



Literacy Assistance Center

**DELIVERY OF FAMILY LITERACY SERVICES**

**IN NEW YORK CITY**

A SUMMARY OF AGENCY SURVEY RESPONSES

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Studies show that parent education level and parent involvement are strong indicators of a child's future success in school. Family literacy enhances both, through comprehensive programs that may include English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and adult basic education classes, assistance for parents in navigating the public school system, promotion of early literacy, and early childhood education. Within the past decade, federal legislation has promoted the "Keenan Model," which has four components: 1) adult education, 2) parenting, 3) early childhood education, and 4) parent and child together time. The Keenan Model is strong and innovative. However by requiring that it be used in all programs receiving federal funding, the government has marginalized other effective family literacy services.

In New York, literacy programs that serve families have sprung up in diverse institutions, including community organizations, churches, schools, libraries, and community colleges. Their grassroots origin ensures that these programs are responsive to local needs, however they have not enjoyed the benefits of mutual coordination, exchange of information, and sharing of resources. A family literacy network could provide them with these benefits without threatening their autonomy.

The data reported in these pages were gathered through a survey of family literacy programs, a primary objective in Phase One of an 18-month Literacy Assistance Center initiative. The goals of this initiative are to:

- Strengthen, enhance, and expand adult and family literacy services in New York
- Enhance the visibility of the broad range of programs that provide literacy and other educational services to parents, children and families
- Build a network of providers that will strengthen and enhance services, share information, and disseminate exemplary practices
- Identify, and draw the attention of public and private funders to, the areas of greatest need in family literacy

Funders, providers, and social service agencies helped the LAC identify more than 600 programs that might be providing family literacy services. Ultimately, 150 completed the survey. The requested information included:

- Who provides services?
- Who are the recipients?
- How do providers describe their work?
- How are they staffed and funded?
- What services do they provide and what groups do they collaborate with?

The responses to these and other questions varied considerably. For example, the average number of service hours provided for a family per year ranged from two or three to 950. In some instances, differences between boroughs were significant: 26% of the Brooklyn respondents provided all four family literacy components; none of the Queens programs did. In other responses, the variations were significant throughout the City: For example, roughly a third of the sites provided services to fewer than 50 families, another third to between 50 and 200 families, and the final third to more than 200. Finally, some similarities emerged as well: almost all of the programs (92%) provided family literacy service to Latinos and 78% to African Americans.

## INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2002, the Literacy Assistance Center (<http://www.lacnyc.org>), with funding from the Altman Foundation of New York City, embarked on a groundbreaking initiative designed to strengthen, enhance, and expand adult and family literacy services in New York. The objectives were to:

- Enhance the visibility of the broad range of programs that provide literacy and other educational services to parents, children and families
- Build a network of providers that would strengthen and enhance services, share information, and disseminate exemplary practices
- Identify areas of high need for family literacy services and alert public and private funders to these needs

In the first phase of this initiative the principal objective was to gather detailed information about New York's family literacy programs.

### **The Importance of Family Literacy Services**

Studies have shown that parent education level and parental involvement in a child's education are major factors in school achievement. Family literacy enhances both by offering comprehensive programs that may include English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) and GED classes, helping parents navigate the public school system, promoting and modeling early literacy to ensure academic success, and providing early childhood education. Family literacy is not only an appealing concept; recent experience shows that early intervention actually works in practice, at a fraction of the cost of far less effective remedial school programs designed to help children who have fallen behind. (Please add the citation for this research here).

In New York City, family literacy programs have sprung up within diverse institutions, including community organizations, churches, schools, libraries, and community colleges. Their grassroots origin is an indication of widespread support, and ensures that these programs are alert and responsive to local needs. But spontaneous development comes with drawbacks. Staff members have few opportunities to benefit from the knowledge and experience of other family literacy projects, hear about promising practices introduced elsewhere, and engage in professional development

activities. Parents who would be eager to participate often don't hear about classes. Schools that could and would refer parents to a nearby program may not be aware that it exists. This year in New York, \$7 million in new funding will pour in from three different government sources, with no coordination across agencies, no provision for consistent professional development, and no coordination across the diverse range of funding sources to ensure that the combined efforts of programs throughout the city are as valuable as they could be.

## **The LAC Family Literacy Initiative**

The initial survey collected data that identify where, how, and to whom family literacy services are delivered, Anita Baker, Ed.D, a senior evaluation consultant, worked in close collaboration with Marguerite Lukes, Director of Program Services at the LAC, to develop, administer, and analyze the survey. The data have been combined with other information about adult education services in New York City and incorporated into a searchable, interactive web-based database on the LAC website (<http://www.lacync.org>); a print resource guide can be downloaded or is available free of charge from the LAC. In the future, the LAC will undertake electronic surveying of additional programs and a more comprehensive, qualitative review of selected programs to identify effective practices as well as programmatic successes and challenges. As they become available, the LAC will share these findings with the family literacy community.

## **Characterizing Family Literacy Service Delivery**

For the purposes of this project, family literacy services were defined as services that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family, and that integrate **some or all** of the following:

- Age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences
- Parent education, including child development, parenting, and school interaction
- Literacy education for adults that leads to self-sufficiency and long-term changes
- Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children

These descriptions were adapted from the United States Department of Education’s definition of family literacy services. The survey and other communications about the LAC family literacy initiative included this definition, and respondents were asked to identify which services they provided. The initial survey was formulated to answer 10 key questions:

- Where are family literacy services provided?
- What types of organization are providing them?
- How many and which families receive them?
- What kinds of family literacy services are being provided?
- How do family literacy providers describe their work?
- With whom do these organizations collaborate?
- When are family literacy services delivered and for how long?
- How are these services staffed?
- How are these services supported?
- How are these services funded?
- What additional services do these organizations provide?

## **Data Collection Using the Family Literacy Survey**

The family literacy survey (FLS) was designed to collect the basic data most important for referrals, such as contact information, as well as information about program participants, service delivery, and staffing. Since the survey was administered by mail without prior contact with the majority of organizations identified as potentially providing literacy services to families, brevity, clarity, and ease of providing information were essential. Recognizing that organizations offering family literacy services frequently run programs at multiple sites, the LAC distributed the FLS in two formats. Executive directors of family literacy service organizations were asked to complete a detailed survey.<sup>1</sup> Key personnel at each location where family literacy services were delivered were asked to fill out a briefer “site survey.”<sup>2</sup> (See appendix for copies of agency and site surveys).

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<sup>1</sup> The agency version of the FLS included a thorough definition of family literacy services and a description of the LAC Family Literacy Initiative. A total of 21 survey questions were asked to address the 10 key initiative questions. With the exception of the services description and contact information sections, all questions were closed-ended with standardized response options.

<sup>2</sup> The site version of the FLS included a total of 13 survey questions about specific service delivery. With the exception of the contact information and services description sections, all questions were closed-ended with standardized response options.

The LAC initially mailed the FLS to 605 agencies and organizations that seemed likely to be service providers. In addition, it conducted a small number of surveys (n=16) by telephone.<sup>3</sup> As family literacy services are provided at a diverse array of agencies that do not operate under a single umbrella organization or share the same funding stream, the task of identifying programs resembled detective work. The LAC solicited the assistance of funding networks (e.g., Even Start, Head Start), experts in the field who had engaged in program or staff development work in family literacy, funders who had provided resources to individual family literacy programs, and large umbrella organizations that serve children and families (e.g., Children's Aid, Department of Education, Urban League). The initial list included some names that were actually sites of other agencies, as well as some very large organizations--such as New York City Department of Education district offices--that did not consider themselves to be providers of family literacy services. Inevitably, this initial list was corrupted by outdated mailing addresses, incorrect information, and high staff turnover. Ultimately, the LAC set a cut-off date, after which few additional names were added. Given the nature of the field, it is impossible to determine what percentage of the total number of service providers that either the original contact list or the final respondent group represents.

As stated previously, the FLS was administered in two stages. In the first, the LAC mailed surveys to the individual who had been identified as the executive director, with a cover letter requesting that he or she complete the four-page *agency survey*. This version asked for detailed information about the agency and its services, including family literacy. The respondent was also asked to complete either a two-page *site survey*, if the organization was the sole site at which family literacy services were provided, or a form listing the locations of all of its sites. The packet with the three forms (the agency survey, the site survey, and the site contact list) also contained a postage-paid return envelope. As an incentive to complete and return the survey by the

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<sup>3</sup> The original plan for the FLS was to conduct both a general mail survey and a more targeted phone survey for a randomly selected subgroup of the probable providers, using the same instrument. After initial attempts to contact 100 randomly selected organizations by telephone, we determined that the contact information was not accurate enough to support such a strategy and that the time first to identify the proper contact person by telephone and then to set a feasible interview date and time would extend the project by several months. As a result, most surveys were conducted by mail.

deadline, the LAC included a request form for a set of 20 free books, which were generously donated by Scholastic, Inc., for distribution to direct service providers. The LAC then sent postcards and e-mail reminders to all 605 agencies and organizations on the original list, called a majority of them, and followed up with a duplicate mailing of survey materials. By the time the follow-up mailing was in process, numerous respondents were calling the LAC to request that the deadline be extended. Their frequent reference to the book donations and the many thank-you letters from participants afterward provided strong evidence that the books were a powerful incentive to return a completed form.

