

10. ELCAA: Analyzing the Results & Potential Impact

Collect all the community asset information that you have collected from focus groups, interviews and lists of potential collaborators and partners. Tease out of everything the things that might call for the changes in services, programming, outreach to underserved population segments and partnership development. Consider scheduling a staff meeting to share what you have with your colleagues, your supervisor/library director.

Issues and questions for staff discussion about this data and your conclusions gathered might include:

- Are there transportation issues that make it difficult for families with young children to come to the library? If so, should we consider off-site services?
- Are there particular geographic, economic, or ethnic/racial groups we might want to target for early childhood services? How might we reach these groups to inform them about our services and invite them to participate?
- Are there community partners who could help us reach targeted populations?
- Are there elected officials who would be interested in what we want to do with families of young children?
- Are there funding sources within our local communities (businesses, Chamber of Commerce, donors) to whom library support would be appealing?
- How can we get our Board engaged and interested in helping us improve early literacy enhancements in the library?
- What are the barriers to using our services and resources that we could eliminate or ease? Language? Negative perceptions of government agencies? Lack of information about library services? Unfriendly physical plant? Our own rules and policies?
- Are there barriers to using our services and resources that we cannot address without additional funding or changes in policy? Do we want to tackle these? If so, how?
- Identify “competitors” offering early childhood services: Gymboree programs, storytimes at book stores, recreation centers, and what can we do to turn them into partners?
- Identify gaps in early childhood services. Are there certain population groups that are underserved and why? Geographic isolation? Language? Transportation? Children with special needs? Is there a need for early childhood programs in the early evening? Weekends? Do we need to offer an early childhood program that targets nannies if the community has them?
- Who are the stakeholders and other potential partners that could help us bridge a gap in early childhood services?
- What can our public library system do to assist us in improving our early literacy services?

The bottom line question is: How do we plan and implement a holistic program of early childhood services? Consider staff training, collections, partners, times and places for programming, outreach to target populations, and methods for evaluating the effectiveness of any changes.