

Parent ACTION

(ACHIEVING CHANGE TOGETHER IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS)

Evaluation

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Prepared for First 5 San Francisco

**Written By
Kelsey Crowe, PhD**



**First 5 San Francisco
1390 Market Street, suite 318
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-934-4849**

**First 5 San Francisco Children and Families Commission
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**First 5 San Francisco Children and Families Commission
Staff**

<p>Laurel Kloomock Executive Director 415.554.9250 laurel@first5sf.org</p>	<p>Gloria Corral Deputy Director 415-934-4854 gloria@first5sf.org</p>	<p>Derik Aoki Senior Program Officer 415.557.9912 derik@first5sf.org</p>	<p>Ingrid Mezquita Preschool for All Senior Program Officer 415-437-4649 ingrid@first5sf.org</p>	<p>Tamara Foster Financial Administrator 415-437-4662 tfoster@first5sf.org</p>
<p>Elaine Wang Civic Engagement Program Officer 415-554-8966 ewang@first5sf.org</p>	<p>Leticia Leyva Family Support Program Officer 415-437-4652 leticia@first5sf.org</p>	<p>Michelle Grant Preschool for All Technical Assistance Coordinator 415-934-4855 michelle@first5sf.org</p>	<p>Mathew Rector Preschool for All Program Associate 415-437-4652 mathew@first5sf.org</p>	<p>Kahala Drain Administrative Coordinator 415-934-4849 kahala@first5sf.org</p>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Description of Program	iv
Executive Summary.....	vi
Methods.....	pg. 1
Survey Findings	
Leadership	pg. 3
Parent participants	
Parent leaders	
Agency staff	
Technical Assistance	pg. 8
Parent participants	
Parent leaders	
Agency staff	
Outcomes and Benefits	pg.12
Parent participants and parent leaders	
Agency staff	
Interview Findings	
Project Leadership and Participation	pg. 19
Improved leadership skills	
Deepening relationships with community institutions	
Limited leadership development	
Agency relationship with grantees	
Technical Assistance	pg. 22
Benefits of technical assistance	
Drawbacks of technical assistance	
Outcomes and Benefits	pg. 25
Impact on parent	
Impact on child	
Parent ACTION: A Unique Opportunity	pg. 27
Ownership	
Focus 0-5	
Fun as a mobilization tool	
Time to grow	
Analysis/Conclusion/ Recommendations	pg. 29

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

The Parent ACTION (Achieving Change Together In Our Neighborhoods) grant program of the San Francisco Children and Families Commission provides parent groups two years of funding and technical support. It aims to build up parent leadership, while also enabling parents to design and implement programming that suits the personal needs and interests of their community.

Parent groups receive \$3,000 in their first year, and \$5,000 in their second year to implement their grant proposals. These proposals commonly provide neighborhood children and families with opportunities for further enrichment through music and art lessons, field trips, and parent support groups. In fewer cases, parents propose to implement projects that benefit the community at large, such as a neighborhood garden project, or a police education project about children with special needs.

First 5 San Francisco expects Parent ACTION group leadership responsibilities to be shared among a number of parents. Such responsibilities include planning activities through deciding on group goals, researching activity ideas, networking with other parents and/or organizations, and completing the grant requirements like writing status reports, accounting for finances, and attending technical assistance workshops.

Parent leaders receive help to participate in the parent ACTION grant program through a mandatory technical assistance package provided by First 5 San Francisco. This package includes content-based workshops on issues such as financial accounting for the grant, report writing, meeting facilitation, and how to advocate with government officials. Workshops also encourage peer-based learning through group sharing of project ideas and challenges. In addition to technical assistance provided in workshops, parent leaders receive one-on-one support from First 5 San Francisco staff, including the Civic Engagement Program Officer and two part-time consultants to the project. Staff and consultants are available to answer questions, provide information, visit grantee groups, and problem solve with individual grantees.

Parent groups represent a wide spectrum of previous experience with community building work and socio-economic backgrounds. Parents come from cooperative preschools, where parent involvement is already high. They come from family support agencies or child care centers, and often need logistical, financial, linguistic, and/or emotional support. And they come from independent corners, mobilizing together without agency or cooperative support.

Currently, there are 32 grants, with a total of 400 parent participants. Group sizes range from a small size of five parents to large internet networks with 20+ families per activity.

The total cost of the Parent ACTION grant program is \$250,000. This amount accounts for grant payments, technical assistance, and staff salaries. Grants are paid out to grantees through a partnership with the San Francisco Foundation's Community Investment Fund.

In the words of one grantee.....

Through this program, without a lot of money, I find that I can help a lot of poor and middle-class parents. I find this program very encouraging and motivating when all members (parents) are sincerely and earnestly working together, getting things done, supporting each other and befriending each other. This program has me given a lot of confidence and courage. Among us in the group, I am no longer afraid to talk about secrets and matters. You know what? At first, I regretted joining this program because I was afraid that I couldn't handle the amount of work. This program is designed in a very detail-oriented fashion. But the facilitators are very caring and friendly. The program is also linguistically friendly. Over time, as I follow the rhythm of this program, I find it easier and more relaxing to participate in Parent ACTION.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research goals

The evaluation of the Parent ACTION grant program has three goals. 1) Identify needs for leadership development; 2) identify grantees' satisfaction with First 5 San Francisco sponsored technical assistance and needs for additional assistance; and 3) identify the benefits and outcomes of participating in the Parent ACTION Grant program for parents and their children, as well as community-based agency staff.

Methods

Data for the evaluation relied on surveys and a sampling of interviews with participants who have been involved in the program for a minimum of one year (representing roughly 2/3 of total grantees for 2006). Three surveys were constructed. One for parents who participate in Parent ACTION grant programs but who do not lead them, one for parents who lead parent ACTION grants, and one for community based staff who support some of the parent ACTION groups. A total of 143 parents responded to the survey. Ninety-eight are parent participants and forty-five are parent leaders. Nine agency staff responded to surveys. Thirteen parent leaders were interviewed; no parent participants or agency staff were interviewed.

Findings

Parent leadership:

Parent leadership is widespread within roughly half the parent ACTION groups. Half of the parent leaders report being satisfied with the number of parents taking responsibility for managing the parent action grant. The number of parent leaders per group is equally distributed between 3-4, 5-6, and 7-9 parents. Half of parent leaders, however, express they are dissatisfied with the number of parents taking on leadership roles for managing the parent ACTION grant. At the same time that nearly half of parent leaders want more parents taking on grant related responsibilities, the majority of parent participants report wanting to take on more leadership responsibilities for managing the grant.

