

Whole Family Approach in Urban Areas: Family Outcomes

Pascale Sykes Foundation
Summer 2022

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Executive Summary

The Whole Family Approach

The Whole Family Approach aims to empower families with the tools they need to achieve financial stability, healthy family relationships, and adult and child well-being.

Critical components of the WFA include:

- Two adult caregivers, at least one of whom is working.
- Families develop plans with short- and long-term goals.
- A collaboration of two or more agencies provide holistic services to both children and adults in each family (2Gen)

The Whole Family Approach

In 2012, the Pascale Sykes Foundation (PSF) implemented the Whole Family Approach (WFA) in rural southern New Jersey.

In 2016, PSF made two additional WFA investments. This time in the New York City metropolitan region, PSF aimed to apply the approach in an urban setting.

Two collaborations, Families for Literacy in Jersey City and Familia Adelante in the South Bronx, were funded from 2017 through 2023. This report focuses on outcomes from those two collaborations. The findings represent data from both.

Note:

Families for Literacy and Familia Adelante initially each received a one-year grant in 2017. The grant was renewable for an additional four years, with funding averaging \$385,000 per year. PSF later extended the investment through 2023.

Research Areas of the Whole Family Approach

- **Financial stability** - coaching & support to help families reach and maintain financial stability.
- **Adult well-being** - coaching & services to strengthen the emotional well-being and resilience of adult family members.
- **Family relationships** - programming to foster trust and healthy communication within families.
- **Child well-being** - programming to strengthen academic skills and emotional well-being of children.

Purpose of the evaluation

The mixed-method evaluation of the Whole Family Approach in Jersey City and the South Bronx sought to understand:

1. How families fared in the areas of financial stability, adult well-being, healthy relationships, and child well-being.
2. What strategies were most effective in supporting families.
3. How WFA's collaborative structure contributed to family outcomes.

This deck presents findings from spring 2022 data collection addressing the first two questions above. Question three is addressed through a separate brief.

See summer 2021 evaluation report and fall 2021 family findings deck for previous results.

Data sources

The findings in this deck are based on data collected via:

- An online survey administered April 15 through May 15, 2022. The survey was sent to all current Families for Literacy and Familia Adelante participants.
- Family interviews of “super-users” in the programs. These families have been in the program for at least one year and have at least one school-aged child.
- Interviews conducted with staff of collaborating agencies in both sites
- Interviews conducted with staff of non-WFA affiliated agencies in Jersey City and the South Bronx

Profile of survey respondents

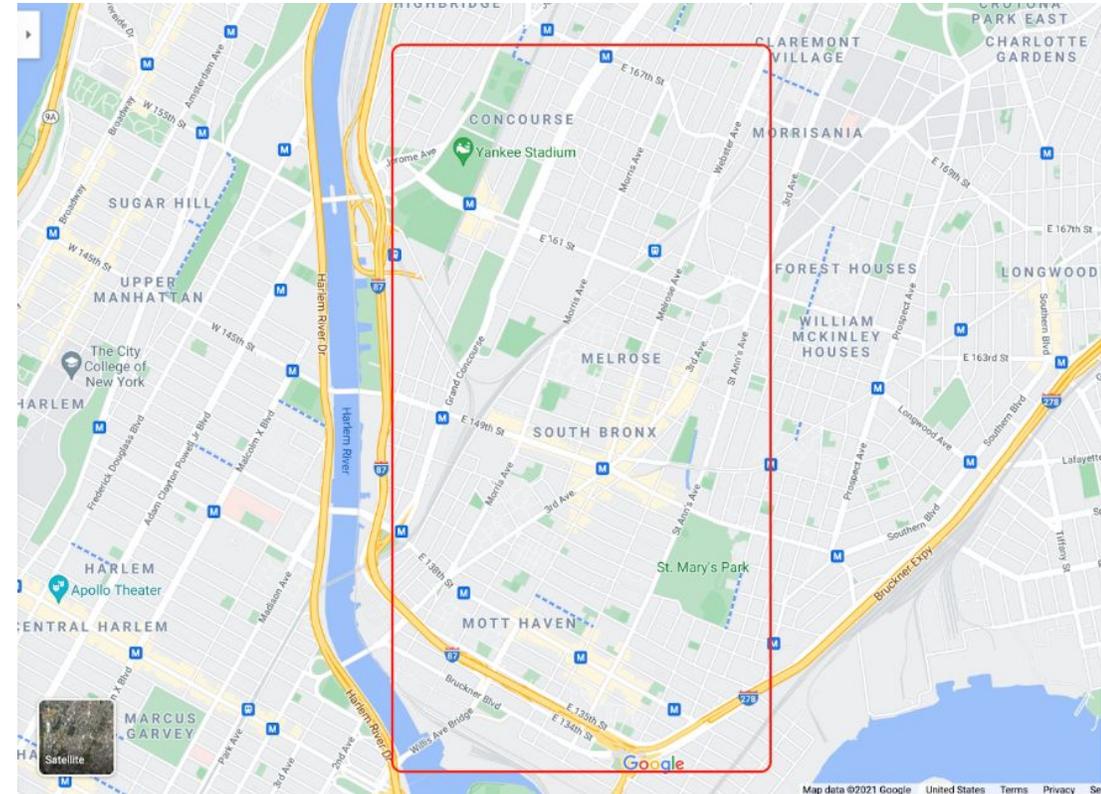
- 168 families, representing 96% of all families involved in Familia Adelante and Families for Literacy responded to the survey. Familia Adelante respondents made up 64% of all survey respondents. This is proportionate to their representation in the invite list (62%).
- 75% of surveys were completed with adults 1 and 2 together. Another 21% were completed solely by adult 1 (typically mother).
- 78% of respondents had either two or three children, with most in the 5 to 11 age range.
- 53% of respondents have joined the program since June 2019, suggesting most of their program experience has been since the COVID pandemic. 24% of respondents began prior to Sept 2017.

About the Communities: Familia Adelante (FA)

- Serves primarily Spanish-speaking, undocumented immigrant families (majority from Mexico) in South Bronx neighborhoods of Concourse, Melrose, and Mott Haven.
- FA participants tend to have low educational attainment, many having just completed eighth grade in their countries of origin.
- Most FA families are two-parent households with male breadwinners and female homemakers.

Collaboration partners:

- **Mercy Center:** Lead agency, family coaching, family skills (parenting, anger management), youth programming
- **Qualitas of Life Foundation:** Financial management
- **Tanya Valle:** Mindfulness coaching
- **Fiver Children's Foundation:** One-on-one educational guidance for families

