

First 5 Monterey County

Key Findings from 2014-15 Evaluation Activities



To promote their vision of all children reaching their full potential in a family and community that values and respects childhood, First 5 Monterey County (F5MC) supports initiatives and programs that serve young children and their families.

This document summarizes key findings from FY 2014-15 evaluation activities, which were conducted by Harder+Company and address core evaluation questions from F5MC's strategic plan. The outcomes presented below were made possible by the hard work of the organizations funded by F5MC. This report also includes the evaluation team's recommendations, which incorporate ideas generated by staff, the Evaluation Advisory Committee, and evaluation participants. Key findings are organized into four sections:

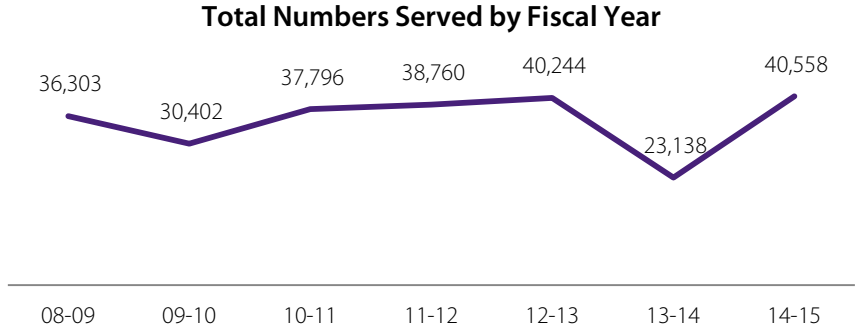


To access the full evaluation reports, visit first5monterey.org or contact David Dobrowski, Evaluation Officer, at david@first5monterey.org.

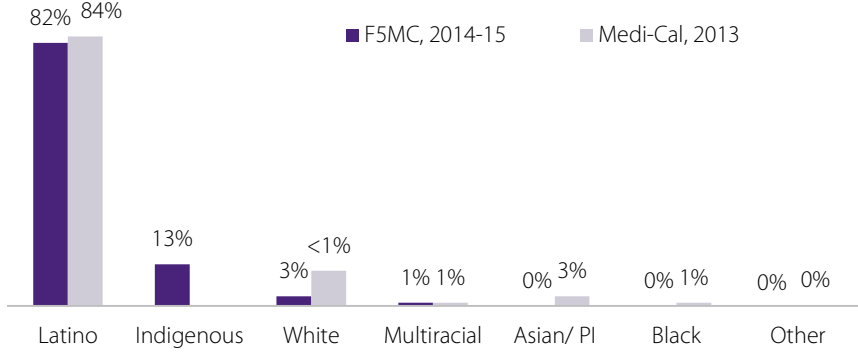
Client Services

F5MC served more than 40,000 children, parents, and providers.

This number includes unduplicated/consented participants (those who participated in playgroups, high-intensity consultations, home visits, information and referral, group parenting education, screening and assessment, and technical assistance), as well as participants of F5MC-sponsored community events and recipients of Parent Kits.



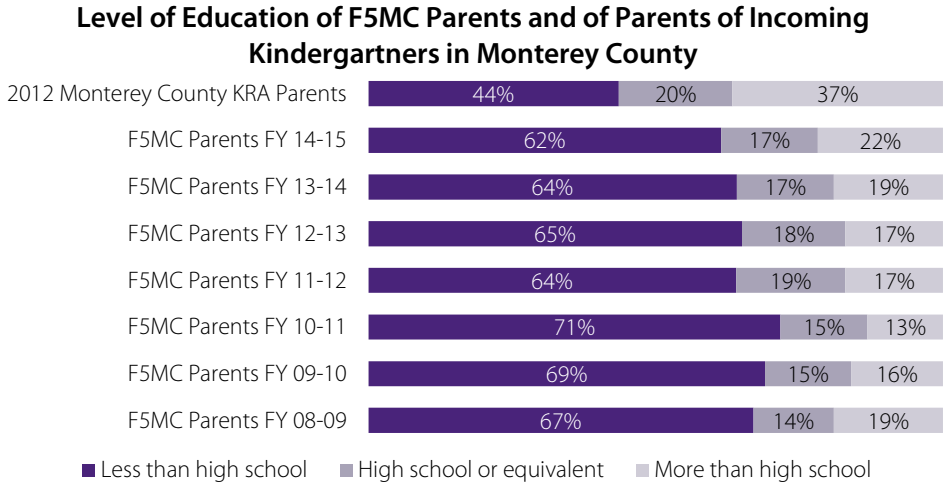
The race and ethnicity of F5MC families parallels that of mothers with Medi-Cal funded births in Monterey County.



