

Narrowing the Gap: **Examining changes in the social and economic gaps among a random sample of direct service participants**

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Parent Interview Longitudinal Study

- + First 5 Monterey County (F5MC) implemented a longitudinal parent interview study to **analyze the benefits of funded programs that provide direct services to families and children.**
- + This allowed evaluators to look at how the **relationship between social and economic family characteristics and program and child outcomes changed over 1 year.**

Evaluation Questions

The Parent Interview Longitudinal Study was designed to discover the following:

- + How are families benefiting from being served by First 5 Monterey County (F5MC) funded programs that provide direct services to families and children?
- + How have families changed after one year of exposure to F5MC services?

Methods and subjects

- + **Telephone survey** focused on family characteristics and broad impacts in the following domain areas: *parent development, child health, early care, and social capital.*
- + **F5MC management information system** utilized to determine service type and level of participation.
- + **Random selection** of 209 parents at baseline. Successful follow up with 83 percent of parents one year later.
- + **Representative sample** of F5MC clients, geographic distribution and service participation.

Narrowing the Gap

Families entered services with varying socio-economic circumstances

Key Factors Related to Reading to Child	Baseline	Time 2
Child's Ethnicity	p<.001	
Family Income	p<.05	
Parent Level of Education	p<.001	
Primary Family Language	p<.001	

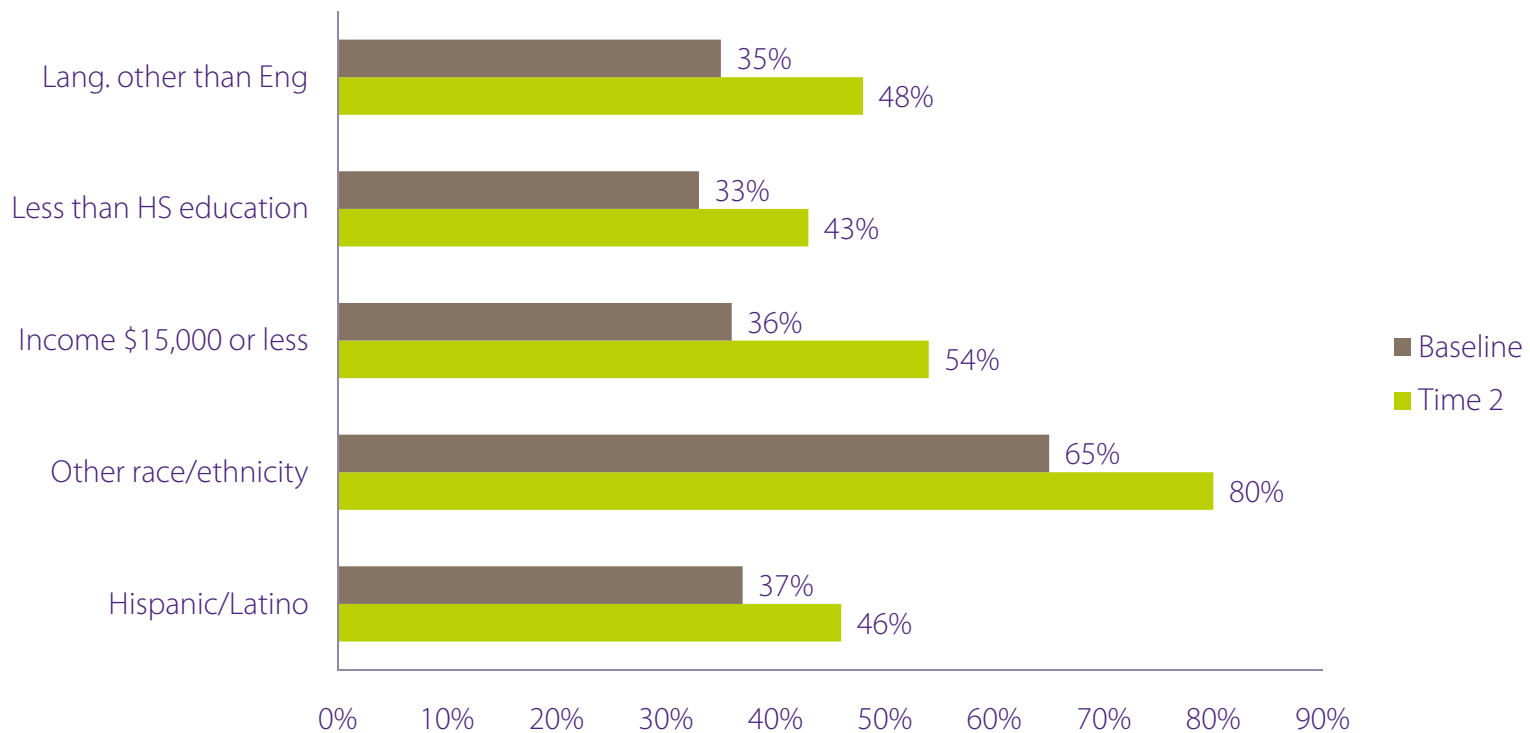
Narrowing the Gap

After 1 year the disparities appeared to have narrowed.

