

Outcomes Evaluation and Program Effectiveness Great Starts Program 2007-2008

Background

What is the Great Starts Program? Great Starts, formerly known as Childbirth Education Association of Seattle, was founded in the early 1950's. Great Starts merged with Parent Trust in December 2006. The program offers classes related to pregnancy, birth, and early parenting. The goal of the program is to provide unbiased, research-based education about all the available options to help new parents make informed choices about their birth and parenting experiences.

Why have Great Starts programs?

We help parents connect to knowledge they need. Our classes gather together the most essential information about pregnancy, childbirth and the newborn. Our instructors use a variety of teaching techniques to help parents understand, remember, and apply the information to their birth and parenting experience.

We help parents connect to community. Our classes offer opportunities to connect to other new parents, share experiences, support and learn from each other. We also discuss community resources for new parents, and ways that family and friends can offer support during this transition.

We help parents connect to their baby. We teach how to care for baby's physical and emotional needs, and to understand / respond to baby's cues.

We help parents connect to their own strengths. We help parents discover their own inner resources for coping with labor. We teach them about their options, and empower them to ask questions, and advocate for themselves and the options that meet their needs and desires.

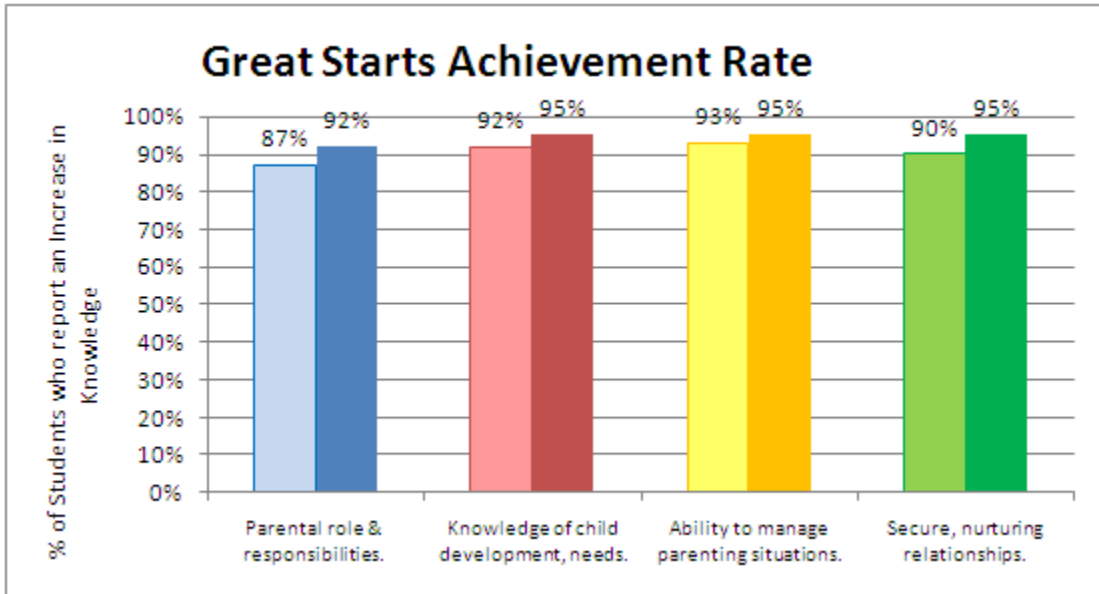
Who does the Great Starts program serve? The majority of our clients are expectant women, and their support partners. 93% of clients are first-time parents. Approximately 90% of women bring a male partner to class; the others are accompanied by a female partner, friend, or family member. The age range of our clients for birth classes is 14 – 48, with a distribution similar to the range of expectant women in King County. 4% of our students have a family income under the poverty line, and 14% of clients use medical coupons to pay for classes. The ethnic backgrounds of our students are similar to those of King County residents in general, although there are a slightly higher percentage of Caucasian, and thus slightly lower percentage of people of color. We also offer classes for adoptive families and training for aspiring childbirth educators.

How does the Great Starts program relate to the other Parent Trust for Washington Children programs? By serving clients during the prenatal period, this program lays a foundation for strong parenting skills which focus on meeting the developmental and emotional needs of infants. We also address the challenges of postpartum and early parenting, using information from the Shaken Baby prevention program, the Speak Up When You're Down program on postpartum mood disorders, and referral to the Family Help Line. Great Starts offers Conscious Fathering classes.

Results

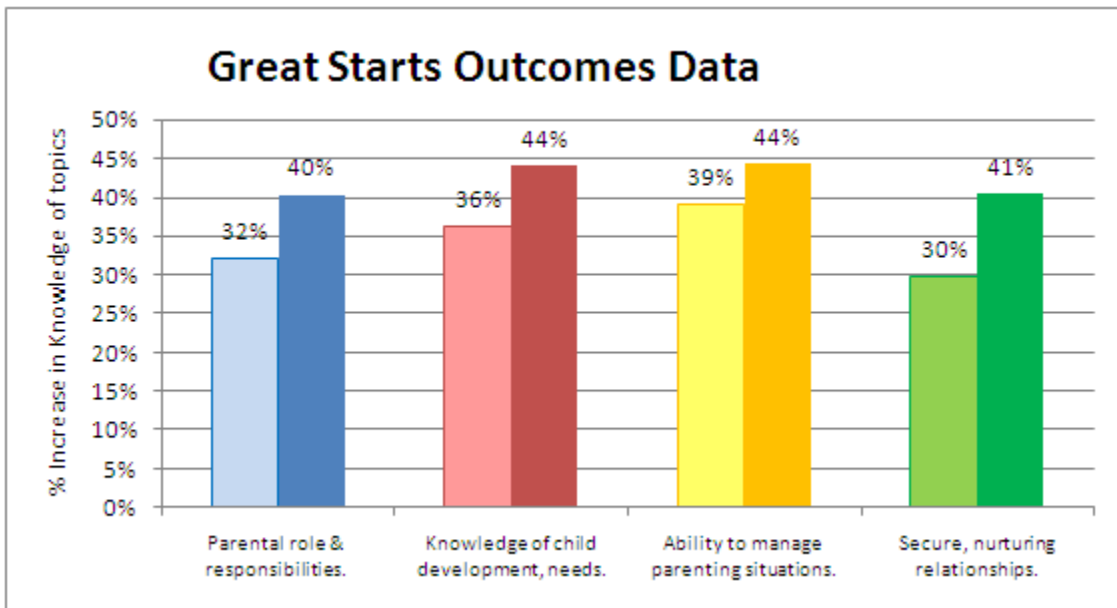
Achievement Rate Goal: 60% of participants will increase their knowledge/skills. (Participants include expectant mothers and their support partners. The partner is most often the father of the baby, but may also be a friend or family member.)

Achievement Rate Results: In the chart below, lighter bars represent mothers, dark bars partners.



Outcome Goal: Participants will report at least a 10% average increase of knowledge.

Outcome Goal Results: In the chart below, lighter bars represent mothers, dark bars partners.



- Parental roles and responsibilities related to making informed choices between available options for birth and parenting.

- Knowledge of child development and needs included understanding newborn capabilities/ behaviors and knowing when/how much to feed a baby.
- Ability to manage parenting duties/situations included confidence about birth, relaxation and coping skills, community resources, and managing breastfeeding challenges.
- Knowledge of secure, nurturing relationships included knowing how to respond to baby's physical/emotional needs, and confidence about breastfeeding/support with breastfeeding