



Sustainable Improvements: Serving the Diverse Children and Families of Monterey County

A Status Report on First 5 Monterey County's Funded Agencies
FY 2014-15 Systems-Level Evaluation Report

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Prepared for



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Key Findings

The 2014-15 Systems-Level Evaluation Report surveyed 58 respondents comprising management, program coordinators, and front-line staff at 24 F5MC-funded agencies. Notable findings include the following:

While funded partners have a long track record of designing responsive and accessible services, more reflection may be needed to design opportunities that encourage father and working-parent participation.

- *F5MC and funded partners have cultivated a stable workforce* – Nearly 90 percent of staff had worked in their current agency for four years or more and 71 percent had served in their current position for the same amount of time.
- *Certain barriers to accessing services persist and others are of growing concern* – Compared to last year, a smaller portion of funded partners reported that the location of services was a barrier *most of the time* (13 percent), but a growing portion reported lack of transportation services was a barrier *most of time* (41 percent). There was also a large increase in the percent of agencies reporting that services not being provided where participants feel safe was a barrier at least *some of the time* (91 percent).
- *Despite highlighting opportunities to encourage father and working-parent participation, agencies are less likely to engage in activities designed to drive their involvement* – For father participation, although slightly more agencies reported ensuring some groups were led by males, most other activities experienced declines. For working parent participation, the most commonly-employed activity was

holding events in the evening; all other service areas experienced declines.

- *F5MC-funded partners are proactively doing more to prevent service attrition* – Compared to last year, a greater share of funded partners engaged in activities to encourage continuing family participation. All now report reaching out to families after scheduled breaks in services and to families who stop participating at least *some of the time*. The most notable increase was in holding new client orientations, an area that F5MC has begun funding for some playgroups.
- *Although a large majority of agencies provide services all month during much of the year, the share providing services all month in non-peak months declined* – As in past years, F5MC-funded agencies tend to provide services *all month* from February to May and September to November. However, a steady decrease in the share of agencies providing services *all month* in the summer and winter months is becoming apparent.

Stronger internal systems are allowing agencies to more efficiently make and strengthen linkages with services that children and families need

- *Funded partners continue to report improvements in their ability to make, track, and follow up on referrals* – The share of funded partners using Persimmony to make referrals continued to grow. Almost all agencies (91 percent) were tracking referrals, which is the greatest percent since this data has been collected. About two-thirds said that referral tracking was working *very well*, representing a steady improvement since 2011-12.

- *Compared to last year, agencies reported a number of decreases in barriers to successful referrals* – Many of the barriers reported in 2013-14 declined in the most recent year. The most commonly-reported barriers in 2014-15 were that other resources/organizations were full (75 percent, a slight increase compared to last year) and a lack of appropriate resources in the region (63 percent, a slight decrease compared to last year).

Funded partners identified fewer barriers and suggested additional supports needed in order to increase engagement in policy and advocacy activities

- *Compared to past years, agencies reported a decrease in the perceived barriers to engaging in policy and advocacy efforts* – The majority of barriers for funded partners to engage in advocacy efforts appear to be declining and, for the first time since data has been collected, no agency reported that it was *not convinced of the benefits*.
- *Funded partners identified areas in which they need more support to feel comfortable advocating and suggested ways that F5MC can work to raise the visibility of early childhood* – The supports that funded partners most frequently mentioned needing were information and updates, more time and support, and meetings and trainings. They suggested that F5MC can continue to raise the visibility of early childhood through outreach and organizing, collaboration with local public and private sector leaders, and more engagement with funded partners.

The F5MC Commission and staff play key roles in supporting and representing funded agencies

- *Overall, agency staff reported high levels of satisfaction with various types of technical assistance (TA) offered by F5MC* – The highest-rated F5MC-provided TA activities were I-ACT meetings, learning circles, and other networking opportunities; support with Persimmony; and assistance with scopes of work.
- *Most agencies felt that F5MC’s grant reporting requirements were both reasonable and helpful* – Three-fourths of agencies (75 percent) said that the time and effort needed for reporting was *about right*. Ninety-two percent felt that the grant reporting process was helpful measuring program impact and supporting learning and improvement.
- *Compared to the prior year, funded partners reported increased satisfaction with F5MC staff* – In 2014-15, funded partners shifted from *agreeing to strongly agreeing* with most of the positive statements about F5MC staff; for all of the statements, between 96 and 100 percent either *agreed or strongly agreed*.
- *Survey results also indicate a generally positive outlook on the F5MC Commission* – Ninety-six percent of agencies felt that F5MC has a *significant impact* on the local community. Compared to 2013-14, they reported consistent levels of agreement with “F5MC is respected among my colleagues” and “My program has sufficient opportunity to provide input into decisions that affect my funded agency;” a smaller share *strongly agreed* with “Commissioners are effective representatives of issues facing children ages 0-5” and “F5MC Commission seeks the input of parents/caregivers when making decisions.”

Welcome

Supporting efforts to improve services and systems

First 5 Monterey County (F5MC) serves as a catalyst to create sustainable change in the programs, systems, and policies that improve the lives of Monterey County's children from the prenatal stages through age 5, and their families. In 2005, F5MC partnered with diverse community stakeholders, including public and private funders, community partners and agencies, early childhood practitioners and educators, and parents and caregivers to develop the Early Learning Opportunities (ELO) strategic plan, which emphasized the importance of learning during a child's early years. The ELO strategic plan calls on F5MC and its funded agencies to support efforts to promote programs and services that are higher quality and more accessible by embodying the following essential characteristics:

- + Culturally and linguistically appropriate
- + Family-centered
- + Community-based
- + Operated with flexible hours and schedules
- + Coordinated among agencies

Since implementation of the ELO strategic plan in 2007, F5MC has continued to assess the F5MC-funded partner system of services as part of the process of evaluating families' access to programs that meet their needs. As it has done since 2007-08, Harder+Company Community Research developed the 2014-15 Funded Partner Survey to evaluate systems-level changes among F5MC-funded programs and to inform mid-course adjustments to the network of funded services, when appropriate. As part of these efforts, this Systems-Level Evaluation provides insights into the F5MC-funded system of services available to Monterey County's youngest children and their families. The results from this annual survey provide an opportunity to stop, reflect, and deepen our collective understanding of approaches that are working well – and others that may require more attention. The following questions helped to guide this year's evaluation:

- + How well do F5MC-funded services embody the program characteristics defined in the ELO Plan?
- + How well are F5MC-funded services overcoming barriers to service access?
- + To what extent are F5MC-funded services fostering a coordinated system of services?
- + How has F5MC been a community convener/catalyst, policy advocate and educator?

A Note to Our Readers: The 2014-15 Funded Partner Survey included many of the same questions asked in previous surveys conducted over the past eight years, since the initial 2007-08 survey. However, there were instances where questions were added or modified after the initial year.

Program Characteristics

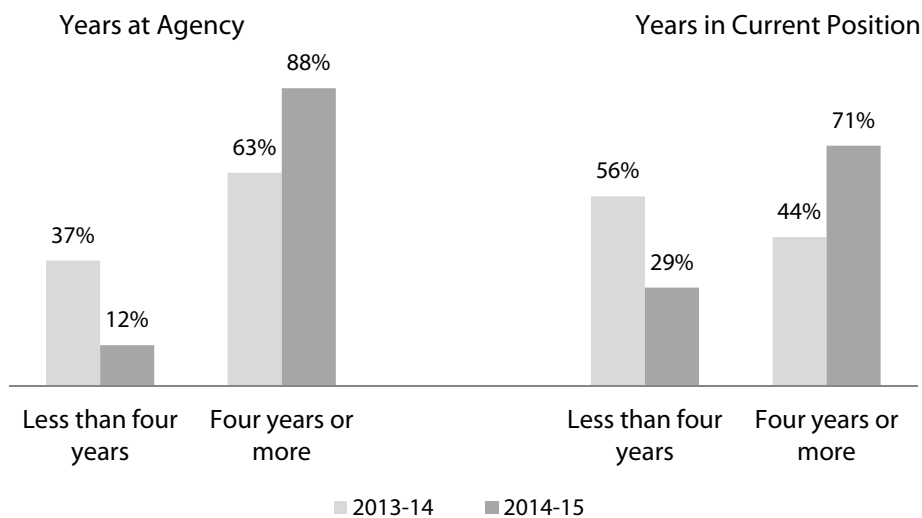
Designing services that are accessible to the diverse families with young children in Monterey County

For programs to be responsive to the diversity of young children and families, they should be designed to be accessible on many levels. This includes respecting the diversity of children and families, celebrating the role of families as central to the well-being of children, being centered in and around particular communities, being provided at times that are convenient for families, and working in concert with other groups looking to produce positive outcomes for the community. Since its initial launch in 2007-2008, findings have consistently shown that *F5MC* and its funded agencies have made strides toward improving access to services and programs for the diverse communities of Monterey County.

