



Todos Juntos

Mi Familia & Me Evaluation Report

December 2023



The University of Texas at Austin
**Texas Institute for
Child & Family Wellbeing**
Steve Hicks School of Social Work

Todos Juntos

Mi Familia & Me Program Evaluation Report

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Introduction & Overview

Background

Todos Juntos contracted with the Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing (TXICFW) at The University of Texas at Austin, Steve Hicks School of Social Work to evaluate the Mi Familia & Me program. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine whether parents who participate in the program demonstrate improved cross-cultural parenting knowledge, confidence, and self-efficacy at the end of the program. The partnership between the Todos Juntos Learning Center and TXICFW began in July 2023 and evaluation activities continued through December 2023. Prior to that, Todos Juntos conducted pre- and post-surveys with parents who participated in the program for the 2022-2023 session.

Mi Familia & Me Program Overview

Mi Familia & Me is a parenting program offered to individuals enrolled at the Todos Juntos Learning Center, a dual-generation education program for English Language Learner families in Central Texas. The Mi Familia & Me program seeks to empower parents to build solid social, emotional, and educational foundations for their children. Primary participants in the program are mothers who have children enrolled in the early childhood education (ECE) program at Todos Juntos, although the program is open to fathers as well. The Mi Familia & Me program has one full-time staff member who works with parents in a group setting for two hours, followed by a one-hour activity with the children on a weekly basis. The program runs for nine months. Approximately 30 participants were engaged with the program during the time of study and this number has approximately doubled in the subsequent year. The core curriculum used by the Mi Familia & Me program is called Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD). The fall semester includes the 10-week curriculum with concurrent activities with children. The spring semester targets a deeper understanding of the initial concepts with experiential activities and guest speakers who have expertise in the content areas introduced by the AP/OD curriculum.

About TXICFW

The Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing (TXICFW) is social work research institute within the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Austin. For over 10 years, TXICFW has provided research, evaluation, and capacity building services designed to establish and increase the impact of organizations serving families and children.

Overview of Evaluation Questions, Activities, and Objectives

In consultation with Todos Juntos, the evaluation team focused on the following questions:

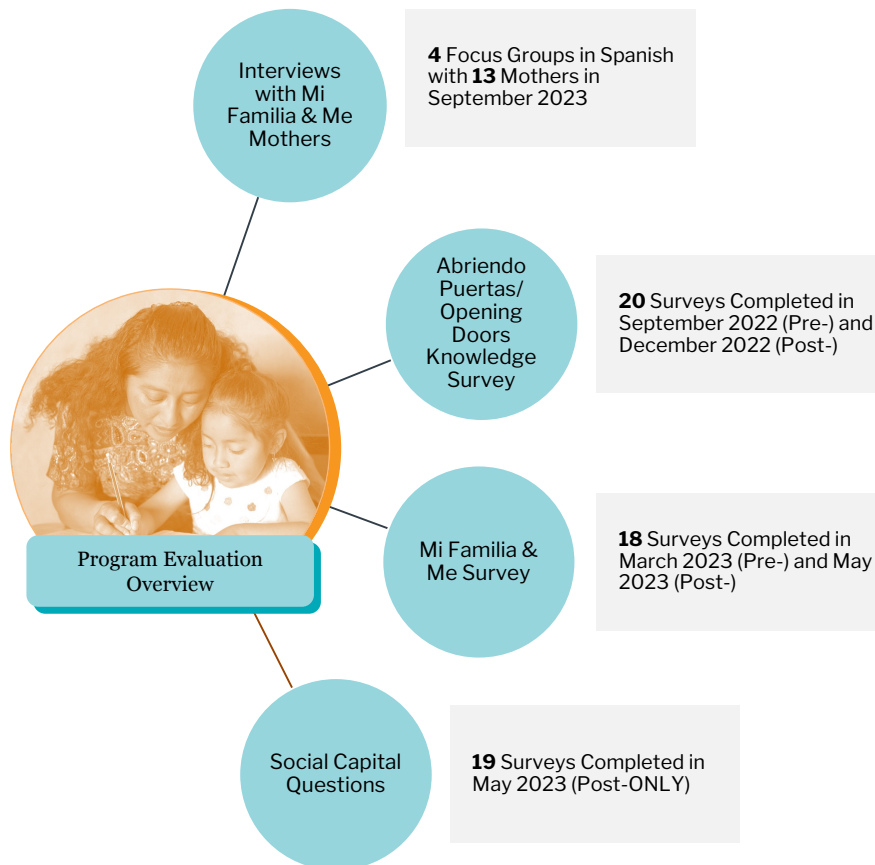
1. What are participants' perceptions of the Mi Familia & Me program?

- a. What are their key takeaways (or learnings)?
 - b. How have they used what they learn through the program with their children and families, if at all?
 - c. What, if anything, could be improved about the program?
2. What impact does the Mi Familia & Me program have on the desired outcomes?

TXICFW conducted a mixed-methods program evaluation including quantitative data that had been collected by Todos Juntos and qualitative data from focus groups conducted by TXCIFW.

- Quantitative data: Existing surveys collected by Todos Juntos with parents who participated in the Mi Familia & Me Program from August 2022-August 2023
- Qualitative data: Focus groups conducted with parents who participated in the program from August 2022-August 2023

Figure 1: Summary of Mi Familia and Me Program Evaluation Activities



This report integrates our findings from the analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data on program outcomes. We provide recommendations for ongoing evaluation and quality improvement, including a logic model. The overarching aim of this report is to provide feedback to the Mi Familia & Me program and its partners to strengthen the program and services to their clients.

Literature Review & Program of Study

Early Childhood Education for Latinx Children

Latinx children are the fastest growing population entering the United States' education system today and approximately one in four children entering kindergarten are Latinx (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). However, Latinx children are enrolled in early childhood education (ECE) programs at lower rates, with approximately 34% of Latinx children enrolling in ECE compared to 43% of White children (Hussar, 2020). ECE programs have been linked to several positive socioemotional, educational, and cognitive outcomes for children overall (Bakken et al., 2017; Luo, 2018). For Latinx children growing up in immigrant families, these programs are also linked to improved English proficiency and provide an opportunity for increased exposure to U.S. cultural norms (Holod et al. 2020; Limlingan et al., 2020; Smith, 2020). However, immigrant Latinx families continue to face several barriers to enrollment, such as community access, language, and cultural mismatch between home and the formal education environment (Ansari, 2017; Rabin, et al., 2022). Parent engagement programs are one strategy for increased Latinx enrollment in ECE.

Parenting Engagement Programs for Latinx Families

A growing body of literature calls for understanding of the specific, diverse perspectives and needs of Latinx parents as they participate in programs designed to increase engagement with the U.S. education system. A review of 13 existing parenting education programs for Latinx families with young children (pre-kindergarten) found that there is a need for ongoing community engagement and understanding to improve program relevancy for parents (Vesely et al., 2013). Rabin et al. (2022) found that Latinx parents emphasized the need for trust, co-learning, and bilingual staff to improve their satisfaction with ECE programs. A meta-analysis of 28 studies on the impact of parental involvement on academic achievement for Latinx families suggests that the former significantly improves the latter. However, the impact of parental involvement programs by themselves is less significant (Jeynes, 2017). Other studies have suggested that while Latinx parents value early education and learning opportunities for their pre-kindergarten-aged children, they may not understand the importance of these opportunities in preparing their children for elementary school (Rabin et al., 2022; Shuyey & Leventhal, 2020). This suggests the need for improved outreach and engagement strategies for Latinx parents to increase understanding of the role early education plays in school readiness and their child's long-term wellbeing.

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors Curriculum

One program targeting Latinx parent education and awareness of the U.S. education system is Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD). AP/OD is a culturally responsive

parenting curriculum for Latinx parents of children under 5 years old. (Abriendo Puertas website can be found at <https://ap-od.org/>) The curriculum is delivered in Spanish over 10 two-hour-long sessions. An overview of each session's content can be found in [Appendix A](#). A primary goal of the program is to promote Latinx parents as their child's first teacher by honoring them as their family's leader and advocate. A randomly controlled trial with 922 parents across 23 U.S. schools found that participating in AP/OD had a significant impact on measures related to parental educational activities at home, approaches to reading, library use, knowledge about appropriate childcare settings, family organization and planfulness, and parents as positive role models for their children (Caal et al., 2019). However, there were several desired outcomes of the program that did not show significant change. These included "parental advocacy, knowledge of early development, language and learning, emotional expression, healthy habits, and encouragement" (Caal et al., 2019). The implementation evaluation from this study included qualitative data to suggest that facilitators needed more time to extensively cover some topics and that parents desired more time to implement what they learned with their children (Moore et al., 2013).

Mi Familia and Me Program

The Mi Familia & Me program integrates the implementation guidance from the evaluation of AP/OD by extending its culturally responsive parenting program for a full academic year (nine months) alongside its onsite ECE. The fall semester of Mi Familia and Me is dedicated to implementing the AP/OD curriculum in its 10-session format. Parents attend the two hours of training followed by relational activities with their children who are enrolled in an onsite ECE program. In spring, participants revisit what they learned in AP/OD by delving into each concept with an experiential learning component. This can include bringing in local service providers, visiting their child's classroom, exploring community resources and facilities, and applying what was learned in a real-world setting. The Mi Familia & Me Schedule and overview of each session's contents can be found in [Appendix B](#). Approximately 30 parents are enrolled in Mi Familia & Me program during a morning session. An afternoon session is being piloted currently with 10 parents, but no data has been collected from this group at the time of the evaluation.

In partnership with the Episcopal Health Foundation, the Mi Familia & Me identified seven desired outcomes related to the Mi Familia & Me program:

1. Parents express knowledge about children's brain development.
2. Parents report time spent dedicated to reading and family strengthening activities.
3. Parents acknowledge and advocate for their child's needs.
4. Parents have increased confidence in their role as their child's first teacher.
5. Parents self-report an improvement in their relationship with their child.
6. Parents report that they have an emotional support network.
7. Parents report a greater sense of hope and confidence in their family's resilience.

Methods

Research Questions

In consultation with Todos Juntos, the evaluation team focused on the following questions:

1. What are participants' perceptions of the Mi Familia & Me program?
 - a. What are their key takeaways (or learnings)?
 - b. How have they used what they learn through the program with their children and families, if at all?
 - c. What, if anything, could be improved about the program?
2. What impact does the Mi Familia & Me program have on the desired outcomes?

Study Design

This evaluation uses a mixed-methods research design including a secondary analysis of quantitative data previously collected by the Todos Juntos Learning Center during the 2022-2023 academic year and focus groups conducted by the TXICFW evaluation team in September 2023.

Measures

Quantitative Data

Three data sources are included as part of the Mi Familia & Me Program Evaluation. These data are pulled from three separate surveys distributed to participants during the 2022-2023 year.

AP/OD Survey – Participant Knowledge of Child Development and Strategies for Stimulating Healthy Development

The AP/OD curriculum includes a self-assessment that is distributed in the first and last sessions. The AP/OD survey assesses pre-post changes in participants' knowledge about child development and strategies for stimulating healthy development across nine domains: parenting; brain development; early learning; language and literacy development; nutrition and physical activity; socioemotional development; use of technology; mathematical development; school readiness; and advocacy. The survey also includes four Likert scale questions for parents to self-assess their confidence in their ability to apply what they learn in the curriculum. The complete AP/OD survey can be found in [Appendix C](#).

The evaluation team considered alignment for each AP/OD survey section with the outcomes identified by Mi Familia & Me for this evaluation. This overview is provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1. AP/OD Survey Overview

Target Outcomes of the Mi Familia & Me Program	AP/OD Survey Sections
Parents express knowledge about children’s brain development	Part I. Parenting
	Part II. Early Learning
	Part III. Language and Literacy Development
	Part IV. Nutrition and Physical Activity
	Part V Socioemotional Development
	Part VI. Use of Technology
	Part VII. Mathematical Development
Parents report time spent dedicated to reading and family strengthening activities.	Part VIII. School Readiness
Parents acknowledge and advocate for their child’s needs	Part IX. Advocacy
Parents have increased confidence in their role as their child’s first teacher	Part X. Confidence

Todos Juntos Social Capital Survey – Participant Experience of Social Emotional Support

Todos Juntos distributed a survey as part of its ESL programming that includes a section on social capital, or social emotional support. Items on this survey relate to Mi Familia & Mi’s target outcome: Parents report that they have an emotional support network. These data were only collected at post-test. These data were only collected at post-test and can be found in Table 2:

Table 2. Todos Juntos Social Capital Survey Overview

Target Outcomes of the Mi Familia & Me Program	Survey Items
Parents report that they have an emotional support network	I have people I can talk to when I feel stressed, sad, overwhelmed.
	If I have a financial emergency, I know someone/some place that can help me.
	I regularly attend local community events (i.e., church, school concert, craft exhibition, etc.).
	I have an emotional & social support network.

Mi Familia & Me (MFM) Survey – Participant Confidence and Self-Efficacy in Parenting

The Mi Familia & Me program developed an additional survey to measure the application of AP/OD lessons in daily parenting practice and family life. This survey was distributed after the implementation of the AP/OD curriculum, with the pre-survey distributed in March 2023 and the post-survey in May 2023. The survey items and alignment with Mi Familia & Me target outcomes are included in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Mi Familia & Me (MFM) Survey Overview

Target Outcomes of the Mi Familia & Me Program	Survey Items
Parents have increased confidence in their role as their child’s first teacher	I believe that learning at home is just as important as learning at school.
	I know how to help my child learn at home.
	I feel confident as a parent.
Parents report an improvement in their relationship with their child	When my child misbehaves, I feel confident in my ability to positively handle their behavior.

Target Outcomes of the Mi Familia & Me Program	Survey Items
Parents report a greater sense of hope and confidence in their family’s resilience	My child is able to communicate effectively in both Native and English languages at age-appropriate levels.
	My child is able to cope when I have to leave him/her with other adults.
Parents report time spent dedicated to reading and family strengthening activities	My child loves reading books (or being read to).
	My child and I read together most days.
	My child reads with other members of our family every day or most days.
	I enjoy reading with my child.
Parents acknowledge and advocate for their child’s needs	It is important for me to have frequent communication with my child's teacher.
	I know what it means to be an advocate for my child.

Qualitative Data

Parents who participated in the program were invited to participate in semi-structured focus groups with members of the TXICFW evaluation team. Focus groups were held in Spanish and asked questions pertaining to how participants heard about the program, general perceptions of the program, what they learned from the program, how they applied what they learned in the program, and strengths/potential areas for improvement. All focus groups were held in Spanish and lasted between 1-1.5 hours. The Focus Group Guide is included in [Appendix D](#).

Data Collection

Quantitative Data

Todos Juntos staff provided data from the AP/OD, Social Capital, and MFM surveys for the 2022-2023 academic year to the research team electronically via email. The AP/OD survey was distributed in paper copy in September 2022 (pre) and December 2022 (post) and scored by the AP/OD program. The other two surveys were distributed via email by the

Todos Juntos program. The Social Capital survey was distributed in May 2023 post-intervention only. The Mi Familia & Me Survey was distributed in March 2023 (pre) and May 2023 (post). Items were scored by the Mi Familia & Me Program Coordinator and provided to the evaluation team in a spreadsheet format.

Qualitative Data

The TXICFW evaluation team coordinated with the Mi Familia & Me program coordinator to schedule focus groups with eligible participants. Eligibility criteria for participating in a focus group included being 18 years of age or older and having participated in the Mi Familia & Me Program in the 2022-2023 program cycle. The Mi Familia & Me Program Coordinator sent the recruitment email ([Appendix E](#)) to eligible participants. This information was also shared via word of mouth at the Todos Juntos learning Center. Participants signed up for one of four interview times based on their availability. Focus groups were conducted in Spanish by a member of the evaluation team who is a native Spanish speaker. Prior to starting the interview, the facilitator reviewed the consent form ([Appendix F](#)) and provided time for questions about the process. Participants marked whether they consented to participate (no signature required) and were given copies of the consent form if requested. Participation was voluntary and participants were informed they could skip any questions and withdraw from the study at any time. Focus groups were recorded and transcribed for translation and analysis purposes. Focus groups were translated by a professional transcription and translation service approved by the UT-IRB. Transcriptions and translations were reviewed for accuracy by members of the evaluation team who are fluent in Spanish. Participants received \$25 for participating in the study.