F5MC uses Monterey County Medi-Cal data to help target services. In 2014-15, 82 percent of mothers served by F5MC reported their ethnicity as Latino/Hispanic. That is similar to the percentage of Latina mothers with Medi-Cal funded births in Monterey County (84 percent in 2013).

A majority of F5MC parents have less than a high school education.

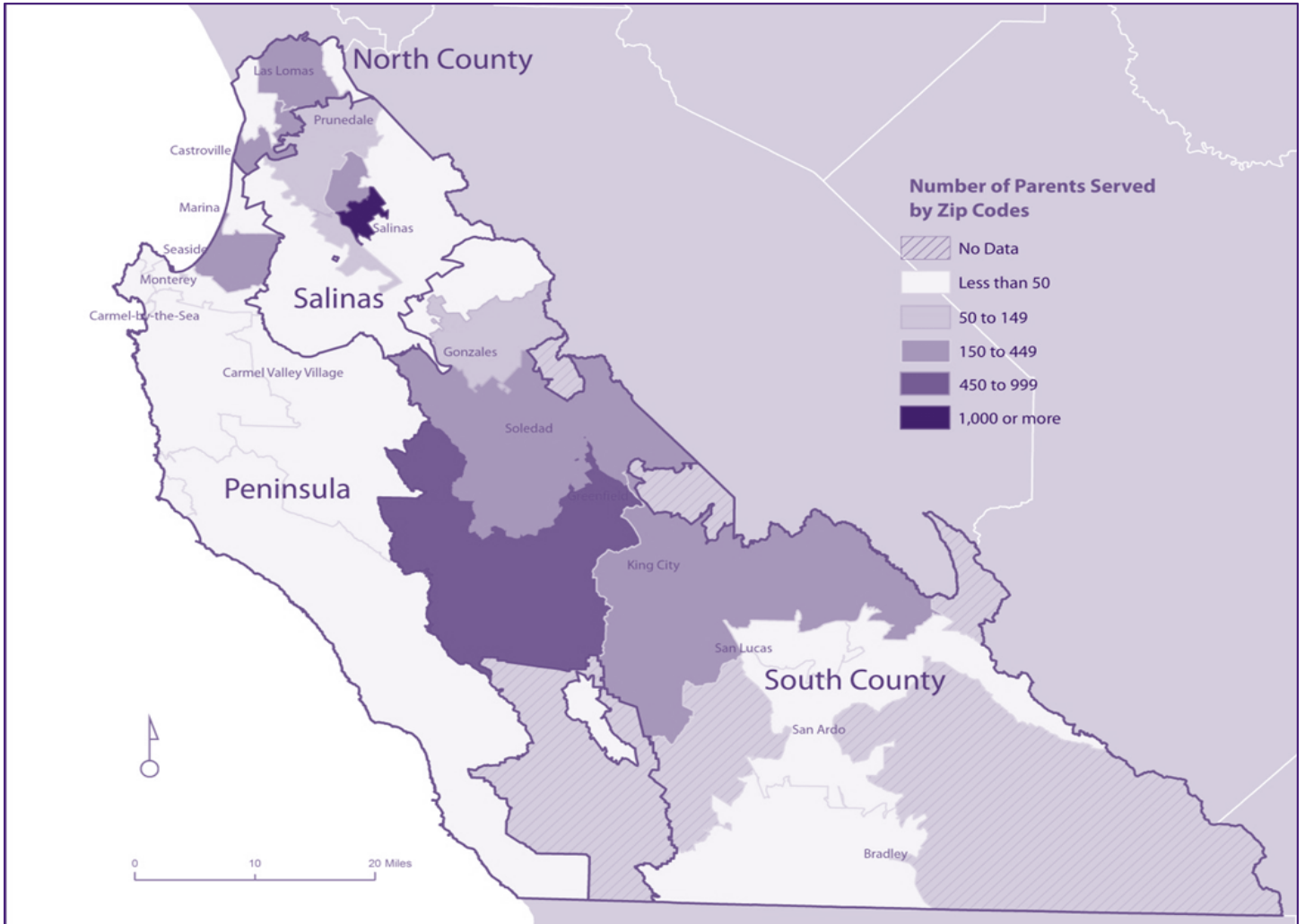
Sixty-two percent of parents served in 2014-15 had less than a high school education, and just twenty-two percent had any formal education beyond high school. Research, including the 2012 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), shows that parents with lower educational attainment are less likely to take part in activities known to positively influence children's school readiness.



