The Campaign for
GRADE-LEVEL
READING

PARENTS SUCCEEDING TOOLKIT

INTRODUCTION

The *Parents Succeeding Pilot Program* (*Parents Succeeding*) serves as a model for organizations that plan and implement programs that support parents in building agency, efficacy, and confidence. The model is based on the understanding that learning happens everywhere, and parents play a key role in helping their young children develop and learn.[1]

With this model, coordinating organizations[2] support parents, specifically parents who are economically challenged, in building agency, efficacy and confidence in accessing community resources on behalf of their families by designing positive and supportive experiences with amenity organizations.[3] With the new skills acquired by engaging with amenity organizations and supportive, reflective learning, parents experience increased family connectedness as well as the ability to support their children in the development of social-emotional, relational, and educational skills.

"High quality family, school, and community engagement is critical to educational and health equity as well as overall success for children and youth. It is only through authentic and meaningful partnerships and mutual support that our children, youth and families can access the resources they need to achieve academic, social, and economic success."

- A PRACTITIONER[1]

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[1] *https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/family-engagement-framework.pdf*

[2] Coordinating organizations — Organizations that have experience in supporting parents and early learning. This can be a library, nonprofit, advocacy agency or other organization.

[3] Amenity organizations — Community institutions that provide cultural, educational, recreational, and social activities. This can be a zoo, museum, educational center, or another place.

PROGRAM TOOLKIT

The *Parents Succeeding* program includes three phases. Parents are invited into the decision-making process in each phase. For this reason, each *Parents Succeeding* program is unique. This toolkit introduces the key components needed to implement an effective program based on findings from the *Parents Succeeding Pilot Program*.

While a child's savings account (CSA) was not included in the *Parents Succeeding* program, it was considered by the coordinating organizations as an important program component that should be explored in the future. Information about a CSA is provided in this toolkit for the convenience of organizations that may consider CSAs in the design of their *Parents Succeeding* program, as appropriate.

A child's saving account (CSA) is important to improving educational outcomes. While the resources could not be committed as part of the Parents Succeeding program, CSAs should be considered when implementing your program. Research suggests that opening a savings account from an early age has been shown to improve a child's social-emotional development, and to build positive parental interactions and practices. Children who have a $500 savings account are more likely to enroll in and graduate from college than those who do not. According to research, children with a savings account that is earmarked for college report higher expectations for college and identify as college bound. The Book Harvest's Book Babies program invites families to open a Bright Futures account through Durham, NC's Latino Community Credit Union. To learn more about CSAs, more information about the Bright Futures savings account program is available in the Appendix.

An effective program:

- Increases parents' sense of agency and self-efficacy.

- Increases parents' confidence in their knowledge of child development, parenting strategies, and parent leadership.

- Helps parents perceive amenity institutions as welcoming and relevant.

- Deploys mini grants to families participating in the program so they can implement activities of their own design.

- Helps parents develop sustainable social networks with their peers.

A coordinating organization can expect the program to include the following:

PHASE 1	**Encourage and Facilitate Engagement** • Recruit parents and launch program • Begin visits to free amenity organizations

PHASE 2	**Strengthen Social Capital** • Arrange visits to moderate-barrier amenity organizations • Continue parent gatherings • Begin peer small groups • Begin parent gatherings

PHASE 3	**Design an Enriching Experience** • Support parents as they plan a visit • Facilitate reporting on experiences • Continue parent gatherings and peer small groups

See a more detailed description of each phase in the *"Description of Stages" on page 6*.
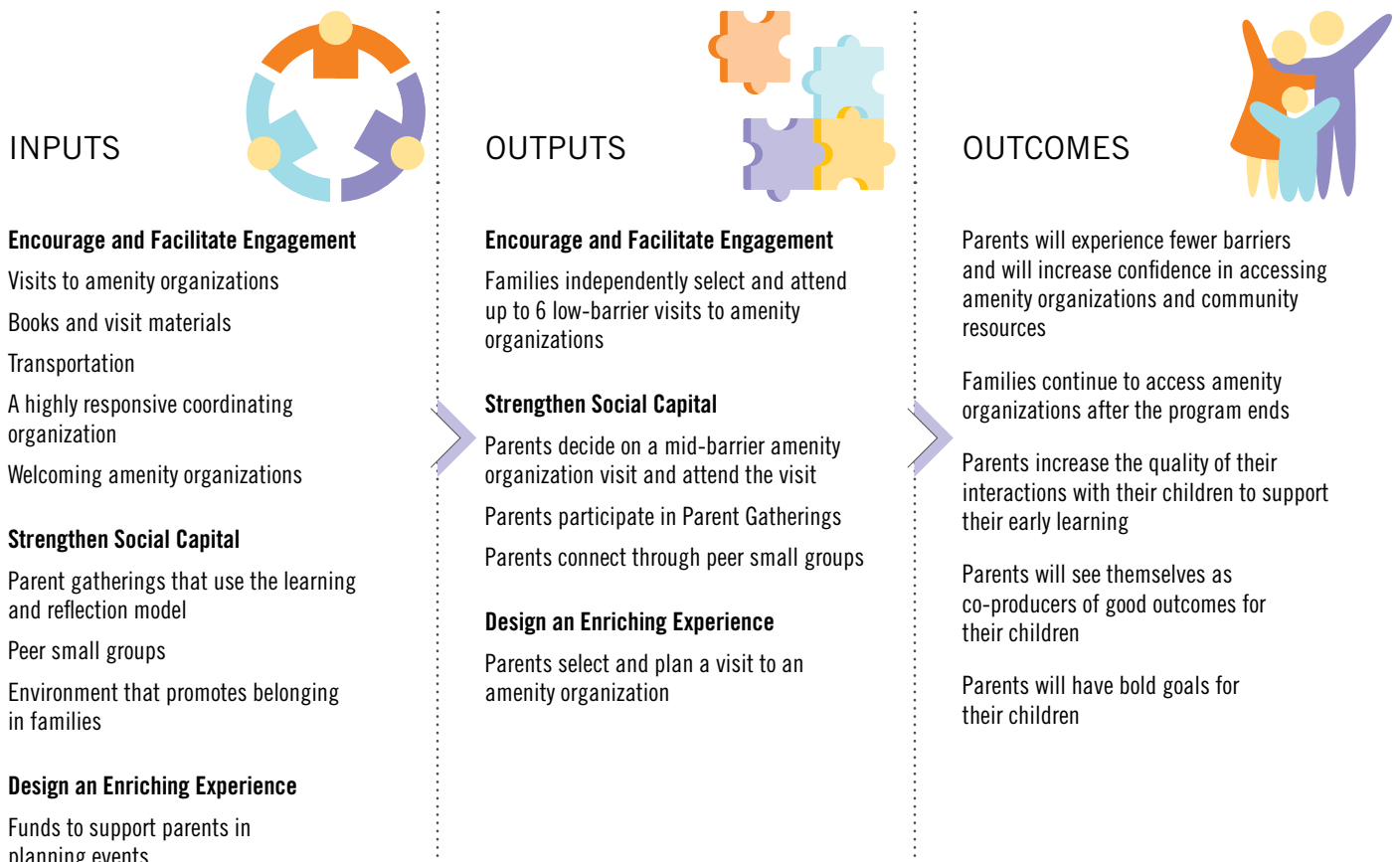
ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