The parent leadership appears to be running the parent ACTION grant programs successfully. A significant majority of parent participants are happy with the quality of parent ACTION grant leadership and with the quality of activities the leadership arranges for their children. Moreover, parent ACTION grant participants report that parent leaders inform them of the First 5 San Francisco Parent ACTION grant mission and goals, and that they learn from parent leaders about content issues addressed in First 5 San Francisco workshops.

In cases where parent leaders and agency staff work together to implement the Parent ACTION grant, the majority of parents report having more grantee related responsibilities than agency staff for deciding on group goals and arranging activities. In a few cases, parents would like more autonomy from agency staff when running the

grant. Agency staff represent a different view, with a small majority reporting they take on more responsibility for managing the grant than they would like. In addition, agency staff respondents describe barriers such as lack of confidence, lack of information about resources, and weak leadership skills as barriers to parent groups being more successful. Despite such concerns, the majority of agency staff report that parents are better able to manage the parent ACTION grants in their second year, and that their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program has increased their confidence in parents' abilities to take on leadership roles.

An overwhelming majority of parent leaders, as well as a majority of parent participants, report improved leadership skills and an increased likelihood of participating in other community oriented activities regarding children as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program. This impact is most pronounced among non-native English speakers.

Technical assistance: A significant majority of parents describe a high degree of satisfaction with the technical assistance workshops from First 5 San Francisco. Grantees without prior community building experience are far more likely than experienced grantees to report benefits from technical assistance.

Parent ACTION participants and parent leaders listed all options for additional assistance as either "extremely important" or "important". These include leadership skills training, learning how to advocate with public officials, partnering with other organizations, and accessing experts on child development, music, and arts. Agency staff and parent leaders most frequently ranked continued leadership skill building as the most important of technical assistance options.

The drawbacks of the technical assistance are consistently described as overwhelming. Report requirements, the length of the trainings, and the extent of communication can be burdensome, especially to parents who describe needing less technical assistance to accomplish their goals.

Benefits and outcomes: The parent ACTION grant program appears to have a significant impact on parents leadership development. Moreover, it helps parents build up a social network that leads to increased support and more information about child-related resources. The majority of parent leaders and participants either "strongly agree" or "agree" on the following benefits of the Parent ACTION grant program: 1) Increased skills in meeting management; 2) increased awareness of resources like preschool, enrichment activities and advocacy organizations; 3) increased access to resources outside one's neighborhood and language/ethnic group; and 4) Increased number of relationships and parent support.

The majority of agency staff report that they have more confidence in parents' abilities to organize activities in their neighborhood as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program. Staff, with less frequency, describe that they have learned skills for empowering parents as a result of their participation in the parent ACTION grant program.

The majority of parents in interview data describe how the parent ACTION grant program impacts their children. Parent driven programming creates socializing activities for children where friendships are made. Additionally, as parents work with each other and the larger community, parents believe their children develop pride in their leadership roles and gain a deeper sense of social responsibility.

Recommendations

Recommendations include the following:

- generating more leadership in the Parent ACTION grant groups using optional First 5 technical assistance trainings
- creating menu options for technical assistance trainings that allow grantees to customize their training packages
- encourage more cross-cultural and cross-project exchange with the use of panel presentations in workshops
- reducing the workload for parent ACTION grantees by streamlining reporting requirements
- create programmatic procedures that enable more experienced grantees to act as project consultants rather than as technical assistance beneficiaries

METHODS

Overview

Data for the Parent ACTION grant evaluation relies on survey responses as well as interviews. Survey questions were constructed with the help of First 5 staff, and with feedback from a 2 parent ACTION grantees and parent ACTION agency staff. Surveys were designed and distributed to three sectors of grant participation. First, parent leaders, who have responsibility for designing parent ACTION grants, overseeing grant implementation, and communicating with First 5 staff. Secondly, parent participants, who participate in the parent ACTION grant activities but have little to no grant related responsibilities. Third, agency staff, who for some grants, provide linguistic, motivational, informational, and logistical support to grantees who already have an affiliation with an agency.

Survey research questions

Survey research questions aim to capture three categories of information: 1) the extent and quality of parent leadership and participation; 2) the quality of, and need for technical assistance from First 5 San Francisco; and 3) the outcomes and benefits of the Parent ACTION grant program.

Extent and quality of parent leadership: The parent leader survey seeks to identify the extent of parent leadership in parent ACTION grants, as well as the need for more parent leadership for grant management. The parent participant survey seeks to identify parents' satisfaction with parent ACTION grant leadership, as well as their interest in assuming more grant management responsibilities. The agency staff survey seeks to learn the degree of confidence staff have in parents' abilities to manage the parent ACTION grants without agency support.

Technical assistance from First 5: The parent leader survey seeks to learn about grantee satisfaction with technical assistance from First 5, as well as needs for technical assistance. The parent participant survey only asks for parent interest in technical assistance, because participants are not actively engaged in First 5 related technical assistance activities. The agency staff survey seeks to identify agency staff satisfaction with First 5 technical assistance, and on-going technical assistance needs.

Outcomes and benefits of the Parent ACTION grant: Parent-based outcomes are the same for parent leaders and parent participants, and are reported together in the report. The outcomes refer to how participation in the Parent ACTION grant increases parents' social relationships, information sharing about child-related resources, and improves leadership skills.

Agency staff-based outcomes refer specifically to how staff perceptions of parents' leadership have changed as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION program.

Survey participants

Surveys were distributed to parent ACTION grant groups that have at least one year of experience with the Parent ACTION grant program. A total of 16 groups responded, and 143 parents responded to the survey. Ninety-eight respondents are parent participants, and 45 respondents are parent leaders. Surveys were distributed to members of three language groups. According to what respondents reported to be the primary language of their group, the linguistic breakdown of parent participants is as follows: 21 Spanish speaking participants, 49 Chinese speaking participants, and 28 English speaking participants. The linguistic breakdown of parent leaders is as follows: ten Spanish leaders, 25 Chinese speaking leaders, and ten English speaking leaders.

Nine agency staff responded to the survey. Three staff reported from one agency. Six agencies are represented in the survey.

Survey data analysis

Data for parent participant responses are analyzed using frequency counts as well as percentages. Data was also analyzed according to language group, and where significant differences between language groups were noted, these differences were included in the findings. When such differences were small, they were not included in the findings in order to maintain brevity in the report. Parent leader data was not analyzed by language group, since responses per language group were too few to verify language-group conclusions. Agency based data is only presented as frequency counts.

Interview research questions

Interview questions sought to explore in depth parents' experience with First 5 San Francisco technical assistance, assistance from community-based agency staff support, and the benefits of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program for them and their children.

