EVALUATION OF THE HAWAI'I PARENTAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCE CENTER

2009–2010

Submitted to:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) is the external program evaluator of the Hawai‘i Parental Information and Resource Center (HPIRC). The HPIRC is a 5-year grant held by Parents And Children Together (PACT) spanning the years 2006–2011.

This evaluation focuses on the HPIRC’s Sundays Project. The Sundays Project, developed prior to the 2009–2010 program year, focuses on improving parenting skills associated with academic achievement and home-school communication for Micronesians living in Hawai‘i. Following the positive deviance approach, the project is continuously improved to suit Chuukese migrants based on feedback from, and behaviors identified within, the same population. The Sundays Project has three phases. Phase 1 involves parents in the project and gains their trust.

Phase 2 deepens their involvement. The positive deviance approach is used to discover hidden, successful, homegrown practices used by community members to solve intractable problems identified by the group and increase these practices within the community. The evaluation was directed at studying how these successful behaviors are identified and adopted by the group, as well as the effects of participant adoption of the behaviors. To receive a certificate of completion for the Sundays Project, parents must attend a series of group meetings and then be judged to have completed the program by the other attending parents.

Phase 3 of the revised Sundays Project model facilitates improved interactions between school personnel and the Micronesian community.

In addition to assessing program outcomes, evaluation activities contributed to the identification of positive deviant behaviors that were brought into the Sundays Project curriculum to share with other families.

Four questions drove the evaluation effort. To answer these questions, we (a) observed a Sundays Project meeting and interviewed three participants, (b) conducted a focus group of phase-2 participants, (c) visited the homes of four participants, (d) interviewed HPIRC staff members, and (e) observed other program activities.

RESULTS
An important part of the evaluation was the identification of positive behaviors that resulted from participation in the Sundays Project. Behaviors were identified both through direct interaction with program participants and through interviews of HPIRC staff members. In this way, the evaluation also helped contribute to the identification of behaviors that comprise the Sundays Project curriculum.

We classified positive deviant behaviors identified prior to or during the evaluation into five general categories: (a) study outside of school, (b) the mood of the home, (c) home-school communication, (d) parent responsibility for child’s education, and (e) parent sense of efficacy about the child.

Six types of program effects were identified within the cases studied. These include (a) changes in behaviors and attitudes at home, (b) changes in the way homework is done in the home, (c) development of home-school communication regarding homework, (d) physical changes to the home, (e) changes in children’s school performance, and (f) student attendance of education enrichment programs.

PREL provides a description of the HPIRC’s implementation of the positive deviance approach and discusses whether the approach and curriculum are appropriate and replicable for other organizations with similar goals serving different populations.
INTRODUCTION
Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) is the external program evaluator for the Hawai‘i Parental Information and Resource Center (HPIRC).

This evaluation focuses on the HPIRC’s efforts to improve parenting skills associated with improved academic achievement and home-school communication for Micronesians living in Hawai‘i. Micronesia is an area on the Western Pacific comprising thousands of small islands separated by vast areas of open ocean. The population of people in Hawai‘i who are from Micronesia faces high rates of poverty and health issues (Evensen, et al., 2009; Hammond & Filibert, 2007; Heine, 2002; Omori, et al., 2007; Pobutsky, Krupitsky, & Yamada, 2009; Yamada & Pobutsky, 2009; University of Hawai‘i, 2008). The Chuukese population in Hawai‘i is growing quickly. To address this population, the HPIRC has developed and maintains meaningful connections with Chuukese people living in Hawai‘i and is headquartered within a large public housing community where a large number of Chuukese live. The HPIRC helps parents understand how to help their children adapt to schooling in Hawai‘i and to increase their parenting skills.

BACKGROUND
In September 2006, Parents And Children Together (PACT) received a 5-year grant (2006–2011) from the Office of Innovation and Improvement at the U.S. Department of Education (Award #U310A060083-10) to implement the Hawai‘i Parental Information and Resource Center (HPIRC). The HPIRC is implemented through community-based, nonprofit family centers associated with PACT and is associated with Title I public schools throughout Hawai‘i.

The specific problems identified within the Chuukese population in Hawai‘i and addressed by the HPIRC are:

1. Student truancy and tardiness.
2. Student sleepiness in class.
3. Head lice (significantly affecting attendance).
4. Low homework completion rates.
5. Low incidence of parents communicating with teachers and attending school events.
6. Poor student literacy scores.
7. Low participation by the father in family’s education.
8. Inability for parents to understand the information in report cards.
9. Late enrollment of children in school.
10. Students’ ill preparation for school at the beginning of the year.
11. Family’s inability to utilize a student planner (as an organizational and communication tool).

