Guardian Engagement

by: Morgan Ames, Sandy Fulkerson Schaeffer, Lindsey Hammargren, Alex Hahn, Nico Francone, Priyanka Joshi, Miranda Kuwahara, Natalie Thom

Why Early Childhood Interventions?
- Early childhood development is considered to be the most important phase in life which determines the quality of health, well-being, learning and behavior across the lifespan (WHO).
- The course that development takes in each person depends critically on the quality of stimulation, support and nurturance that a child experiences in their family, neighborhood, & care environments.
- We sought to empower parents and provide resources so their children can develop and succeed appropriately.
- Our starter project focused on increasing compliance with the Universal Health Certificate, which includes key information on overall health, vaccines, and developmental goals.

SCF Families live or work in the Anacostia neighborhood...
- one of the first suburbs of Washington, Frederick Douglass, an abolitionist and the “sage of Anacostia”, lived in the neighborhood for much of his life. The area was predominantly white (87%) until the 1960s, when the Anacostia Freeway was constructed and imposed a barrier between the neighborhood and the waterfront. Coinciding with the Civil Rights movement and the 1968 race riots, white flight sent middle class white Americans deeper into the suburbs and out of the Anacostia area. Public housing apartment complexes were erected and the neighborhood shifted demographically to predominantly African American (as of the 2000 census, 92%).
- The neighborhood has limited access to shopping, dining, and entertainment facilities, as development slowed with a decrease in income of the local residents. Crime rates, much of which was associated with drug trade and usage, peaked in the 90s. In 2005, the Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC) opened to house nonprofit organizations with the goal of helping children and adults in the area.

Why Early Childhood Interventions?
- I was hoping to become a parent soon, and I thought Guardian Engagement would be a great way to begin thinking more about parenting and early childhood education.
- I chose Guardian Engagement because children are our future, and I feel a sense of responsibility to ensure their health for the rest of their lives.
- I chose Guardian Engagement because I wanted to learn about how parents address their children’s health needs and how interventions could better their family’s health.

Lessons Learned
- We have the utmost gratitude to our coach, Angie Hinzey, for keeping us motivated, thoughtful, creative, and flexible.
- Thank you to Robert Gundling at Southeast Children’s Fund for your guidance and insightfulness. We have thoroughly enjoyed working with you, Miss Hazel, Miss Angie, and all the teachers and staff at SCF.
- Thank you to all the families at SCF for talking with us, teaching us, and allowing us to hang out with your amazing children!
- Thank you to Shay and Meghan for your contribution in the group!

Recommendations
- Establish a formalized, open presence: get a tablecloth, poster, banner, other visibility tools
- Keep an open mind: about your community, your teammates, about the ISCOPEs process
- Collaborate with the teachers and staff members more. They’re wonderful resources and allies. They know the guardians, and they will see your consistent presence. They will help establish trust.
- Find out early what each team member brings to the table, what motivates them, and how they like to work/communicate
- Consider how you will define success. Engagement is an open-ended timeline, and may not lend itself to deliverables. The process may be more important than the end “results”
- Have fun!