The toolkit is designed to provide coordinating organizations such as yours with tools that will help you successfully implement the *Parents Succeeding* model. The resources in this toolkit have been developed based on challenges and successes of the program.

This draft toolkit will be finalized after the Parents Succeeding Advisory Group (PAG) reviews and provides final comments and feedback on it in June 2023.

LOGIC MODEL

INPUTS

Encourage and Facilitate Engagement

Visits to amenity organizations

Books and visit materials

Transportation

A highly responsive coordinating organization

Welcoming amenity organizations

Strengthen Social Capital

Parent gatherings that use the learning and reflection model

Peer small groups

Environment that promotes belonging in families

Design an Enriching Experience

Funds to support parents in planning events

OUTPUTS

Encourage and Facilitate Engagement

Families independently select and attend up to 6 low-barrier visits to amenity organizations

Strengthen Social Capital

Parents decide on a mid-barrier amenity organization visit and attend the visit

Parents participate in Parent Gatherings

Parents connect through peer small groups

Design an Enriching Experience

Parents select and plan a visit to an amenity organization

OUTCOMES

Parents will experience fewer barriers and will increase confidence in accessing amenity organizations and community resources

Families continue to access amenity organizations after the program ends

Parents increase the quality of their interactions with their children to support their early learning

Parents will see themselves as co-producers of good outcomes for their children

Parents will have bold goals for their children

DESCRIPTION OF STAGES

This section presents a more detailed explanation of how you can implement each of the phases. We also introduce key components that you will see throughout the toolkit.

Pre-Implementation Phase

Before you implement the model, you will want to begin your organization's planning process. You should plan to complete a landscape analysis to identify barriers to participation and identify resources to assist parents with needs (e.g., social service agencies, adult education programs, mental health resources, etc.).

Several tools that you can use during this phase include:

• Are We Ready Checklist

• Considerations for Fiscal Planning

• Parent Survey Questions

• Considerations for Partnerships

You should also develop an advisory committee that will bring together stakeholders who will participate in outreach, recruitment, enrollment, implementation, and review of the program. To be effective this committee must include parents who will participate in the program.

Phase 1 | Encourage and Facilitate Engagement

In phase one you should recruit parents and launch your program. Develop an outreach and recruitment plan that explains to families the benefits they will receive by participating in the program. In the program this included a mini grant to parents that completed the program.

Visits to Low-Barrier Amenity Organizations Select and schedule at least six amenity organization visits. Parents and families should choose from and attend these free and low-barrier events at the amenity organizations. You should provide parents with information and help in accessing the events.

As their children's first teachers, parents have an amazing opportunity to nurture their children's growth and development and to advocate for their learning. And many parents want to be involved in their children's education. However, families often face obstacles to engaging in the learning experience.

Parent Gatherings Begin hosting parent gatherings. You can facilitate sessions for parents to participate in that include:

• Using the learning and reflection model to reflect on experiences

• Creating educational session on topics such as child development, techniques for active engagement, and parenting strategies

• Meetings between amenity organizations and parents to discuss the amenities' offerings and strategies for engaging and supporting parents

• Discussion about the gift card and how they will be distributed (if gift cards will be issued as part of your program)

Peer Group Meetings Facilitate the building of connections and exchanging tips about the visits with parents using the learning and reflection model through peer group meetings.

Several tools that can be used during this phase include:

• *Learning and Reflection Model*

• Example Book and Visit Materials

• Techniques for Active Participation

See the *"Action Planner"* for samples of these tools.

> It is important to take time during this phase for families to reach a level of full participation and build their engagement.

Phase 2 | Strengthen Social Capital

Visits to Moderate-Barrier Amenity Organizations In phase two parents develop a list of moderate-barrier amenity organizations that they would like to visit. These are organizations which have admission fees. Coordinate and pay for visits to these locations.

Parent Gatherings and Peer Group Meetings Continue to facilitate parent gatherings and peer group meetings.

Phase 3 | Design an Enriching Experience

In phase three the work is parent-led and supported by you, the coordinating organization. You become the "guide on the side".

Parents' Visit Plan Parents develop a list of "high five" experiences for their family, based on visits they would like to make. Parents work together to select and plan a visit to an amenity organization from their list. Invite them to request assistance from the coordinating organization with financing and coordinating logistics as they implement their plan. Parents report on their experiences and continue to support and assist each other.

Parent Gatherings and Peer Group Meetings Continue to facilitate parent gatherings and peer group meetings.

ACTION PLANNER

The *Parents Succeeding* model has many moving parts that require coordination. This action planner includes key tasks that should be completed. For each task identify the person who will be responsible for the task and the date the task must be completed.

There are other tools that can help you with some of these tasks. Click on the tasks to go to the linked tool.

