and impact on, their child's education.

Every Parent-Child Home Program local site adheres to a carefully developed and well-tested model to ensure high quality services and consistent results:

### **Site Structure:**

- Each site is run by a Site Coordinator hired by the local partner agency and trained by The Parent-Child Home Program's National Center.
- The Site Coordinators are then prepared to recruit and train their local Home Visitors.
- Training in multicultural awareness and the ethics of home visiting are important components of the Parent-Child Home Program's training curriculum for Site Coordinators and Home Visitors. Respect and understanding are critical for successful home visiting relationships.
- Families participate in the two-year program when their children are two- and three-years-old, completing the Program as they turn four and transition into pre-kindergarten or Head Start. A child can, however, enter the Program as young as 16 months and some sites serve families with children up through four-years-old if there are no other pre-school services available in the community.

### **Home Visit Structure:**

- A Home Visitor is matched with the family and visits them for half-an-hour, twice-a-week on a schedule that is convenient for the family.
- On the first visit of each week, the Home Visitor brings a carefully-selected book or educational toy, the curricular material for the week, which is a gift to the family.
- In the twice-weekly home sessions with the parent (or other primary caregiver) and the child, the Home Visitor models verbal interaction, reading, and play activities, demonstrating how to use the books and toys to build language and emergent literacy skills and promote school readiness.
- Over the course of the two years in the Program, families acquire a library of children's books and a large collection of educational and stimulating toys.
- Each Program Year or Cycle consists of a minimum of 23 weeks of home visits or 46 home visits.

The Parent-Child Home Program model does allow for some modifications, if they do not affect the validity of the model and are approved in advance by the National Center, in order to appropriately serve families in diverse communities and a wide range of circumstances.



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## COST EFFECTIVENESS

Independent studies of the return on investment of early childhood programs reveal that early education investments yield a return that far exceeds the return on most public projects that are considered economic development. The quality of life for a child and the contributions the child makes to society as an adult can be traced back to the first few years of life. From birth until about 5 years old, a child undergoes tremendous growth and change. If this period of life includes support for growth in cognition, language, motor skills, adaptive skills, and social-emotional functioning, the child is more likely to succeed in school and later contribute to society. Without this support during these early years, however, a child is more likely to drop out of school, receive welfare benefits, and/or commit a crime.

Early childhood research demonstrates that the influence of early family and social risk factors on children's later adjustments is mediated through two important indicators of the quality of the child's home environment: (1) the parent-child relationship (specifically the affective relationship between the child and his/her primary caregiver); and (2) the provision of language/literacy stimulation in the home. Warm, responsive, and consistent routines and structure have been shown to be important predictors of children's school readiness skills. Home literacy activities, including shared book reading and early and consistent exposure to print, have been associated with children's emergent literacy skills. These early literacy skills are, in turn, strong predictors of children's language development, success in reading and writing, and overall school adjustment and attainment.

The Parent-Child Home Program, a national, evidence-based early childhood home visiting program, focuses on:

- Building positive parent-child verbal and non-verbal interaction;
- Promoting positive parenting skills;
- Enhancing the child's conceptual and social-emotional development;
- Developing pre-literacy skills that are essential for **school readiness**; and
- Creating language-rich home environments.

Research on the Program has consistently demonstrated that parents who participate in the Program exhibit more and consistent positive interaction and affect toward their children. The Program has consistently documented from pre- to post-program participation an increase in warm, responsive, and steady routines and interactions. Studies have also reliably shown that children who participate in the Program enter school with the requisite social-emotional skills (e.g. impulse control and attention to tasks).

Parent-Child Home Program research has consistently demonstrated that Program participants out-perform at-risk control or comparison groups on cognitive measures and have often closed the achievement gap with middle-class children. Randomized controlled trials demonstrated

cognitive benefits for toddlers immediately after Program participation. Follow-up studies at third grade showed long-term gains in intellectual abilities (e.g. math and reading achievement). More recent quasi-experimental studies have shown higher rates of school readiness among former Program participants than their counterparts in a comparison group; and a subject-randomized controlled trial has demonstrated higher high school graduation rates for Program children than those in their school district and nationally.

#### The Parent-Child Home Program's Return on Investment

- An independent report, produced by the City of New York Office of the Comptroller, calculates savings of \$210,000 per child due to reduced need for special education services resulting from home visiting programs that demonstrate reductions in the number of children entering school with developmental delays and subsequent decreased need for school-age special education services. Research on The Parent-Child Home Program demonstrates this pattern of findings.<sup>i</sup>
- Participating in home visiting programs yields long-term economic benefits. An independent report produced by the City of New York Office of the Comptroller estimates that participation in The Parent-Child Home Program could increase a participant's lifetime earnings potential by between \$600,000 and \$1 million dollars.<sup>ii</sup>
- A study of the job creation and earnings creation effects of The Parent-Child Home Program shows that the Program increases state residents' earnings by 5.66%. The study finds that The Parent-Child Home Program has such a high ratio of earnings effect to net program costs because the Program achieves a considerable increase in the high school graduation rate at a relatively low two-year program cost per child (\$4500). The study estimates that if The Parent-Child Home Program were implemented nationally the long-term effects on the economy would include:
  - 300,000 jobs;
  - \$53 billion in generated earnings; and
  - \$42 billion in long-run annual government revenue.<sup>iii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Hevesi, Alan G. "Building Foundations: Supporting Parental Involvement in a Child's First Years." A Report from the City of New York Office of the Comptroller. 2001.

<sup>ii</sup> Hevesi, Alan G. "Building Foundations: Supporting Parental Involvement in a Child's First Years." A Report from the City of New York Office of the Comptroller. 2001.

<sup>iii</sup> Bartik, Timothy J., "The Economic Development Effects of Early Childhood Programs." A Report for the Partnership for American's Economic Success. 2008. 23.