

Houston/Harris County Children's Mental Health Grant Program

Tools for Building Healthy Families An evaluation report by ChildBuilders

**Submitted to Hogg Foundation for Mental Health
August 2013**

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Tools for Building Healthy Families Fourth Year Evaluation Report

For

ChildBuilders

By

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INTRODUCTION

Tools for Healthy Families (TOOLS) is a primary prevention mental health initiative targeting high-risk preschool children enrolled in Head Start. TOOLS is a broad implementation of ChildBuilders' three preventive mental health programs that are delivered in high need areas in south, southeast and southwest Houston and have been shown to be effective. The goal of ChildBuilders is to prevent mental health problems by increasing knowledge, changing attitudes and promoting healthy behaviors in child safety, relationships, and parenting. The three preventive programs are: Parents Under Construction® (PUC), We Help Ourselves® (WHO), and Love Notes®.

In its fourth year TOOLS was implemented at forty-two (42) Head Start centers affiliated with two well-known community-based organizations, Neighborhood Centers Inc. (NCI) (23 centers) and Gulf Coast Community Services Association (GCCSA) (19 centers). Through these two agencies 3,794 preschool children who are high risk received one or more of ChildBuilders programs. Parents, agency staff, and teachers also benefited from TOOLS.

ChildBuilders uses a "train the trainer" model where teachers and staff are trained to deliver PUC, WHO, and Love Notes® to students and/or parents. Planning and coordination at NCI and GCCSA were completed in previous years and many staff and teachers at both organizations were trained in all four years and have delivered the three programs.

The evaluation of Tools for Healthy Families is an examination and review of implementation and outcomes for PUC, WHO, and Love Notes®. The evaluation includes both process and outcome components and is guided by three logic models (see **Appendix A**) that describe the program activities and show graphically how the programs work to educate teachers, staff and parents, and

help children grow up safely, develop healthy relationships and, in the future, become nurturing parents.

PARENTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION®

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Parents Under Construction: Building Healthy Relationships Today and Strong Families Tomorrow® (PUC) is a unique and innovative parenting education program designed to develop future mentally healthy parents by improving children's parenting knowledge, attitudes, and skills today. The program has three goals:

- To increase children's knowledge and retention of information regarding mentally healthy parenting practices
- To positively impact students' attitudes regarding the use of mentally healthy parenting practices
- To increase children's empathy and pro-social skills to enhance current relationships and prevent violence

For many years PUC has been delivered through a cooperative arrangement with Houston area school districts and other youth-serving organizations, and has four developmentally appropriate curricula: 1) Preschool, 2) Kindergarten-3rd grade, 3) 4-6th grade, and 4) 7-12th grade. The classroom presentations cover a wide range of topics including parenting, child development, positive discipline techniques, and non-violent conflict resolution. The program utilizes a variety of student activities, including group discussion, role-playing, group projects, and parent-child activities. The PUC logic model, modified to reflect the program's adaptation for TOOLS, is included in **Appendix A** (Figure 1). The model describes the chain of resources, activities and outcomes that lead to PUC goals.

EVALUATION PLAN

The standard evaluation approach for Parents Under Construction® has been to assess teacher training and test students (pre- and post-) on knowledge and attitudes. This approach will also be used for TOOLS.

Process Evaluation

The PUC process evaluation consists of two components: documenting the numbers (counts) of individuals trained and taught, and assessing training and instruction.

Counts

- Number of staff/teachers trained to deliver PUC
- Number of classes receiving PUC
- Number of participating students
- Number of participating parents

Staff/teacher training sessions

Staff and teachers trained in PUC are asked to fill out a post-training survey to assess the instruction, presenters, and teachers' expectations regarding the curriculum. The survey is a one-page questionnaire with 4 Likert items (1 – 5) for rating perception of their training experience and two yes/no questions about the effect of the training on trainees' own parenting attitudes and also their expectations regarding the effect on the students in their class. Three open-ended questions ask for their assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, and for suggestions or comments¹.

¹ For this and other surveys described in this report, all quantitative data are entered and analyzed. After data analysis, the surveys are returned to ChildBuilders staff so that the qualitative responses to open-ended survey questions can be reviewed.

