



SPLASH! A DAY OF PRESCHOOL!

MAY 2022

ISPY PROGRAM MID-YEAR REPORT



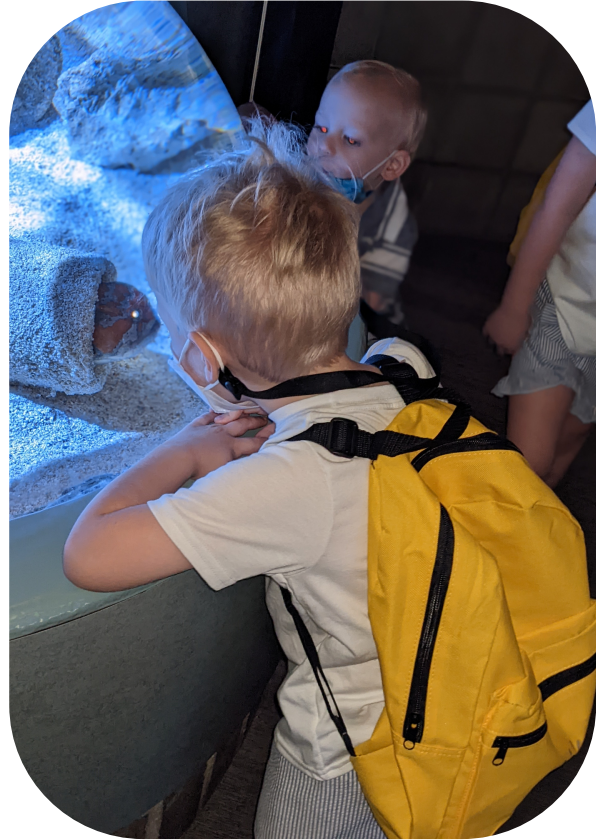
EARLY LEARNING
COALITION OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY



INTRODUCTION

Early and frequent integration of print experiences with play-based exploration launch preschool children into oral language learning and content-area discoveries, cultivating an appetite and aptitude for literacy. Research indicates that vocabulary development—linked to conceptual growth and comprehension—predicts student academic achievement throughout the elementary, middle, and high school grades. Intelligence increases as vocabulary continues to develop.

The iSpy program provides high-quality, content-rich classroom books, learning manipulatives, and PreK teacher resources to increase early literacy access and enhance storytelling and play-based learning opportunities. Engaging, informative books and exploratory tools are also distributed to families of the PreK children to extend literacy experiences and science and math exploration at home. Such evidence-based experiences build conceptual understandings and foundational literacies to set preschool children up for future vocabulary and comprehension success across the disciplines.



VALUE OF EARLY LEARNING

Investments in early childhood development (ECD) are predicted to have substantial returns on investment over the long term. Longitudinal studies have found ECD program returns range from \$7 to \$14 to individuals and society on each dollar spent on early education (Heckman et al., 2010; Reynolds et al., 2011; Rolnick and Grunewald, 2003).

ECD programs also promote educational equity in achievement, ability, health, and adult success. Investment in early education for disadvantaged children from birth to age 5 helps reduce the achievement gap, reduce the need for special education, increase the likelihood of healthier lifestyles, lower the crime rate, and reduce overall social costs (Heckman, 2011).

The Center for High Impact Philanthropy has written about the return on investment for early childhood education programs.



PLAY-BASED LEARNING

Researchers like Neuman, Roskos, Wright, and Lenhart (2007) have long described the relationship between children's exploration and manipulating objects, make-believe play, and creative games with preschoolers' literacy development. When children are provided with supportive and stimulating environments, they eagerly engage in language learning, literacy practices, math play, and science exploration. Opportunities for both "free" and "structured" play produce the foundation for oral language, content-rich vocabulary, conceptual understandings, and literacies (Wright and Neuman, 2009).

VIDEO 1

Play-based Language Interaction

Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy

Module 4: Oral Language
Session 10

Check out these examples of play-based language interactions!





