Background

- Poverty-related disparities in language development / school readiness begin very early in infancy (Hart & Risley, 1995).
- Need for effective interventions prior to school entry

Pediatric primary care is an ideal platform for reaching families prior to school entry (Box 1)

Box 1: Pediatric primary care – Universal platform for promoting parenting and school readiness

High engagement
- Build on existing relationships with healthcare professionals; medical home
- Build on existing staff, infrastructure and visits

Low cost
- ~90% of children now covered for primary care
- ~100% receive immunizations prior to school entry
- 13 to 15 visits from birth to 5 years

Population-level accessibility
- +90% of children now covered for primary care
- +100% receive immunizations prior to school entry
- +13 to 15 visits from birth to 5 years

- AAP recommends that pediatricians provide anticipatory guidance about reading aloud to all families beginning at birth
- Documented impacts of pediatric-based programs (Box 2)
- In addition, pediatric primary care is uniquely poised to connect families with existing resources in their communities

Approach

- City-wide early literacy initiative: City’s First Readers
- Initiated and funded by the New York City Council
- Connect evidence-based programs promoting early literacy across multiple platforms: Pediatric primary care (Box 2), Home visiting, Community, Early Childhood Education.

Box 2: Evidence-based programs promoting school readiness in pediatric primary care
Reach Out and Read (ROR)
- Healthcare providers counsel families about the importance of reading aloud; provide children’s books at each visit
- Waiting room volunteers and staff model reading activities
- Documented impacts on parent reading aloud and child language (High et al, 1999; Mendelsohn et al., 2001)
- Wide dissemination to 25% low income children 6m-5yrs

Video Interaction Project (VIP)
- Builds on Reach Out and Read
- Promotes enhanced parent-child interactions in reading aloud and play.
- Families meet with interventionist at each well-child visit.

Evaluation Questions
1) Is CFR successful in linking different platforms?
- Can pediatric-based programs (ROR, VIP) link families to community-level programs (e.g., libraries)?
- Are library participation rates higher in communities with referrals from pediatric care than in communities without these linkages?

2) Does linking programs provide added value?
- Do families who are touched by more than one program show enhanced engagement in early literacy activities compared to families touched by a single program?
- Does participation in community-level programs provide enhanced benefits to child development compared to participation in pediatric programs alone?

Goals

Enhance potential of pediatric primary care for promoting early literacy and school readiness by:
- Reinforcing literacy messages from pediatric providers through - linkages between programs in pediatric care (ROR, VIP, Box 2) - synergies with programs in other platforms
- Maximize utilization and impacts of early literacy resources in the community through referrals from pediatric primary care

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