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A Community Needs Assessment Survey

By: Theresa McKay

Final Report for:

The Peterborough Parent-Child Mother Goose Program
Supervising Professor: Prof. Sean Kane, Trent University
Trent Centre for Community-Based Education

1 of 2 documents produced

Department(s): Cultural Studies Department
Course code: CUST 387
Course name: Community-based research project
Term: Fall/Winter
Academic year: 2001-2002

Date of project submission: April 2002

Project ID: 315
Call number:

A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

FOR:

**THE PETERBOROUGH PARENT-CHILD MOTHER GOOSE
PROGRAM**

CULTURAL STUDIES 387

AUGUST 16, 2001

THERESA MCKAY

STUDENT NUMBER # 107490

**Theresa Mckay and The Peterborough Parent-Child
Mother Goose Program want to sincerely thank the
many individuals who generously gave of their time to
be interviewed and consulted for this study.**

Keywords: children, development program, parenting, parents, storytelling, needs assessment, survey

Abstract:

The purpose of this project was to conduct a community needs assessment for the Peterborough Parent-Child Mother Goose Program (PPCMGP). The Program offers group experiences in rhyme, song and storytelling to parents and their children (ages birth to twenty-four months), in ten-week sessions. Several methods were employed to gather needs assessment information: a review of past program evaluations, telephone consultations with both participants of the program and community organizations that have used the program or may use its services in the future, a review of reports and data about the program, and a literature review on community partnerships. A list of resources consulted for this project is also enclosed.

A brief history of the PPCMGP program is outlined, as well as why the organization wanted to design a survey and how they intended to use the results of the needs assessment for future planning. Part one of the project focuses on information gathered from program participants, either via the survey or telephone consultation. The two specific questions posed to project participants are listed. For the 142 respondents of the survey, the beneficial aspects as well as problems encountered during participation in the program, as expressed by the participants, are stated generally. The specific responses of the telephone surveys/consultations conducted with program participants (who participated at different times in the program) are also enclosed. Part two details the research questions posed to the thirteen community organizations and their corresponding, specific responses. The results of this section are summarized and analyzed as well. Finally, recommendations based on the community needs assessment

are made for future improvement of the program, specifically with respect to the
PPCMGP's promotion materials.

PART ONE

Documents reviewed for this project include:

- 130 participant evaluation forms received from programs that took place in Peterborough, Havelock and Millbrook, Ontario.
- The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program Training Manual, 720 Bathurst St, Suite 402 Toronto, On M5S 2R4.
- "The Rhymes That Bind", written by Alyse Frampton and published in Equinox Magazine, August 1996 "Social Costs", "The Globe and Mail", April 29, 1997.
- "A Magical Morning", written by Michelle Landsberg. "The Toronto Star". February, 1992.
- "Partnerships the Key", written by Corry Wink, Trent Valley Literacy Association. "The Peterborough Examiner". March 4, 2000.
- Newsletters: From the Toronto and London Parent-Child Mother Goose programs.
- "Is There Any Research Being Done?", A workshop with The Parent-Child Mother Goose First Annual Conference, Toronto, April 2001.

Workshop materials reviewed for this project include:

- Parent-Child Mother Goose teacher's training workshop. March 26 and 27, 2001.
- Parent-Child Mother Goose first annual conference. Toronto, April, 2001

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

For the Peterborough Parent-Child Mother Goose program

(PPCMGP will be the abbreviated form used for this report)

PREFACE

Several factors have driven this report

*PPCMGP's mounting concern that as the program continues to grow and expand that they too are continuing to fulfill their mission statement to the best of their ability.

* To ensure that PPCMGP is meeting all of the needs of the clients that it serves within the community.

*To explore how PPCMGP can continue to increase program awareness and strong partnerships within the community.

Ultimately this report directs attention to all of the above concerns that drive this report. While similar concerns prevail within many other regional /national Parent -Child Mother Goose Programs, the PPCMGP chapter remains unique for the following reasons:

- They have remained a "grassroots organization ". They are the only regional chapter that is not blanketed under a bigger organization or corporation.
- As a result they have limited operational funds, resources and manpower to address many of the factors and concerns that drive this report.