F5MC and funded partners have cultivated a stable workforce designed to meet the needs of children of families.

Among the most notable findings was that a majority of funded partner staff had been at their agency, and in their current position, for four years or more, marking an increase in tenure compared to 2013-14 (see Exhibit 1). Nearly 90 percent of staff had worked in their current agency for four years or more and 71 percent had served in their current position for the same amount of time. Only 12 percent of funded partner staff had been at their agency for three years or less.

Exhibit 1. Staff Tenure



Funded services continue to be culturally and linguistically responsive – yet there appear to be declines in agency participation in cultural competency activities.

F5MC works continually with its funded partners to honor and respect the diversity of children and families in Monterey County. This work necessitates reflection on the extent to which funded partner staff, particularly line staff who have regular contact with participants, are reflective of the communities they serve. The most recent Client Level Data Report indicated that, in 2013-14, 81 percent of parents and caregivers served by funded agencies were Hispanic/Latino, 13 percent were Indigenous/Native American, and 3 percent were White.

Overall, the race/ethnicity of line staff and volunteers was consistent with past years (see Exhibit 2). In 2014-15, 91 percent of agencies reported having Latino line staff, followed by 30 percent having White line staff, and 13 percent having African American line staff. Compared to last year, the percent of agencies with Latino or African American executive directors or program coordinators increased (11 and 5 percentage point increases, respectively), while the percent with White executive directors or program coordinators decreased (20 percentage point decrease).

Exhibit 2. Race/Ethnicity of Staff

Race/Ethnicity	Percent of Agencies											
	Executive Director			Program Coordinator			Line Staff			Volunteers		
	2013-14	2014-15	CHANGE	2013-14	2013-14	2013-14	2013-14	2014-15	CHANGE	2013-14	2014-15	CHANGE
Latino	39%	50%	+11%	60%	65%	+5%	96%	91%	-5%	95%	94%	-1%
White	70%	50%	-20%	36%	30%	-6%	35%	30%	-5%	47%	38%	-9%
African American	0%	5%	+5%	4%	13%	+9%	9%	13%	+4%	11%	25%	+14%
Indigenous	4%	5%	+1%	4%	0%	-4%	4%	4%	0%	11%	6%	-5%

In addition to ensuring staff are reflective of the communities served, funded partners have consistently demonstrated the ability to provide services in the main languages spoken by young children and families in Monterey County. According to the 2013-14 Client Level Data Report, Spanish was the most common primary language spoken by parents and caregivers (72 percent), followed by English (15 percent), Triqui (9 percent), and Mixteco (2 percent).

As in past years, nearly all funded partners (96 percent) have line staff that speak Spanish and some (8 percent) also have line staff that speak Mixteco and/or Triqui (see Exhibit 3). Moreover, three-fourths of funded programs have program coordinators that speak Spanish and nearly half (48 percent) have executive directors that Spanish. The portion of agencies with volunteers who speak Mixteco or Triqui went down after a rise in 2013-14 (the percent change represents a decrease from five agencies to two).

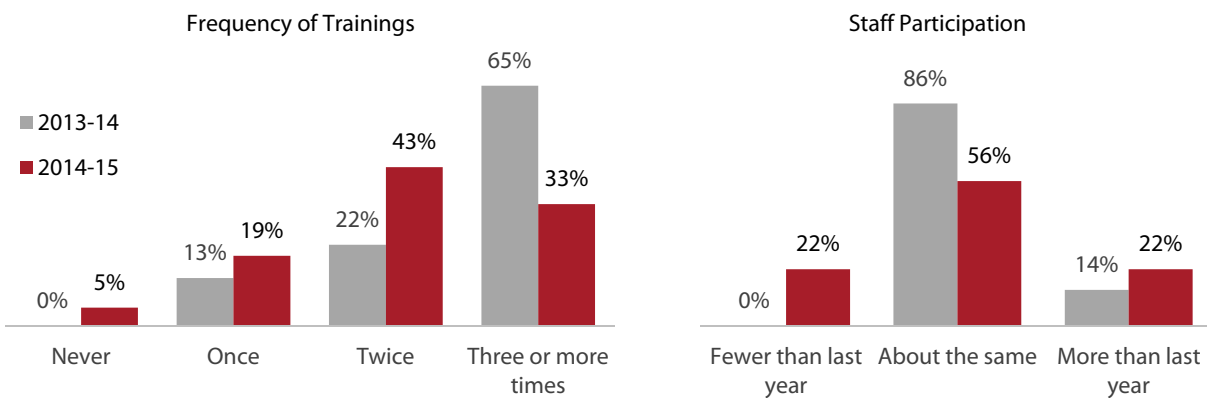
Exhibit 3. Languages Spoken by Program Staff

Race/Ethnicity	Percent of Agencies											
	Executive Director			Program Coordinator			Line Staff			Volunteers		
	2013-14	2014-15	CHANGE	2013-14	2013-14	2013-14	2013-14	2014-15	CHANGE	2013-14	2014-15	CHANGE
English	100%	95%	-5%	96%	92%	-4%	96%	91%	-5%	94%	94%	0%
Spanish	48%	48%	0%	72%	75%	+3%	100%	96%	-4%	100%	100%	0%
Mixteco or Triqui	4%	4%	0%	4%	4%	0%	8%	8%	0%	32%	12%	-20%

When staff who speak a client’s language are not available, funded partners reported using the services of outside interpreters (n=14), working with other agencies such as the Centro Binacional Para El Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (n=13), and using other community resources or family members (n=6 for each).

Despite the continued prevalence of staff that mirror the demographic makeup of families with young children and that speak the languages spoken by this community of families, funded agencies reported declines in their participation in cultural competency activities as compared with 2013-14 (see Exhibit 4). One-third of agencies reported offering cultural competency trainings three or more times during 2014-15, compared with over two-thirds of agencies who reported doing so in 2013-14. Additionally, over half of agencies said that staff participated in about the same amount of cultural competency trainings as last year, and just under one-fourth said that staff participated in fewer than last year. It is unclear what is driving decreases in the frequency of trainings and the level of staff participation in those training. These responses may reflect F5MC’s move to incorporate cultural humility training into existing training series, such as the Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health (IFECMH) series, rather than holding a standalone training for cultural competency. It could also be that as staff are retained in their agency for a longer period of time (see Exhibit 1), they require fewer formal trainings in order to deliver high-quality, culturally-based services.

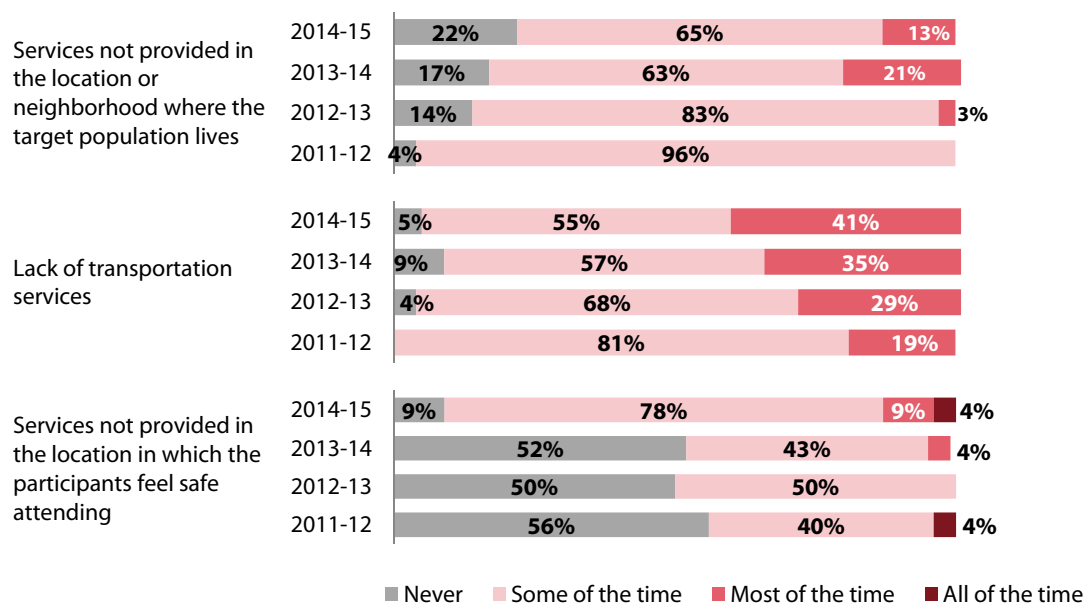
Exhibit 4. Cultural Competency Trainings



Certain barriers to accessing services persist and others are of growing concern.

