

Literacy Integrated Family Engagement:
An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of a Family Engagement Program

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Kansas Reading Roadmap's family engagement program, LIFE (Literacy Integrated Family Engagement). My goal was to use surveys, personal interviews, and compare and contrast student reading scores to determine the impact of the program on the parents, students, and families of those involved. Participants included parents of the children in the LIFE program, LIFE staff, and all students in grades kindergarten through third grade at Neosho Heights Elementary School in Oswego, Kansas. Parents were given a pre- and post-survey asking about family dynamics, their knowledge of the school reading score system, and their relationship with their child. Four parents from each LIFE cycle were randomly selected to participate in an interview to ask their opinion of the LIFE program. Additionally, LIFE staff were interviewed to determine their overall thoughts and opinions on the program. Through this study, my hope was to determine how effective the program has been both in helping the students involved produce higher reading scores and creating healthy family habits for the LIFE participants.

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Literacy Integrated Family Engagement

An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of a Family Engagement Program

Introduction

Research shows that when families are involved with schools and other parents within the community, they “are more likely to reach out to their child’s school and to each other for support” (Kansas Reading Roadmap, 2016, p. 3). This building of community then provides the students involved with a system of support comprised of a growing network of families and school personnel. Within the small community of Oswego, Kansas, many families lack the support of each other and have limited relationships with the local school. Family engagement in the local elementary school is limited to classroom holiday parties. This, however, is not enough. With its new program, LIFE, Kansas Reading Roadmap (KRR) is striving to build a community of connected parents and staff within school districts across the state of Kansas. Along with the benefit of parental support, the program also offers a strategy to improve literacy for children in grades kindergarten through third grade.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the KRR LIFE program within the K, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades of an elementary school in the Oswego, Kansas School District. This was accomplished by implementing the KRR LIFE program into the primary grades and measuring its impact during the 2016-2017 school year. The impact was measured by comparing before and after reading statistics of the

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children involved with the program, evaluating the pre- and post-surveys completed by the parents, and interviewing parents and LIFE staff members.

Review of the Literature

Family engagement programs offer meaningful activities and events in which schools provide families with opportunities to support their students' learning and developmental processes. These programs can become a valuable community resource. These resources, in turn, benefit the families and help support parents as they raise their children. Children raised in communities with multiple resources available are provided with more opportunities, which promotes higher rates of school and social success. "Living in a socio-economically deprived, underdeveloped community, has a negative impact on child development" (My Virtual Medical Centre, 2010).

Statistics show that when families are engaged and active in the school system, students are more likely to succeed. "A synthesis...concluded that there is a positive relationship between family engagement and improved academic achievement" (National dropout prevention center, 2016). Recognizing the need of a strong family engagement program, KRR developed a new program, LIFE (Literacy Integrated Family Engagement), to help families better support their students' academic journey. This new program has several elements, all geared toward student and family success. Each week these activities are repeated, and more activities are introduced, to provide the families with consistency and to "build comfort and familiarity throughout the program" (Kansas Reading Roadmap, 2016, p. 5). These components are listed, defined, and studied below.

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Family Greeting

Each LIFE meeting opens with a greeting. Every family, along with staff members, are given the opportunity to share briefly about their week. This provides families with an introduction, offers supportive listening, and sets the tone for the night. A major component of the overall program is to provide a supportive social network for families. This greeting time opens the door for this network to begin growing. Providing a set of connections for families can greatly improve family dynamics and set the child up for success in school and in the community, as well as developmentally. “The children of parents who have strong and supportive social relationships are more likely to develop positive social relationships themselves and having positive and supportive social relationships and networks improves a child’s development” (My Virtual Medical Centre, 2010).

Family Meals

Creating a routine for families has been known to help in reducing the risk of family crises. These crises can be physical, emotional, or relational. “Examples of such family crises resulting from family stressors are episodes of domestic violence, substance abuse (relapses), illness from weakened immune systems, divorce, accidents, children being abused, or neglected, etc” (McDonald, n. d.). In order to help reduce some of these stressors, LIFE has structures built in to create healthy habits in families.

Home life, for many families, is very busy, and family dinners are often elusive or non-existent. Research states, however, that “having dinner together as a family at least four times a week has positive effects on child development” (University of Florida,

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2008-2012). Some of the benefits of family mealtime include: relationships, better nutrition, portion size control, stability, cost effectiveness, development of cooking and social skills, and an introduction to new foods (Extension, 2010, p. 1). According to the article, *Do Family Meals Really Make a Difference?* by Cook and Dunifon (2012), evidence also suggests that “children who take part in family meals are less likely to be overweight, eat more healthy foods, have less delinquency, greater academic achievement, improved psychological well-being, and positive family interactions” (p. 2).

KRR’s program, LIFE, provides families the opportunity to engage in a family meal. Providing this activity for LIFE families helps to normalize the act of sitting down and eating together. “Establishing a habit of eating together is a building block of a constructive family environment” (Kansas Reading Roadmap, 2016, p. 5). The hope, is that families will establish a routine of eating together and continue the pattern at home, which will, hopefully, help lower risk factors for the children involved.

Attuned Listening

Attuned listening and the development of emotional vocabulary are influential factors in helping families, especially parents and children, empathize with each other. As part of the LIFE program, families are asked to participate in activities in which attuned listening and emotional vocabulary are practiced. Week two of LIFE, parents and children practice simply listening to each other through the attuned listening exercise. One participant will speak for two minutes, while the other listens. After the two minutes are up, the second participant will have 30 seconds to reflect on their experience. Participants will then switch places. In weeks three to five, attuned listening is paired

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with emotions. During these sessions, the emotions of fear, anger, sadness, hurt, and joy are emphasized. (A brief description of these emotions can be found in Appendix A.)

The activity of sharing is the same as week 2; however, the topic of the conversation will involve one of the five emotions listed above. When reflecting, the partner will use the words, “You sound sad,” “That sounds scary,” “It sounds like you are angry,” etc.

Identifying the emotions being felt will help the families begin to recognize those feelings and be able to handle situations appropriately. The attuned listening exercises for weeks six and seven are similar, but involve family stories that contain emotions.

According to the article, *Enhancing Emotional Vocabulary in Young Children*, by Joseph and Strain (2016),

Emotional literacy is the ability to recognize, label, and understand feelings in one’s self and others. It is a prerequisite skill to emotional regulation, successful interpersonal interactions, and problem solving, and is one of the most important skills a child is taught in the early years. (p. 21)

Stonsy (1998), in his article, *Compassionate Parenting*, concurs, stating that “Research has shown that emotional intelligence is more important to success in school and, later, in work relationships, than intellectual intelligence, expressed as IQ” (p. 7). Learning emotional intelligence helps students better understand their own emotions, which leads to improved emotional regulation, higher motivation, and a better understanding of others.

Parents also benefit from the practices of attuned listening and developing emotional literacy. “Teaching parents to recognize their emotions is similar to the

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mindfulness practice of noting and labeling emotions, which has been shown to facilitate emotion regulation” (Coatsworth et al., 2014). With these practices, parents learn that “emotions are temporary internal experiences that may not be avoidable and that recognition and acceptance of both comfortable and uncomfortable emotions will help them parent more mindfully and behave less reactively” (Coatsworth et al., 2014).

Attuned listening teaches participants to identify the emotions they are feeling as well as the feelings of their partner. By recognizing and labeling the emotions, parents are left with a skill set that may prove to be invaluable when entering into a situation that could easily become stressful with their children.

Doorways to Literacy (Structured Read-Aloud and Vocabulary)

The Doorways to Literacy portion of LIFE focuses on LIFE read-alouds (modeling family literacy), family read-alouds (developing family literacy), book circles (individual reading), and young authors (writing). Read-alouds provide “a model to help parents feel more confident in reading aloud to their children” (Kansas Reading Roadmap, 2016, p. 23). It also “gives children opportunities to hear and understand language...[and] helps families establish a habit of reading together” (p. 23).

According to Miller (2010), “A child’s brain is growing faster during the early years than any other time in her life...there is a window between the ages of five and seven when the underlying skills of reading are most easily learned” (p. ix). Families and teachers of younger students have the amazing opportunity to help hone the development of a child’s brain. One key way to do this is through read-alouds. Miller (2010), states the benefits of read-alouds are as follows:

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Exposes students to a richer vocabulary

Stretches and expands the number of words a child knows

Develops a strong concept of story and how print works

Demonstrates proper grammar and sentence structure

Exposes students to a variety of story types, information, and rich literature

Reinforces letter sounds and blending sounds into words (essentials of how our language works)

Gives opportunities to practice prediction and the order or sequence of stories (what happens next)

Builds background knowledge or a mental schemata (what your students already know that they can bring to a new experience or idea)

Strengthens listen [sic] skills and the ability to understand what they hear (and later will read)

Puts a strong model of fluency (when readers' expressiveness, pace, flow, and phrasing make it sound like they are talking) in front of children

Increases attention span

Builds excitement about learning and reading (p. 41-42)

With the wide variety of beneficial skills read-alouds provide, the LIFE program seeks to take advantage of the parents' attention to teach them some important techniques. A guideline to parent read-alouds can be found in Appendix B.

The next doorway to literacy activity is a book circle. Book circles build excitement for reading by introducing children to new books. To do this, a wide variety

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of books is made available for the children and other family members to browse through in silence. At the end of the timed segment (one to two minutes), participants locate a partner and share their books. They discuss the title, main idea, and any predictions they have about the story. At the end of their sharing time, they tell their partner if they would or would not want to read that particular book and their reasoning behind their decision.

Book circles are beneficial to students in many different ways. First, they provide a place for cooperative learning. Book circles “teach kids how to use each other as resources and become independent learners” (Aguilar, 2010). They also “allow students to make choices about their learning” (2010). Students choose the book they are interested in as well as with whom they want to discuss the book. These choices lead “to deeper engagement, increased intrinsic motivation, and an opportunity for guided decision making” (2010).

Book circles also provide a fun, engaging activity for students. They are encouraged to interact with their peers and discuss, debate, and sometimes argue about something of interest with them. This seemingly simple activity affords many valuable benefits to students, making it a very important part of the LIFE evening.

The final doorways to literacy segment is young authors. This activity is introduced in week 6 of LIFE and continued into week 7. “Young authors provides opportunities to create a story about a life experience or write from a story prompt or theme” (Kansas Reading Roadmap, 2016, p. 25). This activity is divided up into two sections. First, is the story circle. During this time, the family, as a whole, develops a story. In the second section, writing time, the child becomes the author.

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To begin the story circle, one family member begins by holding a tennis ball or story stick and tells the first line or two of a story. After they are finished, they pass the story stick to the next family member. This member continues the story by starting with “Yes, and…” then continues with one or two lines to the story. This continues around the circle for five to eight minutes. “This exercise is about working together and supporting each other more than it is about individual contributions” (Kansas Reading Roadmap, 2016, p. 38).

The second part of Young Authors is the Writing Time. During this activity, each child and parent is provided with an opportunity to write. Their composition will be based on their reading and writing level. Their story creations “can start with stories based on a book, a story prompt, or a theme” (Kansas Reading Roadmap, 2016, p. 38). To ensure students are not pressured to perform beyond their abilities, options for writing will be given. Some of these options include: movable alphabets, drawing and verbalizing their story, or dictating a story to a parent.

Narrative writing and storytelling are important skills for children to learn. Some of the benefits of this skill include: fostered creativity, improved reading, and development of a better understanding of language (FunEducation, 2015). Other benefits include, improved listening skills, enthusiasm for reading, purposeful talking, engagement in acting, and writing initiatives (Friday, 2014).

Child-Led Play

“‘Child-led Play’ is where the child follows their own play urges” (Caro, 2012). This is the next activity in LIFE. During this time, children receive one-on-one attention

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from their parent or guardian. They participate in activities such as learning games, playdough, Legos, arts and crafts, etc. Child-led Play has many benefits for children.

According to an excerpt from *Pop-Up Adventure Play's P.L.A.Y. Guide*, by Anna Juster, Ph.D. (2013), when children play in this way, they...