TASKS	INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BE COMPLETED	STATUS
EXAMPLE: Assess organizational readiness	Program Director	June	As of 6/10 two follow-up tasks are outstanding on the Are We Ready Checklist action planner
Assess organizational readiness			
Assess fiscal readiness and manage fiscal responsibilities			
Identify resources to assist parents			
Gather parent input and identify barriers to participation			
Develop an advisory committee, schedule, and host ongoing meetings			
Develop a reporting process and tool for the project to communicate with stakeholders			
Contact amenity organizations, assess readiness and engage in planning			
Develop SMART goals and plan to implement them with fidelity			
Develop and implement a parent outreach and communication plan, including a plan for translation of materials			
Manage ongoing communication with families			

TASKS	INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBLE	DATE TO BE COMPLETED	STATUS
Coordinate and troubleshoot visits to amenity organizations			
Coordinate and troubleshoot transportation for visits to amenity organizations			
Plan curriculum and speakers for parent gatherings			
Schedule and facilitate parent gatherings			
Coordinate and schedule peer group meetings			
Aid with financing and coordinating logistics as families select "high five" experiences			
Distribute funds to families, as appropriate			
Other steps (include other steps pertinent to your specific project)			

You can use the blank spaces above to add additional action steps that are unique to your program.

NEXT STEPS ▶▶▶

After you complete the initial action planner, review it regularly and record updates in the status column.

ARE WE READY CHECKLIST

Are you considering running a *Parents Succeeding* model? This checklist can help you, an organization that is considering using the *Parents Succeeding* model, assess your readiness.

The *Parents Succeeding Pilot Program* operated 2021-22. The program helped identify characteristics that organizations need to be successful when they adapt the model. If your organization is considering using th *Parents Succeeding* model, you will need to plan for the items on this list and determine how you will address them before beginning your program.

Begin by checking each characteristic that exists in your organization.

Coordinating organizations should have:

Deep local knowledge of the community and families, local amenity organizations, etc.

A track record of successfully engaging parents and supporting their self-efficacy

Capacity to recruit and enroll families through strong community ties or partnership with another program serving the population

Willingness to give control of the program design to parents, and willingness to co-create the program with parents

Ability to provide language supports

Understanding and representation of the cultural backgrounds of families

Willingness to provide programming on times and days when families are available — this frequently includes evenings, weekends, including Sundays

Financial resources to support the program and to make the program beneficial to families

Commitment to dignity for parents (i.e., not requiring families to prove their economic status, instead giving all parents from a low income community free services)

Understanding of what parents value most (see the *Parent Survey Questions*)

Strong and committed partnerships with amenity organizations

Partnerships with other organizations — this includes co-coordinating organizations and resource organizations[4]

Culture that is welcoming and inclusive (see *Creating Belonging*)

[4] Resource organizations — Community organizations that assist parents with needs (e.g. social service agencies, adult education programs, mental health resources, etc.)

ACTION PLANNER

After you complete the checklist, look at each of the unchecked items. Use the chart below to record the characteristics and an action(s) that you will take to prepare to implement the *Parents Succeeding* model. Include the timeline for this follow-up work.

	CHARACTERISTIC	ACTION WE WILL TAKE	WHEN WE WILL TAKE THE ACTION
EXAMPLE:	Ability to provide language supports	- Update Community Relations Coordinator job description writing tool. Include "bilingual in Spanish and English required" - Forward the updated tool to HR	By May 1

After deciding to implement the *Parents Succeeding* model, you should begin to identify amenity organizations who will collaborate with you. For each potential amenity organization, use the checklist below to determine if they have the key characteristics that make them an effective partner for this project.

Amenity organizations should have:

Recognition of the need to reach economically challenged parents and children

Willingness and ability to create an accessible, inclusive, welcoming culture

Capacity to meet with parents to discuss their offerings and to hear from parents about strategies and practices that welcome parents into their organizations

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FISCAL PLANNING

As you consider implementing the *Parents Succeeding* model, you will need to identify a funding source to support the project. Review the types of potential funding below.

Types of funding:

• **Unrestricted and unallocated funds** are funds that are already available within an organization's budget that can be used for any purpose and are not already apportioned to other projects.

• **Grants** provide funds for a particular project. To use grant funding to implement the *Parents Succeeding* model you may want to respond to a Request for Proposal (RFP).

• **Private donors** will often sponsor or support initiatives that are important to them. You may have to identify a donor and ask them to support your project.

• **Sponsors**, often corporations, may be willing to provide funds to support projects that align with their initiatives.

• **Blending and braiding funds** is another way to support funding a project. This entails identifying more than one of the funding sources above and combining them to support the project.

No matter what type(s) of funding you are considering using to implement the *Parents Succeeding* model, you should work closely with the staff responsible for finance and development to identify funding sources, write grants and make requests for funding.

ACTION PLANNER

After you complete the checklist, review each of the unchecked items. Use the chart below. Include the timeline for this follow-up work.

CONSIDERATIONS	ACTION NEEDED?	FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS
EXAMPLE: Programs will need access to unrestricted funds that can be used for unexpected expenses.	Yes	*Request unrestricted funding from a private donor*
Programs will need access to unrestricted funds that can be used for unexpected expenses.		
Participation will be less than enrollment so funding that is based on participation may create barriers to implementation.		
Transportation — bus, Uber, Lyft, parking fees, etc. — can be expensive and plans may vary based on where participants live and selected amenity sites.		
Not all funding sources and organizations allow the purchase of gift cards and money orders to be provided directly to parents/families.		
Large numbers of gift cards and/or money orders are not available at stores and may have fees associated with their purchase that should be included in the program budget.		
Staff from the coordinating organizations should know how to access funds for transportation, books, etc.		
The budget should include honorariums for an expert panel during Parent Gatherings and other fees associated with program administration.		
Include the costs of personnel at the coordinating organizations; coordinating organizations found staff time to be higher than expected.		
Include the costs of a photographer and videographer in the budget in order to document the experiences. This can be useful for making the program attractive to funders and future participants.		
Offering food at Parent gatherings can motivate parent attendance and on-time arrival but must be included in your budget.		
Consider offering/budgeting for an annual membership for families that complete the program.		

Use the empty rows above to add other fiscal considerations that may be unique to your organization as you consider fiscal planning.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with amenity organizations are essential to successfully implementing the *Parents Succeeding* model. You can use the following strategies to guide your partnership development.

Strategy 1: Review your Assets

Answer the following questions to review your assets.

- What resources do we need to accomplish our goals?

- What partners work in the areas we identified?

- What does our program have to offer these partners?

- Would the partnerships require funds from our budget?