A document prepared by the HPIRC in the fall of 2010 (Simmons, 2010) comprehensively describes each of these problems with common practices, discoveries made during positive deviance inquiry, cultural attributes associated with the behaviors, program components that address the behavior, and solutions identified.

The HPIRC has two goals and five objectives:

Goal 1: Increase parental involvement in their children’s education to improve student academic achievement

Objective 1.1 Increase families’ ability to help children learn at home

Objective 1.2 Increase parental understanding of their rights and responsibilities in the Hawai‘i State Consolidated Plan for the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and their opportunities for supplemental educational services (SES) and public school choice (PSC)
Objective 1.3 Increase parents’ ability to facilitate their children’s educational transitions

Goal 2: Strengthen partnerships among parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel in meeting the educational needs of children

Objective 2.1 Increase families’ ability to access and participate in decision making regarding their children’s education

Objective 2.2 Increase educators’ understanding and ability to work effectively with parents

The HPIRC works to meet these goals and objectives by offering the Sundays Project.

The Sundays Project

The HPIRC established relationships with local Micronesian churches in order to reach their congregations with school-relevant messages, such as how to prepare children for school and how to monitor children’s progress. The HPIRC uses a program called the Sundays Project¹ to inform families about the significant role they have in supporting their children’s success in school. Ministers, deacons, and church leaders from selected churches serving Micronesian communities in Hawai‘i have completed the program, and others are participating. Most of these congregations are located on O‘ahu; some are on neighbor islands. All of these participating churches are Christian denominations, both Catholic and Protestant.

For seven consecutive Sundays, part of each sermon explains a different aspect about parents’ and families’ involvement in their children’s education. The seven educational messages delivered during church services are chosen by pastors, an HPIRC advisory board, and the HPIRC staff. The material presented in the Sundays Project is available on the HPIRC website (Parents and Children Together, 2010).

Phase I. The purpose of phase 1 is to attract possible target audiences and secure their engagement in the project. In at least one recent experience when additional services were offered after initial exposure to the Sundays Project, parents participated in large numbers.

Phase 2. In phase 2, participants become involved more deeply in the program. For example, they complete the seven lessons involved in the Sundays Project and then move on to a group effort to reduce truancy rates and increase parents’ understanding of school policies, understanding of report cards and rubrics, and ability to communicate with schools. Pledges among participants (parents and caregivers) and contracts for participation are also entailed. Briefly, phase 2 involves deeper engagement and results in a significant amount and important kind of orientation for this community to life in Hawai‘i. To receive a certificate of program completion, parents must attend a series of group meetings and then be judged to have completed the program by the other attending parents.

The hallmark of phase 2 is the use of the positive deviance approach (Marsh, Schroeder, Dearden, Sternin, & Sternin, 2004; Dorsey, 2000). Positive deviance was coined when it was noticed that some families avoided health problems that beset most other families. Closer study indicated these families were using particular adaptive behaviors not used by others. When these behaviors were adopted by other families, health was improved. Similarly, phase 2 of the expanded Sundays Project model involves finding among participants behaviors that confer success with respect to target outcomes, such as school absence, low grades, and fighting. Once these adaptive behaviors are identified within the community, families assist in developing instructional methods for teaching these

¹ The idea of including educational messages in Sunday church sermons was borrowed from a program in Florida. The approach is also being used by the PIRCs located in the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.
positive behaviors to one another. The following is the HPIRC’s description of how positive deviance is used (Simmons, 2009).

The Sundays Project was specifically designed by community leaders and pastors for community pastors. It was created “horizontally,” not top down. Whenever disputes arise about the project’s chosen topics, HPIRC staff guide leaders to seek clarification with their counterparts within the community. This process leads to increased knowledge and understanding about the importance of parent involvement in academic achievement through a peer-to-peer model and also fits within the Positive Deviance approach…

Positive deviance is a developmental approach based on the premise that solutions to community problems already exist within the community. The positive deviance approach thus differs from traditional “needs based” or problem-solving approaches in that it does not focus primarily on identification of needs and the external inputs necessary to meet those needs or solve problems. Instead it seeks to identify and optimize existing resources and solutions within the community to solve community problems.

Phase 3. Because their importance to successful home-school relationships is well understood by the HPIRC, the target recipients for phase 3 are school personnel. The HPIRC will initiate and guide interactions between school personnel and Micronesians. The purpose of these interactions is for school personnel to understand who the Micronesians are and the problems they have interfacing with the school system in Hawai‘i. Conversely, the Micronesians will meet school personnel, learn the rules under which they operate, find out what is expected of parents, and learn how school personnel and parents can interact to further the quality of their children’s school experiences.