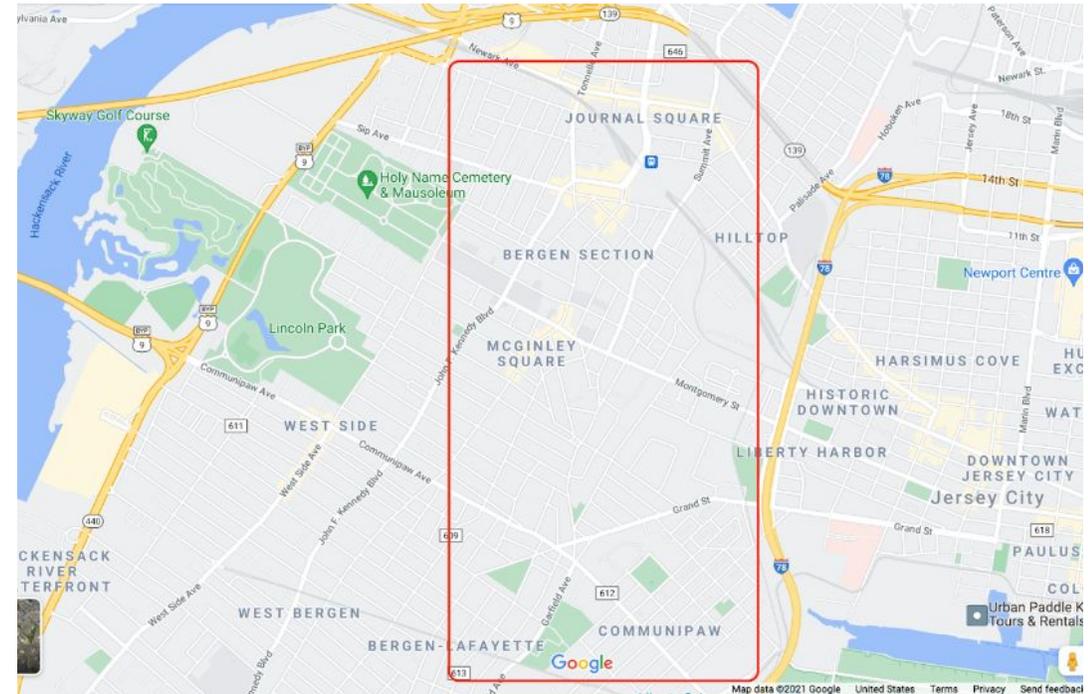


About the Communities: Families for Literacy (FFL)

- Serves primarily employment-authorized, Arabic-speaking immigrants in Jersey City neighborhoods of Communipaw, McGinley Square, and Journal Square.
- Many FFL participants have higher-education credentials obtained in home countries.
- Most FFL families are two-parent households with male breadwinners and female homemakers.

Collaboration partners:

- **New City Kids:** Lead agency, holistic case management, children educational and recreational programming
- **Saint Peter's University:** English-language instruction
- **Women Rising:** Workforce training and job development
- **Rising Tide Capital:** Entrepreneurship training



Context in Jersey City and South Bronx

- Slow recovery from income loss and social isolation of early COVID-19 pandemic
- Education loss as a result of COVID-19 school closures and virtual learning
- Higher cost of living due to inflation
- Government pandemic relief programs ending (e.g., rent moratoriums, child tax credits)
- Housing shortage pushing housing costs even higher
- Continued anxiety for undocumented families related to slow progress on immigration reform issues

Summary of Findings

- In all four domains of the program (financial stability, adult wellbeing, healthy family relationships and child wellbeing), participants indicated faring better now than before participating in the Whole Family Approach.
- Most participants indicated that the Whole Family Approach contributed to how their family is faring across all domains. In both the surveys and interviews, families flagged the extensive support they receive from staff, the flexible and responsive assistance, the holistic activities, and the whole-family focused nature of the services as primary components that make the approach so valuable to them.
- These findings are consistent with the findings from the survey of families in the fall of 2021.

Findings

1. Financial Stability

Slides 16-24

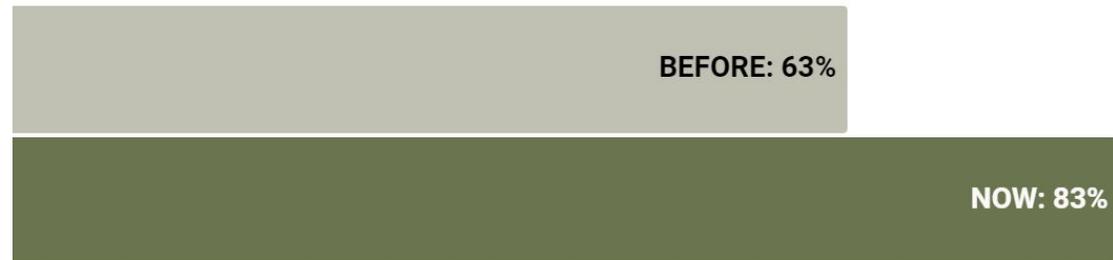
- 
- A. Basic needs
 - B. Financial management & planning
 - C. Banking
 - D. Employment and Income
 - E. Job training/skills

1A. Are families meeting basic needs?

83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they currently had sufficient food, shelter, and basic necessities. 63% agreed or strongly agreed with that statement when reflecting on their family prior to participating in the program.

Percentage of families who agree or strongly agree that...

Our family has sufficient food, shelter, and basic necessities.



N=167

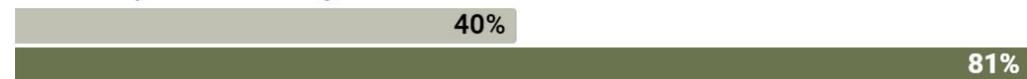
1B. Are families managing finances & planning for their financial future?

About three-quarters of families agreed or strongly agreed with statements indicating sound financial management, including budgeting, setting and planning for financial goals, and confidence in one's ability to meet those goals. This was about twice the proportion who agreed or strongly agreed that these statements applied to their families prior to joining the program. Particularly noteworthy was the increase of families agreeing that they are confident in their ability to achieve their financial goals versus before joining the program.

Our family has a household budget to track income and expenses.



Our family has financial goals.



Our family has a plan to achieve our financial goals.



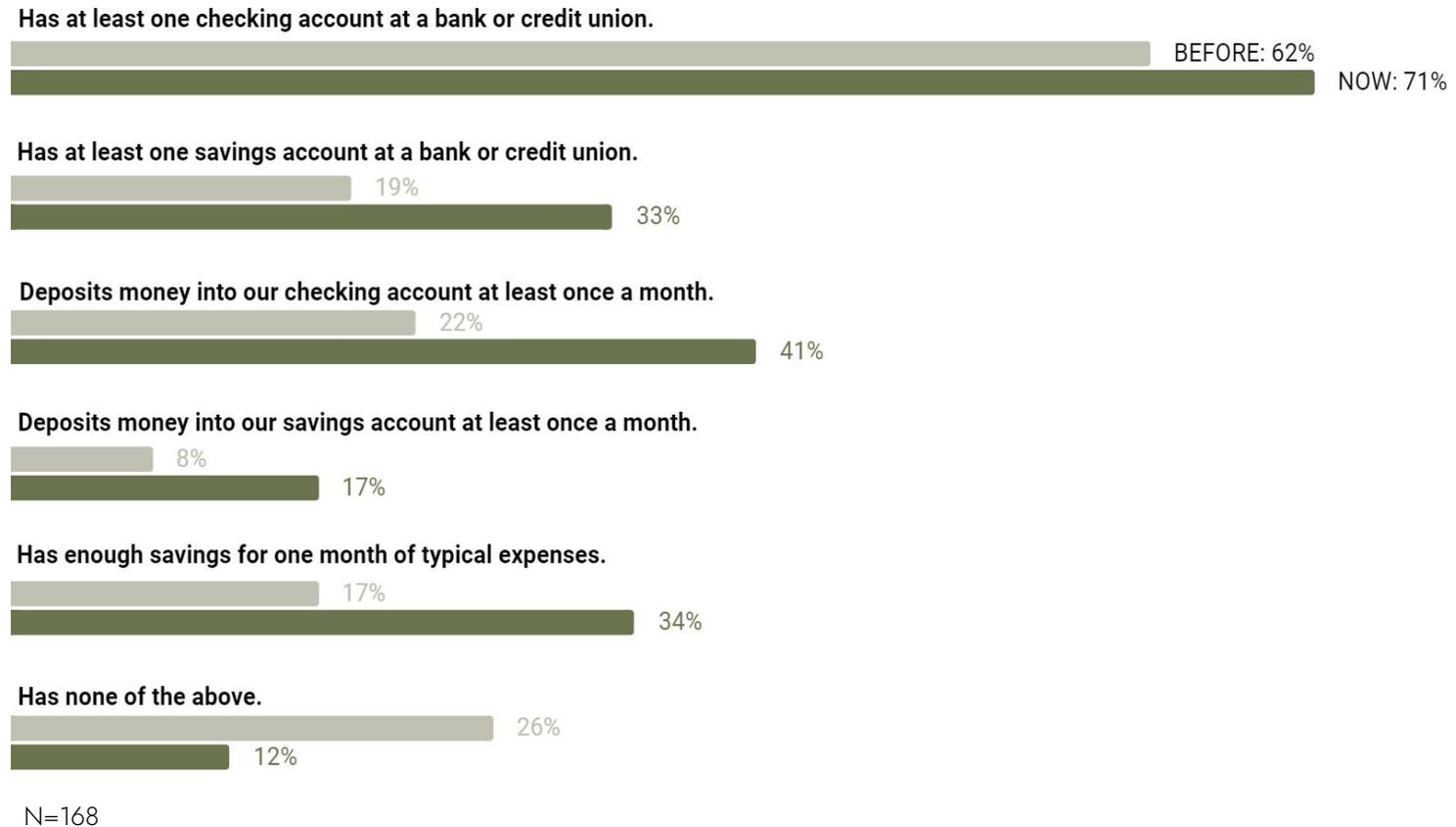
Our family is confident that we will achieve our financial goals.