Staff/teacher presentation experience

Staff and teachers who deliver PUC to students are asked to complete a post-presentation survey to reassess many of the post-training areas based on their presentation experience. The 2-page questionnaire has five quantitative (checkbox, yes-no, or Likert scale) items and seven open-ended questions.

Outcome Evaluation

Two outcomes from the PUC logic model are being examined in the evaluation of this program: Teacher/staff attitude change (completed in the first year) and student knowledge and attitude change which were measured this (fourth) year.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

During the 2012-13 219 new teachers and aides were trained to deliver PUC and, along with individuals trained in the previous years, delivered the program to 2,465 students. A large number of parents (1,070) also participated in the program (486 at GCCSA and 584 at NCI).

Training

Trainings were conducted throughout the fourth year and the related evaluation findings are summarized below.

PUC Training

Nineteen groups (219 individuals) of teachers, aides and other staff at Neighborhood Centers, Inc. and Gulf Coast Community Services Association were trained between July of 2012 and January of 2013 in how to deliver the PUC curriculum to pre-K students. For some of the attendees the sessions were a refresher course as they had been trained in earlier years. Attendees completed a brief post-training survey asking them to rate aspects of their experience and also indicate their expectations for the future.

Participant ratings of the facility, presenters, format, and training experience were very high – averaging between 96% to 100%. Participants were also asked whether the training had affected their parenting attitudes, if they thought it would positively affect those they will teach, and if they planned on presenting PUC in the coming school year. Percent positive (“Yes”) responses to the three questions ranged from 93% to 100%.

This will help me be a better parent.

Teacher Trainee

Post-Presentation

Teachers delivering PUC to students were asked to complete a “post-presentation” survey assessing their experience in presenting the curriculum. One hundred thirty-eight (138) surveys were collected in 2012 and 2013. The results are described below.

Program Assessment

All presenters were asked about the effectiveness of PUC and for their assessment of their experience in teaching the program. As shown in **Table 1**, Ninety-three percent (93%) of the respondents said that PUC did have a positive impact on their students. Their overall assessment of the experience was very positive, 4.40/5 (88%). Eighty-seven percent (87%) rated the experience 4 or higher on a scale of 1 Poor to 5 Excellent.

It's a great program for teachers and parents.

Classroom Teacher

Parents Under Construction Post-Presentation Survey Results		
Do you believe that Parents Under Construction® had a positive impact on the parenting attitudes of your students?	Yes 93%	No 7%
Rate your overall experience teaching Parents Under Construction®? (1 – Poor; 5 – Excellent)	Mean 4.40	

Table 1: Parents Under Construction® Post-Presentation Response Summary

A small proportion, about a fifth (20%), of respondents indicated they had some difficulty in teaching the PUC curriculum, but when asked about the future, ninety-two percent (92%) indicated they planned to teach PUC in the coming year.

Parent Feedback

Parents of pre-school children receiving the PUC program were asked to complete a short survey to obtain their perspective and assessment of the program. Survey responses from the 617 parents who had attended at least one PUC lesson and completed the survey are summarized in **Table 2**. The average number of lessons attended by the parents was about 4 (3.91).

Parents Under Construction® Parent Feedback Results		
Survey Question	Yes	No
Did PUC have a positive impact on parenting attitudes?	98%	2%
Did PUC have a positive impact on your child?	97%	3%
Do you want your child to receive PUC again?	97%	3%

Table 2: Parents Under Construction® Parent Feedback Summary

As shown above, parents responded very positively about the program and its impact and almost all wanted their child to receive PUC again in the future.

The program taught my child to make good choices.

Parent attending PUC Presentation

Pre-K Interview Outcome Study

In the fall of 2012 a pre-post study of the effectiveness of the Pre-K curriculum was initiated for PUC. The goal of the research was to show that the PUC presentations could teach preschoolers the concepts of good parenting. The study was conducted by interviewing 25 preschoolers at two Houston nonprofit agencies using an instrument designed especially for the Pre-K PUC curriculum.

The mean change from pre-test to post-test score was 4.60, a result that was highly significant. This was in spite of the fact that some of the items did not produce a pre-post difference and one of the two sub-groups had a high pre-test score (and thus little room for improvement).

Despite some methodological problems related to the sample, the study was a success in many ways. The pre-post mean comparison was highly significant and suggests that the PUC program is working well in teaching pre-K children the core concepts of good parenting. The individual item results are very encouraging and provide valuable information on which areas are being learned and which are not. For items with weaker results, staff will examine both the instrument and the curriculum to determine why the students did not seem to learn that aspect of the curriculum.

