

ST. HELENA PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

St. Helena Preschool For All (SHPFA) is a non-profit dedicated to providing opportunities for three and four-year old children to attend preschool. With the support of the St. Helena Unified School District, five private preschool programs and numerous local donors, the program provides scholarships to children from low-income families who would not be able to attend preschool otherwise. The program also provides participating families with ongoing parenting education and hands-on opportunities to support their children's learning and development.

Measuring Program Impact. In 2020, SHPFA hired consultant Stephanie Parry, MPA, to evaluate the impact of program strategies on children's future academic achievement and on parent engagement in their children's education. Using parent survey data, participant demographics and student achievement data provided by St. Helena Primary School, the evaluator was able to provide an assessment of the program's impact on the children and families served between Fall 2016 and Spring 2019.

Between Fall 2016 and Spring 2019, SHPFA served 34 children, who were primarily Spanish-speaking (97%) Latinos living in low-income households (94%). Fifty-six percent (56%) of SHPFA alumni had the opportunity to participate in two years of early childhood education, with 15 children attending preschool for two years, and 4 children completing one year of preschool plus one year of transitional kindergarten. All of these children were enrolled at St. Helena Primary School during the 2019-20 school year.

Overall, the positive outcomes and impact of the program serve as strong indicators of the SHPFA program's success over the past three years.



Key Finding #1: SHPFA alumni begin school with better social and emotional skills than their peers with no preschool experience.

88% of SHPFA alumni demonstrated key social emotional skills needed for school success, compared to 44% of kindergartners with no early childhood education.



Key Finding #2: SHPFA alumni begin school with better English Language skills than their peers with no preschool experience.

70% of SHPFA alumni entered kindergarten with at least beginning English Language skills, compared with only 17% of kindergartners with no early childhood education. Students who completed two years of early childhood education are more likely to score in the top two levels of English Language Development assessments in grades K-2 than students with only one year of preschool.



Key Finding #3: SHPFA alumni parents are confident supporting their child's learning.

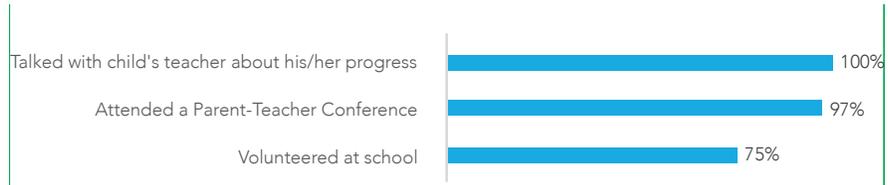
97% of alumni parents report feeling very or fairly confident supporting their child's learning. Parents' confidence in their own abilities as their child's teacher is further demonstrated in their efforts to support their children's literacy: 87% of SHPFA

alumni parents report reading to their children at least three times a week.



Key Finding #4:
SHPFA alumni
parents are
highly engaged
in their children's

education.



All alumni parents report active engagement at St. Helena Primary School: 100% have attended at least two school events and 67% have attended four or more events, accounting for almost all school gatherings and functions.



Key Finding #5: SHPFA alumni have better early literacy skills than their peers with no preschool experience.

55% of SHPFA alumni kindergartners scored at or above literacy benchmarks in Fall 2019. 100% of kindergartners with no early childhood education scored well below literacy benchmarks in Fall 2019. SHPFA alumni who completed two years of early childhood education were more likely to score in the top two levels on literacy assessments in grades K-2 than students with only one year of early childhood education.



Key Finding #6: SHPFA alumni parents feel prepared for school but lack essential Kindergarten readiness information.

88% of families said that they were well prepared for school because of their participation in SHPFA, but 18% of parents said they needed more specific information around early literacy skills, activities to do at home and creating a home routine that supports learning.

Recommendations for Program Development and Impact Assessment. To expand the impact of the SHPFA program on children's academic achievement and parent engagement in children's education, SHPFA should consider implementing the following program improvement strategies:

1. Further develop parent education strategies to include specific information about services offered at St. Helena Primary School and additional kindergarten readiness activities that parents can use at home to support their child's healthy development and learning.
2. Collaborate with participating preschools to develop an annual preschool assessment tool to measure growth in children's social and emotional skills, English Language development and early literacy skills while attending preschool programs.
3. Obtain longitudinal assessment data from multiple literacy and language development benchmarks for both SHPFA alumni and students with no preschool experience to better measure and compare growth.