N=166

1C. Are families participating in mainstream banking?

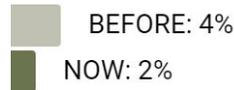
Families reported participating in mainstream banking more now than before joining the program. For example, 71% of families reported having a checking account now versus 62% who had one before participating. Importantly, 34% reported having one month of savings available for emergencies, twice the proportion (17%) of families with emergency savings before the program.



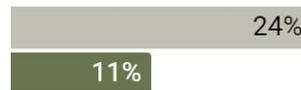
1D. Are families employed & bringing in sufficient income?

While WFA families have always worked, a larger proportion is now bringing in enough income to set aside some savings than prior to joining the program (28% now vs 18% prior). Conversely, fewer families reported being unable to meet basic expenses with their earnings when compared to before joining (11% now vs 24% prior).

No adults in our family work.



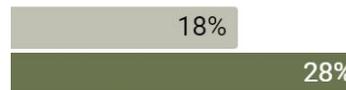
At least one adult has a job but does not earn enough to cover basic expenses.



At least one adult brings in enough income to cover basic expenses.



At least one adult brings in enough income to set some money aside each month.

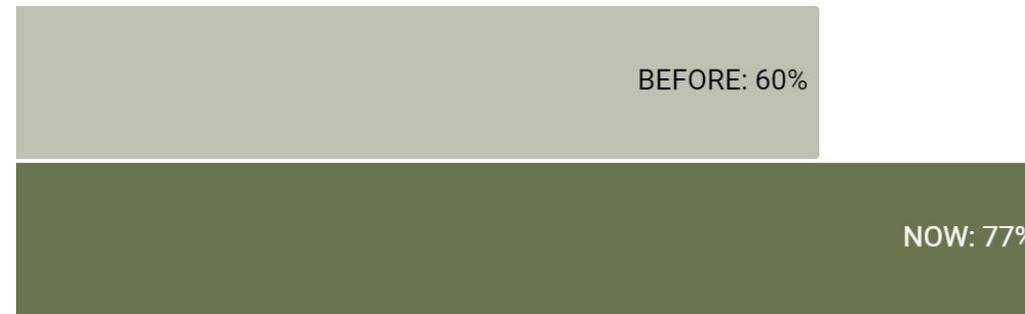


N=168

1E. Do families have sufficient job training & skills?

Among families reporting not currently having a job that allows for savings, more believed they now have sufficient job training and skills to secure such a job than they did prior to joining the program (77% now vs 60% prior).

At least one adult with job training/skills needed to secure better-paying job in the future.

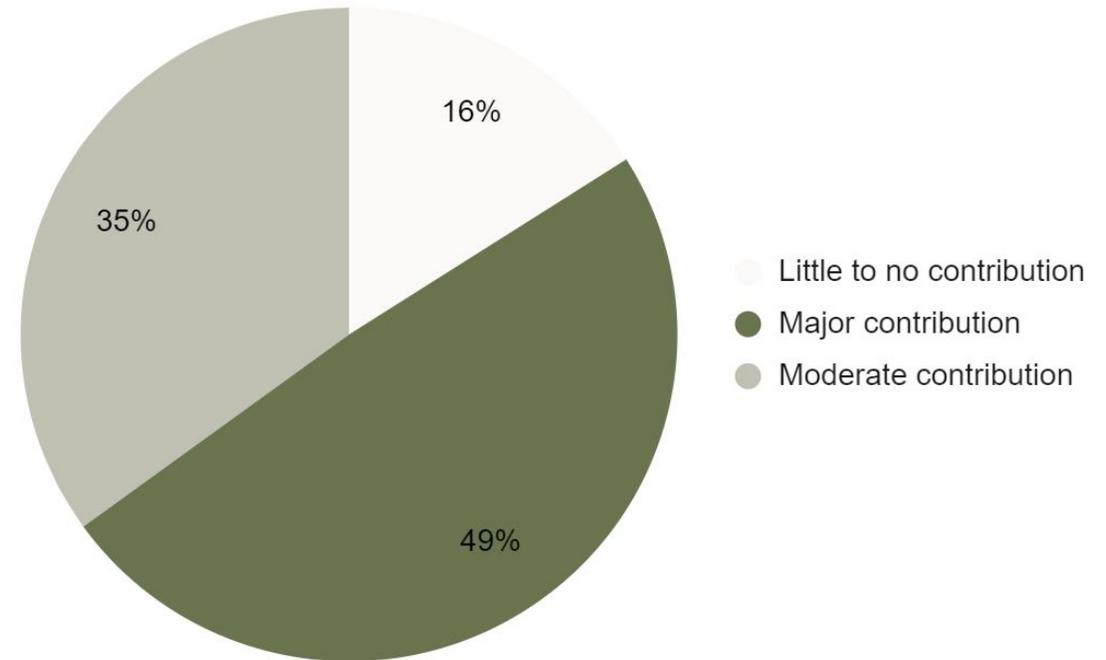


N=119

To what extent did WFA contribute to families' financial stability?

84% of families reported that the Whole Family Approach contributed to their financial wellbeing: 49% indicated the program had a major contribution, 35% indicated a moderate contribution.

Extent of program contribution on financial outcomes (N=168)



Which WFA components contributed to families' financial stability?

Families who indicated some program contribution were asked to indicate which site-specific program components had contributed to their financial outcomes. From a list that included all four program partners and a space for "other," the most frequently selected components for each site are listed below:

Familia Adelante (N=104)

- 70% selected "Meetings with our family worker"
- 69% selected "Activities with Qualitas (financial literacy, financial training, budgeting, individual coaching, etc.)"