Even with the promise of books, response to the survey was predictably low. Nevertheless, the results were informative. A total of 111 respondents completed the agency version of the FLS, and 156 completed the site version. Throughout the rest of this report they will be referred to as the *FLS respondents*. While we cannot assume they are representative of New York City family literacy service providers as a whole, their combined experiences provide a picture of at least a portion of the literacy services available to families throughout the city. Even Start and university programs outnumbered church groups, however the agencies and organizations completing the survey forms were remarkably varied. Their answers were entered in an Excel database, which was later geocoded<sup>4</sup> for the searchable resource guide and converted to an SPSS database to support the analyses for this study.

Despite the relatively low response rate,<sup>5</sup> this initial effort to collect program information achieved three important results:

- For the first time a considerable amount of information is available on the status of family literacy services in New York City. The study provides a first look at who is providing services and how they are being delivered.

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<sup>4</sup> Geocoding is the process by which information is linked to addresses for mapping purposes.

<sup>5</sup> It is not possible to calculate an accurate response rate for this survey effort, as we do not have sufficient information about total population size. While we do know that there was not much undelivered mail, we do not know how many individual or organizational names should have been eliminated from our initial list; that is, it is very hard to establish an accurate denominator for calculation of the response rate. We do know that between 18 and 25% of those who were mailed the survey returned it for incorporation into this study.

- The survey identified a significant group of family literacy service providers. Their contact and descriptive information is now available as part of New York City's first searchable database and print resource guide to agencies providing adult literacy services. The LAC believes that many non-respondents and other actual providers will become aware of the database and request inclusion in future editions. The State Education Department has informed the LAC that it will require that every family literacy program that it funds complete the survey.
- The LAC learned a great deal about how to carry out an effective survey of this population and developed a framework for future (electronic) efforts. A full listing of all organizations and sites that completed the survey is included in the appendix.

## **What This Report Contains**

This report is presented in three sections, including this introduction. Section Two, *Status of Family Literacy Service Delivery*, summarizes all the findings, with supporting tables and figures/maps. Section Three proposes action steps based on the findings, and a discussion of issues for further consideration. The appendix includes copies of the agency and site survey instruments and cover letters, and a complete list of survey respondents.

## STATUS OF FAMILY LITERACY SERVICE DELIVERY

The family literacy survey (FLS) provided the LAC with detailed contact information and service delivery descriptions from 156 sites representing 111 agencies throughout New York City. Based on this admittedly fragmentary data, we can offer tentative answers to key questions about service delivery.

### Where Are Family Literacy Services Provided?

FLS respondents came from all five boroughs of New York City in proportions that roughly reflected the proportions in the original contact list. Table 1 shows a rough comparison of contact data to response data, and more importantly the distribution of responses by borough.

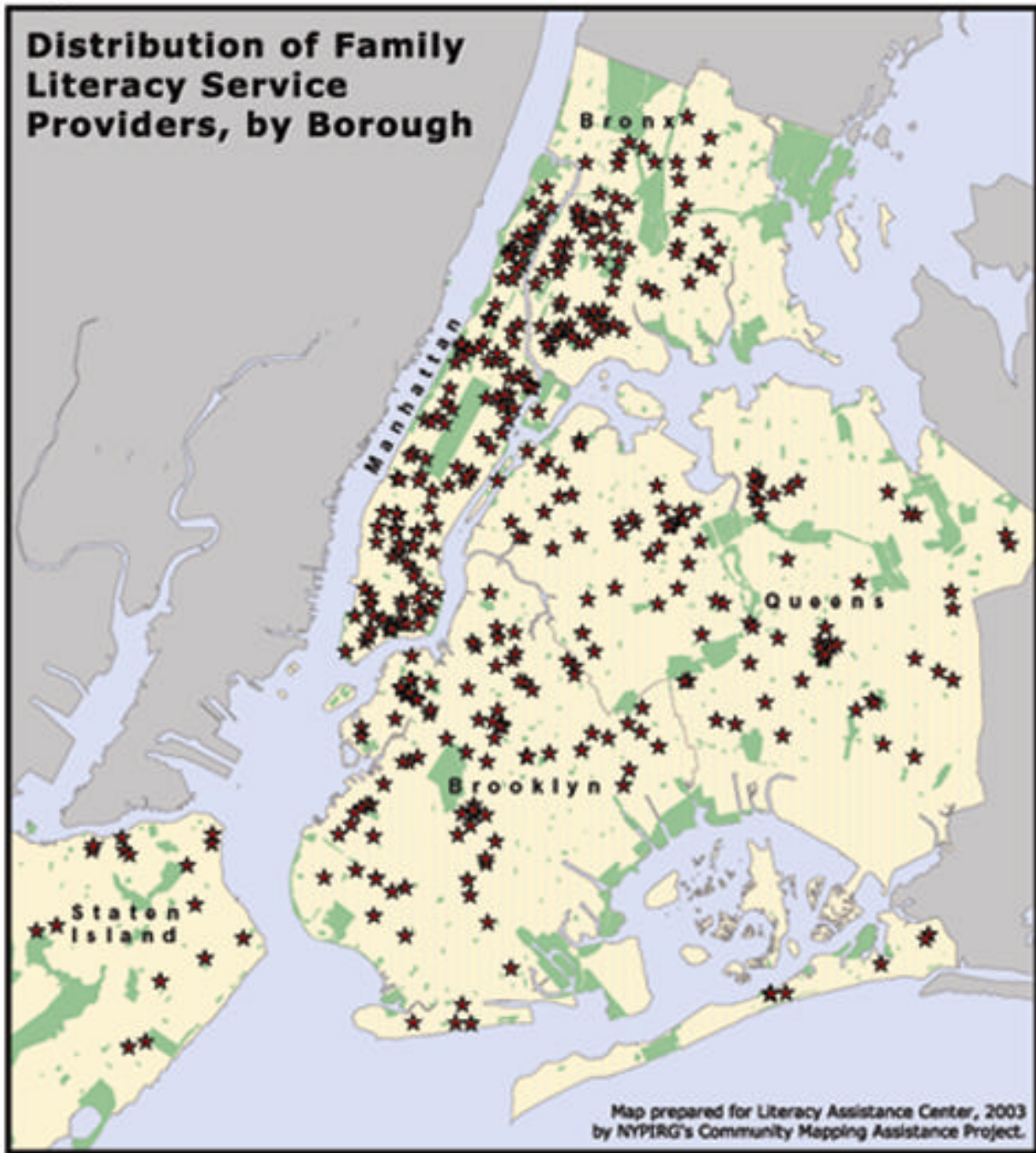
**Table 1: Geographic Distribution of FLS Site Respondents\***

NYC Borough	% of FLS Respondents	% of Original Contacts
Bronx	28%	22%
Brooklyn	22%	25%
Manhattan	39%	32%
Queens	10%	17%
Staten Island	1%	3%
<i>TOTAL</i>	156 (100%)	605 (100%)

*\*Note: this includes all respondents who completed a site survey, N= 156.*

As shown in the table, most respondents came from sites in Manhattan (one-third), the Bronx (one-fourth) and Brooklyn (one-fourth). (See also Figure 1 on the following page for intra-borough distribution of sites). The representation was smaller from Queens (10%) and negligible from Staten Island. As the data represented here include only organizations that responded to the initial survey, it is impossible to determine how accurately these numbers reflect total family literacy services. The pattern, though, is similar to distributions of the original contact list.

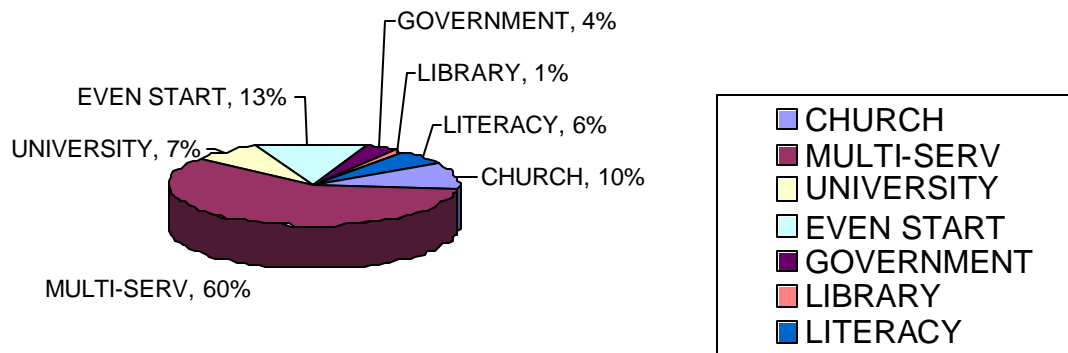
Figure 1



## What Types of Organizations Are Providing Family Literacy Services in NYC?

Several different kinds of organizations deliver family literacy services in New York City, using a variety of on- and off-site strategies. Most of the FLS respondents (60%) were non-profit organizations that provide many other types of services. Some served youth exclusively, but most welcomed participants of all ages. Some were at faith-based organizations, universities or libraries; a modest proportion (13%) were directors or key staff members at Even Start<sup>6</sup> programs. A few were at agencies that are exclusively involved in literacy and other educational services, and another handful work at governmental agencies, such as the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) or the Human Resources Administration (HRA). Figure 2 shows the agencies that responded to the survey by type of organization.