- Figure out things for themselves.
- Learn how to take healthy risks.
- Find innovative ways to think about the world and how it works, based on their own self-led, intrinsically motivated interests.
- Practice necessary skills such as overcoming obstacles, creative problem solving (on their own or with other children), communicating their feelings effectively with others, and working with those who may have difference [sic] points of view.
- Experience the joy of self-discovery, the thrill of being able to pursue their own creative ideas without the dear [sic] of failure that usually arises when there is one, predetermined way to be “right” or to “win”.

Using these child-led play activities, children and parents are able to connect on a new level. Children long to have their parents’ full attention and to elicit a loving response from them. “Allowing a child to assert themselves constructively through play meets this need and also strengthens the bond between children and parents” (Kansas Reading Roadmap, p. 6, 2016). During this time, parents are able to begin to utilize the skills they are using in LIFE to interact with their child. These interactions are a rewarding time for both parent and child.

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Parent Groups

Creating a community of support for parents is another key element of LIFE. This begins in the Parent Group portion of the LIFE evening. During this time, parents participate in another paired share activity where they are partnered with another parent. Parents actively listen to each other and offer support and reflection during this listening exercise. After this activity, parents “come together as a group to share and support each other” (Kansas Reading Roadmap, p. 26, 2016).

“Inclusive social environments which provide support to parents have been shown to enhance parents’ capacity to care for their children and in doing so promote better child health and development” (My Virtual Medical Centre, 2010). The term “social environment,” may refer to social relationships, an individual’s physical surroundings, or community resources. Oftentimes, adults can struggle to maintain healthy relationships and friendships with other adults. This, unfortunately, can have severe consequences on one’s health, family, and overall life.

According to the article, “Why Personal Relationships are Important,” by Mary Jo Kreitzer (2015), low social support can be linked to depression, decreased immune function, and higher blood pressure.

According to psychiatrists Jacqueline Olds and Richard Schwartz, social alienation is an inevitable result of contemporary society’s preoccupation with materialism and frantic ‘busy-ness.’ Their decades of research supports the idea that a lack of relationships can cause multiple problems with physical, emotional, and spiritual health. (Kreitzer, 2015)

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On the other hand, however, healthy relationships can help you: live longer, deal with stress, be healthier, and feel richer (2015). “Individuals who have good relationships develop a sense of belonging and receive support from other members of their social network which helps them to function normally from day to day and also to cope with stress and difficult times” (My Virtual Medical Centre, 2010).

LIFE seeks to help parents build and maintain healthy, lasting relationships with other adults by providing a time for them to bond over attuned listening and sharing time. This time is an important part of LIFE in that it provides a structure of support for parents as well as an investment in future relationships with peers.

Recreation Time

Similar to adult relationships, children require positive peer relationships to be successful. According to Ostrosky and Meadan (2010), children who have the following social emotional skills are more successful in school:

- confidence,
- the ability to develop good relationships with peers,
- concentrating on and persisting with challenging tasks,
- attending and listening to instructions,
- effectively communicate emotions. (p. 104)

Dr. Jeffrey Trawick-Smith states that, “Decades of research have shown that play is an important mediator in the physical, social, cognitive, and language development of young children” (p. 2, n. d.). Developing these social emotional skills takes practice. LIFE provides an opportunity for children to participate in skill building activities during

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Recreation Time while the parents are in Parent Group. This part of the evening allows time for the children to be active and to work on gross motor and collaboration skills.

Family Gift and Gratitude

The LIFE program evenings end with a gift giving and gratitude activity. During this time, each family receives a gift. In return, they must say what they learned and would like to apply throughout the following week as well as three things they are thankful for. The practice of gift giving is two-fold: first, gifts increase the likelihood of families returning each week; second, these gifts are designed to “directly support the creation of a culture of literacy at home... [and some] are aimed at developing family cohesion” (Kansas Reading Roadmap, p. 28, 2016). Some sample gifts include: book packets, family games, story building blocks, activities to help with spelling word practice.

When stating what they learned and how they would like to apply it, parents and families are creating goals. “A goal is a specific idea that one forms consciously, as opposed to motives or desires...” (Center on Education Policy, p. 3, 2012). Goal setting is intentional. By verbalizing what we want and how we will accomplish it, the likelihood of the task coming to fruition is much more probable. LIFE seeks to build new skills in parents and longs for them to be implemented in the home. By asking parents to set goals for how they will execute these newly learned skills at home, it is more likely they will be consciously employing what they have learned in their day to day lives.

Literacy Night

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Week five of the eight-week LIFE cycle is structured a little differently than the rest. The purpose of this night is to educate parents on the purpose of the MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Supports) program in their child's school, as well as to provide resources for parents to take home to help their child become a more fluent reader.

Maintaining an open line of communication between the home and school is important for academic success as well as other areas of social learning. A home-school partnership can "help your child have a more positive outlook on school and respect for the teacher. Over time this could lead to academic and behavioral progress in the classroom" (Hodnett, 2014-2016). According to the article, *The Benefits of Parent Involvement: What Research Has to Say*, by Olsen and Fuller (2010), some of the benefits parental involvement may have on children are: greater academic achievement; consistency in homework assignments; higher self-esteem, self-discipline, and motivation in school; improved behavior; and children are less likely to be placed in special education and remedial classes.

By becoming educated on the MTSS program, parents are empowered to question their child's teacher on their reading progress in school. "Discussing changes in a child's readiness skills can open a dialogue about the child's strengths and any areas of potential concern...Then families and teachers can work in partnership to ensure that children continue to receive appropriate instruction..." (Snow, n. d.). By maintaining an open line of communication, parents provide their child with the support they need to succeed in school, teachers and parents form better relationships, and parents become more confident in their decision making skills.

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Purpose Statement

As you can see, the new program, LIFE, has several different elements. Each of these play a key role in creating an environment conducive to building unity within the family units as well as among the families. Each of these activities also provide a piece of the foundation for important literacy, school, and social skills.

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the LIFE program at Neosho Heights Elementary School in Oswego, Kansas. An evaluation of the program was conducted by analyzing the results of a pre- and post- survey (these can be found in Appendixes C through F), interviewing parent participants and LIFE staff, and analyzing student reading scores.

Methods

This research was a qualitative study based on descriptive investigations. The proposed research (pre- and post-surveys, interviews, and an evaluation of reading scores) was conducted on participants within the LIFE program as well as within educational settings at Neosho Heights Elementary School, in Oswego, Kansas. Comparisons were made of the reading scores to determine whether the supports of the supplemental LIFE program have helped to increase the reading scores of the children involved. The surveys and interviews were also analyzed, compared, and evaluated to determine the success of the program.

Participants

Nonprobability sampling was used to select participants, which included male and female adults who participated in the LIFE program, all staff of the LIFE program, as

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well as all students in grades kindergarten through third grade at Neosho Heights Elementary School. Approximately 95-105 participants were included in this study. Of these participants, only adults not employed with the LIFE program will participate in the pre- and post-surveys. Four parent participants for each LIFE cycle were chosen to complete the in-depth interview. All LIFE staff, minus the researcher, were interviewed, as well. Student reading scores were also analyzed during the study.

The process for recruiting study participants included flyers sent home with students in grades K-3 at Neosho Heights Elementary School. (These flyers can be found in Appendix G.) Phone calls were made to all parents with children in these grades at this elementary school, and Facebook advertisements were used.

Materials and Instruments

Qualitative research methods in the form of descriptive investigations were used for this research study. The following qualitative research characteristics, as stated by Creswell (2014, p. 185-186), were utilized:

1. Natural setting – Data was collected at Neosho Heights Elementary School.
2. Research as key instrument – Data was collected, documented, and examined by the researcher.
3. Multiple sources of data – Pre- and post-surveys, separate interviews with parent participants and LIFE staff, and student reading statistics were used for comparison and validity.
4. Inductive and deductive data analysis – Inductive data analysis was used by analyzing results from the surveys, interviews, and reading scores.

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5. Participant's meaning – Survey and interview results along with reading score analysis determined the effectiveness of the program.
6. Emergent Design – Participants within the LIFE program dropping out, students transferring from the school, or other unforeseen factors may have caused the process of the study to change, or shift.
7. Reflexivity – Personal biases and preconceptions of the researcher were reflected on so that potential biased interpretations did not shape or change the direction of the study, causing results to become skewed and invalid.
8. Holistic account – By conducting an in-depth interview with participants, the researcher was able to ascertain personal views and attitudes pertaining to the LIFE program.

Procedures

Prior to beginning the study, participants were recruited to join the LIFE program. To do this, flyers were sent home with all kindergarten through third grade students at Neosho Heights Elementary School, in Oswego, Kansas. After parents received the flyers, the researcher personally called each parent to inform them about and invite them to join the program. Facebook was also used as a means to recruit families to join the LIFE program.

On the first night of the program, parents were informed of the study and asked to sign a written consent form allowing or denying their participation in the study. Parents were assured their refusal to participate in the study would in no way affect their participation in the program. After the consent forms were returned, parents were asked

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to fill out a pre-survey relating to their knowledge of school reading programs, their relationship with their child, how well they understand their child's emotions, and home reading habits. (See Appendixes C and E.) To maintain confidentiality of each participant and corresponding data, random numbers were used in place of their names. This helped to eliminate any identifying markers and keep the data from becoming biased.

To confirm validity of the study, multiple forms of data were used for comparisons: pre- and post-surveys, personal interviews with parents and LIFE staff, and student reading scores. After administering the pre-survey, families proceeded through the LIFE program. The program lasted eight weeks. Each night, families participated in a family greeting, family meal, attuned listening exercises, doorways to literacy activities, child-led play, parent group and recreation time, and the receiving of gifts and gratitude. At the end of the eight weeks, parents completed a post-survey. Surveys were once again coded with the same code used for their pre-survey. Due to the LIFE program being in its beginning stages, some adaptations were made between Fall and Spring semesters. One of these changes was in the form of the pre- and post- parent survey. Both surveys, although slightly different in nature, were analyzed in the same way. Appendixes C and D show examples of the Fall LIFE session's pre- and post-surveys. Appendixes E and F present examples of the Spring LIFE session's surveys.

Four parents were randomly selected to answer six interview questions on their experience in the LIFE program and how it has affected their families (see Appendix H).

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LIFE staff members were also interviewed to determine their thoughts on the success of the program (see Appendix I).

Neosho Heights Elementary School uses AIMSweb testing to analyze student reading scores at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. The researcher was given access to these results for students in grades kindergarten through third grade. Student records were coded so as to maintain the anonymity of each student. The researcher compared the reading scores of students in the following groups: students not in any KRR (Kansas Reading Roadmap) program; students participating only in the KRR LIFE program; students participating only in the KRR after-school program; and students participating in both the LIFE and after-school programs. These scores were evaluated to determine student growth throughout the 2016-2017 school year.

Analysis of Results

Data Analysis

In the Fall session of LIFE, five parent participants completed both the pre- and post-survey. A one-tailed Paired-Samples Test was run on the results of the surveys to determine if there was a significant increase in parent answers.

The results were as follows:

Participant #1:

A paired samples t test was calculated to compare the mean pre-survey score to the mean post-survey score. The mean on the pre-survey was 3.82 ($sd = 1.14$), and the mean on the post-survey was 4.36 ($sd = .848$). A significant increase from the pre-survey to the post-survey was found ($t(21) = -1.92, p = .04$).

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Participant #2:

A paired samples t test was calculated to compare the mean pre-survey score to the mean post-survey score. The mean on the pre-survey was 3.73 ($sd = .703$), and the mean on the post-survey was 4.00 ($sd = .309$). No significant difference from the pre-survey to the post-survey was found ($t(21) = -1.67, p = .06$).

Participant #3:

A paired samples t test was calculated to compare the mean pre-survey score to the mean post-survey score. The mean on the pre-survey was 4.09 ($sd = .294$), and the mean on the post-survey was 4.27 ($sd = .703$). No significant difference from the pre-survey to the post-survey was found ($t(21) = -1.283, p = .11$).

