

# Making Sense of Changes in Bounded Networks

*A look at a group of grantees working collaboratively to improve the lives of children and families in Monterey County, California*

Panel Session 887, Palos Verdes A

AEA 2011

Raúl Martínez and David Dobrowski



# presentation **outline**

- **background** and **context**
- preliminary year 1 to year 2 network analysis findings
  - how findings influenced networking strategies
  - when to conduct network analysis in the future
- **results:** year 1 to year 4
- lessons learned and **BIG** ideas

# background and context

# background

- First 5 Monterey County (**F5MC**) invests in 25 agencies that promote a child's learning during the earliest years of life.

- Grounded in its strategic plan, **F5MC** actively works to facilitate increased **coordination and collaboration** to promote an integrated service delivery system for young children and families.



# why look at **collaboration**?

- Collaboration **improves services** and makes them more **accessible**.
- Collaboration **indicates** the extent to which the attributes of a strong and efficient service system are in place:
  - Broad awareness of programs and available services
  - Frequent communication and defined roles among agencies
  - Mutual trust among agencies
  - Joint decision-making and resource sharing

# research **questions**

- What is the **nature** of the relationships between funded agencies and **to what extent** are these agencies collaborating?
- How do funded agencies **perceive** their interactions with each other?
- How, if at all, have interactions changed **over time?**

# users and uses\* of network analysis

users	uses
F5MC Commission	Accountability
F5MC staff	Accountability and Strategic Learning
F5MC funded agencies	Strategic Learning

\*Coffman, A User's Guide to Advocacy Evaluation Planning (2009)

# how did we **measure** collaboration?

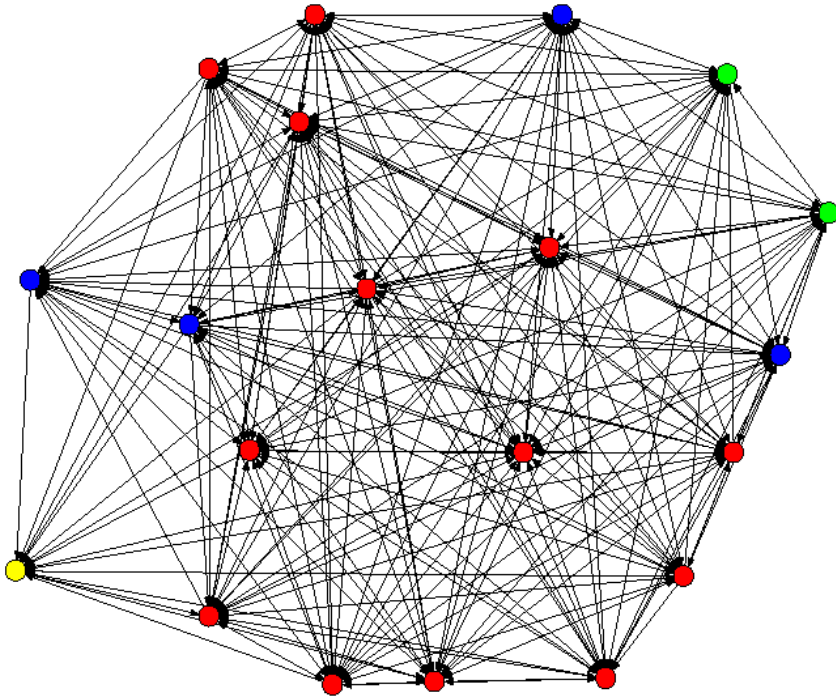
## Levels of Collaboration Scale

- 0. No Interaction**
- 1. Networking:** aware of organization; loosely defined roles; little communication; all decisions are made independently.
- 2. Coordination:** share information; some defined roles; frequent communication; some shared decision making.
- 3. Collaboration:** share ideas and resources; frequent communication is characterized by mutual trust; decision making is done jointly.