The findings of this small study strongly suggest that the PUC program is effective in teaching very young children many of the basic concepts related to good parenting. Suggestions were made for a more rigorous study in the future. A copy of the Pre-K Interview Study Report is attached as **Appendix B**.

WE HELP OURSELVES®

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

We Help Ourselves® (WHO) is a program that teaches children to recognize and protect themselves from different forms of abuse, kidnapping, bullying, peer pressure, and more. The program uses an age-appropriate curriculum, DVDs, and puppets to help the children learn. Traditionally, WHO is delivered by trained volunteers, educators, and counselors. The WHO logic model was modified for the TOOLS Program and is included in **Appendix A** (Figure 2). The model describes the chain of resources, activities, and outcomes that lead to the goals of the program.

EVALUATION PLAN

The evaluation approach generally used for We Help Ourselves® is to assess staff training and subsequent WHO program presentations.

Process Evaluation

The TOOLS/WHO process evaluation consists of two components: Documenting the numbers (counts) of individuals trained and taught, and assessing teacher training.

Counts

Number of staff/teachers trained to deliver WHO

Number of classes taught WHO

Number of participating students

Staff/teacher training sessions

There were two levels of WHO training provided for agency staff. All staff and teachers were taught to recognize the signs of child abuse and how to respond to a

child who reports abuse. A smaller group of teachers and staff specialists were trained to deliver the WHO program. During the fourth year, more than 100 teachers, aides and other staff received this training or a refresher course to reinforce training attended in previous years. These trainees completed a one-page post-training survey assessing the training and gathering suggestions to improve future trainings.

Staff/teacher post-presentation assessment

After presenting the WHO program, teachers are asked to complete a short questionnaire assessing the presentation experience and getting their input on the curriculum's effectiveness.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

During the fourth year 130 WHO facilitators were trained and, along with a number of individuals trained earlier, delivered WHO to more than 3,700 students.

Training

WHO trainees included Family Service Specialists and Family Service Associates. Attendees were asked to complete a brief post-training survey to assess their experience. They were presented with seven statements to which they could express their agreement along a 5-point scale from 1 – Disagree to 5 – Agree. The table below summarizes the responses of the 80 trainees completing the survey.

We Help Ourselves® Post-Training Survey Results						
Post-Training Survey Questions (1 – Disagree; 5 – Agree)	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
I acquired new knowledge and/ or skills	-	-	5%	29%	66%	4.61
Participant/Instructor interaction was sufficient	-	-	1%	18%	81%	4.80
Audiovisual aids/handouts were helpful.	-	1%	3%	16%	80%	4.75
Presenter was knowledgeable concerning topic.	-	-	1%	11%	88%	4.86
Presenter was prepared and organized	-	-	-	9%	91%	4.91
The training had value for me	-	-	-	16%	84%	4.84
I feel I can present the WHO material well	-	-	1%	23%	76%	4.75

Table 3: We Help Ourselves® Teacher Training Assessment

All of their levels of agreement were very high (4.61 to 4.91 out of 5) and 95% (marked 4 or 5) strongly indicated that they learned new knowledge and/or skills and 99% felt they could present the WHO material well.

The most helpful part of the training was learning how to relate the material to the children.

WHO Trainee

Post-Presentation Surveys

The WHO program was presented to children at all 42 Head Start centers. One hundred and forty-one (141) classroom teachers completed a post-presentation survey and their responses are summarized in **Table 4**.

We Help Ourselves® Post-Presentation Survey Results						
Post-Presentation Survey Questions	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
What is your assessment of the program's content? (1 – Poor; 5 – Excellent)	-	-	4%	16%	80%	4.76
How well did the presenter relate to the students? (1 – Not well; 5 – Very well)	1%	-	4%	11%	85%	4.79
How successful was the presenter in teaching the material? (1 – Unsuccessful; 5 – Successful)	-	-	4%	11%	85%	4.81
How successful was the presenter in teaching kids safety education? (1 – Unsuccessful; 5 – Successful)	-	-	3%	14%	84%	4.81
Overall, the We Help Ourselves® presentation my class received was: (1 – Poor; 5 – Excellent)	-	-	3%	12%	85%	4.82

Table 4: We Help Ourselves® Teacher Post-Presentation Assessment

Program Assessment

In assessing the WHO presentation itself, the teachers were very positive. As shown in **Table 4** the mean responses to questions about the presenter, program content and successfulness in teaching the material were very high. In all of these areas only one teacher gave a response less than 3 (out of 5). In responding to an additional question on the age appropriateness of the material, 98% of teachers indicated they thought that the material was age-appropriate. Overall the program was rated 4.82/5.00.

