

Request for Proposals for Evaluating Sesame Street Family Engagement Training Among Preschool Child Care Providers

November 2018

Background

Family engagement is a strong predictor of preschooler's success in school and beyond.¹ By creating opportunities for families to enrich their young children's learning, and being sensitive to and appreciating families' cultures and beliefs, schools can better involve families and help ensure children are ready to learn both in and out of the classroom. Studies have shown a positive link between family involvement and children's literacy², math³, and social-emotional skills.⁴ Further, programs that succeed in involving primary caregivers may be even more effective for children and parents from low-income households than more affluent ones.⁵

Sesame Street: Growing Together is a set of resources that aims to support the family engagement efforts of preschool educators and other professionals caring for young children and their families. The resources include an online professional development course for staff on how they can create a welcoming environment for families and involve parents in their child's healthy development, as well as materials that providers can share with parents to connect and extend their child's learning between classroom and home. The *Sesame Street* online resources include videos, storybooks, articles for primary caregivers and providers, as well as printable activity sheets with the friendly and entertaining *Sesame Street* characters.

The special relationship that children form with the *Sesame Street* Muppets and the trust that parents, caregivers, and providers have for the *Sesame Street* brand create unique opportunities to help providers and families connect with each other. The resources aim to leverage *Sesame Street*'s unique role and resources to support providers' efforts to engage families and thereby help ensure children's well-being and long-term success.

The Proposed Evaluation

Research is at the core of Sesame Workshop's model for creating engaging and effective content for young children and families. To that end, we are seeking an evaluation team to

¹ Van Voorhis, F. L., Maier, M. F., Epstein, J. L., & Lloyd, C. M. (2013). *The impact of family involvement on the education of children ages 3 to 8: A focus on literacy and math achievement outcomes and social-emotional skills*. MDRC.

² Hindman, A. H., and Morrison, F. J. (2011). *Family involvement and educator outreach in Head Start: Nature, extent, and contributions to early literacy skills*. *Elementary School Journal*, 111(3), 359-386..

³ Sheldon, S. B., Epstein, J. L., and Galindo, C. (2010). *Not just numbers: Creating a partnership climate to improve math proficiency in schools*. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 9(1), 27-48.

⁴ Sheridan, S. M., Knoche, L. L., Edwards, C. P., Bovaird, J. A., and Kupzyk, K. A. (2010). *Parent engagement and school readiness: Effects of the getting ready intervention on preschool children's social-emotional competencies*. *Early Education and Development*, 21(1), 125-156. doi: 10.1080/10409280902783517.

⁵ Noble, K. G., Duch, H., Darvique, M. E., Grundleger, A., Rodriguez, C., and Landers, C. (2012). *Getting ready for school: A preliminary evaluation of a parent-focused schoolreadiness program*. *Child Development Research*, 2012, 1-14. doi:10.1155/2012/259598.

conduct an evaluation (randomized control trial) of an **online intervention focused on increasing family engagement among preschool educators and low-income families of the children they care for** over a 12-week period beginning in January, 2020.

The evaluation team will be responsible for identifying and selecting qualified early childhood educators serving low income families within the continental US for a “treatment condition,” and to also recruit a separate but relatively similar set of educators for the “control/business-as-usual condition.”

The treatment group (at least N=50 providers who are early childhood educators serving low income families) will receive online training via a webinar created by Sesame Workshop on how to use the materials. The trainings and materials will be offered in English. After training, the providers will be asked to use the materials with at least 3-5 families with preschool children age 36-60 months in their classroom over the course of 3 months. Evaluators will be responsible for ensuring that each provider recruit at least 3-5 families in their classroom for the 3-month program.

Our goal for the research is to assess the impact of the *Sesame Street* resources on providers’ and parents’ knowledge, attitudes and self-reported behavior regarding family engagement, as well as the impact of the resources on children’s social emotional skills (as reported by providers). We encourage a quantitative methods approach, where responses will be collected via online surveys administered before and after exposure to the *Sesame Street* resources.

Timing

The intervention will run from January 2020-May 2020. Proposals should plan for a baseline evaluation in November 2019, and an endline evaluation for April 2020.

Outcomes and Measures

The measures used in the evaluation must reflect the project’s educational goals and be age- and culturally-appropriate. We expect researchers to pilot test the measures before fieldwork to ensure their validity and to make certain that other common measurement issues (such as a ceiling effect) are addressed. The evaluation will measure developmentally appropriate outcomes in adults, as well as reported outcomes in children (reported by parents/caregivers) as articulated in the project’s content framework.

The main outcomes of interest will focus on both the providers and the parents’/guardians changes in attitudes, knowledge and self-reported behavior regarding family engagement:

- Changes in providers’ knowledge of and confidence in practicing strategies for engaging families in their programs, and in promoting enriching adult-child interactions among families they serve
- Changes in child’s social-emotional related skills, as reported by providers

- Changes in knowledge, reported behavior, and attitude of parents/guardians regarding family engagement based on their use of the resources, including their relationship with their child's teacher, and their knowledge and attitudes around their role in their child's education and school
- Assessing appeal, utility, and relevance of Sesame Street materials among parents and providers (treatment group).

