

**SUMMARY
OF
PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK**

**ESSO FAMILY MATH
Year 4
(2003-2004)**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TRAINING WORKSHOPS

During 2003-04, the Esso Family Math staff delivered fourteen training workshops to a total of 289 individuals. The purpose of the “Early Years” and “2 – 5 Years” Workshops was to continue preparing volunteers to facilitate Family Math programs. However, the focus for this final full year of the project was to prepare experienced Family Math Leaders to take on the tasks currently the responsibility of the Esso Team members. The “Coordinator Training” Workshops were train-the-trainer sessions where Family Math Leaders learned how to support the development of Family Math programming, including delivering training workshops to community volunteers.

<i>Training Type</i>	<i>B.Ed. Students</i>	<i>OEYC Staff*</i>	<i>Community Reps</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Family Math Leaders</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Early Years</i>	8	195	4	2		209
<i>2 – 5 Years</i>	19		4	4		27
<i>Coordinator</i>					53	53
<i>Totals</i>	27	195	8	6	53	289

* Ontario Early Years Centres

At the end of all training workshops, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to provide evaluative feedback. The responses of the 289 individuals are summarized below. See pages 14 – 58 for the actual feedback collected at each training workshop.

Early Years and 2-5 Year Training

Many participants in the Early Years Workshops were OEYC staff members who attended as part of their job requirements. They expressed a desire to learn how to implement the program with the families in their own Centres. Several of these individuals indicated a need for new ideas on how to present math concepts to children. Most university students who attended the workshops indicated that their reason for attending the training was to either gain experience working with families or to participate in a program that would help them become more effective educators.

Overall, the training was extremely well received with 61.0% of participants reporting that the training exceeded their expectations and 38.5% of participants reporting that the training met their expectations. Only one individual indicated that the training failed to meet their expectations.

While participants reported many helpful aspects of the training, the hands-on approach, the step-by-step review of all program components, the excellent resources /materials, and the explanations of “Where’s the Math” were mentioned most frequently.

There were fewer aspects of training that were noted as needing change. The most frequently recommended changes were to refrain from going through each and every activity (Early Years) and decrease the instruction time on Saturday (2 - 5 Years).

The Family Math activities received high praise from all participants. They were described as well-designed, excellent, fun, and easy to implement.

The large majority of participants (86.6%) reported that after attending the training they felt prepared to facilitate Family Math sessions. When asked what would help them feel

even more prepared, they responded that they would have liked more opportunities to practice program delivery, more time to review the materials, and more instruction.

The overall success of the training was evident from the participants' additional comments made at the end of the questionnaires. These comments were overwhelmingly favorable in terms of both the Family Math Program and the Training Workshops. Participants were obviously appreciative of the Esso Team's efforts to put forth a well organized and effective program. They were especially complimentary of the presenters' enthusiasm and passion for Family Math.

Coordinator Training

The majority of participants in the Coordinator Training Workshops were experienced Family Math Teacher Leaders. They attended the training to "learn how to provide ongoing training for leaders and volunteers". Those affiliated with Ontario Early Years Centres were especially interested in acquiring the skills necessary to conduct training for their fellow staff members.

Again, the training was extremely well received with 64.6% of participants reporting that the training exceeded their expectations and 31.3% of participants reporting that the training met their expectations. Two individuals indicated that the training failed to meet their expectations.

When asked to rate different aspects of the training (content, presentation, materials, length, meal, and location), all components received a majority of "excellent" ratings. Only "location" received any ratings less than "good".

The participants especially appreciated learning more about the math connections in the program, both from group discussion and from their homework assignment. The majority of participants (95.8%) reported that after attending the training they felt prepared to participate in Family Math as a Coordinator. When asked what would help them feel even more prepared, several responded that they would like to work with a mentor when

delivering their first training sessions.

The participants were also asked to provide their impressions of the newly developed Coordinator Training Manual. Over 70% of the trainees indicated that the Manual needed no revisions and rated it very highly in terms of its content, clarity, layout, completeness and usefulness. Others suggested minor revisions.

In terms of the participants' overall training experience, the following comments made by one individual reflects the group's response:

My confidence is building! Thank you for sharing all your experiences, knowledge and passion for this project. It was an excellent opportunity to go through the curriculum, "Where is the Math" and Parent Talk. The homework provided us with an opportunity to look at the program as a whole and think about the content and activities in more detail. This training session has provided me with the confidence and reassurance needed to continue to offer this program to families. Best wishes to all of you. Thank you for developing this training! Your hard work and dedication is appreciated by many.