Interview participants

Interviews were conducted with thirteen parent leaders. Parent leaders were selected to represent a sampling of group types. Two groups are with cooperatives, four groups are working with an agency, three groups have reduced their dependency on an agency over time, and four groups work independently of an agency or cooperative. One of the interviewees is Spanish speaking, eight are Chinese speaking, and four are English speaking.

Interview data analysis

Interview data was coded for themes which emerged from immersion into the data. Themes like "planning" "learning" and "overwhelm" were coded, and then categorized under broader concepts like "leadership development" and "support". Only themes occurring in over four or more interviews were reported under findings, except where noted in report on findings.

SURVEY FINDINGS

I. Project Leadership and Participation

PARENT PARTICIPANTS

Extent of participation: Participation rates in the Parent ACTION grant program range from a one-to-three times a year to over 16 times a year. Seventy-seven percent of respondents report attending at least four events a year or more (table 1.a). Most parents report participating in the Parent ACTION grant program either “always” (42%), or “most of the time” (35%). (table 1.b).

Table 1a

Number of activities participated in a year	1-3	4-7	8-11	12-15	16 or more	Total
<i>Total Respondents</i>	20	33	11	3	20	87
<i>Total Percentage</i>	23%	38%	13%	3%	23%	100%

Table 1.b

How often do you participate in Parent ACTION?	Always	Most of the time	About half the time	not so often	almost never	Total
<i>Total Respondents</i>	36	30	10	8	1	85
<i>Total Percentage</i>	42%	35%	12%	9%	1%	100%

Satisfaction with grant: The majority of parents report being happy with the quality of the Parent ACTION grant activities and parent leadership. Seventy-seven out of 90 respondents (87%) either “strongly agree” or “agree” they are happy with Parent ACTION grant activities (see table 1.c). Forty-seven out of 88 respondents (53%) “strongly agree”, and 30 (34%) “agree” they are happy with the Parent ACTION grant leadership (see table 1.d). A minority of grantees, 11 out of 88 (12%), report only “slight agreement”, “no opinion”, or some extent of “disagreement” about being happy with the Parent ACTION grant leadership.

Table 1.c

I am happy with the quality of Parent ACTION activities	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Respondents</i>	51	32	2	4	0	0	1	90
<i>Total Percentage</i>	57%	36%	2%	4%	0%	0%	1%	100%

Table 1.d

I am happy with the quality of Parent ACTION leadership	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Respondents</i>	47	30	6	3	1	0	1	88
<i>Total Percentage</i>	53%	34%	7%	3%	1%	0%	1%	100%

Desire for increased leadership responsibility: The majority of parent participants report wanting more leadership responsibility for implementing the Parent ACTION grant. Thirty-three respondents out of 86 (38%) “strongly agree”, and 25 (29%) “agree” they would like more responsibility for deciding on group activities. Data analyzed by primary language group show that interest is higher among Spanish language speakers at 82% (33/87), and Chinese language speakers at 84% (33/37) who “strongly agree” and “agree” they would like more grant management responsibility (see table 1.e). Only half of English speaking respondents report wanting more increased leadership responsibility.

Table 1.e

I would like to take more responsibility for deciding on group activities	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Spanish</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	13	5	2	1	0	1	0	22
<i>Percentage of Spanish</i>	59%	23%	9%	5%	0%	5%	0%	
<i>Chinese</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	18	15	0	2	4	0	0	39
<i>Percentage of Chinese</i>	46%	38%	0%	5%	10%	0%	0%	
<i>English</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	2	5	6	9	1	2	0	25
<i>Percentage of English</i>	8%	20%	24%	36%	4%	8%	0%	
Total Respondents	33	25	8	12	5	3	0	86
Total Percentage	38%	29%	9%	14%	6%	0%	0%	100%

Knowledge of First 5 San Francisco: The majority of parent participants report having knowledge of the First 5 parent ACTION grant mission, and of the resources shared at the Parent ACTION grant trainings. Eighty-three out of 90 (93%) respondents either “strongly agree” or “agree” they understand the mission and purpose of the Parent ACTION grant (table 1.f). Seventy-three out of 88 (83%) respondents report learning about resources shared at Parent ACTION grant workshops from Parent ACTION grant leaders (table 1.g).

Table 1.f

I understand the mission and purpose of the Parent ACTION grant	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Respondents</i>	42	41	5	2	0	0	0	90
<i>Total Percentage</i>	47%	46%	6%	2%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Table 1.g

Parent leaders share with me the skills and resources learned at First 5 trainings	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Respondents</i>	30	43	6	7	0	0	2	88
<i>Total Percentage</i>	34%	49%	7%	8%	0%	0%	2%	100%

PARENT LEADERS

Parent leadership: The number of parent leaders in a group ranges from 1-2 to 7-9. The greatest number of respondents report they have between 7-9 leaders in the group responsible for managing the grant. The next greatest number of respondents report having 3-5 parent leaders in a group (table 1.h)

Table 1.h

Including you, how many parents have responsibility for managing the grant	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-9	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	3	15	13	16	47
<i>Total Percentage</i>	6%	32%	28%	34%	100%

Almost half of parent leaders report some degree of concern that not enough parents are taking responsibility for managing the grant. Eighteen out of 40 parents report they “strongly agree”, “agree”, or “slightly agree” they are concerned not enough parents are taking responsibility for managing the Parent ACTION grant program. Another fifty percent “disagree” about having concerns that parents are not taking a leadership role managing the grant (table 1.i)

Table 1.i

I am concerned not enough parents are taking responsibility for managing the grant	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Slightly	Disagree Slightly	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	8	10	2	5	15	0	40
<i>Total Percentage</i>	20%	25%	5%	13%	38%	0%	100%

Parent ACTION-agency relationship: The majority of respondents (25/41) report their grants have a relationship with a family support center, childcare center, or park facility. Most parents (64% or 21/33) report they are more responsible than agency staff for making decisions about grant activities. Eighteen percent of parents report that agencies have more responsibility than parents for deciding on group activities (table 1.j). Marginally fewer parents report being responsible for communicating with First 5 San Francisco. Sixteen out of 28 (58%) parents report that agencies have from a small to a significant amount of responsibility for communicating with First 5 San Francisco (table 1.k).