**EVALUATION PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS**

The evaluation serves three primary purposes. The first purpose—addressed by Evaluation Question 1 below and general evaluation activities—is to articulate the activities the HPIRC undertakes, as well as to describe the population it serves. The second purpose, primarily addressed by Evaluation Question 2, is to learn whether the program is working—whether participants are likely to adopt desirable parenting behaviors. The third purpose of the evaluation is to describe how the Sundays Project works in practice with a specific focus on the Positive Deviance approach. This includes specific findings about improving educational outcomes for Micronesians living in the United States that will be useful for other education agencies and service providers.

The HPIRC program implementation—utilizing the positive deviance approach—is organic in nature. The intervention is constantly being transformed. In order to study this method, as well as the impact the program has on the community, a naturalistic evaluation plan was used. The naturalistic nature required flexibility but provided a deep and thorough understanding of the program (Posavac & Carey, 2003). The resulting evaluation includes case-study-based findings (including the identification of specific program outcomes) that enable future evaluation efforts to be more quantitative.

**Evaluation Question 1: What behaviors were identified by the HPIRC as exhibiting positive deviance?**

In order to understand what the HPIRC does, it was necessary to identify the exceptional behaviors being advocated within the community. Studying the behaviors (as well as the HPIRC’s methods of identifying and teaching them) also allowed an understanding of the program that helped PREL to learn whether the strategy might later be implemented by similar programs.
The method used to address Evaluation Question 1 involved reviewing HPIRC’s internal documents, speaking with HPIRC staff, and the incidental identification of behaviors through evaluation activities addressing other evaluation questions.

**Evaluation Question 2: What are examples of how families and individuals were affected by the HPIRC’s positive deviance-based activities?**

The content of the Sundays Project includes behaviors identified by members of the local Micronesian populations, and is tailored specifically to their needs (e.g., high truancy rates for their children). As part of the positive deviance approach, the HPIRC works with the community to continuously develop and refine the intervention. Accordingly, answering this evaluation question is simultaneously an implementation and an evaluation effort. For the same reason, evaluation findings will be used both formatively and summatively.

To provide examples of effects the program has on families, two methods were used. First, PREL facilitated a focus group meeting with mothers and grandmothers who were served by the HPIRC through the Sundays Project. We also visited the homes of four families that had benefitted from the program, interviewing family members and observing the home itself. Two of these families volunteered to participate in the evaluation; the others were chosen because they had been quiet prior to the evaluation, not sharing evaluative in previous group events.

**Evaluation Question 3: How was the positive deviance approach implemented by the HPIRC?**

The purpose of Evaluation Question 3 is to describe program implementation. To provide a complete answer, we looked at the HPIRC’s internal (organizational) and external activities. Conclusions included identification of areas for both improvement of implementation, also indirectly supporting Evaluation Question 4.

In one way, the evaluation became a part of program implementation. While addressing Evaluation Questions 1 and 2, we contributed to the pool of known positive deviant behaviors that comprise the Sundays Project’s curriculum. In other words, the process shown in Figure 1 is simultaneously an evaluation finding and evaluation method.

**Figure 1. Program evaluation contributes to the identification of positive deviant behaviors and assesses program outcomes.**

**Evaluation Question 4: Is the HPIRC’s positive deviance-based implementation replicable by other PIRCs serving different populations?**

Evaluation Question 4 supports two purposes. First, if the HPIRC’s use of the positive deviance approach is replicable, it is of potential use to other PIRCs and programs serving different populations. Second, qualities that keep the program replicable (e.g., clear program logic) may
contribute to program sustainability, for example in the instance of tumultuous change in program staff.

Evaluation Question 4 was supported naturalistically by all data collection methods.

**METHODOLOGY**
The five methods used to address the evaluation questions are described in the following sections.

**SUNDAYS PROJECT OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEWS**
After delivery of the first complete cycle of the Sundays Project, PREL conducted an observation of a sermon and interviewed three volunteers from the congregation about the program and its effects. The observation and interviews supported Evaluation Questions 1 and 3.

**FOCUS GROUP**
In February 2010, a group of Chuukese mothers and grandmothers who had been participating in the Sundays Project attended a focus group meeting hosted by the HPIRC and PREL. Creation of the focus group protocol was informed, in part, by ideas presented in an informal interview of a Chuukese woman who had begun working for the HPIRC. The protocol was then adapted in a cooperative process between PREL and the HPIRC. The focus group protocol is provided in Appendix A.