- What level of engagement could we expect from the partners?

Strategy 2: Reach Out to Partners

When you prepare to meet with partners, you will want to come prepared with an agenda, and be ready to ask for support (i.e., fundings, other resources, etc.). Include each of the following items on your agenda.

- An overview of the project

- The benefits of the project to the partner

- Roles and responsibilities of the partner and you

If the partner agrees to collaborate with you on the project, it is important to put a Memorandum of Understanding in place to document your relationship.

Strategy 3: Preserve Partnerships

Once your partnerships are established it is important to continue to pay attention to them to make sure that they are healthy and effective. Select actions from the list below to help preserve your partnerships.

Recruit partners to participate in your advisory committee.

Maintain routine communication (ex. monthly meetings and regular email updates).

Share data about the partnership and outcomes.

Share resources (ex. space for an event or materials for programming).

Recognize and highlight partners' work (ex. share posts on social media or your website).

Send thank you notes or email.

PARENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

Do you know what families want? It is important that you use parent feedback to plan how you will implement the *Parents Succeeding* model.

Review the questions and select 8-10 from this list that will provide you information about families' needs and interests. Then use the questions to get input from the families you are planning to recruit to participate in your program.

You can print copies of the survey or distribute the survey digitally.

1 How often do you participate in community activities with your family?

Once a week   Every two weeks   Monthly   Less than once a month

2 Name two community activities you have participated in with your family in the last six months.

3 What is most important to you when you plan to attend community activities? *Check up to three.*

Something fun for your children   Free or low-cost activities

Exposure to new things   Easy to get to

Giveaways   Learning opportunities for your children

4 What community spaces and places would you like to visit with your family? *Check up to three.*

Zoo   Museum   Community center   Art center

Fair or festival   Cultural center   Playground or play space   Park or nature center

5 List other community spaces and places you would like to visit with your family.

6 What barriers do you face when attending or planning to attend community activities?
Check any that apply.

Transportation   Cost   Not interesting to my children

Language barriers   Time/day of the activities   Not family friendly

7 What else keeps you from attending more community activities?

8 Select the times you are available to attend activities for each day.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

9   How many hours would you spend at a community activity? *Check one.*

1–2 hours   3–4 hours   5–6 hours

10   What language do you speak at home?

English   Spanish   Arabic   Chinese

11   List how many children you have in each age group.

0-2 YEARS	3-5 YEARS	6-8 YEARS	9-11 YEARS	12-14 YEARS	15-18 YEARS

12   What would you be interested in learning more about? *Check up to three.*

Helping my child succeed in school   Teaching my child to read

Healthy child growth and development   Helping my child eat healthy food

Community resources   Parenting and discipline

Note: *This list should be adjusted as needed to meet the needs of your specific project and the community served.*

13   What is the best way to reach you?

Text   Phone   Facebook Group

Email   Other:

Once you have collected the responses, look for themes. What are the most common responses to each question? What are parents interested in?

This survey is just a starting place for understanding parents' needs and interests. Follow up on the survey feedback:

• Host a **focus group** to expand your understanding of the feedback.

• **Interview** parents, asking follow-up questions on the survey results.

• **Share the data** with families and brainstorm ideas with them to respond to the input.

However you follow up — you must do something with the information you received to keep parents engaged.

GOAL SETTING AND DATA COLLECTION

Creating goals provides a road map for the program and a means to evaluate the effectiveness of your work. Meet with stakeholders including funders, coordinating organization staff, amenity organizations and parents to set goals, and to ensure that everyone understands the expectations of the program. Use the sample SMART goals to assist you in developing your own program SMART goals.

SPECIFIC The target audience/participants	Parents of children ages 0-7
MEASURABLE The tools (valid, reliable, evidence-based, etc.) that will be used to measure impact	Sign-in sheets and post-program survey
ACHIEVABLE The target progress/accomplishment	• 20 families participate in at least one activity in all three phases of the program • 80% of parents who complete the program report a "significant" change in their agency, efficacy and confidence in accessing community resources • 60% of parents who complete the program report planning at least two outings with their families 6-8 weeks after the program
RELEVANT The connection to your vision/mission	The program is to build parents' agency, efficacy and confidence in accessing community resources
TIMEBOUND The timeframe for measuring the data	18 months

SMART GOALS:

• 20 families with children ages 0-7 will develop their skills by participating in at least one activity during all three phases of the *Parents Succeeding* program as measured by sign-in sheets.

• 80% of parents who complete the program report a "significant" change in their agency, efficacy, and confidence in accessing community resources in the post-program survey.

• 60% of parents who complete the program report planning at least two outings with their families 6-8 weeks after the program in the post-program survey.

Once you have developed your SMART goals, to capture your data. You can use the chart to develop a plan to ensure data collection.

	SMART GOAL	MEASUREMENT TOOL	INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNED	TARGET GROUP	TIME FRAME	ACTUAL OUTCOME
EXAMPLE:	80% of parents who complete the program report a "significant" change in their agency, efficacy, and confidence in accessing community resources in the post-program survey.	Post-program survey	Project Coordinator	Parents who completed all three phases	- Send 6 weeks after the program ends - Send follow up reminders 7 weeks after - Make follow up calls 8 weeks after	82% of parents who completed the survey indicated they had a "significant" or "very significant" change

PARENT INTEREST INVENTORY

Use this inventory during phase one or between phases one and two to assess parents' interests and needs regarding parent gathering educational sessions. Before using this tool, review the topics and make sure to add any that were brought up during focus groups, interviews, or data sharing. You can print copies of the survey or distribute the survey digitally.

Rank each topic from 1 to 10 with 1 being topics that you are most interested in exploring during Parent Gatherings. Then, record any questions you have on this topic.

RANKING	TOPIC	QUESTIONS I HAVE ABOUT THIS TOPIC
	Community resources Support services	
	Diversity and inclusion	
	Learning at home Literacy, learning through play, physical and emotional well-being	
	Financial support Budgeting, resources	
	Health and wellness Car seat safety, healthy eating	
	Parenting Discipline, setting routines, physical and emotional well-being	
	School School choice, enrolling in school	
	Trauma informed care Adverse childhood experiences, mental health supports	
	Child development Developmental milestones, positive youth development	
	College and career pathways Accessing higher education, college readiness	

NEXT STEPS ≫

Review the Parent Interest Inventories you received and identify the top-ranked topics. Identify who can provide educational sessions on these topics, when the topics can be held and share the "questions I have about this topic" with the facilitator so that they can utilize them in designing their session.

