Assessing the Power of Summer Enrichment

An evaluation of Let’s Invest in Neighborhood Kids (LINK) Summer and LINK Leaders Summer 2020

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by
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Once you ask questions you cannot avoid the answers.
-- proverb from Cameroon

If you don’t ask the right question, you don’t get the right answers. A question asked in the right way often points to its own answer.
-- Edward Hodnett

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Opportunities

Challenges

Recommendations

Indicators and Milestones

Consider reducing the number of milestones

Program Design

Downsizing to a simpler program approach
Acknowledgements
Dr. Amy Desai Graham would like to thank the staff and funders of LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer at Village Learning Place for the opportunity to serve and support your program and the young people and families you engage.

Acronyms
VLP - Village Learning Place
LINK - Let’s Invest in Neighborhood Kids
21st CCLC - 21st Century Community Learning Center(s)

Executive Summary
Village Learning Place engaged Dr. Amy Desai Graham to conduct an assessment of the Let’s Invest in Neighborhood Kids (LINK) Summer program, which received its first 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) grant in 2009. This report summarizes results from the summer of the twelfth year of program operation, summer 2020.

The LINK Summer program has expanded its program to include LINK Leaders Summer, which serves 7th to 10th grade students. Based on findings from past evaluations and needs assessments, the program established five objectives relevant to the needs of the community focusing on prevention of summer learning loss, character education and family support.

The evaluator was provided self-report data from the program as well as access to a variety of data on LINK Summer students including an attendance log and a family engagement log. The evaluation consisted of limited secondary data analysis with the majority of findings obtained from self-report data, in line with two of the program’s five objectives, which in summary state:

Objective 1: Participants in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs will demonstrate educational and social benefits and exhibit positive behavioral changes. (4 indicators)

Objective 3: 21st Century Community Learning Centers will offer services to support parental involvement and family literacy. (3 indicators)
Table 1. summarizes the program indicators, milestones and results from the second year of observation towards these objectives.

Table 1. Program Indicators, Milestones and Results for Summer 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Participants in the program will show continuous improvement in academic achievement as measured by improvement in work and study habits, grades, and test scores.</td>
<td>1.1.1 PreK-6th: 75% of regularly attending students (RAS)* who are below grade level will grow or maintain math skills, preventing summer learning loss.</td>
<td>No data due to the pandemic and transition to distance learning; VLP suspended assessments for program participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.2 PreK-6th: 75% of RAS who are below grade level will grow or maintain reading skills, preventing summer learning loss.</td>
<td>No data due to the pandemic and transition to distance learning; VLP suspended assessments for program participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.3 7th-10th: 75% of students will complete a collaborative learning project incorporating peer and instructor feedback over the course of the program.</td>
<td>X 58% of 7th-10th grade students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1.4 7th-10th: 75% of students will present their collaborative learning project to an audience of peers, family, and community members.</td>
<td>X 58% of 7th-10th grade students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Participants in the program will show improvements on measures such as school attendance, Classroom performance, contribution in school classes, and decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors.</td>
<td>1.2.1 PreK-10th: 70% of RAS will report that they feel ready for the coming school year.</td>
<td>✓ 94% of RAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2.2 PreK-10th: 75% of RAS will show increased summer program classroom participation.</td>
<td>✓ 82% of RAS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1.3 Participants in the program will show positive increases in social skills, positive | 1.3.1 PreK-10th: 75% of students will participate in 12 hours of direct instruction in character education. | ✓ 83% of LINK Leaders  
✓ 79% of LINK Summer  
✓ 80% of students overall |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>relationships and interactions, and fewer isolating behaviors.</strong></th>
<th><strong>1.3.2 PreK-10th: 75% of RAS will report that they made friends.</strong></th>
<th><strong>No data due to the pandemic and transition to distance learning; milestone not applicable</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.3.3 PreK-10th: 75% of RAS will demonstrate that they have learned at least one conflict resolution strategy.</strong></td>
<td><strong>No data due to the pandemic and transition to distance learning; milestone not applicable</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>1.4 Participants in the program will show improved capacity to take initiative, plan projects and complete assignments in school and out.</strong></th>
<th><strong>1.4.1. PreK-10th: 75% of RAS will demonstrate improved classroom leadership skills.</strong></th>
<th>✓ 76% of RAS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.4.2 PreK-10th: 75% of students will design and execute a service learning project that meets an identified community need.</strong></td>
<td><strong>PreK-6th: N/A</strong></td>
<td>✓ LINK Leaders: 83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>3.1 Adult participants will have opportunities to learn about child development, good health, and proper nutrition.</strong></th>
<th><strong>3.1.1 PreK-10th: 75% of families will be represented at an educational session that provides education and resources on child development, health, and/or nutrition.</strong></th>
<th>X 7% (3/42) of families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.1.2 PreK-10th: 65% of families will attend an event, class, or VLP event intended to build adult literacy and/or skills.</strong></td>
<td><strong>No data; Spring literacy event cancelled due to COVID-19</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **3.2 Adult participants will have opportunities to improve their skills to be more effective in their role as their children’s first teacher.** | **3.2.1 PreK-10th: 65% of families will attend an event intended to build parenting skills, and their relationships with their children.** | **No data; Summer event cancelled due to COVID-19** |