Human Subjects Protections

This evaluation protocol was submitted to and reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Texas at Austin. The IRB submission included the study protocol, focus group protocol, consent forms, and recruitment materials. The IRB determined the study as a program evaluation that was exempt from review.

All participant contact information was kept in a password-protected file and stored securely on UT Box, a secure cloud-based server. No identifiable information was collected in the research process. Data will be stored securely on UT Box, a password-protected server only accessible to the research team. Data will be stored securely for three years, after which files will be destroyed in a secure manner.

Sample

Any adult (18+) who participated in the Mi Familia & Me program for the 2022-2023 academic year was eligible to participate in the study, which was reported as 30 participants. Twenty program participants completed the AP/OD survey, 18 completed the Social Capital questions, and 19 completed the MFM survey. Thirteen program participants (43.3% of total) shared their experiences in three focus groups.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS statistical analysis software and Microsoft Excel. Due to the small sample sizes, descriptive statistics were used to report all survey data, including pre- and post-survey data when available.

Focus group data were then analyzed using thematic analysis approaches. One member of the evaluation team independently reviewed and coded each transcript using a qualitative data software (e.g., Dedoose). The researchers then met to identify major themes and consulted with each other to establish interrater reliability. Major themes are presented in this report along with participant quotes to contextualize the findings.

Findings

Quantitative Data Findings

AP/OD Survey– Participant Knowledge of Child Development and Strategies for Stimulating Healthy Development

The scored results of the AP/OD survey were provided to the evaluation team for analysis. Correct answers were given a score of 1 and incorrect answers received a score of 0. Each survey section consists of four questions with a maximum of four points for correct answers per section. Although 22 pre-surveys were scored, two were removed from analysis due to not having post-surveys, resulting in 20 surveys for analysis. Average scores and percentage of correct answers across participants for each survey section are in Table 4 on the next page.

The team analyzed the AP/OD survey using non-parametric tests (related-samples Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test) to assess for significance. Non-parametric tests were chosen due to small sample sizes and the skewedness of the data.

The survey results demonstrated positive changes in knowledge for all survey sections and Mi Familia & Me target outcomes.

- *Knowledge of children’s brain development: The score increases on the topics of nutrition and physical activity, socioemotional development, mathematical development, and use of technology were statistically significant.*
- *Dedicating time to reading and family strengthening activities: The score increase for school readiness was statistically significant.*

Table 4: AP/OD Survey - Average Pre and Post Survey Scores for Knowledge Items

Target Outcomes of the Mi Familia & Me Program	AP/OD Survey Section	Average Pre-survey Score		Average Post-survey Score		Percent Change
		# correct	% correct	# correct	% correct	
Parents express knowledge about children's brain development.	Part I. Parenting	3.15	78.8%	3.45	86.3%	+ 7.5%
	Part II. Early Learning	3.15	78.8%	3.55	88.8%	+ 10.0%
	Part III. Language and Literacy Development	3.4	85.0%	3.75	93.8%	+ 8.8%
	Part IV. Nutrition and Physical Activity	1.9	47.5%	3.05	76.3%	+ 28.8%*
	Part V. Socioemotional Development	3.25	81.3%	3.7	92.5%	+ 11.3%*
	Part VI. Use of Technology	1.8	45.0%	2.5	62.5%	+ 17.5%*
	Part VII. Mathematical Development	1.65	41.3%	2.25	56.3%	+ 15.0%*
Parents report dedicated time to reading and family-strengthening activities.	Part VIII. School Readiness	2.5	62.5%	3.35	83.8%	+ 21.3%*
Parents acknowledge and advocate for their child's needs.	Part IX. Advocacy	2.95	73.8%	3.45	86.3%	+ 12.5%*

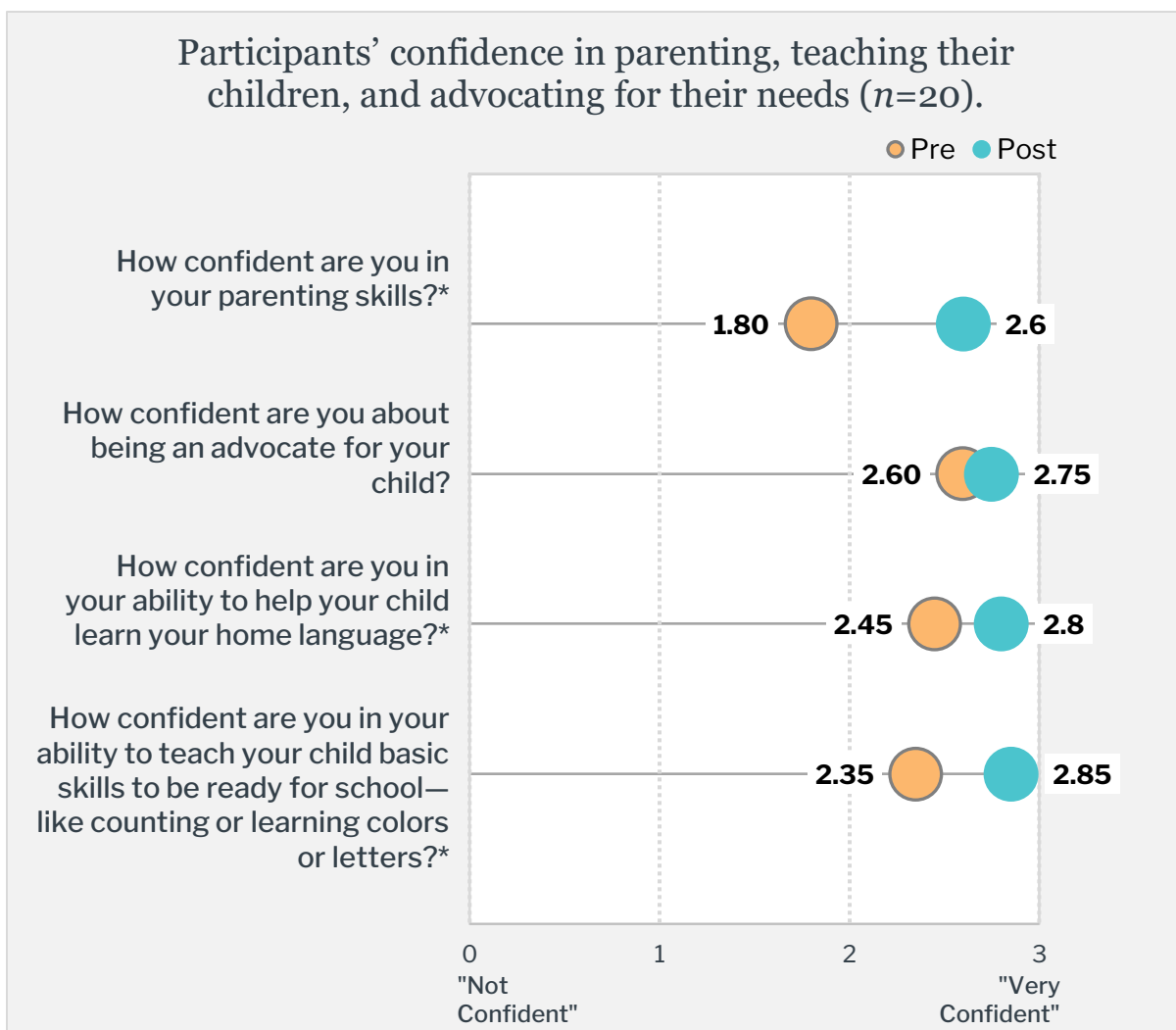
*Significant at the .05 level

The final question on the AP/OD survey asked four questions pertaining to participants' confidence with response options ranging from 0 ("not confident") to 3 ("very confident"). Figure 2 presents the averages for the pre- and post-ratings on these items. We analyzed these data using paired sample t tests.

There were positive changes in participants' confidence in parenting, teaching their children, and advocating for their needs.

- *Pre- and post-test scores for confidence in parenting skills, teaching children their home language, and teaching children basic skills to be ready for school showed a statistically significant increase.*
- *Pre- and post-test scores for confidence in advocating for their children's needs did not show a statistically significant increase.*

Figure 2: AP/OD Survey - Average Pre- and Post-Survey Scores for Confidence Items



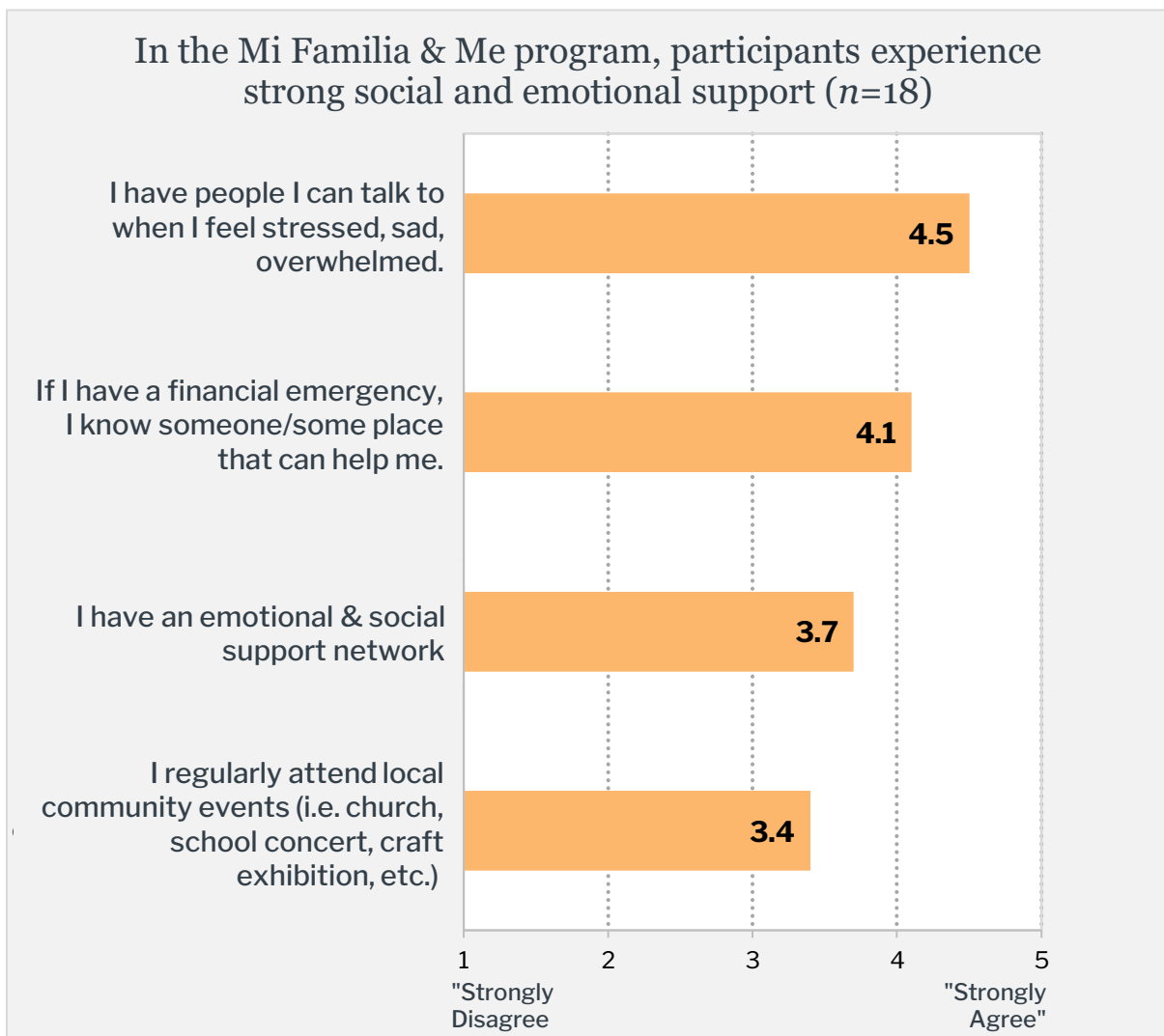
*Significant at the .05 level

Todos Juntos Social Capital Survey – Participant Experience of Social Emotional Support

The Social Capital Survey includes four items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree” that was administered at the end of the program. A total of 18 people completed the survey and averages are included in Figure 3.

Data show that at the conclusion of the Mi Familia & Me program, participants experience strong social and emotional support that they can access when they have emergencies or feel stressed. There is somewhat less agreement on having a support network or being connected with the community on an ongoing basis.

Figure 3: Social Emotional Support Post Intervention Mean Scores



Mi Familia & Me Survey – Participant Confidence and Self-Efficacy in Parenting

The Mi Familia & Me (MFM) survey included 12 items that were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, corresponding to scores from 1 through 5. The survey results are presented in Table 5.

A total of 19 people completed the MFM pre- and post-surveys. The MFM pre-survey was administered midway through the program year after the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD) had concluded, and the post-survey was administered two months later at the conclusion of the program year. We analyzed the data with a paired samples t test.

The data show positive trends from pre- to post-survey on most of the items. However, only one item showed a statistically significant increase: “It is important for me to have frequent communication with my child's teacher.”

Several factors complicate this analysis, including small sample sizes, delayed administration of the pre-test midway in the program year, and a short length of time between the pre- and post-survey.

Table 5: MFM Survey- Pre- and Post-Survey Means for Participant Confidence and Self-Efficacy

Target Outcomes of the Mi Familia & Me Program	MFM Survey Item	Pre-Survey Mean	Post-Survey Mean
Parents have increased confidence in their role as their child's first teacher.	I believe that learning at home is just as important as learning at school.	4.79	4.74
	I know how to help my child learn at home.	4.26	4.53
	I feel confident as a parent.	4.63	4.95
Parents report time spent dedicated to reading and family-strengthening activities.	My child and I read together most days.	3.11	3.26
	My child reads with other members of our family every day or most days.	3.84	4.26
	I enjoy reading with my child.	4.32	4.11
	My child loves reading books (or being read to).	4.00	4.00

Target Outcomes of the Mi Familia & Me Program	MFM Survey Item	Pre-Survey Mean	Post-Survey Mean
Parents report a greater sense of hope and confidence in their family’s resilience.	My child is able to communicate effectively in both native and English languages at age-appropriate levels.	4.47	4.58
	My child is able to cope when I have to leave him/her with other adults.	4.42	4.84
Parents report an improvement in their relationship with their child.	When my child misbehaves, I feel confident in my ability to positively handle their behavior.	3.58	4.00
Parents acknowledge and advocate for their child’s needs).	It is important for me to have frequent communication with my child’s teacher.	2.47	3.37*
	I know what it means to be an advocate for my child.	3.58	4.00

*Significant at the .05 level

Additionally, an item included in the MFM post-surveys asked, “Do you believe that you have an improved relationship with your child after this year being part of Todos Juntos?”. All 24 responses indicated “Sí, nuestra relación ha mejorado/Yes, our relationship has improved.”

The implication of findings from these surveys are discussed further in the Summary and Discussion section of this report.

Qualitative Data Findings

The following analysis of focus group interviews centers on three main questions:

1. What are the program participants' key takeaways from the program?
2. How have they used what they learned through the program with their children and families, if at all?
3. What, if anything, could be improved about the program?

Prior to conducting the focus group, the evaluation team conducted a tour of the Todos Juntos Learning Center. Although this tour was not a formal part of the evaluation process, the team observed a strong and evident connection between the program participants and the staff. The staff warmly greeted adult learners and their children by their names. The physical environment was welcoming, with educational materials and decorations present in all classrooms. Finally, the building's location proved to be highly accessible, offering both free parking and convenient public transportation options. This observation is particularly noteworthy, as several participants mentioned during the focus groups that the staff's expertise, cultural connection, and the welcoming atmosphere significantly influenced their sense of belonging and community at the Todos Juntos Learning Center.

The research team identified three major categories of learning and program impact in the analysis of focus group transcripts. Each of these categories are explored in detail below and illustrated with quotes that provide insight into how participants applied what their learned through the program in daily family interactions.

- Becoming a teacher and leader in and for the family – Shifting parenting practices and family dynamics.
- Increasing school readiness – Understanding how to support children's development.
- Building community – Connecting and learning through shared experience.