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Child's Ethnicity	p<.001	ns
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Supporting Findings

1. More parents with greater needs were reading more frequently to their children.



Supporting Findings

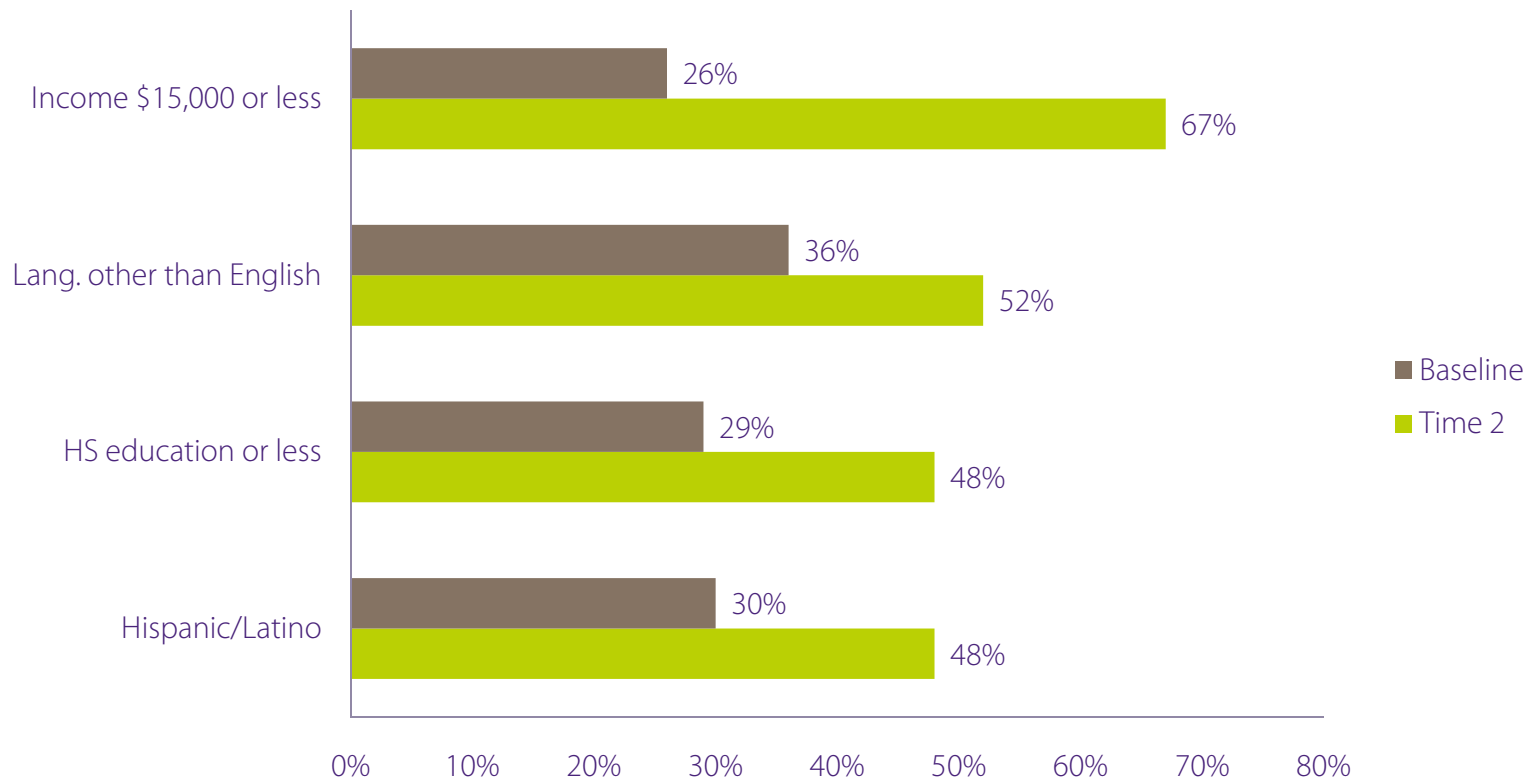
- 2. **Changes in Service Selection.** More intensive services (e.g., playgroups) were accessed by parents.

Families reported using a range of *F5MC*-funded services.

Baseline	Time 2	
39%	47%	Playgroups
34%	32%	Information & Referral
31%	28%	Parent Education
13%	28%	Home Visits
6%	28%	High Intensity Consultations & Interventions
5%	11%	Literacy & School Transition
3%	4%	Community Capacity Building
1%	3%	Screenings & Assessments

Supporting Findings

3. More parents with greater needs were accessing playgroups one year later.



Summary of Findings

- + **Intensive interventions were accessed at a significantly ($p < .01$) higher rate than at baseline by**
 - Latino families with less than a high school education,
 - families whose primary language is Spanish, and
 - families who have annual household incomes of less than \$30,000

Summary of Findings

- + Families with those same characteristics were reading and engaging with their children significantly more ($p < .001$)



Summary of Findings

- + The social and economic disparities gap seen at baseline across program indicators appeared to narrow after one year.



Implications

- + Useful shift in the evaluation lens.
- + Growing interest in examining and measuring changes in health disparities, achievement gaps, socio-economic gaps in regards to program participation.
- + Relevant to social research and may be applied to different areas including community health, education, social services.
- + This study is replicable.

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