| **3.3 Adult participants whose first language is not English will have opportunities to acquire communication skills to support their relationships with their children, school staff, and the community** | **3.3.1 PreK-10th: 55% of families for whom English is not a first language will attend a Family Fun Night, class, or VLP event intended to build adult literacy and/or skills. Materials will be available in their native language.** | **N/A; no families for whom English is not a first language served** |
at large.

3.3.2 PreK-10th: 55% of families for whom English is not a first language will participate in program with their children in an activity aimed at building skills or relationships.

N/A; no families for whom English is not a first language served

✓ milestone was met  X milestone was not met  Unclear whether milestone was met due to insufficient data

Opportunities

- The LINK Summer program has a well-established record of success in preventing summer learning loss in an in-person instruction setting. Given the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on in-person learning in the following year, the program could identify academic components and assessments that are successful on a virtual platform, and build upon the strength of their current programming.

Challenges

- The program has never operated on a virtual platform, and the sudden transition to distance learning left little time to adapt all of the program’s activities, events and assessment methods to a virtual space. Further, maintaining relationships and contact with both students and families proved to be a significant challenge in the virtual setting.
- The program expanded their evaluation milestones from 3 (in the previous cycle) to 16 in the current cycle. With a transition to distance learning, maintaining program components and assessments for all 16 measures may be a hindrance to the program’s primary goal of preventing summer learning loss.

Recommendations

Indicators and Milestones

Consider reducing the number of milestones

Currently, the programs have 7 outlined indicators with 16 associated milestones for the two evaluative objectives. Committing the programs to collecting and tracking data for this many measures may be too ambitious and could serve to dilute the true achievements made. Given that the programs run for 7 weeks during the summer, VLP may want to consider reducing the number of indicators for each objective and to correspondingly reduce the number of milestones. As mentioned in the previous year, our suggestion is to focus on no more than two indicators for each objective and to have no more than 1 or 2 milestones for each indicator.

Program Design

Amy Desai Graham  •  13440 Triadelphia Mill Rd  •  Clarksville, MD 21029  •  443-799-1270
Downsizing to a simpler program approach
It is unclear as to whether the program will be able to return to its regular in-person instruction and activities in the following year. If virtual learning is continued next summer, VLP may want to identify program components considered essential and amenable to the prevention of summer learning loss and focus its efforts on a smaller set of program components. Further, virtual assessment is critical to determining progress toward academic milestones, so identifying assessment methods that are practical for distance learning would prove valuable.

LINK Summer Evaluation Overview

Village Learning Place (VLP) is an independent non-profit library that houses educational programs, enrichment opportunities, and informational resources located in Charles Village. Since 2007, they have worked with young people from pre-K to 8th grade and expanded to serve students in pre-K to 10th grade. They were selected into the 2019-2021 summer cohort of 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) program, a federally funded initiative managed at the state level through the Maryland State Department of Education. The funding supports VLP’s ongoing summer enrichment program, Let’s Invest in Neighborhood Kids (LINK) Summer and LINK Leaders Summer.

