



FIRST 5 SANTA CRUZ COUNTY



ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT



July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

October 2023

Raising A Reader

Program Description

Raising A Reader (RAR) fosters healthy brain development, supports parent-child bonding, and motivates families to read aloud with their children which helps develop the early literacy skills that are critical for school success. Raising A Reader (RAR) began operation in Watsonville during the last quarter of the 2005-06 fiscal year and has served almost 31,000 children since then. The program provides a way for children and their parents or caregivers to participate in a weekly rotating book bag program through early care and education settings.

On a weekly basis, participating RAR classrooms and family child care homes provide children with bags that are filled with various award-winning books, which they borrow and bring home to their parents. RAR provides training and information to parents and caregivers on how to effectively share these books with their children at home, to help develop their children’s early literacy skills.

RAR also connects families with their local public library, and at the end of the program children are given a book bag of their own as a way to encourage families to continue the practice of borrowing and reading books together.

What Parents Are Saying

“While our older child (age 3 ½) is participating in the program, our younger child (1 ½) also loves the books brought home from school and is always interested in looking at them as well.”

“It’s great to get new books to read, since my son gets tired of the books we have [at home]. I also love that there is new vocabulary and themes than what we would normally get.”

- Raising A Reader, Parent Retrospective Survey

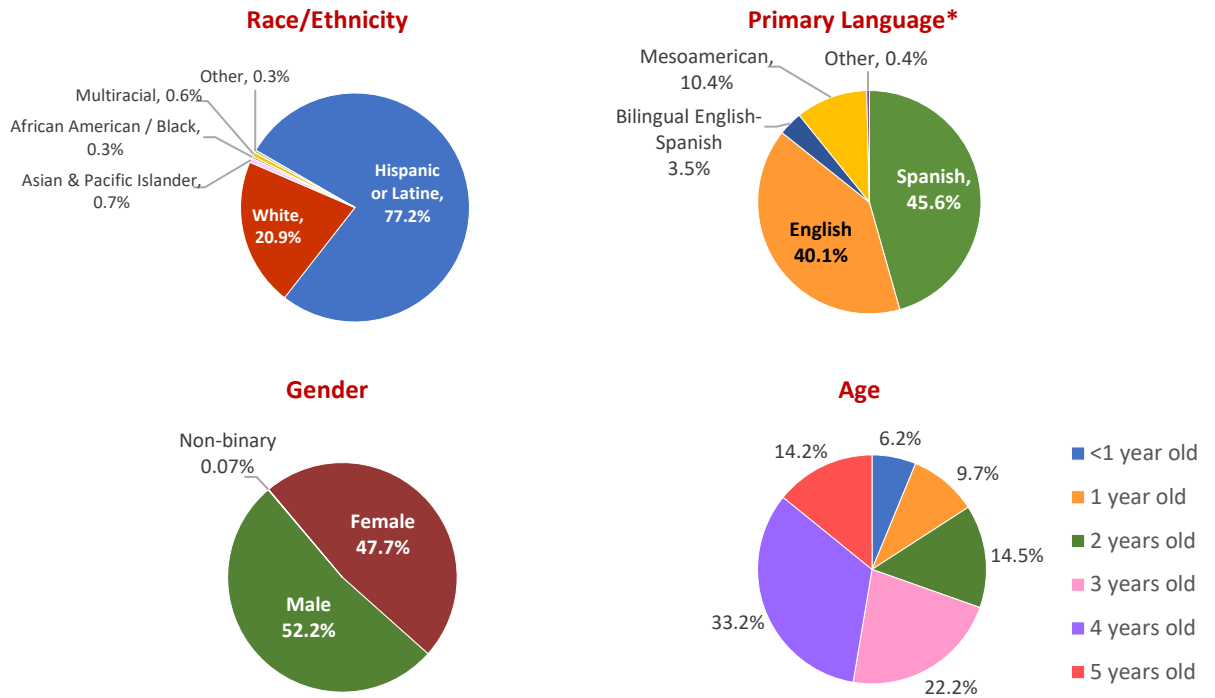
Population Served

| | New | Existing | 2022-23 Total |
|----------|-------|----------|---------------|
| Children | 1,369 | 1,541 | 2,910 |

Source: First 5 CCD database for July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023.

Note: “New” children are those who began participating in Raising A Reader for the first time during this fiscal year. “Existing” children are those who began participating in Raising A Reader before this fiscal year and continued their participation into this fiscal year. The population numbers include children reported by Raising A Reader, and also children who were enrolled in this program through Families Together.

Figure 54: Demographics of Children (ages 0-5) participating in Raising A Reader (2022-23)



Source: First 5 CCD database for July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023.
 * “Mesoamerican” languages include Mixtec, Oaxacan, and Zapoteco. “Other” languages include Bilingual-Other and other languages.
 Note: These demographics are for the children enrolled in classrooms providing Raising A Reader.
 N: (Race/Ethnicity)=2,906; (Primary Language)=2,910; (Gender)= 2,901; (Age)=2,910.

Program Objective: Support existing sites offering Raising A Reader

RAR staff visit participating child care sites to monitor how well the program is operating, and to provide refresher books or trainings as needed. Indeed, as more and more sites in the county have implemented RAR over the years, the objectives of RAR have shifted from adding new sites to maintaining and supporting the existing ones.