The focus group, attended by 17 program participants, was conducted in the Chuukese language with the help of a translator. The meeting was recorded with a video camera, resulting in approximately 60 minutes of video. Using volunteer labor, the HPIRC transcribed the content, translated the transcript into English, and sent the resulting document to PREL. PREL then coded the transcription data by hand and with the use of NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software program.

The focus group meeting supported Evaluation Questions 2 and 4.

**HOME VISIT AND INTERVIEWS**
In the spring of 2010, four Sundays Project participants were chosen for home visits. They were chosen because they collectively represented the diversity of program participants in terms of family arrangements and program engagement. All four participants agreed to allow a PREL program evaluator, the HPIRC director, and a Chuukese translator to visit their homes. One of the participants, following her participation in the Sundays Project, had begun working for the HPIRC. The HPIRC director was included in the home visits because interview questions did not focus on program effectiveness, but rather specific behaviors and characteristics of the home. Her presence as a liaison did not negatively interfere with the evaluation but contributed to the identification and solidification of positive behaviors.

The home visits supported Evaluation Questions 2 and 4. The protocol (provided in Appendix B) was developed in direct response to PREL’s and the HPIRC’s conclusions from the focus group meeting.

**INTERVIEWS OF HPIRC STAFF MEMBERS**
The director of the HPIRC was interviewed several times. Two other staff members were also interviewed. These interviews supported Evaluation Questions 1, 3, and 4.

**OBSERVATION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**
Throughout the year, PREL observed quarterly HPIRC program meetings and a presentation by the HPIRC to a group of teachers from the Hawai‘i Department of Education’s Even Start program.

These observations supported Evaluation Questions 3 and 4.
RESULTS
Findings regarding each evaluation question are presented in the following sections.

EVALUATION QUESTION 1: WHAT BEHAVIORS WERE IDENTIFIED BY THE HPIRC AS EXHIBITING POSITIVE DEVIANCE?

Evaluation Question 1 is answered in two ways. First, the working list of behaviors used by the HPIRC is provided. Next, the behaviors identified during the evaluation are described by category.

The HPIRC’s working list of positive deviant behaviors is:

1. Parents ask about homework.
2. Parents check that homework is completed.
3. Parents of middle and high school students know how to use a planner to hold their kids accountable for homework even if the parents cannot help with the homework themselves.
4. Parents understand how to read the report cards and change their parenting practices in response to report card information.
5. There is a schedule for the family.
6. Children are expected to attend school daily and be on time.
7. Parents know their child’s teacher and communicate regularly with them—not just when the child is in trouble.
8. Kids are enrolled in supplemental education programs.
9. Kids have a designated place to do homework.
10. There are age-appropriate books in the household.
11. TV viewing is limited.

Positive deviant behaviors that were identified during the evaluation fell into five general categories: (a) study outside of school, (b) the mood of the home, (c) home-school communication, (d) parent responsibility for child’s education, and (e) parent efficacy about the child. Within these categories are positive behaviors that are associated with families experiencing exceptional change. Not all of these behaviors were present in all of the families, and in some cases it is not clear where the behaviors are in the spectrum between intervention and outcome.

The following collection of positive behaviors is not exhaustive. Other isolated behaviors are explained in better context in the HPIRC’s program description (Simmons, 2010).

Study Outside of School

The largest collection of behaviors that were identified is related to study outside of school. These include extracurricular reading, homework, and study spaces. Specific behaviors include:

1. The child has books to read at home.
2. The parent checks to see whether the child has homework. In some cases, this involves the parent looking into the child’s school bag when they come home from school.
3. The parent helps the child with homework. A related behavior is the child asking the parent for help with homework. The latter seems to happen only after the parent shows willingness to be involved with homework.
4. The child has a quiet place to do homework. Surprisingly, some parents set aside entire rooms as libraries or study rooms in otherwise cramped apartments. These rooms reportedly see a lot of use, but only for reading and studying.
5. The child reads books at home.
6. The parent takes the child to the community library.
7. The child participates in an after-school education program.
Mood of the Home

Many behaviors were identified that specifically relate to the mood of the home. These are generally about structure, schedule, love, and respect. Specific behaviors include:

1. The parent requires the child to go to bed at the same time every night and wake up at the same time every morning during the school week.
2. The parent makes sure that the child is ready for the first day of school.
3. The parent makes sure that the child gets to school on time every day.
4. The parent tells the child that they love them. We were surprised that this behavior was new for these parents.
5. The parent does not yell at, or physically hit, the child. The group studied reported abandoning corporal punishment as a result of participating in the program. “Now I know to love my children,” one mother reported. “I talk to them nicely, don’t threaten and intimidate them like before. That’s why my eldest son was slowest in learning.”
6. A list of rules for the children to follow is posted on a wall in the home.
7. The home is seen as a happy place, and negativity is decreased.