Participant #4:

A paired samples t test was calculated to compare the mean pre-survey score to the mean post-survey score. The mean on the pre-survey was 4.77 ($sd = .429$), and the mean on the post-survey was 5.00 ($sd = .000$). A significant increase from the pre-survey to the post-survey was found ($t(21) = -2.485, p = .01$).

Participant #5:

A paired samples t test was calculated to compare the mean pre-survey score to the mean post-survey score. The mean on the pre-survey was 4.55 ($sd = .510$), and the mean on the post-survey was 5.00 ($sd = .000$). A significant increase from the pre-survey to the post-survey was found ($t(21) = -4.183, p = .00$).

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In order to gain more insight on the parents' perspective of the LIFE program, four parents were interviewed. These parents sat down with the researcher on the last night to answer the following questions:

Q1: What are your overall thoughts about the LIFE program:

Parent 1: We actually liked it. I think it was more because it was a school program and we could come as a family and be involved. The girls liked it.

Parent 2: I think it was a great program. It helped parents meet one another. It was good for the kids to interact with different age ranges.

Parent 3: I thought it was pretty good. The only part I didn't really care about was the cheer.

Parent 4: It brought the family together more. I like that it allowed us to get together with other families.

Q2: Do you feel this program has been beneficial to your family? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

Parent 1: Yes. The communicating as a family and spending time as a family.

Parent 2: I thought it was very beneficial. [My child] was very excited for every Tuesday to come. It gave us different games to play that we didn't know about.

Parent 3: Yes, I think it was, but more importantly, I think it is beneficial to families and how it gives them the knowledge on how to work on literacy skills at home.

Parent 4: It helped us have more family time.

Q3: What changes would you make to this program?

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Parent 1: Maybe a bit more reading with your child.

Parent 2: I think we should mix the families up more; make us intermingle more during the discussion times.

Parent 3: I would limit it to two hours. Going until 8:00 did not work with our bedtime schedule.

Parent 4: Probably nothing.

Q4: What was your favorite part of the program:

Parent 1: The parent time.

Parent 2: I like the adult time because I don't have that very often.

Parent 3: I think the parent talk was good.

Parent 4: Family time.

Q5: Would you participate in this program again?

Parent 1: Yes

Parent 2: Sure I would!

Parent 3: Yeah

Parent 4: Yes

Q6: Any other thoughts or comments you have about the LIFE program?

Parent 1: I thought it was good for me to interact with the other parents and get to know them a little bit better.

Parent 2: I think it was a great little program! Too bad it wasn't around with [my older child] was little.

Parent 3: More parent time would be nice.

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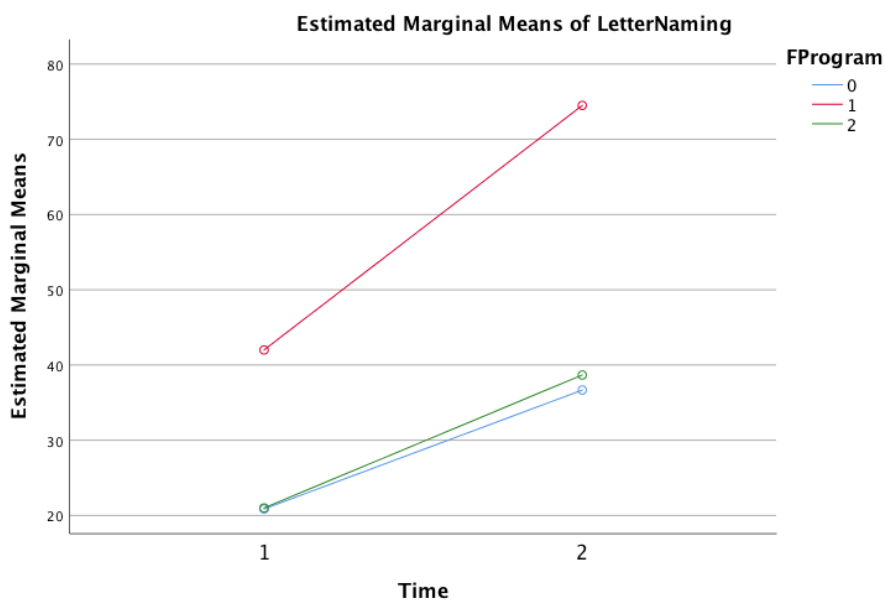
Parent 4: I thought you guys did awesome!

After analyzing the results of the parent pre- and post-surveys and examining the parent interview questions, the researcher evaluated the reading scores. To do this, a Mixed Design ANOVA was used. The scores were grouped into four different groups: students in no KRR program (represented by the number 0), students in only the LIFE program (number 2), students only in KRR's after school program (number 1), and students in both KRR programs (number 3). Two tests for each grade was analyzed. The results determine whether or not the programs the students in grades kindergarten through third grade are involved in have had a significant impact on their test scores. The results are as follows:

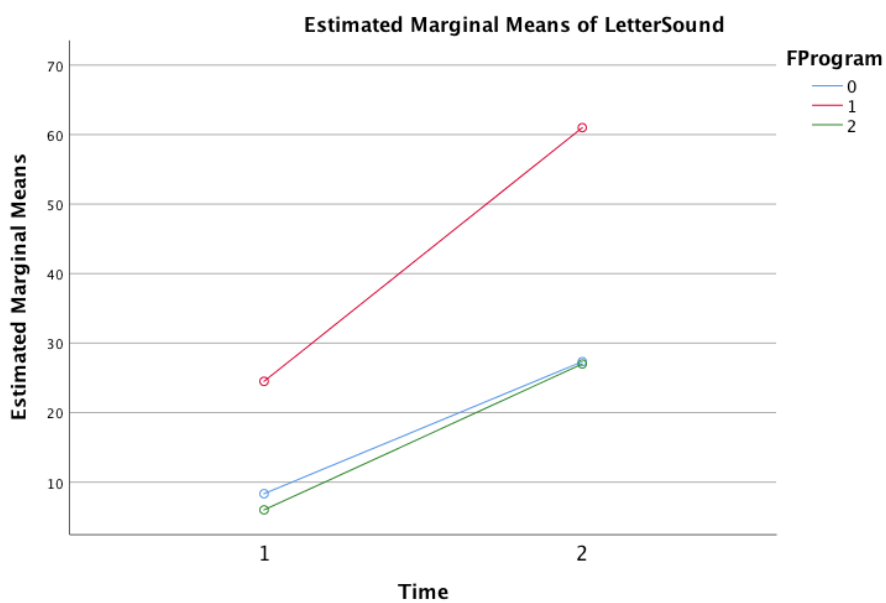
Kindergarten Scores:

Letter Naming Fluency: A 3×2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Fall test and Winter test) on scores. No significant time \times program interaction ($F(2, 17) = 2.536, p > .05$) was found. The main effects for time ($F(1, 17) = 49.829, p < .05$) and program ($F(2, 17) = 5.854, p < .05$), however, both showed significance.

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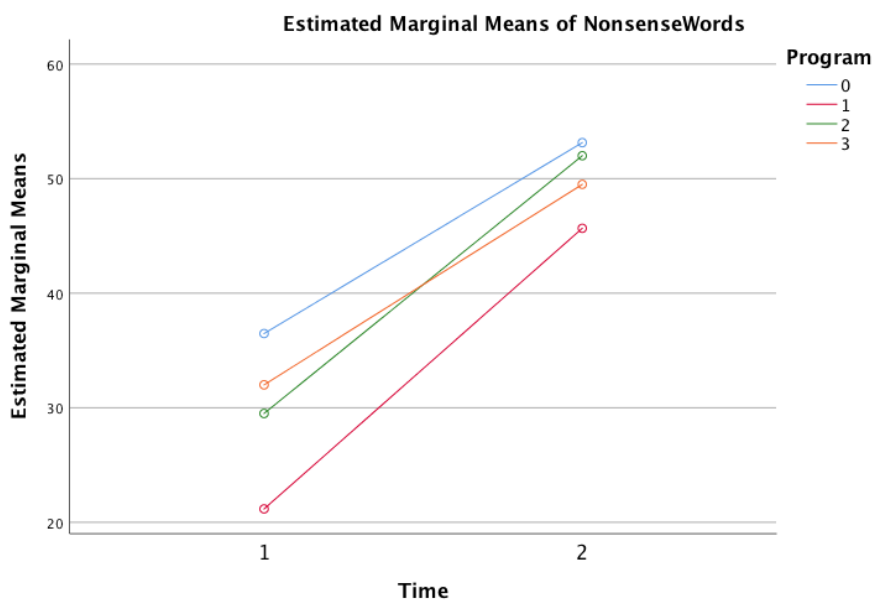
Letter Sound Fluency: A 3×2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Fall test and Winter test) on scores. No significant time \times program interaction ($F(2, 17) = 2.918, p > .05$) was found. The main effects for time ($F(1, 17) = 70.208, p < .05$) and program ($F(2, 17) = 6.855, p < .05$), however, both showed significance.



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First Grade Scores:

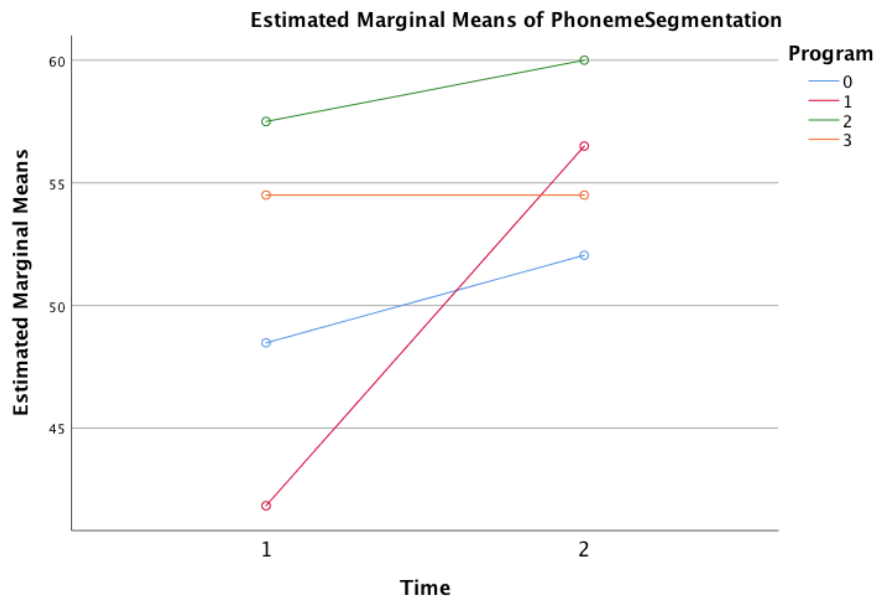
Nonsense Word Fluency: A 3×2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Fall test and Winter test) on scores. No significant time \times program interaction ($F(3, 27) = .365, p > .05$) was found. The main effect for time ($F(1, 27) = 18.573, p < .05$), however, showed significance. The main effect for program was not significant ($F(3, 27) = .814, p > .05$).



Phoneme Segmentation Fluency: A 3×2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Fall test and Winter test) on scores. No significant main effects for time \times program interaction ($F(3, 27) = 2.139, p > .05$) or the main effect for time ($F(1, 27) =$

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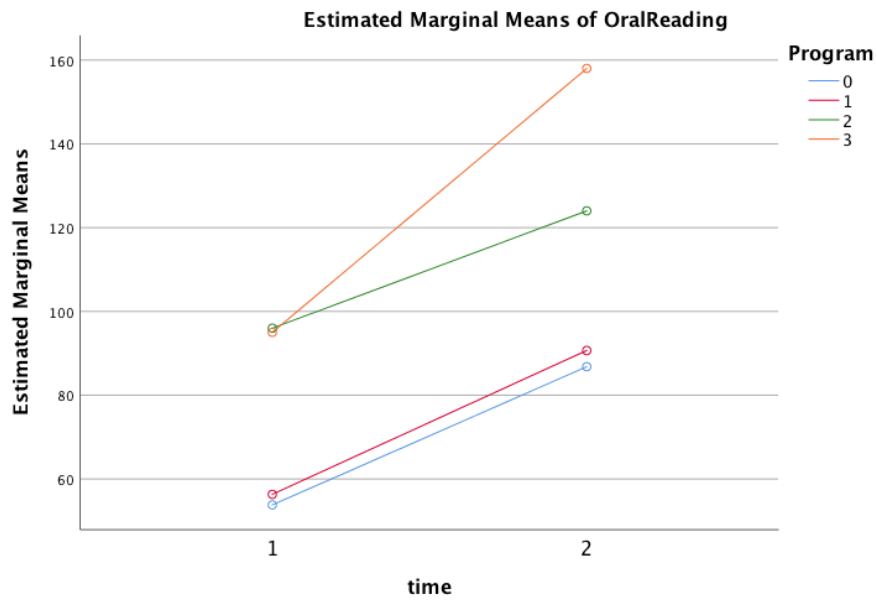
3.441, $p > .05$) were found. The main effect for program, however, was significant ($F(3, 27) = .759, p < .05$).



