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TYPE OF DISTRICT/ORGANIZATION SUBMITTING ENTRY: Public School District
Serving over 73,000 students

NUMBER OF COMMUNICATION STAFF – 3

ENTRY CATEGORY: Special Communication Project / Campaign – THRIVE BY FIVE

*Please consider this entry for a Golden Achievement Award
Thrive by Five is a program launched by Brevard Public Schools to provide a pathway for families with children from birth to age five in Brevard County to learn about the importance of early literacy beginning at birth and connect them to resources that promote readiness for school.

Each pre-K and Kindergartener in Brevard County is evaluated for “school readiness.” We consistently see lower scores from children who come from low-income homes and children of various ethnicities. This is of great concern as research has shown that students who are behind when they start Kindergarten make up the largest portion of school dropouts. In fact, these students have less than a 12% chance of attending college. Additionally, children of adults with low literacy skills are 72% more likely to be at a low reading level in school.

Numerous studies have shown a profound relationship between poverty and illiteracy. Poverty can negatively affect a child’s cognitive development and his academic performance. Limited exposure to reading materials, poor health, a scarcity of food, housing instability and unsafe environments are all additional challenges that children living in poverty often encounter. According to the Heart of America foundation, 61 percent of families living in poverty do not have children’s books in their homes. Consequently, children living in poverty already have a 50 percent weaker vocabulary than their wealthier peers at the start of school.

By providing a book and a central access point for community resources to families of every child born in Brevard County, we can significantly improve the odds of educating and raising awareness for the importance of literacy beginning at birth. This program partners with all the birthing hospitals in Brevard County to provide a bag which includes a child’s first book, bib and other items featuring a QR code for easy access to a central website with multiple resources geared toward helping every child in our community Thrive by Five.
We used both formal and informal research methods to provide us both qualitative and quantitative data to create the framework for Thrive by Five. Some of this research included statistics on literacy in early childhood (secondary), test scores from pre-k and kindergarten students for the past 5 years in Brevard (primary), demographics of pre-k and kindergarten students for the past 5 years in Brevard (primary) as well as additional research on the impacts of poverty and homes without literate family members or books on the development of the brain, physical body and social-emotional well-being of children ages birth through five years of age (secondary).
Planning

The Thrive by Five team created two goals. The first goal is to increase awareness in our community and among families with children from birth through age five about the importance of early literacy. The second goal is to provide a connection to access resources that promote early childhood development information and readiness for school.

To help us facilitate proper planning and development of key messaging, we identified the following audiences based on both demographics and psychographics: Partner healthcare systems, business partners of BPS, the Early Learning Coalition, Chambers of commerce, community organizations, elected officials and families with children from birth through age five.

Next, we created our objectives, strategies and tactics for the launch phase which are as follows:

1) **Pack and Deliver at least 500 bags for distribution to partner birthing centers by October 27, 2021**
   - Use community and business partners to pack bags with items (book, bib, information, folder, magnet)
   - Utilize hospital courier system and BPS warehouse teams for transport and storage

2) **Increase our reach and engagement on social media for Thrive by Five by 25% between Nov. 1- Jan. 1 2021**
   - Create a social media campaign to educate all targeted audiences
     - Place “Did You Know” facts on social media platforms three times a week
     - Boost those posts with specific audience controls in place for more relevance

3) **Receive at least 5 media placements on the launch of Thrive by Five between Nov. 1 and Jan. 1 2021**
   - Schedule a press conference with all healthcare partners and sponsors
   - Invite the media to join the press conference and packing event
   - Utilize partner media lists to distribute media advisory of event

4) **Have 75 families who gave birth between 11/1/ and 12/31 sign up for our online community by Jan.1 2022**
   - Create a method for recipients of the bag to join the Thrive by Five Community and gain access to resources
     - Launch a friendly capture pop-up on the website the QR code directs them to on collateral received
     - Utilize web filters to control pop-up timing and occurrences
Implementation

All elements of the launch phase including initial meetings, research, planning and implementation occurred June 1 through December 31 of 2021. These were accomplished by the Early Childhood and Government and Community Relations Teams at BPS in partnership with our healthcare system partners. Key messaging was developed for each target audience and included the “why” this program matters which entailed statistics and the overall impact on communities who have a thriving public school system (educated workforce, lower crime, higher home values, bigger draw for companies to reside in Brevard County). These messages were communicated via social media, direct emails, presentations to garner support and other marketing materials. The key message utilized in all program components targeting parents with children from birth to age 5 is “Help Your Child Thrive by Five.” This message was used for all strategically placed advertisements, collateral materials, social media, website, daycares, schools, public transportation vehicles, healthcare facilities, pediatric offices, radio stations, birthing suites, grocery stores and all other likely locations and platforms where this audience would frequent to promote this message and leave them asking themselves “How”? We found ourselves needing to be creative as all our healthcare partners compete against one another and particularly in specific geographic areas. Additionally, some of the statistics and facts about poverty, ethnicities, etc. are certainly sensitive. When creating messaging to achieve our goals, all of these things had to be carefully considered, especially given the current climate surrounding public education, healthcare tensions, a global pandemic and escalated racial tensions in our country.
Help your child Thrive by Five