The following results show the number of sites that have been supported during the past year. Some sites may be listed more than once if they required additional assistance throughout the year.

| Existing Sites | Number of Visits at Existing Sites ¹ | | 2022-23 Total |
|---|---|-----------------------------|---------------|
| | Family Child Care Home | Preschool/Child Care Center | |
| Between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023, sustain, monitor and support 200 existing RAR sites | 169 | 113 | 282 |

Source: Raising A Reader Biannual and Annual Progress Reports, 2022-23.
¹ Some sites may be visited more than once. Additionally, the actual number of classrooms participating in Raising A Reader is likely to be higher than the total number of sites, as one site may include more than one classroom.

In addition to supporting existing sites, RAR also enrolled 5 new sites in 2022-23.

| Number of New Sites Implemented since July 1, 2022 | | 2022-23 Total |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Family Child Care Home | Preschool/Child Care Center | |
| 2 | 3 | 5 |

Source: Raising A Reader Biannual and Annual Progress Reports, 2022-23.

Outcome Objective: Parents will spend more time reading or sharing books with their child

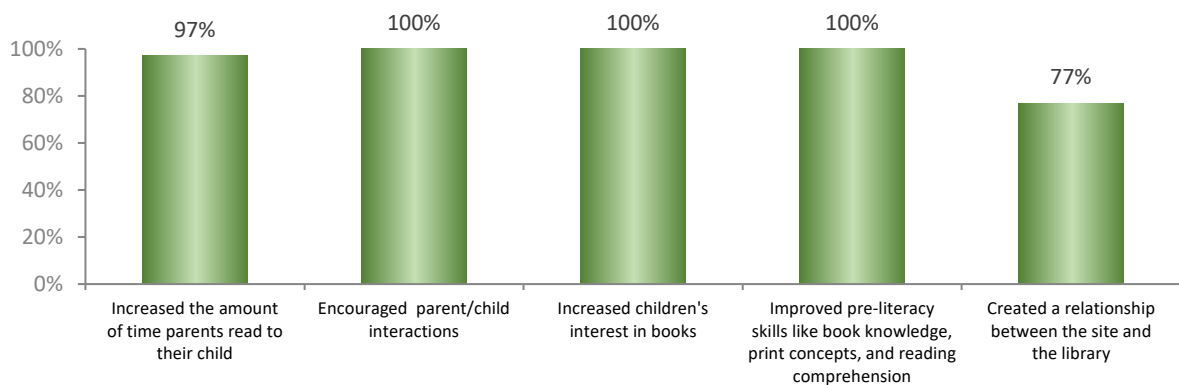
Two surveys were conducted to help assess the effect of Raising A Reader on the amount of time parents spent reading to their children, the interest children had in books, and the improvement in children’s pre-literacy skills.

Provider/Teacher Refresher Survey

Raising A Reader staff uses the *Provider/Teacher Refresher Survey* to measure their perceptions of the impact of the RAR program at their sites.

Results show that RAR providers are noticing that the program is having a great effect on both parents and children. The vast majority of providers report that parents are reading with their children more frequently and are encouraging more interactions with them, and that the RAR program has increased children’s interest in books, improved their pre-literacy skills, and helped create a relationship between the RAR sites and their local library.

Figure 55: Percentage of Providers who stated that RAR had an impact on these key pre-literacy areas (2022-23)



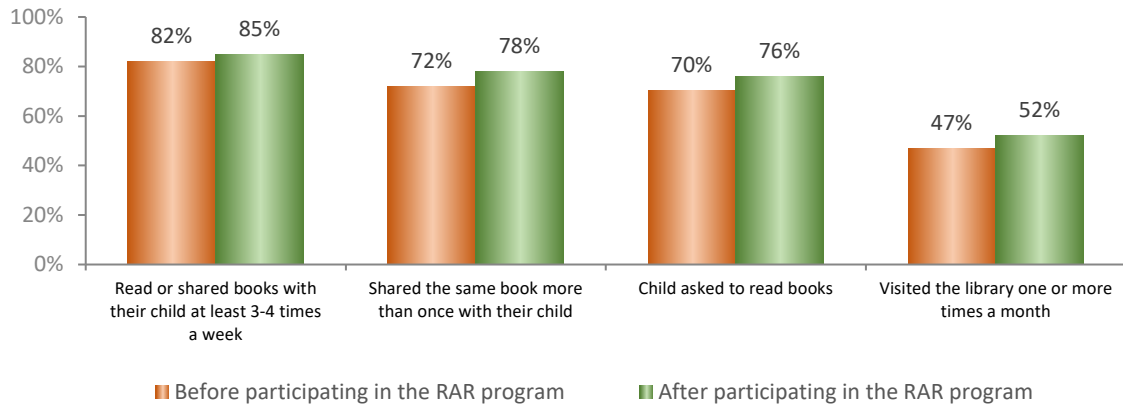
Source: Raising A Reader, *Annual Progress Report*, Provider/Teacher Refresher Survey results, 2022-23. N=38.

Parent Retrospective Survey

Raising A Reader distributed a *Parent Retrospective Survey* to parents participating in the program, asking them to self-report how often they performed certain activities with their children before and after their participation in the RAR program. The survey was distributed via email, uploaded to Learning Genie (an online family engagement service), and QR codes were distributed on paper that connected parents to the online survey. Families completed the survey on their phones or computers.

Results show that more parents are practicing key pre-literacy activities with their children after their participation in RAR, such as reading a book with their child at least 3-4 times a week, sharing the same book more than once with their child, the child asking to read books, and visiting the library one or more times a month.

Figure 56: Percentage of RAR Parents who practiced these key pre-literacy activities with their child (2022-23)



Source: Raising A Reader, Annual Progress Report, *Parent Retrospective Survey* results, 2022-23. N=100.