Second Grade Scores:

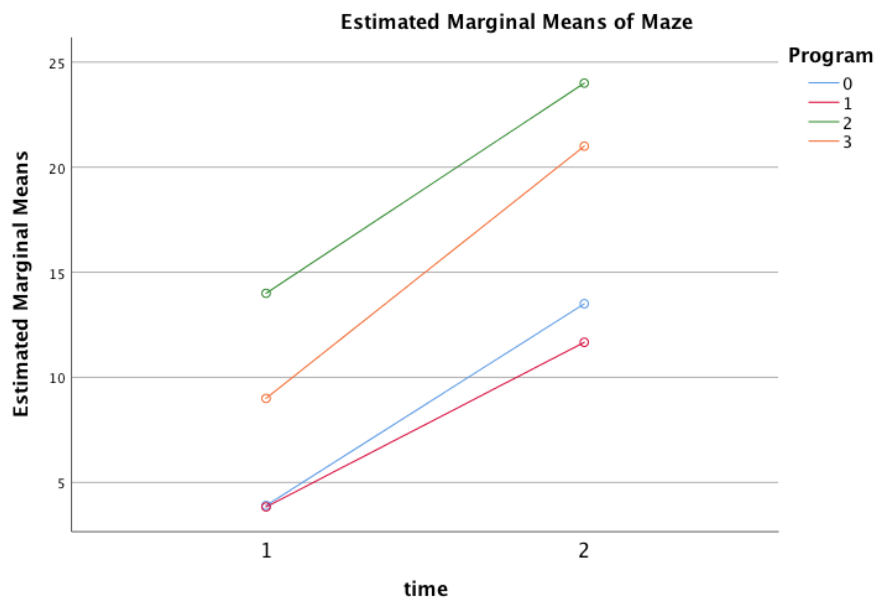
Oral Reading: A 3×2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Fall test and Winter test) on scores. No significant time \times program ($F(3, 14) = 2.599, p > .05$) interaction was found. The main effect for time ($F(1, 14) = 98.541, p < 0.05$), however, showed significance. The main effect for program was not significant ($F(3, 14) = .809, p > .05$).

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Maze: A 3×2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Fall test and Winter test) on scores. No significant time \times program ($F(3, 14) = .125, p > .05$) interaction was found. The main effect for time ($F(1, 14) = 12.108, p < 0.05$), however, showed significance. The main effect for program was not significant ($F(3, 14) = 1.571, p > .05$).

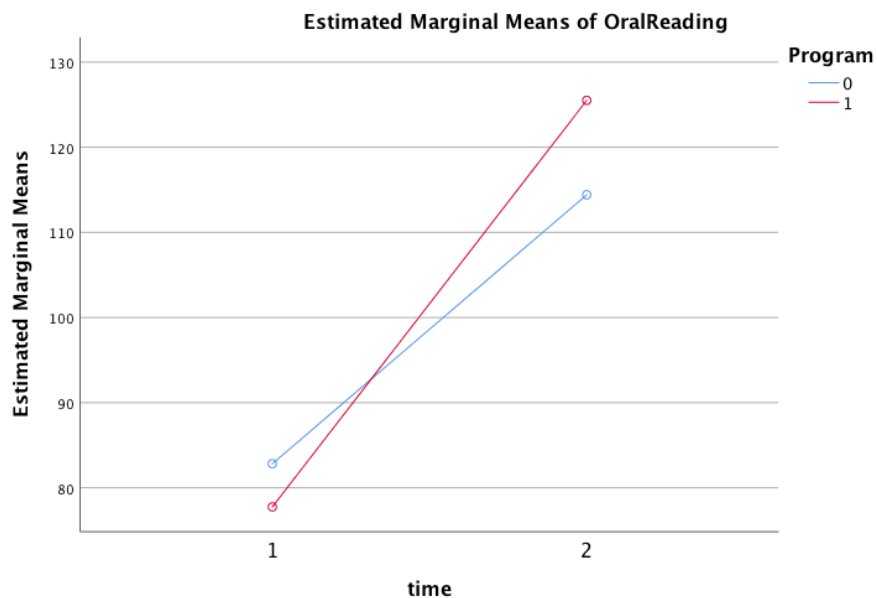
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Third Grade Scores:

Oral Reading: A 3×2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Fall test and Winter test) on scores. A significant effect for time \times program interaction ($F(1, 19) = 7.021, p < .05$) and time ($F(1, 19) = 169.195, p < .05$) was found. No significant effect for program was found ($F(1, 19) = .023, p > .05$).

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Maze: Oral Reading: A 3×2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Fall test and Winter test) on scores. No significant main effects or interactions were found. The time \times program interaction ($F(1, 19) = .354, p > .05$), the main effect for time ($F(1, 19) = .669, p > .05$), and the main effect for program ($F(1, 19) = .014, p > .05$) were not significant. Test scores were not influenced by either time or program.

The final piece of the evaluation the researcher used was an interview with the LIFE staff at Neosho Heights Elementary School. Each paid staff member, minus the researcher, was asked a series of five questions. Their answers are as follows:

Q1: How do you feel LIFE went?

Staff member 1: Overall I think the program went well.

Staff member 2: I feel that LIFE went well considering that it was a new program to everyone.

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Staff member 3: The first two weeks weren't as smooth as the rest because we were new to the schedule. After that it went well, especially when the parents were more comfortable with the routine and each other.

Staff member 4: This Fall was a little bit of a struggle to stay organized and on task.

Q2. What are your overall thoughts about the LIFE program?

Staff member 1: I think it's a good program.

Staff member 2: I believe that LIFE is a wonderful program. I feel that it is not only helping families learn to enjoy literacy together, it is also helping them learn to communicate with each other. Some families may have trouble interacting with each other, and I believe the skills learned at LIFE are a great tool for them to use.

Staff member 3: I feel encouraging families to share time together by reading, playing games, eating without electronic device distraction, and listening to each other is so important. LIFE promotes this idea, and I appreciate it.

Staff member 4: LIFE is a great program for families to educate themselves, spend time together, and meet other families.

Q 3: What did you like the most about the program?

Staff member 1: Parent group is always a hit. I like sharing more literacy with the families than we have previously.

Staff member 2: I enjoyed seeing the families read together during the book circle. I also liked the child led play activities.

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Staff member 3: Modeling activities was helpful, especially “how to read a book.” For example: predicting what the story was about, naming the author, defining big words, etc.

Staff member 4: Families sharing a meal, parent time, and reading books.

Q4: What changes would you make to this program?

Staff member 1: Longer parent group

Staff member 2: I would shorten the attuned listening time and make it a weekly activity. Learning to listen to those in your family is very important in understanding each other's feelings and getting to really know them.

Staff member 3: Unless something unusual happens, I feel one debriefing the first week and maybe one the last week is sufficient. (Or none at all!)

Staff member 4: Shorter evening.

Q5: Any other thoughts or comments you have about LIFE?

Staff member 1: No answer.

Staff member 2: I feel that the importance of LIFE and skills that are taught during the LIFE program should be conveyed to the school staff. I don't feel that they see how wonderful it is and helpful to families. If they see this, it may help in the recruiting efforts and the positivity given to the program.

Staff member 3: No answer.

Staff member 4: The meals are a wonderful addition and great way for families to bond. Free books – awesome!

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In the Spring session of LIFE, five parents completed the pre- and post-surveys. Unfortunately, the researcher was unable to obtain these surveys, so this data has not been analyzed.

Four parent participants were interviewed to help the researcher obtain a clearer understanding of their experience with the LIFE program. These participants met with the researcher on the last night of the Spring LIFE session to answer the following questions:

Q1: What are your overall thoughts about the LIFE program:

Parent 5: It seems to be fun and interactive. It gives the kids time to play with other children of different age groups.

Parent 6: We really like coming to it.

Parent 7: It's pretty cool. I like how it brought my family together to learn to do all the different things.

Parent 8: I enjoyed it. It was a fun time that we got to spend as a family.

Q2: Do you feel this program has been beneficial to your family? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

Parent 5: Yeah, I guess. Sometimes it seems to keep [my child] calmed down. It depends on how far we push him. [The program] helps us learn how to be interactive with other adults and other children. It gives kids time to read more and talk to other kids about what they read.

Parent 6: Yes, I think it is. It shows that reading, family time, and socializing with other people is important.

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Parent 7: It was beneficial in my part just because I'm the new single dad.

Learning what to do in reading and learning about emotions was good. One of the biggest things is trying to get them to tell me what their emotions are, so that was a good thing to bring up with them.

Parent 8: Yes. It brought us closer together and opened up the kids. They are more talkative now.

Q3: What changes would you make to this program?

Parent 5: I'd like to try more new things—maybe change it up a little. I'd like more parent time. I miss getting advice from other adults, like in the previous program.

Parent 6: Maybe more parent time and maybe more reading time.

Parent 7: Sometimes it seemed chaotic.

Parent 8: Longer parent time. Let the kids run around more to wear them out before bedtime.

Q4: What was your favorite part of the program:

Parent 5: The child-led play. It gives us time to talk with the child while having fun. It promotes good communication.

Parent 6: The parent time.

Parent 7: Storytelling.

Parent 8: Storytelling, story circle, and family activities together.

Q5: Would you participate in this program again?

Parent 5: Of course. [The kids] love it.

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Parent 6: Yes.

Parent 7: Yes.

Parent 8: Yes.

Q6: Any other thoughts or comments you have about the LIFE program?

Parent 5: No.

Parent 6: We really like coming to it. We enjoy it.

Parent 7: I think it's a good program. Informing.

Parent 8: The food was good.