F5MC clients largely reside in Salinas, especially East Salinas.

The F5MC strategic plan prioritizes the following areas within each region: East Salinas (*Salinas*), Chualar, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, King City, San Ardo, and San Lucas (*South County*), Seaside (*Peninsula*), and Pajaro, Castroville (*North County*). As in past years, half of unduplicated/consented clients (50 percent) lived in Salinas and one-third (34 percent) lived in East Salinas. Just over one fourth (27 percent) lived in South County.

Parents Served in 2014-15, by Region and Zip Code

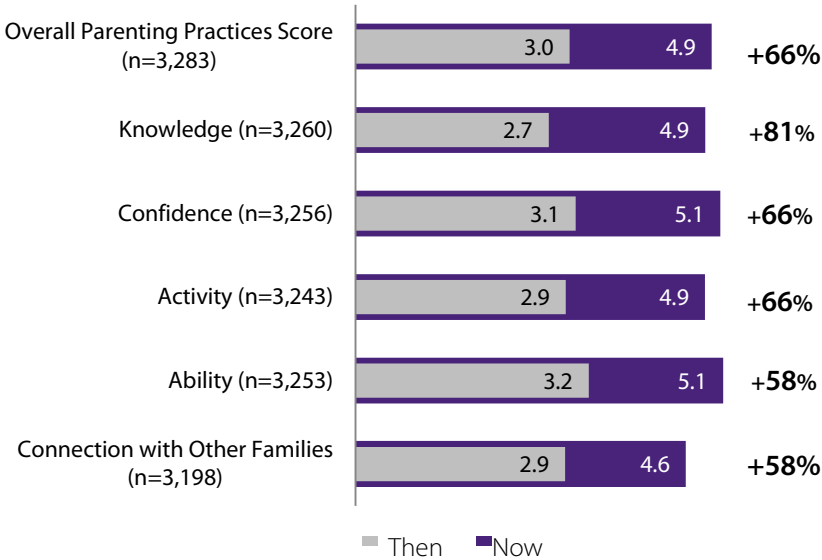


Family Outcomes



F5MC families improved in multiple parenting practices.

Changes in Parenting Practices



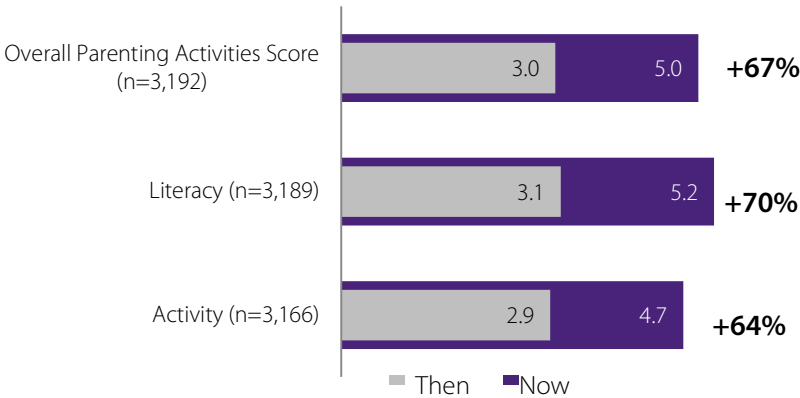
Parents were asked to reflect on their parenting practices before and after participation. Families reported gains in the following areas:

- knowledge (81 percent)
- confidence (66 percent)
- activities (66 percent)
- ability (58 percent)
- connections to other families with children (58 percent)

After participating in funded services, F5MC families engaged in more activities linked to positive developmental outcomes.

