



Collaborative Designs to Assess Holistic Support for Families

Ashlan Allison, Families First Parenting Programs, Inc.; Gretchen Biesecker, Ph.D., Bee's Knees Consulting LLC; Maureen O'Brien, Ph.D., Families First Parenting Programs, Inc.

aallison@families-first.org

www.families-first.org

BACKGROUND

- When individual stakeholders unite around common issues, the outcomes achieved are “more effective, efficient and/or sustainable than what would have been achieved if organizations were working alone” (Drummond, 2005, p.3).
- Collaboration between smaller organizations allows for program and evaluation designs to be more holistic and derive greater learning.
- Five organizations joined together to create one comprehensive program which combined their services for parents and their children within a housing project.
- The collaborating partners pooled resources to assess multiple outcomes across parents and children through a mixed-methods evaluation design.

PROGRAM PARTNERS



PROGRAM DESIGN

Pre-K Readiness Program

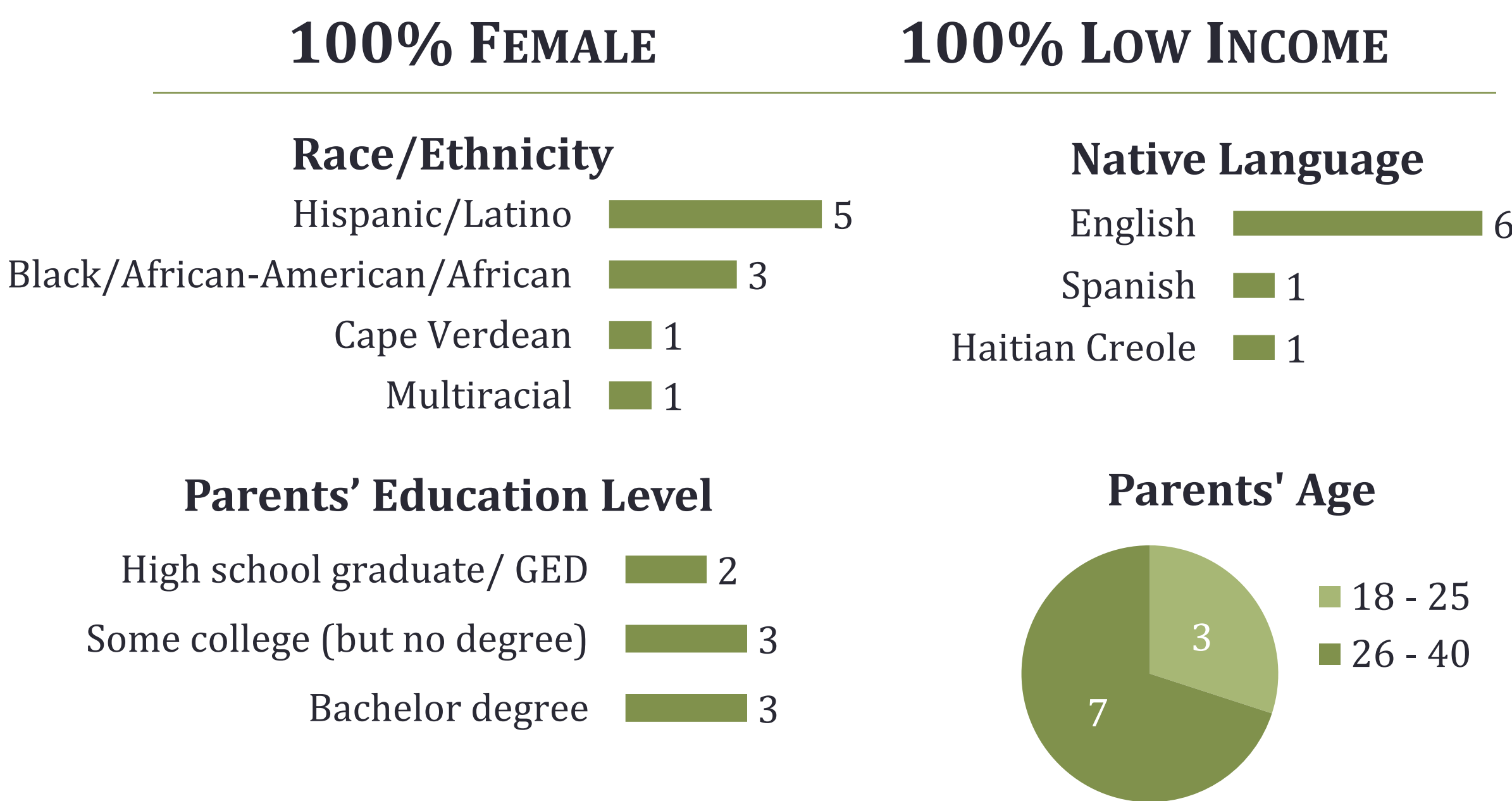
Weekly Dinner
6:00 - 6:30pm

Tuesdays
6:30 - 8:00pm

Thursdays
6:30 - 8:00pm

Other Services

PARTICIPANTS (N = 10)



DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Before

- Parent & child intake forms
- Jumpstart School Success Pre-Checklist for children
- Parent pre-survey