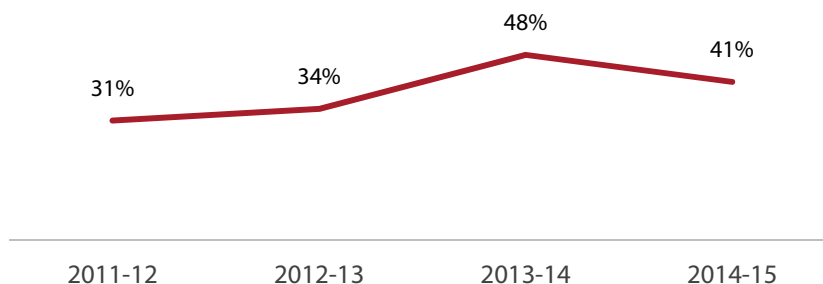
Compared to last year, a smaller portion of funded partners reported that the location of services was a barrier *most of the time* (13 percent, compared to 21 percent in 2013-14), but that lack of transportation services was a barrier on the rise (see Exhibit 5). In fact, 41 percent of funded agencies reported lack of transportation services was a barrier *most of the time* – a 22 percentage point increase from 2011-12. Safety also appears to be a growing concern; there was a large increase in the percent of agencies reporting that services not being provided where participants feel safe was a barrier at least *some of the time*.

Exhibit 5. Barriers to Access



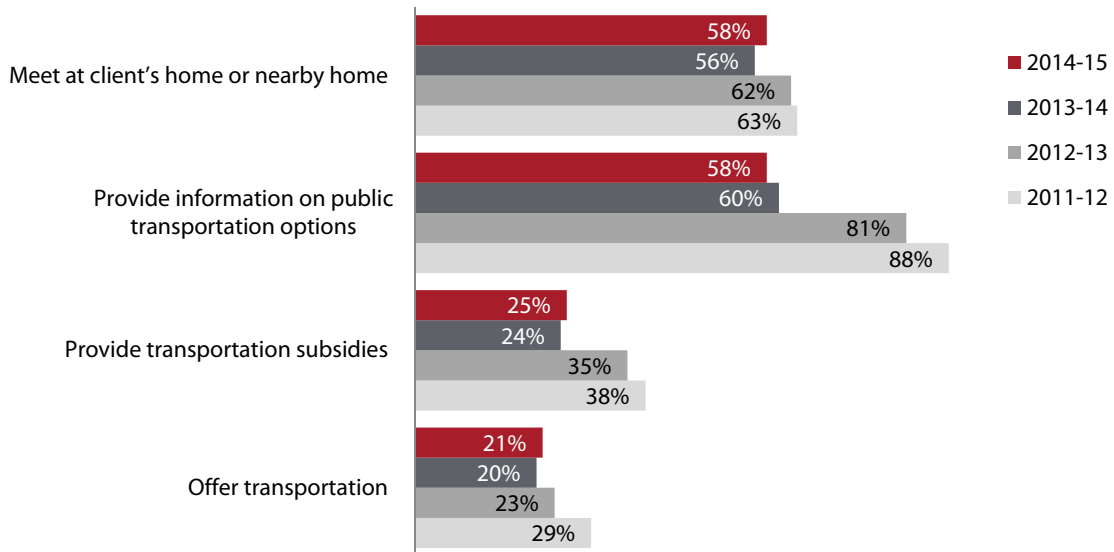
After an increase in 2013-14, the percent of agencies reporting that at least half of their clients walk to F5MC programs declined (see Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6. Agencies Where 50 Percent or More of Clients Walk to Program



The share of agencies that reported offering different types of transportation assistance was similar to last year and lower than in 2011-12 and 2012-13 (see Exhibit 7). When asked to describe what strategies would help them address transportation barriers, agencies noted that transportation subsidies (n=10), improved public transportation (n=7), and co-locating services or meeting clients where they are (n=6) would be the most impactful.

Exhibit 7. Transportation Assistance Offered by Program

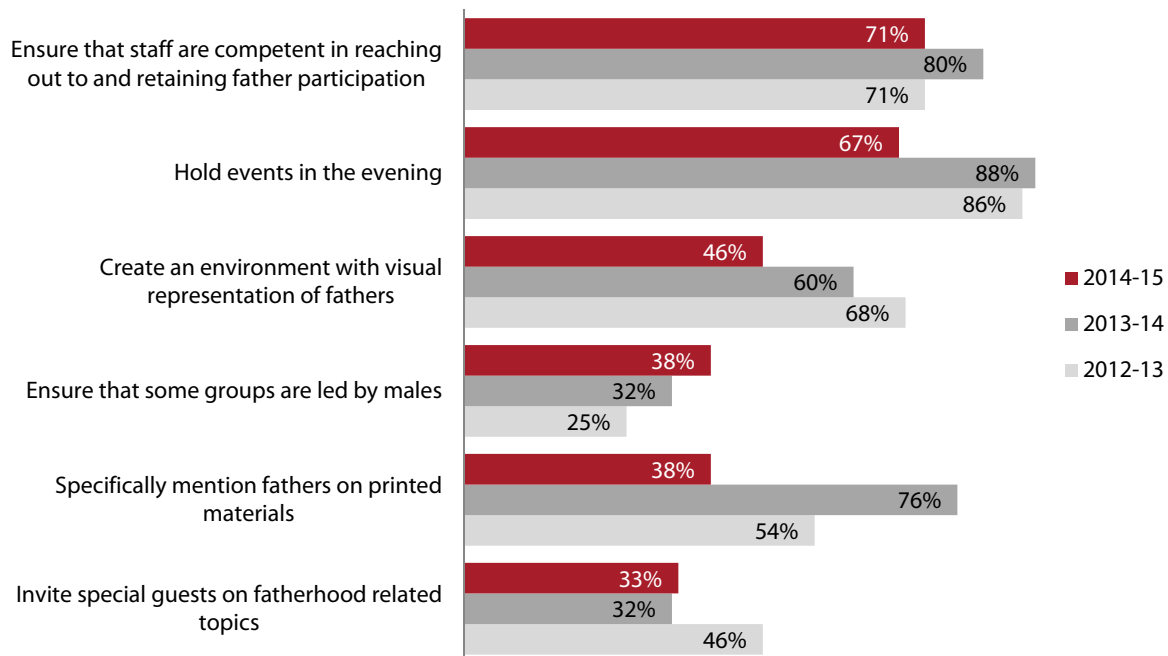


While the findings are encouraging, more exploration is required to understand how funded partners can support participants with their transportation needs and challenges so they are able to access the services they need when they need them. It is worth acknowledging that last year's systems evaluation report highlighted this growing trend, resulting in a recommendation to reflect on why the location of service and/or lack of transportation appeared to be growing challenges for service participants. Since then, F5MC offered training on the local bus system and has follow-up meetings planned for funded partner program coordinators and line staff, which will include a reminder that agencies may budget for bus vouchers or other transportation subsidies.

Despite highlighting opportunities to encourage father and working-parent participation, agencies are less likely to engage in activities designed to drive their involvement.

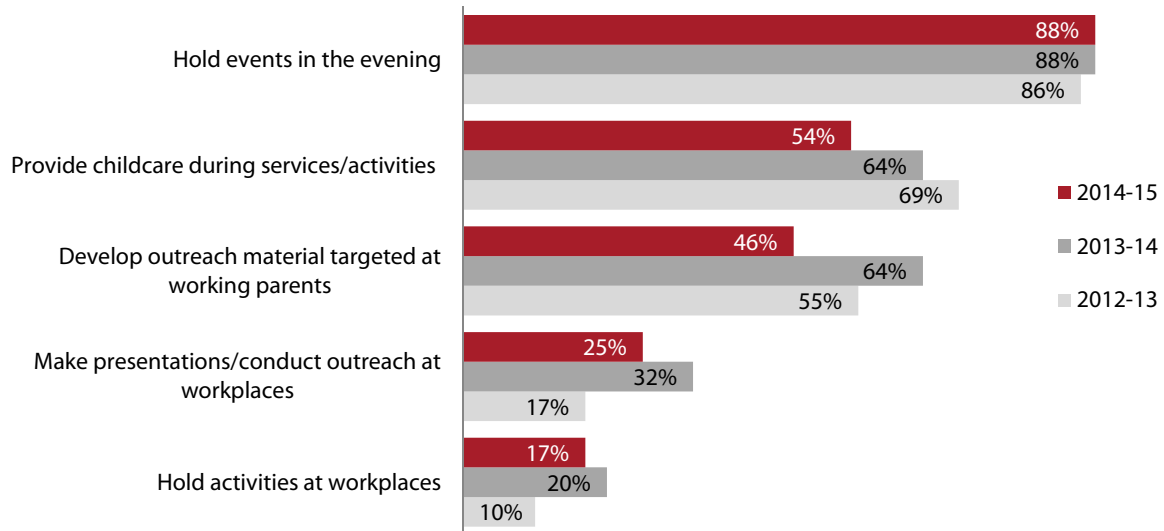
According to the 2013-14 Client Level Data Report, 27 percent of parents and caregivers served by funded partners were male. Compared to last year, a smaller portion of agencies reported engaging in specific activities to encourage father and working-parent participation (see Exhibit 8 & 9). Although slightly more agencies reported ensuring some groups were led by males, most other activities experienced declines. The following experienced the greatest decreases since 2013-14: *specifically mention fathers on printed materials* (38 percentage point drop from 2013-14); *create an environment with visual representation of fathers* (22 percentage point drop from 2013-14); and *hold events in the evening* (21 percentage point drop from 2013-14).