Becoming a Teacher and Leader in and for the Family – Shifting Parenting Practices and Family Dynamics

Mothers who participated in the Mi Familia & Me program reported an increased capacity to act as teachers and leaders in their family. The research team identified three themes that built on each other and enabled mothers to step into a new role: (1) self-care and self-regulation, (2) practicing attuned and positive parenting, and (3) modeling new skills and leading by example. As a result, mothers described a shift in parenting practices and family dynamics, including stronger connections with their children and more positive relationships with their partners.

Establishing the Importance of Self-Care and Self-Regulation: “You are people first before being a mom or wife.”

Many of the mothers discussed how the program increased their awareness for the importance of self-care and personal growth. One participant likened participating in the

program to a “mental break.” “I would get home happy. Like I had time for mom, I would get home happy. [...] My daughters would say, ‘Oh, this is good.’ Because I wasn’t running around the house stressed.” Another participant echoed these sentiments and described the link between time for self-care, a sense of self-worth, and her ability to support her family:

...the importance of you taking care of yourself. Because you are your children’s pillar. If you’re okay, you’re going to be able to help your children. And if you’re not okay, you’re not going to be able to. Sometimes, we forget. We spend the time assisting our husbands, our children, but we forget about ourselves. So, what happens if you neglect yourself? What happens if you’re not okay? Because you’re the pillar. We have learned that here, too. To value, care, and look out for ourselves, too. Not to leave ourselves behind, to move forward too.

Making time for self-care helped facilitate maternal autonomy and the ability to regulate emotions. Mothers described how the program’s emphasis on self-care and self-regulation enabled them to set a positive example for their families, refrain from acting out of stress, anger, or anxiety, and promote intergenerational healing. Two participants shared their experiences in the following exchange:

Mother 1: Well, I think it also taught us to first heal our wounds so that we can be good mothers to our children. And not place on them things that we’re carrying from our childhood. Setting a good example and learning with them every day. Teaching them a different way to how we learned. And also taking our space, like [other participant] was saying, sometimes we get frustrated because we want to be moms that—

Mother 2: That solve everything.

Mother 1: That can do everything but there comes a time when frustration sets in, and we can’t. We need a break. If we get so busy with so many things, we won’t have time for ourselves or for them. So, I think we need to have our space so we can set a good example for them.

Mother 2: Yes, to know that you are people first before being a mom or wife.

Mother 1: I also think that it’s like not repeating patterns we had, like if nobody sat us down to read, things like that. Try to improve, right? We won’t be perfect but try to improve what we lived as children.

Being Present and Attentive with the Children: “Make time to pay attention to the children in the moment and give them importance.”

Several mothers identified how their enhanced awareness and emotional regulation allowed them to be more present and attuned with their children. In the examples below, two mothers reflect on their increased ability to regulate their own emotions and impulses before turning their attention to the children. The ability to regulate their own emotions allowed the mothers to then help their children regulate.

It helped me a lot in the sense that I am very impulsive. (...) I learned to control myself and like the teachers were saying, “Put yourself at [your child’s] level, so you can have a conversation with them and say, “this is wrong, this is good.” I think that all that helped me because it was like, “Stay still, if you don’t, I’ll give you a swat.” So, all that helped me a lot to be a better mom. To try without raising my voice but get their attention and talk to them and tell them what is right and wrong.

Another mother shared:

For me, it was also controlling my impulse, you can be doing something at home and the kids are fighting and I would usually yell. It helped me a lot to control that. Control myself first and then get their attention.

Participants cited parenting practices that they had learned in the program that helped them calm their children down and provide them with choices and agency. This allowed participants to de-escalate conflicts, avoid punitive responses, and promote connection and growth. Several mothers described this as a significant change from parenting practices that had been passed down through generations. As one participant said:

I also think that I should not continue dragging the chains. Our parents educated us in a way, but I don’t want to educate my children the same. [...] They taught me new methods here about how to relax him, how to calm him down. [...] So, give them options, but above all, to not continue with [...] hitting, screaming, bad words. We didn’t do it with our older children, but now, we have the opportunity to do it with the little ones so it’s never too late to make a change. That’s what I have learned the most here. And, as she says, to take some time for ourselves [...] take a breather, something to relax and to help us be better.

Moreover, several mothers reflected on a lesson about “being attentive to the children” and making time for activities with children in the midst of their busy days. These participants reflected that “little things” may be very important to a child, even though they don’t seem important to an adult. “Those little things that are super important for them, we need to give them importance. To be attentive to them,” one participant said. In one focus group a mother shared:

Something that impacted me too was that sometimes, we’re cooking here and the child is playing over there by himself. And he’s “Mom, mom.” And we don’t pay attention, “Wait and wait, and wait.” Until the child stands up and approaches. And until he tugs my hand and takes me. Then, I think, “Why don’t I turn off the stove and see what he’s doing?” To pay attention to him at that moment. As my grandmother used to say, “Look, they won’t be children all the time; enjoy them.” They grow very fast. So, I think it’s that, as [other mother] says, to provide attention to them and see how they’re feeling, right? To understand that feeling they are trying to let us know. Maybe, they are afraid of something, maybe he saw something. Maybe they want to show us something.

In a separate focus group, another mother also described making time for the connection with her child:

If we don't make the time, from the time we get up until we go to sleep, as a mom you never have enough time, there's dishes to wash, food, this and that and the more you look the more you find. But it's important, they would tell us here, maybe it's not half an hour, maybe start with five or ten minutes, daily to just do like they do here when they do the Christmas activities or easter, they do an activity between mother and child. That is a connection that is beautiful because you learn how to understand children, something that I also didn't do with my other older kids.

Teaching and Leading by Example: "Our children are watching."

Several mothers discussed how they started modeling self-regulation and positive parenting strategies at home, translating what they were learning through the program into practice. The mothers noted that as they were implementing these new practices with their children, they were also teaching their partners by example:

Yes, my husband tells me the same thing, "How are you so patient?" Well, I've learned at school. [...] It's what I like about school, because other times, it was the other way around, he was patient with the girls and I wasn't, before I came to school. Sometimes he looks at me and I say, "Calm down, calm down, talk to them, talk to them." He doesn't say anything and starts laughing.

I also think what I've learned I've taught him more than anything. Because I spend so much time with the kids, what I learn I put it into practice. I always focus on the kids but also a lot on him. Because what I learn, I have to teach him. What happens if one day I have to go somewhere or something happens to me, you never know. This house will be chaos between him and the kids. So, I bring him along and I teach him.

Another mother noted that she worked to maintain self-control to model positive and healthy behaviors for her children, because she recognized that "the children are watching":

[...] the children are seeing it because one day, they're going to be adults. They're going to be grown-up women and if they're watching, "Oh, my mother explodes at everything." "She's getting angry at everything." If they see that we, as mothers, have self-control, I mean, sometimes, husbands arrive all tired from work and they are there annoying all the time, but if we have that self-control, as she says, the children are watching.

Changes in self-care, self-regulation, and parenting practices also impacted the mothers' relationships with their partners. One mother described how the program helped her to shift from begging her partner to change and become more involved—which frequently resulted in conflict—to taking the initiative in implementing the changes she wanted to see with her children. Once she started to model positive changes, he followed her lead:

There was a time that I wanted him to get involved. But I didn't ask him, I demanded that from him. "You should do this." "You should go and see [your daughter] at school." Todos Juntos helped me a lot with this, it's been a few weeks now that I decided not to keep on asking or begging for his attention. I started to devote more time to myself because that's what they have taught us here.

That's why I tell you that we teach by example because they start to watch. Sometimes, when I start reading to the kids, if I go out to ride the bikes, he arrives from work and sees that we're over there, he arrives, gets on his bike and catches up with us. Before it wasn't like that. [...] And he follows us. He's gotten involved more. If he's making that change on his own, I feel good because I didn't get angry at him. I didn't discuss it with my daughters, and they don't see those problems.

The mother continued to explain her understanding that her relationship with her partner was going to set an important relationship model for her daughters:

Our children see the attitude we have as a couple and that's going to affect them in a relationship in the future. I tell their father, "Are you going to like [others] treating your daughter like that?" "Are you going to like that someone humiliates your daughter like that one day?"

Overall, program participants described profound changes for themselves, their children, and their relationships. One mother described how her experience in the program transformed her relationship with her children and facilitated change within the family system, including with her partner who was initially hesitant in supporting the shifts in parenting. As she describes below, her increasing ability to model positive parenting for her partner and lead by example was critical for changing deeply ingrained stereotypes:

I can say that my life changed 360 degrees. Because I was a person who didn't like to wake up early. If something bothered me, I never told my partner to avoid having problems. I always scolded my children for any mess; I told them, "You are always..." I mean, I was always feeling bad.

When I started—I started first with the youngest, to read books to her, and he was like, "Why are you reading books to her? She doesn't understand, she can't read." And I keep on doing it. Then, there was a change in my daughters; the youngest one doesn't follow him much because her father doesn't read to her, he doesn't play much with her. He detaches himself from the girls' activities and he notices that.

Then, he started getting involved without me telling him. Because he had that macho thinking, "I don't do it; I don't get involved." "Moms have to do that." "She has to do it." I didn't tell him anything. I think that I just did it with my daughters. He watched, and he, by himself, started to get involved with his daughters.

Another participant explained how she began to see herself as a leader: a person who has information, manages stress, and builds on mutual support. As a leader she can support her husband and work with him as a team:

I feel that being a leader is that my children, my husband, my family have some support or have someone with that information (...) Sometimes I tell my husband, "You know what? We can do this. I feel that I am a leader, and I can find that support". That my husband finds that support in me and my children find that support in me, they can rely on me.

Although I know that sometimes I can't. Stress overwhelms me and to be a leader—I feel that it's to be a team. I mean, perhaps I have information, but I need my husband to support me, my children to support me. To have that support. From them to me and from me to them. They should find that trust, that love, that respect, to always find that at home. To be that team, that leader among all of us to make it all stronger.

Summary

In summary, participants describe increased confidence in being leaders in their families. Participants shared examples of leading by example and modeling healthy relationships and described improved connections both with their children and partners. They specifically credited the program's focus on self-care and self-regulation, positive and attentive parenting practices, and support for implementing new strategies in their families.

Increasing School Readiness – Understanding How to Support Children's Development

The second category of learning and program impact identified by the research team revolved around the importance of preparing the children for elementary school. When asked about the most important part of being involved with the program, one mother shared, “The attention that they give the children. The attention and the help they give to learn and to be prepared for kindergarten.”

The research team identified four themes that built on each other and contributed to increasing school readiness: (1) parallel programming and learning for mothers and children, (2) learning about brain development and stimulating connections, (3) building routines, and (4) advocating for the child in the U.S. school system.

Parallel Programming and Learning for Mothers and Children: “Mutual motivation to keep studying.”

Several mothers spoke to the importance of having pre-school programming for their children while they were learning English and participating in Mi Familia & Me. They saw a benefit for their children which enforced their own commitment to the program, and vice versa:

For me, personally, I always tell my sisters because they also have their young kids and I tell them, “Come to the school, you can take your kid and have your English class and your daughter will be in school. It's not a daycare, it's a school where they will teach her and prepare her to go to school. That way your child won't struggle.” That one year of bringing [my daughter] here changed her so much and helped. It was big progress for her.

One mother shared how her daughter's enjoyment of the program encouraged her own consistent attendance:

To see that my child likes to come; she wants me to bring her at night. I have to tell her, 'The sun hasn't come up yet.' It's good to see that she wants to come, it's motivation for me. If she wants to come, then I want it too. I have to bring her because she enjoys being here. So, for me, this program it's been a blessing.

Another mother shared how her commitment to studying provided an example for her son and motivated him to do his homework:

In my family, being involved—one of the things that helped me is with my seven-year-old son, back then he was six. I always struggled getting him to go to school or do homework. And with me having homework, he saw me coming to school, and doing my homework, it motivated him and now it's easier in that area. He saw that everyone would sit at the table with me to do their homework and I thought that was really nice. To see him motivated to keep studying.

Learning About Brain Development: “Stimulating connections and growth.”

Many mothers spoke to the importance of learning about brain development and how they could support their child's development in daily interactions. One mother described how the program prepared her son for school and helped her support his cognitive development:

Mi Familia & Me [is] connected to the school. So, that's why they train [the children] so well for school outside. But things about the program that helped me, as a mother with my son, was that how is it that with such simple things we can help so much, in their little brain, right? Because they start making little neurological connections and those connections will help him be a more intelligent person, not just numerically, but in decision making, solving problems.

Several specific activities stood out for the mothers in building their understanding of child development. One mother described an in-class activity that was particularly impactful in helping her understand how regular and attentive interactions with children, such as reading, can stimulate their brain development:

I can't remember the name of the activity, but it was something that impacted me a lot. It stayed with me. It was an activity about the children's brain, the connections. With some ribbons we made brain A and brain B: And one child was like his parents didn't pay attention to him or read with him. The problems they had among themselves. They didn't explain that they weren't related to him; things like that. And then the other child was the opposite. So, it was like this brain here had really beautiful connections and the brain here was very alone. It was a lesson like, they were small things that one thinks don't affect [the child] but you realize they do. I feel like it's a lesson that many people should know because we don't realize and know that little things affect them. So, I think that is a lesson I would like more parents to know about and learn.

Another mother continued: “...about the brain, one is how to stimulate the connections and the other is how to turn them off. It was yelling, not taking him to the park, not reading,

things that were so simple that help make those connections that many parents don't know. We have no idea that happens."

As a result of this new knowledge and understanding, mothers incorporated more reading and learning activities into daily chores and outings, such as to the grocery store:

[...] something as simple as going to the store, and the kid is quiet and I am quiet, and you're shopping [...] and I say, "Look, that's a rectangle." Or the colors, "Look, let's get the fruit, what color is the tomato? What color is the--?" things I never did with the other girls. They would cry and I would give them something and then go on to what I was there for. Today, I go to the store and something so simple, I'll grab something and say, "What do you think this is? What color is it?" Maybe he says a different color, but I'll tell him, "It looks red." But it's a routine that he knows, he knows that when we go to the store, sometimes I do it on purpose like, not telling him anything and he says, "Mom, you have tomatoes," and I'll say, "Oh yes, tomatoes." So, it's something that I didn't do with my other children.

Several mothers mentioned how education and activities in the program encouraged their support for the children's reading and interests:

For me, everything I learned was about the reading. Because I was a person that I would get home from work, do what I need to do, and I never focused on them. And with the reading program, it taught me a lot, he would come up to me and say, "Mommy, read me the book. Mommy, I want to read this book." He would choose the books and he wanted to read them. So, I think that for me a very important moment was being able to express myself with him through a book and teach him what he wants to learn.

Building Family Routines: "Going to school cheerfully."

Establishing routines, both for themselves and their children, was mentioned by several mothers as an important learning experience in the program. One mother described the importance of joining the program and getting out of the house where she had been living locked down since the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing to do so even after the lockdown ended. The program pushed her to adopt new and beneficial routines for herself and her family:

It was the time when COVID started. Then, I kept on with the routine of being locked down all the time. I used to go to HEB wearing pajamas. I used to go to Walmart in pajamas. So, to come out of that routine was a very big impact for me. Since I started with Todos Juntos, my routine is different. I mean, my day starts at 5:00 am in the morning to 9:00 pm at night. My day is longer now. I have time for myself, I have time to watch a series. I have time for the children. I mean, you wake up at 5:00 am in the morning, you prepare lunch; I mean, it's so important to wake up early. It's so important for the day. Before, no, my morning was to wake up at 11:00 or 12:00 and I was drinking coffee. I think it was a very big change for me; very big and very good, for me and for my family.

Other mothers described building daily routines for the children to promote positive associations with going to school. They noted that consistency was important and reduced daily arguments:

Mother 1: For me, I learned a lot here about routine because before, I have two kids that are older than [the child in the program], but I didn't have a routine at night or in the morning to go to school, I was always arguing with them and now thanks to what I learned here, it's not like that. At night we have a routine for going to bed, the time, sometimes it's a bit difficult but I think that its normal. In the morning they get up and they're happy and go to school cheerful. Thanks to the routine.

Mother 2: I learned that you have to be, well, here they make you learn to be constant. So, try to always have a routine with the kids because that will help them when they go to school. Coming here from Monday to Thursday, the kids know they have to get up early, they have a routine and that helps them get used to having a routine in their day. So, that helps them so once they go to school, they know they have to get up early, go to school. [My child] learned that he has a routine, and he knows that during the week we come to the—well, he still doesn't know how to identify, like Monday, Saturday, but he knows that he goes to school every day. So, I think that will help him when he goes to school.