**Figure 2: Types of FLS Organizations**



<sup>6</sup> Even Start Family Literacy (ESFL) is a federally funded program providing family-centered education. Even Start provides participating families with an integrated program of early childhood education, adult education and basic skills instruction, parenting education, and interactive literacy activities between parents and their children. All projects have some home-based instruction and provide for the joint participation of parents and children. Even Start stresses collaboration across diverse agencies. ESFL is a state-administered discretionary program. In addition, the United States Department of Education administers direct discretionary grants to federally recognized Indian tribes and tribal organizations, for migratory families, and to the outlying areas.

Respondent self-descriptions regarding their work with families and other service offerings are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2: Services to Families by FLS Agency Respondents**

<b>% of FLS Agency Respondents That . . .</b>	<b>N=111</b>
Serve only families with one distinct program	17%
Serve only families, but with multiple programs	12%
Serve mostly families, plus other target groups	20%
Subtotal	49%
Serve mostly other target groups	29%
Other organizational service strategy	23%

**Note: N= total number of agencies responding**

Table 2 illustrates that about half of the respondents identified families as a primary target group; the balance did not specialize in this area. A relatively small number of respondents (17%) served families exclusively. Most significantly, **a diverse set of organizations reported priorities that encompassed families, but not did not focus on them exclusively**. A full listing of the agencies and sites represented in this report is available in the appendix, as well as in the Family and Adult Education Service Providers database on the LAC website.

The FLS respondents also illuminated the range of family literacy service strategies. As shown in Table 3, configurations of service delivery varied considerably.

**Table 3: Use of Sites by FLS Agency Respondents**

<b>% of FLS Agency Respondents That . . .</b>	<b>N= 111</b>
Conduct one family literacy program at one site	37%
Conduct one family literacy program at multiple sites	20%
Conduct multiple family literacy programs at one site	21%
Conduct multiple family literacy programs at multiple sites	21%

**N= total number of agencies responding**

More than half of the FLS respondents (57%) offered only one family literacy program; many (37%) did so at a single site. Interestingly, the 42% that reported offering multiple family literacy programs were divided almost equally between those who provided them at a single location and those who used multiple sites. When we asked respondents providing more than one program to declare how many they offered, the answer ranged from two to 10 or more. Most, however, reported providing two or three.

Overall, the survey revealed substantial diversity among service providers, both in the types of organizations that responded, and in the program/site approaches they use to provide services.

### **How Many and Which Families Receive Family Literacy Services?**

The responses to questions about the duration and intensity of services varied widely. A few sites gave a very small figure, while some sites reported serving 3,000 families or more in a year. The average number of families served was 361. Together, the responding sites reported serving 28,556 participants: 6,704 in the Bronx, 7,850 in Brooklyn, 11,138 in Manhattan, and 2,864 in Queens. The sites in Staten Island did not report how many families they served annually.

As shown in Table 4, the participant levels were evenly distributed. About one-third of the sites served fewer than 50 families a year, another third served between 50 and 200, and the final third served more than 200.

**Table 4: Number of Families Participating in Family Literacy Services, with Types of Income Targeting for Family Participants**

<b>Number of Families Served by FLS Respondent Sites</b>	<b>N= 156</b>
Bronx	6,704
Brooklyn	7,850
Manhattan	11,138
Queens	2,864
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28,556*</b>
<b>% of FLS Respondent Sites That . . .</b>	<b>N= 156</b>
Provided services to 3–49 families in 2002	31%
Provided services to 50–200 families in 2002	33%
Provided services to more than 200 families in 2002	36%
Targeted participants from specific income groups	66%
Served participants fully dependent on public assistance	12%
Served families with public assistance and other income	21%
Served families with low income, but no public assistance	14%

**N= total number of sites responding. \* Note, the two Staten Island sites that responded to the survey did not answer the question about numbers of families served.**

Table 4 also shows that about two-thirds of the sites focused on specific income groups: 12% reported that they targeted families fully dependent on public assistance; 21% indicated that their focus was on families with both employment and public assistance income; and about 14% declared that they targeted working-poor families (low-income families who do not receive public assistance). Most respondent organizations provided services primarily to families headed by a single parent using Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) as a primary source of income support. (About two-thirds of the respondent organizations reported that more than half of their participants were single parents, and 70% worked with cohorts in which more than one-quarter of the families were dependent on TANF funds).

The responding organizations also indicated that they served a diverse group of families in 2002, including many in racial/ethnic minority groups. As expected, and as shown in Table 5, many adult participants had a primary language other than English, and educational attainment levels were low.

**Table 5: % of FLS Respondent Organizations  
Serving Adults with the Following Characteristics, 2002**

Racial/Ethnic Background (N=111)		Primary Language (N=111)		Highest Ed. Completed (N=111)	
African American	78%	Arabic	30%	Less than high school	79%
Asian	55%	English	75%	High School/GED	61%
Black (other)	62%	Spanish	81%	Some college, no degree	43%
Latino	92%	Chinese	42%	2-yr degree	22%
Multi-racial	60%	Creole	28%	4-yr degree	22%
White	51%	Russian	23%	Graduate degree	13%

N= total number of organizations responding

Specifically, respondent organizations declared the following about their adult participants:

- Most offered family literacy services to African American and Latino adults: 78% and 92% respectively. Approximately half provided services to Asian adults and approximately half to white adults.
- Most (81%) offered services to adults whose primary language was Spanish, but many (75%) also served adults who were native speakers of English. Between 23% and 42% reported services to adults who spoke other languages, including Russian, Creole, Arabic, and Chinese.
- Three-fourths (79%) provided services to adults with no high school education. Two-thirds had services for adults with only a high school diploma or GED, and somewhat fewer than half offered services to adults with at least some college. Only 13% reported that they provided services to adults with higher levels of educational attainment.

## **What Kinds of Family Literacy Services Are Being Provided to Families?**

The FLS included four key questions to determine which family literacy services were provided. Specifically, sites and agencies were asked whether they provided each of the four components prescribed for family literacy programs in the “Keenan Model” promoted by federal legislation: early childhood education, parent education, adult education/ESOL/GED, and interactive parent/child activities, and/or other related

services. Table 6a and Figures 3a and 3b show the percentages of responding sites delivering each component, as well as the different constellations of services.

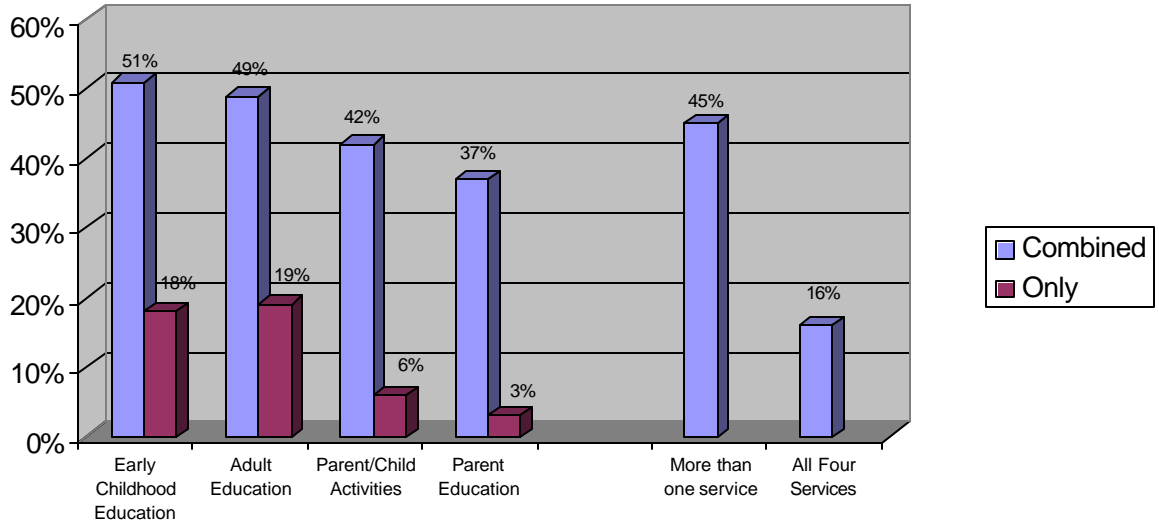
**Table 6a: Family Literacy Service Delivery at FLS Respondent Sites**

<b>% of FLS Site Respondents Delivering . . .</b>	<b>N=156</b>
Early childhood education service component	51%
Adult education/ESOL/GED service component	49%
Interactive parent/child literacy activities component	42%
Parent education services component	37%
<b>% of FLS Site Respondents Delivering . . .</b>	<b>N=156</b>
More than one family literacy service component	45%
Early childhood education services ONLY	18%
Adult education services ONLY	19%
Interactive parent/child activities ONLY	6%
Parent education services ONLY	3%
Parent/child activities and early childhood education	28%
Parent/child activities and early childhood education ONLY	4%
Parent education and adult education services	23%
Parent education and adult education services ONLY	2%
Parent education and early childhood	23%
Parent education and early childhood ONLY	1%
Early childhood education and adult education	21%
Early childhood education and adult education ONLY	3%
Parent/child activities, parent education, and early childhood.	22%
Parent education, adult education, and early childhood	19%
<b>All four family literacy service components</b>	<b>16%</b>

As shown, FLS site respondents provided the four family literacy services in various combinations; however, **only about 16% provided all four**. Specifically, we learned the following about service delivery patterns among respondents:

- Early childhood education and adult education were provided at about half the sites (51% and 49%, respectively) and were offered in combination at about one-fifth (21%) of the sites.
- Almost half of the sites (42%) reported offering interactive parent/child literacy activities. About one-quarter (28%) provided this component in combination with early childhood education, and 22% offered it in combination with parent education and early childhood services.
- About a third of the sites (37%) reported providing parent education services. Nearly a quarter (23%) delivered these services in combination with adult education and 23% in combination with early childhood services; another 19% offered all three in combination.