Program Description

Overview of LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer
LINK Summer completed its tenth year of 21st CCLC programming as a small community-based summer academic enrichment program serving pre-K to 6th grade students from Charles Village neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland. The overall program is designed to prevent summer learning loss and to inspire creativity.

For summer 2020, VLP transitioned both LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer to a virtual learning experience. The programs offered 6 weeks of summer learning from June 29 to August 7, 2020. There were 3 learning paths: 1) live virtual programming, 2) on-demand online programming, and 3) at-home, no technology activities. The schedule for live virtual programming was Monday-Thursday from 10am to 3pm via one-click online access. The virtual sessions are a blend of engaging videos, teacher-led activities and workshops focused on STEM explorations, art, dance, movement breaks, cooking demonstrations, etc. Students that chose on-demand online programming had access to a new video playlist published on the VLP website weekly and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The playlist was curated with VLP-approved videos about science, cooking, art and more. VLP provided ‘no tech kits’ for students that chose the at-home, no technology option. The kits contained directions and supplies for 5 activities available for no-contact pickup at VLP on a weekly basis. Examples of the kits include: STEM kit from FutureMakers, art kits from Baltimore ClayWorks and Art With a Heart, tie-dye kits with

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LINK Summer t-shirt, etc.

Registered students were permitted to join in all 3 learning pathways this summer. VLP was a site for the Summer Meals grab & go service. In addition to food, they provided weekly supply packets available for families in their program so that they had the materials needed for the activities each week. Each student received a supply box at the start of summer programming with materials (i.e. paper, markers, crayons, scissors, composition book, sketch pad, etc.); additional supply materials were available weekly at Grab & Go Meal service pick-up. VLP also utilized the library catalog to check in and out classroom educational resources (such as blocks, puzzles, and games) in addition to their normal collection of books.

Indicators

In accordance with the 21st CCLC requirements, LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer has articulated specific indicators consistent with the objectives of the funding initiative and with the programs’ overarching intentions:

- 1.1 Participants in the program will show continuous improvement in academic achievement as measured by improvement in work and study habits, grades, and test scores.

- 1.2 Participants in the program will show improvements on measures such as school attendance, Classroom performance, contribution in school classes, and decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors.

- 1.3 Participants in the program will show positive increases in social skills, positive relationships and interactions, and fewer isolating behaviors.

- 1.4 Participants in the program will show improved capacity to take initiative, plan projects and complete assignments in school and out.

- 3.1 Adult participants will have opportunities to learn about child development, good health, and proper nutrition.

- 3.2 Adult participants will have opportunities to improve their skills to be more effective in their role as their children’s first teacher.

- 3.3 Adult participants whose first language is not English will have opportunities to acquire communication skills to support their relationships with their children, school staff, and the community at large.
Evaluation Plan

**Identified Milestones**

**Objective 1:**

*Indicator 1:*

1.1.1 PreK-6th: 75% of regularly attending students (RAS)* who are below grade level will grow or maintain math skills, preventing summer learning loss.

1.1.2 PreK-6th: 75% of RAS who are below grade level will grow or maintain reading skills, preventing summer learning loss.

1.1.3 7th-10th: 75% of students will complete a collaborative learning project incorporating peer and instructor feedback over the course of the program.

1.1.4 7th-10th: 75% of students will present their collaborative learning project to an audience of peers, family, and community members.

*Indicator 2:*

1.2.1 PreK-10th: 70% of RAS will report that they feel ready for the coming school year.

1.2.2 PreK-10th: 75% of RAS will show increased summer program classroom participation.

*Indicator 3:*

1.3.1 PreK-10th: 75% of students will participate in 12 of direct instruction in character education.

1.3.2 PreK-10th: 75% of RAS will report that they made friends.

1.3.3 PreK-10th: 75% of RAS will demonstrate that they have learned at least one conflict resolution strategy.

*Indicator 4:*

1.4.1 PreK-10th: 75% of RAS will demonstrate improved classroom leadership skills.

1.4.2 PreK-10th: 75% of students will design and execute a service learning project that meets an identified community need.