**results**

## Complete Network Map of Funded Partner Agencies: Year 1 and Year 2



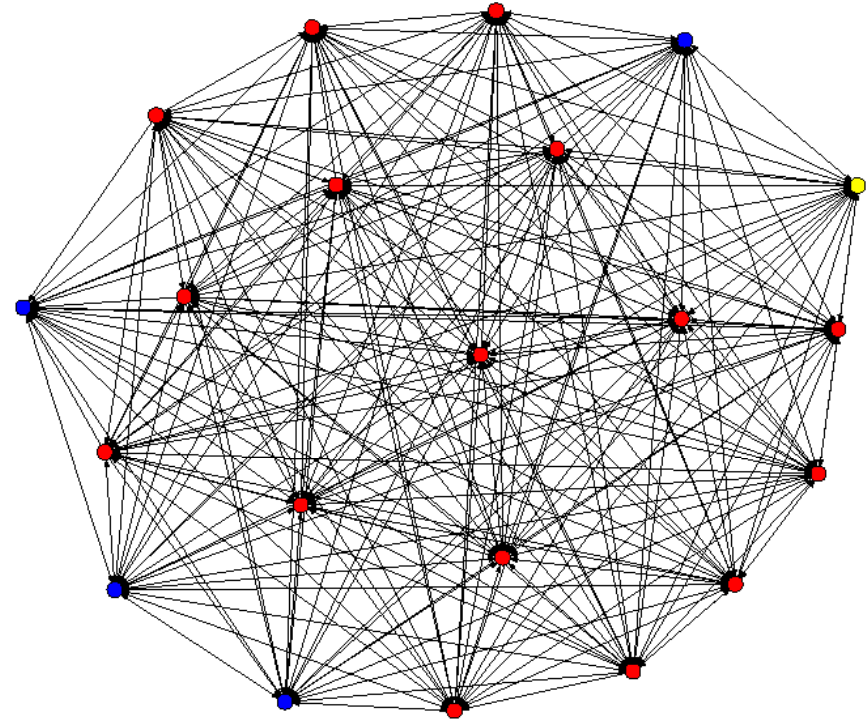
### Year 1

**Density:** 358 actual interactions out of 420 possible = 85%

*Networking:* 221 or 62% of actual interactions

*Coordination:* 76 or 21% of actual interactions

*Collaboration:* 61 or 17% of actual interactions



### Year 2

**Density:** 367 actual interactions out of 420 possible = 87%

*Networking:* 235 or 64% of actual interactions

*Coordination:* 84 or 23% of actual interactions

*Collaboration:* 48 or 13% of actual interactions

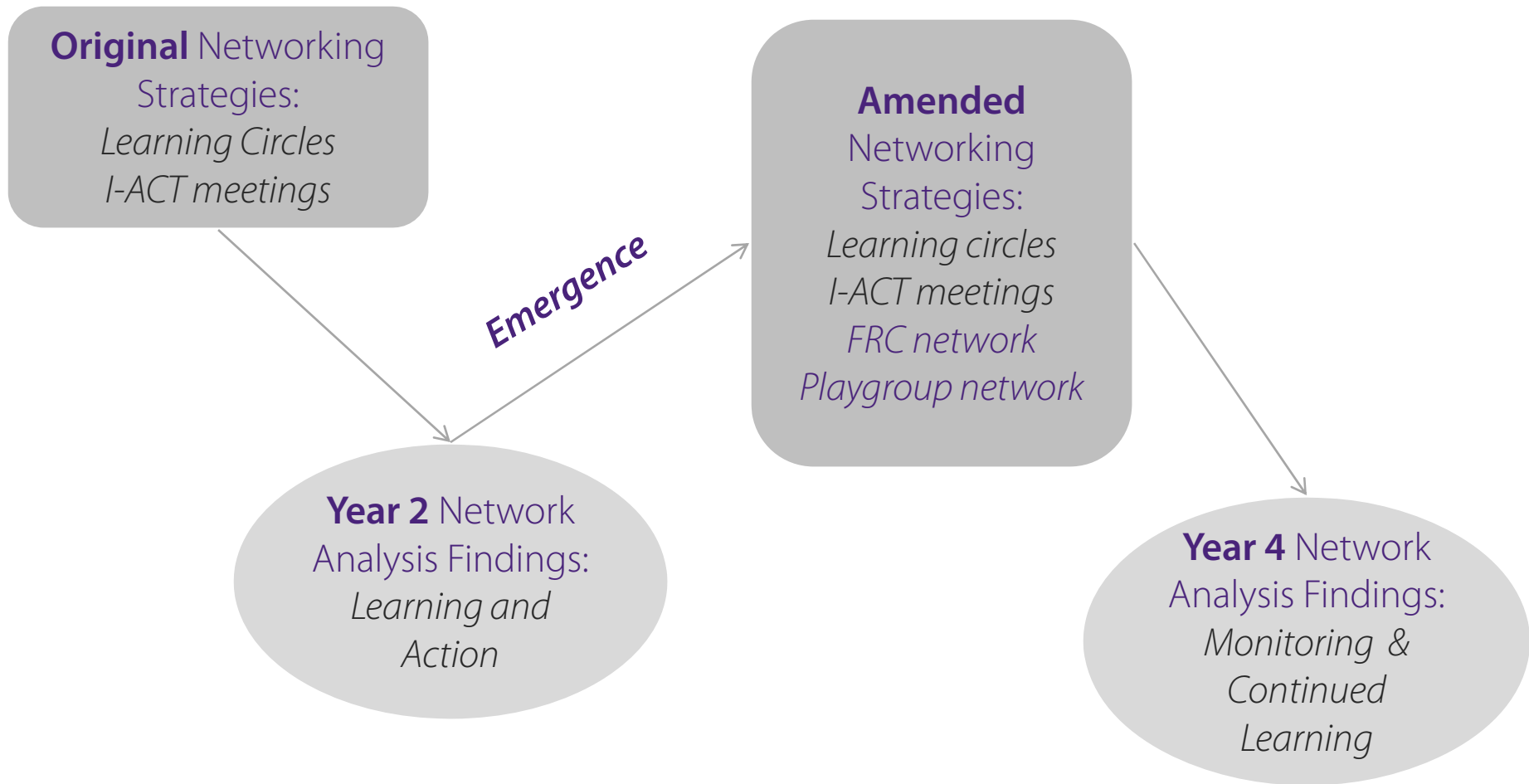
year 1 to year 2: **very little change**