Parental Responsibility for Child’s Education

PREL is often reminded that Micronesian culture seems to discourage parents meddling in school affairs because meddling can be seen as offensive to the teacher. The exceptional parents we studied had learned that, within the U.S. school system, parents are held responsible for helping their child to perform well in school. Related to this is the parents’ attitude that communicating with the schools is part of their responsibility as parents.

Additionally, the father’s active role in parenting in general is a positive deviant behavior.

Home-School Communication

Increasing home-school communication is near the heart of the HPIRC’s purpose. Related positive deviant behaviors include:

1. The parent understands the rules and policies in the child’s school.
2. The parent talks about the child with the teacher and other people who work at the school. Interestingly, parents reported that adoption of this behavior resulted simply from their being told that it is appropriate in the United States.
3. The parent looks at the child’s report card. Prior to these families becoming exceptional performers, parents simply discarded the report cards.
4. The parent knows how to read the report card. In Hawai‘i, the report card is difficult to read, requiring the ability to understand a large table and some unusual terminology. The HPIRC found that none of the parents beginning the program could make sense of the report cards. However, the exceptional families had gained the necessary skills from the program and were able to identify trends in their child’s school performance and take action accordingly.

Parental Efficacy About Child

The final category of positive deviant behavior we found includes parents’ belief that the children are capable of doing well in school. Some parents reported initially feeling that the children were not smart. Later, they realized that the children were actually intelligent, but that they needed parental support.
Evaluation Question 2: What are examples of how families and individuals were affected by the HPIRC’s positive deviance-based activities?

The 2009–2010 evaluation was naturalistic and case-study based. Accordingly, the findings presented here are not generalized to all Sundays Project participants.

PREL observed the program at many levels of operation. In addition to identifying specific behaviors and outcomes, we also observed ways in which parents’ participation in the program eventually leads to behavior change.

In addition to adopting specific practices, the participants appear to have become more introspective and motivated as parents as a result of participating in the program. Some of the positive behaviors that happened in the home were not taught specifically, but rather resulted from the parents’ increased self reflection with regard to parenting. As a result of participating in the Sundays Project, for example, one woman began to ask herself why her child was not learning well. “One time, I went to the boy’s doctor because I thought the reason he was slow was because of the beatings I gave him,” she said. The doctor helped the mother adopt parenting behaviors that she credits with improving the child’s learning. She reports that the child’s teacher also noticed the improvement. “I totally believe it’s from me attending the Sundays Project. I became so concerned with school,” she added.

Evaluation Question 2 was addressed using Sundays Project session observations and interviews, a focus group interview of parents, and home visits. Findings from each of these methods are presented by method below.

Sundays Project Observation and Interviews
After delivery of the first complete cycle of the Sundays Project, PREL conducted an observation of a sermon and interviewed three volunteers from the congregation about the program and its effects. The participants reported that they valued information they received from the program and that it helped them accommodate to life in Hawai‘i. They said that they wanted more depth about the topics than the minister gave. Consequently, the HPIRC expanded the Sundays Project to include the three phases.

Focus Group
Content from the focus group can be organized into three overall domains. First is adult guidance provided to children in the home. Four types of guidance were identified. Described as being provided by mothers and other adult members of the household was guidance about (a) school work (e.g., homework) and (b) physical needs (e.g., eating and sleeping). Mothers were also described as providing guidance about children (c) doing household chores and (d) attending community social events.

The second domain includes information about household members (mother, father, and other adults) working together. The domain is about understanding adults’ roles and responsibilities in the home and how adults work together to accomplish a shared goal.

The third domain is about the general mood of the home. Included are the tone of voice used, knowing how to treat children, being selfless, or spending additional time with the children overall.

There was little discussion about home-school communication or empowerment of parents to be involved in the school or community somehow. The first indication that this may be happening was in reports that parents were learning how to read report cards, at least allowing some one-way communication from the school to the home. This seems to be an important part of the HPIRC’s work in general, and may deserve further evaluation.
Home Visit and Interviews
The coding categories used in this section are different from those used with regard to focus group findings.