Exhibit 8. Services to Encourage Father Participation



Although the declines were not as dramatic, agencies were also less likely to engage in services designed to encourage participation of working parents. As in 2013-14, the most commonly-employed activity was holding events in the evening. However, all other service areas experienced slight to moderate declines. The greatest declines were in the development of outreach material targeted at working parents followed by providing childcare during services/activities (18 and 10 percentage point drop from 2013-14, respectively).

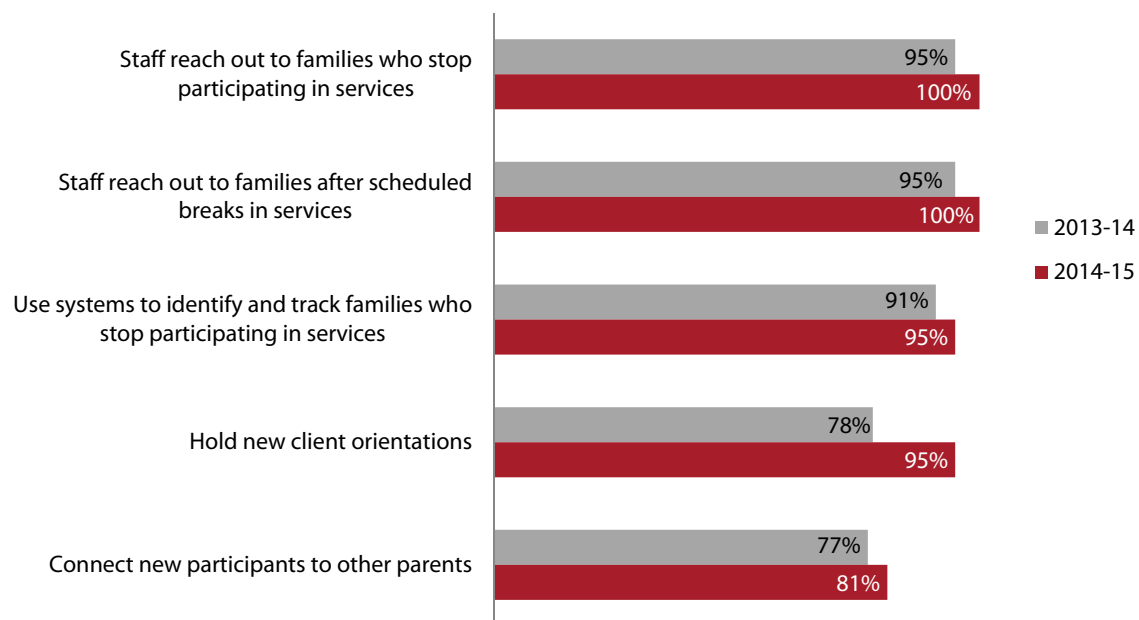
Exhibit 9. Services to Encourage Participation of Working Parents



F5MC-funded partners are proactively doing more to prevent service attrition.

Based on findings from the 2012-13 Program Attrition Study, F5MC encouraged funded agencies to think about what factors (e.g., outreach, hours of operation, breaks in service, clarifying expectations, tracking disengaged participants) may impact service retention. Last fiscal year (2013-14) represented the first time funded partners were asked about the activities to sustain family participation. Compared to last year, a greater share of funded partners said that they engaged in activities to encourage continuing family participation *at least some of the time* (Exhibit 10). All agencies now report reaching out to families after scheduled breaks in services and reaching out to families who stop participating at least *some of the time*. The most notable increase was in the area of holding new client orientation, an area that F5MC has begun funding for some playgroups – a 17 percentage point gain compared to last year.

Exhibit 10. How Program Encourages Family Participation (At Least Some of the Time)



Some agencies reported additional strategies they used to encourage participants to continue participating in services, including offering opportunities for clients to be more actively involved in service provision such as volunteering or creating a plan for themselves (n=5); conducting outreach in the form of phone calls, mailings, and presentations (n=4); and providing incentives for participation such as gift cards, certificates, and field trips (n=3).

Although a large majority of agencies provide services *all month* during much of the year, the share of agencies providing service *all month* in non-peak months declined.

As in past years, F5MC-funded agencies tend to provide services *all month* from February – May and September – November (see Exhibit 11). However, a steady decrease in the share of agencies providing services *all month* in the summer (June, July, August) and winter (December, January) months is becoming apparent. It is worth noting, however, that most do provide services for part of those months. It may be worth exploring the implications and feasibility of providing more services during these months, how it impacts the ability of funded partners to encourage and maintain family participation in services, and what barriers, if any, parents experience accessing services for their children and families during those times of year.

Exhibit 11. Services Offered Year-Round

Month	Percent of Agencies with services provided <i>All Month</i>		
	2013-14	2014-15	CHANGE
January	68%	58%	-10%
February	92%	92%	0%
March	92%	96%	+4%
April	92%	100%	+8%
May	100%	100%	0%
June	76%	71%	-5%
July	68%	58%	-10%
August	76%	67%	-9%
September	100%	100%	0%
October	100%	100%	0%
November	92%	96%	+4%
December	60%	50%	-10%

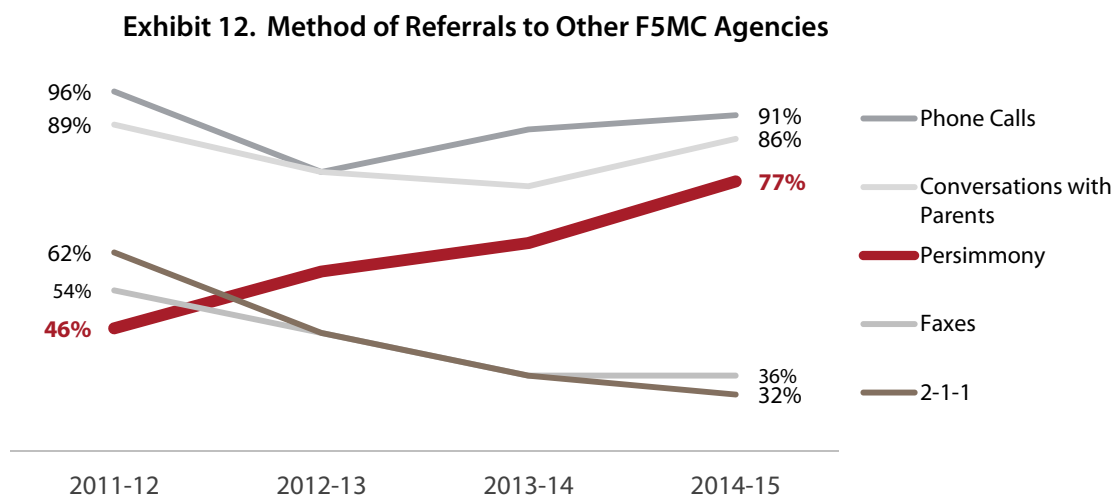
Connections to Services

Stronger internal systems are allowing agencies to more efficiently make and strengthen linkages with services that children and families need

The agencies funded by F5MC operate within a broader system of services that support families with young children. In order to ensure that families are connected with the constellation of services they need when they need them, F5MC has been working with funded partners to strengthen processes for making, tracking, and following up on referrals to other agencies.

Funded partners continue to report improvements in their ability to make, track, and follow up on referrals.