Table 1.j

If answered "yes", who usually decides on activities for your group?	Agency staff are always responsible	Agency staff, but sometimes parents help	Agency staff and parents are equally responsible	Parents are usually responsible, but sometimes agency staff decide	Parents are always responsible	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	2	3	1	6	21	33
<i>Total Percentage</i>	6%	9%	3%	18%	64%	100%

Table I.k

Who is most responsible for communicating concerns with First 5 San Francisco staff?	Agency staff are always responsible	Agency staff, but sometimes parents will communicate	Agency staff and parents are equally responsible	Parents are usually responsible, but sometimes agency staff will communicate with First 5	Parents are always responsible	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	1	4	1	10	12	28
<i>Total Percentage</i>	4%	14%	4%	36%	43%	100%

Connection to First 5 San Francisco: Parent leaders report they understand the mission of First 5 San Francisco. Forty percent (17/43) “strongly agree” and 53% (23/43) agree that they could describe the mission of the Parent ACTION grant program. No parents responded with disagreement to this statement (table I.l)

Table I.l

If asked, I could easily describe the mission and purpose of the Parent ACTION grant	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Slightly	Disagree Slightly	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	17	23	3	0	0	0	43
<i>Total Percentage</i>	40%	53%	7%	0%	0%	0%	100%

AGENCY STAFF

Parent leadership: Agency staff have mixed opinions about parent leaders’ capacity to run parent ACTION groups. Slightly more than half of respondents (6/9) “strongly agree” or “agree” that parents are comfortable facilitating a meeting, while 3/9 “disagree” to some extent. Five out of nine agency staff “strongly agree”, “agree” or “slightly agree” that parents are comfortable arranging logistics for the parent ACTION grant, and three disagree to some extent (table I.m)

Table I.m

Parents are comfortable facilitating group meetings	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	2	4	0	0	1	1	1	9

Parents are comfortable arranging logistics for the group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	8

Almost half of agency respondents “strongly agree”, “agree”, or “slightly agree” they take on more responsibility for facilitating meetings and arranging logistics for the Parent ACTION grant than they would like (see table I.n)

Table I.n

As agency staff, I take on more responsibility for facilitating meetings than I would like	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	1	3	1	0	1	2	1	9

As agency staff, I take on more responsibility for arranging logistics than I would like	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	1	0	3	1	1	3	0	9

Despite concerns among half of the agency staff that parents are not comfortable facilitating meetings and arranging meetings, eight out of nine respondents report that parents take on more grant management responsibilities than they did one year ago (table I.o)

Table I.o

Parents take on more responsibility for managing the Parent ACTION grant than they did a year ago	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	2	5	1	0	0	1	0	9

Agency staff report a fair amount of agreement on barriers to implementing the Parent ACTION grant program. Most frequently cited barriers include lack of skills about how to decide on group goals (7/9); Parents lack of knowledge about resources (6/9), parents' lack of confidence (5/9), and turnover in parent leadership as barriers to leading the Parent ACTION program. A less frequently cited barrier to implementation includes cultural barriers (4/9). Agency staff rarely report agency specific barriers to implementation such as “time to help parents with the parent ACTION grant” or lack of support from the agency director (table I.P)

Table I.p

Please check all of the challenges you and the parents face in trying to help parents lead the Parent ACTION group on their own	Parents' language and cultural barriers	Parents' lack of confidence	Parents lack of knowledge about resources	Turnover in parent leadership	skills about how to decide on group goals	Lack of support from the agency director	enough time to help parents with the	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	4	5	6	5	7	0	2	9

II. Parent ACTION Grant Technical Assistance and Improvement

PARENT PARTICIPANTS

Technical assistance: A majority of parent participants report wanting more training from First 5 San Francisco, with 74 out of 83 parents responding “yes” to the question of whether they would like to attend First 5 parent ACTION grant workshops.

A substantial number of parent participants report wanting additional resources for enhancing their grant programs. Most parents rank program enhancement options listed in the survey as either “extremely important” or “important”, with only marginal differences in total responses for each enhancement option (table IIa).

Table IIa

Experts to speak to our group on issues of child development	Extremely Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Total
<i>Total Respondents</i>	52	33	4	0	0	89
<i>Total Percentage</i>	58%	37%	4%	0%	0%	100%
Experts to provide music and art lessons	Extremely Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Total
<i>Total Respondents</i>	51	34	4	0	0	89
<i>Total Percentage</i>	57%	38%	4%	0%	0%	100%
Finding organizations in our neighborhood that we can work with	Extremely Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Total
<i>Total Respondents</i>	41	45	3	1	0	90
<i>Total Percentage</i>	46%	50%	3%	1%	0%	100%
Learning more about how to advocate with public officials re: child-wellbeing	Extremely Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Total
<i>Total Respondents</i>	47	29	7	4	1	88
<i>Total Percentage</i>	53%	33%	8%	5%	1%	100%
Learning more leadership skills (like how to run a meeting)	Extremely Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Total
<i>Total Respondents</i>	36	38	7	2	4	87
<i>Total Percentage</i>	41%	44%	8%	2%	5%	100%

PARENT LEADERS

Technical assistance: The majority of parent leaders report positively about the Parent ACTION technical assistance. Ninety-five percent (38/40) of parent leaders respond they “strongly agree” or “agree” that First 5 staff and/or consultants are open to their ideas. Additionally, 88% (34/ respondents) indicate they “strongly agree” or “agree” that one-on-one sessions with First 5 staff helped clarify their project’s goals. Less helpful to parent leaders is the Parent ACTION handbook. Forty-nine percent, or 14/36 parent leaders, report that they “disagree slightly” or “disagree” that they have used the parent ACTION grant handbook to find resources (table II.a).

Table II.a

First 5 staff and consultants are always open to my ideas	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Slightly	Disagree Slightly	Disagree	Stongly Disagree	Total	
<i>Total Responses</i>	12	26	0	1	1	0	40	
<i>Total Percentage</i>	30%	65%	0%	3%	3%	0%	100%	
One-on-one sessions and meetings with First 5 San Francisco staff and/or consultants helped our project clarify its goals	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Slightly	Disagree Slightly	Disagree	Stongly Disagree	Total	
<i>Total Responses</i>	17	17	0	1	4	0	39	
<i>Total Percentage</i>	44%	44%	0%	3%	10%	0%	100%	
I have used the Parent ACTION handbook to find resources for our group	Unaware of PAH	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Disagree Slightly	Disagree	Stongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	3	7	0	12	1	7	6	33
<i>Total Percentage</i>		21%	0%	36%	3%	21%	18%	100%

Trainings: Parent leaders describe a number of trainings offered by First 5 San Francisco as useful. Trainings that received the most “strongly agree” responses include “learning and sharing best practices” (39%), and “learning how to advocate with public officials”. Additionally, parent leaders report highly favorable responses for the small group trainings, which provided leaders of similar skill levels with specialized trainings. Ninety-three percent of parent leaders report they either “strongly agree” or “agree” that small group trainings were more useful than large group trainings. Overall, most trainings offered by First 5 san Francisco received over 85% favorability ratings of either “strongly agree” “agree” and “slightly agree” (table II.b).