Proposal Components

Proposals shall include a provision for delivery of the following elements:

1. **Research Design:** Proposals shall outline the design of a potential study or set of studies including:
 - Description of implementation measurement
 - Suggested outcome measures
 - Data collection plan, including a description of monitoring and quality control measures for data collection; a description of how researchers are trained and ways in which researchers will ensure that they adhere to the ethical standards of research set forth by the Society for Research on Child Development (<http://www.srcd.org/about-us/ethical-standards-research>). We expect the evaluation team to obtain IRB approval for this work.
 - Data analysis plan that outlines how data will be analyzed to draw conclusions about the project's impact
 - Timeline
2. **Budget:** A detailed budget for the project shall be submitted with the research proposal. The budget shall include separate sections outlining costs associated with each data collection wave.
3. **Key personnel:** CVs or biographic summaries of key personnel.
4. **Past evaluations and references:**
 - A 1-2-page description of similar or comparable studies in which the agency has engaged in the past, or similar work sample
 - Contact information for at least 2 previous clients for references

Deliverables

Researchers will deliver the following for the evaluation:

1. **Baseline report:** After completing the baseline data collection, researchers will submit a report of findings.
2. **Data analysis plan:** Before endline data collection begins, researchers will submit a detailed data analysis plan that describes how data will be analyzed to draw conclusions about the project's impact.
3. **Endline report:** The researcher will submit a draft version of the report of the findings to Sesame Workshop for review prior to the completion of a final report (in English). The report must include an Executive Summary.
4. **1-2 page summary:** The researcher will submit a 1-2 page summary of findings with appropriate infographics created for a non-research audience.

- 5. Data, original instruments, videos, IRB approval document, consent forms, data and other material:** Researchers will be required to submit an electronic version of data (in SPSS or SPSS-compatible format), as well as original instruments, and any videos made of children during the research sessions. Instruments will be in the local language (if applicable) and English. Quantitative data will be submitted in English and qualitative data should be submitted in the original language and an English translation. These items will become the property of Sesame Workshop. Note: The researchers selected will have access to instruments used in previous Sesame Workshop assessments, which can be used as a base for creating questionnaires and other data collection devices for the proposed study.

Deadline

Proposal should be submitted by **February 4, 2019**. A decision will be made by **February 28, 2019**.

Budget

The research proposal should not exceed a budget of US \$195,000
A final report of the small-scale research study is due on June 15, 2020.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Experience in conducting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative research and knowledge of media research methodologies
- Experience conducting educational research with families with young children and organizations who support these families
- Experience conducting research with early childhood educators, and on family engagement in particular
- Experience conducting research in low-resource contexts
- Experience conducting research in English
- A demonstrated capacity to work in a range of settings and to deliver products in a timely fashion under tight and strict monitoring, management and deadlines
- The ability to produce high-quality reports
- The ability to conduct high-level analyses such as multivariate analyses and multi-level modeling
- Feasibility of study within budget and time parameters
- Appropriateness of research design
- Capacity to execute proposed study

How to Submit Proposals

Submit proposal via email to: david.cohen@sesame.org. Please note the following in the email subject heading: **Proposal for Sesame Street in Communities Evaluation**. Upon submission of a proposal, bidders will be asked to submit a Contractor Information Form.

Questions are welcomed! Please contact david.cohen@sesame.org

Disclaimers and Terms of this RFP

1. Sesame Workshop will not compensate offerors for preparation of their response to this RFP. All expenses incurred in the preparation of the Proposal in response to this RFP is at your sole cost and responsibility.
2. This RFP does not guarantee a resulting contract and Sesame Workshop is under no obligation to offerors unless and until a written agreement is signed by Sesame Workshop and offeror.
3. Sesame Workshop may withdraw or amend this RFP at any time.
4. This RFP may result in one or more contracts for parts of activities.
5. Sesame Workshop may request additional rounds of responses based on more detailed instructions or requirements.
6. Information provided by Sesame Workshop in connection with the RFP process, including this document, is confidential to Sesame Workshop. Proposals produced under this RFP belong to Sesame Workshop. Any distribution of such Proposals must first have written authorization from Sesame Workshop.
7. Offerors are not entitled to any compensation or payment for any submission to Sesame Workshop or Sesame Workshop's use of such submission for any purpose. Offerors acknowledge that Sesame Workshop in good faith will have the sole discretion to determine whether any compensation is due to offerors for use of any submitted materials. Offerors recognize that any creative materials, concepts, ideas and techniques that are disclosed to Sesame Workshop may be similar or identical to, in whole or in part, to creative materials, concepts, ideas and techniques already developed, in development, or to be developed in the future by Sesame Workshop.
8. Offeror will retain a copy of its Proposal and hereby releases Sesame Workshop from any liability for loss of, or damage to the copy of the Proposal that is submitted to Sesame Workshop.
9. All intellectual property and related materials provided to offeror by Sesame Workshop shall remain the sole and exclusive property of Sesame Workshop and no license is granted to offeror other than as may be necessary for offeror to prepare and submit its Proposal hereunder. Offeror understands and agrees that Sesame Workshop is entitled to use any part of the Proposal which is not concrete or does not itself constitute protectable and/or copyrightable property without compensation to offeror.
10. No work may be sub-contracted out on this proposal, unless otherwise agreed to by Sesame Workshop.
11. Any contract to be entered into between Sesame Workshop and an offeror will be for work provided solely as work-made-for-hire, with ownership and all rights belonging to Sesame Workshop.
12. The cost estimate and proposed time-line and all other terms and conditions stated in your Proposal must remain valid for 180 days from the date of delivery of the Proposal to Sesame Workshop.