Advocating in School: “How not to be scared and get solutions.”

Many mothers described how “being a leader” extended to their ability to advocate for their children in the school setting. This increased confidence played an important role as they parented their children. One mother described how she assured her son that she was there for him and would advocate for his rights if needed:

Okay, so firstly for my son, every morning we get up and I sit with them and say, “Okay, today is a new day. I hope it goes well at school. First of all, no fights and no bothering other children and if someone bothers you, that's what the teacher is there for, so you can say what you feel and what other kids are doing to you, if you don't want to defend yourself. But if you don't tell the teacher, if you're scared, that's what I'm here for. Because I am your mom, and I will defend you.

Mothers credited their increased confidence in navigating the U.S. school system to learning about their rights and being informed about available supports, including counselors and translators. Several mothers stated that they felt less intimidated, with one saying, “For me to not be scared and to get to the point where I get solutions at school. And that I have rights, if they don't speak Spanish, I have the right to a translator. I liked that a lot, I didn't know that we had that right.” Another mother expanded on how the Mi Familia & Me program prepared her and gave her tools to advocate for her children in school:

Well, mine isn't in school yet and it's my first child so I have not gone through that process, but I feel like that I am more prepared, I am not scared. If something happens at his school, I won't stay quiet. They teach you; how do you say it? Like, they give you the tools so you can be prepared so if any problem were to come up, if someone doesn't help you, they say that there are counselors at school, and you

need to address them. But if they can't help you with the problem, they can tell you where to go. I feel like you are not as closed to the moment or scared that, "They don't speak Spanish. What am I going to say?" Or things like that. So, I feel like in that aspect, it's like they prepare you as well, to begin that stage.

The early childhood education program offered alongside Mi Familia & Me provides a helpful learning environment for children to develop necessary skills and for parents to practice their advocacy skills. A mother shared a clear example of this:

My child, before coming here [...] they evaluated his speech [...] my child wouldn't talk, he was two and half and didn't talk. So, I was worried because with my other kids, they had to get speech therapy. I said, it looks like with him, we're going down the same situation, he's going to need a speech therapist. And that frustrated me [...] But when he started here, we finished the first semester, that child made such a huge change. He was talking and talking. And today [...] people that would say that he doesn't talk, today they say, "Be quiet, you talk too much." So, but yes, it helped him a lot to come here and be with other kids, because that made him develop his speech. Even his speech therapist that he still sees, she said she sees the change the boy has had since coming here.

Summary

Mothers spoke to multiple areas in which the program supported their children's school readiness. Particularly important was the provision of a preschool program for their children while they themselves were learning English and participating in Mi Familia & Me. Participants described how their own engagement in education motivated their children and how they began setting routines and developing positive associations with school. They also credited Mi Familia & Me with teaching them about brain development and how they could include stimulating activities in daily interactions and spend time reading with their children. Lastly, being prepared to advocate for their children reduced anxiety and increased their confidence for navigating the U.S. education system.

Building Community – Connecting and Learning through Shared Experience

The third category of learning and program impact identified by the research team was building community. Several mothers noted that the program provided important connections both within the program and the larger community. Many participants described the program as a source of information and ongoing support. "I feel like part of the family and the staff, the months and years that I've gotten to know them," one participant said. The research team noted three themes that supported building community: (1) giving and receiving nonjudgmental social support, (2) trusting the teachers' competencies, and (3) connecting with the larger community.

Nonjudgmental Social Support: "My family, my therapy, my support."

Several participants described how they relied on the Mi Familia & Me staff and other mothers in the program for nonjudgmental social support. This support centered on a

shared experience and perspective that promoted trust in each other, which was particularly important for mothers who were immigrants. The nonjudgmental environment helped reduce some feelings of guilt or shame that can come through comparing your child and parenting to others. As one mother said, “People from your family judge you a lot. If the child is not walking yet, if the child is not eating, the way you dress him [...] I think that a real family is when they listen to you, when they support you, when they respect your opinion. I think that’s what I found here.”

One participant described how social support was essential in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic:

What I feel about the program and all this, I have no words because here I found a lot of emotional support. I came from the pandemic, from being alone. I felt like I needed social support and here, all the other mothers, the teachers [...] they helped me so much with their kindness. They were always there if we needed anything. They’re always ready to find solutions and getting us the information we need.

Another mother described how the program offered a therapeutic and nonjudgmental environment that allowed her to get help she could not get elsewhere. Other program participants and staff helped her problem solve from a shared perspective and experience:

I saw the program, Mi Familia & Me, as if it was my therapy. My therapy for many things. There are topics that you can’t talk about with relatives [...] it might be things related to the children, with the husband. I felt I was in a family here; a family that doesn’t judge you, that listens to you, suggests things and above all, they’re people who are listening to you and are suggesting things from their experience. You find people who agree with you. People who have the same problems regarding the children’s education or sometimes, even in personal matters. That’s how I describe Mi Familia & Me, as my therapy and my support.

Social support was especially important in the context of immigration for mothers who were separated from their families and experienced isolation and discrimination in their new environment. One mother shared:

I think I already expressed this in a different occasion but as an immigrant it’s hard to come without family and not know where to go. So, you create the support network between moms that are going through the same thing, I think that moms that don’t have another profession but to be a mom, we’re more empathetic. We understand and don’t judge. I think that was the nicest thing we did. We didn’t judge the moms for one thing or another and that created a support network that helped me to almost get a job.

Another mother in a different focus group also shared:

Actually, the Mi Familia & Mi program impacted me a lot and made me do lots of changes [...] and to know what comments and opinions to take for me and which ones to ignore. Because society is very cruel and affects us a lot. Sometimes, as mothers, it affects us a lot. I think I find support here. That information, that support, and I keep on coming.

Trusting the Teachers' Competencies: "You can count on them for solving problems."

The second theme that supported community building represents the mutual respect between teachers and mothers in the program. Mothers shared how the staff's enthusiasm "brightened their day," that the environment felt safe for them and their children. The safety created within the program extended to the mothers' relationships with each other, as noted above.

One mother described how the staff's enthusiasm, respect, and modeling helped emphasize the importance of all of the women in the program:

I think they're respectful, they care a lot about us and the children. They are people who have a spark... I notice that they always come here with enthusiasm and they always want to be here. I see everybody here to respect them, but we see beyond the occupation they have. We trust them to talk about other things with them. Respectfully, they always try to keep things in order. To make sure that nobody feels offended by anything. If there is a concern with a child or a mother, instead of trying to see the problem separately, they always try to keep a union. So, I think they are—I see them as wonder women here, duplicated. From the office staff, the teachers, all of them. They all show how important each of us is.

One of the mothers shared how the teachers' attention to her, beginning with a greeting every morning, improved her self-worth:

I feel that I have found many friends here, the teachers. As she says, they greet you at the entrance. 'Hello, good morning.' And you feel good. You feel like you're an important person because they're giving you that attention. Perhaps nobody has told you that all morning and you come here and they tell you, 'Hello, good morning' and another one, 'Hello, good morning.' It feels good, it feels nice.

When asked about the program staff, moms universally expressed positive experiences that impacted their perception of the program and reflected trust and appreciation of the teachers' competencies in what they taught in *Mi Familia & Me*:

You feel so impressed with everything they can give you [...] They pay attention to you, they get you the help you need, they make you feel like if you need anything you can count on them. And the teachers are very well trained, they teach you new things, right?

The respect and care given by staff to program participants enhanced participants' ability to ask questions and seek out resources when needed. Most importantly, participants were able to problem solve and work through challenges. One mother shared:

There's always been respect. They have always been very respectful. We are free to ask if we have any doubt or if we don't like something we can comment on it to her. I've done it and I've received a good response from them. They solved things.

Another mother shared:

I even asked them—because I lost my computer charger and they lent me the computer because I was doing the GED but I told them, “Why don’t you order the cable for me because I don’t have an Amazon account?” “Oh, yes.” They were very kind. So, it’s been support for me, of any type. They let me know so they solve what I’m asking them.

Connecting with the Larger Community: “From registering for insurance to going on fieldtrips.”

Lastly, several mothers shared how the activities and resources offered through the program improved their ability to navigate their communities at large, from health insurance to basic resource needs. One mother shared:

I have also had good support when I go and ask a question. I don’t know, perhaps to register for medical insurance. Things like that. Or they bring programs from other associations or organizations related to health or dental care.

Several parents shared that the field trips, including going to parks and seeing animals at farms, helped them feel more confident in trying new things, as well as encouraging their children to explore and enjoy things outside the home. A mother shared how this enhanced her child’s learning:

They make sure that they are in contact with nature too. Sensory activities: they let them play in the sand. Music and dancing activities. My child doesn’t like that; music and dancing is not his thing. He’s learned to cope with it a bit more now. At least to watch. And also reading activities. They have implemented all that here and I try to do it at home too. Out of all those activities, the one that my child has liked the most and there is some kind of routine is activities outside.

To play with dirt; they make farms with dirt and sticks and little animals. He knows what animals belong to the water, ducks; he pours water in a little hole he makes. He starts classifying things because I suppose they show them some of that here.

Another shared how these activities helped build one-on-one relationships in a way that may have been challenging to access or do with the entire family: “They were activities that you can’t afford because when you go out with your family, you’re taking care of all three or four, so that time you have with your youngest child and you just experience it with him, those are experiences you will take with you forever.”

Summary

In summary, program participants highly valued the social support and nonjudgmental community that was built throughout the Mi Familia & Me program. The community was especially important to mothers who experienced isolation, judgement, or discrimination. The social support centered around a shared experience, trust in the teachers’ competence and their help with solving daily problems, and opportunities for connecting with the larger community.

Suggestions for Program Improvement

Participants provided consistent and positive feedback about the Mi Familia & Me program's impact on their families and themselves. To answer the third research question, "What, if anything, could be improved about the program?" interviewers probed for any general suggestions. The research team noted two primary themes for this question: Increasing Awareness and Capacity of the Program and Developing a Program for Fathers.

Increasing awareness and capacity of the program

A few mothers shared how they wished the program had a broader reach, both in community awareness about the program and accessibility. One mother shared how she wished she had learned about the program sooner. She stressed that some immigrant mothers, particularly those newer to the country and with limited resources, may not hear about the program due to other priorities, like work, or not accessing information through social media:

I think that would be a, something that you can share. Because like I say, "Why didn't I hear about this before? Why didn't I know before about the program?" So, my question is how do you get to those people? Especially the immigrants [...] how to lead them to the program, how do you get to the people that have just immigrated and they come with nothing. And you want to tell them, "You're not alone, there's lots of families in the same situation and they can help you make it, in this program." How do you get to them? Because a lot is through social media, but there are people that don't have social media. Or maybe they get here and its work, work, work because there is no other option. And how do you get to them? To that vulnerable sector. That can change a lot of lives.

One mother shared that she had a friend who wanted to participate in the program but was unable to access it because of capacity issues:

Perhaps, there are many mothers who were left outside because there wasn't enough room. They are on a waiting list. There is a mother—I have a new friend who—there wasn't room for her girl but she's coming herself now. When there is room, she's going to be able to bring her child. That could be a thing...to have a larger place. Because there are many mothers who would like to be here or mothers who have other children to bring. There are people who, perhaps, don't have them but there isn't enough room.

Some mothers felt that the program could use additional physical space, possibly with more locations to be accessible within the community. Two mothers shared that the program could benefit from having a dedicated building or additional space within the community:

Mother 1: They should have their own school, because I understand this is a church. They should have their own school, their own name, their own place.

Mother 2: Perhaps, in the future, if they had more campuses; maybe, one here, one in the north.

Others thought that additional locations could ease transportation issues, which could alleviate some barriers to accessing the program. One participant noted, “Because for some people it takes even an hour; it took an hour for me today [...] So, if there were more locations, it would be closer and it would also be easier, but okay. Hopefully one day it will be possible to have in different areas.”

Developing a Program for Fathers

While the Mi Familia & Me program is not intended only for mothers, the program coordinator shared that this year’s attendance included only mothers in the program. A few mothers expressed that it may be helpful to have a specific program for fathers to facilitate what they learned in the program and to alleviate pressures they experienced at the intersection of culture and gender in their roles as mothers:

Mother 1: I would like, I think we talked about it last time during “My Family and Me,” that the dads had a class. So, they can learn what we learned because realistically dads only focus on work. I would like it if there was a talk like they do here, so they can learn more about the kids. Because sadly, in my case, my husband gets home tired, he doesn’t want to pay attention to the kids. On Sunday, yes, he does pay attention but just one day is not enough. I would like some motivation, obviously, as a mom we get tired. I think, I imagine, that they think that we don’t do anything but its several kids. In my case, I have four kids, I need to be on top of all of them. I get tired too, and I tell my husband, “It’s not just about working and bringing money home. You also have obligations with our kids, you have the obligation of sitting with the girls, talk about what they need, or watch a movie, sit with them.” I would like there to be some talks for dads, even if it’s at night because sadly dads don’t have the opportunity in the mornings.

Mother 2: Yes, what she is saying, for me too, I would like that a lot because I think that if you notice the one that is present in the children’s lives is the mother. In our case, as Hispanics, it’s almost always the mom, the dad is never present because the dad is the one that works. And like she was saying, my husband leaves at 6:30, comes home at 7 and he comes home tired, showers and eats and then he sits down to watch TV. But he watches his program, it’s not like he says, “Come, sit, lets watch,” no. Sometimes what we learn here is what we try to teach them. But because they’re men, I think. It’s not something that they say, or like us that we think and say, “Yes, you’re right.” In this, we need to help them so, in what she’s saying, yes. We’d—I don’t know, we’d have to, it’s frustrating because you say, “How can I make him understand?”

Some participants shared they had discussed these ideas with the program staff, but several mothers thought their husbands may be unable or unwilling to attend. One mother noted, “[The program asked], ‘If they had a session to see if the dads committed to coming, what dads could?’ But most of us said, because we know our husbands, right? They can’t, they work or another reason so well, it wasn’t made.”

Summary

It is important to note that participants often responded with affirmations and appreciation for the program when asked for programmatic improvements. As one participant shared, “It’s a difficult question because—I think the program covers it and has it all.” However, some participants thought that increasing awareness and capacity in the program would allow more mothers to benefit from the programming, particularly for mothers who may be harder to reach or were especially isolated. A few mothers also noted that a program for fathers would be helpful, but fathers would need to commit to attending for that program to be successful.

Summary & Discussion

Mi Familia & Me is a parenting program offered to individuals enrolled at the Todos Juntos Learning Center, a dual-generation education program for English Language Learner families in Central Texas. Primary participants in the program are mothers who have children enrolled in the early childhood education (ECE) program at Todos Juntos, although the program is open to all parents. The program runs for nine months and includes the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP/OD) curriculum offered in the fall semester, concurrent activities with children, and an ongoing program with guest speakers and experiential activities during the spring semester to deepen the concepts introduced by the AP/OD curriculum.

Todos Junto identified the following target outcomes:

1. Parents express knowledge about children's brain development.
2. Parents report time spent dedicated to reading and family strengthening activities.
3. Parents have increased confidence in their role as their child's first teacher.
4. Parents acknowledge and advocate for their child's needs.
5. Parents report an improvement in their relationship with their child.
6. Parents report that they have an emotional support network.
7. Parents report a greater sense of hope and confidence in their family's resilience.

Summary of Findings

Quantitative Survey Data

The core outcomes assessed with the surveys administered by Todos Juntos included:

- *Participants' knowledge of brain development and strategies for stimulating healthy development assessed before and after the implementation of the AP/OD curriculum in the fall semester.*
 - *The survey results demonstrate positive changes in knowledge for all survey sections and Mi Familia & Me target outcomes.*
 - *The score increases on the topics of nutrition and physical activity, socioemotional development, mathematical development, use of technology, and school readiness were statistically significant.*
 - *Participants' confidence and self-efficacy in their role as their child's first teacher and advocates for their children assessed before and after the implementation of experiential activities in the spring semester.*
 - *The data show positive trends from pre- to post-survey on most of the items. However, only one item showed a statistically significant on a paired sample t*

test: “It is important for me to have frequent communication with my child's teacher.”