Learning and sharing best practices with other parents was useful	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Slightly	Disagree Slightly	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	11	13	0	0	4	0	28
<i>Total Percentage</i>	39%	46%	0%	0%	14%	0%	100%
Clarifying reporting forms was useful	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Slightly	Disagree Slightly	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	5	12	0	2	4	0	23
<i>Total Percentage</i>	22%	52%	0%	9%	17%	0%	100%
How to design parent activities was useful	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Slightly	Disagree Slightly	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	8	21	0	0	0	0	29
<i>Total Percentage</i>	28%	72%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
How to advocate with government officials for more resources for our children was useful	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Slightly	Disagree Slightly	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	8	11	0	1	2	0	22
<i>Total Percentage</i>	36%	50%	0%	5%	9%	0%	100%
I found the smaller group trainings more useful than the large group trainings	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree Slightly	Disagree Slightly	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	9	17	0	1	1	0	28
<i>Total Percentage</i>	32%	61%	0%	4%	4%	0%	100%

Improvements to technical assistance: Parents most frequently report wanting more trainings on parent leadership skills (i.e. group facilitation and delegating responsibility). Other frequently requested improvements to the Parent ACTION grant program include “demonstrating more understanding towards grantee challenges”, and “providing more opportunities for grantees to learn from one another”. Of some interest is help in partnering with other organizations.

Very few respondents asked for fewer trainings, for more on-on-one attention, or for more help clarifying reporting forms. None of the primary English respondents reported wanting more one-on-one attention or more help clarifying forms (table II.c).

Table II.c

Provide more trainings on parent leadership skills (i.e. group facilitation; delegating responsibility)	Help us find resources (i.e. experts on child development and/or enrichment activities)	Provide more one-on-one attention	Demonstrate more understanding towards grantee challenges	Clarify more clearly expectations of the Parent ACTION grant	Help us find and make relationships with organizations that can partner with us	Have fewer trainings	Provide more opportunities for Parent ACTION grantees to learn from each other	Provide more information about First 5 San Francisco
27	21	13	22	15	18	11	22	16

AGENCY STAFF

Relationship with First 5 San Francisco staff/consultants: The majority of agency staff respondents appear to have a strong working relationship with First 5 staff. 7/9 “agree” they would contact First 5 staff for help with resolving a problem of conflict or lack of direction for their group, while eight out of nine agree they would contact First 5 staff for help learning about more resources for grant activities. Moreover, three out of eight respondents “strongly agree” and four out of eight respondents “agree” that First 5 staff and/or consultants are open to their ideas and opinions about the grant (table II.d).

Table II.d

Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
If facing a problem of conflict or lack of direction in the Parent ACTION group, I am likely to call or meet with First 5 staff for assistance							
0	7	1	1	0	0	0	9
<i>Total Responses</i>							
If I wanted our project to engage in other activities but did not have the resources or knowledge about how to do so, I would ask First 5 San Francisco staff and/or consultants for assistance							
0	8	0	1	0	0	0	9
<i>Total Responses</i>							
First 5 San Francisco staff and/or consultants are open to my ideas and opinions about how to make the program better							
3	4	1	0	0	0	0	8
<i>Total Responses</i>							

First 5 technical assistance: The majority of agency staff respondents report that First 5 technical assistance is helpful to their grants, with 2/9 responding “strongly agree” and 6/9 responding “agree” to the statement that one-one sessions with First 5 staff and/or consultants helped to clarify their project goals and activities. Agency staff report the parent ACTION grant handbook to be the least helpful of technical assistance tools. Although 5/9 grantees report they either “strongly agree” (1/9) or “agree” (4/9) they have used the resources listed in the Parent ACTION grant handbook, 3/9 either “slightly disagree” or “disagree” that they have used the handbook to learn of these resources (table II.e).

Table II.e

Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
First 5 San Francisco staff and/or consultants are open to my ideas and opinions about how to make the program better							
3	4	1	0	0	0	0	8
<i>Total Responses</i>							
One-on-one sessions and meetings with First 5 San Francisco staff and/or consultants helped our project clarify its goals and activities							
2	6	1	0	0	0	0	9
<i>Total Responses</i>							

Technical assistance enhancement options: Agency staff report almost all options for enhanced technical assistance are “extremely important” or “important”. The majority of agency staff value leadership skill development over other forms of grant enhancements options. Five out of nine respondents report that leadership skills like how to run a meeting is “extremely important” and 3/9 report that learning more about how to advocate with public officials is “extremely important”. No agency staff report having fewer trainings as at all important (Table II.f).

Table II.f

Information about resources in child development, health, and other child or family related matters	Extremely Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	2	6	0	1	0	9
Information about how to find music and art lessons for our group	Extremely Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	2	6	1	0	0	9
Finding organizations in our neighborhood that can work with us (i.e. parks, libraries, preschools)	Extremely Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	2	7	0	0	0	9
Learning more about how to advocate with public officials (like schools, board of supervisors, parks; etc.) about issues that are important to the well-being of children	Extremely Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	3	5	1	0	0	9
Learning more parent leadership skills, like how to run a meeting and organize activities	Extremely Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	5	4	0	0	0	9
Provide more opportunities for Parent ACTION grantees to learn from one another and share experiences	Extremely Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	1	8	0	0	0	9
Provide more opportunities for agency staff to learn from one another about how to help parent ACTION grantees	Extremely Important	Important	No Opinion	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	1	7	1	0	0	9

III. Outcomes and Benefits

PARENT LEADERS AND PARENT PARTICIPANTS

Leadership skills: The majority of parent-participants and parent-leaders report improvements in their leadership skills as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program. Ninety-nine out of 136 (73%) parent-leaders and parent participants combined, report that they “strongly agree” (34/136) or “agree” (65/136) that as a result of their participation in Parent ACTION, they feel better prepared to run a meeting (table III.a). Additionally, 99 out of 127 respondents (78%) report that as a result

of their participation in Parent ACTION grant program, they are more likely to participate and/or lead other parent based efforts to improve an organization, school, or neighborhood based facility that affects their child (table IIIa).

Parent leaders report higher gains than parent participants. When analyzed by parent type (leader versus participant), 92% (36/ 39) of parent-leaders compared to 65% (63/97) of parent participants report “strongly agree” or “agree” that as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program, they feel better prepared to run a meeting. Additionally, 90% (36/40) of parent-leaders, compared to 72% (63/87) of parent participants, report that as a result of their participation in the parent ACTION grant program, they are more likely to participate in other parent-led efforts.

Differences in respondent reports are also found based upon the respondent's primary language. Only 43% of Primary English language speakers versus 93% of Chinese speakers and 75% of Spanish speakers report being more likely to lead a parent based effort as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program. Only 29% of primary-English speakers, compared to 80% of primary-Chinese speakers, and 80% of Spanish speakers, feel better prepared to run a meeting as a result of their participation in parent ACTION grant program. Comments on three surveys from English speakers indicate that grants going towards those groups were groups already in progress. Thus, many basic leadership skills were in place before such groups received their grants.