LEARNING AND REFLECTION MODEL

DESCRIPTION

FEELINGS

EVALUATION

ANALYSIS

CONCLUSION

ACTION PLAN

The *Parents Succeeding* model relies on parent learning and reflection[5] during parent gatherings to support parent development. There are six stages to the learning and reflection process – description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan. What occurs during each stage is explained on the next page.

The facilitator of the parent gatherings can use the guiding questions on this tool to lead parents through each stage.

In addition to the learning and reflection model, a curriculum to support parents' development is a key aspect of the *Parents Succeeding* model. Ideally the curriculum will address the needs and skills that are identified during reflection activities. In the *Parents Succeeding Pilot Program* each coordinating organization used a different curriculum.

[5]This Learning and Reflection Model is based on Gibb's reflective cycle (1988).

DESCRIPTION

Here parents set the scene by sharing what happened during their visit.

Guiding Questions:

- When did it occur?
- Who was there?
- What did you do?
- What were the outcomes?

FEELINGS

Parents are encouraged to discuss their feelings and thoughts about the experience.

Guiding Questions:

- How did you feel at the time?
- What did you think at the time?
- What impact did your emotions, beliefs and values have?
- What do you think other people were feeling?
- What did you think about afterwards?

EVALUATION

Parents tell about their experience. Encourage them to focus on the positive and negative.

Guiding Questions:

- What was good and what was bad about the experience?
- What went well? What did not?
- If you had a difficult experience, do you feel that the situation was resolved?

ANALYSIS

This is where you support parents in making sense of what happened, using what they learned through the *Parents Succeeding* program and wider context to develop understanding. This section is very important, particularly for building the parents' skills.

Guiding Questions:

- Why did things go well? Why did things go badly?
- How can what you have learned through the program explain what happened?
- How does your experience compare to what you've learned in the program?
- What can help you make sense of this?
- Could you have responded in a different way?
- What might have helped or improved things?

CONCLUSION

Parents will make conclusions that focus on their personal situations.

Guiding Questions:

- What have you learned?
- What can you now do better?
- Could/should you have done anything differently?
- What skills would you need to handle this better?

ACTION PLAN

Action plans sum up anything parents need to know and do to improve their family's experience next time.
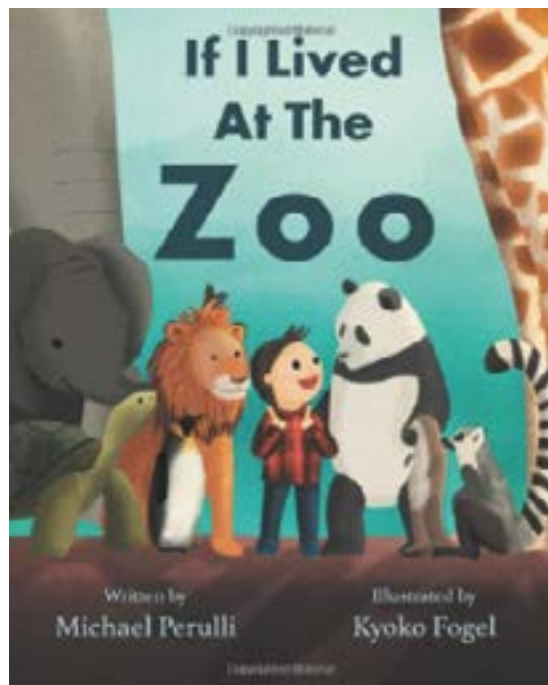
Guiding Questions:

- How/where can you use your new knowledge and experience?
- How will you adapt your actions or improve your skills?
- If the same thing happened again/if you went to the same place again, what would you do differently?

EXAMPLE BOOK AND VISIT MATERIALS

This tool identifies strategies that you should take and components you should look for when developing materials that you can use with parents to support learning in connection with an amenity organization.

This example is designed for children ages 2-4.

Connect books to the amenity visit.

Provide guided reading questions.

Give parents questions that they can ask their children as they read together:

- What animal is that?

- What sound do they make?

- Is this animal bigger or smaller than that animal? (Point to and name animals.)

- What is that? (Point to body parts— eye, nose, ear, mouth)

- Count the animals on this page.

- Which animals do you want to see/did you see at the zoo?

Include simple activities parents can do before the visit in their home.

Recommend activities that parents can do with their children before they visit:

- Read *If I Lived at the Zoo* and use the questions above to discuss the book.

- Pack a snack to take to the zoo and ask your child what they think animals eat.

- Draw a picture together of their favorite animal.

- Walk (or dance or do yoga) moving like the animals in the book.

- Talk about your visit with your child(ren) and what will happen.

Include simple activities parents can do after the visit in their home.

Recommend activities that parents can do with their children after they visit:

- Re-read If I Lived at the Zoo and have your child look for animals they saw at the zoo.

- Play zoo animal charades, moving like the animals did at the zoo.

- Describe the animals they saw. Use words like big, small, fast, slow, soft, slimy, hard, furry, describe the colors and patterns of the animals, and describe where they live.

Provide clear details about what to expect at the zoo.

Include a map.

Explain to parents what to expect at the zoo:

• The zoo is a 20-minute ride from your location.

• When you arrive go to the will-call and tell them your first and last name. Your tickets will be there. There are also $10 coupons for each person in your family so that you can purchase a snack or drink. You can also bring snacks and drinks from home.

• Most guests walk 2–4 miles once they arrive at the zoo. Consider bringing a stroller for your littlest ones. Let [*insert name*] know if you need to borrow one. Comfortable sneakers are also a must.

• You will not be able to touch the animals except the barnyard animals. Everyone will wash their hands before entering and after leaving this area.

• The van will return at [*insert time*] to pick you up at the same place they dropped you off.