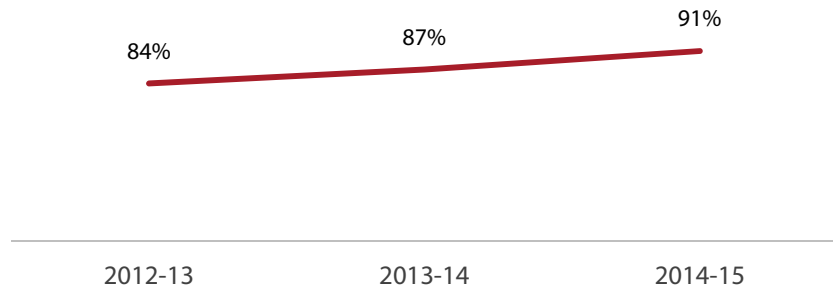
Making referrals. For the past five years, F5MC-funded service providers have been asked to report what methods they use to refer families to other funded partners. In 2014-15, the share of funded partners using Persimmony to make referrals continued to grow, as did the portion that use phone calls and conversations with parents. A smaller share of agencies continues to use faxes and/or 2-1-1 to make referrals (Exhibit 12).



One survey respondent called out the role that F5MC has played in fostering relationships among funded partners: “F5MC has made possible many meaningful interactions and collaborations with other agencies also funded by F5MC. It’s taken several years, but the relationships are valuable. This is in contrast to our NOT interacting much with agencies serving children that are not funded by F5MC.” Still, almost all funded partners (96 percent) reported that they do refer clients to agencies not funded by F5MC; they most commonly do so using conversations with parents (83 percent) or phone calls (79 percent). Since F5MC support has been helpful in fostering relationships with other funded partners, it may also be able to play a role in helping agencies continue to build and strengthen their partnerships with non-funded service providers.

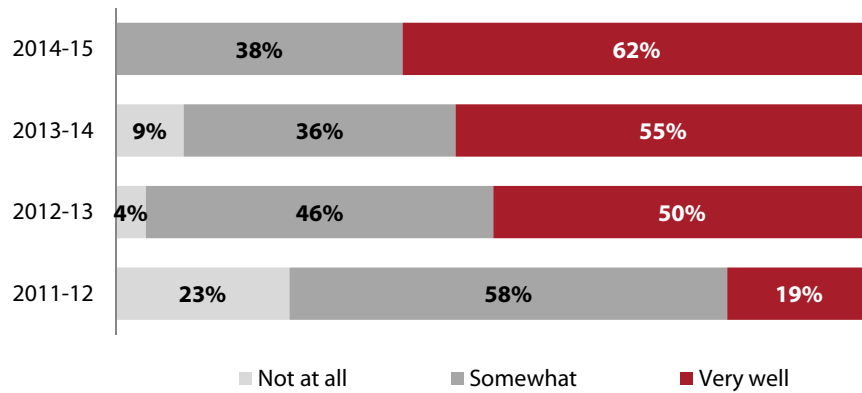
Tracking referrals. Once referrals have been made, efficient tracking processes help ensure that they are documented and can be followed up on. Almost all agencies (91 percent) said that they were tracking referrals, which is the greatest percent to report doing so since this data has been collected (Exhibit 13).

Exhibit 13. Agencies that Track Referral



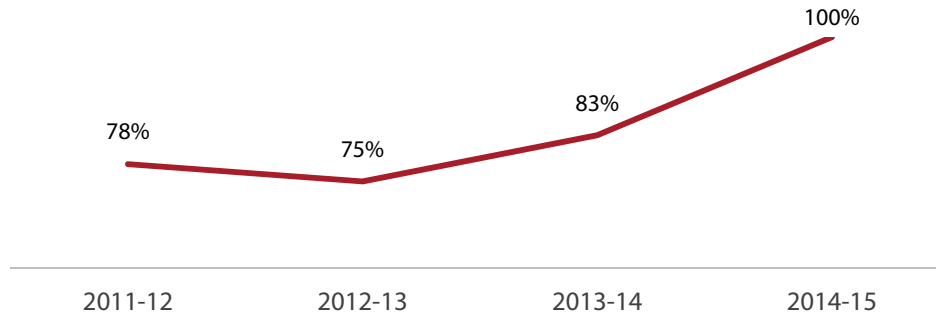
As shown in Exhibit 14, about two-thirds of funded partners said that referral tracking was working *very well*—representing a steady improvement since 2011-12—and, for the first time, ever none said that referral tracking was *not working at all*.

Exhibit 14. Referral Tracking Functionality



Referral follow up. Consistent and systematic follow up not only aids children and families with making connections to needed services, but it also enables agencies to learn important information about the service providers they refer their clients to. As in other areas related to referrals, funded partners continued to improve with respect to follow up as well. For the first time since data has been collected, one hundred percent of agencies reported that they *always* or *sometimes* follow up on referrals (Exhibit 16).

Exhibit 15. Agencies that “Always” or “Sometimes” Follow Up on Referrals



Compared to last year, agencies reported a number of decreases in barriers to successful referrals.

In 2013-14, funded partners reported a number of barriers to successful referrals, many of which declined in the most recent year. The most commonly-reported barriers in 2014-15 were that other resources/organizations were full (75 percent, a slight increase compared to last year) and a lack of appropriate resources in the region (63 percent, a slight decrease compared to last year).

Exhibit 16. Barriers to Successful Referrals

	2013-14 (n=25)	2014-15 (n=24)	CHANGE
Other resources/organizations are full/ there is a waiting list	68%	75%	+7%
Lack of appropriate resources in the region	68%	63%	-5%
Contact with clients is lost during the follow-up or referral process	56%	42%	-14%
The more offices someone is expected to go, the harder it is	36%	38%	+2%
Lack of sufficient staff time to provide attention to referrals	44%	25%	-19%
Lack of knowledge of what services another agency specifically offers	32%	21%	-11%
My organization does not have a clear referral process	16%	21%	+5%
Agencies to whom you refer will not share information	8%	17%	+9%
Unknown admittance requirements	0%	17%	+17%
Filling out paperwork is cumbersome	8%	8%	0%
Lack of culturally appropriate services	28%	4%	-24%

Policy and Advocacy

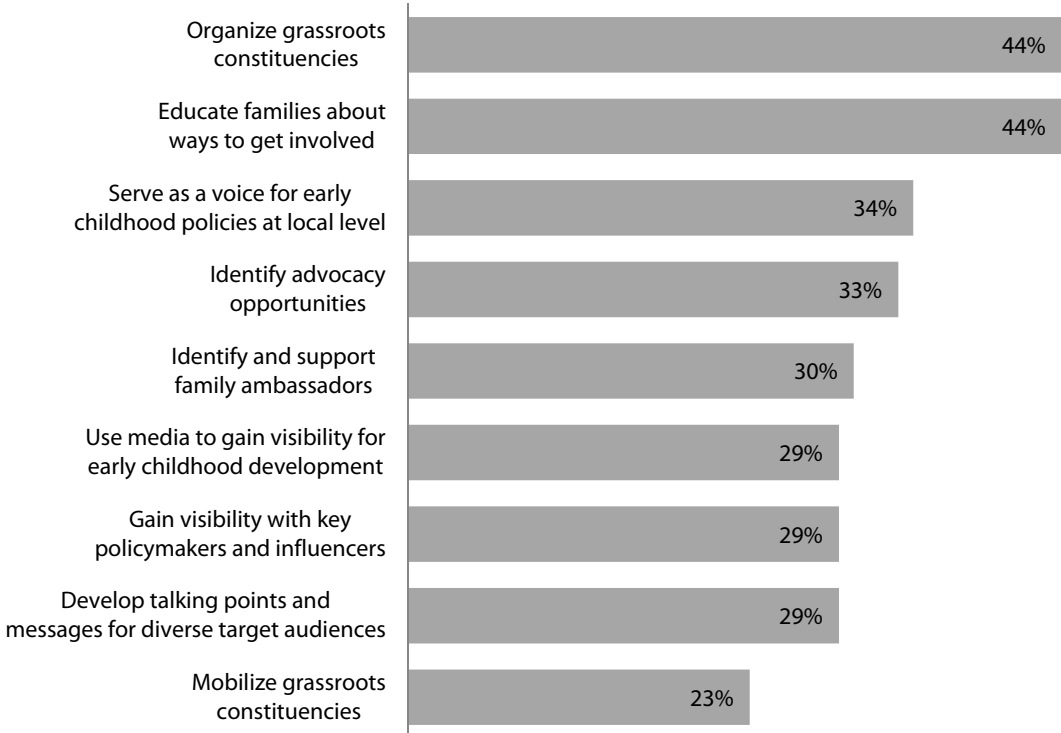
Funded partners identified fewer barriers and suggested additional supports needed in order to increase engagement in policy and advocacy activities

In order to raise the visibility of early childhood development across the county, F5MC supports its funded partners in their efforts to educate local residents about issues that affect young children and their families. This section identifies the policy- and advocacy-related activities that funded agencies reported participating in, demonstrates a decrease in the perceived barriers to carrying out those types of activities, and highlights the need for additional capacity building in certain areas.