Resources for Birth – Age 5

Learn more
brevardschools.org/BrevardThriveByFive

Did you know that infants develop more than one million new neural connections per second?
#BrevardThrivebyFiveFacts

Did you know 37% of children arrive at kindergarten without the skills necessary for lifetime learning?
#BrevardThrivebyFiveFacts

Did you know that 50% of adults cannot read a book written at an eighth-grade level?
#BrevardThrivebyFiveFacts

Did you know that children who are read to at least three times a week are almost twice as likely to score in the top 25% in reading compared to children who are not?
#BrevardThrivebyFiveFacts

Did you know that 90% of a child’s brain develops by age 5?
#BrevardThrivebyFiveFacts

Did you know that experts are nearly unanimous in stating that babies should routinely experience books during the first weeks and months of life?
#BrevardThrivebyFiveFacts
Thrive by Five Key Messages

Parents & Families

• Thrive by Five is a central hub for family resources for birth to age 5
• Education and Health/Development go hand-in-hand to prepare children for Kindergarten readiness
• Literacy begins at birth
• Become familiar with “ages and stages” to help your child meet developmental milestones

• Embrace early screening and intervention
• You are your child’s first and most important teacher
• Literacy begins and birth
• The first five years is essential in learning

Business and Community Partners

• Together, we are investing in Brevard’s future.
• The program focuses on the holistic needs of a child and supporting our families to have the resources needed.
• Education, Healthcare and Businesses are working side-by-side to support the children of our community and provide information and resources to our families.
• Supporting and investing in our employees to provide an environment that makes family a priority.

• The more children that come to Kindergarten ready and prepared, the more achievement and success they will have in the classroom and eventually, our workforce.
• Attract and retain talent by offering a unique approach to giving our employees and their families a true community approach to living, working, learning and playing in Brevard County.

Media

• Early literacy and meeting developmental milestones greatly improves the odds of high performance in school and life.
• Brevard County is coming together to serve our families in a unique way by providing a whole family approach for information and resources to help our children thrive by five. Our healthcare, education and business communities are joining forces to make a positive difference in lives of families and their children.
Thrive by Five

Thrive by Five is an initiative launched by Brevard Public Schools’ Superintendent Dr. Mark Mullins to provide a pathway for every family in Brevard to learn the importance of early literacy beginning at birth, connect them to resources that promote readiness for school and set the stage for lifelong learning success.

Why it matters....

Literacy begins at birth. Thrive by Five provides Brevard families with a central place to find resources, information, and best practices for their children from birth to age five. Why does this program matter to Brevard County?

- Children of adults with low literacy skills are 72% more likely to be at a low reading level in school, according to ProLiteracy.
- Students who are behind when they start kindergarten make up the largest portion of school dropouts. These students have a less than 12 percent chance of attending college, according to the Children’s Reading Foundation.
- There is a profound relationship between poverty and illiteracy. Poverty can negatively affect a child's cognitive development and his academic performance. Limited exposure to reading materials, poor health, a scarcity of food, housing instability and unsafe environments are all additional challenges that children living in poverty often encounter. According to the Heart of America foundation, 61 percent of families living in poverty do not have children's books in their homes.

Together, we can

- Ensure families have access to local resources
- Build a strong foundation that focuses on serving the whole child
- Help children in our community be ready for Kindergarten
- Improve access to reading materials and education for parents on the importance of literacy
- Prepare families to embrace the developmental and educational journey

Thrive by Five provides a pathway for healthcare providers, business partners and public education to come together and serve the families in our community in a brand new way by providing a holistic approach in raising the future of the Space Coast.

Learn More

https://www.brevardschools.org/ThrivebyFive

This material is printed and distributed at no cost to the tax payer and is fully underwritten by program supporters.
Evaluation

Upon evaluation and review of the launch phase of Thrive by Five, we packed and delivered 602 bags to partner birthing centers by October 27th and 1,448 by the end of the year. The “Did You Know” social media campaign average a 42% increase in reach and engagement on social platforms. The program launch received 8 media placements across a variety of mediums and provided several leads for community sponsors and volunteers. 92 families who gave birth between 11/1 and 12/31 joined our community by January 1, 2022.

Budget

Sponsorship Dollars for each healthcare partner were determined by the number of births each facility had. The total dollars raised equalled $77,000. These funds paid for printed collateral materials, the bags and the associated items inside.

The breakdown includes:
Books - $22,650
Bags and Associated Items - $39,811.16
Billboards - $10,100
Public Transportation Advertisements - $3,200
Printing Cost - $1,049.60

Staff time during this period was approximately 427 hours which equates to $12,810.

The return on investment for children having a lifetime of opportunities to succeed is priceless.