ABOUT ISPY

The iSpy program encourages play-based learning and early literacy by providing students with opportunities to directly engage with background content. The Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County partnered with Zoo Tampa, the Glazer Children's Museum, and Tampa Aquarium to design a program that promotes content-rich learning around four topics:

- SHAPES IN NATURE
- SENSES IN NATURE
- THINGS THAT FLY
- REAL VERSUS NOT REAL

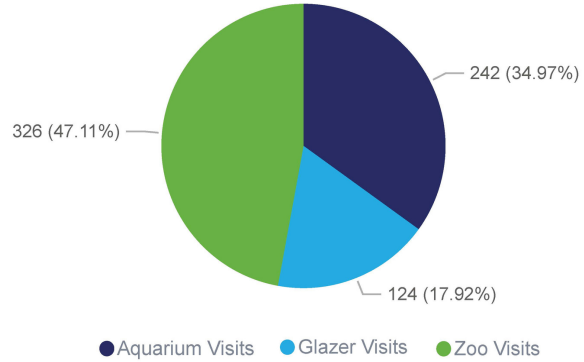


Participating classrooms are stocked with scientific equipment, classroom libraries, and suggestions for science activities related to digital field trips. Students and families are given free passes to Zoo Tampa, the Glazer Children's Museum, and the Tampa Aquarium. Students are also provided with age-appropriate equipment like magnifying glasses, binoculars, and books on related science and nature topics.

Anticipated program outcomes include increased student vocabulary, student awareness of STEAM careers, increased time for engaged play in classrooms, increased environmental stewardship, increased parent engagement, and increased learning in cultural institutions.

ISPY ATTENDANCE REPORT

ATTRACTION VISITS - PERCENTAGE



Membership Usage

692 Total Number of Attraction Visits	429 Number of Memberships Used	275 Children Visited 1+ Attractions
--	---	--

VISIT BREAKDOWN BY ATTRACTION



242
Total Visits

82
Repeat Visits

432
Family Exposure



124
Total Visits

22
Repeat Visits

213
Family Exposure



326
Total Visits

65
Repeat Visits

547
Family Exposure

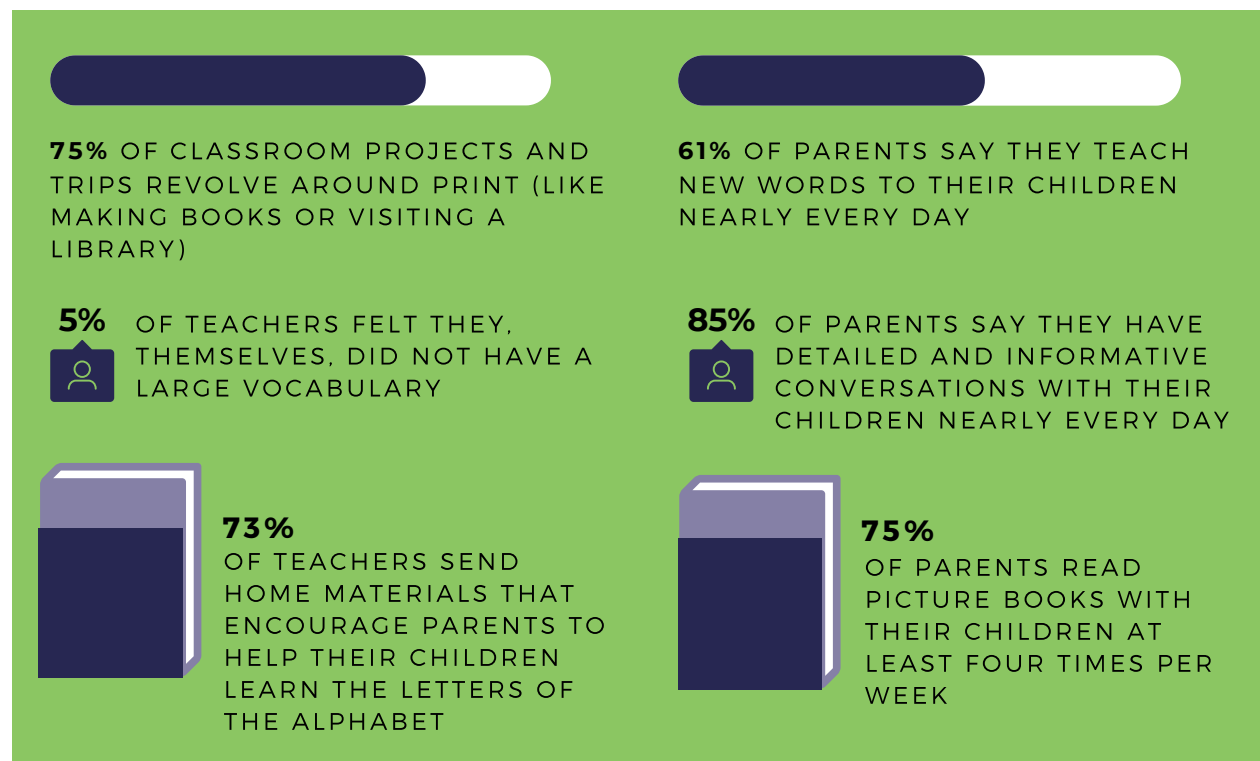
Updated May 9th, 2022
Aquarium through April 30th
Glazer and Zoo through
March 31st