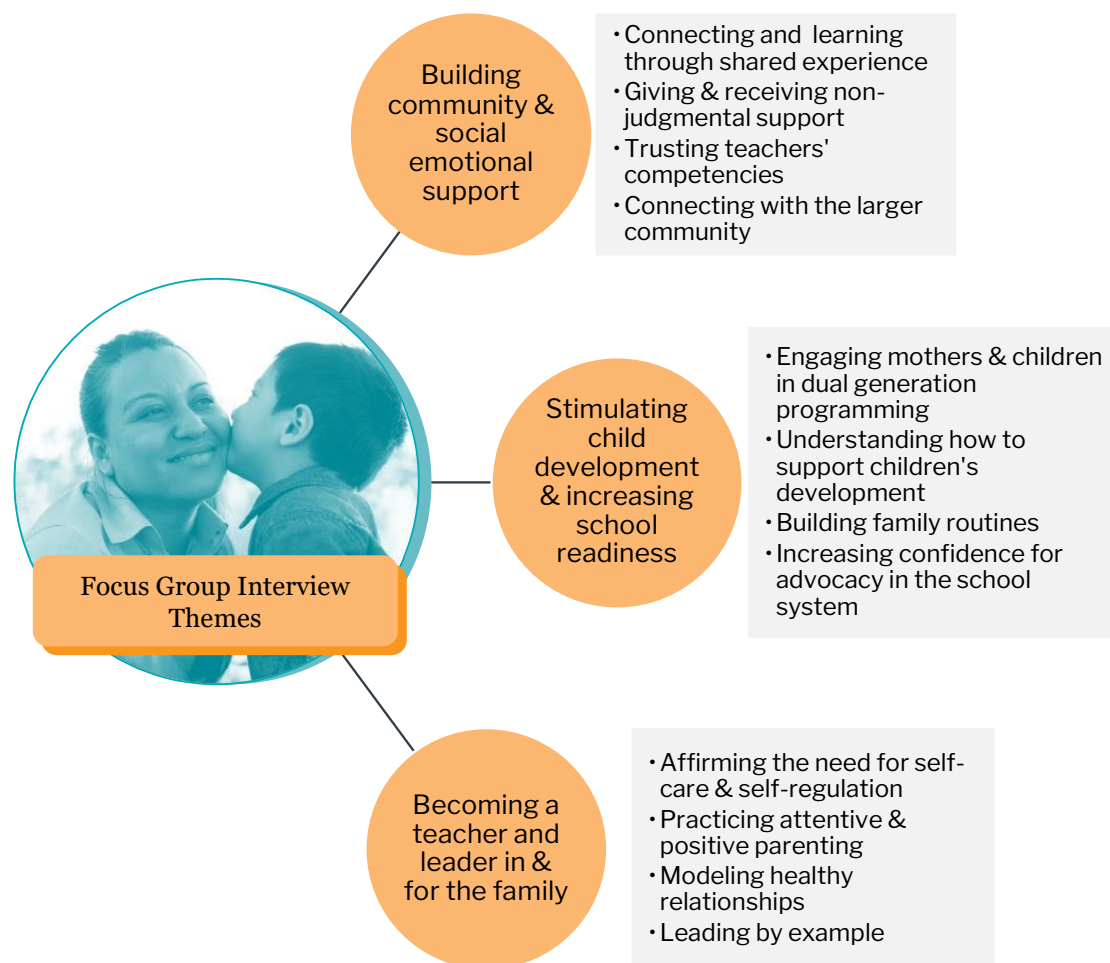
- *Participants’ report about improvement in their relationships with their child assessed after the implementation of experiential activities in the spring semester.*
 - *Participants all affirmed improved relationships with their children.*
- *Participants’ experience of social emotional support at the end of the full program.*
 - *Program participants reported strong social and emotional support that they can access when they have emergencies or feel stressed. There was somewhat less agreement on having a support network or being connected with the community on an ongoing basis.*

Although we found positive trends for all outcome measures, the small sample size and the timing of survey administration limited the likelihood to find statistically significant results. The findings from the surveys should therefore be interpreted with caution and considered alongside the qualitative data to contextualize the overarching impact of the Mi Familia & Me program on participants and their families.

Qualitative Focus Group Data

The semi-structured focus groups were designed to get a deeper understanding of participants’ key takeaways from the program, their translation of learning into everyday practice with their families, and any recommendations for program improvement they may have. Focus group participants provided many examples that reflected positive changes in the target outcomes identified by program staff. The key findings based on a thematic analysis of the interviews are summarized in Figure 4 on the following page.

Figure 4. Summary of Findings from the Analysis of Focus Group Interviews



Discussion

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative data provide evidence of a positive impact of the Mi Familia & Me program that echo many of the findings in the research literature. Mi Familia & Me expands the AP/OD curriculum to include additional time and experiential activities on the topics presented in the curriculum (Moore et al., 2013). By using a two-semester format, the Mi Familia & Me program presents the information of the AP/OD curriculum in the fall and provides opportunities for deeper learning, as well as application, in the spring. The Mi Familia & Me program also addresses several of the noted gaps in implementation research. Namely, by providing bilingual, culturally responsive dual generation programming, the Mi Familia & Me program connects the importance of early childhood education programming with school readiness and later life outcomes for parents (Rabin et al., 2022; Shuyey & Leventhal, 2020; Vesely et al., 2013). Lastly, the data in this report strongly suggest that participants have a high level of trust and value the co-learning provided by the Mi Familia & Me Program, a noted need by Rabin and colleagues (2022). Overall, this report suggests that the Mi Familia & Me Program positively impacts the participants and their families, while creating community within the program and bridging the gap with the larger community

Recommendations

Program Recommendations

The strong community, cultural identity, and acceptance provided by the Todos Juntos Learning Center builds the foundation for participants' learning and growth while in the Mi Familia & Me program and this program evaluation shows that the program meets its target outcomes.

We can make relatively few programmatic recommendations based on the data collected for this report. A few participants did note that increasing the capacity and community awareness for the program, as well as developing a program for fathers, may be of benefit. However, it is important to note that participants valued the quality of the Mi Familia & Me program, and particularly the expertise of the staff. The program's commitment to high-quality, culturally adapted, bilingual education that is embedded within the community warrants consideration before expanding.

Evaluation Recommendations

The logic model for Mi Familia & Me (Figure 5 on page 41) was developed based on the findings of this formative evaluation. The program logic model depicts the relationship between the program's activities and expected outcomes and provides a roadmap for continuous quality improvement and ongoing evaluation. With the logic model in mind, we propose a few additional steps to strengthening the organization's evaluation activities.

Integrate Data Collection into Existing Processes

There were several challenges pertaining to survey distribution that may be addressed by streamlining processes around survey distribution and collection. This is a common challenge for social service agencies, as the priority is delivering high-quality services to clients and data collection is a secondary effort in service of this goal. To streamline data collection, we suggest:

- Considering existing timepoints where clients may already be completing paperwork and integrating the surveys into paperwork collected at that time.
- Distributing paper **and** electronic versions of the surveys. If participants primarily use phones for accessing the internet, provide a QR code that may allow them to access the survey online in real-time when they are at the agency. If paper surveys are preferred, ensure there is a procedure for entering the survey answers into a data base and check for accuracy, so the information is not lost.
- To measure changes more accurately on outcomes with the MFM survey, distributing the MFM pre-survey at the start of the program along with the AP/OD pre-survey. Collect midpoint data for the MFM survey at the conclusion of the AP/OD curriculum (along with the AP/OD post-survey). Collect the MFM post-survey at the end of the program year.

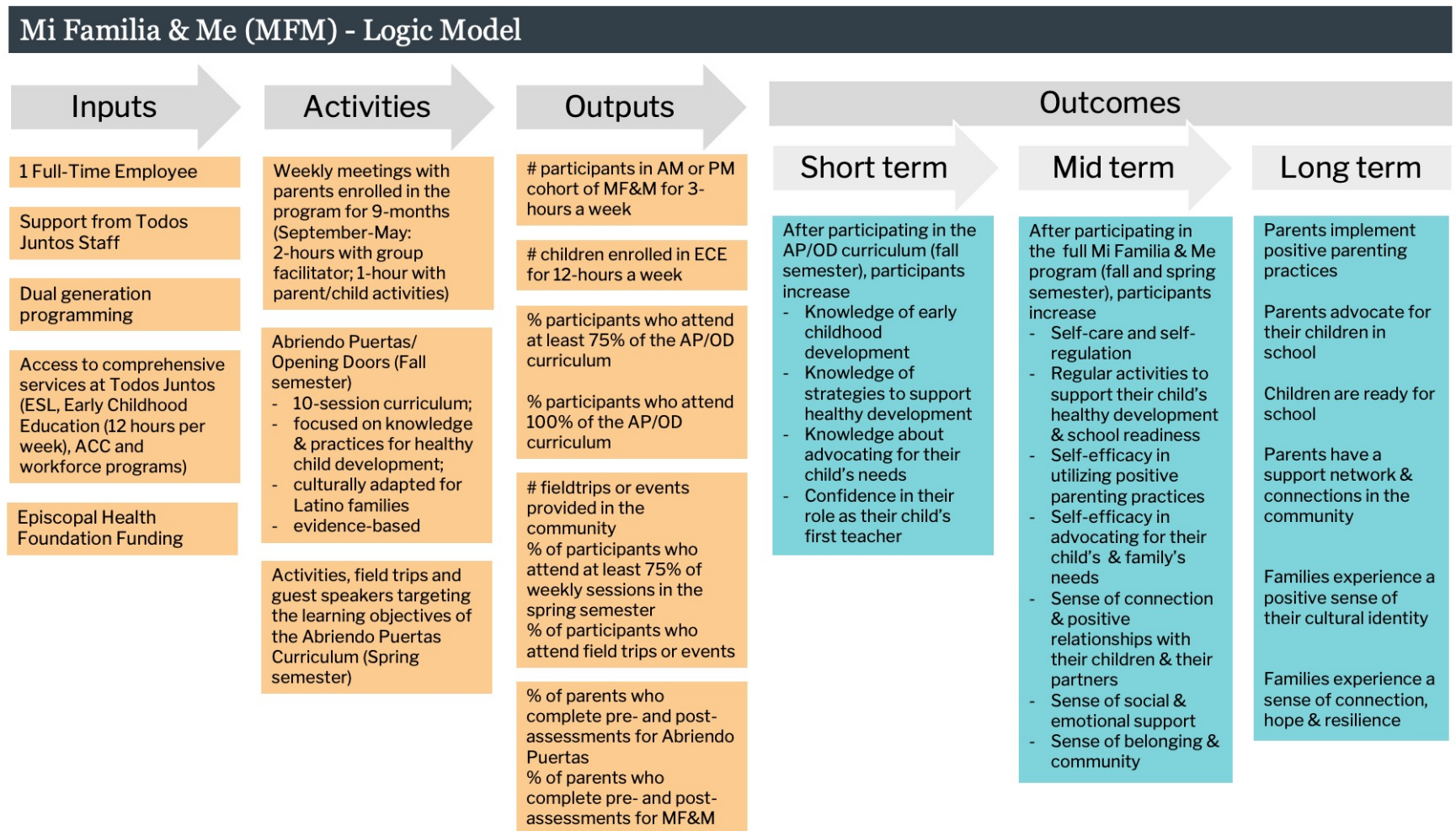
- Combining different surveys into one data collection tool to be distributed at the same point in time.

Define Outcomes and Clarify Measures

In consideration of the findings from this evaluation and the proposed logic model, there are a few outcomes and measures that could be clarified. These include:

- Adding a measure on self-care and self-regulation considering the importance of this outcome as articulated in focus group interviews.
- Refining measures on implementation of positive parenting practices based on the importance of this outcome as articulated in focus group interviews.
- Expanding the measure on advocacy beyond advocacy for children within the school system to include a measure for self-advocacy and problem solving with regard to social services, health care, employment etc.
- Adding a measure that better reflects the sense of hope and resilience for the family, such as strength of family connections, positive relationships, and ability to cope with stress and problems.
- Including a measure to capture the sense of community and belonging for parents in the program, particularly as a reflection of the importance of cultural identity and the experiences of immigrant parents participating in the program.


Figure 5. Logic Model for Mi Familia & Me



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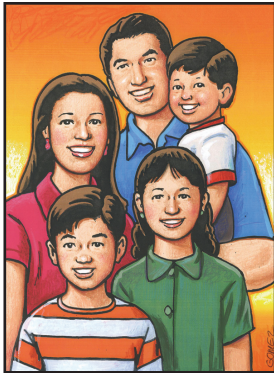
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Appendix A.
Abriendo
Puertas/Opening
Doors 10-Session
Overview

Curriculum Sessions

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors is a 10-session curriculum centered on the cultural values, strengths, experiences and deeply held goals of parents. The curriculum consists of the following topics: early childhood development, early reading, good health, social and emotional well-being, early math, transition to kindergarten, and leadership and advocacy. Throughout the curriculum “participants” is used as an all-encompassing word that includes parents and other adult caregivers. Below are highlights of each session.



Session 1

I Am My Child’s First Teacher; Our Home, My Child’s First School **Popular Saying: “The Apple Doesn’t Fall Far from the Tree”**

This session introduces the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors curriculum, goals, and objectives. The concepts of parents being their child’s first teacher and the home as their child’s first school are discussed. Also discussed is, the importance of how parents take on the role of leaders in the home by communicating or conveying family values, establishing good communication, using positive discipline, setting goals, and developing and implementing a family action plan. A Parent Session 1 Survey(pre-survey) will be conducted so that the program’s local impact can be measured.

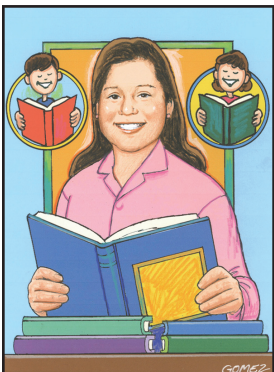


Session 2

My Child’s Growth and Development

Popular Saying: “What Begins Well, Ends Well”

This session focuses on how parents can use daily routines to stimulate healthy brain development in their children ages 0-5 through positive relationships and back and forth interactions. The facilitator will share existing resources and services in the local community to support early childhood development.

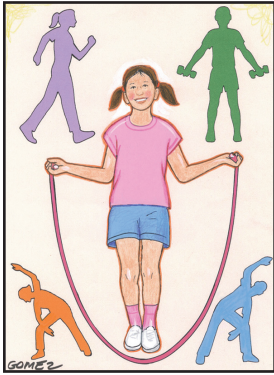


Session 3

Power of Words

Popular Saying: “The More That You Learn, The More Places You Will Go”

In this session, parents will gain practical tips for turning daily routines into opportunities for reading and language development. The session will also explore the benefits of bilingualism and inform parents about how to advocate for their child’s educational rights.



Session 4 **Healthy Body/Healthy Mind - Part 1: Nutrition & Physical Activity** **Popular Saying: "Better Safe Than Sorry"**

In this session, parents will learn the importance of balanced nutrition and physical activity. They will find out how to promote healthy habits in their home and learn about healthy recipes as well as programs available in their local community.



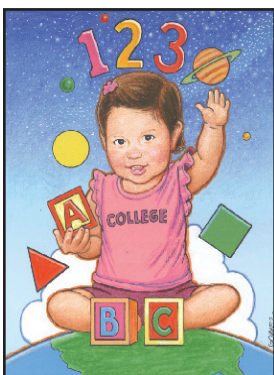
Session 5 **Healthy Body/Healthy Mind - Part 2: Social-Emotional Well-Being** **Popular Saying: "Each Mind is a World unto Itself"**

In this session, parents will explore ways of taking care of their children's social-emotional well-being, as well as their own. They will practice parenting strategies to help their children be self-reliant, confident, and socially competent. This session introduces the parent created Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors video: Small Children: Big Feelings on the importance of social-emotional well-being. Parental self-care is also explored.