Table III.a

As a result of Parent ACTION, I feel better prepared to run a meeting	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Spanish</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	0	16	1	3	0	0	0	20
<i>Percentage of Spanish</i>	0%	80%	5%	15%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<i>Chinese</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	16	23	4	6	0	0	0	49
<i>Percentage of Chinese</i>	33%	47%	8%	12%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<i>English</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	3	5	5	8	3	3	1	28
<i>Percentage of English</i>	11%	18%	18%	29%	11%	11%	4%	100%
<i>Total Participant Responses</i>	19	44	10	17	3	3	1	97
<i>Total Participant Percentage</i>	20%	45%	10%	18%	3%	3%	1%	100%
<i>Total Leader Responses</i>	15	21	0	2	0	1	0	39
<i>Total Leader Percentage</i>	38%	54%	0%	5%	0%	3%	0%	100%
<i>Total Part + Leader Responses</i>	34	65	10	19	3	4	1	136
<i>Total Participant + Leader Percentage</i>	25%	48%	7%	14%	2%	3%	1%	100%

I am more likely to participate/lead other parent-based effort	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Spanish</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	2	13	3	2	0	0	0	20
<i>Percentage of Spanish</i>	10%	65%	15%	10%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<i>Chinese</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	19	17	2	1	0	0	0	39
<i>Percentage of Chinese</i>	49%	44%	5%	3%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<i>English</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	1	11	6	7	1	2	0	28
<i>Percentage of English</i>	4%	39%	21%	25%	4%	7%	0%	100%
<i>Total Participant Responses</i>	22	41	11	10	1	2	0	87
<i>Total Participant Percentage</i>	25%	47%	13%	11%	1%	1%	0%	100%
<i>Total Leader Responses</i>	14	22	0	3	0	1	0	40
<i>Total Leader Percentage</i>	35%	55%	0%	8%	0%	3%	0%	100%
<i>Total Part + Leader Responses</i>	36	63	11	13	1	3	0	127
<i>Total Participant + Leader Percentage</i>	28%	50%	9%	10%	1%	2%	0%	100%

Awareness of resources and enrichment activities: All parents report increased awareness of resources for their children. Forty-three percent (56/131/) of parents “strongly agree”, and 40% (52/131) “agree” that they are more aware of ideas for spending quality time with their child. Eighty-seven percent of parents either “strongly agree” or “agree” that they are more aware of high quality preschool education resources as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program. The most frequently cited benefit of Parent ACTION is 86% of parents who “strongly agree” or “agree” they are more aware of enrichment activities like music, dance, museums, and fairs for their child as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program (table III.b).

Table III.b

I am more aware of ideas for spending quality time with my child	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Part + Leader Responses</i>	56	52	10	6	3	3	1	131
<i>Total Participant + Leader Percentage</i>	43%	40%	8%	5%	2%	2%	1%	100%
I am more aware of high quality preschool education	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Part + Leader Responses</i>	54	56	5	7	0	4	0	126
<i>Total Participant + Leader Percentage</i>	43%	44%	4%	6%	0%	3%	0%	100%
I am more aware of enrichment activities for my child (i.e. music, dance, museums, fairs)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Part + Leader Responses</i>	57	62	6	5	0	3	2	124
<i>Total Participant + Leader Percentage</i>	46%	50%	5%	4%	0%	2%	2%	109%
I am more aware of opportunities and organizations to help me advocate for my child	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Part + Leader Responses</i>	50	54	8	12	1	1	0	126
<i>Percentage</i>	40%	43%	6%	10%	1%	1%	0%	100%

Seventy-two percent of parents also report they “strongly agree” or agree” that they are accessing resources that are outside their neighborhood as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program. Analyzing *participant* parent responses by language group (parent leader is not broken down by language group) shows that non-primary-English language speaking participant parents most commonly report gains of this kind. Eighty percent of Chinese primary language parent participants (31/39) and 86% (19/22) of Spanish primary language parent participants report accessing more resources outside their neighborhood. Additionally, 100% of primary Spanish speaking parent participants and 81% of Chinese parent participants (27/38) report they “strongly agree” or “agree” that as a result of their participation in Parent ACTION, they are more likely to access resources their not in their primary language or ethnic group (table III.c).

Table III.c

I am more likely to access resources for my child outside my neighborhood	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Spanish</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	4	15	2	1	0	0	0	22
<i>Percentage of Spanish</i>	18%	68%	9%	5%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<i>Chinese</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	21	10	4	3	0	1	0	39
<i>Percentage of Chinese</i>	54%	26%	10%	8%	0%	3%	0%	100%
(parent leader data is not identified)								
<i>English</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	3	8	3	9	3	1	0	27
<i>Percentage of English</i>	11%	30%	11%	33%	11%	4%	0%	100%
<hr/>								
<i>Total Participant Responses</i>	28	33	9	13	3	2	0	88
<i>Total Leader Responses</i>	12	19	0	6	0	1	2	40
<i>Total Part + Leader Responses</i>	40	52	9	19	3	3	2	127
<i>Total Participant + Leader Percentage</i>	31%	41%	7%	15%	2%	2%	2%	101%
<hr/>								
I am more likely to access resources for my child that are not provided in my primary language and/or ethnic group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Spanish</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	10	11	0	0	0	0	0	21
<i>Percentage of Spanish</i>	48%	52%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<i>Chinese</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	14	13	7	3	0	1	0	38
<i>Percentage of Chinese</i>	37%	34%	18%	8%	0%	3%	0%	100%
<i>English</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	1	4	1	10	3	4	2	25
<i>Percentage of English</i>	4%	16%	4%	40%	12%	16%	8%	100%
<hr/>								
<i>Total Participant Responses</i>	25	28	8	13	3	5	2	81
<i>Total Leader Responses</i>	8	14	0	6	0	6	2	36
<i>Total Part + Leader Responses</i>	33	42	8	19	3	11	4	120
<i>Total Participant + Leader Percentage</i>	28%	35%	7%	16%	3%	9%	3%	100%

Community support: The majority of parent leaders and parent participants, 80% (102/127), report they “strongly agree” or “agree” they have more relationships with other parents as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program. When analyzed by parent participation type, parent leaders respond 95% percent that they “strongly agree” or “agree” with this statement, while 76% of parent participants respondents answer accordingly.