Behaviors and Attitudes at Home
Behaviors and attitudes in the homes that we visited had changed in two ways. First, there was a significant shift in parents’ engagement and motivation. Parents in all four homes reported that they simply didn’t care about parenting before their participation in the Sundays Project. All four families also reported that, prior to their participation, they did not know how to help their children. They described feelings of “ignorance” and “groping in the dark, not knowing what to do.” The families reported improvement in engagement and efficacy resulting from their participation in the Sundays Project. When asked if it was a matter of not caring about the children’s schooling or not knowing how to help them, one mother responded, “Simple. Before the program, I didn’t really care about their lessons. After the program, I really care about the lessons. I urge them to study, come back, do their homework. I am involved.”

Second, there were changes in procedures in the home resulting from participation in the Sundays Project. These included the following:

1. Families reported changes at mealtime. One family now eats together. Another parent mentioned making sure that the children eat.
2. More direction was provided in the home. At several homes, rules were posted and followed. The rules (see example in Figure 2) provided a structured schedule.
3. Satisfaction with the home improved. Parents reported that children now acted properly and that parents are happier.
4. Corporal punishment, a popular parenting strategy among the population we visited, had stopped. To some degree, the striking of children had halted because parents learned that it is illegal in the United States.
5. At least two families mentioned that they now know “how to love the kids,” or know to tell the children that they love them.
6. Other reported outcomes include parents taking the children to the library more often, as well as changes in TV viewing, showering, and sleeping schedules.

Figure 2. These house rules were posted at one of the visited homes.

Homework
Not surprisingly, homework was a significant concern in the home. With regard to homework, the following changes were described in the homes that were visited:
1. In at least three of the four homes visited, parents reported that they now help their children with their homework. Prior to the program, homework was simply ignored or completed by the children without assistance.

2. Children in three homes also now ask their parents for help with their homework.

3. In all four homes, a place has been established where the children can do their homework.

4. Parents in two homes mentioned that homework completion had improved.

In one visit, a parent reported, “Before attending [the Sundays Project], I was negligent, ignorant about the kids. I didn’t know what to do with the children. When the eldest son came home from school, I didn’t know what to do with him. Now we do. When the kids come home, they do homework.”

**Physical Changes of the Home**

Two types of physical changes in the home were observed. First was the presence of artifacts in the home that seemed to proudly symbolize change. In at least three homes, the parenting pledge or certificate of completion from the Sundays Project was posted on a wall. Often, these were laminated or framed. In all cases, the parents spoke of these artifacts proudly.

The second type of physical change was the designation of a room as the study room. In two homes, in spite of crowded conditions, the parents had set aside one bedroom to act as a library. These rooms were reserved for homework and reading.

**School Performance**

In at least three homes, the parents reported that school performance was improving. Parents described the children prior to the program as not smart and having a hard time. After the program, parents reported that children seemed smarter, report cards showed improvement, and a teacher noticed improvement.

In one visit, the mother reporting about her daughter said, “Before, she was not smart, but now because of the program, she’s doing very very good in school. It’s really going up [gestures to show progressively higher levels].”

**Home-School Communication Regarding Homework**

Positive behaviors regarding homework included parents checking the children’s bags for homework after school or signing the homework for the teacher’s benefit. This was not a significant area of discussion during the home visits.

**Education Enrichment and After-School Programs**

Parents’ willingness to send their children to supplemental education programs (e.g., 21st Century Community Learning Centers) is a key focus for the HPIRC. At several homes, parents described being more comfortable with supplemental education as a result in their participation. The total number of children represented by the four homes visited is 11. Prior to the parents’ participation in the Sundays Project, none of these children participated in after-school or enrichment programs; after participation, four children were actively involved in these programs. However, we do not know with certainty that Sundays Project participation is the cause of enrollment or if the larger population experienced similar results.

**Evaluation Question 3: How was the positive deviance approach implemented by the HPIRC?**

Prior to the 2009–2010 program year, the HPIRC sought the support and input of leaders within the Chuukese community. The HPIRC quickly learned that the best way to initially reach the Chuukese
community is to approach the local Chuukese churches. Recruiting in this way, the need for program participants was quickly satisfied.

The HPIRC’s primary headquarters are located within a public housing community that is home to a significant proportion of the Chuukese population in Hawai‘i. The HPIRC began offering the Sundays Project events in a meeting room of a nearby small community library. Working closely with the population allows the HPIRC to naturalistically identify problems within the population and adjust accordingly. For example, none of the parents participating in the project were found to be able to read their child’s report card. Therefore, the HPIRC has been teaching the necessary skills (including how to read a table and understand unfamiliar words) and found that this activity takes several hours.

