AVANCE DALLAS PROGRAM: 2013-14

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At-a-Glance

AVANCE-Dallas, a non-profit organization has provided foundational education services through the Parent-Child Education Program to at-risk children and their families in Dallas ISD campuses since 2002. The program implements two major components, early childhood development and parent education. The program is offered free of charge to parents and is in 32 elementary campuses; however, 10 of the campuses receive Title III funding (a total of $300,000) and are the focus of this report.

Overview

The AVANCE-Dallas’ Parent-Child Education Program served low-income, Hispanic children, ages zero through three, and their parents. Mothers met weekly for four hours while their children were cared for in an age-appropriate educational setting. AVANCE’s nationally recognized program, teaches parents that they are their children’s first and most important teachers and that the foundation for education begins at home. Parent participation in the Parent Education program can lead to better parenting skills and an increased appreciation for education that leads them to improve their own literacy and professional skills.

The children served in the AVANCE program are not registered Dallas ISD students so recruitment for the program includes door-to-door solicitation within campus boundaries, public service announcements through Univision (Spanish television station), presentations at Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and pre-kindergarten and kindergarten round-ups.

Eligibility criteria include ethnicity, age, and low income status; however, verification of income is not required. Although children ages 0-3 are the target group for the program, exceptions are made to include four year olds who were not accepted into a Dallas ISD pre-kindergarten program.

In 2013-14 AVANCE program services were provided at ten elementary level campuses selected by the Multi-Lingual Education (M-LEP) department: David G. Burnet, F.P. Caillet, Esperanza “Hope” Medrano, Obadiah Knight, Maple Lawn, James Bowie, Anson Jones, John F. Kennedy, Urban Park, and Annie Webb Blanton. A total of 340 parents and 394 children at the participating campuses were registered to receive services in 2013-14. Of these totals, 88.5 percent of parents and 89.8 percent of children completed the program.

Early Childhood Development

The purpose of the Early Childhood Development program is to advance Hispanic children's learning early on so that they can succeed in school and for the rest of their lives. Classes are provided during the foundational years of birth to age three. Teaching environments are developmentally appropriate for infants, toddlers and preschoolers and were created with the development of children’s language abilities, cognitive and social skills, and an interest in learning in mind.

Six learning centers are used in the classroom that make learning and discovery an enjoyable experiences for the children as they explore math, art, dramatic play, blocks, writing, and reading. Several activities are used to strengthen phonological awareness, social skills, and literacy development including:

- alliteration exercises,
- rhyme challenges,
- word games,
- teacher-child conversations,
- peer-to-peer games,
- alphabet cards, and
- story time.

Thus, children are given an educational foundation before entering school, providing them confidence and the ability to succeed.

Parent Education

Teaching parents the importance of their role in their child’s education is the best way to ensure their children succeed later in school. Parents are taught by parent educators to develop creative, instructive relationships with their children during the fundamental years of life.

The parent education program provided one day of training per week per campus with the exception of Burnet, Bowie, and Kennedy which provided an additional day of training based on need. A total of 32 sessions were offered through the year; however, parents were required to attend 27 sessions within a nine-month period for a total of 150 hours. The weekly sessions covered:

- parenting,
- toy making, and
- community resources.
In addition, important components of the parent education program included:

- intensive early childhood classes,
- parent education,
- home visitation, and
- family literacy (parents become active readers with their children).

Each AVANCE program participant was to receive an average of seven home visits by a trained toy-making instructor/home visitor. Home visits were designed to work with each participating parent and their child. Home visitors were to observe and document the mother-child interactions.

**Outcomes**

Children were administered a pre- and post-cognitive and development test that included;

- *Early Learning Accomplishment Profile (E-LAP)* for ages zero through 2, and
- *Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP-3)* for ages three and four.

Testing was administered in September and again in May. Children ages three and four, who showed a delay in development were tested in February and results reported to the admitting campus. Outcome data for 2013-14 were not available for this report.

Parents were administered a pre- and post-AVANCE Dallas Parent Questionnaire to determine levels of success in parenting knowledge and skills. Parents also kept track of the number of times they read to their child and recorded this on the Weekly-Sign-in Form. The goal was for parents to increase reading from one day or less per week to five times per week by the end of the program. Outcome data for 2013-14 were not available for this report.

**Summary and Recommendations**

The AVANCE-Dallas’ Parent-Child Education Program served low-income, Hispanic children, ages zero through three, and their parents at ten elementary campuses in 2013-14. Through the program’s implementation of two components, childhood development and parent education, children were given an educational foundation before entering school and parents were taught that they are their children’s first and most important teachers and that the foundation for education starts at home.

This report provides only general information about the program, as outcome data were not made available for evaluation. It is recommended for 2014-15 that AVANCE and/or participating schools collect participant data and provide it to program evaluators for analysis to determine program effectiveness.

For more information, contact Program Evaluation at 972-925-6457