

IPM Education and Outreach in a Latino Urban Community

Background

The Preschool Project (The PSP) is a non-profit organization that began in 1988 as a grass roots effort of neighborhood parents and preschool teachers concerned with the lack of services and supports for families with young children in the Kensington area of Philadelphia. Today, the PSP offers training, education and technical assistance for early care and education professionals working with young children; and direct service programs for children and families. The PSP staff includes 30 full-time and 6 part-time personnel. Forty percent of staff members are Latino.

Demographics of Target Communities

Over 50 percent of the child care providers and families served in programs are Latino. Target communities include 1) Lower Northeast/Lower East North/Fishtown and Kensington areas of Philadelphia, and 2) South Philadelphia. These communities include some of the most diverse and economically challenged areas of the City. Residents cope with unemployment and underemployment; language and cultural barriers; underfunded and limited city services; and too few and often inadequate early childhood and youth services. Latino population citywide has increased five fold in selected neighborhoods (City Census Data, 2001).

- **In Eastern North Philadelphia:** Over 47 percent of children in these neighborhoods live in households at or below the federal poverty level. Thirty percent of residents in this region report speaking a language other than English at home; among these 10 different languages are spoken with over 21.7 percent speaking Spanish (Census Data, 2000).
- **South Philadelphia:** The PSP began offering services to the Mexican community in South Philadelphia in 2004. There was immediate, eager and overwhelming interest, engagement and enrollment. In the fall of 2006, The PSP opened the first truly Bilingual Head Start in the City of Philadelphia, funded by the School District. The target community is home to over 10,000 Mexican immigrants. Largely from four Mexican villages, families have limited access to social and medical services, resources, referrals, employment opportunities and other basic supports. The PSP is one of the only service providers in this community with bilingual, bicultural competencies, and has established relationships built upon trust and respect.

Importance of IPM Education and Outreach to the Latino urban community

Recently, The PSP has recognized the dangers of pest infestations and extensive, repeated use of pesticides by residents. The potential health hazards associated with pests and pesticides directly impact the health of our target audiences: child care providers, parents, children and infants. In addition, data show that in other eastern urban Latino communities, “under the counter” sales of dangerous illegal pesticides (i.e. “Chinese chalk” and “Tres Pasitos”) are widespread. We can assume this is a potential problem in Philadelphia as well. Education on IPM, including: causes of infestations, non-chemical interventions, informed decision-making about pesticides, hiring pest control services, and applying safe practices can help mitigate the health risks and lead to more effective control of pests. Currently, few IPM resources, outreach tools and educational venues are available in Spanish for Latino urban communities.

To address this need, we propose to begin to create and incorporate bilingual IPM education for child care professionals, caregivers, parents and the children in their care within The PSP’s

extensive community-based educational programs and services. This addresses two priority Education and Outreach Issues identified in the Northeastern IPM Center's *Priorities for Community and Urban IPM (2005)*:

Issue: Develop IPM outreach to homeowners, retailers of pest management products and multipliers. The Preschool Project is a "multiplier"; our programs reach hundreds of child care providers, teachers, caregivers and parents annually, serving over 320 children directly and over 2,500 children indirectly. We reach over 800 Latino families each year.

Issue: Communicate IPM strategies to non English Speakers. This project will develop presentation modules for community educators, brochures and interactive program aids for children, translated into Spanish in several dialects, and piloted by PSP staff trained during this project. The PSP staff capacity will be developed to integrate IPM information/materials into ongoing and new PSP programs. All materials developed will be usable for other urban Latino communities regionally and nationally. These materials will also be available electronically and transferable for Extension and other outreach programs.

Project Goals

The project has two primary goals.

1. Increase IPM knowledge and educational capacity of PSP staff

This goal will be addressed through the following objectives. Working with our technical partners in city agencies and the PA IPM Program at Penn State University, The PSP will:

- a) **develop 4 training modules for PSP's community educators.**
- b) **hold 4 training sessions for PSP staff (English) including:**
 - 1) basic IPM and pest information;
 - 2) pesticide decision-making, safe use and disposal;
 - 3) how to choose a pest control company or apply safe pest control practices yourself;
 - 4) IPM site assessment – what to ask & look for (hands-on).

2. Provide education and outreach to the Latino community serviced by The PSP

This goal will be addressed by implementation of the following objectives:

- a) **Translate training modules into Spanish, attending to linguistic/cultural variations** (e.g. primarily Puerto Rican and Mexican dialects).
- b) **Develop Bilingual program materials** (e.g. brochure, interactive games)
- c) **Transfer information to child care professionals, parents and children in programs:**
 - 1) Workshops will be held at two regional conferences: e.g. The PSP's Latino Child Care Conference (2008) (reaching 125 professionals and over 600 families) and the Philadelphia Early Childhood Collaborative's Conference (2008) (150 professionals and over 725 families). Informational tables will also provide information.
 - 2) PSP staff to integrate IPM material into PSP programs whenever appropriate.
 - 3) *Other possible venues once additional funding is secured include presentations at:*
 - The PSP's 3 Child Care centers (reaching 100 children);
 - for each of 10 Latino Child Care provider sites (reaching over 100 children);
 - a group presentation to 10 Latino Family Child Care providers (60 children);
 - 2-hour training(s) added to PSP's 2007/08 calendar (15 providers each)
- d) **Transfer information to larger Latino community**
 - 1) **PSA's on key radio stations** – i.e. La Mega, and La Rumba in Philadelphia;
 - 2) **Articles in key print publications** – i.e. El Dia, Enfoque, Impacto (syndicated);
 - 3) **Conference presentations** (i.e. in objective c. 1. above; state/national in future.)