Funded partners reported varying levels of capacity in a number of policy- and advocacy-related areas, and identified strategies for including families in those efforts.

The policy and advocacy areas in which funded partners reported having the greatest capacity were *organizing grassroots constituencies* to talk about messages and approaches, *educating families* about how they can get involved, and *servicing as a voice for early childhood* at the local level. They expressed lower levels of capacity in other areas, particularly with respect to messaging and communicating with decision makers and the public more broadly. Agencies also identified a number of other ways they try to include parents and families in advocacy efforts. The most commonly-mentioned strategies were sharing information (n=5) and encouraging family participation (n=4); others mentioned parent meetings or committees, and two expressed an interest in having more opportunities to engage parents in advocacy efforts.

Exhibit 17. Agency that Rated their Advocacy Capacity as “5” (Very Strong) or “4” (Strong)



Compared to past years, agencies reported a decrease in the perceived barriers to engaging in policy and advocacy efforts.

The majority of barriers for funded partners to engage in advocacy efforts appear to be declining and, for the first time since data has been collected, no agency reported that it was *not convinced of the benefits*. As in past years, the most common barrier reported was lack of time, which was a factor for two-thirds of agencies (67 percent, down from 76 percent in 2013-14 and 85 percent in 2012-13).

Exhibit 18. Barriers to Advocacy

	2013-14 (n=25)	2014-15 (n=24)	CHANGE
Lack of time	76%	67%	-9%
Other priorities get in the way	48%	46%	-2%
Lack of resources	64%	33%	-31%
Internal policies prevent staff from supporting or opposing specific pieces of legislation	28%	29%	+1%
Lack of awareness and understanding about the local policy landscape	32%	25%	-7%
Lack of relevant skills and expertise	32%	17%	-15%
Legal restrictions	16%	17%	+1%
Not convinced of benefits	4%	0%	-4%

Funded partners identified areas in which they need more support to feel comfortable advocating and suggested ways that F5MC can work to raise the visibility of early childhood.

In order to feel comfortable advocating, the supports that funded partners most frequently mentioned needing were information and updates (n=11), more time and support (n=6), and meetings and trainings (n=4). Regarding one agency’s advocacy efforts, a survey respondent explained, “I feel comfortable advocating. However, it is helpful when F5 sends us e-mails that highlight opportunities for us to participate in a writing campaign or advocacy project.”

Survey respondents also offered suggestions for how F5MC can raise the visibility of early childhood and/or engage funded partners in the process. The top responses were centered around outreach and organizing (n=7; includes media, newsletters, communications to policymakers), collaboration with local public and private sector leaders (n=5), and more engagement with funded partners (n=2).

F5MC Resources and Support

The F5MC Commission and staff play key roles in supporting and representing funded agencies

In addition to providing monetary support to funded agencies, F5MC strives to build funded partners' capacity on an ongoing basis by providing and supporting technical assistance in a number of areas. Agencies rely on F5MC staff to provide direction and respond to their needs, and they look to the F5MC Commission to represent them and the families they serve among the broader community.

Overall, agency staff reported high levels of satisfaction with various types of technical assistance offered by F5MC.

In 2014-15, F5MC provided a range of technical assistance (TA) supports to its funded partners. The highest-rated types of TA were I-ACT meetings, learning circles, and other networking opportunities; support with Persimmony; assistance with scopes of work; and support for designing and implementing appropriate child development activities (Exhibit 20). With one exception (assistance with implementing evaluation plans), agencies generally reported similar or slightly higher levels of satisfaction with F5MC-provided TA activities compared to the prior year.

In addition to providing TA directly, F5MC also supports a number of other TA activities. Among those, funded partners expressed the greatest satisfaction with community education events and Early Childhood Education seminars, both of which underwent a substantial increase in satisfaction compared to the prior year.

Exhibit 19. Satisfaction with Technical Assistance Offered by F5MC

	2013-14 (n=25)	2014-15 (n=24)	CHANGE
F5MC-Provided Technical Assistance			
i-ACT/Networking opportunities	n/a	100%	n/a
Learning Circles/Networking opportunities	87%	96%*	+9%
Support with Persimmony database	88%	92%	+4%
Assistance reflecting and understanding my scope of work	84%	91%	+7%
Assistance provided to implement program-level evaluation plans	80%	74%	-6%
Support for designing and implementing appropriate child development activities	91%	91%	0%
Assistance regarding aggregate data and evaluation reporting	82%	87%	+5%
Support in implementing the Essential Characteristics	76%	87%	+9%
Assistance with budgetary questions	82%	82%	0%
F5MC-Supported Technical Assistance			
Community education events	86%	100%	+14%
F5MC ECE seminars	86%	95%	+9%
Event sponsorship	80%	85%	+5%
IFECMH (mental health training series)	80%	77%	-3%
Center for Nonprofit Excellence Management Assistance Program	72%	70%	-2%

*"learning circles" and "networking opportunities" combined in 2014-15

Spotlight: The Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health (IFECMH) Training Series

F5MC, in collaboration with WestEd and University of California, San Francisco, designed the Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health (IFECMH) series to support professional relationships, foster collaboration, and create opportunities to experience reflective facilitation/supervision. In 2013-14, a participatory evaluation demonstrated the impact of this training on participants' work with children and families, their partnerships with colleagues, and their own professional development.

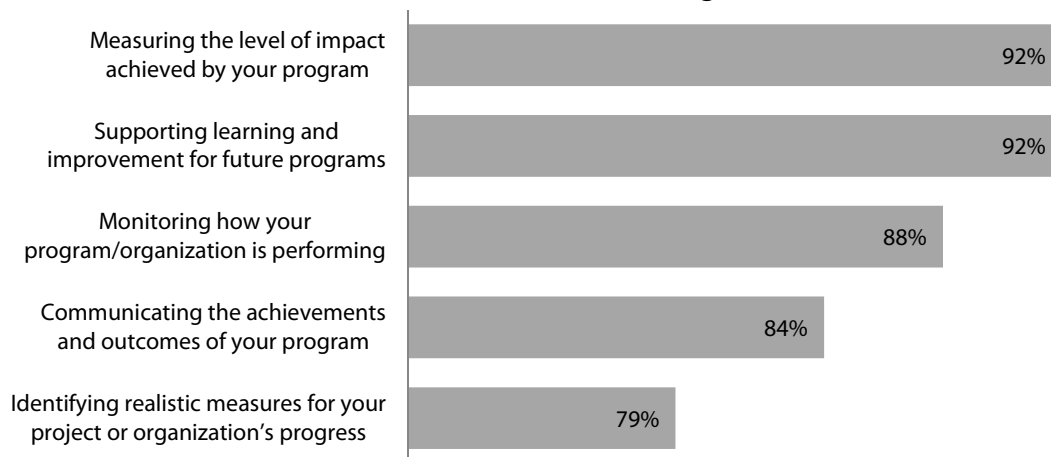
A continuation of the IFECMH was the most frequently-requested type of training for the coming year. One person said, "I would like to continue to see and participate in the mental health training series. Mental health is a great need in our community, so learning how to support families and ourselves is essential for the work we do." Another survey respondent added, "I am very grateful that F5 has provided the support with IFECMH training. This training has helped me be a more supportive tool for our participating clients and families."

Most agencies felt that F5MC's grant reporting requirements were both reasonable and helpful.

On average, funded partners reported spending about 12 hours on grant-related reporting for each F5MC-specific grant in a given grant period, which comprises about three hours each for narrative, aggregate, fiscal, and evaluation reporting. Three-fourths of agencies (75 percent) said that the time and effort needed for reporting was *about right*, given the financial value of each grant.

Exhibit 20 demonstrates that a large majority of funded partners felt that the grant reporting process was helpful in a number of areas. Almost all (92 percent) said it helped them measure the impact of their program and supported learning and improvement.