On average, F5MC parents reported engaging in literacy activities with their children 5.2 times per week *now* (after participating), compared to 3.1 times per week *then* (before participating). They also increased the frequency of other parent-child activities from an average of 2.9 times per week *before* to 4.7 times per week *after* service participation. Overall, this translates to a 67 percent increase in parent-child interaction activities from the time *before* to the time *after* they participated in F5MC-funded programs.

Changes in Parent-Child Activities



F5MC families show greater knowledge about child development than a national sample of parents.

F5MC families also responded to questions from a national survey of adults about their knowledge of child development. For three of the six statements (see below), F5MC families were correct more frequently than all parents from the national sample, including those with a college education or more.

Child Development Knowledge

Statement	Percent Correct Response		
	F5MC Parents*	National: Parents ≤ High School	National: Parents College+
1. Children's capacity for learning is pretty much set from birth and cannot be greatly increased or decreased by how parents interact with them.	59%	60%	77%
2. Parents' emotional closeness with their baby can strongly influence that child's intellectual development.	81%	81%	83%
3. A child aged six months or younger who witnesses violence, such as seeing his father often hit his mother, will not suffer any long term effects, because children that age have no long term memory.	63%	48%	48%
4. Children get an equal benefit from hearing someone talk on TV versus hearing a person in the same room talking to them.	66%	33%	53%
5. Children who are spanked as a regular form of punishment are more likely to deal with their own anger by being physically aggressive.	75%	34%	34%
6. Infants need a lot of time to develop bonds of security with individuals, so frequent changes in care providers has a negative impact.	61%**	68%	84%

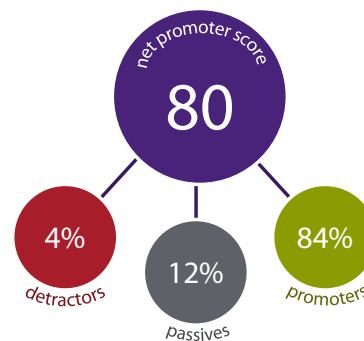
* Bolded numbers: statistically significantly more F5MC parents answered correctly compared to parents in national sample.

** Significantly fewer F5MC parents answered this question correctly compared to parents in national sample.

Most F5MC families are highly likely to recommend F5MC-funded programs.

Eighty-four percent of families who participated in four or more services are "promoters," or loyal enthusiasts likely to recommend F5MC-funded programs. Only four percent are "detractors," or unhappy clients that may voice dissatisfaction to others. As the exhibit below shows, F5MC's *net promoter score* (the percent of promoters minus the percent of detractors) is 80, which is considered well above average.¹

Likelihood of Recommending Program to another Family



Recommendations

- ★ **Strengthen the data.** In order to strengthen the ability to report the impact of programs on parents, link family outcome data (e.g., Parenting Ladder Surveys) to specific F5MC clients and families and add a field for program type. Set a benchmark for response rates and monitor survey completion throughout the program year.
- ★ **Improve comparability.** Align items that come from existing surveys to allow for more comparisons with external data.

¹ Net Promoter Scores* higher than 15 percent are considered above average, and 50 percent or above are usually considered excellent. Net Promoter Score, a registered trademark of Satmetrix Systems, Inc., Bain & Company and Fred Reichheld, is a measure of user satisfaction based on likelihood of recommending a product to a friend or colleague.

Provider Outcomes



In demonstration of its commitment to increase access to quality, affordable early care and education, F5MC approved local augmentation of the First 5 California Child Signature Program (CSP) 2 funding in 2012.

Local enhancements that are aligned with best practices known to benefit young children included on-site coaching; classroom materials; supplemental pay for teachers and supervisors to take part in seminars and reflective meetings; and opportunities for administrators to reflect on how organizational systems and requirements affect program quality.