**Figure 3a: Constellations of Services**



**Figure 3b: Constellations of Family Services**

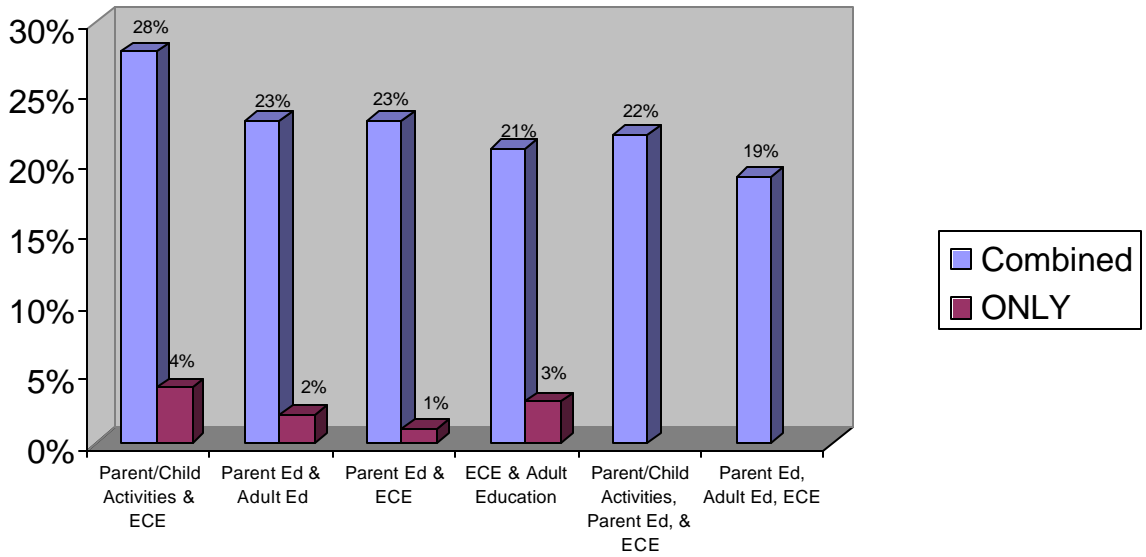


Table 6a also shows that nearly half the sites (45%) were providing more than one family literacy service, and relatively few sites (less than 20%) were providing any of the family literacy services in isolation, or in narrowly defined combinations (less than 5%).

- A total of 18% were providing early childhood education services only, 19% were providing adult education services only, 6% were providing interactive parent/child literacy activities only, and 3% were offering parent education services only.
- A total of 4% of respondents were providing parent/child literacy activities and early childhood education services only; 2% were providing parent education and adult education services only; 1% were providing early childhood and parent education only; and 3% were providing early childhood and adult education only.

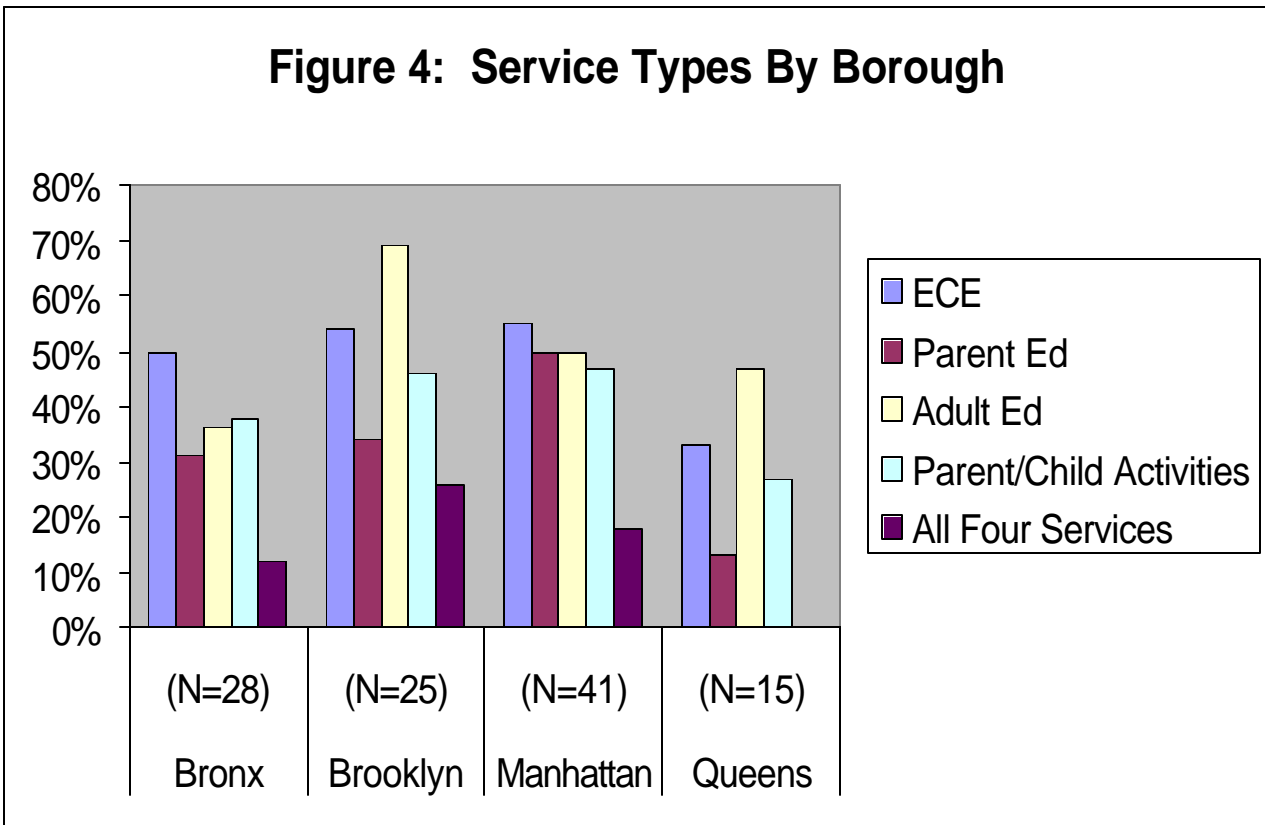
A few respondents (8%) declared that they were family literacy service providers, but indicated that, although their services were related to the four service categories, those services did not fit readily into any of the categories.

A geospatial review of the data also revealed interesting patterns of service delivery by borough. As shown in Table 6b and Figure 4, among the FLS respondents, the four family literacy services and combined services were not equally practiced by borough. In the Bronx, more sites were providing early childhood education than any of the other family literacy services. In Brooklyn, adult education was most popular. In Manhattan, all four services were represented fairly equally. In Queens, adult education was offered most frequently. Staten Island had too few programs for a meaningful comparison. **Brooklyn had the most respondent sites (26%) providing all four components of family literacy; Queens had none.**

**Table 6b: % of FLS Respondents Offering Each Type of Service**

	<i>Bronx</i> (N=28)	<i>Brooklyn</i> (N=25)	<i>Manhattan</i> (N=41)	<i>Queens</i> (N=15)
<i>ECE</i>	50%	54%	55%	33%
<i>Parent ed</i>	31%	34%	50%	13%
<i>Adult ed</i>	36%	69%	50%	47%
<i>Parent/child activities</i>	38%	46%	47%	27%
<i>All four services</i>	12%	26%	18%	0

**Figure 4: Service Types By Borough**



## **How Do Family Literacy Service Providers Describe Their Work?**

Respondents to the FLS were asked to provide a 50-word description of their services. This information was incorporated into the searchable web-based database so that seekers of family literacy services would have detailed descriptions of what is available. These descriptions were also reviewed for this analysis. In summary, they corresponded with the service combination descriptions provided in the previous section. They also revealed differing perceptions among service providers regarding what constitutes family literacy services, reflecting the lack of uniformity in the field. The descriptions the respondents provided are available in the electronic and print resource guides through the LAC website, <http://www.lacnyc.org>.