During

- Attendance
- Parent multi-series post-survey
- Parent *Play as Learning* curriculum pilot data
- Parents' wellness surveys
- Parents' physiological changes (e.g. weight, blood pressure)
- Qualitative measures: Parent reflection quotes, activities and photos posted into the mobile app
- Monthly steering group meeting notes
- Mid-year and end-of-year partner survey

After

- End-of-program phone calls with parents
- Jumpstart School Success Post-Checklist for children
- One-month follow-up calls with parents

SAMPLE OF TOOLS

FINAL POST-SURVEY: URBAN EDGE

Families First Parenting Workshops with Michelle & Pam

Thank you for completing this survey. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to skip any question you do not wish to answer for any reason. All information you provide will be kept confidential and used to help Families First, Urban Edge, Jumpstart, Baraka Community Wellness, and Union Capital Boston learn and improve our programs.

Urban Edge ID#: _____ Date: _____

For Question 1: Use the scale below to rate your agreement with each of the following statements: (Please circle one number.)

	Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
1. How much do you agree with the following statements?					
a. I am confident in taking care of my child.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I feel a connection to other parents who are going through similar issues.	1	2	3	4	5
c. I understand how to set expectations for my child based on his or her age.	1	2	3	4	5
d. I enjoy spending time with my child.	1	2	3	4	5

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

Among the benefits to parents were:

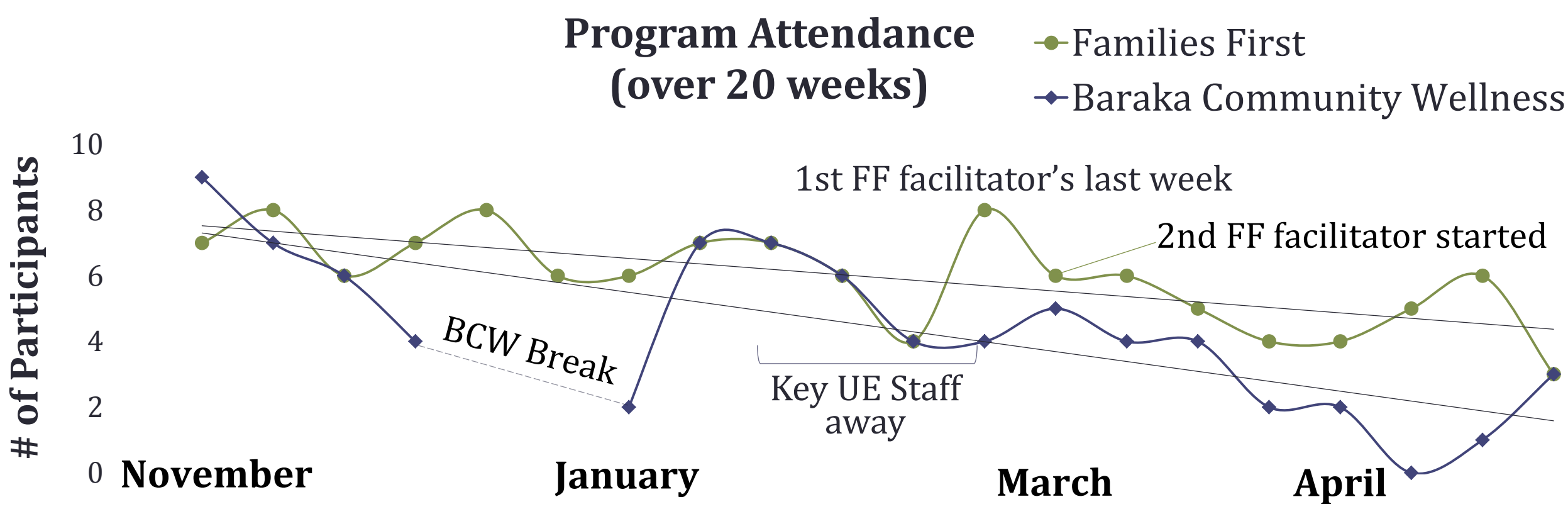


- Increased social connections with other parents
- Sustained high levels of parenting confidence
- Sustained or increased time spent reading with their child
- Increased connection to community resources
- Commitment to start taking time for themselves as parents
- Commitment to stop a negative verbal communication style with their child

Along with high program satisfaction, parents also provided constructive feedback, which has led to program improvements.

PROGRAM CHALLENGES

Our biggest challenge was retaining parents in the program across 20 weeks. We examined trends and contributing factors.



COLLABORATION LEARNINGS

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- Recruitment should be about double the program's capacity
- Parent satisfaction is a major factor in attendance for voluntary programs
- Despite program quality, long programs twice a week are challenging
- Finding ways to keep parents connected to the program (when they have to miss/drop out of sessions) should be a priority

ABOUT THE EVALUATION

- High baselines result in restricted range for data
- Small sample size and inconsistent attendance impacts data analysis
- Flexibility must exist with evaluation and program planning
- Collaboration expands capacity for data collection, but more data means more analysis



NEXT STEPS

- Parent and partner feedback was incorporated into program changes
- Engagement support was enhanced with partners
- A Families First parenting mobile app launches this fall
- Evaluation structure and tools were revised
- An enhanced program model will launch in multiple sites this year