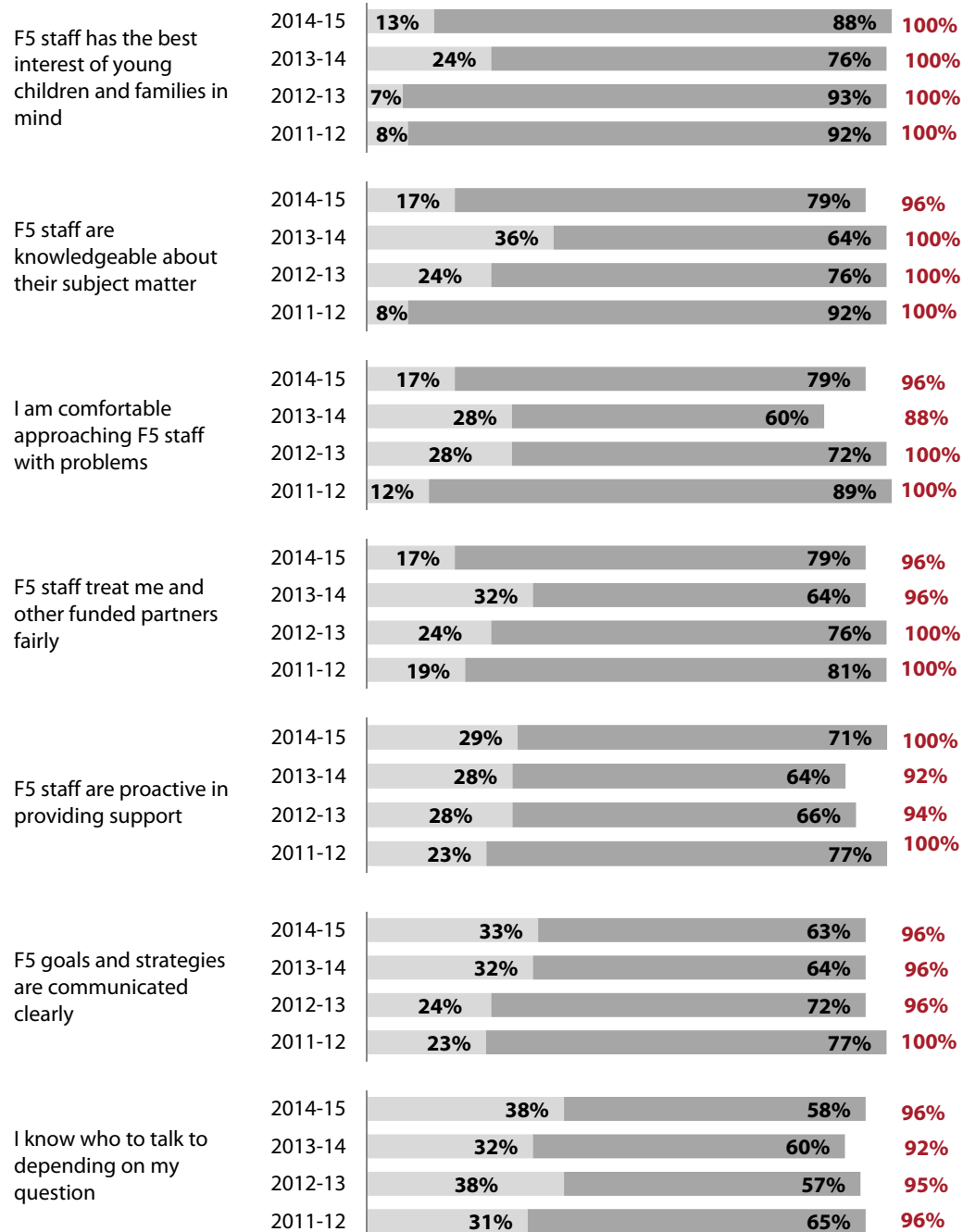
Exhibit 20. Areas in Which Grant Reporting Process Was "Moderately" or "Very" Helpful (Percent of Agencies)

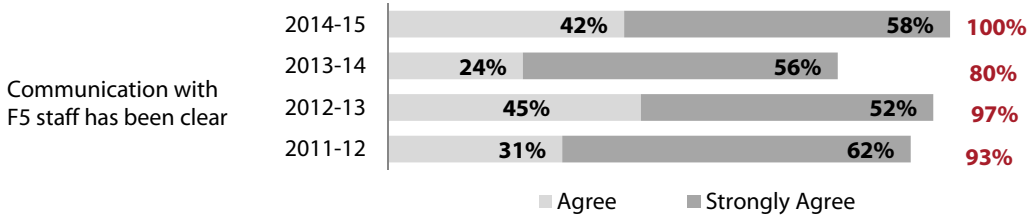


Compared to the prior year, funded partners reported increased satisfaction with F5MC staff.

One recommendation from the 2013-14 Systems Level Evaluation Report was to “monitor agency satisfaction with F5MC staff, and focus on communication openness and clear direction to funded partners.” In 2014-15, funded partners shifted from *agreeing* to *strongly agreeing* with most of the positive statements about F5MC staff (see Exhibit 21). For all of the statements, all or nearly all funded agencies (between 96 and 100 percent) either *agreed* or *strongly agreed*.

Exhibit 21. Perceptions of Working with First 5 Monterey County Staff





The statements with which the greatest share of agencies *strongly agreed* were:

- F5 staff has the best interest of young children and families in mind (88 percent *strongly agreed*)
- F5 staff are knowledgeable about their subject matter (79 percent)
- I am comfortable approaching F5 staff with problems (79 percent)
- F5 staff treat me and other funded partners fairly (79 percent)

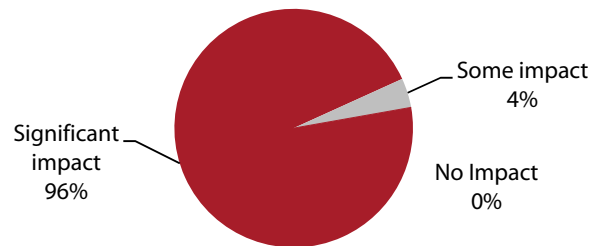
On the other hand, the statements with which lower percentages of funded partners *strongly agreed* were:

- F5 goals and strategies are communicated clearly (63 percent *strongly agreed*)
- I know who to talk to depending on my question (58 percent)
- Communication with F5 staff has been clear (58 percent)

Survey results also indicate a generally positive outlook on the F5MC Commission.

Almost all agencies felt that F5MC has a *significant impact* on the local community.

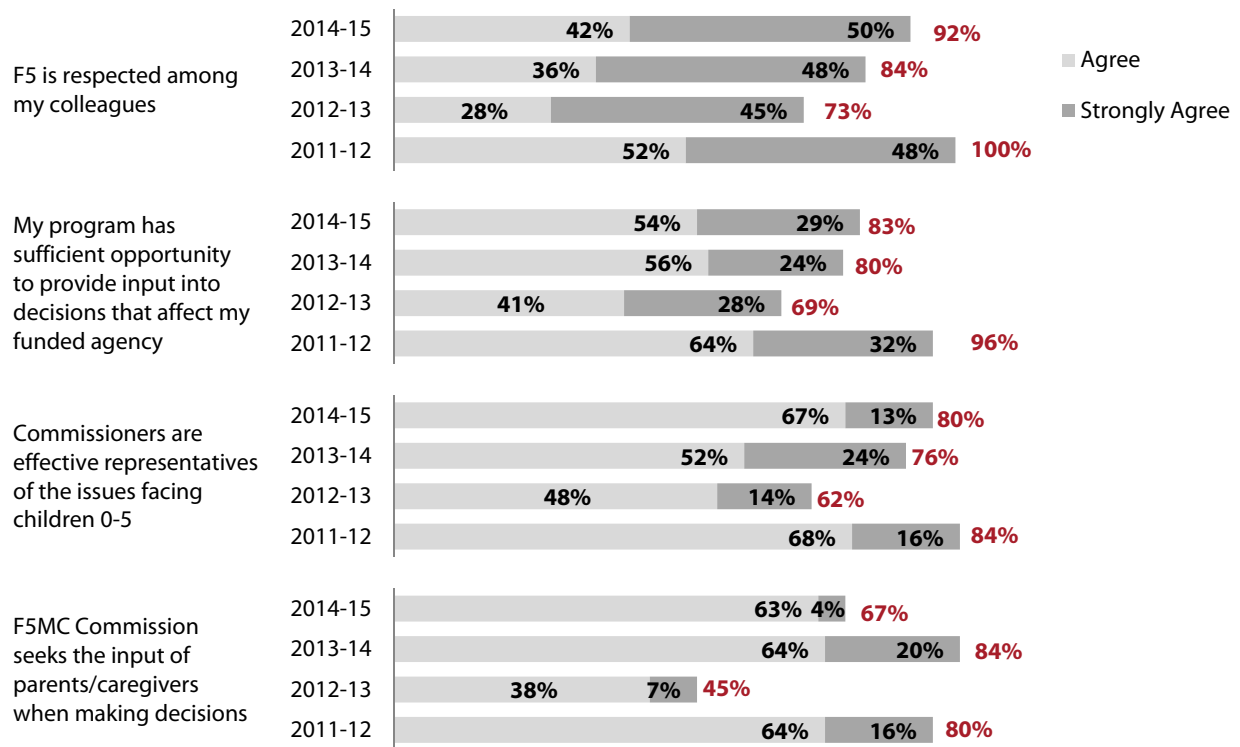
Exhibit 22. F5MC’s Impact on Local Community



In terms of satisfaction with the F5MC Commission, no agencies *strongly disagreed* with the positive statements, and the percent that *disagreed* went down compared to 2013-14 (see Exhibit 23). Agencies reported consistent levels of agreement with the statements “F5MC is respected among my colleagues” and “My program has sufficient opportunity to provide input into decisions that affect my funded agency.”