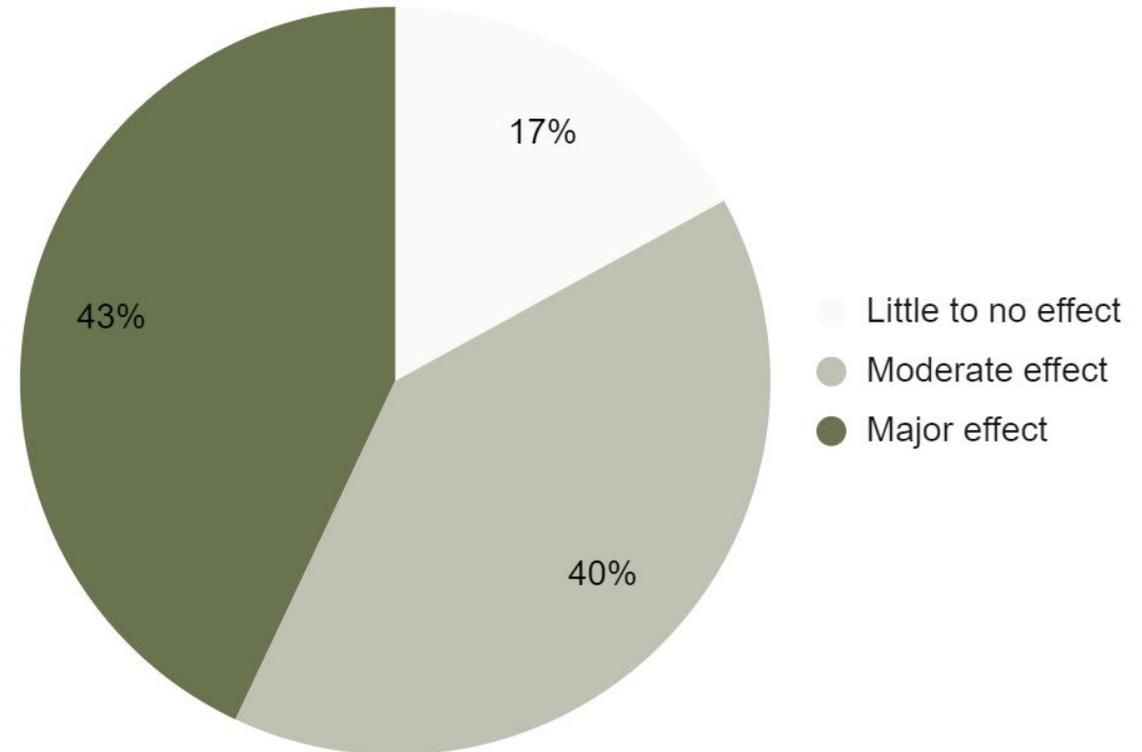
Families for Literacy (N=58)

- 83% selected "Activities with New City Kids" (financial literacy workshop, budget creation, etc.)
- 83% selected "Meetings with our case manager"

To what extent did Covid affect families' financial stability?

For most families, the pandemic had a moderate (40%) or major (43%) effect on how they were faring financially. Covid had little to no effect on family financial outcomes for 17% of respondents.

Extent of Covid's effect on financial outcomes (N=167)



In their words...

“Qualitas gave us guidance on how to administer our money, how to save. I learned that sometimes we made mistakes buying things that weren’t necessary. That lesson is still helping us today.”

- Familia Adelante mother

“I was determined to continue my profession. Families for Literacy gave me an opportunity to continue my profession. And now I can. I’m working all the time with the things that I enjoy. My kids can see that the results of all that work that we did is our stability.”

- Families for Literacy father

2. Adult Well-Being & Healthy Relationships

Slides 26-38

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- A large green bracket on the left side of the list, grouping the items A through H.
- A. Interpersonal support
 - B. Resilience
 - C. Emotional well-being
 - D. Family communication & support
 - E. English skills
 - F. Advocacy on behalf of children
 - G. Goal orientation
 - H. Time-management skills

2A. Do adults feel supported?

Across all elements of interpersonal support, adults indicated they were faring better now than before participating in the Whole Family Approach.

Nearly half of respondents indicated they definitely had someone they could turn to for advice about handling problems with their family (48% now vs 12% before), knowing who to turn to for suggestions on how to deal with a personal problem (47% now vs 10% before), and having someone to turn to for career advice (41% now vs 11% before).

There is someone I can turn to for advice about handling problems with my family.



When I need suggestions on how to deal with a personal problem, I know someone I can turn to.



There is someone I could turn to for advice about making career plans or changing my job.

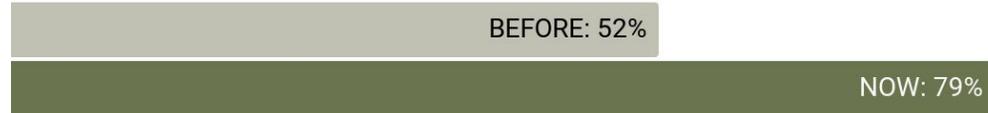


N=292

2B. Are adults resilient?

Across all elements of resilience, adults indicated faring better now than before the program. Over three-quarters of adults (79%) agreed or strongly agreed that they tend to bounce back quickly after hard times versus 52% who felt this way before participating in the program. Other indicators of resilience saw similar increases: 74% agreed or strongly agreed that it does not take them long to recover from a stressful event (51% before), and 67% agreed or strongly agreed that they usually come through difficult times with little trouble now (52% before).

I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.



It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.



I usually come through difficult times with little trouble.

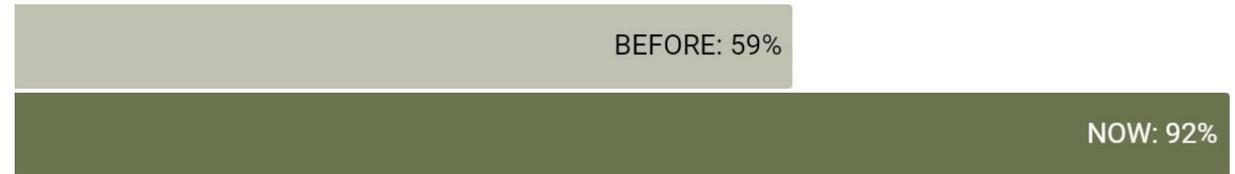


N=287

2C. Do adults have a sense of emotional well-being?

Adults have a strong sense of emotional well-being, with 92% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their overall well-being is good (59% prior to program participation) and 94% indicating they tend to feel positive about their life (66% prior).

I would rate my overall emotional well-being as good.



I tend to feel positive about my life.



N=294

2D. Do adults have healthy relationships?

Adults indicated having healthy relationships with family members. Over 90% indicate that they feel respected and supported by their family members and have good communication with them. Before participating, 67% to 77% of adults reported feeling this way.

I feel respected by the other members of my family.



I feel supported by the other members of my family.