“We always did the same routine because we thought it had to stay that way. [Our coach] told us we could adapt our routine to the children’s interest and level of activity, and we did it and it went smoothly.”

- Center Administrator

Teachers, coaches, site supervisors, and center administrators participated in reflective meetings as part of F5MC’s CSP initiative.

For teachers, participating in reflective meetings with their coach and fellow teachers provided opportunities to take a step back and reflect on their observations. The reflective approach fostered teachers’ appreciation of the value of observation and encouraged them to be more intentional about their work.

Teachers and administrators took part in a series of trainings and seminars. Many said the trainings gave them ideas and taught them skills, and that they benefitted from coaches’ and administrators’ support with integrating the learning into their daily work.

“It’s so different as you walk in the classroom. The whole environment feels brighter, more cheerful, and children’s work is everywhere. Children are more engaged; it feels like a happier place.”

- Coach

CSP efforts supported early learning environments in becoming more responsive to children’s interests and developmental abilities. Teachers adapted their curricula and classroom operations to be more responsive to children’s interests and needs. They also enhanced the flow of the day, making use of indoor, outdoor, and small group activities based on children’s needs.

Participation in CSP built awareness about how the physical environment can support positive interactions and learning. Changes to the classroom environment included strategies to support children’s identity and connection, the intentional use of new materials to support children’s development, independent access to engaging materials, and open exploration.

Teachers, coaches, and program administrators reported that CSP resulted in teachers seeing themselves as educators and having improved interactions with children, parents, and colleagues both in their centers and beyond. This initiative marked a shift from teacher-directed to child-initiated work. Many participants improved the quality of interactions and relationships with parents. CSP activities created a sense of community and teamwork among teachers at participating sites. CSP also contributed to the development of a broader learning community.

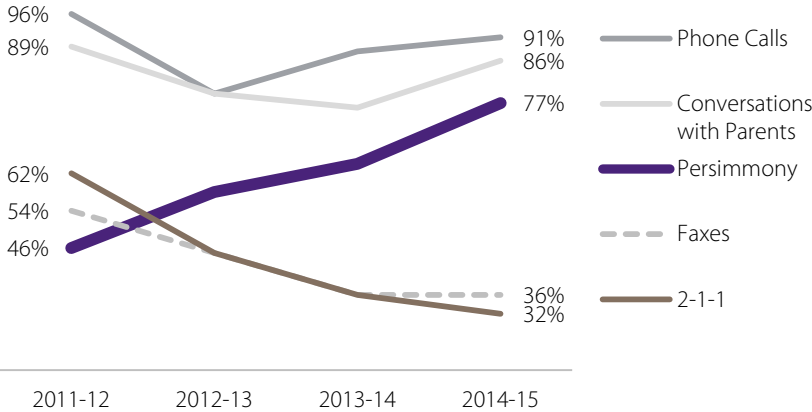
Recommendations

- ★ **Support the growing connections and relationships formed by the CSP project.** Encourage site supervisors and agency administrators to continue cultivating relationships. Invite participants to local professional development opportunities and networking events for the early childhood education community.
- ★ **Expand current F5MC professional development efforts to accommodate participants who are interested in continued learning.** Teachers will likely need continued support (professional development as well as financial/material resources), and some center administrators have already begun to apply for additional F5MC technical assistance.

Funded Agencies

Stronger internal systems are strengthening linkages.

Method of Referrals to Other F5MC Agencies



In 2014-15, the share of funded partners using the F5MC management information system (Persimmony) to make referrals continued to grow, as did the share that use phone calls and conversations with parents. 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.

There are high levels of satisfaction with technical assistance offered by F5MC.

Satisfaction with Technical Assistance Offered by F5MC

Agencies generally reported similar or higher levels of satisfaction with F5MC-provided technical assistance activities compared to the prior year. The highest-rated F5MC-provided technical assistance activities were I-ACT meetings, learning circles, and other networking opportunities; support with Persimmony (F5MC's management information system); and assistance with scopes of work.