METHODOLOGY

Information was gathered from several sources for this study including:

- Program evaluations from the first session in October of 1998 to the last session completed in July of 2001.
- Consultations with a total of fourteen participants selected from each of the programs that PPCMGP has operated.
- Consultations with thirteen community organizations who have either used our service in the past or may decide to do so in the future.
- Review of research reports and data presently being conducted on The Parent -Child Mother Goose Program.
- Review of existing articles on community partnerships written by Corry Wink of the Trent Valley Literacy Foundation appearing in "The Peterborough Examiner."

PART 1

A. Orientation: A brief history of the PPCMGP.

B. Design: the survey and completed preliminary research.

C. Consultation: with fourteen of the program's past participants and thirteen community organizations.

ORIENTATION

A. PPCMGP was established in 1998. Since that time, there have been fourteen programs offered within Peterborough and the surrounding regions. Each ten- week session accommodates ten to twelve parents with their children. PPCMGP mission statement is as follows: they are a non-profit charitable organization that offers group experiences of rhyme, song and storytelling to parents and their children from ages birth to twenty- four months. The program is aimed at families in need of support for any of a great variety of reasons. Based on several key ideas involving the use of playful and imaginative language as an important part of a child's life from infancy on. That the traditional activity of playing with children using rhymes and songs is not known to all parents. That parenting can be a lonely job with little guidance and support available until a crisis develops. That in the natural course of bringing up a young child, all parents experience frustration, loss of confidence and unrealistic expectations of their children or themselves and that rhymes, songs and stories can be a great help at these difficult times. That parents and children can greatly benefit from being part of a supportive group that offers appropriate, non-intrusive guidance and is accepting and enjoyable. That interactive language play develops the relationship and enhances the bond between parent and child. An objective of the program is to build a feeling of community and mutual support within the group and to strengthen the connection of participants with other community programs and agencies.

DESIGN

B. PPCMGP wanted to design a survey that would assess the capacity and effectiveness of its program. Evaluating previous recipients would determine the needs for future target clientele. The community needs assessment survey would help ensure that the program is in fact fulfilling its mission statement. The survey would help to determine if there are any areas of the program that are in need of restructuring, and thereby improving and better serving the community. In cooperation with PPCMGP, leader Kate Jarrett designed the following two questions that would be asked of participants in the survey.

Question #1. How has the experience of participating in a Parent-Child Mother Goose program been for you?

Question #2. Are there any areas of the program that you think could have been improved?

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

At the completion of each program, participants were asked to fill out program evaluations. Not all participants chose to fill out these forms. Throughout the duration of all fourteen programs, these evaluation forms changed in format structure. From program #1 through to #4 there was an area on the evaluation form that invited the participant to express any problems that they found with the program. Therefore, after program four it becomes very difficult to evaluate if a participant is experiencing any difficulties with the overall program.

By analyzing these participant evaluation forms the preliminary research would seem to show that:

- Out of a total of 142 participants 69 of these parents / caregivers stated that the most beneficial aspect of participating in a PPCMGP had been the positive social benefits that had occurred as a result of interacting in a group experience that uses songs, stories and rhymes. Some of these "social benefits" included strengthening of family bonds between child and parent, improved confidence for both parent and child, improved language development and increased social interactions for the child.

- Out of these 142 participants the following problems regarding the program were expressed:

- 7 participants expressed problems with the chosen program location being either too cold, dirty, large, noisy or not having enough parking.

- 4 participants expressed concern about the need for more child-care within the program.

- 2 participants wanted the program to have a longer duration time.

- 1 participant wanted the program to be ongoing.

- 2 participants felt that not enough people know about the program.

C. INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH FOURTEEN PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS.

* These consultations were conducted by telephone.

- Date of session is included with the answered question responses in column A. and question two to follow under column B.
- The names of participants will remain anonymous.

*Some participants were selected at random and some participants were pre-selected by Kate Jarrett

* Some groups received two telephone calls in order to speak with clients who seemed to have a low attendance record.

GROUP # 1. February 10 to April 28, 1998

- A. It was the mix of the one on one time for my child and myself mixed with the wonderful group experience that was so positive for us. At the time of the program we were going through a lot of separation anxiety and I found that the nature of the program helped us through this so much.
- B. The only problems that I can see is that I think that the actual weekly program should be longer than one hour and there should always be an on going program.