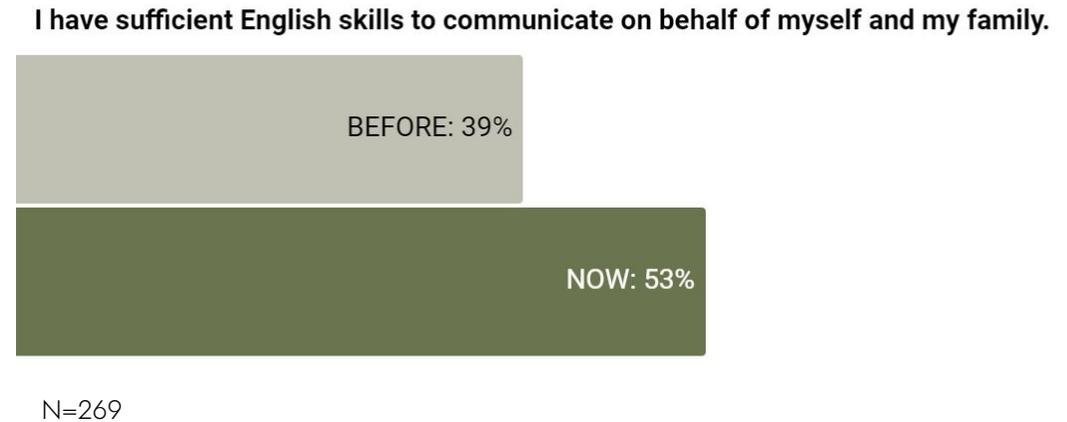
I have good communication with my family.



N=292

2E. Do families have sufficient English skills?

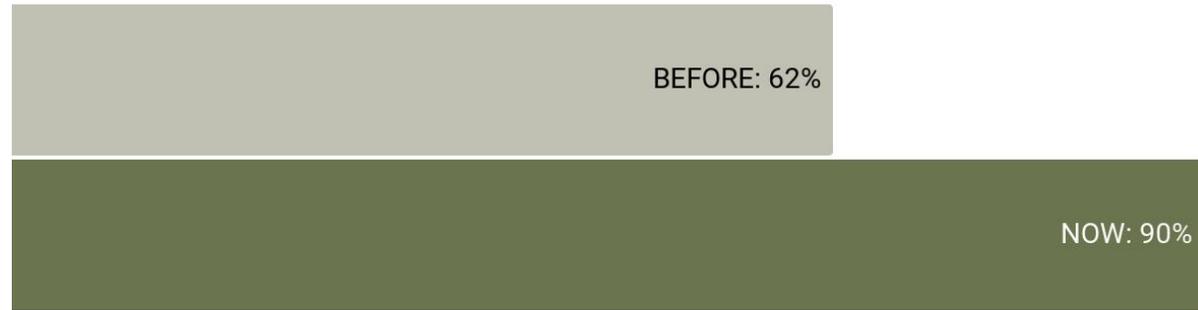
Just over half of adults agreed or strongly agreed that they have sufficient English skills to communicate on behalf of themselves and their families, suggesting this an area to continue working on for WFA. It is, however, an area of progress, as only 39% of adults agreed or strongly agreed that this statement was true prior to program participation.



2F. Are adults comfortable advocating on behalf of their children?

90% of adults indicated they are comfortable advocating on behalf of their children; this is a notable increase from 62% prior to the program.

I feel comfortable asking teachers/administrators for what my child(ren) need at school.



N=292

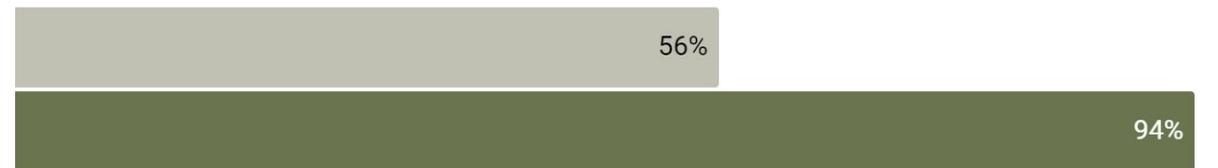
2G. Are adults goal-oriented?

One of the key pillars of the Whole Family Approach is families setting and working toward goals. Therefore it is not surprising that 95% of adults agree or strongly agree that they have set goals for their family and that 94% are regularly working toward achieving them. This is a notable increase from before participating in the program when 53% agreed or strongly agreed that they had set goals and 56% were actively working on them.

I have set goals for myself or my family.



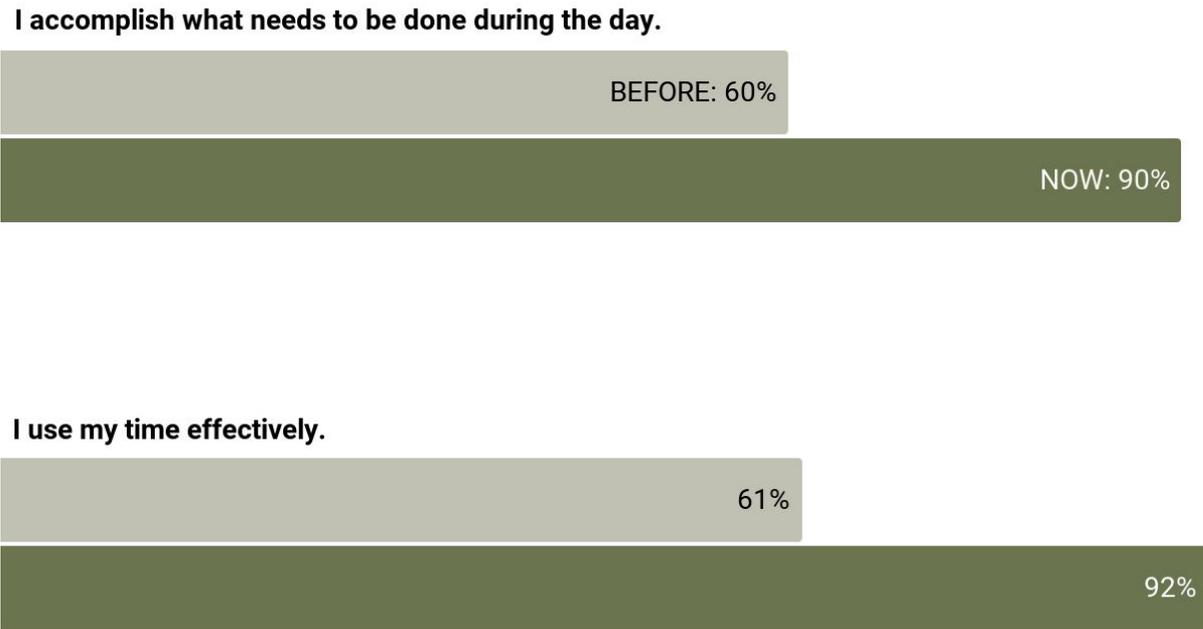
I regularly work toward achieving goals for myself or my family.



N=292

2H. Do adults manage time well?

90% of adults agreed or strongly agreed that they accomplish what needs to be done during the day (compared to 60% who indicated feeling this way before the program), and 92% indicated using their time effectively (vs. 61% before).



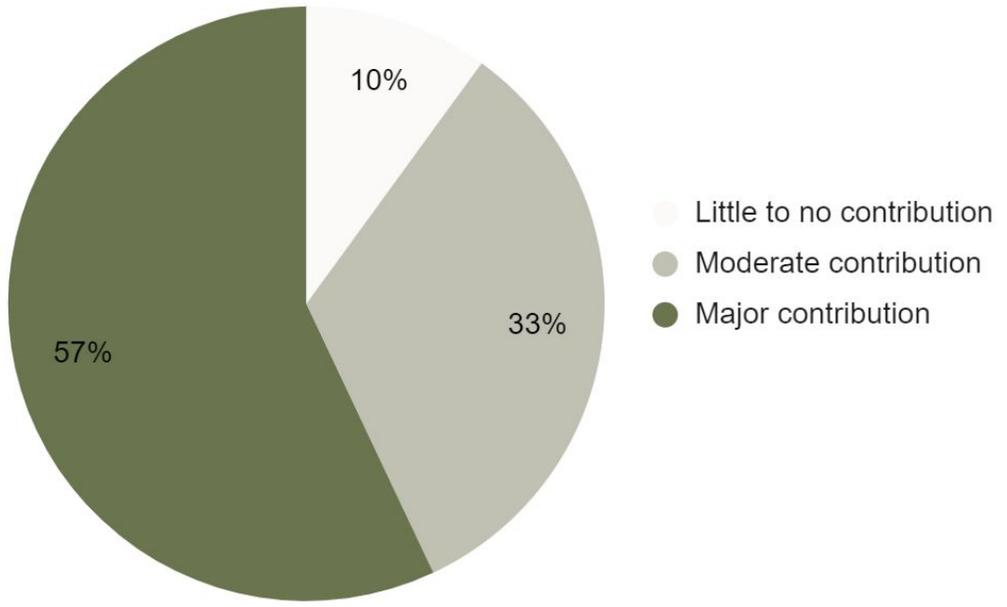
N=289

To what extent did WFA contribute to adult well-being and healthy relationships?