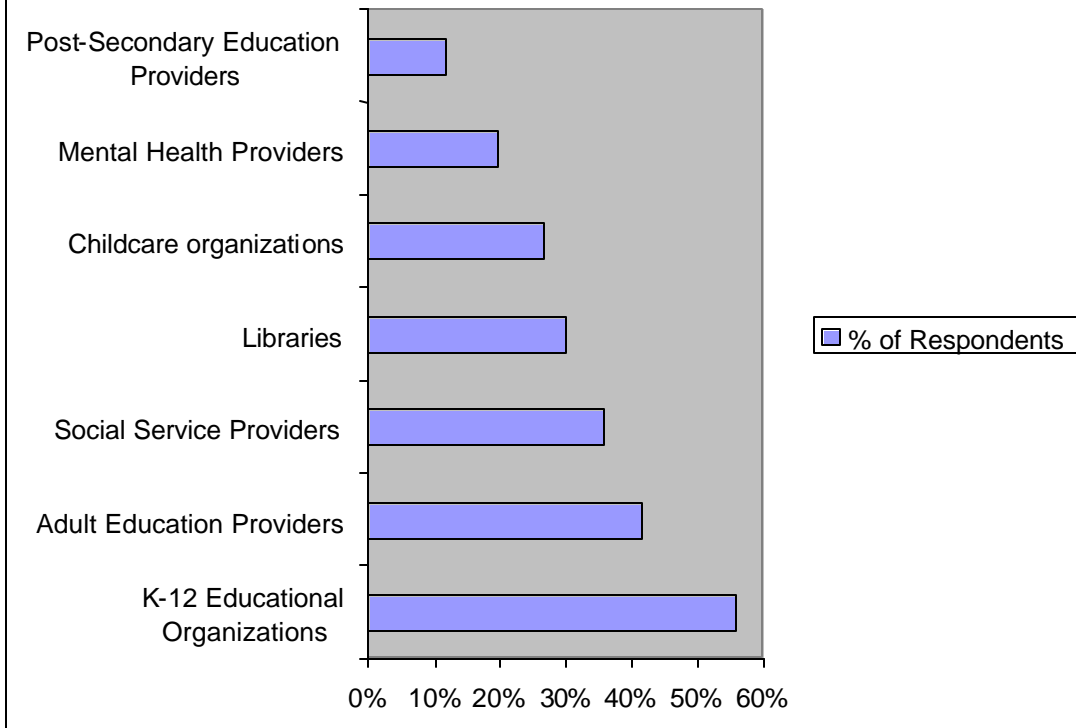
## **With Whom Do FLS Respondent Organizations Collaborate?**

In providing family literacy services, the FLS respondents collaborated with a variety of partners. Respondents were not confined to a specific form of partnership in the survey; they could define the term however they chose. The most common partners cited were public education and adult education providers, as shown in Figure 5 and Table 7. According to the survey,

- Slightly more than half (56%) of the responding organizations partnered with K–12 educational organizations; 42% partnered with adult education providers.
- About one-third of the responding organizations partnered with libraries and/or social service providers.
- One-fourth or fewer of the respondents partnered with childcare organizations, mental health providers, and/or other types of organizations.

The least frequently cited partners were post-secondary institutions.

**Figure 5: Partners of FLS Respondent Organizations**



**Table 7: Partners of FLS Respondent Organizations**

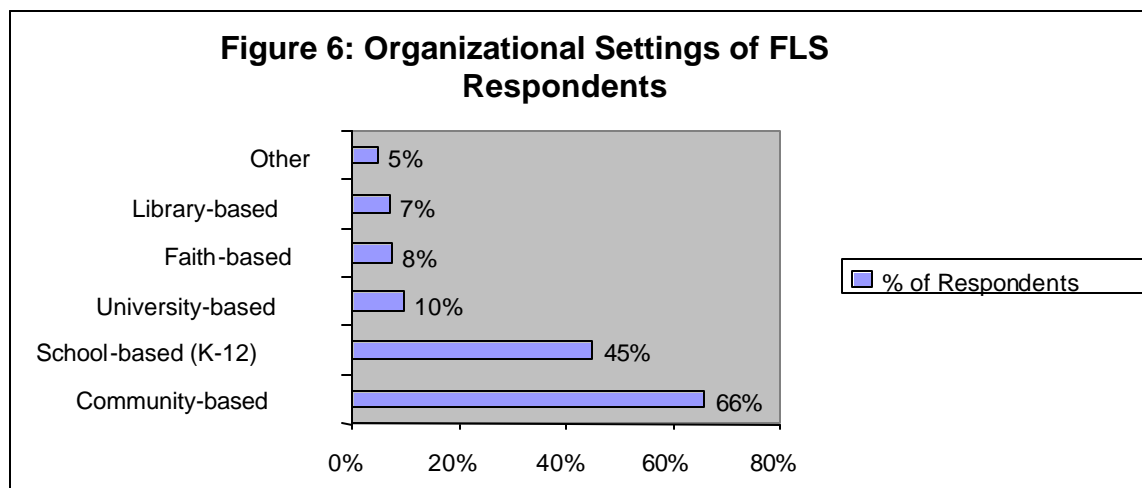
% of FLS Respondents That Partnered With . . .	N= 111
K-12 educational organizations	56%
Adult education providers	42%
Social service providers	36%
Libraries	30%
Childcare organizations	27%
Mental health providers	20%
Post-secondary education providers	12%
Others	26%

**N= total number of agencies responding**

The types of partnerships varied somewhat depending on the kind of family literacy services offered, in predictable ways. For example, the most common type of partner for respondent organizations offering early childhood services or parent education was

K–12 educational institutions; for respondent organizations that had adult education services, it was adult education providers.

In addition to partner organizations, FLS respondents also clarified the institutional settings in which they offered services. Figure 6 shows their responses. The most common settings were CBOs and schools; about 66% of sites reported they delivered community-based family literacy services; 45% of sites indicated they delivered school-based services. Very few agencies delivered university-based, faith-based, or library-based services (10% or fewer for each category).

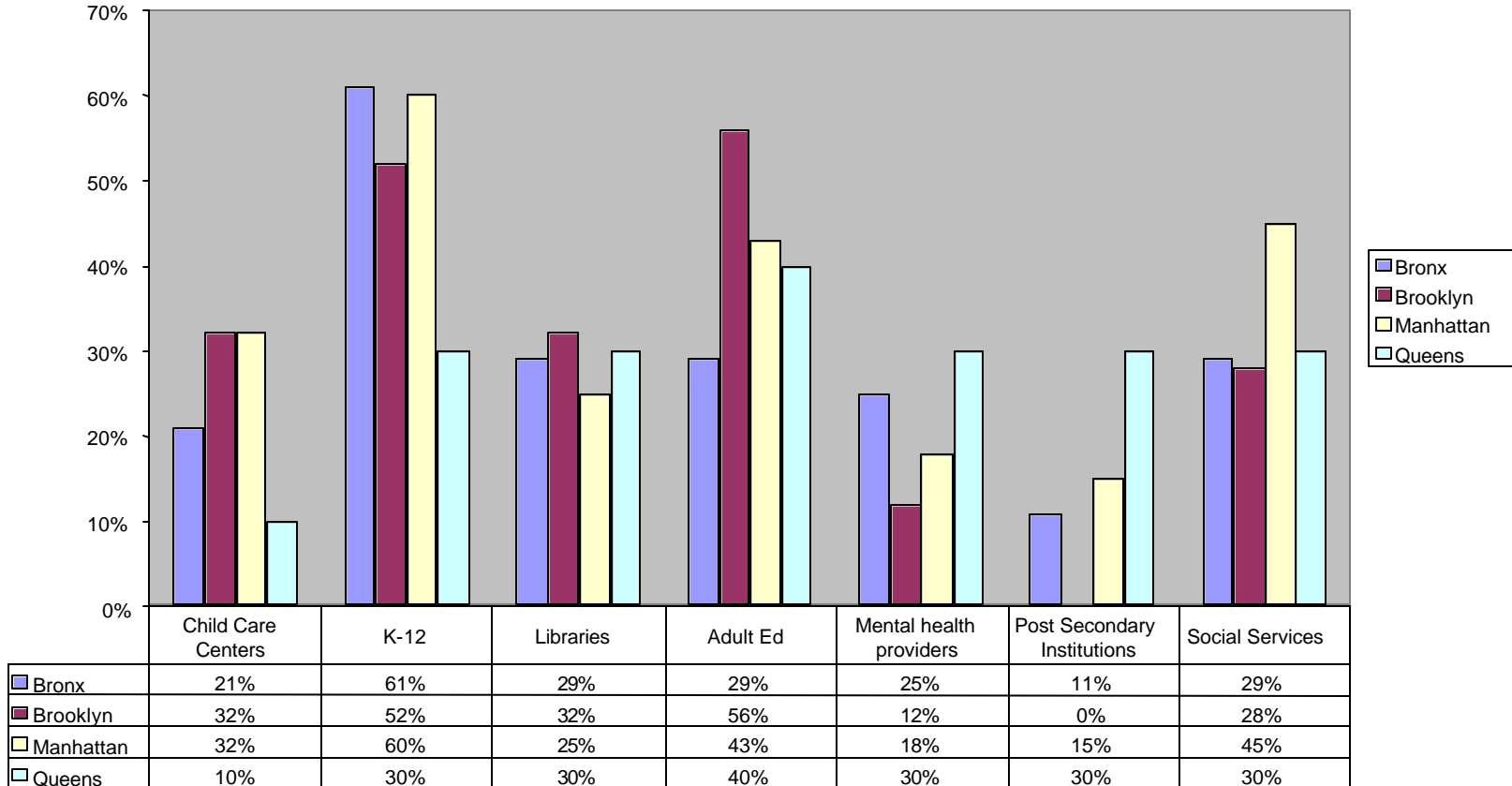


The geospatial distribution of partners, however, differed significantly in each borough:

- In the Bronx, K–12 institutional partners were far more common than any other partner type.
- In Manhattan, K–12 educational institutions, social service providers, and adult education providers were the most common partners, but about one-third of the respondent organizations also indicated they partnered with childcare organizations.
- In Brooklyn, many of the respondents partnered with K–12 organizations and even more with adult education providers, but about one-third also partnered with childcare agencies and/or libraries. No post-secondary education partners were cited.
- In Queens, adult education providers were the most common partners; childcare providers were least common.

