"We spend a lot of time thinking about how to provide great experiences for children and encourage them to be better learners. CORAL allows us to expand on what we do and increase the ways we bring programs out into the community."

~ Jenni Martin, Children's Discovery Museum

CORAL

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AN UNCOMMON APPROACH

TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

CORAL

Communities **O**rganizing **R**esources to **A**dvance **L**earning

"CORAL matches the neediest children with the best resources available to teach them how to become successful in school and in life. Investing in their future is critical to creating a better future for our entire community."

~ Maritza Maldonado, CORAL Director and Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County Youth Services Co-Director

CORAL Helps Create Brighter Futures

Every child needs to learn, to play, and to experience new things in a safe, attentive environment. **That's how they grow into successful adults.** But

most children living in high-poverty areas of our community don't get this chance.

The scenario is all-too-familiar: over-crowded classrooms, less experienced teachers, and very limited resources at school and at home. And it creates all-too-familiar problems: poor academic performance, high drop-out rates, and the continuing cycle of poverty.

CORAL has **a vision of equity, access, and achievement** for these children. And we have a proven framework to support this vision—a comprehensive program that brings academic and community resources directly to the schools.

Three hours each day, four to five days a week throughout the school year, adults and children commit to work together to create an exciting learning environment. We begin with **concentrated literacy support**, which gives many children their first academic success. We build on those accomplishments with **enrichment activities** from leading community-based organizations. **Strong family participation** is the third element, which brings the love of learning home.

We make a significant investment in training staff to be enthusiastic role models as well as program leaders. Together with educators and parents, they weave a **tight network of personal support for each child.**

There is **urgency to our work.** These children would otherwise have little or no access to educational programs outside their under-funded classrooms. CORAL gives them the excitement of achievement today and hope for **successful tomorrows.**

"Since CORAL joined our after-school partnership, the difference in the quantity and quality of our offerings, caliber of staff, and total number of children attending on a regular basis is like the difference between night and day."

~ Peggy Bryan, Principal

CORAL Excites and Engages Children

Creative activities **demonstrate the joy in learning** while directing children's energy in positive ways. Our community has a wealth of enrichment resources for young children, but fees, communication, and transportation issues prevent low-income kids from reaching them—and this breeds even more isolation in high-poverty areas.

CORAL **puts children in touch with their own communities** by bringing resources directly to them. Every day after their literacy work, students engage in **60 minutes of hands-on activities** in science, technology, practical mathematics, art, theater, life skills, dance, sports, and community service. And they make the most of every minute, inspiring all of us with their joy and courage in trying new things.

CORAL is the first organization to create **a network of the area's best museums and community-based organizations** with common goals, program training, and structure. All of our **activities have a literacy component** and are linked to California State standards for instruction. In fact, participating CBOs have found that CORAL improves the quality and efficiency of their overall service delivery.

Children learn enthusiastically when they can see, hear, and touch in real-life situations. Academic enrichment not only teaches new skills, it excites children about new possibilities in their lives.

CORAL Nurtures Enthusiastic Learners

More than 70 percent of **CORAL kids are English language learners from low-income immigrant families.** Before they enter the program, their academic performance is generally very low. And when children lack basic academic skills, they also lack the tools to become successful adults.

The core of the CORAL program is **60 to 90 minutes of balanced literacy support every day.** We use an innovative combination of reading and writing activities that create different avenues for learning. A carefully targeted plan guide the children and their mentors to work on establishing or strengthening specific skills as needed.

Throughout the week, students enjoy "read aloud" time with an adult modeling fluent reading. They participate in lively discussions called "shout out" and play reading and vocabulary games called "word works." They also have writing lessons and do independent reading.

CORAL's success comes from its unique ability to address each child as an individual learner. Teachers, administrators, and parents are often surprised at the rapid rate of progress—and **the wonderful changes in the children** that go hand-in-hand with their advancing skills.

This is **the child's first taste of success.** Once CORAL kids learn the power of their own minds, they're empowered to make smart choices in all areas of their lives.

ACHIEVEMENT

"CORAL had the right tools to help my son, Jesus, overcome his difficulties with reading. They also gave him a safe place to go after school, great role models, and activities that we could not afford on our own."

~ Alejandra Arreola, Parent

CORAL Strengthens Families, too

Educators and researchers have proven that **parents are key to helping children grow into successful adults.** But most parents of CORAL kids grew up in different cultures; many have limited education and

English skills. So they face an enormous challenge: how do they help their children become successful in a society in which they're still learning how to be successful themselves?

Changing a child's life for the better requires also supporting his or her family. In CORAL, **parents are valued participants, not "silent partners."** They regularly volunteer with enrichment activities. They work with mentors and teachers to help them assess their children's needs. They provide feedback about program design. And, most importantly, they learn how to actively reinforce their children's sense of pride in learning.

Another special feature associated with CORAL is **parenting workshops.** These eight-week classes teach parents how to support their children in school, communicate more effectively, and implement positive discipline. In addition to the workshop meetings, families take part in recreational activities and on-going monthly support groups. Classes are offered several times a year in both Vietnamese and Spanish.

Many CORAL parents **become empowered to take on leadership roles in their schools and neighborhoods**, and provide a source of inspiration for other underprivileged adults. They demonstrate a sense of responsibility that strengthens their communities just as it enriches their own children's lives.

All of us are accountable to the children in our community.