90% of families reported that the Whole Family Approach contributed to emotional well-being and healthy relationships: 57% indicated that the program had a major contribution, 33% indicated a moderate contribution.

Nearly three-fourths indicated that the impact was the same for both adults, while 22% said it was greater for adult 1. When prompted to explain, respondents indicated that mothers were more active in the program and therefore benefited more from it.

Extent of program contribution on adult well-being and relationship outcomes (N=168)



Which WFA components contributed to adult well-being and healthy relationships?

Families who indicated some program contribution were asked to indicate which site-specific program components had contributed to adult well-being and healthy relationships. From a list that included all four program partners and a space for “other,” the most frequently selected components for each site are listed below:

Familia Adelante (N=104)

- 75% selected “Meetings with our family worker”
- 69% selected “Mercy Center Activities” (Mother’s Group, Fathers’ Group, Family Weekend/Day, Couples Reflection, etc.)

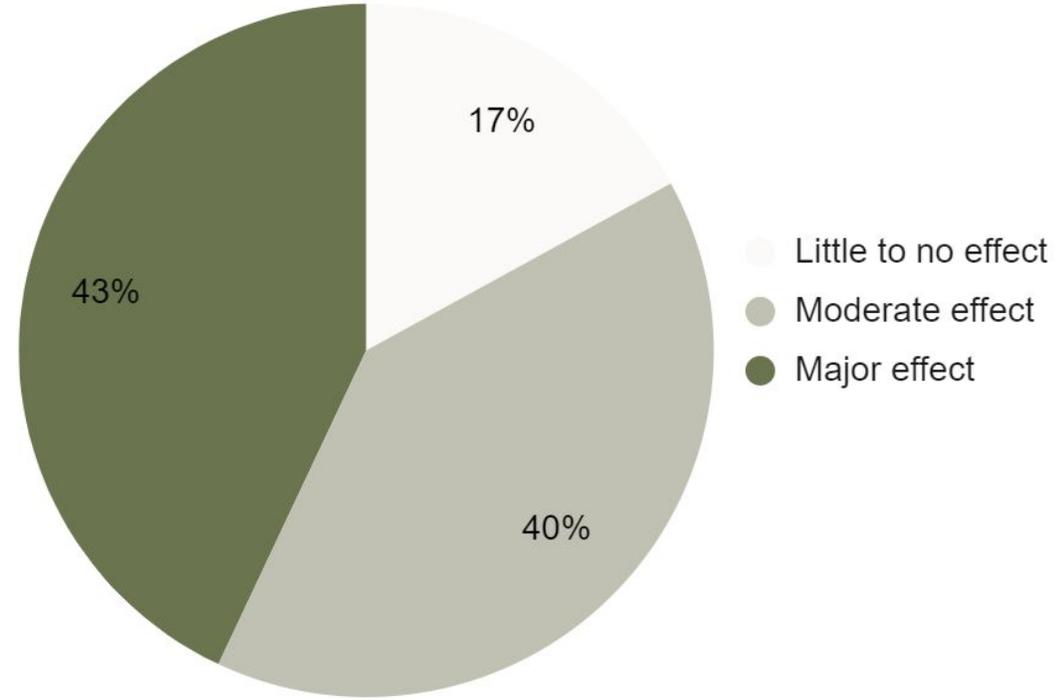
Families for Literacy (N=62)

- 84% selected “Activities with New City Kids” (financial literacy workshop, budget creation, etc.)
- 77% selected “Meetings with our case manager”

To what extent did Covid affect adult well-being and healthy relationships?

Most families (83%) indicated the pandemic had at least a moderate effect on adult well-being and healthy family relationships. Just under one-fifth (17%) indicated it had little to no effect.

Extent of Covid's effect on adult well-being and healthy relationship outcomes (N=167)



In their words...

“They don’t tell you what to do; they ask you questions. ‘What do you need?’ ‘What do you think of this idea?’ ‘What if we make a savings plan for your family?’ Then once you’ve set the goal, they help you structure it and make a plan so you can take steps little by little to meet your goal.”

- Familia Adelante mother

“If you find some people and spend time together and talk together about your feelings or if you have any problem, and you speak with someone, you feel better.”

- Families for Literacy mother

In their words...

“In one of the sessions with our family worker, my husband finally opened up, and that was the moment that I saw a different side of him. In that session, I finally saw my husband. I saw a sensitive person who also suffers and has needs. That moment was a blessing because I saw that we could keep growing as a family, as a couple. And I think he changed a lot, too. He even learned to braid our daughter’s hair! I can truly say that Familia Adelante can change your life.”

- Familia Adelante mother

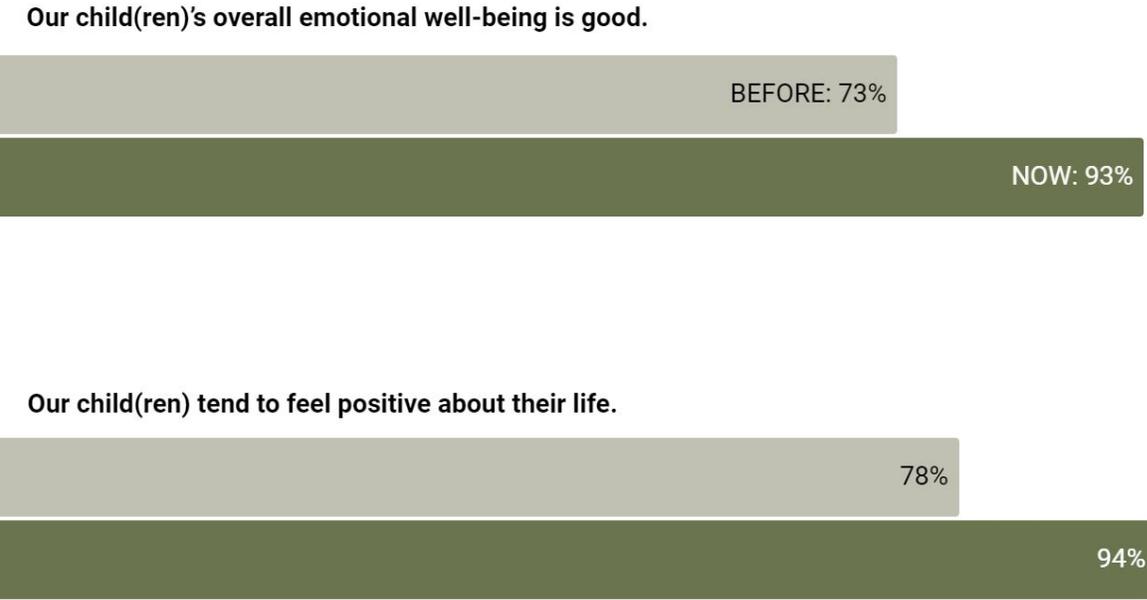
3. Child Well-Being

Slides 40-50

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- A large blue bracket on the left side of the list, grouping the seven items.
- A. Emotional well-being
 - B. Optimism about the future
 - C. Resilience
 - D. Reading ability
 - E. Physical activity
 - F. Peer relationships
 - G. Relationship with parents

3A. Do children have strong emotional well-being?