These differences by borough are displayed in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: FLS Respondent Partners, by Borough**



## When Are Family Literacy Services Delivered, and for How Long?

Respondents were asked to provide information about hours and duration of their family literacy services. Specific schedule information is shown in Table 8. It is not clear from the data which times were most popular or most requested by participants; conceivably, schedules were shifted based on participant need.

**Table 8: Operating Times for FLS Respondent Sites**

<b>% of FLS Respondents That Operated Family Literacy Programs during . . .</b>	<b>N= 156</b>
Weekday mornings	74%
Weekday afternoons	80%
Weekday mornings and afternoons	79%
Weekday evenings	45%
Weekday afternoons and evenings	38%
Weekday mornings and evenings	25%
Weekday mornings, afternoons, and evenings	19%
Saturdays	24%
Weekday mornings, evenings, and Saturdays	12%
Sundays	7%
Summer	57%

**N= total number of sites responding**

Most responding sites provided services during the day (74% in the morning, 80% in the afternoon) and about half (45%) also had weekday evening hours. Fully 79% of the sites provided services all day (both mornings and afternoons), but considerably fewer than half (38%) were open in the afternoons *and* evenings; only 25% were open in the mornings and the evenings, even though those are the most convenient times for parents. Fewer than 20% of the sites were open in the mornings, afternoons, *and* evenings. In addition to weekday programming, about one-quarter of the sites (24%) were open on Saturdays, but very few offered programs on Sundays (7%). Fewer than 15% of the sites were open morning, evenings, and Saturdays. Slightly more than half (57%) provided family literacy services during the summer.

About half of the FLS respondent sites also indicated the average number of contact hours they provided to each family in a year, as well as the average length of family literacy programming. These figures varied widely. Some sites reported providing as few as two contact hours on average, while others reported as many as 950. Due to the considerable variation in contact hours and the variety of services offered, the citywide or borough-wide average for contact hours is not truly representative. Across all sites, for example, although the average was 106 hours per family per year (roughly equivalent to two hours per week), the median was only 60 hours (one to two hours per week, depending on duration of services). A majority of the site respondents reported that families typically received services for a year or less, but more than a third (35%) provided services for more than one year. Table 9 shows specifics about intensity and service duration.

**Table 9: Intensity and Duration of Family Literacy Services**

<b>% of FLS Respondents That Provided Family Literacy Services for . . .</b>	<b>N= 156</b>
2–30 hours per year on average	36%
31–60 hours per year on average	33%
61–90 hours per year on average	4%
More than 90 hours per year on average	27%
Less than one month	2%
1–6 months	40%
7–12 months	23%
More than one year	35%

**N= total number of sites responding**

One-third of the sites indicated they provided between two and 30 hours per family per year on average; about one-third provided between 31 and 60 hours per year; and almost one-third offered more than 90 hours per family per year.

## How Are Family Literacy Services Staffed?

Staffing patterns and use of volunteers varied somewhat. Most sites reported having at least one full-time staff member, but a significant number reported that they relied on part-timers or volunteers exclusively. Typically, the paid staff was relatively small, and almost all sites had volunteers. These findings are summarized in Figure 8.

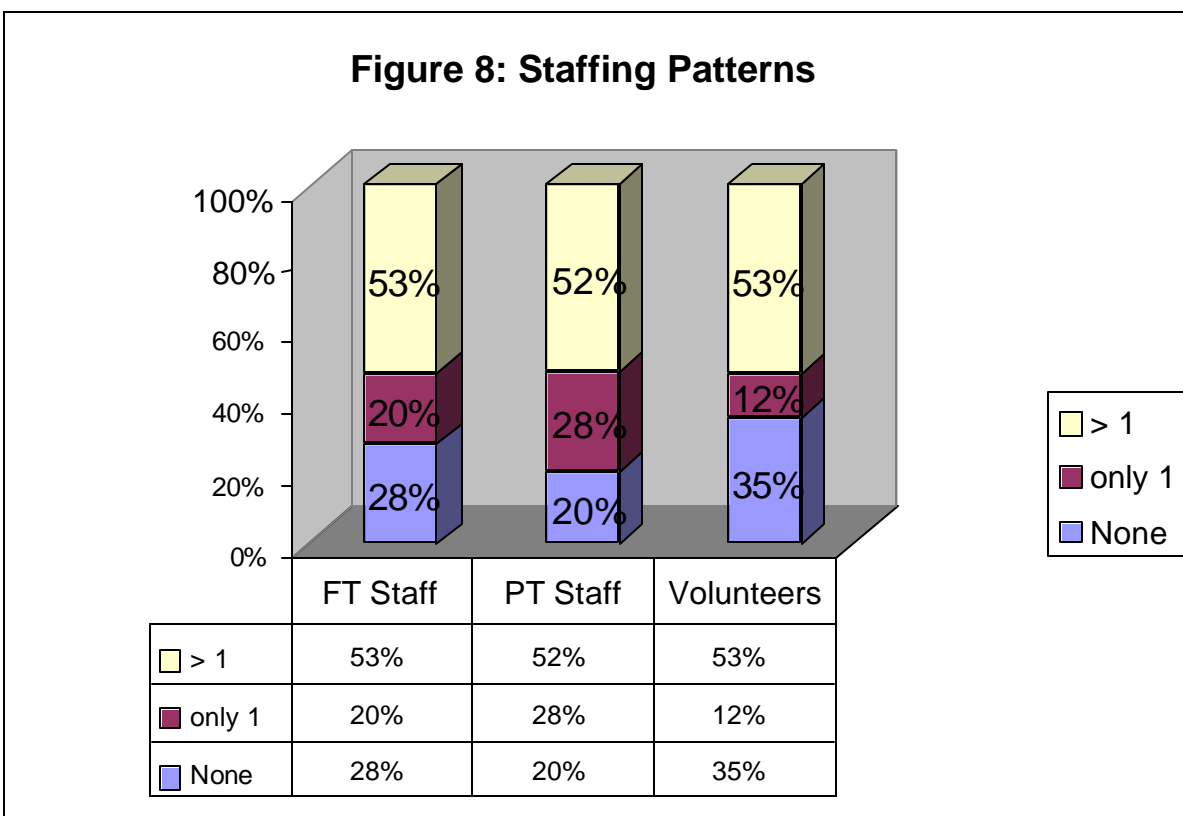
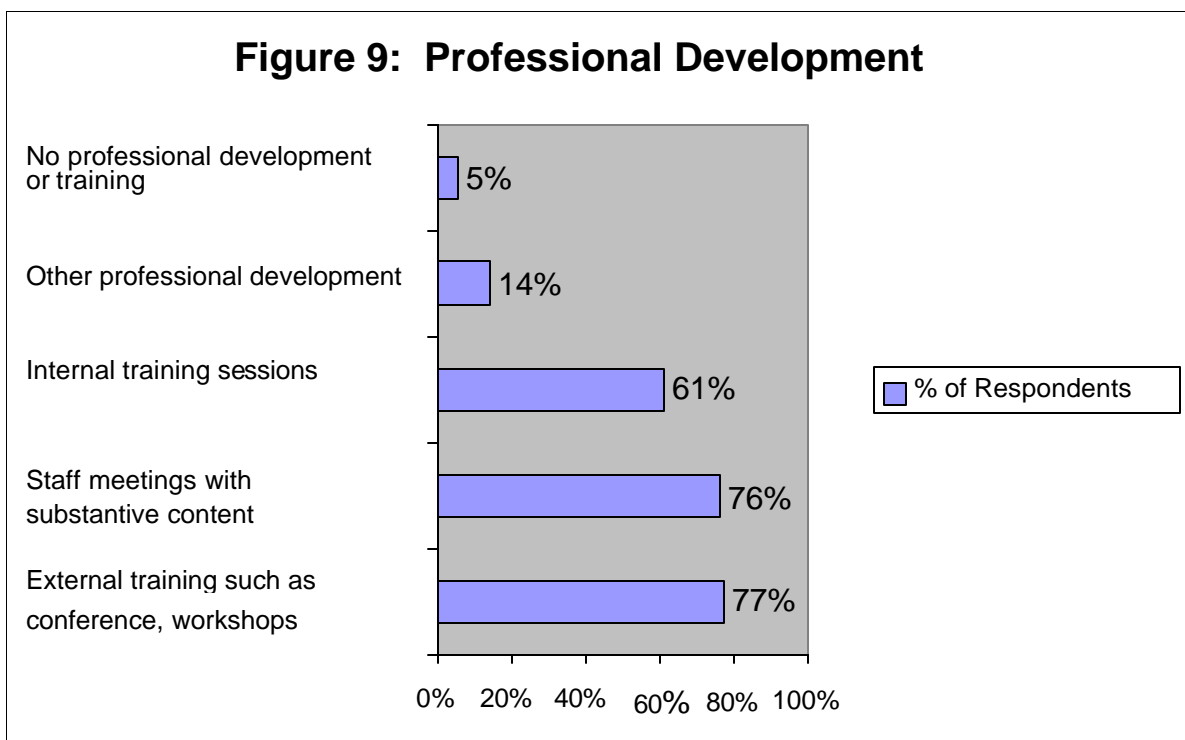