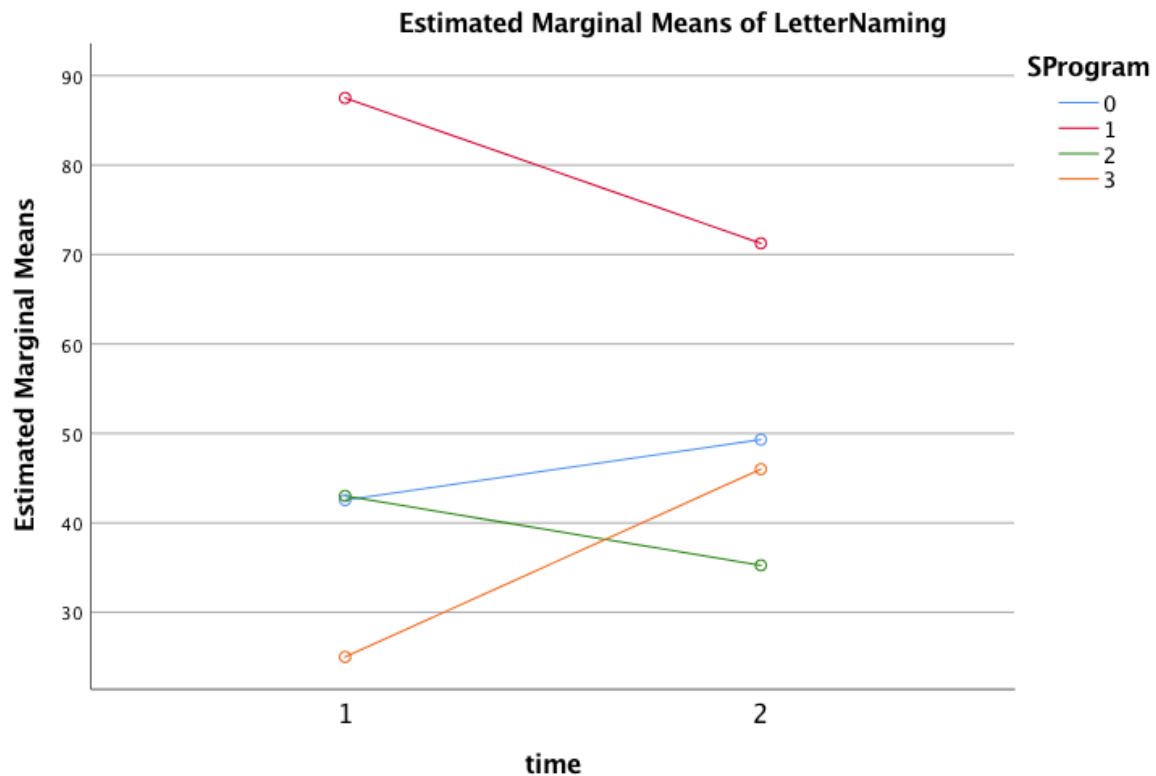
The next form of data to be looked at by the researcher are the Spring AIMSweb reading scores. The same method used for the Fall scores was used to analyze the Spring scores. A Mixed Design ANOVA was used. The scores were grouped into four different groups: students in no KRR program (represented by the number 0), students in only the LIFE program (number 2), students only in KRR's after school program (number 1), and students in both KRR programs (number 3). Tests from each grade were analyzed. Not every test chosen for the Fall semester was chosen for the Spring semester. Tests could only be analyzed if the same test was given during the previous testing period. The results will determine whether or not the programs the students in grades kindergarten through third grade were involved in had a significant impact on their test scores.

Kindergarten Scores:

Letter Naming Fluency: A 3 x 2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Winter test and Spring test) on scores. No significant main effects or interactions were found.

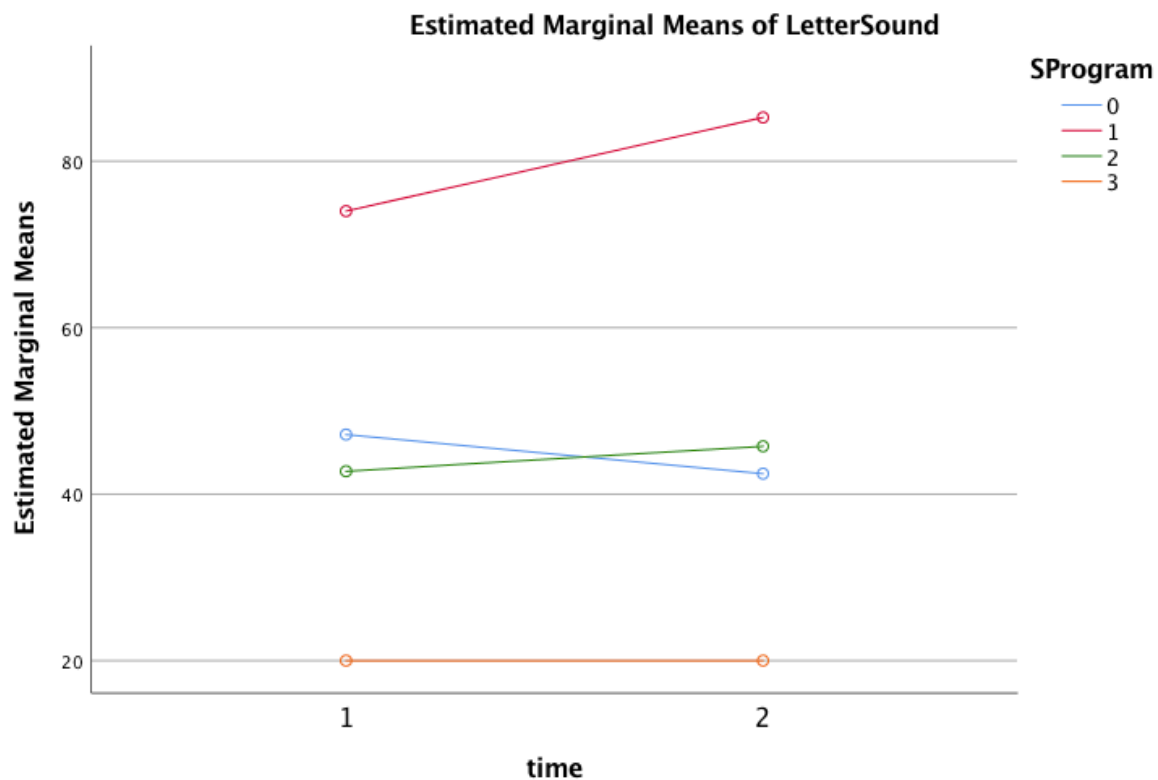
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The time x program interaction ($F(1, 18) = 2.383, p > .05$), the main effect for time ($F(1, 18) = .028, p > .05$), and the main effect for program ($F(1, 18) = 2.140, p > .05$) were not significant. Test scores were not influenced by either time or program.



Letter Sound Fluency: A 3 x 2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Winter test and Spring test) on scores. No significant main effects or interactions were found. The time x program interaction ($F(1, 18) = .645, p > .05$), the main effect for time ($F(1, 18) = .135, p > .05$), and the main effect for program ($F(1, 18) = 2.513, p > .05$) were not significant. Test scores were not influenced by either time or program.

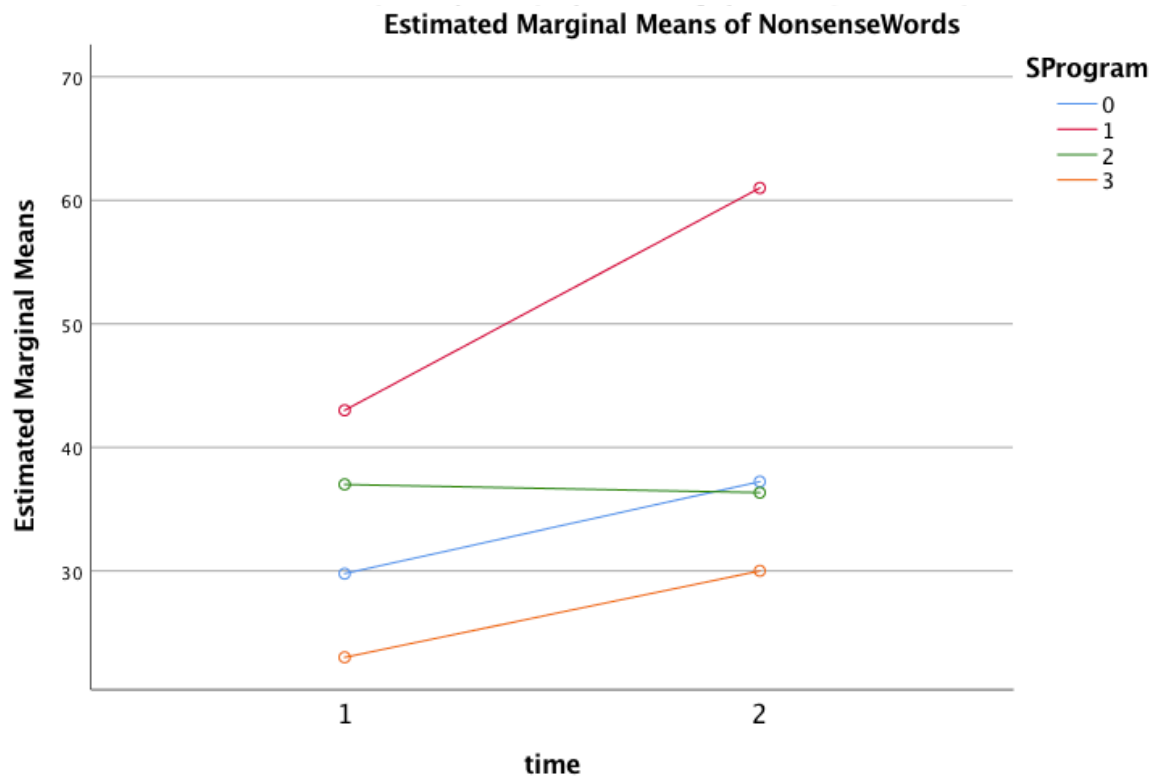
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Phoneme Segmentation: A 3 x 2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Winter test and Spring test) on scores. No significant main effects or interactions were found. The time x program interaction ($F(1, 18) = .735, p > .05$), the main effect for time ($F(1, 18) = .660, p > .05$), and the main effect for program ($F(1, 18) = 1.195, p > .05$) were not significant. Test scores were not influenced by either time or program.

Nonsense Words: A 3 x 2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Winter test and Spring test) on scores. No significant main effects or interactions were found. The time x program interaction ($F(1, 18) = .446, p > .05$), the main effect for

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time ($F(1, 18) = 1.877, p > .05$), and the main effect for program ($F(1, 18) = .217, p > .05$) were not significant. Test scores were not influenced by either time or program.

First Grade Scores:

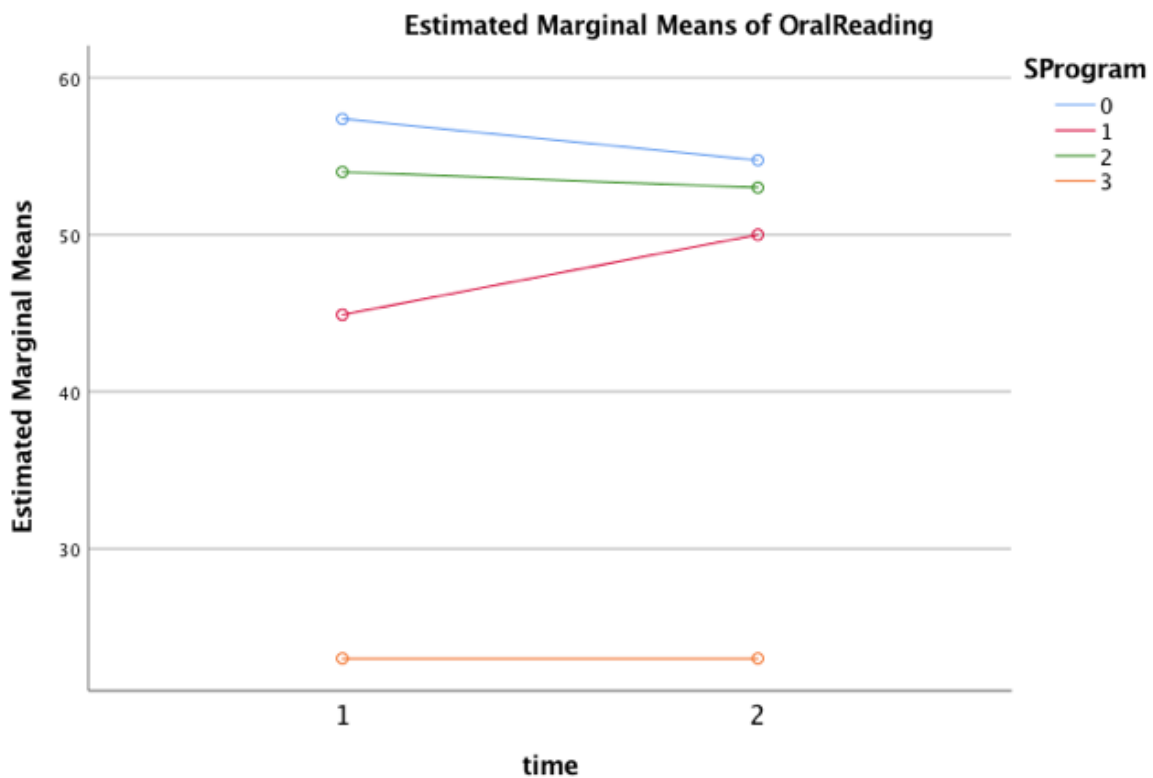
Nonsense Word Fluency: A 3 x 2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Winter test and Spring test) on scores. No significant main effects or interactions were found. The time x program interaction ($F(1, 27) = 1.435, p > .05$), the main effect for time ($F(1, 27) = .001, p > .05$), and the main effect for program ($F(1, 27) = .451, p > .05$) were not significant. Test scores were not influenced by either time or program.