More parents agreed or strongly agreed that their children's emotional well-being is good now than parents who indicated that this was the case before joining in the program. 93% of families agreed or strongly agreed that their children have strong emotional well-being versus 73% before participating, and 94% agreed or strongly agreed that their children feel positive about life versus 78% before the program.



N=164

3B. Are children optimistic about their future?

More parents agreed or strongly agreed that their children are optimistic about their future now than parents who indicated that this was the case before joining in the program (92% vs 74%). This is also true for parents who indicated their children believe they will achieve their dreams (94% vs 76%).



N=163

3C. Do children recover easily from setbacks?

87% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their children recover easily from setbacks. 70% of parents felt this was the case before participating in the program.

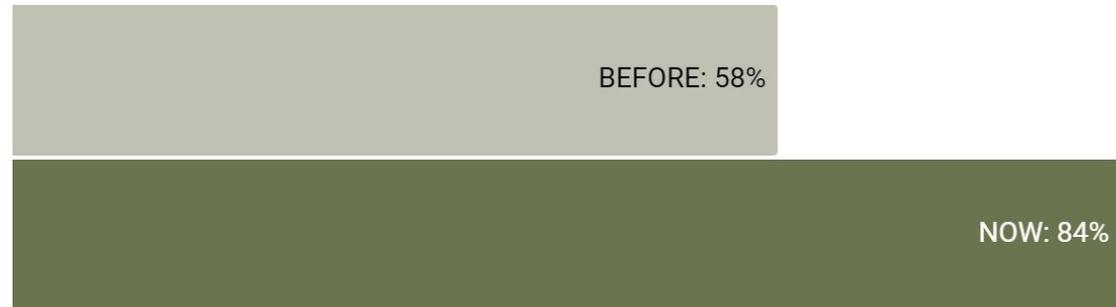


N=163

3D. Are children reading at grade level?

84% of parents believed their children are reading on grade level now. 58% of parents indicated that this was the case before joining in the program. This is especially noteworthy given reading challenges for children during the pandemic.

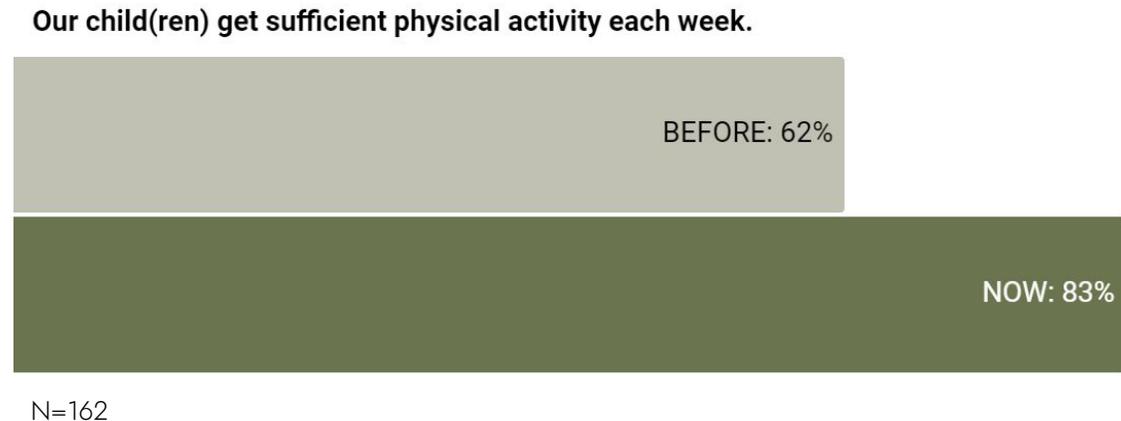
Our child(ren) are reading at or above grade level.



N=162

3E. Are children physically active?

More parents agreed or strongly agreed that their children get sufficient physical activity now than parents who indicated that this was the case before joining the program (83% vs 62%).



3F. Do children have healthy peer relationships?

92% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their children regularly spend time with or talk with peers (70% before the program), and 89% agreed or strongly agreed that their children can easily make new friends (74% before).

Our child(ren) regularly spend time with and/or talk with peers.



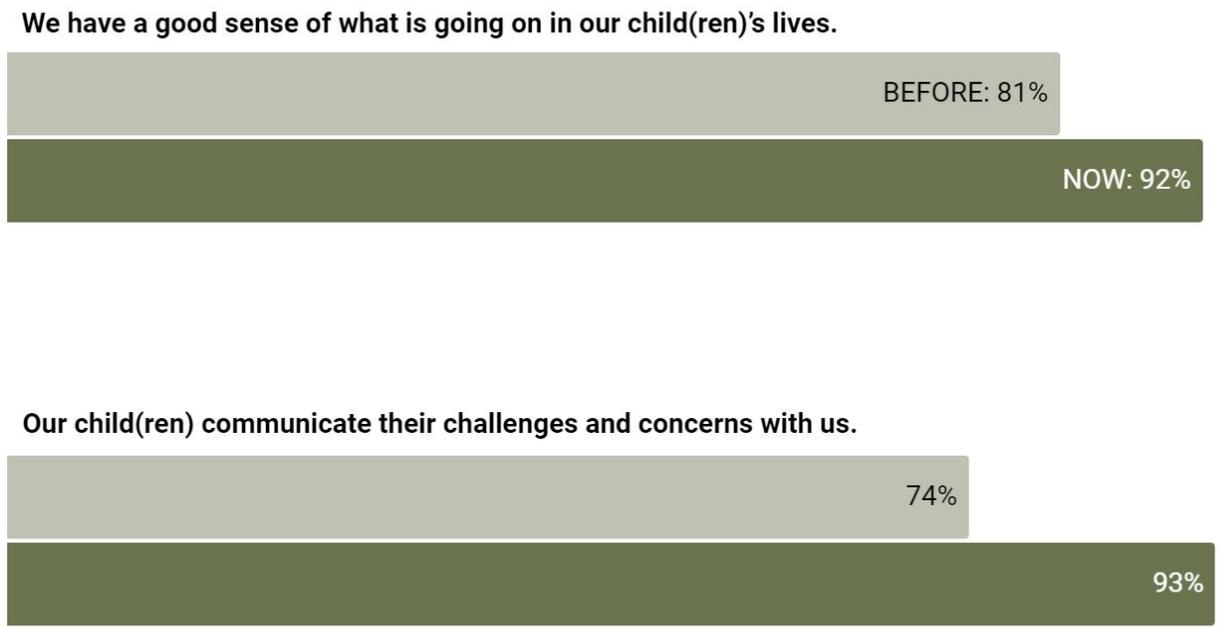
Our child(ren) can easily make new friends.



N=163

3G. Do children have healthy relationships with their parents?

Parents have strong relationships with their children. 92% agreed or strongly agreed that they have a good sense of what is going on in their children's lives (vs 81% before the program), and 93% agreed or strongly agreed that their children communicate challenges and concerns with them (vs 74% before the program).