This impact is most significant for primary Chinese speaking respondents, and primary Spanish speaking respondents. Eighty-nine percent (35/39) of Chinese speaking parent participants and 86% (18/21) of Spanish speaking respondents report they “strongly agree” or “agree” with this statement. By contrast, only 40% of primary English speaking respondents report this. In fact, 44% (12/27) of English speaking respondents report that they “have no opinion”, or “disagree” to some extent that they have formed new relationships as a result of the Parent ACTION grant program. Comments written on three English speakers’ surveys suggest this is because a number of the English speaking groups were already formed prior to receiving the Parent ACTION grant (such as with coop parents), and that the Parent ACTION grant did not contribute to opportunities for bonding that would have taken place without the grant (table III.d).

Table III.d

I have new relationships with parents in my community	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Spanish</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	8	10	2	1	0	0	0	21
<i>Percentage of Spanish</i>	38%	48%	10%	5%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<i>Chinese</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	22	13	1	3	0	0	0	39
<i>Percentage of Chinese</i>	56%	33%	3%	8%	0%	0%	0%	100%
<i>English</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	3	8	4	7	2	3	0	27
<i>Percentage of English</i>	11%	30%	15%	26%	7%	11%	0%	100%
<hr/>								
<i>Total Participant Responses</i>	33	31	7	11	2	3	0	87
<i>Total Participant Percentage</i>	38%	38%	11%	4%	3%	3%	1%	100%
<i>Total Leader Responses</i>	22	16	0	1	1	0	0	40
<i>Total Leader Percentage</i>	55%	40%	0%	3%	3%	0%	0%	100%
<i>Total Part + Leader Responses</i>	55	47	7	12	3	3	0	127
<i>Percentage</i>	43%	37%	6%	9%	2%	2%	0%	100%

Parents who did report having more relationships as a result of parent ACTION show a fairly even distribution of responses to having formed 1-3 new relationships (23%), 4-7 new relationships (28%), and 8-11 (29%) new relationships (table III.e).

Table III.e

Number of new relationships with parents	1-3	4-7	8-11	12-15	15 or More	Total
<i>Total Part + Leader Responses</i>	18	22	23	8	7	78
<i>Total Participant + Leader Percentage</i>	23%	28%	29%	10%	9%	100%

Parents also describe that these relationships are supportive, with 78% (100/128) of parents responding “strongly agree” or “agree” that they feel more support from other parents as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant (table III.f).

Table III.f

I feel more support from other parents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Spanish</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	6	10	2	4	0	0	0	22
<i>Percentage of Spanish</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Chinese</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	24	12	2	1	0	0	0	39
<i>Percentage of Chinese</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>English</i>								
<i>Subtotal</i>	4	8	7	6	1	0	0	26
<i>Percentage of English</i>	15%	31%	27%	23%	4%	0%	0%	100%
<hr/>								
<i>Total Participant Responses</i>	34	30	11	11	1	0	0	87
<i>Total Leader Responses</i>	11	25	0	2	0	1	2	41
<i>Total Part + Leader Responses</i>	45	55	11	13	1	1	2	128
<i>Total Participant + Leader Percentage</i>	35%	43%	9%	10%	1%	1%	2%	100%

AGENCY STAFF

Increased confidence in parent leadership capabilities: The majority (8/9) of agency staff report that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” that they have greater confidence in parents’ abilities to take on leadership roles in their communities as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program (table III.g).

Table III.g

I have more confidence in parents' abilities to take leadership roles in their community than before participating in the Parent ACTION grant program	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	1	7	0	0	1	0	0	9

Mixed response regarding skill development: Half of agency staff report that they “strongly agree” (3/7) or “agree” (2/7) that they have more skills to help parents take on a leadership role as a result of their participation in the parent ACTION grant program. Marginally less than half of agency staff disagree with this statement (table III.h).

Table III.h

Question 2: I have more skills to help parents take on a leadership role in the agency and/or preschool where I work	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	No Opinion	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
<i>Total Responses</i>	3	2	0	1	0	1	0	7

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

I. Project Leadership and Participation

Improved leadership skills

The grant provides parents an opportunity to learn skills that are basic to organizing people around a common goal. The impact of leadership development opportunities appears greatest among grantees with little to no previous experience running grants or doing community building work. Such leadership skills include planning, communication, and meeting management. This increase in leadership skills makes parents more confident about leading in general, and leads to their increased participation in their children's school environments.

Practice skills: The planning, communication, and meeting management skills required to organize large-scale group activities is a new kind of responsibility for many parents.

This program provides me with room for personal growth and increased maturity. Before joining the program, I didn't know how to organize an activity. Any family outing or activity took place strictly within my family. Now, with Parent ACTION, I get to make plans and coordinate larger-scale activities with other families.

Sometimes, there is disagreement among us, and we face a lot of problems in making decisions or moving the project along. However, I feel that from this program, we learn to understand each other better and problem-solve over disagreements and arguments. We are changing from not knowing how to do things (i.e., plan activities) to knowing what to do. First 5 gives me an opportunity to train myself.

I have changed from not knowing anything, to knowing how to take control of (facilitate) a meeting. I have become a leader who can better manage the meeting time and still reach our goals. In addition, I have changed into a leader who knows what to say in a meeting and how to say it more appropriately.

Confidence. Grantees who are new to community building work consistently cite increased confidence as an outcome of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program. In a number of cases, this increased confidence has resulted in parents taking on broader responsibilities in their young and older child's school.

I feel like my leadership skills are stronger. That parents recognize me and trust me. I have never been that popular before at my child care center! Now, people say, "oh, are you so and so"? People are seeking me out because they hear about what we do, and what we have done for ourselves as parents. The grant provides you with a sense of purpose.

I find it is easier to talk with others, and I am more willing to talk to strangers (or people whom I don't know) now. More so, I can talk to people (my members) about their responsibilities and duties in a more serious fashion, and I notice that I handle the business more seriously.

Leadership skills! For most of the events, I am involved in the research and look for the best deal for trips and classes. I do a lot, and everybody looks up to me and now I feel like I am a leader. I feel more confident now. I am a mom of four kids and now I am more involved in the older children's school activities.

Increased participation in other non-parent ACTION activities: Parents describe gaining confidence and knowledge about participating in other community related activities for their children, especially in their child's preschool setting, or else in their older children's school setting.

I am more confident in participating in their school. Before participating in this project, I would wait for a teacher at my children's school to ask me to do something. Then I would do it. Now I ask the teacher how I can help.

I feel a lot more confident now about my ability to work with others. I see that I can do it! That these things that seemed so difficult to me are actually easy if you try, and I see that I am capable. And I like that other parents look up to me. Now I work with the Parents Association in my older child's school. I was asked to participate as a parent leader because the director had seen the work that I did with parent ACTION.