However, compared to 2013-14, a smaller share reported that they *strongly agree* with the statements “Commissioners are effective representatives of the issues facing children ages 0-5” and “F5MC Commission seeks the input of parents/caregivers when making decisions.”

Exhibit 23. Satisfaction with First 5 Monterey Commission



Recommendations

The 2014-15 F5MC Systems Level Evaluation Report provides important insights into how well F5MC-funded partners are serving the needs of young children and families in Monterey County. The real value of this report, however, is based not only on the knowledge it provides, but also on the sustainable change it generates. With that in mind, we offer the following recommendations that may guide the F5MC Commission in putting the findings of this report into practice.

Continue working with funded partners to address participants' transportation needs and challenges.

This year, the share of funded agencies reporting that the lack of transportation services was a barrier for their clients *most of the time* was greater than it had been in years. The need is even more pronounced for under-resourced families who live in less densely populated areas (such as South County) and need to access specialized services that are only available in more populous regions (such as Salinas). In light of these growing concerns about access to transportation, funded agencies identified several strategies for addressing the transportation barriers that their clients face. The most common suggestions were related to providing transportation subsidies, such as bus passes/vouchers or other “free transportation options,” in order to attend programmatic activities and other local community events. A number of respondents also identified a need for improved public transportation, particularly in terms of frequency (i.e., ability to board a bus at a given stop more than once an hour) and coverage (i.e., number of routes). Others suggested co-locating services, meeting clients where they are (such as in their homes), and providing information about public transportation.

F5MC has already started taking steps to help agencies address these transportation barriers. One survey respondent noted, “Recently, we attended a F5MC meeting in which we had a speaker from MST [Monterey-Salinas Transit] show up and guide us through the booklet they have available for new bus riders. They provided us with real helpful information and pamphlets. Now, we know how to guide them properly if they have transportation issues.” F5MC should ensure that service providers at all funded agencies are well-informed about public transportation systems—namely, transit routes as well as options for financial assistance—so they can share that information with their clients. F5MC may also wish to engage directly with MST to advocate on behalf of service participants.

Engage with funded partners to re-examine expectations about increasing father and working-parent participation.

Compared to the previous year, a smaller portion of agencies reported engaging in several specific activities to encourage father and working-parent participation. F5MC should explore what is driving these downward shifts. For example, *are agencies prioritizing the engagement of fathers and working parents and, if not, why not? Have they found that any of these specific activities are not successful with the population they serve? Are there other strategies that they have found to be more successful?*

F5MC may also wish to review the strategies that other service providers working with similar populations have used to successfully engage fathers and working parents, as well as the nature of that engagement (e.g., regular participation in services, volunteer opportunities, parent groups). Identifying and clearly articulating the goals of reaching out to fathers and working parents could help funded partners to hone in on the most appropriate strategies for them to employ.

Explore participants' demand for, and funded partners' ability to provide, year-round services.

This year's evaluation found that, compared to the prior year, fewer funded agencies were providing services all month during the summer (June, July, August) and winter (December, January) months. While most do provide services for part of those months, it is unclear whether that is sufficient to address participants' needs. F5MC and funded partners should consider investigating the extent to which families with young children need and benefit from access to in services all month during the summer and winter and, if appropriate, the feasibility of providing needed services during those times.

In order to continue strengthening the system of services, consider new lines of inquiry about referrals and additional mechanisms for funded partners to collaborate more closely with each other and with non-funded partners.

As in past years, funded partners' capacity to successfully and efficiently make, track, and follow up on referrals continues to show improvement. With that as a foundation, F5MC may wish to start looking into additional areas of inquiry about referrals. For example, *what is the nature of clients' experiences with services they are referred to? To what extent are those services meeting their needs?* Agencies could then learn from participants' experiences to help ensure that they are referring clients to the most appropriate and highest quality services available.

Funded partners often refer clients to other F5MC-funded agencies, so it is important for them to have opportunities to collaborate with those providers. The most common suggestions offered by survey respondents for ways that F5MC could promote this type of collaboration were related to holding events and collaborative meetings. For example, one person said, "It would be great to have an annual orientation to introduce new staff across the county. This would include ice breakers and structured team building activities."

In terms of working with each other, some funded partners added that they would like more time for networking at collaborative meetings, especially centered on focused topic areas. Several also noted that it would help them to have a list of all the funded partners and descriptions of the services they provide.

Several survey respondents also described mechanisms that have enabled them to partner with non-funded agencies on a regular basis, including collaboratives (e.g., Early Childhood Development Initiative, Child Care Planning Council, Monterey County Vulnerable Infant Care Coordination Collaborative), connections with school districts, and joint participation in trainings. F5MC may also be able to play a role in helping funded partners continue to develop and strengthen their relationships with a broader network of non-funded agencies across the county.

Provide targeted support to funded partners in order to build their policy and advocacy capacity.

Between one-fourth and one half of funded agencies reported having *strong* or *very strong* capacity in a range of policy- and advocacy-related areas, indicating room for growth. While they reported a decrease in most perceived barriers to engaging in policy and advocacy efforts, those barriers nevertheless persist. In particular, one-third of agencies reported a lack of resources and one-fourth reported a lack of awareness and understanding about the local policy landscape as barriers. As identified in this report, funded partners did identify areas in which they needed more support, which included a need for information and updates, more time and support to focus on policy and advocacy, and relevant meetings and trainings. F5MC should work with funded agencies to build their capacity in this area, as appropriate, and to address the perceived barriers to engagement with policy and advocacy activities.

Review funded partners' requests for the training and capacity building support they would like to see in the next year.

Training topics that survey respondents requested for the next year included the following (each topic was listed by one person unless otherwise indicated):

General

- Conferences
- Seminars, workshops, learning opportunities
- Trainings that meet "various levels of experiences"

Specific trainings

- IFECMH (n=6)
- Strengthening Families
- Circle of Security (general)
- Circle of Security (English)

Targeted skills

- Spanish refresher
- ASQ
- Playgroup evaluations

Working with specific populations

- Children with special needs
- Fatherhood

Other topics

- Child-parent psychotherapy
- Cultural competency
- Personal care for stress
- Social-emotional support for children ages 0-5
- Science
- Overview of F5 programs
- Alternative funding methods

F5MC should reflect on which of these areas it will prioritize for training and technical assistance in the upcoming fiscal year.

Survey Methods

F5MC continues to support an annual evaluation designed to shed light on changes in Monterey County's system of services for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. This year (2014-15) marks the eighth year of the evaluation. A total of 58 respondents from 24 F5MC-funded agencies participated in this year's survey.

Because of changes in funding over time, the same funded partners are not represented in each year of the survey. This variable may account for some of the changes presented for multi-year comparisons in this report. In addition, multiple staff members from management and line staff levels were asked to respond to the survey to arrive at a more balanced perspective from each agency. Responses from each agency were then averaged to generate agency-level responses.

2014-15 Funded Partner Survey Respondents

58 respondents from 24 agencies:

- 10 executive directors
- 19 program coordinators
- 29 line staff

As it has done since 2007-08, Harder+Company Community Research developed the 2014-15 Funded Partner Survey to evaluate systems-level changes among F5MC-funded programs. This year's survey included many of the same questions as previous surveys, along with new areas of inquiry to enhance the evaluation. For access to all of the data captured by the Systems-Level Evaluation, please refer to the F5MC 2014-15 Funded Partner Survey Data Book.

Acknowledgments

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- Chualar Union School District
- City of Salinas, Public Library
- Community Action Partnership (CAPSLO)
- Easter Seals Central California, Strengthening Special Needs Families
- Go Kids, Inc., Nuevas Posibilidades
- Hartnell Community College, CARES
- King City Union School District, Family Resource Center
- Kinship Center
- MCSTART, Door to Hope
- Mexican American Opportunity Foundation
- Monterey County Health Department Behavioral Health, Secure Families
- Monterey County Office of Education, Dads in Action
- Monterey County Probation Department, Child Advocate Program
- Monterey Peninsula College, CARES
- Monterey Peninsula Unified School District, Family Resource Center
- Monterey Public Health Department Regional Nursing Teams, Teen Parenting Program
- North Monterey County Unified School District, Castro Plaza Family Resource Center
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- Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Healthy Start Pajaro Family Resource Center
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