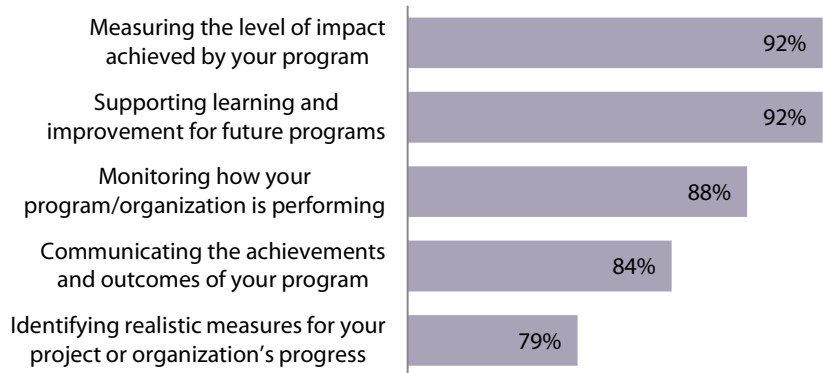
	2013-14 (n=25)	2014-15 (n=24)	CHANGE
F5MC-Provided Technical Assistance			
i-ACT/Networking opportunities	n/a	100%	n/a
Learning Circles/Networking opportunities	87%	96%*	+9%
Support with Persimmony database	88%	92%	+4%
Assistance reflecting and understanding my scope of work	84%	91%	+7%
Assistance provided to implement program-level evaluation plans	80%	74%	-6%
Support for designing and implementing appropriate child development activities	91%	91%	-
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%	-
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

Seventy-five percent of funded agencies said that the time and effort needed for reporting was about right.

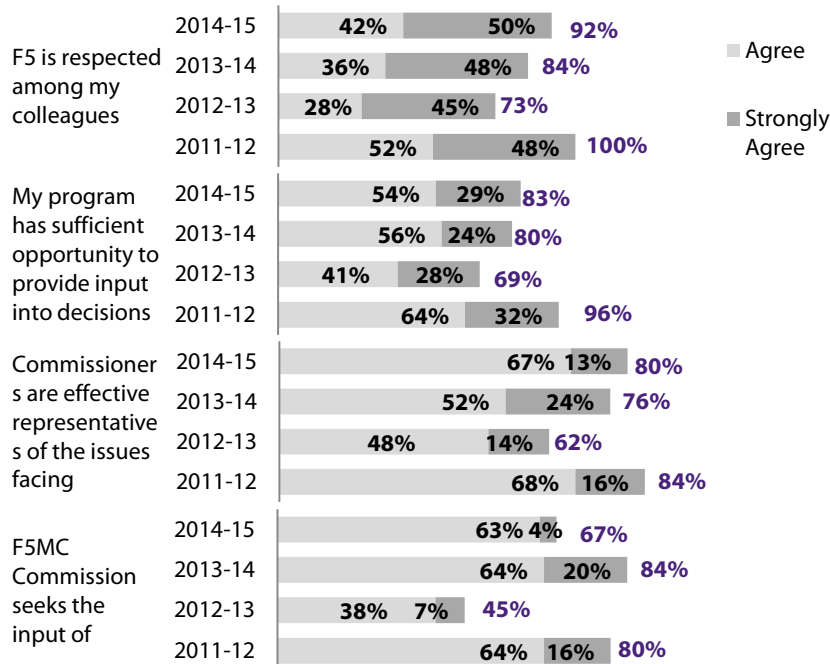
Most agencies felt that F5MC's grant reporting requirements were both reasonable and helpful. As an example, ninety-two percent felt that the grant reporting process was helpful measuring program impact and supporting learning and improvement.

Areas in Which the F5MC Grant Reporting Process Was "Very" or "Moderately" Helpful



Funded partners have a positive outlook on the F5MC Commission.