**Objective 3:**

*Indicator 1:*

3.1.1 PreK-10th: 75% of families will be represented at an educational session that provides education and resources on child development, health, and/or nutrition.

3.1.2 PreK-10th: 65% of families will attend an event, class, or VLP event intended to build adult literacy and/or skills.

*Indicator 2:*

3.2.1 PreK-10th: 65% of families will attend an event intended to build parenting skills, and their relationships with their children.

*Indicator 3:*

3.3.1 PreK-10th: 55% of families for whom English is not a first language will attend a Family Fun Night, class, or VLP event intended to build adult literacy and/or skills. Materials will be available in their native language.

3.3.2 PreK-10th: 55% of families for whom English is not a first language will participate in
program with their children in an activity aimed at building skills or relationships.

**Methods**

Dr. Amy Desai Graham was selected as the external evaluator for LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer in May 2019 for the three-year funding cycle (2019-2021). The evaluation plan was designed to help VLP report program progress accurately to fulfill the 21st CCLC funding requirements.

Dr. Graham conducted a secondary data analysis to determine the progress made toward meeting identified milestones when data was available; otherwise, findings were documented based on self-report by the program. Student academic outcomes were not assessed this year. The students’ perceptions of school readiness was assessed using oral surveys and teachers’ observations. Program class participation was assessed using teachers’ observations and teacher surveys. Character education hours were calculated using records tracking on-line attendance. The Program Quality Assessment (PQA) could not be administered this summer, however, teachers’ observations were used to assess classroom leadership skills. Family engagement measures were determined based on online attendance at a designated educational session.

**Evaluation Results**

**Description of the Participants**

The following tables describe the participants in the program. Given the transition to a virtual platform, program participation could only be assessed for students that chose either of the two online tracks offered; total of 40 participants. Students engaged in the at-home, no technology track were considered enrolled but counted as having zero days of attendance; total of 37 participants. For summer 2020, the program had 24 days of virtual programming; therefore, students that participated in 20 days (80%) of virtual programming were considered regularly attending students. Table 2 displays program participation with 22% of enrolled students engaged in the program for 20 days or more. There were a total of 77 students enrolled in the program, 17 of which were regularly attending students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days in Program</th>
<th># Students</th>
<th>% Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 20 days</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 or more days</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Attrition Rate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Program Participation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Ever enrolled N= 77 (%)</th>
<th>Attended 20 days or more N= 17 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-K - 6th grade</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th - 10th grade</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Needs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American/Not Hispanic</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American/Hispanic</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Not Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results by Objective

Objective 1: Educational and social benefits and positive behavioral changes

Indicator 1.1: Participants in the program will show continuous improvement in academic achievement as measured by improvement in work and study habits, grades, and test scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Milestones</th>
<th>Year 1 Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1 PreK-6th: 75% of regularly attending students (RAS)* who are below grade level will grow or maintain math skills, preventing summer learning loss.</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2 PreK-6th: 75% of RAS who are below grade level will grow or maintain reading skills, preventing summer learning loss.</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3 7th-10th: 75% of students will complete a collaborative learning project incorporating peer and instructor feedback over the course of the program.</td>
<td>X 58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.4 7th-10th: 75% of students will present their collaborative learning project to an audience of peers, family, and community members.</td>
<td>X 58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The academic achievement goals of LINK Summer focus on preventing summer learning loss for both reading and maths skills. Progress towards academic milestones is determined using pre- and post-assessments for each subject matter. VLP chose to suspend academic assessments due to the transition of the program to a virtual platform. Without these assessments, progress towards the math or reading milestones (1.1.1 and 1.1.2) cannot be determined.

Milestones regarding the collaborative learning project (1.1.3 and 1.1.4) were not met in 2020. Nevertheless, eleven (11) out of 19 (58%) 7th-10th graders completed a collaborative learning project and presented it to peers, family and community members.
Indicator 1.2: Participants in the program will show improvements on measures such as school attendance, Classroom performance, contribution in school classes, and decreased disciplinary actions or other adverse behaviors.