The Sundays Project curriculum included positive deviant behaviors (uncommon activities employed in Chuukese homes experiencing exceptional school-related success) that were identified previously. Implementation involves a high level of participation from the attending parents. As time passes, exceptional participant behaviors not already included in the curriculum are identified and written into the curriculum that is later offered to future cohorts. Positive deviant behaviors are also identified through evaluation activities.

Evaluation activities included interviews of program participants and staff members, a group interview with one cohort of participants, and visits to the homes of some of the participants. Each of these activities contributed to the identification of additional positive deviant behaviors that were later added to the Sundays Project curriculum. This content is continually integrated into the curriculum that is presented to future cohorts. Thus, the curriculum is continually updated.

In addition to teaching parents how to be involved in schools directly, the HPIRC also helped bridge an existing divide between schools and immigrant groups through direct contact with school officials. The HPIRC shared some findings with administrators of the schools in the local community, as well as with Hawai‘i Department of Education personnel who deal with similar issues. For example, PREL observed a presentation given by the HPIRC about the Micronesian community to a group of teachers of the Even Start program sponsored by the Hawai‘i Department of Education. In another case, a Department of Education official spoke at length at a quarterly HPIRC meeting, presenting information about upcoming policy changes that may affect the HPIRC.

**Evaluation Question 4: Is the HPIRC’s Positive Deviance-Based Implementation Replicable by Other PIRCs Serving Different Populations?**

The positive deviance approach may be useful in other contexts, but the behaviors identified by the HPIRC are carefully tailored to the Chuukese population of Hawai‘i. Accordingly, the behaviors themselves may not be relevant to some of the groups served by other PIRC programs. However, the positive deviance approach is successfully employed in a variety of subject areas around the world (Positive Deviance Initiative, 2010). It is particularly useful for unique populations whose problems are poorly understood outside of the immediate context. In this way, it is well suited for Micronesians in Hawai‘i and Micronesia and would be useful for minority populations served by other PIRCs (e.g., Latino communities in the contiguous United States).

PREL believes that the positive deviance-based approach would be replicable by other PIRCs serving various populations. However, the curriculum and evaluated outcomes would vary from community to community.

To this end, the HPIRC disseminates findings about its experience with the positive deviance approach as a strategy for social and educational change. This includes speaking about the method at national PIRC events and sharing the program’s story with the Positive Deviance Initiative and their audience at the initiative’s invitation.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION
An important part of the evaluation was the identification of positive behaviors that resulted from participation in the Sundays Project. Behaviors were identified both through direct interaction with program participants and through interviews of HPIRC staff members. In this way, the evaluation also helped contribute to the identification of behaviors that comprise the Sundays Project curriculum.

Five types of positive deviant behaviors identified prior to or during the evaluation fell into five general categories: (a) study outside of school, (b) the mood of the home, (c) home-school communication, (d) parent responsibility for child’s education, and (e) parent efficacy about the child.

After identifying positive deviant behaviors associated with families experiencing exceptional change, PREL and the HPIRC collaboratively created a survey instrument that is being used to measure program outcomes during the 2010–2011 program year.

Five types of program effects were identified within the cases studied. These include (a) changes in behaviors and attitudes at home, (b) changes in the way homework is done in the home, (c) development of home-school communication regarding homework, (d) physical changes to the home, and (e) changes in children’s school performance.

The HPIRC generally follows the positive deviance approach as outlined by the Positive Deviance Initiative. We believe that the approach itself would be appropriate for PIRCs and educational institutions serving a variety of populations. However, the content of the Sundays Project is naturally customized for the population of Chuukese in Hawai‘i, and many of the positive deviant behaviors may not apply to other populations.

Next stages of the evaluation, to take place in upcoming years, may be to identify long-term outcomes and explore how positive deviant behaviors work in the home environment to contribute to these outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS
PREL makes three suggestions:

1. Consider amending the curriculum to include information about corporal punishment. While conducting the evaluation, PREL learned that corporal punishment of children is a popular parenting behavior among the population being studied. Participants participating in the evaluation had stopped striking their children. This change in behavior did not result from the belief that corporal punishment is a bad parenting strategy—parents from at least two homes said that they still believe the practice would work better than those they use now. Instead, they stopped because they learned that they could be imprisoned if they continued this disciplinary practice. We conclude (and the HPIRC agrees) that parents could benefit by learning more about the issue and about alternative disciplinary practices. The Sundays Project curriculum may benefit from the addition of this information.