Figure 8 shows that about one-fourth of the FLS sites had no full-time (FT) staff members, and about 20% had no part-time (PT) staff. A very few sites were fully dependent on volunteers. A majority had more than one FT staff member and/or more than two PT staff members. Programs averaged about three FT staff members and about four PT staff members, or about six staff members overall, which equates to about one staff person for every 60 families, on average. According to the responding organizations, the educational backgrounds of staff members varied considerably. Very few, however, employed staff members with less than a high school education, and most had staff members with a college (72%) or graduate-level (82%) education.

## How Are Family Literacy Staff Supported?

Respondents were also asked to provide information about professional development for their staff members. Figure 9 shows how they have been involved.

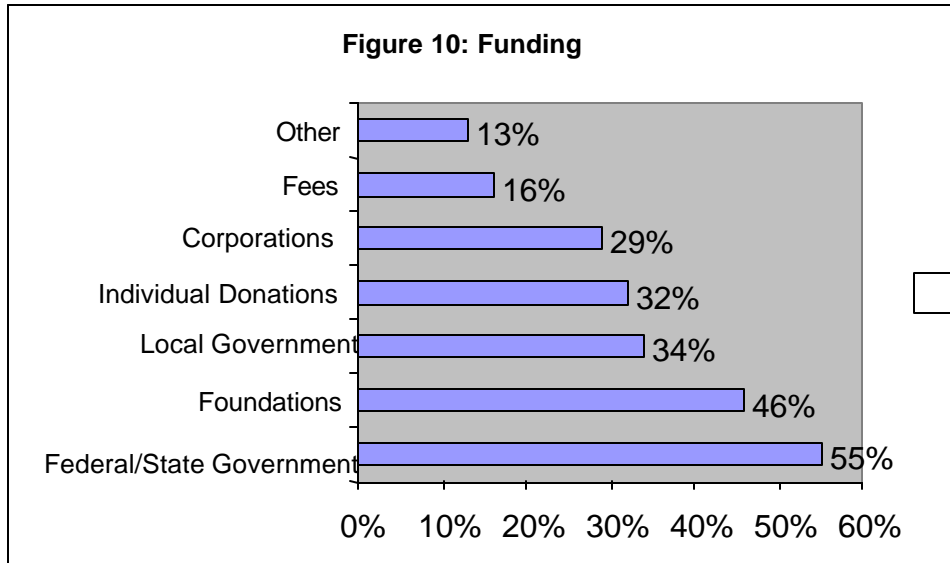


As shown in Figure 9, most respondents indicated that they are providing professional development for their staff, though they did not provide details on frequency or who received these services. More than three-fourths reported that they sent their staff to external training sessions or had staff meetings with substantive content. In addition, more than half indicated that they provided other types of internal training for staff members delivering family literacy services. Very few organizations (5%) reported that they conducted no professional development or training. Without knowing more about the intensity, duration, or impact of these professional development services, it is impossible to draw conclusions about their effectiveness.

## How Are Family Literacy Services Funded?

Respondent organizations obtain financial support for family literacy services from a variety of sources. This was not surprising, as one challenge in bringing service

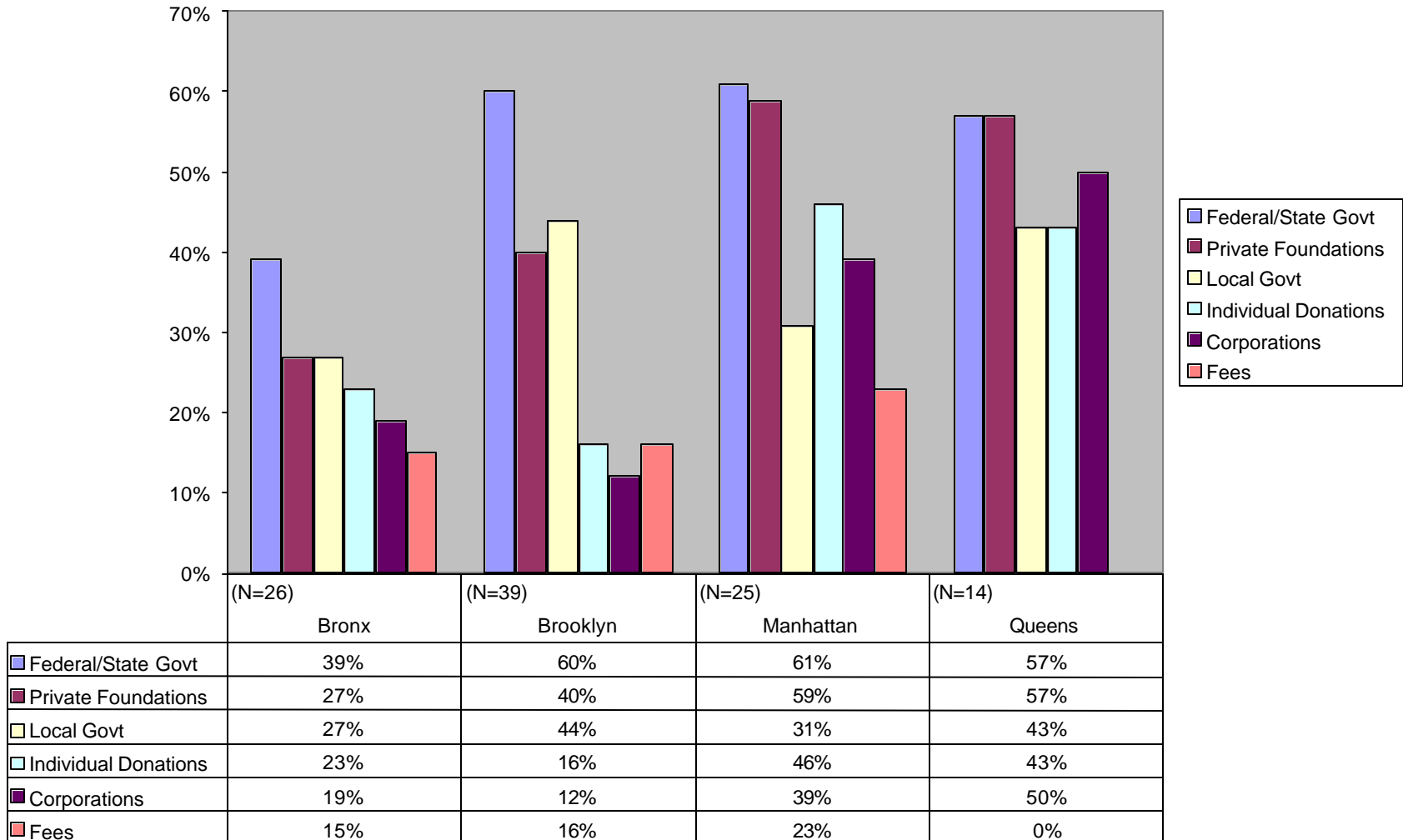
providers together to share information and improve practices has been their disparate funding sources. As shown in Figure 10, respondents drew on the entire range of potential funders.



Specifically, as Figure 10 indicates, most programs drew support from multiple sources. Over half the sites obtained funding from the federal and/or state government; almost half (46%) obtained private funding; and about one-third received municipal, private, or corporate funding. A very small number of responding organizations (16%) reported that they charged fees for family literacy services. Surprisingly, although substantial numbers of organizations reported that they get public and private funding for their family literacy services, only about 30% have been subject to formal evaluation.

It is also interesting to note that funding sources varied somewhat by borough, as shown in Figure 11.

**Figure 11: Family Literacy Funding Sources, by Borough**



Specifically, Figure 11 shows the following geographic patterns:

- Only about one-third of the organizations in the Bronx rely on federal or state government funds; in every other borough, more than half do.
- More than half of the organizations in Manhattan and Queens obtain money from private foundations, compared to only 40% in Brooklyn and 27% in the Bronx.
- The proportion of sites receiving municipal funds is markedly higher in Brooklyn and Queens than in the Bronx or Manhattan.
- Many respondent organizations in Manhattan and Queens benefited from individual and corporate donations, but they were not a common funding source in the Bronx or Brooklyn.

