



Children's Service
Society of Wisconsin™

A member of Children's Hospital and Health System.

July 31, 2010

Mr. Harold F. Mayer
The Oscar G. and Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation
1 South Pinckney Street, Suite 312
Madison, WI 53703

RE: Interim Report for \$30,000 Grant Received January, 2010

Dear Mr. Mayer,

Fewer than half of the children in Madison's low-income families have the skills necessary to begin school. By five years of age, Madison children living in poverty significantly lag behind their peers in cognitive skills including reading readiness, number skills, problem solving, creativity and memory. Research shows that children that start school behind, stay behind.

Alarmed by this reality, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (CSSW) launched KinderReady, a community-wide initiative using evidence-based best practices in early childhood development and education. This program has a particular focus on serving at-risk families with children age birth to five from disadvantaged backgrounds in Madison, Wisconsin.

In January 2010, the Oscar G. and Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation generously approved a grant in the amount of \$30,000 as an investment in KinderReady: *Building Kindergarten-Ready Kids*. We are pleased to submit the following Interim Report detailing the progress of this grant to date.

We are extremely grateful to the Mayer Family for its partnership in KinderReady and the care, concern and compassion for children exhibited through your generosity. Together, we are empowering children to succeed in school and in life. Thank you for sharing our vision.

Should you have any questions relating to the following report or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Keri

Keri Brunelle
Development Manager

Dave

Dave Siewert
Development Director

Interim Report/Progress Summary on Identified Outcomes (Referencing Section IV in our 9/23/09 Proposal)

1) Increased kindergarten readiness

School readiness includes the readiness of the individual child, the school's readiness for children, and the ability of the family and community to support optimal early child development. Studies of early brain and child development reveal that modifiable factors in a child's early experience can greatly affect that child's learning trajectory. Many children enter kindergarten with limitations in their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development that might have been significantly diminished or eliminated through early identification of and attention to child and family needs. By increasing parents' level of knowledge and interaction with their children in these early formative years, many of these limitations can be minimized and allow a child to achieve the readiness necessary to be prepared for Kindergarten. Research has shown that providing in-home education and role modeling to these parents during this time is an effective way to increase this level of knowledge and interaction.

Forty-seven percent of KinderReady children are being raised by one or more parents who did not complete high school. KinderReady utilizes the Parents as Teachers evidence-based model for their in-home education. The service numbers for the program year 7/1/09-6/30/10 included 999 home visits to 102 children. A total of 88 families participated in KinderReady during this program year. When considering the entire family constellation, a total of 384 adults and children were serviced through KinderReady in the last year.

Outcomes of kindergarten readiness are measured through the Madison Metropolitan School District's (MMSD) "Kindergarten Screener". These results are based on the total number of children who completed the screener since KinderReady's inception in 2007. Of the KinderReady "graduates" that are currently enrolled in MMSD, 91% completed the optional "Kindergarten Screener". This is dramatically higher than the 60% (3 out of 5) of overall MMSD Kindergartners that complete the Screener. Other demographics of note include 77% of the KinderReady families have Spanish as the Home Language (compared to 14% of the MMSD general population) and 91% of KinderReady families qualify as "low income" as defined as qualifying for the free/reduced lunch (compared to 45% of the MMSD general population).

Of the KinderReady children who completed the Screener, twenty-three percent were considered to be 'Kindergarten Ready'. This is in comparison to 60% of the MMSD general population who completed the Screener. Of the KinderReady children who had Spanish as their home language, 29% were considered to be 'Kindergarten Ready' – an increase of 10% from previous years and is greater than the MMSD general population where 22% of children who had Spanish as their home language were considered 'Kindergarten Ready'. Of the KinderReady children who qualified as low income, 18% were considered to be 'Kindergarten Ready'. In comparison to the MMSD general population, 31% of children who qualified as low income were considered 'Kindergarten Ready'.

A highlight worth noting includes significant success in pre-literacy. Knowing letter sounds is a fundamental building block for literacy development. Although only a low percentage of our children meet the overall criteria for Kindergarten readiness, MMSD has reported that the percentage of KinderReady "graduates" showing proficiency in knowing their letter sounds is remarkable. Ninety-two percent of the KinderReady children demonstrated proficiency in knowing their letter sounds and is higher than that of the MMSD general population demonstrating this same proficiency.

Additionally, we are excited that, according to a recent MMSD teacher-rated 'child as learner' behavioral-assessment report, students that had been part of the KinderReady program performed at or above the same level as peer MMSD Kindergarten students in nearly all behaviors. These behaviors included a child being able to: accept responsibility for own behavior, complete assignments on time, demonstrate listening skills, demonstrate self-control, follow oral directions, organize materials and time, participate in classroom activities, persist in tasks until completion, respect the rights, diversity and feelings of others, solve conflicts appropriately, take positive risks in learning and social situations, and work cooperatively with others.

This finding is significant – that KinderReady children (high risk population and low Screener results) are even with the mainstream kids when looked at as "ready to learn".

2) Increased Parental Confidence, Knowledge and Skills

The KinderReady program utilizes and administers a Parent Knowledge survey after the first three months of participation and every six months subsequently. Statistical analysis of the parents' answers in this survey revealed four significant findings with regard to parents' changes in attitudes and perceptions relating to reading and playing activities.