2. Continue developing collaborative relationships and channels of communication with the professional community. The HPIRC shared some findings with administrators of the schools in the local community, as well as with Hawai‘i Department of Education personnel who deal with similar issues. The HPIRC is deliberately expanding these activities as the positive deviance-based project matures, and has already begun to experience positive results. PREL recommends that the HPIRC continue sharing findings and best practices. Further development of collaborative relationships will likely contribute to meeting the program goals, particularly Goal 2: to strengthen partnerships among parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel in meeting the educational needs of children.

3. Include indicators of program success that are identified by the community in the evaluation of any future incarnation of the positive deviance-based program. The HPIRC formally
adopted the positive deviance approach after it had been doing similar activities for several years. By chance and by design, program implementation follows nearly all of the steps encouraged by the Positive Deviance Initiative with a high degree of fidelity. However, the late adoption of the approach disallowed the HPIRC from including community-driven evaluation activities. Community-assisted development of appropriate indicators to monitor progress may facilitate culturally appropriate ways to communicate outcomes and share the project’s impact with others. Accordingly, the HPIRC should consider including this component in any future implementation of a positive deviance-based project.
REFERENCES


Simmons, C. (2010). *Hawai‘i’s Sundays Project: Family engagement for academic achievement: Working with the Chuukese community to grow success in school*. (Not yet published.)
University of Hawai‘i (2008). Report on the needs of Micronesians in Hawai‘i. University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Center for Pacific Islands Studies School of Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Chuukese/Micronesian parent focus group protocol

Priorities:
- Keep questions away from child behavior. The HPIRC director doesn’t want to send the message that the intervention is about children making changes. For her own program work, she wants to place emphasis on parent behaviors and feelings.
- We are interested in student behavior as an intermediate outcome.
- As an ultimate outcome, we are interested in student achievement. Specifically, this is attendance, tardiness, and the six Hawai‘i GLOs on the report card.

Questions
1. Number of attendees: _____

2. Number of attendees who have attended the Sundays Project: _____

3. Number of attendees who attended All Sundays Project sessions: _____

4. Other information (optional): __________________

Background:
5. The HPIRC is video recording this meeting. Is that okay with everyone?

6. Do you live in this neighborhood?

7. What language or languages does your family speak at home?

8. You took a pledge to help with your child’s academic progress. Have you been able to work on the pledge?

9. Have the things you do as a parent changed as a result of your participation in [the PIRC]?

10. What, if anything, are you doing differently in your home? [like CS’ 6b]
11. Are other family members doing anything different because of what you learned during your mornings with this group? [CS’ 6c]

12. What concepts do you remember learning in the Sundays Project that really spoke to you?
   • [If necessary] You participated in a series of sessions about topics such as issues and solutions for truancy, head lice treatment and prevention, and how to read a standards-based report card. Have these topics been helpful? Tell us your story.

13. Have the relationships in the home changed?

14. Does your home have a different feel since you have changed your behavior?

Additional questions:

15. How did you learn these new behaviors?

16. Do you have any ideas for how the Sundays Project or HPIRC could better serve Micronesian in Hawai‘i?

17. What kinds of things should we ask parents (AND KIDS) about in the one-on-one interviews?
APPENDIX B: HOME VISIT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Home Interview Protocol
Hawai‘i PIRC Evaluation, 2009–2010

Background:
Is this still a good time to talk?

We are here to learn about the Sundays Project. Because you are an expert, we want your help to learn what parts of the program are good and what parts can be made better.

We want to find out what (if anything) you learned and see if anything is different in your home because of what you learned.

Before we start, do you have any questions for us?

1. Can you tell us if anything is different in your home because of the Sundays Project?

2. What happens with the kids’ homework? (Does it get done? If so, how? When? Where?)

3. What happens with the kids’ report cards?

4. Because of the Sundays Project, have any physical changes been made to your home?

5. Are there other ways that kids learn better at home?

6. Before the Sundays Project, how comfortable were you to reach out and contact teachers or other people at your kid’s school?

   very uncomfortable | a little uncomfortable | comfortable | very comfortable
   __________ | __________ | ______ | ______
   1             | 2             | 3         | 4

7. **Now,** how comfortable are you to reach out and contact teachers or other people at your kid’s school?

   very uncomfortable | a little uncomfortable | comfortable | very comfortable
   __________ | __________ | ______ | ______
   1             | 2             | 3         | 4
8. [If there is a difference.] Why are you more comfortable to reach out now?

9. [At end] These changes we have talked about — how has the Sundays Project helped, if at all?

10. Are there any other things about the Sundays Project that you want to share?