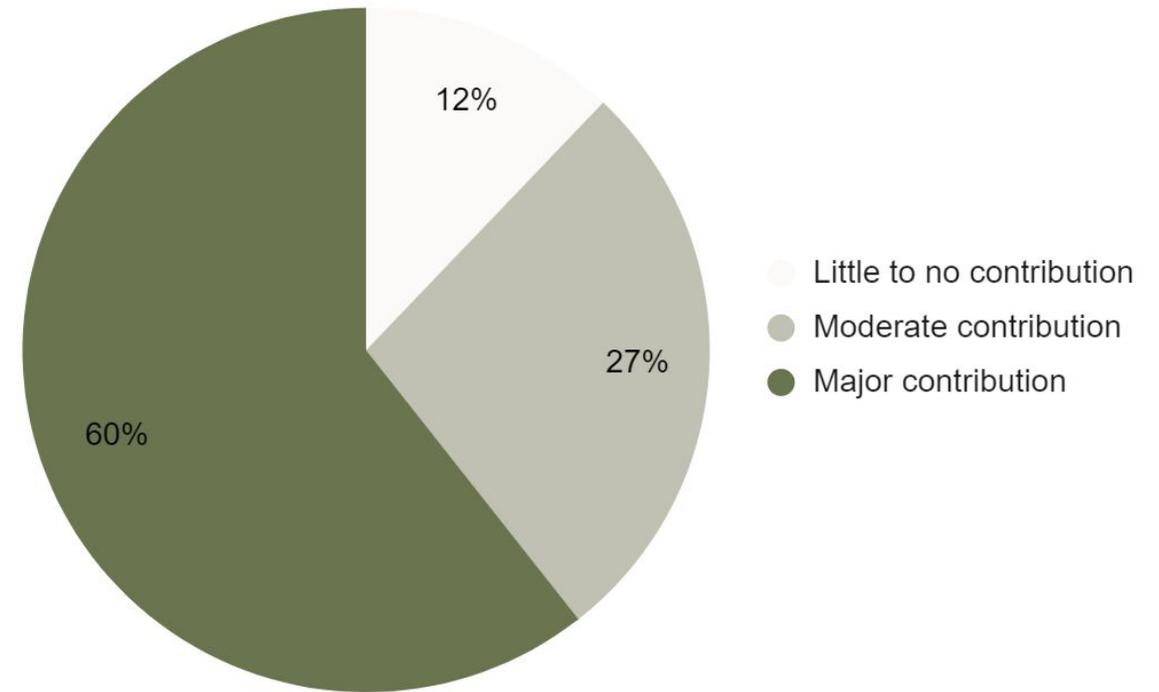


N=161

To what extent did WFA contribute to child well-being?

87% of families indicated that the program contributed to child well-being: 60% indicated the program had a major contribution, and 27% indicated a moderate contribution.

Extent of program contribution on child well-being (N=161)



Which WFA components contributed to child well-being?

Families who indicated some program contribution were asked to indicate which site-specific program components had contributed to child well-being. From a list that included all four program partners and a space for “other,” the most frequently selected components for each site are listed below:

Familia Adelante (N=102)

- 65% selected “Meetings with our family worker”
- 65% selected “Fiver Activities” (tutoring, camps, workshops, individual coaching, etc.)

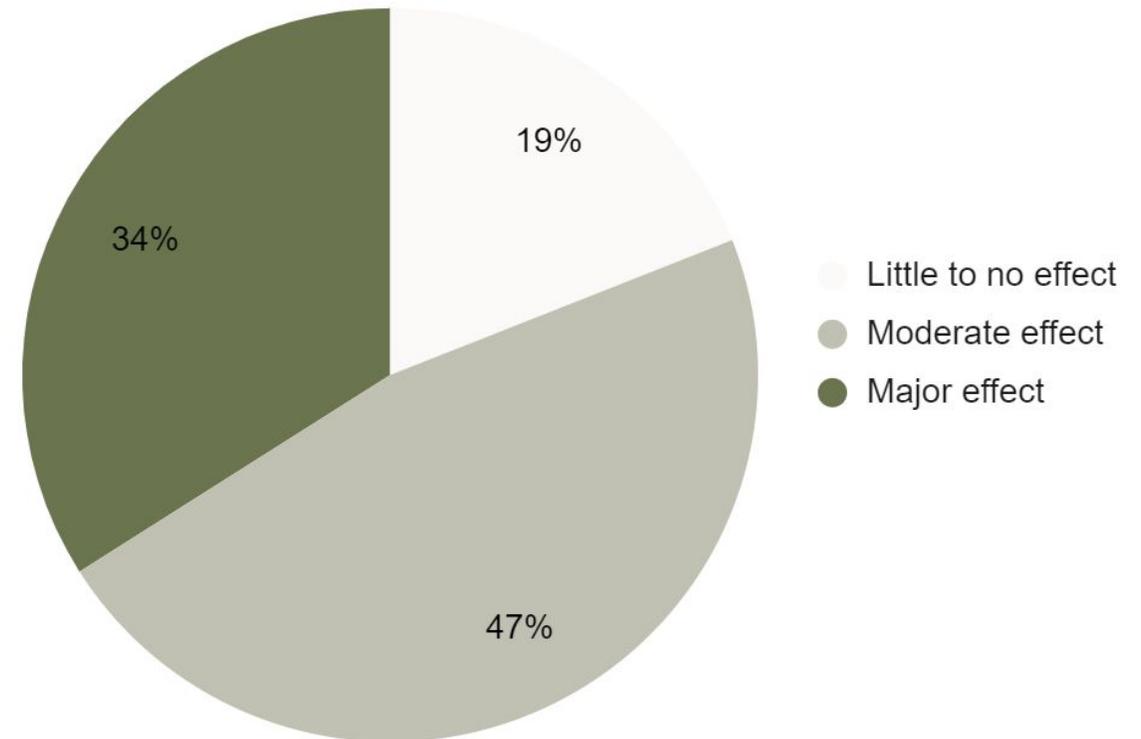
Families for Literacy (N=55)

- 86% selected “Activities with New City Kids” (financial literacy workshop, budget creation, etc.)
- 80% selected “Meetings with our case manager”

To what extent did Covid affect child well-being?

About one-third of all families (34%) indicated that COVID had a major effect on their children's well-being. 47% indicated a moderate effect, and 19% indicated little to no effect.

Extent of Covid effect on child well-being (N=159)



In their words...

“In Familia Adelante, the children really gain the sense of security of knowing that there are other people besides their parents whom they can trust, who are looking out for them. It’s very important for children to know that they are in a safe environment. The program is a very important resource for me in raising self-confident children who know that they can solve any problem they face. I feel that is what my children are gaining from Familia Adelante; they are gaining a healthy future.”

- Familia Adelante mother

“New City Kids got me to read more. I didn’t read at all before the EPIC program.”

- Families for Literacy Child, age 10

Closing: In their words...

"I am so thankful for this program, because it was the path for me to continue my life with my family. And as a professional and as a person, it was great to have people behind me, supporting me, all the time encouraging me to keep working and learning and not giving up even though it was hard. When you see your family succeed in different aspects, it's a miracle."

- Families for Literacy father

"The program is like the architect for your family. You tell them what you want, and they recommend the materials and draw up plans for you, but ultimately you decide what is right for your family. They provide all the tools. All your family has to bring is your commitment."

- Familia Adelante mother