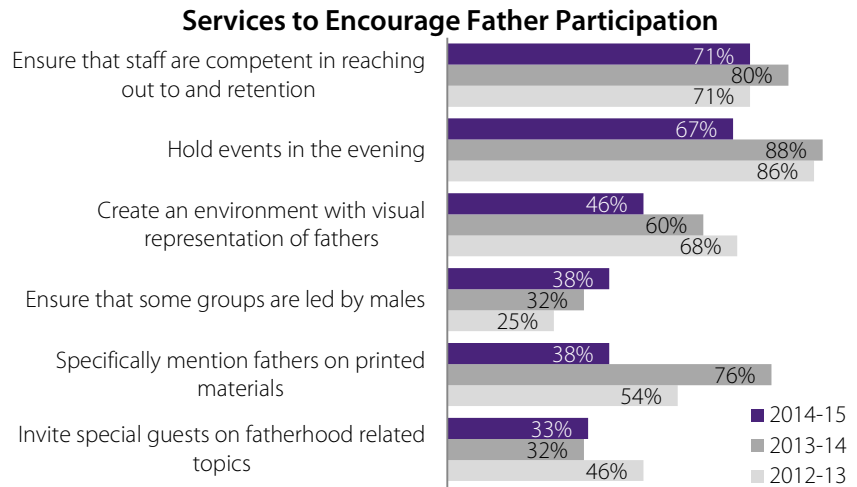
Satisfaction with First 5 Monterey Commission



Compared to 2013-14, they 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*; a smaller share strongly agreed with the statements *Commissioners are effective representatives of issues facing children ages 0-5* and *F5MC Commission seeks the input of parents/caregivers when making decisions*.

While funded partners have a long track record of providing responsive and accessible services, more opportunities to encourage the participation of fathers and working parents are needed.

For father participation, although slightly more agencies reported ensuring some groups were led by males, most other activities experienced declines. The trend for activities to promote working parent participation was similar—the most commonly-employed activity, holding events in the evening, was done as much as in the prior year; all other activities experienced declines.



Although a large majority of agencies provide services all month during much of the year, fewer agencies are providing services all month in summer and winter.

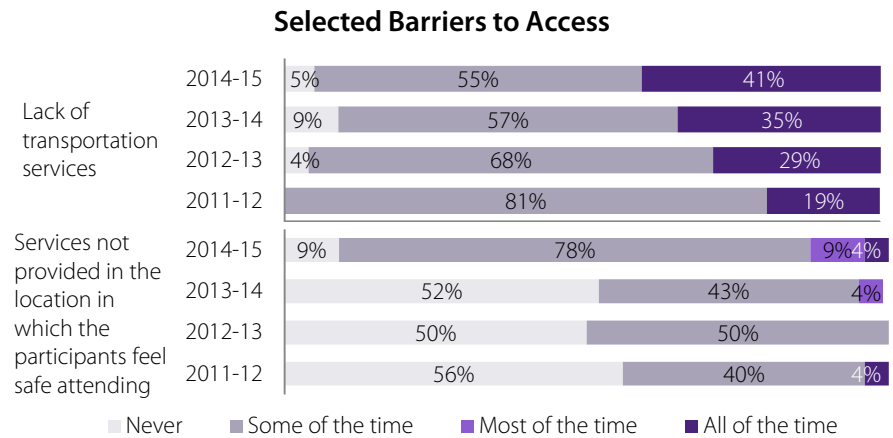
Services Offered Year-Round

Month	Percent of agencies that provide services all month		
	2013-14	2014-15	CHANGE
January	68%	58%	-10%
February	92%	92%	-
March	92%	96%	+4%
April	92%	100%	+8%
May	100%	100%	-
June	76%	71%	-5%
July	68%	58%	-10%
August	76%	67%	-9%
September	100%	100%	-
October	100%	100%	-
November	92%	96%	+4%
December	60%	50%	-10%

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. It is worth noting that most agencies do provide services for part of those months.

Lack of transportation services and safety are growing barriers.

Forty-one percent of funded agencies reported that *lack of transportation services* was a barrier most of time – a 22 percentage point increase from 2011-12. 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.



Recommendations

- ★ 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.
- ★ Engage with funded partners to re-examine expectations about increasing father and working-parent participation.
- ★ Explore participants' demand for, and funded partners' ability to provide, year-round services.
- ★ Continue working with funded partners to address participants' transportation needs and challenges.