FAMILY SESSIONS

During the 2003-2004 school year, the Esso Family Math Program was offered at five London locations as well as at sites in Ingersoll, St. Thomas, Tillsonburg, Wallaceburg and Woodstock. Six of the ten sites delivered the Early Years Program while a total of six sites delivered the 2 - 5 Years Program. A total of approximately 120 families (including over 130 children) took part in the programs, attending a Family Math session one night a week, usually for six weeks. Across all ten sites, program delivery was the responsibility of 14 teacher leaders and approximately 100 teaching volunteers.

Teacher Leader/Teaching Volunteers Feedback

Throughout the fall and winter, feedback regarding the family sessions was collected from both teacher leaders and teaching volunteers. On the final night of the program at each site, these individuals were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their experiences. As well, together as a group, they completed a questionnaire that

encouraged discussion of the overall effectiveness of their particular program. The data collected is detailed on pages 59 – 75 and summarized below. It should be noted that this year sites were encouraged to collect this data for their own use but were not required to submit it to the Esso Family Math Team. This was an attempt to facilitate community ownership of the program. The feedback presented on pages 59 - 75 is the data that was shared with the Esso Team.

Teacher Leaders

Six teacher leaders completed feedback questionnaires. Only two of these individuals were leading programs for the first time. All six teacher leaders reported that the Training Workshop had been effective in preparing them for program delivery.

The leaders indicated that they shared their program delivery responsibilities with the teaching volunteers. They described some teaching volunteers as “excellent” in terms of “preparing and delivering the activities” while others were “not prepared or willing to help set up or clean up”. They singled out the student teachers as having done a “terrific job...because they have such a vested interest in children”.

Overall, the teacher leaders described their Family Math experiences as “gratifying” and “absolutely fantastic”. Many leaders plan to use their Family Math facilitation skills in their own classrooms within the school system and in programming within their community.

Teaching Volunteers

A total of 24 teaching volunteers, the large majority participating in Family Math for the first time, completed questionnaires. Many of these individuals (58.3%) were attending a university education program at the time.

These teaching volunteers spoke positively about the training they received prior to their participation in family sessions. They felt it was “excellent”, “very thorough” and “set the tone for how the program should be done”.

It was apparent that the teaching volunteers filled many roles in the delivery of the Family Math Program. Their primary responsibilities included: leading activities, assisting families, and helping with the coordination of meals and materials. The teaching volunteers reported overwhelmingly that this was a positive learning experience for them.

When asked about the role their teacher leader played in program delivery, the volunteers responded with great enthusiasm. Teacher leaders were described as “incredible”, “enthusiastic”, “approachable” and “well organized”.

Overall, the volunteers described their Family Math experiences as “amazing” and “fulfilling”, and as one individual stated, “it provided me with another perspective on teaching and the impact of parent-child relationships on learning”. Many teaching volunteers plan to use their Family Math facilitation skills in their own classrooms once they begin their teaching careers, as well as with their own children when they become parents.

Group

Together, the leader and teaching volunteers of each Family Math group discussed the overall effectiveness of their program and completed a group questionnaire. Feedback was received from four Early Years Programs and three 2 – 5 Years Programs.

When asked how families responded to their program, all groups indicated that families participated enthusiastically. The groups reported many activities that worked well, in addition to several activities that need change. Both Early Years sites and 2 – 5 Years sites incorporated new activities into their programs.

When asked to rate different aspects of the family sessions, all sites indicated that the location, the meals and the support from the Family Math staff and the community was either “good” or “excellent”.

The groups had a great deal of advice for others who may be preparing to deliver Family

Math programs. This included: be flexible, plan ahead, be organized and prepared, and adjust the program to meet the needs of the participating families.

The groups were also asked to identify positive and negative factors that affected the outcome of their programs. Positive factors were the meals, the teamwork, and the program itself. Negative factors were lack of space, lack of consistent attendance, and dealing with children who have behavioral/emotional challenges.

Parent Feedback

Feedback was also collected from parents. Assisted by a teaching volunteer, an adult from each family completed two questionnaires and a family information sheet.

Participation in this research was entirely voluntary. The data collected is detailed on pages 76 – 91 and summarized below.