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Phoneme Segmentation: A 3 x 2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Winter test and Spring test) on scores. No significant main effects or interactions were found. The time x program interaction ($F(1, 27) = 1.287, p > .05$), the main effect for time ($F(1, 27) = .241, p > .05$), and the main effect for program ($F(1, 27) = .553, p > .05$) were not significant. Test scores were not influenced by either time or program.

Oral Reading: A 3 x 2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Winter test and Spring test) on scores. No significant main effects or interactions were found. The time x program interaction ($F(1, 27) = .344, p > .05$), the main effect for time ($F(1, 27) = .006, p > .05$), and the main effect for program ($F(1, 27) = 1.263, p > .05$) were not significant. Test scores were not influenced by either time or program.

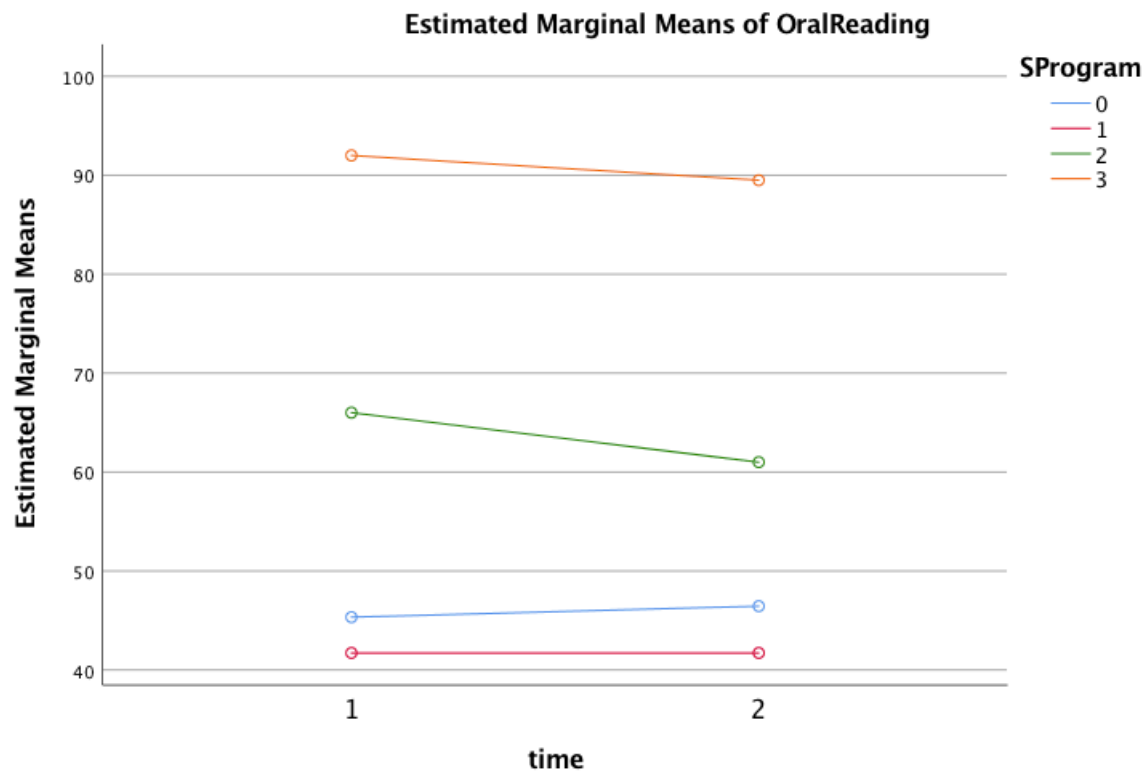
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Second Grade Scores:

Oral Reading: A 3 x 2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Winter test and Spring test) on scores. No significant main effects or interactions were found. The time x program interaction ($F(1, 15) = .255, p > .05$), the main effect for time ($F(1, 15) = .367, p > .05$), and the main effect for program ($F(1, 15) = 1.818, p > .05$) were not significant. Test scores were not influenced by either time or program.

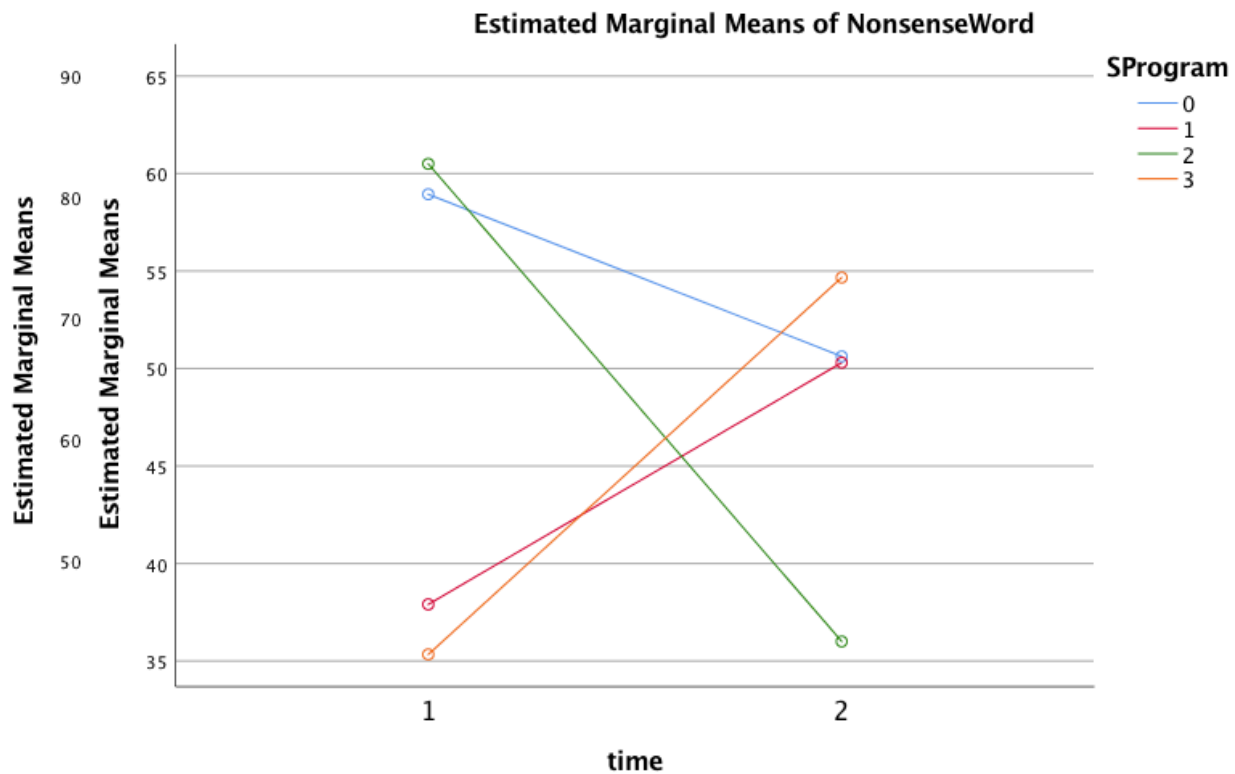
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Third Grade Scores:

Oral Reading: A 3 x 2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of the program (Programs 1, 2, and 3) and time (Winter test and Spring test) on scores. No significant main effects or interactions were found. The time x program interaction ($F(1, 18) = .048, p > .05$), the main effect for time ($F(1, 18) = .048, p > .05$), and the main effect for program ($F(1, 18) = .67, p > .05$) were not significant. Test scores were not influenced by either time or program.

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The researcher once again interviewed LIFE staff members to gain a better understanding of their thoughts of the LIFE program and how they felt the Spring session went. Their answers are as follows:

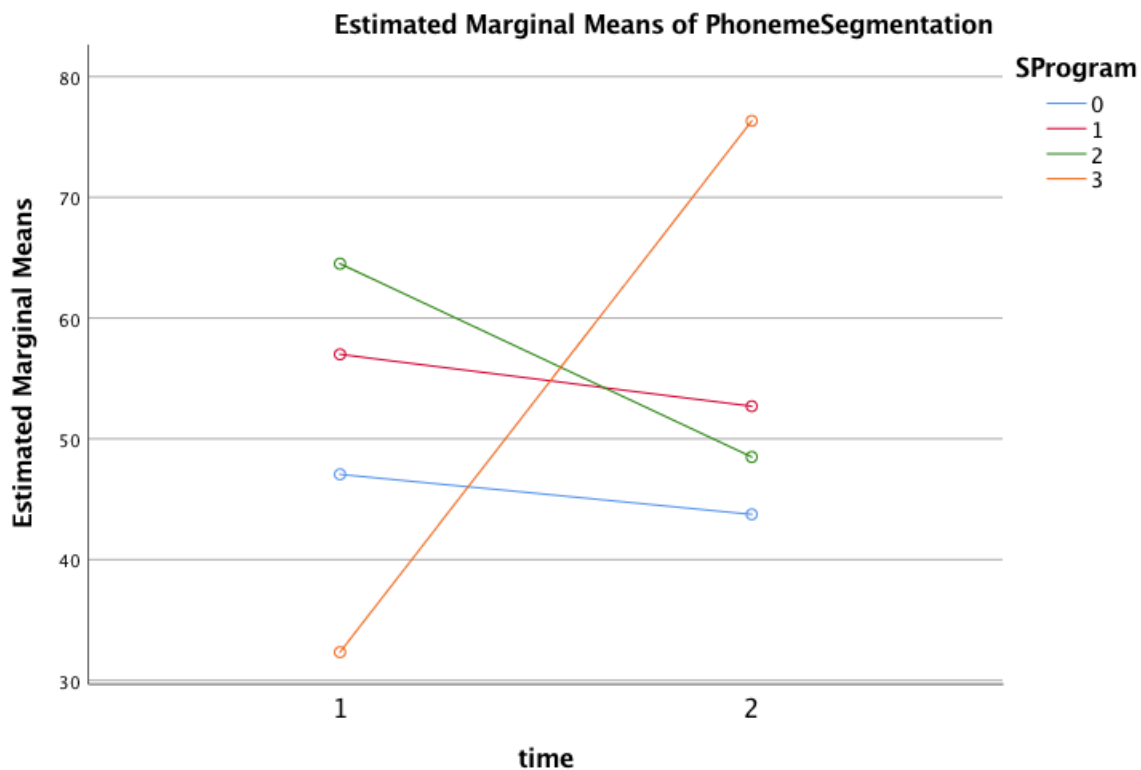
Q1: How do you feel LIFE went?

Staff member 1: Overall well.

Staff member 2: I feel that LIFE went much better this time around. We have become more familiar with the material and program.

Staff member 3: I felt it went smoothly. Having already completed the Fall session, I felt more acquainted with the format.

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Staff member 4: It was a great LIFE program.

Q2. What are your overall thoughts about the LIFE program?

Staff member 1: I think LIFE is a great program. I think the families enjoy it.

Staff member 2: I really think that this program is wonderful!! I wish that it would have been in our district when my child was younger so we could have been involved. This program is teaching so many lessons! Besides the lessons that are being taught with this program, families (adults and youth) are learning compassion, social skills, etc. (Sidenote: I practice skills learned through this program at home with my child...thanks LIFE!)

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Staff member 3: Because it is a long day for the children, especially the younger ones, keeping it short and moving along is important. The program is a good one to help families BE a family.

Staff member 4: LIFE was very successful this Spring. The parents were very active and involved. It seemed to flow better.

Q 3: What did you like the most about the program?

Staff member 1: I like the child-led play the most.