Understanding these patterns may help funders and providers develop appropriate responses to ongoing support needs.

## **What Additional Services Do FLS Respondent Organizations Provide?**

Because most of the respondents were multi-service agencies or ran multiple programs, the survey included questions about the services they offer in addition to family literacy. Table 10a lists them, along with the percentage of FLS respondent organizations that provide each service. As is clear from the table, the FLS respondents offered many services besides family literacy. Only 8 (7%) reported that they did not offer any additional services, and more than two-thirds (67%) reported providing three or more. On average, the 111 agency respondents offered five types of services in addition to family literacy. This pattern emerged in each borough and across all types of respondent organizations. The most common additional services included after-school programs (56%), computer training (51%), and job training/career preparation (47%). Additionally, more than one-third of the FLS respondent organizations also provided advocacy (38%), childcare (35%), counseling/mental health services (34%), and social and recreational services (each 30%). Borough-wide combinations of services, however, differ significantly (see Table 10b and Figure 12). The data seem to indicate that most FLS respondent organizations have added family literacy service to a wide variety of other offerings. (Note that all additional services data are included in the web-based searchable database at <http://www.lacnyc.org> to enable potential seekers of

services to determine which ones they can obtain at a particular provider, in addition to family literacy.)

**Table 10a: Additional Services at FLS Respondent Organizations**

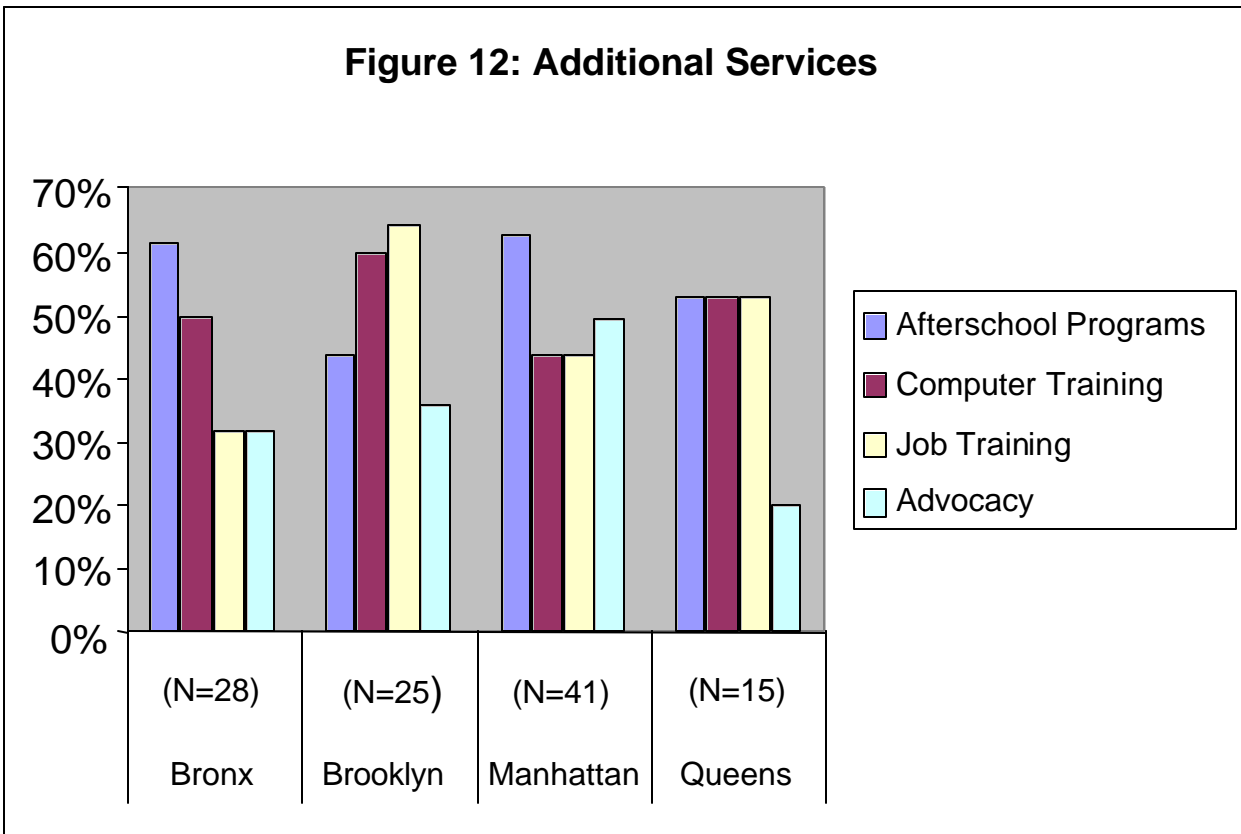
<b>% of FLS Agency Respondents That Provide . . .</b>	<b>N= 111</b>
After-school programs	56%
Computer training	51%
Job training/career preparation	47%
Advocacy	38%
Childcare	35%
Counseling/mental health services	34%
Social services	30%
Recreation services	30%
Health education	23%
Immigrant services	23%
Elder services	19%
Health services	13%
Legal services	11%
Substance abuse prevention/treatment	11%
Services for the developmentally disabled	6%
Services for the physically disabled	2%
Other services	18%
Average Number of Supplementary Services	5

**N= total number of agencies responding**

**Table 11b: % of FLS Respondents Offering Common Additional Services**

	<i>Bronx</i> (N=28)	<i>Brooklyn</i> (N=25)	<i>Manhattan</i> (N=41)	<i>Queens</i> (N=15)
<i>After school programs</i>	61%	44%	63%	53%
<i>Computer training</i>	50%	60%	44%	53%
<i>Job training/career prep</i>	32%	64%	44%	53%
<i>Advocacy</i>	32%	36%	49%	20%
<i>Average Number of Supplementary Services</i>	4	5	5	4

**Figure 12: Additional Services**



# CONCLUSION

## Implications and Recommendations

The data gathered in the initial survey may not be entirely representative of family literacy services in the five boroughs; however, they are sufficient to justify preliminary conclusions in a number of key areas.

**1. Both coordination and identification of programs are urgently needed in the family literacy services community.** Survey participants, funders, community organizations, K–12 administrators, and others working with parents and families in the New York City public school system have enthusiastically welcomed the LAC initiative to gather literacy services for families into a coordinated network. In both formal and informal conversations, school administrators in particular have expressed interest in learning more about family literacy services and excitement about the prospect of a citywide directory.

**2. The initial survey was very revealing and should be extended.** With the help of other organizations and agencies, the LAC identified over 600 programs that may be offering family literacy services and obtained data from 111 of them, just under 20%. The readiness of service providers to participate in the survey once they learned more about the project is strong evidence that renewed data collection efforts will significantly expand and strengthen the nascent family literacy network. We are confident that new resources such as the interactive referral guide and print directory and the *Literacy Harvest* special issue on family literacy will encourage unlisted programs to participate.

**3. A family literacy network is more essential now than ever before.** The impressive growth in funding for family literacy in New York City—\$7 million in new government grants in 2003 alone—and the increasing recognition that family literacy programming can bring dramatic benefits at relatively low cost are generating a rapid expansion in the number and size of programs. This will increase the need for professional development services and exchanges of ideas and experiences.

**4. Information technology could streamline future data collection.** With assistance from NYPIRG, the LAC has explored the possibility of using information technology to collect additional data from programs that have already participated in the survey and to expand the network. Potential methods include web-based surveys, e-mail, and creative use of the interactive database.

**5. The skills and experience of the LAC in professional and network development will be an invaluable resource in the family literacy community.** Over the past 20 years, the LAC has developed a wealth of experience in providing staff development programs, hosting public forums, and creating networks. It is uniquely qualified to foster a strong, mutually supportive family literacy network, using the new database as a foundation. Through its work with the NYS Education Department, the LAC already has access to newly funded family literacy programs and will soon convene them to provide staff development services and gather further information.

**7. The data already collected will be extremely useful in efforts to gather more information.** The LAC is currently contacting an array of potential funders for family literacy programming and is offering them the opportunity to examine the data and interactive database. In addition, we are planning an extensive postcard mailing to draw attention to the interactive database on our website. The level of interest this campaign generates will inform our subsequent efforts to expand and strengthen the family literacy network.

### **Further Questions for Exploration**

The first phase of data collection made major strides in identifying services and establishing what literacy services are currently available to families in New York City. This initial effort inevitably raised significant questions that could be answered through further research:

- In the absence of a network, how have programs become aware of new initiatives and funding sources? Will the creation of a network increase their access to information?
- How do programs evaluate the effectiveness of their services? What kinds of data are they collecting?
- Most programs report providing some form of professional development for their staff. What is the intensity and duration of their current programs and how might they be enhanced in a network of service providers?
- What innovative practices have emerged in family literacy in New York? Which of these might prove valuable in a broad range of programs with differing constituencies?