PROGRAM EVALUATION

RMC Research Corporation (RMC), based in Tampa, is conducting an evaluation of the iSpy program. Research questions for this evaluation include:

1. What are factors that encourage and discourage family visits to cultural venues?
2. How do teachers use the classroom resources provided through the iSpy program?
3. What are the best ways to measure student and classroom effects of the iSpy program?
4. How often do program participants visit cultural venues?
5. What are the characteristics of venues most visited by participants?

In fall 2021, RMC sent out pre-surveys to parents/caregivers and teachers considering signing up for the program. The surveys asked about relevant literacy activities adults were participating in with their PreK children and students. Selected survey findings are presented below:



Other evaluation activities include student assessments, teacher and parent/caregiver focus groups, analyses of program attendance data, and a second survey administration. These activities will be completed by the end of the school year, and a report will be available in June 2022.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

- Include “thought partners” from the STEM field to improve iSpy curriculum and activities.
- Assess classroom and home literacy environments compared to pre-program survey results.
- Conduct longitudinal studies to examine the longitudinal effects of iSpy on student literacy, STEM concept acquisition, and kindergarten readiness.
- Examine barriers and conductors to student attendance at partner venues.
- Create family activities and lesson plans to go with student materials, books, and venue visits.

CALL TO ACTION

HOW CAN I SUPPORT EARLY LEARNING AND KINDERGARTEN READINESS IN MY COMMUNITY?

- Through groups like alumni organizations, faith-based groups, or individually
- By helping children in need, such as those in Title I programs, children with disabilities, linguistically and culturally diverse children, and children in foster care
- By donating money, providing books or other resources, or giving time in the form of reading to students or tutoring



REFERENCES

Heckman, J. J., Moon, S. H., Pinto, R., Savelyev, P. A., & Yavitz, A. (2010). The rate of return to the HighScope Perry Preschool Program. *Journal of Public Economics*, 94(1-2), 114-128.

Heckman, J. J. (2011). The economics of inequality: The value of early childhood education. *American Educator*, 35(1), 31.

Neuman, S. B., Roskos, K., Wright, T., & Lenhart, L. (2007). *Nurturing knowledge: Linking literacy to math, science, social studies, and much more*. Scholastic.

Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., Ou, S. R., Arteaga, I. A., & White, B. A. (2011). School-based early childhood education and age-28 well-being: Effects by timing, dosage, and subgroups. *Science*, 333(6040), 360-364.

Rolnick, A., & Grunewald, R. (2003). Early childhood development: Economic development with a high public return. *The Region*, 17(4), 6-12.

Wright, T. S. & Neuman, S. B. (2009). *Purposeful, Playful Pre-K*. American Educator.