Staff member 2: Everything in this program is great! I really enjoy watching families interact with the members of their own families and others. Everyday life in general has become such a rat race that families don't always get to spend quality time together. LIFE gives them a chance to do this. It teaches them to interact with each other at the LIFE program and to take skills home and use them.

Staff member 3: I liked modeling reading a book and then observing parents reading to their family.

Staff member 4: Watching the parents engage with their children during the family activities. Reading books.

Q4: What changes would you make to this program?

Staff member 1: I think the family cheers and introductions get too repetitive after the first few times. The families stop enjoying them as much.

Staff member 2: This isn't a change necessarily to the program itself, but I would like to see families that are even **more** "in need" of the LIFE skills to be involved.

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Staff member 3: I would drop the chant/cheer. I didn't feel it added anything to the program and most children didn't participate in it.

Staff member 4: Slightly shorter evening, so families could get home earlier.

Q5: Any other thoughts or comments you have about LIFE?

Staff member 1: None.

Staff member 2: I would like to see ALL staff from the elementary school come for at least one night to observe and join in with the LIFE program. I believe that they would see firsthand the benefits from the program and be able to "talk it up."

Staff member 3: Having the children and parents tell what they are grateful for was another favorite.

Staff member 4: Great option for families to educate themselves and bond. The meals are awesome and helpful. Love the free books and activities for families!

Discussion

Based on the results of the parent Fall pre- and post-survey scores, all participants scored higher on their post-survey; three of the five participants had significant increases in their results.

According to the parent interviews from the Fall session, parents enjoyed the program. It seemed to be a consensus that the program was beneficial for not only spending quality with their families, but also in meeting and spending time with other adults. All parents said they would repeat the program; three out of four parents said they enjoyed the parent group the most; and reading more with your child, mixing families up,

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and shortening the evening were all suggestions on what would have made the program a little more enjoyable for them.

The Fall and Winter AIMsWeb test scores showed mixed results as to whether or not the Kansas Reading Roadmap programs benefited the students involved. Three tests (Kindergarten letter sounds and letter naming, and first grade phoneme segmentation) all showed a significant effect caused by the program the students were involved in. The program showing the results, however, was not the LIFE program, rather it was KRR's after school program. All except one test showed time as a significant factor.

The staff interviews showed that the Fall session of LIFE went well, but was a bit of a struggle the first few weeks. Staff members concur that the program is a great way for families to spend time together without distractions. The LIFE employees also seem to agree that adding more literacy skills, modeling, and reading time has enhanced the program. When asked what changes they would make to the program, the answers stretched across the board. Answers included: shortening the evening, longer parent group, shortening attuned listening, and limiting staff debriefing time to two sessions. For the final comments, two staff members did not say anything, one staff member complimented the meals and free books, and the fourth staff member commented on how school personnel should be more educated on the program so they can help promote future LIFE sessions.

The Spring parent interviews showed that the parents really enjoyed being able to come together as a family to participate in the activities LIFE has to offer. All parents thought the program was beneficial to their families. A single dad said it has helped him

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learn how to talk with his children about their emotions, a mom mentioned it brought their family closer together and her youngest has really opened up and started talking and communicating more. Another mom mentioned that LIFE helped show her children that reading, family time, and socializing with other people is important. The last parent mentioned how it helped her child calm down and helped her children learn how to be interactive with other adults and children. When asked what their favorite part of the program was, parents had mixed answers: child-led play, parent time, storytelling, and family activities were listed. Parents mentioned more parent time, less chaos, more physical activities for their children, and changing things up a little for possible changes to the program. All parents said they would participate in the program again.

The Winter and Spring AIMSWeb test scores showed no significant effect of either the time or the programs involved in student changing student scores. As you can see by the graphs, some change did happen. The results, however, were conflicted, as some scores increased, but others decreased.

The LIFE staff members seemed to agree that the Spring LIFE session ran more smoothly than the Fall session. Having more experience with the program seemed to help give the staff members a more secure sense of the program. Staff members also agreed that LIFE is a great program for families. They said it teaches lessons such as compassion, social skills, reading, etc. One staff member also said that families this semester were very active and involved. Another one said that it helps the families learn to *BE* a family.

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Members of the staff seem to agree that watching the families interact with each other is a great benefit to the program. Parents are more engaged with their children, are playing and reading with them, and are interacting with other families. When asked what they would change about the program, two of the staff mentioned the family cheers and introductions were repetitive and families stopped enjoying them after the first few sessions. Another mentioned having a shorter evening would be beneficial. The final staff member said that she would like to see families of children who need to learn the skills LIFE offers become more involved with the program. On the final question, “Any other thoughts or comments you have about LIFE?”, one staff member mentioned that she would like to see the entire staff from Neosho Heights Elementary School attend and observe at least one night of the LIFE program. She feels this would help them to understand the value of the program, and they would be better able to help recruit students and their families as future LIFE participants.

As proposed in the literature review, students should potentially benefit from all aspects of the LIFE program. The results shown for the Fall LIFE session and the AIMSweb test scores, however, were not consistent with the research. This could stem from a number of limitations, which are listed below. The main benefit for parents and students in the Fall LIFE session were discovered through parent interviews. Parents expressed their appreciation for the time they were able to spend with their families and other adults.

One of the goals of the LIFE program, as stated in the LIFE Program Manual is to provide a support group for parents. These “relationships are important for developing

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resilience and reducing the negative effects of stress” (Kansas Reading Roadmap, p. 6, 2016). As seen by the research pertaining to positive parent relationships, “Inclusive social environments which provide support to parents have been shown to enhance parents’ capacity to care for their children and in doing so promote better child health and development” (My Virtual Medical Centre, 2010). The program, as shown by the parent interviews in both the Fall and Spring LIFE sessions, succeeded in accomplishing this goal of providing parents with a support group within the community. One can only hope these relationships will overflow into their personal lives and help in providing the support these parents need.

Limitations

Limitations of the study may include a lack of parent involvement. Due to the time commitment of the program, many families are unable to participate. Limitations may also include the economic status of the participants. Since we have only a small sampling of parents from the Oswego, Kansas, school district, we are unable to meet the standards of maintaining a proper sampling depicting each socio-economic class in the community.

Another limitation of the study may include the researcher’s participation in the program. The researcher is a paid staff member of the LIFE program, which will provide invaluable insight to the study, but may also cause unintentional bias when analyzing the results.

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Limitations may also stem from the AIMsWeb testing scores. When testing, students are timed, which may result in stress for the individuals or may not accurately depict the students' reading abilities.

Finally, human error and the transfer of reading scores and survey answers from Neosho Heights and KRR to the researcher may cause the results of the study to become slightly skewed.

Conclusions

Summary

Overall, the Fall LIFE session proved to be a learning experience for both LIFE staff and families. Although the statistics for the AIMsWeb reading scores did not show a significant effect for the LIFE program, some parent surveys showed significance, and both parents and LIFE staff expressed their enjoyment of the program. It was also beneficial to families in that it provided a support system and allowed families to get better acquainted with one another.

Personal Reflection

As the researcher and a LIFE staff member, I believe this program has had a significant effect on families through the support it provides for them. My position in the program is the Parent Liaison. I have the privilege of working closely with the parents and seeing their relationships blossom into friendships. Through our discussions and "getting to know you" activities (attuned listening and games) in the Parent Group, parents begin to form bonds with each other. These parents, although they come from all

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walks of life, embark on a journey together, which forms the foundation of lasting friendships.

Future Research

Data from the current research may offer grounds for future research. The LIFE program, for example, is currently partnering with over 50 low-income schools throughout the state of Kansas. To maintain a more accurate evaluation of the program, this study could be expanded to include a sampling of the schools across the state. Moreover, research could be conducted by following a group of students from kindergarten through third grade. This study could help further identify the effects of programs KRR has to offer by maintaining a steady comparison of reading statistics and family dynamics throughout the early elementary school years.

Results from this research will allow the researcher, KRR, and Neosho Heights to gain a deeper understanding of the success of the KRR LIFE program. This will allow for future participants to have a more fulfilling experience when participating in the program. It will also provide valuable insights for Neosho Heights Elementary School and Kansas Reading Roadmap by supplying them with information obtained by a third party regarding their family engagement program and student and family experiences within it.

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LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Appendix A

The Five Emotions**Fear**

What causes it: A threat to ourselves, our sense of who we think we are, our goals, or things important to us.

What it may feel like: We get a pit in our stomach, our heart rate increases, and we get dry mouth. We want to avoid things and either become very agitated or shut down.

What you can do with it: Fear can keep us safe. It also floods us with energy that we can use to do something about the things we are afraid of.

**Hurt**

What causes it: When we feel the lack of love from others.

What it may feel like: Heaviness in the heart, tightness around the mouth, we don't feel like being with others.

What you can do with it: You can use hurt as a signal that it's time to reach out to others. It is also a signal that you need to say loving things to yourself.

**Anger**

What causes it: When a goal is blocked.

What it may feel like: Blood goes to your arms and legs making you want to run, hit, or throw things. Your chest feels full; you want to yell.

What you can do with it: You can use the energy of anger to get what you want. Anger gives you tremendous strength and determination. If you use it instead of exploding, it can become a very powerful ally.



LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Sadness

What causes it: The loss of something we value.

What it may feel like: Heaviness in the heart. Desire to cry. We either reach out for comfort or self isolate.

What you can do with it: It is important to allow ourselves to be sad. It is our bodies way of letting things go. Crying releases powerful chemicals in your brain that help you heal.

**Joy**

What causes it: Accomplishing our goals. Feeling happy.

What it may feel like: A light tingly feeling. Life is coursing through your body and you're full of energy and enthusiasm.

What you can do with it: You can use joy to celebrate life, enjoy yourself and others, and to increase your health and creativity. Do things that bring you joy and savor your experiences of joy.



LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Appendix B

LIFE Read-Aloud Guidelines

1. Hold book so all can observe the cover
 2. Say name of book, author, illustrator
 3. Give others time to study the cover page
 - a. Pause to give children an opportunity to predict what they might think the story is about. Show by your body language how you are studying the cover pictures and, if necessary, say something like: "Right now, I am thinking that the ladybug will fly to other plants..."
 - b. Begin reading at a steady pace—not too fast, not too slow
 - c. Listen to yourself as you read
 - d. Keep it interesting
 4. Try holding book out so children can see the illustrations as you read but if you can't, be sure to show pictures carefully after you finish each page
 5. As you are reading to the children, you will choose a number of words to model how we do vocabulary work
 - a. Provide simple, kid-friendly definitions for each vocabulary word you choose.
Ecstatic means very, very happy!
 - b. Follow this up with an easy to understand example that makes sense in daily life.
Think of how happy you would be if you got a new puppy. If you would be really excited, we would say you were ecstatic.
 - c. Encourage a few children to come up with their own examples.
What would make you feel really, really happy? So happy you would be ecstatic?
 - d. Use the new words as often as you can for the rest of the LIFE session.
 6. As you are reading, ask the children what the characters might be feeling. Tell them what you are feeling, and ask them what they are feeling. This is a way to reinforce the work on the Five Emotions and to help children get more engaged in the story.
How do you think Sam is feeling about that? I feel joy that Mommy now has help.
I feel sad that Thomas lost his pillow.
What are you feeling about how Sam helped Thomas?
 7. After finishing the story, ask the children when happened at the beginning of the story. After discussing how the story began, ask them what happened in the middle of the story. Then ask them what happened at the end of the story. Work with them to put together the sequence of events that made up the story.
-

LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Appendix C

Literacy-Integrated Family Engagement: Pre-Survey

The following statements are about instruction your child gets at school with his/her teachers and tutors (if applicable). Please rate your degree of understanding about each.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I understand the purpose of tiered support.					
I understand the purpose of an academic intervention.					
I understand the purpose of progress monitoring.					

The following statements refer to your child's development as a reader. Please rate your degree of understanding about each.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I understand that my child learns to read in a progression of skills.					
I understand how a progress monitoring chart could help my child's learning.					
I have seen and practiced reading a progress monitoring chart.					

The following statements refer to how you feel about supporting your child's development as a reader. Please rate your degree of agreement with each.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel confident that I have at least one activity I can do at home to support my child's reading progress.					
I feel confident that I can ask some helpful questions about my child's reading progress with his/her teacher(s) and tutors, if applicable.					

LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

LITERACY-INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT: PRE-SURVEY (CONTINUED)

The following statements refer to how you feel about yourself as a parent and your relationship with your child. Please rate your degree of agreement with each.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am satisfied with my relationship with my child.					
I am good at listening to my child when he or she shares thoughts and feelings with me.					
My child listens to me when I share my thoughts and feelings with him or her.					
I am satisfied with myself as a parent.					
I understand my child's emotions.					
My child understands my emotions.					
I am satisfied with my child's behavior.					
I am satisfied with my relationship with my child's teachers.					
I am satisfied with my relationship with my child's school.					
I am satisfied with my relationship with my child's school.					
I read aloud at to my child on a regular basis.					
My child often reads at home.					
I am satisfied with my relationship to other parents in my community.					
I often sit down and have dinner with my child.					
I am satisfied with my support system of family, friends, and community.					

One thing I would really like to know or have in order to be able to support my child's reading progress is:

LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Appendix D

Literacy-Integrated Family Engagement: Post-Survey

The following statements are about instruction your child gets at school with his/her teachers and tutors (if applicable). Please rate your degree of understanding about each.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I understand the purpose of tiered support.					
I understand the purpose of an academic intervention.					
I understand the purpose of progress monitoring.					

The following statements refer to your child's development as a reader. Please rate your degree of understanding about each.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I understand that my child learns to read in a progression of skills.					
I understand how a progress monitoring chart could help my child's learning.					
I have seen and practiced reading a progress monitoring chart.					

The following statements refer to how you feel about supporting your child's development as a reader. Please rate your degree of agreement with each.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel confident that I have at least one activity I can do at home to support my child's reading progress.					
I feel confident that I can ask some helpful questions about my child's reading progress with his/her teacher(s) and tutors, if applicable.					

LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

LITERACY-INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT: POST-SURVEY (CONTINUED)

The following statements refer to how you feel about yourself as a parent and your relationship with your child. Please rate your degree of agreement with each.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am satisfied with my relationship with my child.					
I am good at listening to my child when he or she shares thoughts and feelings with me.					
My child listens to me when I share my thoughts and feelings with him or her.					
I am satisfied with myself as a parent.					
I understand my child's emotions.					
My child understands my emotions.					
I am satisfied with my child's behavior.					
I am satisfied with my relationship with my child's teachers.					
I am satisfied with my relationship with my child's school.					
I am satisfied with my relationship with my child's school.					
I read aloud at to my child on a regular basis.					
My child often reads at home.					
I am satisfied with my relationship to other parents in my community.					
I often sit down and have dinner with my child.					
I am satisfied with my support system of family, friends, and community.					

One thing I would really like to know or have in order to be able to support my child's reading progress is:

LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Appendix E

LIFE ID#

Literacy-Integrated Family Engagement: Family Survey, Session 1

Please fill out this survey this based on your experiences with the child that you brought to this LIFE meeting. If you brought more than one child, each child will have his/her own survey.

Introduction

Please circle the answers to the following questions:

1. What is your relationship to the child that you brought to this LIFE meeting?	
Mother (biological/step/adoptive/foster)	1
Father (biological/step/adoptive/foster)	2
Other, related guardian	3
Other, unrelated guardian	4
Grandmother	5
Grandfather	6
Other (please specify): _____	7
2. Do you live in the same household as the child that you brought to this LIFE meeting?	Yes No

Home Activities

Please think about a typical week for the child that you brought to this meeting and circle the number of days the child does each activity at home.

Item	Number of days per week
1. In a typical week, how many days does your child read to himself/herself at home?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. In a typical week, how many days does your child read out loud to others at home?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. In a typical week, how many days do you or any other family members read books to your child?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. In a typical week, how many days does your family sit down to have dinner together?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

My Child's Feelings and My Feelings

Below are statements about how you feel or think about your child's feelings and your own feelings. Using the scale below, circle the appropriate number for each item.

	1= Not true	2=Sometimes true	3= True
1. It is important to know how my child is feeling.	1	2	3
2. I don't want to know how my child is feeling.	1	2	3
3. If my child is upset, I try to understand why.	1	2	3
4. I don't care about how my child is feeling inside.	1	2	3
5. I usually know how my child is feeling.	1	2	3
6. I am often confused or puzzled about what I am feeling.	1	2	3
7. It is difficult to know whether I feel sad or angry or something else.	1	2	3
8. I never know exactly what kind of feeling I am having.	1	2	3
9. When I am upset, I don't know if I am sad, scared, or angry.	1	2	3
10. Sometimes, I feel upset and I have no idea why.	1	2	3
11. I often don't know why I am angry.	1	2	3
12. I don't know when something will upset me or not.	1	2	3

Relationship with Your Child

Please reflect on the degree to which each of the following statements currently applies to your relationship with your child. Using the scale below, circle the appropriate number for each item.

	1=Definitely does not apply	2= Not really	3= Neutral, not sure	4= Applies somewhat	5= Definitely applies
1. I share an affectionate, warm relationship with my child.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My child and I always seem to be struggling with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
3. If upset, my child will seek comfort from me.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My child is uncomfortable with physical affection or touch from me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My child values his/her relationship with me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When I praise my child, he/she beams with pride.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My child spontaneously shares information about himself/herself.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My child easily becomes angry at me.	1	2	3	4	5
9. It is easy to be in tune with what my child is feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My child remains angry or is resistant after being disciplined.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Dealing with my child drains my energy.	1	2	3	4	5
12. When my child is in a bad mood, I know we're in for a long and difficult day.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My child's feelings toward me can be unpredictable or can change suddenly.	1	2	3	4	5
14. My child is sneaky or manipulative with me.	1	2	3	4	5
15. My child openly shares his/her feelings and experiences with me.	1	2	3	4	5

LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Appendix F

LIFE ID#

Literacy-Integrated Family Engagement: Family Survey, Session 8

Please fill out this survey based on your experiences with the KRR child who you brought to this LIFE meeting. If you brought more than one child, each child will have his/her own survey.

Introduction

Please circle the answers to the following questions:

1. What is your relationship to the KRR child?	
Mother (biological/step/adoptive/foster)	1
Father (biological/step/adoptive/foster)	2
Other, related guardian	3
Other, unrelated guardian	4
Grandmother	5
Grandfather	6
Other (please specify): _____	7
2. Do you live in the same household as the KRR child?	Yes No
3. Did you fill out a survey for this child during the first LIFE session?	Yes No

Home Activities

Please think about a typical week for the child that you brought to this meeting and circle the number of days the child does each activity at home.

Item	Number of days per week
1. In a typical week, how many days does your child read to himself/herself at home?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. In a typical week, how many days does your child read out loud to others at home?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. In a typical week, how many days do you or any other family members read books to your child?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. In a typical week, how many days does your family sit down to have dinner together?	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

My Child's Feelings and My Feelings

Below are statements about how you feel or think about your child's feelings and your own feelings. Using the scale below, circle the appropriate number for each item.

	1= Not true	2=Sometimes true	3= True
1. It is important to know how my child is feeling.	1	2	3
2. I don't want to know how my child is feeling.	1	2	3
3. If my child is upset, I try to understand why.	1	2	3
4. I don't care about how my child is feeling inside.	1	2	3
5. I usually know how my child is feeling.	1	2	3
6. I am often confused or puzzled about what I am feeling.	1	2	3
7. It is difficult to know whether I feel sad or angry or something else.	1	2	3
8. I never know exactly what kind of feeling I am having.	1	2	3
9. When I am upset, I don't know if I am sad, scared, or angry.	1	2	3
10. Sometimes, I feel upset and I have no idea why.	1	2	3
11. I often don't know why I am angry.	1	2	3
12. I don't know when something will upset me or not.	1	2	3

Relationship with Your Child

Please reflect on the degree to which each of the following statements currently applies to your relationship with your child. Using the scale below, circle the appropriate number for each item.

	1=Definitely does not apply	2= Not really	3= Neutral, not sure	4= Applies somewhat	5= Definitely applies
1. I share an affectionate, warm relationship with my child.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My child and I always seem to be struggling with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
3. If upset, my child will seek comfort from me.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My child is uncomfortable with physical affection or touch from me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My child values his/her relationship with me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When I praise my child, he/she beams with pride.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My child spontaneously shares information about himself/herself.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My child easily becomes angry at me.	1	2	3	4	5
9. It is easy to be in tune with what my child is feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My child remains angry or is resistant after being disciplined.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Dealing with my child drains my energy.	1	2	3	4	5
12. When my child is in a bad mood, I know we're in for a long and difficult day.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My child's feelings toward me can be unpredictable or can change suddenly.	1	2	3	4	5
14. My child is sneaky or manipulative with me.	1	2	3	4	5
15. My child openly shares his/her feelings and experiences with me.	1	2	3	4	5

LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

LIFE ID#

Knowledge of Multi-Tiered System of Supports- all this page

1. Did you attend the fifth session of LIFE where staff presented information on the multi-tiered system of supports and the KRR model?
 - Yes
 - No

If yes, please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements. Using the scale below, circle the appropriate number for each item.

	1 = Strong disagree	2= Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly agree
1. I understand the purpose of multi-tiered system of supports.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I understand the purpose of progress monitoring.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I understand the purpose of academic intervention.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I understand that my child learns to read in a progression of skills.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I have seen and practiced reading a progress monitoring chart.	1	2	3	4	5

Feedback on the LIFE Program

The following questions are open-ended. Please answer in 2-3 sentences and provide examples. Your feedback will help us improve the LIFE program for future families.

1. What did you and your family get out of participating in the LIFE program?

2. What were your three favorite activities in LIFE? What did you like about them?

1 –

2 –

3 –

3. What suggestions do you have for improving the LIFE program?

Appendix G

**BECAUSE NOBODY'S
LIFE looks
LIKE THIS ANYMORE**



that's why

FOR FAMILIES OF K-3RD GRADERS

KRR L.I.F.E.!

(LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT)

Sign Your Family Up Today!

When? Starts Sept. 20th
Every Tuesday for 8 Weeks from 5:15-7:45pm

Where? Neosho Heights

What? Playtime with your child
Engaging with other parents about topics that matter
Literacy Interaction with your child
Gifts like books or art materials each time your family attends
Dinner provided for **FREE** for you and your family

Sign Up Deadline: September 15th

Questions: Contact Chaney @ the School Office 795-4541



Appendix H

Interview Questions for Parent Participants

“Hi (Insert parent name here). First, I want to thank you for participating in this study. As you know, I am evaluating the effectiveness of the LIFE program for my final project in my master’s program. Your participation means a lot to me and will hopefully help make LIFE even more effective for future participants! I want to remind you that your answers to these questions will remain confidential. I am the only person who will know your identity. Anything I include in my paper will not include your name or any identifying factors. We’re going to go ahead and get started really quick, and if you have anything else to add at the end of these questions, I would love to hear your opinions and suggestions for future LIFE programs.”

1. What are your overall thoughts about the LIFE program?
2. Do you feel this program has been beneficial to your family? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?
3. What changes would you make to this program?
4. What was your favorite part of the program?
5. Would you participate in this program again?
6. Any other thoughts or comments you have about LIFE?

LITERACY INTEGRATED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Appendix I

Interview Questions for LIFE Staff

“Hi (Insert staff name here). First, I want to thank you for participating in this study. As you know, I am evaluating the effectiveness of the LIFE program for my final project in my master’s program. Your participation means a lot to me and will hopefully help make LIFE even more effective for future participants! I want to remind you that your answers to these questions will remain confidential. I am the only person who will know your identity. Anything I include in my paper will not include your name or any identifying factors. We’re going to go ahead and get started really quick, and if you have anything else to add at the end of these questions, I would love to hear your opinions and suggestions for future LIFE programs.”

1. How do you feel LIFE went?
2. What are your overall thoughts about the LIFE program?
3. What did you like the most about the program?
4. What changes would you make to this program?
5. Any other thoughts or comments you have about LIFE?