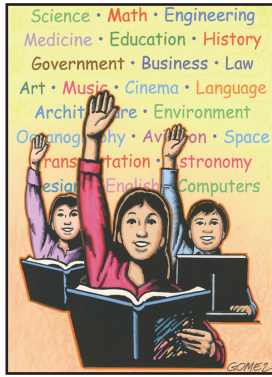
Session 6 **My Child, Media and Technology** **Popular Saying: "The Future Belongs to Those Who Prepare for It Today"**

In this session, parents will be informed and encouraged to embrace media and technology to prepare their children to succeed in the digital age. Parents will also learn: how to identify quality media choices, serve as good role models, use developmentally appropriate media and technology with children 0-5, ensure technology serves as a tool for reaching educational goals, guidelines as well as the challenges and fear about technology will also be addressed, and support will be given.



Session 7 **Count With Me** **Popular Saying: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step"**

In this session, parents will view videos and engage in discussions that demonstrate math is everywhere in the world around them. Fun play and learning activities will be shared to show parents how they can take advantage of daily routine activities that will help their children have fun while doing math. This session introduces the parent created Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors video: Count With Me on the importance of introducing math into everyday activities and Ready Rosie videos that demonstrate ideas for activities parents can do any time to promote early math in a fun and engaging way with their children. This session also includes the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors Count With Me Bingo game. Parents will gain knowledge about the importance of early math skills and reinforce this knowledge by playing the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors Count With Me Bingo game.

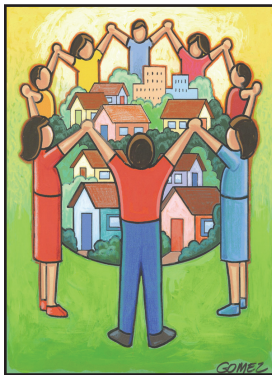


Session 8

Let's Get Ready for School

Popular Saying: "Knowledge is Power"

In this session, parents will gain practical tips for daily routines and learning activities they can use at home to support their child's transition to school. Parents will be informed about how to assess and select local options for high quality early care and education and kindergarten and how to advocate for their child's educational needs. Facilitators will encourage parents to sign a Parent Reading Pledge Card to signal their commitment for their child's learning. This session introduces a parent created Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors video: Transition to Kinder on the importance of preparing children to be ready for school. In addition, this session promotes Ready4K, a texting program that sends you three text messages a week. The messages give fun facts and tips on how to help your child get ready for Kindergarten in simple, easy, everyday ways.



Session 9

Champions for Our Children's Future

Popular Saying: "There is no worse struggle than the one never waged"

In this session, parents will deepen their view of themselves as leaders and advocates in their homes, schools, and communities. Parents will strengthen leadership and advocacy skills to solve problems and challenges in a variety of community settings. This session introduces another parent created Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors video: Parent Power on the important role parents play as champions for their children, families, and community.

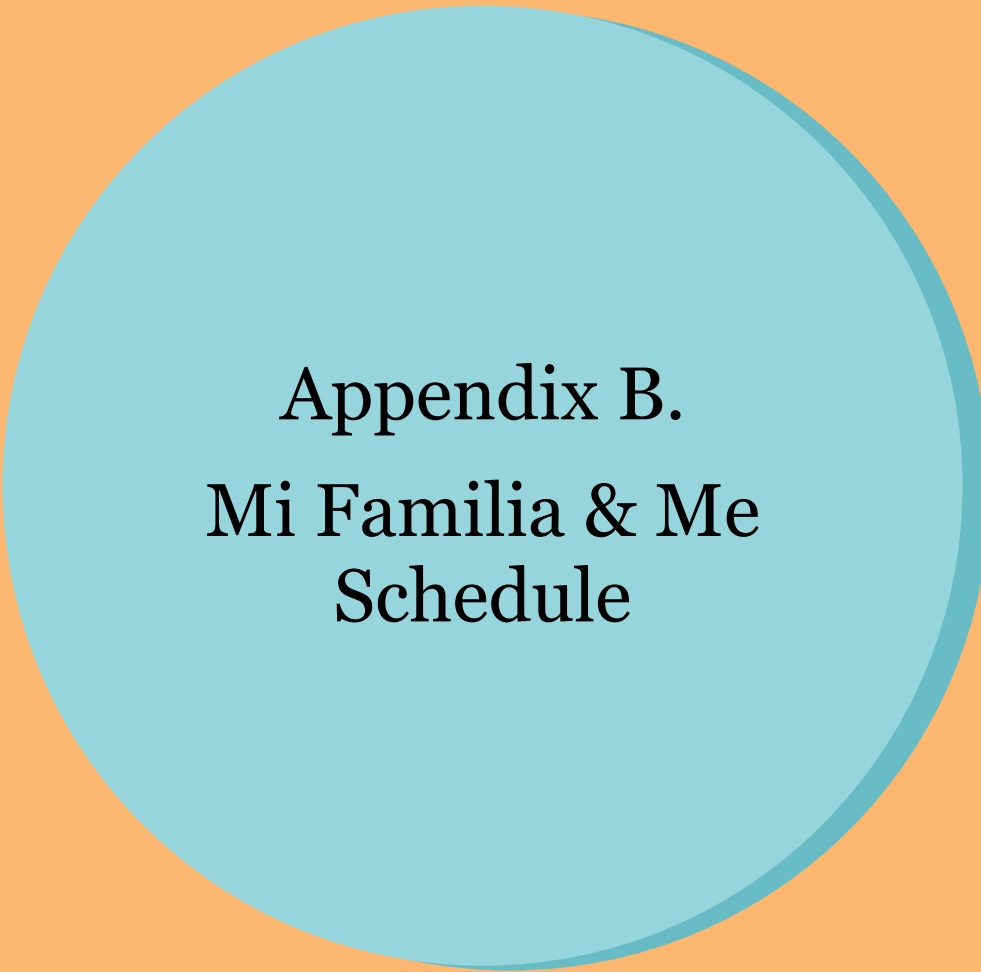


Session 10

Yes, We Can! Graduation

Popular Saying: "Success Knows No Bounds"

This session is a special celebration that honors each participant with a certificate for their participation, recognizing their commitment to lead and advocate on behalf of children. During the celebration, parents will share the positive changes they are making in their homes, schools, and community as a result of participating in the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors program. This session also includes the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors Bingo game. The game was developed with feedback from more than 200 parents and educators and an analysis of the effects of the game when played with parents and their young children. The Bingo game connects the values, concepts, and fundamental objectives of the curriculum with the hopes and skills of families. A Parent Session 10 Survey (post-survey) will be conducted so that the program's local impact can be measured.



Appendix B.
Mi Familia & Me
Schedule

Fall Semester

Fecha/ Hora	Sep 15	Sep 22	Sep 29	Oct 6	Oct 13	Oct 20	Oct 27
9:00	Orientation. Abiendo Puertas Session 1	AP/OD Session 2	AP/OD Session 3	AP/OD Session 4	AP/OD Session 5	AP/OD Session 6	Pumpkin Party
10:00							
11:00							
11:30							

Fecha/Hora	Nov 3	Nov 10	Nov 17	Dec 1	Dec 8
9:00	AP/OD Session 7	AP/OD Session 8	AP/OD Session 9	AP/OD Session 10	Holiday Party
10:00					
11:00					
11:30					

Spring Semester

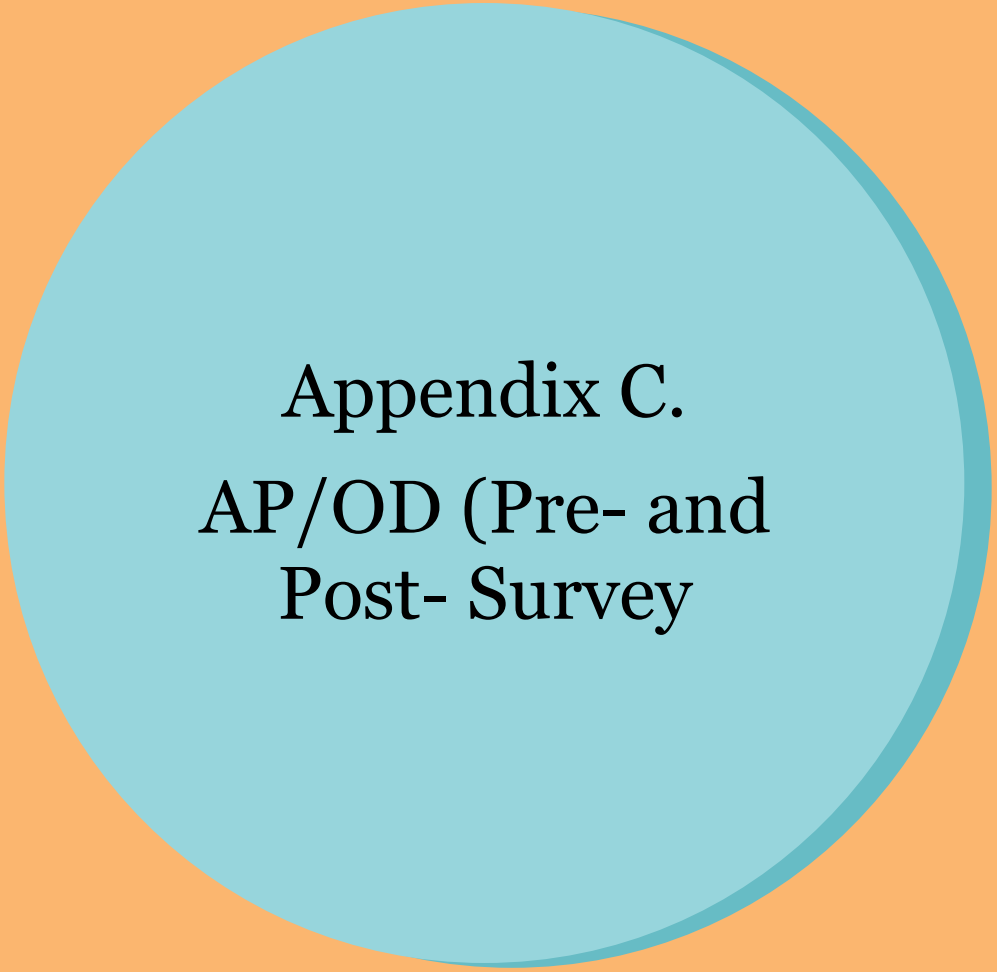
Fecha/ Hora	Jan 26	Feb 2	Feb 9	Feb 16	Feb 23	Mar 2	Mar 9	Mar 16
9:00	Orientation		Parent book club	Parent book club	Field trip Alliance children garden	Parent book club	Parent book club	Spring break
10:00			Breakthrough	Yo sé - Tú sabes		Yo sé - tú sabes (Schools)	PIP session	
11:00			Breakthrough	Parks		Leap of Joy	PIP session	
11:30			Music class	Rooms		Leap of Joy	Music class	

Fecha/ Hora	Mar 23	Mar 30	April 6	April 13	April 20	April 27	May 4	May 11
9:00	Kindergarten	Parent book club	Picnic Egg Hunt	Maricarmen	Parent book club	Zoofari	PBS	Wrap up
10:00	round up	Yo sé-tú sabes (Schools)		Maricarmen	Yo sé - tú sabes (How to talk with pediatricians and teachers)		PBS	session

Fecha/ Hora	Mar 23	Mar 30	April 6	April 13	April 20	April 27	May 4	May 11
11:00		Leap of Joy			Leap of Joy		Leap of Joy	
11:30	Rooms	Music class		Music class	Butterflies exhibition		Boxes activity	rooms

Class	Description
Parent Book Club	Provided by Bookspring. Parents had 6 sessions designed to give them the confidence, motivation and skills to share books with their children on a regular basis. Besides they got a free book each week.
Breakthrough	Breakthrough presented to our families their services. This is an organization helps students since 5th grade to pursue their college education through different services in a three-dimensional model for academic and personal success: Extended learning, comprehensive advising and leadership experiences.
Pediatric Occupational Therapist Maricamen Romero-Mondragon	Presentation about development of motor skills, play/communication skills, and feeding skills 0-3 years old. Mothers had an overview of how occupational, speech and physical therapy can help with development, what are the red flags to look for and how parents can obtain these services.
Benjamin Kramer, Vice President of Education, Austin PBS	Presentation about Screen Time in Children Under 5 Years Old. Benjamin provided information to the moms about the best use of screens with children under 5 years old and shared with them the educational options that PBS has for children.

Kindergarten round up	8 schools from different schools districts tableting at Todos Juntos sharing information about registration dates and process, transportation, extracurricular activities, the additional services that the schools offer and how their special department operates.
Partners in Parenting	PIP facilitated a session about the importance of routine in early childhood, also moms were invited to be part of their program. PIP offer different parent support groups like newborn, baby, second time around, toddler, prenatal.
Music classes	Music classes were provided by Armstrong Community Music School. Moms and children attended the classes together.
Dance classes	Dance classes were provided by Leap of Joy. Moms and children attended the classes together
Rooms	Parents were invited to their children classrooms
Yo sé - Tú sabes	During these sessions we taught the moms some search tools and they had the opportunity to share their own knowledge about different topics as: Parks (Benefits of being outdoors and spent some time mom and child together, parks in Austin and how to get there, safety measures at the park, tips about how to get your kids leave the park); Schools (How to use the AISD website to look for schools, registration process at schools, sharing experiences about charter schools); How to talk with pediatricians and teachers.



Appendix C.
AP/OD (Pre- and
Post- Survey)



Abriendo Puertas | Opening Doors

Building a Better Future Through Parent Leadership
Desarrollando un Futuro Mejor a Través del Liderazgo de los Padres
www.ap-od.org

Site: _____ State: _____

Date: _____

Facilitator's Name: _____

Your Birthdate: _____ / _____ / _____ (Month/Day/Year)

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors 3rd Edition Session 10 Survey

Part I. Parenting

1. A child's learning starts:
 - (a) prenatally
 - (b) when she/he starts talking
 - (c) when she/he goes to preschool
 - (d) when she/he goes to kindergarten
 - (e) I don't know

2. Parents can improve their child's school success by:
 - (a) getting involved in their child's school
 - (b) talking regularly with their child's teacher
 - (c) reading books with their child everyday
 - (d) all the above
 - (e) I don't know

3. In order to make your hopes and dreams a reality for your children:
 - (a) you need to establish clear goals and action plans
 - (b) you should let your children's school show them the way
 - (c) you should let them figure it out by themselves
 - (d) you should wait until they are in high school to figure out what is next
 - (e) I don't know

4. True or false: Once children get into elementary school, the "opportunity gap" disappears and those who started school behind their peers catch up.
 - (a) true
 - (b) false

Part II. Early learning

5. Which period is most important for your child's brain development?
 - (a) prenatal to age 3
 - (b) preschool (age 3 to 5)
 - (c) kindergarten (age 5 to 6)

- (d) first grade and on (starting at age 6)
 - (e) I don't know
6. Which area is most important in your child's development?
- (a) physical
 - (b) cognitive
 - (c) socioemotional
 - (d) all the above
 - (e) I don't know
7. What is the most prominent consequence of toxic stress on young children's development?
- (a) it makes them more vulnerable to illness
 - (b) it starts to break down connections in the brain
 - (c) it affects sleeping patterns
 - (d) it does not have any consequences
 - (e) I don't know
8. True or false: Children usually can say "mama" or "dada" when they are about 12 months old.
- (a) true
 - (b) false

Part III. Language and literacy development

9. Parents can promote their baby's language skills by: (check all that apply)
- (a) talking about what they are doing when they are dressing, bathing, and feeding him/her.
 - (b) singing to him/her
 - (c) reading or telling stories to him/her
 - (d) only speaking when they have something important to say
 - (e) using only words that their baby already knows
10. I think that a child who uses two languages:
- (a) will get confused
 - (b) will have educational and economic advantages
 - (c) will be unable to communicate fluently in both of them
 - (d) will have a hard time learning in school
 - (e) I don't know
11. Reading to my child will:
- (a) help him/her become a better reader in the future
 - (b) be most helpful once my child learns to read
 - (c) only help if I can read in English
 - (d) only help if I am an expert reader
 - (e) I don't know
12. True or false: Children who learn their home language well will have an easier time learning a second language.
- (a) true
 - (b) false