- **Density:** Respondents reported a slight increase in the number of ties
- **Levels of interaction:** Agencies reported a decrease in the number of ties at the collaboration level

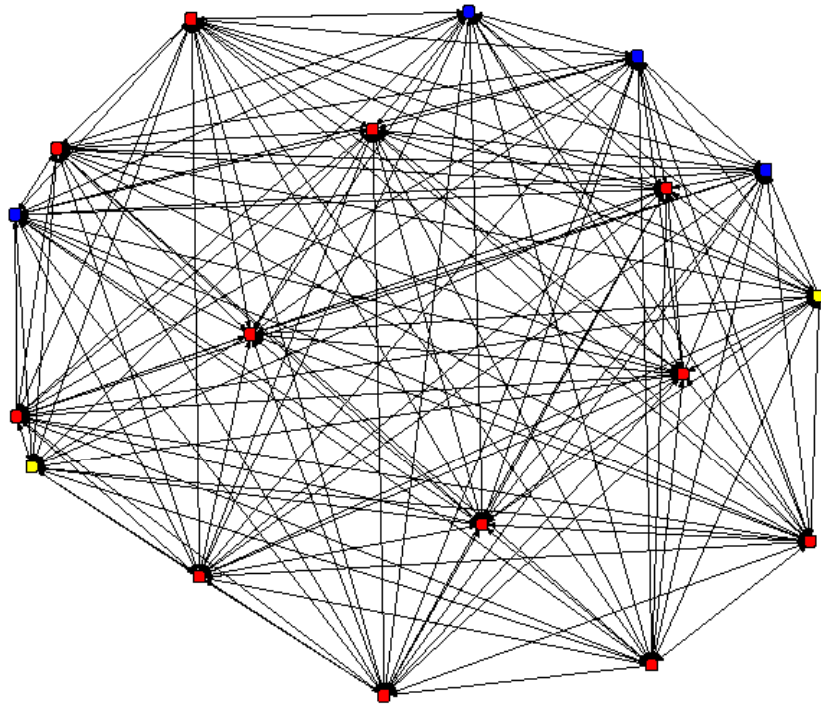
# how were these findings **helpful**?