Future Activities

Ninety-four percent (94%) of the teachers planned on using the follow-up activities with their students. A similar proportion (93%) would like to have WHO delivered in their school next year.

This is important information for kids to know.

Agency Teacher

LOVE NOTES®

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Love Notes® is a program designed for young adults and parents in at-risk populations. Love Notes® teaches young adults how to communicate, resolve conflict and build healthy and committed relationships. A logic model was created for the TOOLS program's implementation of Love Notes® and is included in **Appendix A** (Figure 3). The model describes the chain of resources, activities, and outcomes that lead to the goal of teaching children how to develop healthy, committed relationships and marriages when they grow up.

EVALUATION PLAN

The evaluation approach for Love Notes® is centered on training assessment and parent feedback on the program.

Process Evaluation

The TOOLS/Love Notes® process evaluation consists of two components: Documenting the numbers (counts) of individuals trained and assessing training and instruction.

Counts

Number of staff/teachers trained to deliver Love Notes®

Number of parent training sessions

Number of participating parents

Staff/teacher training sessions

Staff and teachers trained in Love Notes® filled out a post-training survey to assess the instruction, presenters, and teachers expectations regarding the curriculum. The survey used was a one-page questionnaire with four Likert items

(1 Poor – 5 Excellent) assessing the facility, presenter(s), format, and overall experience. There were also two yes/no questions on attitudes and several open-ended questions.

Parent satisfaction and input

Parents attending Love Notes® classes completed a post-presentation survey. The survey questions ask for parent assessment of their teacher, their overall experience, and their assessment of the effect of the program on their own relationships. A final open-ended item gave parents the opportunity for additional comments and suggestions.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

During the fourth year NCI and GCCSA facilitators delivered the Love Notes® program to 190 parents in 14 groups at NCI and GCCSA. The 8 hours of Love Notes® presentation were delivered over several sessions and most (12/14) were in Spanish. There are several points in the Love Notes® implementation where evaluation data was collected and the results are summarized below.

Training

In February of 2013, 30 GCCSA staff attended a “refresher” course on how to deliver the Love Notes® curriculum. The trainees included family service specialists and associates. Attendees were asked to complete a brief post-training survey to assess their experience (regarding the facility, presenters, format, and overall) and also to obtain their expectations for the future. All of their assessments were very high (4.88 to 4.96 out of 5) and 92% indicated that the training impacted their own relationship attitudes and 100% said they expected the curriculum to positively affect those they trained. Every respondent indicated they would deliver Love Notes in the spring of 2013.

This training ROCKS!

Love Notes Trainee

Love Notes® Classes for Parents

As mentioned above, during the spring of 2013, 14 groups of parents (190 individuals) from NCI (8 groups/108 parents) and GCCSA (6 groups/82 parents) Head Start centers received Love Notes® classes in Spanish and English. Following the classes parents were asked to complete a post-presentation survey with a small number of process questions. The responses from the 62 parents completing a survey are summarized in **Table 5**.

Love Notes Parent Survey Results	
Attendees	190
Number completing post survey	62
Class Rating (1-Poor to 5-Excellent)	Mean (%/5)
The Love Notes® teacher for my class was:	4.93 (99%)
My overall experience in my Love Notes® class was:	4.98 (100%)
Class Effect	% Yes
Do you believe that the Love Notes® program will have a positive effect on your current and/or future relationships?	100%

Table 5: Love Notes® Class Parent Assessment Summary

Parents' assessments of their presenter and their overall experience were extremely positive. Only four respondents checked less than "5" (one "3" and three "4"s) across both questions. Every responding parent (100%) believed the program will have a positive effect on their own relationships in the future.