Part IV. Nutrition and physical activity

13. A possible consequence of children spending too much time in front of the TV, tablet, or phone screen is: (check all that apply)
- (a) a higher risk for the child to be overweight or obese
 - (b) greater difficulties with falling asleep at bedtime
 - (c) better socialization skills
 - (d) fewer words learned
 - (e) a decrease in future cognitive test scores
14. To help my child grow up and be healthy, it is important to: (check all that apply)
- (a) model healthy diet and exercise habits
 - (b) provide her/him with juice to drink throughout the day
 - (c) feed her/him 4 to 6 serving of fruits and vegetables per day
 - (d) limit the amount sugar she/he eats
 - (e) make sure she/he brushes her/his teeth twice a day
15. Which of the following statements about playtime is TRUE:
- (a) it supports children's learning
 - (b) it supports children's motor development
 - (c) it can prevent chronic diseases
 - (d) all of the above
 - (e) I don't know
16. True or false: If a child is healthy, she/he should not get vaccinated.
- (a) true
 - (b) false

Part V. Socioemotional development

17. Developing positive socioemotional skills includes learning to:
- (a) hide your feelings well
 - (b) express your thoughts and feelings constructively
 - (c) express only your positive feelings
 - (d) express your feelings through behaviors (and not words)
 - (e) I don't know
18. How can you help your child express and regulate her/his thoughts and feelings effectively?
- (a) teaching my child to suppress emotions
 - (b) ignoring my child
 - (c) punishing my child
 - (d) listening, and validating my child's emotions
 - (e) I don't know
19. Which of the following is a sign of your child's being the victim of bullying? (check all that apply)
- (a) complaining of stomachaches or headaches before going to daycare or preschool

- (b) becoming excited about going to daycare or preschool
- (c) complaining of another child “bothering” or “bugging” her/him, or “being mean”
- (d) saying things like: “I’m stupid” or “No one likes me”
- (e) becoming withdrawn, depressed, fearful or clingy

20. True or false: My socioemotional health affects the socioemotional development of my child.
- (a) true
 - (b) false

Part VI. Use of technology

21. Parents can support their child's technology experience by: (check all that apply)
- (a) letting them explore freely, without supervision
 - (b) providing a balance of online and offline activities
 - (c) exposing them to educational apps
 - (d) co-engaging with them during screen time
 - (e) prohibiting the use of all technological devices for children between 4 and 16 years of age
22. Good practices for children’s use of technology include:
- (a) not having TVs, videogames, and other devices in the child’s room
 - (b) turning off the TV when is not being used
 - (c) avoiding screen exposure one hour before bed time
 - (d) all of the above
 - (e) I don’t know
23. What should you do when choosing shows and apps with your child? (check all that apply)
- (a) pick those that promote conversations with your child
 - (b) choose this activity for no more than one hour per day
 - (c) choose interactive shows (e.g. Sesame Street)
 - (d) let your child watch what she/he likes best
 - (e) avoid violent content for children age 7 and younger
24. True or false: Video-chatting with family members is the only recommended use of media for children younger than 18 months.
- (a) true
 - (b) false

Part VII. Mathematical development

25. A child starts to develop mathematical abilities:
- (a) at birth
 - (b) when she/he starts talking
 - (c) when she/he starts counting
 - (d) when she/he starts formal education (e.g. preschool or kindergarten)
 - (e) I don't know
26. Parents can support their child's development of mathematical skills by: (check all that apply)
- (a) describing how many eyes, fingers, and toes she/he has
 - (b) teaching her/him concepts like “more”, “less”, and “equal”
 - (c) inviting her/him to do free drawing
 - (d) exposing her/him to the world of numbers, patterns, colors, shapes, sizes, and weights
 - (e) prompting her/him to do exercises for gross motor development such as running or jumping

27. Which of the following are essential math skills: (check all that apply)
- (a) numbers (counting, using one-to-one correlation, and comparing the number of objects)
 - (b) measurement (small, large, etc.)
 - (c) spatial sense (learning about direction and location)
 - (d) geometry (recognizing shapes)
 - (e) understanding sequence, patterns, colors, and textures
28. True or false: Math is not necessary for most jobs in life.
- (a) true
 - (b) false

Part VIII. School readiness

29. I think my child's opportunities to do well in school improve if I: (check all that apply)
- (a) am involved in her/his education from the start
 - (b) communicate regularly with her/his teachers
 - (c) promote reading activities at home
 - (d) do not get involved, since English is not my first language
 - (e) only speak to my child in English
30. I think that strong parental involvement in my young child's pre-/school includes: (check all that apply)
- (a) knowing about my child's homework and making sure it gets done
 - (b) knowing what is being learned in class and checking on my child's progress
 - (c) reviewing my child's progress report or report card
 - (d) developing a plan with the teacher to help my child improve in any needed area
 - (e) going to pre-/school meetings
31. I think that getting children ready for kindergarten includes her/his learning:
- (a) to identify letters and sounds
 - (b) to work and play with others
 - (c) daily eating, bathroom, and going-to-bed routines
 - (d) all of the above
 - (e) I don't know
32. Children that attend quality preschool programs are **less** likely to: (check all that apply)
- (a) repeat a grade level
 - (b) go to college
 - (c) dropout of high school
 - (d) need special help
 - (e) engage in delinquent activity

Part IX. Advocacy

33. Which of the following is your right as a parent in the U.S.:
- (a) the right to review your child's records
 - (b) the right to be involved in decision making at your child's school
 - (c) the right to visit your child's classroom
 - (d) all of the above
 - (e) I don't know

34. Which of the following practices can help you advocate for yourself and your family: (check all that apply)
- (a) stay calm and be persistent
 - (b) be demanding, and yell if it is necessary to convey your ideas
 - (c) keep the meeting focused on the needs of your child and possible solutions to address them
 - (d) quickly accept the situation if you are told that there is nothing that can be done
 - (e) find out more about the problem, rules, and laws—and how the system works
35. When informed parents take action and advocate for solutions, they:
- (a) are automatically designated as troublemakers
 - (b) make themselves ineligible for services like housing or food support
 - (c) help schools, agencies, and community programs improve their service delivery
 - (d) all the above
 - (e) I don't know
36. If you need to speak to your child's school in a language other than English: (check all that apply)
- (a) you need to bring your own interpreter to parent-teacher conferences
 - (b) you will need to learn English to participate in your child's school
 - (c) you won't be able to effectively advocate for your child
 - (d) you have the right to request effective language assistance during school meetings
 - (e) you won't be able to file written complaints

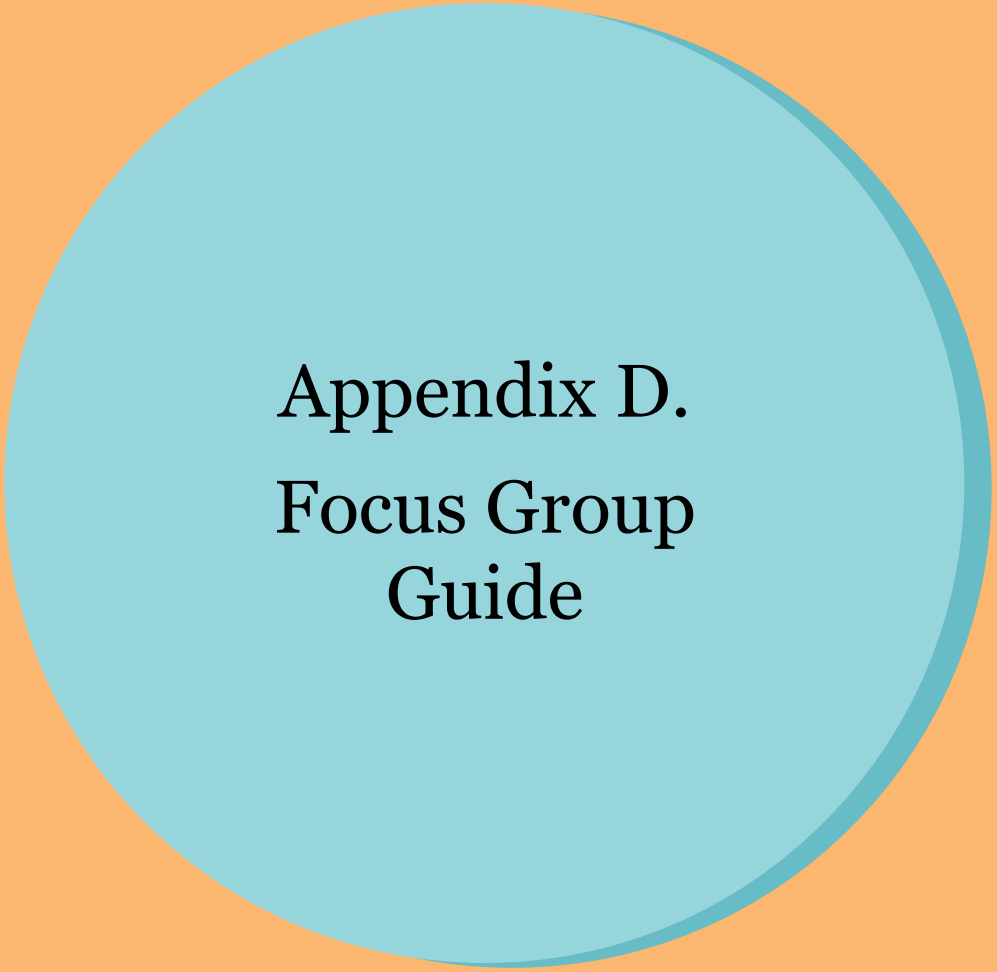
Part X. Confidence

37. How confident are you in your parenting skills?
- (a) not confident
 - (b) somewhat confident
 - (c) confident
 - (d) very confident
38. How confident are you in your ability to help your child learn your home language?
- (a) not confident
 - (b) somewhat confident
 - (c) confident
 - (d) very confident
39. How confident are you in your ability to teach your child basic skills to be ready for school—like counting or learning colors or letters?
- (a) not confident
 - (b) somewhat confident
 - (c) confident
 - (d) very confident
40. How confident are you about being an advocate for your child?
- (a) not confident
 - (b) somewhat confident
 - (c) confident
 - (d) very confident

Part XI. Your Background

41. What is your home language?
- (a) English
 - (b) Spanish
 - (c) Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese)
 - (d) Tagalog (including Filipino)
 - (e) Vietnamese
 - (f) Arabic
 - (g) French
 - (h) Korean
 - (i) Other: _____
42. Which of the following best represents your racial or ethnic heritage? (check all that apply)
- (a) Non-Hispanic White or Euro-American
 - (b) Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African American
 - (c) Latino or Hispanic American
 - (d) East Asian or Asian American
 - (e) South Asian or Indian American
 - (f) Middle Eastern or Arab American
 - (g) Native American or Alaskan Native
 - (h) Other: _____
43. How many years did you go to school? (please check one)
- (a) completed grade school or less
 - (b) some high school
 - (c) high school graduate/GED or more

Thank you for helping us!



Appendix D.
Focus Group
Guide

Focus Group Guide

Research Objective: The purpose of these interviews and focus groups is to gain a better understanding of the Mi Familia & Me program and the AP/OD Curriculum that is delivered as part of Mi Familia & Me. The following questions are a guide. Prompting questions can be asked depending on the participants' responses.

Background

- How did you become involved with Todos Juntos?
- How did you hear about the Mi Familia & Me Program?
- How long have you participated in the Mi Familia & Me Program?
- How many children do you have participating in the program? How old are they?

Experience with Mi Familia & Me

- How would you describe the Mi Familia & Me program in your own words?
- What activities did you participate in?
- What activities did your child participate in?
- What were your favorite parts of the program? And why?
- What were your experiences with program staff like?
- What is the most important thing you've learned through participating in this program?
- In the program you learned a lot about supporting your children's development and school readiness.
- What was the most important take-away for you?
- How have you used what you've learned in real life? Can you provide any examples?
- You also talked about being a leader and advocate for your child's learning and wellbeing.
- What was the most important take-away for you?
- How have you used what you've learned in real life? Can you provide any examples?
- How has the program informed your understanding of your role as a parent?
- What connections or support have you experienced while participating in the program, if at all?
- How has participating in Mi Familia & Me impacted your family?
- Your relationship with your child, with other family members, your family's wellbeing?
- What strategies have you learned about dealing with challenges that come your way?
- What are some take-aways from the program that you would like to share with other parents?
- What are some ways the program could be improved?

Closing

- Is there anything else you'd like me to know Mi Familia & Me?
- Do you have any questions for me?
Thank you for participating in the focus group.

Objetivo de Investigación: El propósito de estas entrevistas y grupos focales es para obtener un mejor entendimiento del programa “Mi Familia & Me” y el currículo “AP/OD” que es parte del programa “Mi Familia & Me”.

Nota: Estas preguntas son una guía. Preguntas que inciten se pueden usar dependiendo en las respuestas de los participantes.

Información General

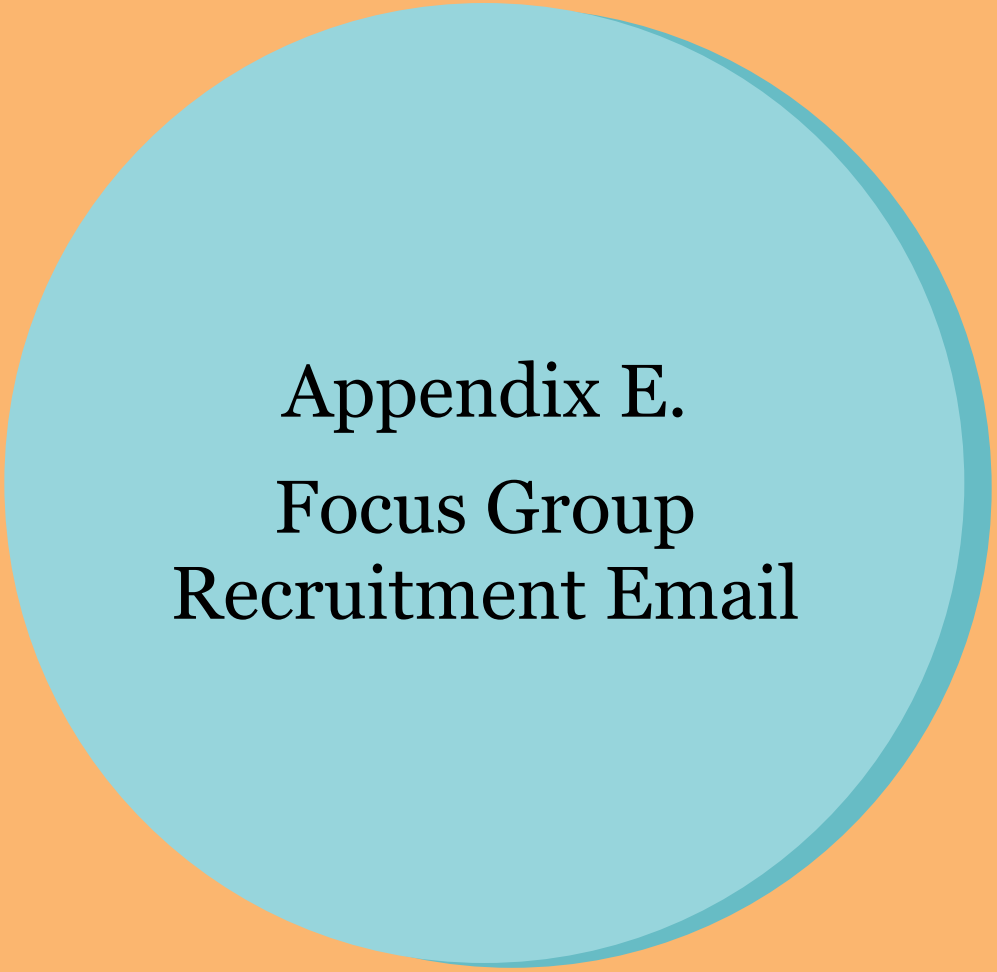
- ¿Como se involucró con Todos Juntos?
- ¿Como escucho sobre el programa “Mi Familia & Me”?
- ¿Cuánto tiempo ha participado con el programa “Mi Familia & Me”?
- ¿Cuántos hijos/as tiene participando en el programa? Que son las edades de sus hijos/as?