Zoo Map

Include details about the transportation plan.
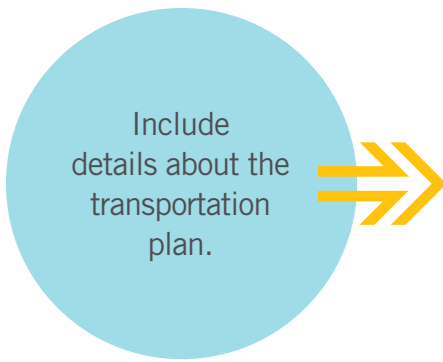
Transportation Plan

The van will meet you at [*insert location*] on date at time. Call or text [*insert name*] at [*insert number*] if you have any questions or concerns.

USING BOOK & VISIT MATERIALS

Once you identify/create these materials, you can:

• Distribute them to parents to do independently.

• Review them during Parent Gatherings so that parents understand them.

• Do the activities during Parent Gatherings as parents build confidence in using these activities with their children.

TECHNIQUES FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

The *Parents Succeeding* model builds parents skills in being active participants in their child's learning. This is not something that is innate; adults themselves must learn how to do this. This tool reviews techniques for active participation that families can use to engage their children in learning. You can use this tool as a handout for parents, as a conversation starter during Parent Gatherings, or as a resource to discuss with parents who struggle to engage their children during visits to amenity organizations. The techniques in this tool aren't only for visits to amenity organizations. They are techniques that will promote learning in everyday places and spaces.

SENSORY MOTOR SKILLS

These are built by using the five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching) and motor skills (fine motor skills that make your hands and wrists move and gross motor skills that control large body movements). You can help build children's sensory skills by encouraging them to:

• Look and describe what they see.

• Listen and echo or describe what they hear.

• Smell what is around them and talk about it.

• Taste things that are safe to eat.

• Touch a variety of things.

You can help build children's motor skills by encouraging them to:

FINE MOTOR

Reach • Grasp • Point
Touch • Release

GROSS MOTOR

Sit • Stand • Walk
Run • Jump • Lift • Kick

Imagine you are going to the park. Place a check mark near things that you can do with a young child to build their sensory motor skills.

Young children learn through experiences everywhere they go and in everything they do. They learn through play, eating and other everyday activities. As parents, you can help them learn and grow by using these everyday experiences intentionally to develop their sensory motor, communication, and fine and gross motor skills.

Jump on different surfaces — grass, asphalt, gravel, wood chips and dirt.

Crab walk on different surfaces, letting their hands touch the ground.

Look for flowers, birds or bugs.

Listen to park noises — birds calling, children playing, gravel crunching when you walk, leaves rustling, water lapping, cars driving.

Hunt for items and collect them in a bag that are large, small, soft, hard, bumpy and smooth.

Smell flowers, fresh dirt, grass — you could even have a scavenger hunt at the park!

Hop — or play hopscotch.

Do not step on cracks in the sidewalk.

Throw a ball.

Play on the playground.

Create an obstacle course with a series of things to jump over, crawl under, lift, pull or move.

Have a race. See who can get to a destination first.

Children learn and grow in everyday places and spaces.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Young children learn new ideas and new words from talking to you. Some ways that you can help build young children's communication skills include the list below.[6] Check some that you want to try.

Listen to Your Child and Show You're Listening:

Get down to your child's level and make eye contact.

If you're not sure what your child is trying to tell you, summarize it back to them to check that you understand what they're saying.

Use responses that show you are interested. For example, you can say, "Really?", "Go on" or "And then what happened?"

Avoid interrupting your child if they say or use a word incorrectly. Instead, you can use the word correctly when you respond. For example, if your child says, "I like pasghetti for dinner," you can say, "Yes, spaghetti is very yummy."

Talk to Your Child:

Use your body language and gestures to help your child understand what you mean.

Try to say exactly what you mean. It might be best to avoid exaggeration or sarcasm because young children don't understand this.

Try to use concrete words that represent things that your child can see, hear, taste, smell and touch. Use abstract words like "fear" or "truth" only when you have time to explain them.

If your child can't understand what you're saying, repeat the same message in a couple of different ways.

> Children who grow up with involved fathers are 45% less likely to repeat a grade, 2 times as likely to go to college and find stable employment, and 80% less likely to spend time in jail.
>
> The *Parents Succeeding Pilot Program* found that although mothers were typically the lead, often both parents engaged in visits to amenity organizations.

Help your child learn "why" by explaining things when you're speaking. For example, "We don't ride our bikes on the road because a car might not see us, and it might accidentally bump into us."[7]

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[6]Source: Talking and listening to preschoolers. (2019, May 30). Raising Children Network.
https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/connecting-communicating/communicating/talking-listening-to-preschoolers

[7]Source: CFRP POLICY BRIEF. (2021).

Develop Your Child's Conversation Skills:

Read and talk about picture books with your child. This will help you understand your child's thoughts, ideas and feelings.

Encourage your child to take turns talking during your conversations, and gently remind your child that only one person can speak at a time. This develops good conversation skills and builds your child's listening skills.

Explain to your child that in some situations, they have to listen quietly while other people talk.

Give your child specific praise and encouragement for good communication. For example, "Thank you for letting me finish what I was saying."

Answer Your Child's Questions:

Children learn by asking questions. When you take your child's questions seriously and take the time to give a real answer, you encourage your child to keep asking questions. This helps your child to learn about the world as they grow and develop.

If you don't know the answer to your child's question, you can find out the answer together. For example, you could say, "That's a really interesting question — let's see if we can find out."

There are a lot of recommendations on this list. Pick one or two to try this week!

SAMPLE COMMUNICATION SCHEDULE

You can use this sample communication schedule to plan and track all communications with parents and amenity organizations. Be sure to add any communication tasks that are unique to your program.