GROUP # 2 October 19 to December, 1998

- A. The experience was wonderful for it gave us new opportunities for close quality time with my son. The rhymes that we learned were great tools to help occupy him and we're still doing them to this day.
- B. As I see it, there is no room for improvement.

GROUP # 3 October 15 to December, 1998

- A. It was a really good and fun time. There is an art form to telling a story that was taught to us that was so beneficial and calming for all involved. The program was well planned and organized with a wonderful social element.
- B. There is no improvement needed in my opinion.

- A. The program was okay
- B. I don't remember any problems.

GROUP # 4 Spring 1999

- A. My son learned so much at our sessions. We are still using many of the rhymes and songs; they are just as useful today as they were when they were taught to us. It was also really important to us that this program was free otherwise we would not have had the money to attend it.
- B. The only improvement would be to keep a program going on an on going basis.

GROUP # 5. Fall, 1998

- A. The experience was so good in fact my child can still remember those songs when fall asleep to. I also remember the great social time of being with other Mothers. It was all so positive.
- B. I don't think any improvement is needed.

GROUP # 6 (THERE WERE NO AVAILABLE PHONE NUMBERS FOR THIS GROUP.)

GROUP # 7. Winter, 2000

- A. This was such an important program for our family for we needed those calming songs at that time. Everything about the program was excellent, from all of the songs and finger plays to those wonderful stories. We missed the sessions when they were over.
- B. Absolutely no improvement needed.

GROUP # 8. Spring, 2000

A. For my twins all of those songs and finger plays are still a huge part of their daily life. They continue to love all of the Mother Goose experience and it is a lovely and meaningful memory for us.

B. No improvement needed.

A. The program was very fun

B. I do not remember any problems at all.

GROUP # 9 Fall, 2000

A. It was such a positive experience. The children found the program so comforting and fun. They always looked forward to going. We really missed it when it ended.

B. I really think that the program should be ongoing.

GROUP #10 Fall, 2000

A. I think my son liked the program.

B. It was a lot of work to go every week.

GROUP # 11 Fall, 2000

A. The social interactions were so positive for us. The songs and rhymes were so useful for us. We used them all the time back then and still to this day.

B. I don't think any areas of the program need improvement.

GROUP # 12 Winter 2001

A. The best things about the program are those interactive songs and the whole social aspect of the group. The fact that it was offered free of charge was really important for us.

B. I think an area of improvement could be to offer the program in the evenings so that people that work in the day are also able to experience Mother Goose.

A. I remember liking the program

B. I don't think there were any problems.

GROUP # 13 Winter, 2001

A. These songs and finger plays that we just learned are really helpful because we are able to do them anywhere we go. I really liked attending this program and would look forward to going again in the future.

B. I can't really think of anything that I would improve with the program.

GROUP # 14 Spring, 2001

A. I have learned so many new stories, songs and rhymes. It is so valuable for the child and the whole family.

B. No problems.

ANALYSIS SUMMARY:

-Fourteen participants found the program to be beneficial.

-3 participants also believe that the program should be held on an ongoing basis and should have a longer duration time than one hour.

-1 participant believes that the program should be available to everyone and therefore should also be held in the evenings.

PART TWO

RESEARCH CONDUCTED WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Kate Jarrett designed the following three questions that were to be asked of fourteen community organizations:

1. Are you aware of the role that the PPCMGP plays in the community?
2. What would be helpful in building that awareness?
3. Would you be interested in some level of partnership in offering programs to your clientele?

ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED (Thirteen)

**The Children's Services Division
City of Peterborough
Angela McLean**

1. Yes we are very aware of PPCMGP and very interested!
2. We need your program to make sure that we keep getting enough brochures. I can't state this enough. I suggest that that your teachers come to our team meetings and make presentations to our leaders. This would be very helpful.
3. Yes we are completely ready to provide a "fee for service" basis for the service of your program. We would like to see an infant program and a toddler program perhaps this coming fall.

**Kawartha Haliburton CAS
Peggy Heard**

1. We have a very vague awareness the PPCMGP.
2. The program doesn't really pertain to us because most often we have children who are quite old or who are between placements etc. Occasionally we have suggested your program to an interested party otherwise we don't really use it.