Experiencias con Mi Familia & Me

- ¿Qué palabras usaría para describir el programa “Mi Familia & Me”?
- ¿En cuales actividades participo?
- ¿En cuales actividades participo su hijo/a?
- ¿Cuáles fueron sus partes favoritas del programa? ¿Y por qué?
- ¿Como fueron sus experiencias con el personal del programa?
- ¿Qué es lo más importante que usted aprendió por participar en este programa?
- En el programa usted aprendió mucho sobre como apoyar el desarrollo y preparar para la escuela para sus hijos/as.
- ¿Que fue la lección más importante para usted?
- ¿Como ha podido usar lo que aprendió en su vida real? ¿Puede darme ejemplos?
- También hablaron sobre como ser líder y abogar por la enseñanza y bienestar de sus hijo/a
- ¿Que fue la lección más importante para usted?
- ¿Como ha podido usar lo que aprendió en su vida real? ¿Puede darme ejemplos?
- ¿Como ha informado el programa su comprensión de su papel como padre?
- ¿Qué conexiones o apoya ha tenido mientras participo en el programa, si es que hubo?
- ¿Como ha impactado a su familia la participación en el programa “Mi Familia & Me”?
- Su relación con su hijo/a, con otros familiares, el bienestar de su familia?
- ¿Cuáles estrategias ha aprendido para enfrentar los desafíos que se le presentan?
- ¿Que son unas lecciones del programa que usted le gustaría compartir con otros padres?
- ¿En qué maneras se puede mejorar el programa?

Clausura

- ¿Hay algo más que usted quisiera que yo sepa sobre “Mi Familia & Me”?
- ¿Tiene preguntas para mí?
- Gracias por participar en el grupo focal. Vamos a para de grabar.



Appendix E.
Focus Group
Recruitment Email

Mi Familia & Me Program Evaluation (English)

Researchers at the Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing at the University of Texas at Austin are conducting an evaluation of Mi Familia & Me as part of a partnership between the Institute and the Todos Juntos Learning Center. The purpose of this evaluation is to gain a better understanding of the current activities and goals of Mi Familia & Me program, as well as the program's impact.

The research team will be conducting focus groups with parents who have enrolled in the Mi Familia & Me program in the last year (August 2022-present). If you are interested in participating, please sign up at this link: (link to Smartsheet sign-up sheet).

Focus groups will take 1-1.5 hours and will be held online (via Zoom or Microsoft Teams) and in-person. All participation in this study is voluntary and participants will complete an electronic consent prior to study participation. All data are confidential and secure. You will receive a \$25 electronic gift card for participating.

To sign up, please contact Anna Wasim at annawasim@austin.utexas.edu to schedule an interview. A researcher will respond with a link to complete a pre-interview and consent form. Please complete these prior to your scheduled interview.

Feel free to email Dr. Monica Faulkner at mfaulkner@mail.utexas.edu if you have any other questions about this study.

Thank you,

Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing

Mi Familia & Me Evaluación de Programa

Las investigadoras de Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing de la Universidad de Texas en Austin están llevando a cabo una evaluación de “Mi Familia & Me” como parte de una colaboración entre el Institute y Todos Juntos Learning Center. El propósito de esta evaluación es obtener un mejor conocimiento de actividades actuales y metas del programa “Mi Familia & Me”, y también conocer el impacto del programa.

El equipo de investigadoras llevara a cabo grupos focales con padres que se han inscrito en el programa “Mi Familia & Me” en el último año (agosto 2022- presente). Si está interesado/a en participar, por favor registrarse en este enlace: (link to Smartsheet sign-up sheet).

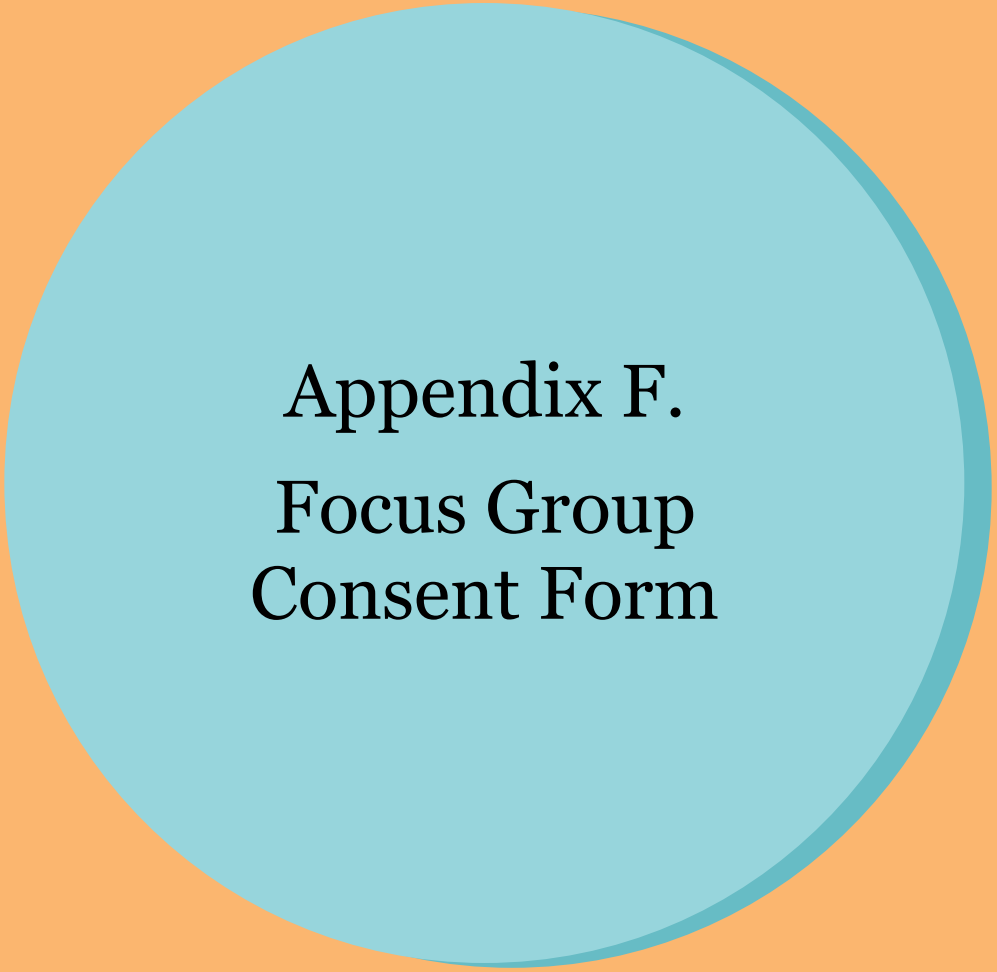
Los grupos focales duraran entre 1-1.5 horas y se llevaran a cabo en línea (a través de Zoom o Microsoft Teams) y en persona. La participación en este estudio es voluntario y los participantes llenarán un formulario de consentimiento electrónico antes de participar en el estudio. Todos los datos son confidenciales y seguros. Usted recibirá una tarjeta de regalo electrónica de \$25 por participar.

Para registrarse, por favor de contactar a Anna Wasim en annawasim@austin.utexas.edu para programar una entrevista. Una investigadora le responderá con un enlace para completar un formulario previo a la entrevista y de consentimiento. Por favor de llenar estos formularios antes de su entrevista programada.

Por favor de mandar un correo electrónico a la Dr. Monica Faulkner en mfaulkner@mail.utexas.edu si tiene preguntas sobre el estudio.

Gracias,

Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing



Appendix F.
Focus Group
Consent Form

Consent to Participate in Research

Basic Study Information

Title of the Project: Mi Familia & Me Program Evaluation

Principal Investigator: Monica Faulkner, Ph.D., LMSW

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to be part of a research study. This consent form will help you in choosing whether or not to participate in the study. Feel free to ask if anything is not clear in this consent document.

What is the study about and why are we doing it?

This study is being conducted by researchers at The University of Texas at Austin. The goal of the Mi Familia & Me Program Evaluation is to understand the program, your experiences with the program, and any impact the program has had for you and your family.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in a focus group with other parents participating in the program. A member of the research team will ask questions about how you became involved with the program, activities you have participated in, important things you have learned, support you may have received, and any other feedback about the program. Focus groups will be audio recorded so that the research team can transcribe and analyze them, but all interview data will be stored securely on a password protected server that only the research team has access to, and none of your information will be linked to your responses once data is reported on.

How long will this study take and how many people will be in the study?

Participation in this study will take 60-90 minutes and include approximately 30 participants.

What risks and discomforts might you experience from being in this study?

We believe that there is little risk for you to be harmed in this study. There is always a small chance that someone might look through your responses, but your name and any other information that would identify you and will not be written on any research form. You can skip any question you do not want to answer. Skipping questions or stopping the interview will not impact your relationship with Todos Juntos or UT research team.

How could you benefit from this study?

There is no a benefit to you for participating in the study. There is a potential benefit that this information might help the program make improvements for other families in the future

What data will we collect from you?

As part of this study we will collect your answers to the questions you choose to answer. This study is confidential and your responses to the questions will not be linked to your identity. Results will only be reported in aggregate form. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be audio recorded. Any audio recordings will be stored securely and only the research team will have access to the recordings. Recordings will be kept for up to three years and then erased.

How will we protect your information?

We will protect your information by storing recordings and notes on a secure server that only the research team can access. Recordings will be kept for up to three years and then erased. Your name and any other information that can directly identify you will be stored separately from the data collected as part of the project.

If it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review the study records, information that can be linked to you will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate it with you, or with your participation in any study.

What will happen to the information we collect about you after the study is over?

We will keep your research data to use for future research. Your name and other information that can directly identify you will be deleted from the research data collected as part of the project.

How will we compensate you for being part of the study?

To thank you for participating in the study, you will receive a \$25 Tango e-gift card that may be redeemed at any store of your choice (e.g., Amazon, Walmart, Target). This gift card will be emailed to you at the end of the interview.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary

It is totally up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with The University of Texas at Austin or Todos Juntos Learning Center. You will not lose any benefits or rights you already had if you decide not to participate. Even if you decide to be part of the study

now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions about the Research

If you have questions about the focus group, contact Dr. Monica Faulkner who is the lead researcher for this study. You can contact Dr. Faulkner by phone at 512-471-7191 or email at mfaulkner@mail.utexas.edu. You can also ask any questions to the researcher at any time during prior, during, or after the interview.

Contact Information for Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the following:

The University of Texas at Austin
Institutional Review Board
Phone: 512-232-1543
Email: irb@austin.utexas.edu

Please reference the protocol number found at the top of this document.

Your Consent

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you may receive a copy of this form upon your request. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you consent, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. By clicking the "I agree to participate in this study" button below, you agree to participating.

- I agree to participate in this study.
- I do not agree to participate in this study.

Consentimiento para Participar en Investigación

Información Básica del Estudio

Título del Proyecto: Mi Familia & Me evaluación de programa

Investigadora Principal: Monica Faulkner, Ph.D., LMSW

Invitación para Formar Parte de un Estudio de Investigación

Usted ha sido invitado a formar parte de un estudio de investigación. Este formulario de consentimiento le ayudará a decidir si desea participar o no en el estudio. No dude en preguntar si algo no está claro en este documento.

¿De qué trata el estudio y por qué lo estamos haciendo?

Este estudio de investigación se está llevando a cabo por las investigadoras por la Universidad de Texas en Austin. El propósito de la evaluación del programa Mi Familia & Me es para comprender el programa, sus experiencias con el programa, y cualquier impacto que el programa ha tenido para usted y su familia.

¿Qué pasará si usted forma parte del estudio?

Si acepta participar en este estudio, se le pedirá que participe en un grupo focal con otros padres que participaron en el programa. Un miembro del equipo de investigación le hará preguntas sobre cómo se involucró con el programa, las actividades en las que participó, las lecciones importantes que aprendió, los apoyos que a la mejor recibió, y cualquier otro comentario sobre el programa. Los grupos focales serán grabados por audio para que el equipo de investigación pueda transcribirlos y analizarlos, pero todos los datos de la entrevista se guardarán de una forma segura usando un servidor protegido con contraseña que solo tienen acceso el equipo de investigación, y su información nunca se vinculará a sus respuestas una vez que se informen los datos.

¿Cuánto tiempo estará en este estudio y cuántas personas estarán en el estudio?

La participación en este estudio durará de 60-90 minutos e incluirá aproximadamente 30 participantes.

¿Qué riesgos e incomodidades podría sufrir al participar en este estudio?

Nosotros creemos que hay poco riesgo de que usted sufra daños en este estudio. Siempre existe la pequeña posibilidad de que alguien vea sus respuestas, pero su nombre y cualquier otra información que le identifique no estará escrita en ningún formulario de investigación. Usted puede saltar cualquier pregunta que no quiera contestar. Saltando preguntas o parando la entrevista no afectará su relación con Todos Juntos o el equipo de investigación de la Universidad de Texas en Austin.

¿Cómo podría beneficiarse de este estudio?

Usted no recibirá un beneficio directo por participar en este estudio. Es posible que su información podría ayudar a mejorar el programa para otras familias en el futuro.

¿Qué datos recolectaremos de usted?

Como parte de este estudio, recolectaremos sus respuestas a las preguntas que usted decide responder. Este estudio es confidencial y sus respuestas a las preguntas no estarán vinculadas a su identidad. Los resultados solo serán reportados de una forma agregada. Si decide participar en este estudio, será grabado/a por audio. Las grabaciones de audio serán guardadas de una manera segura y solo el equipo de investigación tendrá acceso. Las grabaciones de audio se conservarán por tres años y luego se borrarán.

¿Cómo protegeremos su información?

Protegeremos su información guardando las grabaciones y notas en un servidor seguro que solo pueden acceder el equipo de investigación. Las grabaciones serán guardadas por tres años y después se borrarán. Su nombre y cualquier otra información que pueda identificarlo directamente, será almacenada por separado de los datos colectados para el proyecto.

Si es necesario que el Comité de Revisión Institucional (IRB) revise los registros del estudio, la información que pueda ser vinculada a usted será protegida en la medida que lo permita la ley. Sus registros de investigación no serán proporcionados sin su consentimiento a menos que lo exija la ley o una orden judicial. Compartiremos sus datos o muestras con otros investigadores para futuros estudios de investigación no detallado en este formulario de consentimiento. En este caso, los datos o muestras compartidos con otros investigadores no incluirán información que pueda identificarlo directamente.

¿Qué pasará con su información una vez terminado el estudio?

Nosotros conservaremos sus datos recopilados durante el estudio para futuras investigaciones. Su nombre y otra información que pueda identificarlo directamente, serán eliminados de los datos recolectados como parte del proyecto.

¿Cómo será compensado por ser parte del estudio?

Para agradecerle por su participación en el estudio, usted recibirá una tarjeta de regalo electrónica Tango de \$25 que puede usar en cualquier tienda que elija (Amazon, Walmart, Target). Esta tarjeta de regalo será enviada por correo electrónico al final de la entrevista.

Su Participación en este Estudio es Voluntaria

La decisión de participar o no en este estudio de investigación depende totalmente de usted. Participar en este estudio es voluntario. Su decisión no afectará de ninguna manera su relación con la Universidad de Texas en Austin o Todos Juntos Learning Center. No perderá ningún beneficio o derecho que ya tenía si decide no participar. Incluso si decide formar parte del estudio ahora, puede cambiar de opinión y dejar de participar en cualquier momento. No tiene que responder ninguna pregunta que no quiera responder.

Información de Contacto del Equipo de Investigación y para Preguntas del Estudio

Si tiene preguntas acerca del grupo focal, puede contactar a la Dra. Monica Faulkner quien es la investigadora principal de este estudio. Usted puede contactar a la Dra. Faulkner por teléfono al 512-471-7191 o por correo electrónico a mfaulkner@mail.utexas.edu. También puede hacer cualquier pregunta a la investigadora en cualquier momento antes, durante, o después de la entrevista.

Información de Contacto para Preguntas sobre sus Derechos como Participante de Investigación

Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante de la investigación, o desea obtener información, hacer preguntas o discutir cualquier inquietud sobre este estudio con alguien que no sean las investigadoras, por favor comuníquese con:

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Su Consentimiento

Usted ha sido informado sobre el propósito, los procedimientos, las posibles beneficios y riesgos de este estudio, y puede recibir una copia de este formulario si lo solicita. Se le ha dado la oportunidad de hacer preguntas antes de dar su consentimiento, y se le ha dicho que usted puede hacer preguntas en cualquier momento. Al hacer clic en el botón a continuación, “Acepto participar en este estudio”, acepta participar.

- Acepto participar en este estudio.
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