Questionnaires were completed as follows:

Questionnaire Type	No. Completed	
	Early Years	2 – 5 Years
Comments Before Sessions Began	27	25
Comments After Last Session	20	25
Family Information	26	25

Early Years

The majority of Early Years parents (92.3%) indicated that their children live in a two-parent home. The mothers' education levels were reported to be relatively high with all but one mother completing high school. Many mothers (76.9%) have also completed

college or university. Similarly, 70.8% of the fathers have completed college or university and only one father reported not completing high school.

While some parents reported that math was an enjoyable school subject for them, others (33.3%) stated that they found math “difficult” and “not fun”. Parents decided to attend the Family Math sessions “to encourage the enjoyment of math”, to “spend time together” and in some cases, to help their children who are having difficulty in school. Eight-five percent (85.0%) of the parents expect their children to get at least passing marks in mathematics during their school years.

When asked how they use math in their daily life, most parents indicated that they use math at work and/or at home when taking care of the household finances. All parents reported that they do math activities with their children, mostly involving counting and measuring. All of the parents said that they are comfortable talking to their children’s teachers and they also indicated that they have no problem helping with homework.

After attending the Esso Family Math sessions, all parents expressed positive comments about their experiences. Every parent had attended at least five of the six sessions. They especially enjoyed the variety of activities and the helpful advice on how to include math in daily activities. When asked if they would change anything about Family Math, several parents stated that they would like the leaders to follow the time schedule more closely and allow more time for table activities.

Many parents indicated that they are now using the Family Math activities, such as estimating and patterning, at home. They commented that they now realize that “math is a part of everyday life” and “math can be fun”. As one parent summarized, “I have a new appreciation for the different aspects of math”.

2 – 5 Years

The majority of 2 - 5 Years parents (88.0%) indicated that their children live in a two-parent home. The mothers’ education levels were reported to be relatively high with

78.3% completing high school. Forty percent (40.0%) of the mothers have also completed college or university. Similarly, 70.8% of the fathers have completed high school with 41.7% also completing college or university.

While several parents reported liking math in school, 32.0% of parents expressed negative comments about their math experiences in school. Some found the subject “hard”, “tough”, and “not much fun”. Many decided to attend the Family Math sessions to help improve their children’s math skills.

Sixty-four percent (64%) of the parents expect their children to find mathematics like other school subjects and get at least passing marks during their school years. This is a significant drop from the 85.0% reported by parents of Early Years children.

When asked how they use math in their daily life, most parents indicated that they use math at work and/or at home when taking care of the household finances. All parents reported that they do math activities with their children at home, mostly involving games and math facts. While all but one of the parents said that they are comfortable talking to their children’s teachers, several parents indicated that helping their children with math homework is “frustrating” and “stressful”.

After attending the Esso Family Math sessions, the 2 - 5 Years parents were very willing to share their opinions of the program. Most of them (75.0%) had attended at least five of the six sessions. All parents had positive comments about their experiences. They especially enjoyed the games and the time they spent together with their families. When asked if they would change anything about Family Math, some parents requested more sessions and more time within each session for each activity.

Many parents indicated that they are now using the Family Math activities at home. Some parents also reported that they feel “less frustrated” and “not so intimidated” about helping their children with math homework.

Note: Parent feedback can also be found on pages 92 – 98 (emails and journal entries).

COORDINATOR FEEDBACK

In February of 2004, the first eleven Coordinators to be trained by the Esso Team were interviewed regarding their experiences as new Coordinators (see pages 99 - 105). The majority of these individuals reported being active in regards to delivering training workshops and presenting Family Math information sessions. They described these experiences as being very positive. Their future plans are to continue providing training and to remain involved in program delivery.

In September of 2004, surveys were emailed to the 42 trained Coordinators. Their responses (see pages 106 - 109) confirm the considerable growth of Family Math programming in Ontario. Training workshops, as well as information sessions, have been conducted in locations throughout the province. Many of these events have been held independent of Esso Family Math, in other words, sites across Ontario are developing without the direct support of the Esso Project. Communities are taking ownership of the program using the tools developed by the Esso Team. It appears that the Family Math Coordinators have trained over 400 individuals during the past year alone.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As the Esso Family Math Project heads into its final months, there are many indications that Ontario families will continue to benefit from Family Math programming. Established sites, including many Ontario Early Years Centres, have skilled personnel who are enthusiastic about ongoing program delivery. The Esso Team has created a comprehensive set of resources that will enable new sites to develop similar programs. Fully trained Coordinators will provide support to these sites, including training workshops for volunteers. These efforts will undoubtedly be recognized by families who continue to give overwhelmingly positive feedback on the Esso Family Math Program.