3. No partnership.

**Community Care Access Center.
Kim Crieg**

1. Our awareness of the program is very good. We do keep your brochures available.
2. We don't really require any more written material or presentations as the children that we work with are much older.
3. No partnership.

**New Canadian's Center.
Carmelia Valles.**

1. We have a really good awareness of the organization and have really enjoyed and appreciated the help that we have received.
2. Receiving brochures is always helpful.
3. We are comfortable in referring clients to you.

**Kawartha Childcare Services.
Ann Cathcart**

1. We have a moderate awareness of the program
2. I don't believe that we would require your services.
3. No partnership.

**Salvation Army
Shelley**

1. We have a very small understanding of what exactly this organization does.
2. Some brochures would really be helpful with clear explanations and information on them.
3. We may refer clients to you.

Nursery Two
Laura

1. We are aware of your program and have actually had a couple of our workers take the PCMGP leader training in Toronto.
2. I think we would appreciate updated program information to include within our newsletters, which parents end up receiving.
3. We might inform some of these parents about the program.

Five Counties Children's Services.
Alex Cranfield

1. We have a very good awareness of the program. Our resource teachers are really big advocates of Mother Goose as well as our speech pathologists. The children that they get are already identified with speech problems. The numbers are low but there are referrals made.
2. Let these workers know about all of the programs that are up and running. Keep them informed. We receive brochures but it is never consistent.
3. This level of partnership is adequate.

Family Counseling Services.
Hope Carson

1. There is not a lot of awareness of this program. They are not even on our data- base.
2. We would really appreciate brochures; anything that would keep us updated on the programs.
3. We may be able to refer clients if we had more information on the programs.

YWCA
Janice Werch

1. Yes, I have a very keen awareness of this program but other people in our organization don't.
2. To build this awareness I suggest the following ideas. Access an e-mail system so that you can consistently contact community organizations. Ask to go in to the weekly newsletters that we have. Have a teacher/leader go into the Crossroads shelter's team meetings, visiting and promoting the program to the children's counselors.
3. Unclear at this time.

Kawartha Midwives.

1. We have a very good awareness of this organization.
2. It would be helpful to have more information on up and coming programs. Keep us stocked up so that we don't run out.
3. Our way of partnering is to refer clients to you, and we do.

The Paediatrician's Office.

1. A vague awareness, we need reminding.
2. More brochures would help and to receive them consistently would be useful.
3. No partnership.

The Peterborough County-City Health Unit.

1. We are great advocates of this program and refer people to it all the time.
2. What would be really useful to help build this awareness would be to have brochures with very simple descriptive explanations and benefits of the program. Some of clients have very low literacy skills and can feel intimidated by the program. It would be very useful to have a very simple video that clearly shows what people do in the circle. A video would be just great and we have the time to let the client view it in advance.
3. Partnership is done through referrals.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF PART TWO

- Eight organizations have a good awareness of the PPCMGP
- Five organizations have a very vague awareness of the PPCMGP
- Six organizations express the idea of "partnership" by way of referrals
- Six organizations do not want to enter into a partnership
- One organization wants to do a complete "fee for service" partnership.

RECOMMENDATIONS :

Most of the community organizations that I spoke with seem to be expressing a common concern regarding the infrequency and inconsistency in which they receive the promotion materials from the PPCMGP. It might be recommended therefore that in order to increase the visibility, profile and awareness of the PPCMGP within the community, the following measures may want to be considered:

- Create a simple brochure using as few words as possible. Consideration might be paid to the use of clear and descriptive language choices that enables and informs clients/ organizations of exactly how the PPCMGP operates.
- Create a video that could depict the above. The production value of the video should be in keeping with the brochure: simple, clear and as "un-produced" as possible. Depict Peterborough.
- Create a newsletter that informs the community about all aspects of the program.
- Consider accessing an E-mail account. This would be a very beneficial and cost efficient way of consistently keeping in touch with the community.
- Consider a Web-site as yet another way of "staying in touch".
- Create a resource package that can be ordered upon request. This package would contain the contents of all of the above points.
- Consider programs that run a longer period of duration time. Include programs that might also operate at alternative times of the day or evening.
- Let community organizations know that a "fee for service" basis is also available.
- Consider PPCMGP presentations within the team meetings of community organizations.