Table 5. Summary of School readiness and Classroom participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Milestones</th>
<th>Year 1 Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 PreK-10th: 70% of RAS will report that they feel ready for the coming school year.</td>
<td>✓ 94% of RAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 PreK-10th: 75% of RAS will show increased summer program classroom participation.</td>
<td>✓ 82% of RAS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The assessment of school readiness and classroom participation was conducted through oral surveys and teacher observations. The milestones for these two indicators were surpassed among regularly attending students. Among preK-10th graders, 94% (16/17) felt ready for the coming school year and 82% (14/17) showed increased summer program classroom participation.

Indicator 1.3: Participants in the program will show positive increases in social skills, positive relationships and interactions, and fewer isolating behaviors.

Table 6. Summary of Social skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Milestones</th>
<th>Year 1 Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1 PreK-10th: 75% of students will participate in 12 of direct instruction in character education.</td>
<td>✓ 83% of LINK Leaders ✓ 79% of LINK Summer ✓ 80% of students overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2 PreK-10th: 75% of RAS will report that they made friends.</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.3 PreK-10th: 75% of RAS will demonstrate that they have learned at least one conflict resolution strategy.</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The character education milestone (1.3.1) was surpassed by preK-10th grade students. LINK Summer students (PreK-6th) were invited to 24 hours of live instruction in character education and received 6 at-home character education activities to engage students asynchronously. Twenty-two (22) out of 28 (79%) of LINK Summer students who joined online learning received 12 or more hours of direct instruction in character education. LINK Leaders (7th -10th) were invited to 24 hours of live virtual character education programming and received 12 at-home character education activities to engage students asynchronously. Ten (10) out of 12 (83%) of
LINK Leaders students who joined online learning received 12 or more hours of direct instruction in character education. Overall, 32 out of 40 (80%) students who joined the LINK Summer/Leaders program online for live virtual instruction received 12 or more hours of character education instruction.

Due to the pandemic and transition to a virtual platform, data could not be collected about milestones 1.3.2 and 1.3.3. Although progress towards these milestones could not be determined, it is encouraging to note that teachers report that students maintained existing relationships with peers and made strong connections to their cohort’s staff. In addition, regularly attending students received a minimum of 4.8 hours of character education focused on virtues (based on materials from The Virtues Project™).

Indicator 1.4: Participants in the program will show improved capacity to take initiative, plan projects and complete assignments in school and out.

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<td>1.4.2 PreK-10th: 75% of students will design and execute a service learning project that meets an identified community need.</td>
<td>PreK-6th: N/A Link Leaders: 83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The milestone for improved leadership skills (1.4.1) was met this year. The program had to suspend the use of the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) this year given the transition to a virtual platform. Based on teachers’ observations, 13 out of 17 (76%) of RAS demonstrated improved classroom leadership skills.

LINK Summer (preK-6th) students did not complete a service learning project due to the transition to distance learning. Students in LINK Leaders (7th-10th) exceeded milestone 1.4.2 with 10 out of 12 (83%) students that designed and executed a service learning project.
Objective 3: Parental involvement and family literacy

Indicator 3.1: Adult participants will have opportunities to learn about child development, good health, and proper nutrition.

Table 8. Summary of Parental engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Milestones</th>
<th>Year 1 Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 PreK-10th: 75% of families will be represented at an educational session that provides education and resources on child development, health, and/or nutrition.</td>
<td>X 7% (3/42) of families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 PreK-10th: 65% of families will attend an event, class, or VLP event intended to build adult literacy and/or skills.</td>
<td>No data; Spring literacy event cancelled due to COVID-19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Milestone 3.1.1 was not met this summer. Three (3) out of 42 (7%) families participated in an educational session that provided education and resources on child development. The program reported that connecting with families online was an ongoing challenge given the transition to a virtual platform.

Progress towards Milestone 3.1.2 could not be determined as the program cancelled the spring literacy event due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Indicator 3.2: Adult participants will have opportunities to improve their skills to be more effective in their role as their children’s first teacher.