- Parents report a significant increase in their actions (defined as reading to child, engaging in activities with child, and making connections with other families) following their participation in the KinderReady program.
- Parents report a significant increase in their parenting abilities (defined as ability to identify child's needs, to respond effectively to child, and to keep child safe and healthy) through their participation in the KinderReady program.
- Parents report a significant increase in their level of confidence (defined as in self as part, in setting limits, and in helping child learn) as a direct result of their participation in the KinderReady program.
- Parents report a significant increase in their level of knowledge (defined as of how child is developing, what behavior is typical, and brain development) through their participation in the KinderReady program.

CSSW also conducts quarterly Customer Satisfaction Surveys. Of those parents surveyed from the KinderReady program in first quarter 2010,

- 100% reported that they would recommend the KinderReady program to their family and friends,
- 100% of these parents rated the quality of the KinderReady services as very good or excellent.

We are confident that this level of engagement and satisfaction will continue to lead to outstanding achievements of this specific outcome goal.

3) Children at risk for developmental delays are identified & referred for early intervention services

The KinderReady program utilizes 2 developmental screening tools: the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and the ASQ-Social Emotional Questionnaire (ASQ-SE). These screening tools are administered at the beginning of a child's participation in the program and again at every age-appropriate interval. The results are documented and referrals tracked using Wisconsin's Secure Public Health Electronic Record Environment (SPHERE) database.

Of the participants in the KinderReady program, 100% are screened and the results are promptly sent to the child's medical home. Of those KinderReady participants who are identified for being at risk for developmental delays, 100% are referred to outside resources by the KinderReady staff for further evaluation and intervention services.

This year, 33% of KinderReady children have been identified with potential delays. For comparison, twenty-two percent of same-age children in the general statewide population are typically identified for being at risk for developmental delays. This finding suggests that the KinderReady program is working with more challenged and at-risk children and families.

4) Establish a Medical Home for Each Participating Child

The purpose of incorporating this goal in KinderReady's outcomes is our recognition of the importance that families establish roots in their communities while identifying vital community resources and support services and fostering consistent and appropriate healthcare for their children.

Our staff helps families establish a connection with a primary family physician and/or pediatrician with whom the family can build a long-lasting relationship – versus the more common occurrence of families seeing healthcare providers as simply a means to an end. A medical home then becomes a resource to the family for not just medical needs, but social, emotional, educational, and overall well-being needs.

One hundred percent of KinderReady parents are educated about the importance of and have been assisted in establishing a family Medical Home.

Looking Ahead

The KinderReady board of advisors – which includes representatives from Dane County Department of Human Services, Dane County & the City of Madison Department of Public Health, CUNA Mutual Group Foundation, United Way of Dane County, Family Enhancement Program Inc., Madison Metropolitan School District, and Children's Hospital and Health System – is actively monitoring KinderReady's progress toward these goals and while the outcomes at this point in time are not where they (and our staff) want them, they are absolutely confident that KinderReady is making tremendous strides in addressing Dane County's school preparedness crisis.

While the "Kindergarten Screener" scores present a challenge, this is not viewed as a crisis by KinderReady staff or our community-wide collaborative network of partners. We have seen improvements and expect to see that trend continue.

The Screener scores challenge is an opportunity for KinderReady staff and advisory board to look closely at our program components, our quality and detail of service, and to build on our strengths and the home visiting research in order to make impactful program improvements.

KinderReady is engaged in program improvement that may include:

- Greater purposeful integration of specific KinderReady – MMSD measures into the Parents As Teachers home visitation component of KinderReady and the use of a specific progress monitoring tool recently identified by literacy experts at MMSD. This will measure our children's progress in acquiring early learning skills and identify areas on which to concentrate more heavily.
- Keeping families engaged over a longer period of time and developing ways to transition them into Kindergarten by connecting parents to their Parent-Teacher Organizations/Associations, connecting parents to their child's teacher, using Parent-to Parent mentoring, and possibly introducing Americorps Volunteers as KinderReady partners.
- Enhancing KinderReady by collaborating with the Literacy Network to access their "Family Literacy and English in the Schools" parent education program. This program could teach English to Spanish speaking parents so that they can communicate better with their child's school and teachers and more actively engage in their child's academic life.
- Continuing to capitalize on the array of services and expertise housed under the Children's Service Society of Wisconsin umbrella. KinderReady works in close collaboration with other CSSW programs, including Joining Forces for Families; Community Support

Specialists; Mobile Play & Learn; our Family Resource Center; and Child & Family Counseling. When a family becomes involved in KinderReady, there is number of impactful CSSW programs and services that surround them. CSSW serves thousands of children and caregivers, supporting and educating them through the early years of parenting to build a strong foundation for Dane County kids.

Children's Service Society of Wisconsin is innovative in engaging in excellent outcomes-based research on the impact of KinderReady. We remain resolute in the implementation of KinderReady as a community-wide initiative using evidence-based best practices in early childhood development and education and providing this program to at-risk, minority, low-income families with children age birth to five in Madison, Wisconsin.

We are extremely grateful to the Oscar G. and Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation for your investment in KinderReady and the care, concern and compassion for children that it demonstrates. Together, we are empowering children to succeed in school and in life. Thank you for your partnership.

Should you have any questions relating to this Interim Grant Report or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact either Keri Brunelle (kbrunelle@chw.org or 608-442-4150) or Dave Siewert (dsiewert@chw.org or 414-266-6305).