

Edison Taking Off To Success Program



*A Glance at Successes and
Challenges of Year Two*

*Edison T.O.T.S. Program activities
are managed by:*



With support from:



Edison Taking Off To Success (T.O.T.S.) Program

A Glance at Successes and Challenges of Year Two

Introduction

Many changes have taken place since the program has been managed by Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc. Secured funding has been consistent, professional development of staff has been available and utilized, and graduating families have organized an Alumni Council to maintain engagement and access to resources.

This summary report is intended to provide readers with a glance at successes and challenges of the Edison T.O.T.S. program during its second year, as well as suggested program modifications for the final grant-funded year.

Successes

In addition to the original six community partnerships mentioned in the year one report, staff has been able to increase the program's visibility and strengthen linkages to community resources by serving on a number of advisory committees and boards. Below are a list of agencies and the manner in which staff are involved:

Northwest and Five Rivers Oak Council Priority Boards

- Program Manager serves as an administrative council member to share monthly updates on program and to recruit families living within the respective communities.

Hannah's Treasure Chest

- Program Manager serves as an advisory board member to ensure that the needs of children within the Greater Dayton area are met.

Child and Family Health Services Consortium

- Program Manager serves as a member to address issues that affect child health, pregnancy and women of child-bearing age in an effort to decrease health disparities and infant mortality.

Center for Healthy Communities' Advisory Board

- Full-time Home Visitor serves as a member to provide guidance and oversight to CHC staff and to share bi-monthly updates on program and opportunities for collaboration.

OSU Extension's Parenting Education Dialogue Circle

- Full-time Home Visitor serves as a member to coordinate services with organizations serving a similar population.

Daybreak

- Full-time Home Visitor meets on a regular basis with a Daybreak case manager to actively recruit and support potential TOTS participants.

Not only has community collaboration and partnerships increased, the engagement of families has doubled! Over the past two years, we've recruited a total of 630 parents and approximately 317 children. Of those recruits, we've engaged 386 unduplicated adults and 403 unduplicated children in at-least one session. We've consistently employed two full-time and one part-time staff, whom have devoted time to increase family engagement, home visits, and visibility of the program to the greater community.

The T.O.T.S. program has graduated 61 families, whom we believe are taking off to success! Currently, we have nine TOTS families that have selected Edison as their school of choice for the 2012-2013 school year. In order to continue recruiting and retaining families in the T.O.T.S. program, staff and graduate parents have developed and implemented a parent engagement group called the T.O.T.S. Alumni Council. The Alumni Council members are committed to focusing on:

1. Staying well informed of school readiness initiatives and ways to support their child's educational progress;
2. Advocating for a variety of social and educational issues within their community, neighborhood school, and the City of Dayton;
3. Participating actively as leaders of Edison PreK-8 School and its surrounding community.

The Council typically meets every Thursday at Edison School, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. and work closely with Edison School's Parent Advisory Coordinator and program staff, in order to support school and community events. Over the course of eight months, approximately eight members have been actively engaged in planning and implementing workshops and forums such as:

- The First Annual Housing Forum
- Transition Day for PK-2nd Grade Families
- Voter Education & Registration Night
- Reading Readiness Workshop

*All of these events were planned in collaboration with Edison School.

Recently, two TOTS graduates have been elected to Edison PreK-8 School's Community Education Council, as Chairperson and member, for the duration of the 2012-2113 school year. Program staff will continue to support the growth of council members' leadership skills by providing professional and personal development opportunities in areas that parents are interested.

The next section describes the significant challenges that have impacted the implementation and management of the program.

Challenges

Having addressed transportation and attendance options during year one, the program still faces the need for consistent child education staff. Part-time substitute teachers and teacher's aides are currently being utilized; however, they are not required to participate in the Edison T.O.T.S. program which negatively impacts the retention of quality teaching staff. Since December 2010, the program has a child education staff turnover rate of 76% (13 out of 17 have either abandoned or resigned from their positions).

The inconsistent staffing has caused program participants to request during exit interviews and parent survey times for additional childcare staff. There is an existing program need for a minimum of four child education staff members, preferably those with Associate Degrees or higher in Early Childhood Education.

The next section describes suggested changes that may increase family engagement and reduce staff turnover and burnout.

Proposed Modifications

The Edison T.O.T.S. program is designed to provide families with quality care and access to community services and resources in order to overcome barriers that would negatively impact a child's physical, social, emotional and mental development. There are a number of components that make a program whole. Below is a list of component modifications being proposed for consideration and approval of the partner agency, Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc.

Staffing:

1. Review the agency's HR practices as it relates to posting positions for substitutes in order to consistently and specifically recruit for the T.O.T.S. project. Hire child education staff to specifically work on Saturdays, and then allow those staff to pick-up more hours during the week.

Budgeting/Funding:

1. Currently the agency pays two senior level staff members to provide supervision and/or technical assistance. Supervision could be reduced to one senior level staff person and re-allocate funds to hire quality and consistent child education staff.
2. Prior to the end of year two, the TOTS program should be evaluated to determine the feasibility of merging components with the agency's Pregnant Mothers program. This will allow the agency the opportunity to specifically focus on pregnancy and parenting, with additional staff.

Recruiting:

1. In order to boost visibility of the program's partnership and purpose, the program should be placed on the agency's website.