TASK	PLATFORM / METHOD OF COMMUNICATION	DATE TO BE COMPLETED	STATUS
EXAMPLE: Confirm date and time of visit with amenity organization	Email	5 weeks before visit	Confirmed with Courtney J. on April 11
Confirm date and time of visit with amenity organization		5 weeks before visit	
Post date and time of visit on program calendar		5 weeks before visit	
Send initial invitation to sign up to parents		4 weeks before visit	
Identify and order books and resources to be distributed		4 weeks before visit	
Distribute visit details and materials to parents		3 weeks before visit	
Schedule post-visit parent gathering		3 weeks before visit	
Confirm transportation plan		3 weeks before visit	
Send second invitation for sign up to parents		2 weeks before visit	
Schedule post-visit parent gathering		2 weeks before visit	
Distribute visit details and materials to parents		1 week before visit	
Follow-up with parents to answer questions regarding the visit and communicate schedule of post-visit parent gathering		1 week before visit	

TASK	PLATFORM / METHOD OF COMMUNICATION	DATE TO BE COMPLETED	STATUS
Confirm attendance at the visit		24-48 hours before visit	
Finalize transportation		24-48 hours before visit	
Finalize details with amenity organization		24-48 hours before visit	
Be available the day of the visit to address last-minute concerns		Day of visit	
Check in on visit and remind parents of parent gathering		24-48 hours after visit	
Remind parents of parent gathering		24-48 hours before parent gathering	
Share upcoming program calendar		Day of/at parent gathering	

Tips for Communication:

• Word of mouth is powerful — expect that parents will talk to one another.

• Use communication platforms that parents are using — this may include text, email, website, phone calls, Facebook group, etc.

• Give parents more than one way to reach you.

• Communicate through a variety of platforms.

• Consider if parents need paper information as well as digital resources.

• Be sure that information is in language(s) accessible to parents.

• Consider the literacy levels of the parents in the program.

• Ensure a staff member is at each location for events to answer parents' questions and to assist them throughout the event.

CREATING BELONGING

Creating belonging is a key aspect of a successful *Parents Succeeding* model. Review these tips and check the ones that you need to work on as you implement in your program.

People experience belonging when they are welcomed, known, included, supported, and connected.

Welcomed:

Have amenity organizations discuss their organizations and offerings, and ask parents to share strategies and practices that would help them feel welcome at the amenity organizations.

Bring services and amenity organizations into the coordinating organizations, promoting the amenity organizations as welcoming and accessible.

Have activities for children during parent-only sessions.

Select amenity institutions that don't have dress codes.

Known:

Invest staff time in relationship building.

Ask families what they want and follow up.

Included:

Demonstrate a commitment to dignity.

Create spaces for open and honest communication.

Make the program a space where the values of diversity, equity and inclusion are at the forefront.

Understand cultural and community norms.

Provide services in languages that families understand.

Provide visits to amenity organizations that are accessible to various family needs.

Include parents in the planning of visits.

Supported:

Create a space for parents to be their authentic self.

Provide coaching to parents.

Connect parents with resource organizations.

Recognize parents' accomplishments.

Connected:

Create a space for social interactions between parents.

Communicate on platforms and in ways that are most accessible to parents.

Allow parents to see themselves within the coordinating and amenity organizations.

In cultures around the globe hospitality is exhbited through food, and meals are a place where connections are made.

The *Parents Succeeding Pilot Program* used breakfasts to create a welcoming and supportive environment and to increase attendance in parent gatherings.

NEXT STEPS

Using the checklist on the previous page, you identified considerations to address to *create a sense of belonging*. List the ones you checked in the considerations column on the chart below, then identify actions you will take and when you will take the action in order to help create belonging in your program.

	CONSIDERATIONS	ACTION NEEDED?	WHEN I WILL TAKE THE ACTION
EXAMPLE:	Have activities for children during parent-only sessions	- Contact the local Girl Scout troop to see if they can do an activity with preschool-age children. - Email Jan from the high school child development department to see if students could lead activities.	By Friday

BECOMING HIGHLY RESPONSIVE

Becoming highly responsive is a key aspect of what makes the *Parents Succeeding* model successful. Review these tips and check the ones to work on as you implement program.

Responsiveness is responding to the needs and desires of the people in the program and doing this quickly and accurately.

Ask parents what they hope to get from the program.

Manage parent expectations: Let them know how you will support them and what you will provide. Be clear about what they should expect.

Educate your team: Develop procedures that assure that your team knows how to respond so that they are timely and accurate.

Provide self-service options: Post information online with updates on events so that people can check details at any time.

Stay human: Technology can be a great communication tool, but using the phone or seeing parents face to face is important.

Be available on the day of amenity visits: There are many moving pieces to coordinating these visits. It is important to be available throughout the day to address any last-minute concerns.

Build trust: There are many ways to do this, but by building trust you will increase parent engagement.

Be respectful.

Go the extra mile when necessary.

Show concern for the families and their needs.

Be willing to advocate for parents: This can be with resource and amenity organizations or in other community spaces and places.

Take time to hear what is going on with families.

Use information that parents share to give them what they need.

Increase the number of times you contact parents.

Increase the number of ways you contact parents.

Provide parents multiple ways to reach you.

Using the checklist on the previous page you identified considerations to address to become highly response. List the ones you checked in the considerations column, identify actions you will take and when you will take the actions.

	CONSIDERATIONS	ACTION I WILL TAKE	WHEN I WILL TAKE THE ACTION
EXAMPLE:	Provide self-service options	- Give Ana, who manages our website, information to create a new page on our website. - Create a Facebook group and invite families to join.	By Tuesday, June 20th

SAMPLE PHOTO/VIDEO RELEASE TEMPLATE

This photo/video release template can be used to gain permission to take and use photos/video for promotional and other purposes.

I, _____, am the parent/guardian/legal representative of
(please print your name)

_____
(please print name of child(ren))

and do hereby give permission for myself and the above-named child(ren) (hereinafter "child") or myself (hereinafter "parent") to be interviewed, photographed, and/or videotaped by the [Fill in your organization name] (hereinafter "organization") or their representatives for the purposes of the [Fill in your program name]. I understand and agree that the text, photographs, and/or videotapes of this project containing the words, image, and/or voice of the child and/or parent may be used in the production of instructional and/or promotional materials in print and online, produced by or on behalf of the organization and that such materials may be distributed or broadcast to the public in any and all media now known or hereafter and displayed publicly. I also understand that my permission to use the text, photographs, and videotapes is for use in perpetuity and that neither I nor the child will receive any compensation for granting this permission or for the use, if any, of the child's or my own words, image, and/or voice.

I acknowledge that the organization has no obligation to use the child's or my own words, image, or voice in connection with the materials it produces. I hereby unconditionally release the organization and their representatives from any and all claims and demands arising out of the activities authorized under the terms of this agreement.