***I would love it if this program was taught
to younger high school students.***

Parent attending Love Notes Presentation

SUMMARY

In its fourth year the Tools for Building Healthy Families initiative has continued the success of the first three years in delivering Parents Under Construction®, We Help Ourselves®, and Love Notes® to children and parents in the Houston area. During 2012-13 more than 3,700 children received one or more of these preventive programs. ChildBuilders' staff believe the set of programs has had a very positive impact not only on the children but also the teachers, staff and parents who are involved with the program implementations. Multiple survey and interview measures were collected looking at training, program delivery, and effectiveness.

A number of staff and teacher trainings were held, mostly in the fall of 2012, and responses from participants on post-training surveys were very positive as they have been since the project's inception. Respondents indicated that the presenters and program content were excellent and their expectation for program effectiveness was high.

In many cases, parents and teachers completed post presentation surveys and, like the results from the training assessments, all the findings were very positive. Respondents indicated that the programs were effective in their view and almost everyone supported the continued provision of the ChildBuilders' programs to all students including their own children.

Overall, Tools for Building Healthy Families has had four very successful years of helping students, parents, teachers, and Head Start center staff.

It taught me how to effectively discipline my child.

Parent (after attending Parents Under Construction® session)

***I learned new techniques that
I want to use to improve my relationship.***

Parent (after receiving Love Notes®)