Table 9. Summary of Parenting skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Milestones</th>
<th>Year 1 Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 PreK-10th: 65% of families will attend an event intended to build parenting skills, and their relationships with their children.</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progress towards Milestone 3.2.1 could not be determined given that the program cancelled the summer parental skill-building event.
Indicator 3.3: Adult participants whose first language is not English will have opportunities to acquire communication skills to support their relationships with their children, school staff, and the community at large.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Milestones</th>
<th>Year 1 Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 PreK-10th: 55% of families for whom English is not a first language will attend a Family Fun Night, class, or VLP event intended to build adult literacy and/or skills. Materials will be available in their native language.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 PreK-10th: 55% of families for whom English is not a first language will participate in program with their children in an activity aimed at building skills or relationships.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final two milestones (3.3.1 and 3.3.2) target families for whom English is not a first language. This summer, these milestones were not applicable to the program evaluation given that there were no such families participating in the LINK Summer or LINK Leaders programs. The materials for both programs are translated into Spanish to serve any Spanish-speaking families that join either program.

**Program Quality and Engagement**

Program quality is typically assessed using site observations, conducted by the evaluation team. During these visits, data is collected regarding the following indicators: facility, types of activities, classroom management, safety and security, student engagement with activities, teacher-student interaction, and utilization of resources. This year, the site was not able to provide opportunities for virtual observation due to various challenges associated with the transition to distance learning. If the program continues to use a virtual platform in the following year, it will provide the evaluator an opportunity to observe the various program components to assess program quality and engagement.

**Program Closure Weekly Activity Forms**

VLP completed forms documenting the time staff spent on core activities to support the LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer programs. Table 11 below summarizes these forms for the period from May 4 through August 21, 2020:
Table 11. Summary of Program Closure Weekly Activity Forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours Spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum work</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson plan development</td>
<td>239.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online/Distance learning</td>
<td>1775.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff/Professional development</td>
<td>269.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OST program data collection and entry/validation</td>
<td>238.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems planning work</td>
<td>209.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All activities</td>
<td>2771.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Insights

The LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer programs were not able to collect data regarding 8 out of 16 (80%) of their performance measures due to the sudden transition to distance learning. The program was able to attain most of the second year milestones for which they were able to collect data, except for Summer Leaders collaborative learning project and family engagement. Progress towards the prevention of summer learning loss could not be determined due to the inability to administer academic assessments on the virtual platform. Despite the various challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the programs successfully assisted students in: feeling ready for the coming school year, increasing summer program classroom participation, participating in character education, improving classroom leadership skills, and completing a service learning project. Despite not meeting all milestones, the LINK Summer and LINK Leaders Summer programs made meaningful strides towards the 3-year cycle objectives and can build upon this success to make even greater achievements in the next summer.

Opportunities

- The LINK Summer program has a well-established record of success in preventing summer learning loss in an in-person instruction setting. Given the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on in-person learning in the following year, the program could identify academic components and assessments that are successful on a virtual platform, and build upon the strength of their current programming.
Challenges

- The program has never operated on a virtual platform, and the sudden transition to distance learning left little time to adapt all of the program’s activities, events and assessment methods to a virtual space. Further, maintaining relationships and contact with both students and families proved to be a significant challenge in the virtual setting.
- The program expanded their evaluation milestones from 3 (in the previous cycle) to 16 in the current cycle. With a transition to distance learning, maintaining program components and assessments for all 16 measures may be a hindrance to the program’s primary goal of preventing summer learning loss.

Recommendations

Indicators and Milestones

*Consider reducing the number of milestones*

Currently, the programs have 7 outlined indicators with 16 associated milestones for the two evaluative objectives. Committing the programs to collecting and tracking data for this many measures may be too ambitious and could serve to dilute the true achievements made. Given that the programs run for 7 weeks during the summer, VLP may want to consider reducing the number of indicators for each objective and to correspondingly reduce the number of milestones. As mentioned in the previous year, our suggestion is to focus on no more than two indicators for each objective and to have no more than 1 or 2 milestones for each indicator.

Program Design

*Downsizing to a simpler program approach*

It is unclear as to whether the program will be able to return to its regular in-person instruction and activities in the following year. If virtual learning is continued next summer, VLP may want to identify program components considered essential and amenable to the prevention of summer learning loss and focus its efforts on a smaller set of program components. Further, virtual assessment is critical to determining progress toward academic milestones, so identifying assessment methods that are practical for distance learning would prove valuable.