By signing below, I represent that I am at least the legal age of majority in my State and/or am the parent/guardian/legal representative of the above-named child. I have read the foregoing agreement and agree with all of the terms and conditions therein. I agree that I will not revoke or disaffirm this agreement at any time.

Signature of parent/guardian/legal representative of child:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

RESOURCES

Many coordinating organizations implementing the *Parents Succeeding* model will need a foundational understanding of how to access amenity organizations and how an investment of this scale can increase the well-being of families. You can explore the resources provided below as you plan your program.

• Conquering Kindergarten. (n.d.). Toolkit. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from
https://conqueringkindergarten.org/toolkit/

A toolkit with skills that help children manage themselves and their interactions with others. Programs have used this to support the parent gatherings.

• Heather Weiss, Global Family Research Project. The Global Family Research Project is the successor to the Harvard Family Research Project (1983-2016). The organization has established a track record in defining and advancing the fields of family, school, and community engagement.

• National Awareness, Attitudes, and Usage Study. (n.d.). IMPACTS Experience. Retrieved March 17, 2023, from *https://www.impacts-experience.com/naau-study/*

Lower household income increases the likelihood that institutions are perceived as inhospitable.

• National Endowment for the Arts. (2015). A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002–2012. Retrieved March 17, 2023, from
https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/2012-sppa-feb2015.pdf

Barriers to participation in arts events for low-income families included access challenges, parents' work, children's school schedules and negative prior experiences.

• University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice. (2017, March 10). New Research Shows How Arts and Culture Improve Health, Safety and Well-being. Retrieved March 17, 2023, from
https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/new-research-shows-arts-culture-improve-health-safety-well/

Residents who had access to cultural resources had better education, security and health outcomes — including more high-scoring students on standardized English and math tests, fewer cases of child abuse and neglect, and less serious crime — compared with those who lack them.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can we fund this program?

Coordinating organizations should pursue funding from institutions that target their support toward early childhood development, parent education and community institutions.

What resources are available to support the program?

The Campaign for Grade Level Reading has developed a library of resources on its CLIP library. To access the library, users must create a free account.

Is there a list of amenity organizations?

Because every community is different, there is not one master list of amenity organizations. As you complete your landscape analysis, explore the availability of the following types of amenity organizations in your community:

• Libraries

• Nonprofit organizations

• Cultural centers

• Art museums and other cultural museums

• Indoor play spaces

• Community events

• Zoos

• Aquariums

• Science centers

• Gardens

• Historical sites

• Parks (local, state, or national)

• Community centers

What coordinating organizations participated in the *Parents Succeeding Pilot Program*?	Three organizations participated in the *Parent Succeeding Pilot Program* – City of Phoenix, Arizona; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library in Charlotte, North Carolina; and the Free Library of Philadelphia in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The purpose of this toolkit is to continue to expand this list of coordinating organizations.
Do you have an example curriculum I can use to support parents' development?	During the *Parents Succeeding Pilot Program*, the coordinating organizations developed a curriculum or worked with a partner organization to select materials that best met the needs and desires of the parents. We would encourage coordinating organizations to do the same to assure that the programs are successful. One organization used the Conquering Kindergarten Toolkit as the foundation for developing their curriculum. This resource is included in the list of resources and is available online.
How else can I support families whose native language is not English?	Along with a representative from the coordinating organization who speaks the native language(s) of the families and resources in the languages that families speak at home, amenity organizations should ensure speakers of languages other than English are available to support the visit.
What staffing level is needed to implement and manage a *Parents Succeeding* program?	The number of staff needed to implement an effective *Parents Succeeding* program depends on the number and types of activities included in the program. Keep in mind that it takes multiple resources to arrange transportation to/from amenity organizations for all parents included in the program. Carefully plan for staffing needs to administer logistics associated with catering for events, collaborating with amenity organizations, gathering materials and resources for each activity, etc. Consider using community volunteers to support your staffing needs.

APPENDIX

BRIGHT FUTURES

book harvest

Unlocking the Transformative Power of Children's Savings Accounts

WHAT IS BRIGHT FUTURES?

Bright Futures is a college-and-career savings program for Book Harvest Durham's Book Babies participants. Book Harvest contributes $100 per year to a child's Bright Futures account for each completed year of a child's participation in Book Babies, up to a total of $500. The program was launched with a generous grant from the Angelina Merenda O'Bar Trust in 2021.

WHY BRIGHT FUTURES MATTERS

- A savings account from an early age has been shown to improve a child's educational outcomes, social-emotional development, and positive parental interactions and practices.[1]
- Children who have a $500 savings account are more likely to enroll in and graduate from college than those who don't.[2]
- Children with savings earmarked for college report higher expectations for college and identify as college-bound.[3]

HOW BRIGHT FUTURES WORKS

Families currently enrolled in -- along with alumni of -- Book Harvest's Book Babies program are invited to open a Bright Futures account through Durham's Latino Community Credit Union (LCCU). Book Harvest contributes $100 per year to a child's Bright Futures account for each completed year of Book Babies participation, up to a maximum of $500. These funds along with any additional amounts (from families, interest, etc.) can be used for the child's education or career needs when he/she turns 18.

[1] Elliott, W., III. (2013). Small-dollar children's savings accounts and children's college outcomes. Children & Youth Services Review, 35(3), 572–585. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.12.015
[2] https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/csd_research/371/
[3] Elliott, W., Choi, E. H., Destin, M., & Kim, K. H. (2011). The age old question, which comes first? A simultaneous test of children's savings and children's college-bound identity. Children and Youth Services Review, 33(7), 1101-1111

ABOUT BOOK HARVEST

Books for every child; support for every parent; literacy for every community. Book Harvest is internationally recognized for its work to transform children's literacy. Since 2011, Book Harvest has provided nearly 1.9 million books to families in North Carolina, ensuring that parents have the tools and power to ignite and strengthen their children's literacy. With programs that are grounded in evidence, Book Harvest believes that literacy starts at birth, at home, with parents, and with books. For more information, contact Ginger Young, Founder and CEO, Book Harvest, Inc. at 919-428-0511; ginger@bookharvest.org.

bookharvest.org | @bookharvestnc | (252) 497-BOOK

The Campaign for
GRADE-LEVEL
READING