APPENDIX A

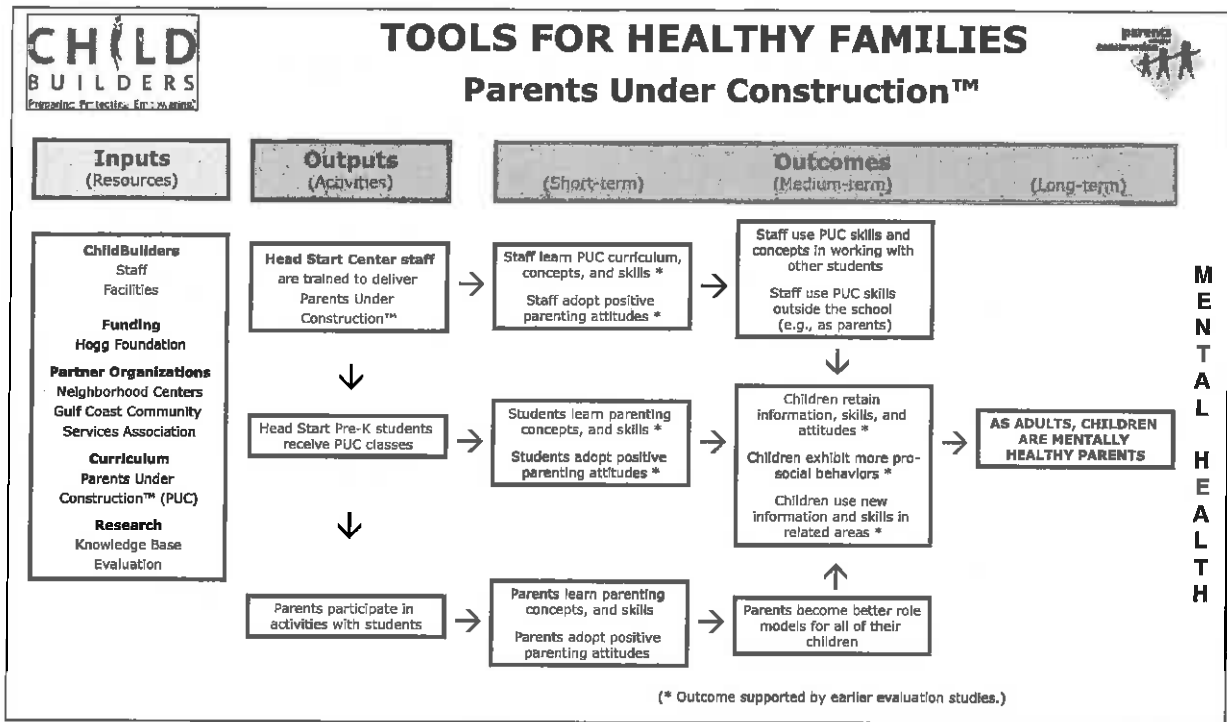


Figure 1: TOOLS: Parents Under Construction® Logic Model

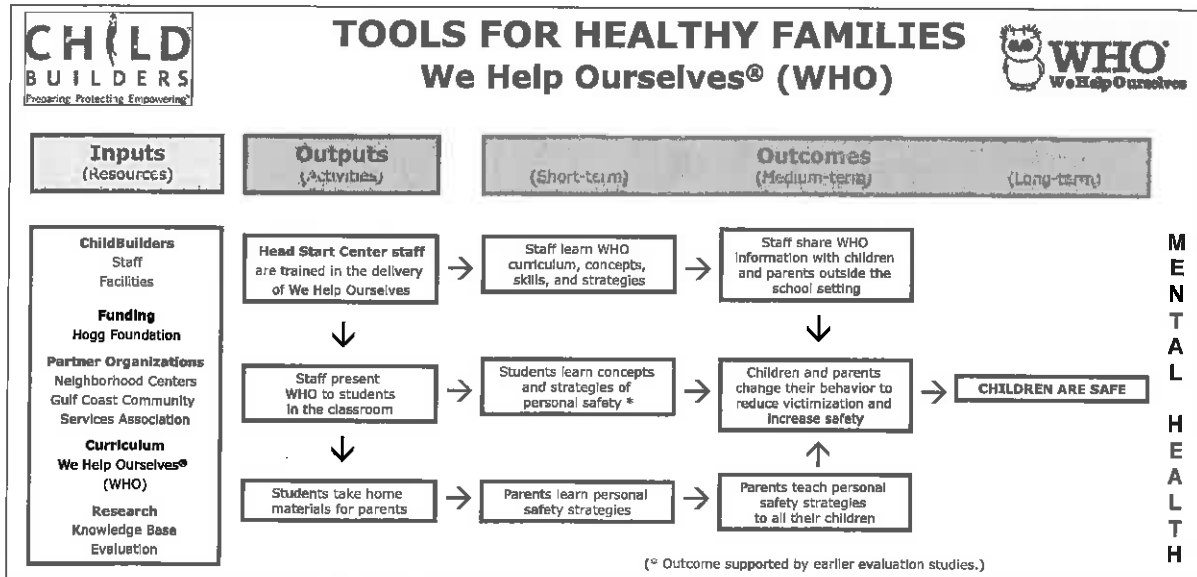


Figure 2: TOOLS: We Help Ourselves® Logic Model

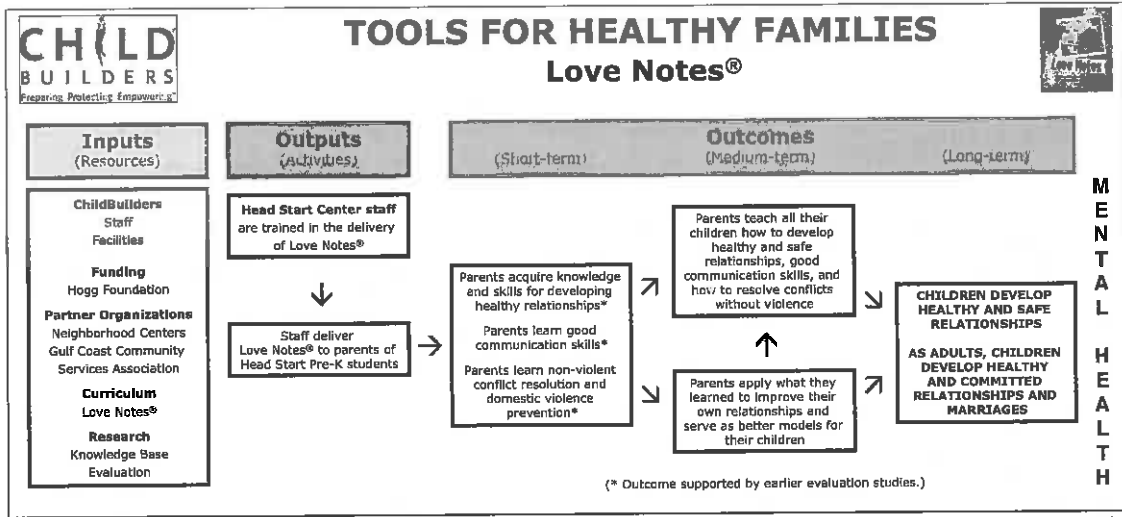


Figure 3: TOOLS: Love Notes® Logic Model