- **Strategic learning:** Interim findings held a strong **developmental value**\* for **F5MC** staff and funded agencies
  - Potential changes to the network were possible in relationship to new knowledge, i.e., the year 2 network maps
- **Shared network maps** with funded agencies
  - Which gave them **time and space to reflect** on how they would like the nature of interactions to change

# how network findings supported **real-time changes** to the system



## Original Cohort of Cycle 1 Funded Partner Agencies: All Levels of Interaction Year 1 and Year 4



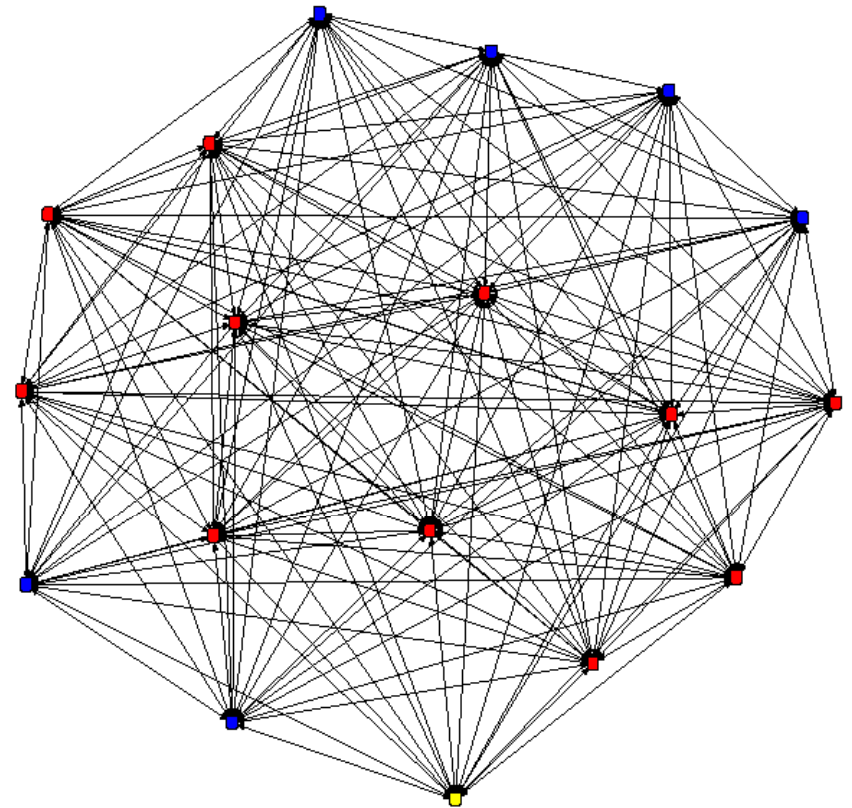
### Year 1

**Density:** 263 actual interactions out of 306 possible = 86%

*Networking:* 169 or 64% of actual interactions

*Coordination:* 58 or 22% of actual interactions

*Collaboration:* 36 or 14% of actual interactions



### Year 4

**Density:** 280 actual interactions out of 306 possible = 92%

*Networking:* 144 or 51% of actual interactions

*Coordination:* 97 or 35% of actual interactions

*Collaboration:* 39 or 14% of actual interactions

year 1 to year 4: levels of interactions between and among funded agencies **deepened**

- **Density:** Similar to year 2, respondents reported an increase in the number of ties
- **Levels of interaction:** A greater number of funded agencies reported deeper levels of interaction

# how were the year 4 findings **helpful**?

- **Monitoring and accountability:** helped *F5MC Commission* document the extent to which funded agencies were interacting with one another and identify overall if relationships deepened
- **Strategic learning:** helped *F5MC staff and funded agencies* identify networking strategies that could foster more coordination and collaboration



# how were the year 4 findings **helpful**?

(cont)

- **Strategic learning:** detailed maps enabled funded agencies to understand their role within the network, as defined by other funded agencies.
  - They could also see relationships of parallel agencies in other regions of the County.

**BIG** ideas

# lessons learned

- Determine **users** and **uses**
- Use network analysis findings to **support real-time changes to the system**
- Provide guidance for space and reflection
- Use network analysis findings to **monitor the range of networking strategies** used to strengthen the system of services
- Make it **fun!**
  - Engage users in activities to make the data real

contact

**Raúl Martínez**

[rmartinez@harderco.com](mailto:rmartinez@harderco.com)

**David Dobrowski**

[david@first5monterey.org](mailto:david@first5monterey.org)