I was always a parent representative with my child care center. But since Parent ACTION, I have become more involved, more committed. I ask more meaningful questions, like about the budget. I am more concerned with parent outreach. I speak up more in meetings. I definitely play a larger role now.

Limited leadership development

Leadership development with more experienced grantees: More experienced grantees frequently describe they have experienced little personal impact on their skill development as a result of their participation in Parent ACTION. This is because parents have had management responsibilities at their work, or they have had previous experience doing community building work. In a couple of interviews, more experienced grantees report the value of sharing their leadership experience with others in order to feel more connected to the benefits of technical assistance.

When asked how such grantees have changed as a result of their participation in the program, most remark as this parent did: "I haven't changed much. I have already been doing this kind of work for a while".

But overall, I think we should have a round table or something where we can present and I can feel our leadership experience is recognized.

Isolated leadership: In one interview, a leader described how other parents are too busy to take on leadership responsibilities, and as a result, she is left doing much of the work.

But we have a lot of new families, and they don't know about the grant, and often I feel alone.

Agency relationship with grantees

The relationship agency staff have with grantees who receive agency staff support varies from one that is supportive of parent leadership to one that is, according to one parent, overly directive.

Empowering grantee/agency staff relationship: In an empowering grantee-agency staff relationship, the grantee describes how the agency staff encourages grantees to learn through trial and error. Additionally, the grantee/agency staff relationship is one that changes over time, with the agency staff providing increasingly less direction as parents learn to organize activities on their own.

She (the staff person) and her agency ask us to take the initiative to bring up questions. Whenever we come across any problems, she only gives us subtle hints and tips for tackling the problems. With her tips, we ultimately are the only people who come up with resolutions. (This agency) is not controlling of us at all. As a matter of fact, the agency is very encouraging for us to take the lead in planning the activity. The agency encourages us to do trial and error in planning. The agency respects our group's decision.

She (the agency staff) supported us in the beginning. She did most of the report. They helped translated the report this year, which is good. Now the agency does less, but at first, it helped a lot. If we have a need, we consult with Laura (First 5 staff).

Even though we don't use their help as often as before, I know that the staff members are ready to take our questions and offer us help whenever we need them.

Overly directive grantee-agency staff relationship: Agency staff can be overly directive in their support of parent ACTION grants. In this instance, a parent describes how the parents' autonomy with the grant is restricted by agency staff which she describes as being overly concerned with how the grant's success reflects their agency's own reputation.

Often times, (this agency) claims that we are not skilful and we do not have enough experience; therefore, the staff members there would simply help us set up things. In a snapshot, I feel that we don't have any autonomy and decision-making power because we often need to report back to the agency (in order to get approval). I think that (this agency) may be concerned about their reputation, and may worry that any poor job outcomes or performance from our group may reflect negatively on the agency.

II. Parent ACTION Grant Technical Assistance and Improvement

Benefits First 5 San Francisco technical assistance

The benefits of the Parent ACTION grant trainings on skill improvement is described by grantees without prior community building or grants management experience. Examples of learning include how to write up reports and account for their finances. Grantees with and without prior community experience both describe how the diversity of projects represented in workshops, as well the ethnic and socio-economically diversity, motivates and inspires grantees to improve their projects.

Skill building: Skills building, like reporting writing and financial accounting, are helpful for to grantees. It is only grantees with less experience with community building work and grant work who describe the benefits of this technical assistance.

For the positive areas, I think the instruction and explanation given in trainings are very clear. I know exactly what I need to do. The trainings help a whole lot on working on a report. Before, I actually had no clue about how to do it. After going through the trainings, I have a better grasp on how to complete one. You know the samples of report given in trainings are also very helpful.

One training on one-on-one outreach was very helpful. It has changed the way I act and think about doing this. It makes me comfortable doing outreach. Also helped in writing the grant. How to do the finances. Elaine(First 5 staff) explains everything so clearly.

Inspiration: When attending grantee workshops, grantees have exposure to each other and can share each other's ideas. For many, the diversity of project ideas and of ethnic groups and cultures opens up new ways of viewing their own projects and cultures.

I like going to the trainings. I find them motivating.

I feel that this program allows different cultures gathering together and share their ideas. When we listen to other groups' experiences, I learn to appreciate my own group's strengths. I also learn how other groups deal with the same problems we face here. I often learn some creative ideas or ways of handling things.

The people who speak Spanish are so energized and inspired and it makes me want to be like them—they strengthen my will to do it; it makes me stronger. Like us, most of the Spanish speaking parents don't speak English. But they still express their own ideas in the training. They are not afraid. They speak up, and it makes me more confident that I can speak up too. If you have ideas, you can speak up. And they bring a lot of people to the training, even though only two parents are required to go to the training. They want more people to get really involved and I think we should do the same thing.

Structure The parent ACTION grant trainings and reports, although described by many parents to be too burdensome, are also described by parents as a useful structure for keeping parents on track with their community building work.

The grant makes us more disciplined. More focused. The emphasis on children, as well as the deadlines! It wasn't just the money, it was the TA and also the deadlines.

The regularity of the program keeps it on my agenda. It is a little overwhelming, but I don't know what you pull back on.

Drawbacks of First 5 San Francisco technical assistance workshops

The drawbacks parents universally describe about the technical assistance program refer to the length of the trainings and the inability of trainings to address the range of community building experience among grantees. Grantees with more community building and grants management experience consistently describe the content of trainings as being too basic. These same grantees describe the lack of opportunity for meaningful discussion across cultures because of language barriers and the large group training formats.

One size does not fit all: Although a number of grantees new to the experience of grant or project management describe learning a great deal from reports, others report they already have sufficient knowledge to handle these tasks with just the aid of an instruction manual.

I do not believe the grantees should get a blanket treatment. There's a pocket of people who really know how to organize themselves; it is a wide spectrum of needs. Some people need more one-on-one themes than others.

The workshops should have a more casual kind of affair and exchange info that way would sense a group like ours have been more interesting. Exchange more information. I felt like there was not time for a deep exchange of information- it was top down. The trainings were too large and the needs to varied for their to be any meaningful outcome. You have to customize information.

Limited depth of sharing: Although a number of grantees describe the benefits of group sharing, a larger share of grantees describe wanting more in-depth information about group projects and challenges, as well as more opportunities for developing relationships. The different languages present at First 5 workshops makes sharing in small groups across cultures difficult.

Learn more about what other work parents are involved in, have panel presentations by parents, not just small groups. Because of the language barriers, in small groups, we don't get to learn about parents of other languages and their projects.

There should have been more give and take from the groups—there wasn't enough interaction. I don't have any relationships with other groups b/c of the language barriers.

Length of trainings: Parents universally report that the trainings sessions lasting approximately three-to-four hours are too long, with extra time added to the trainings as attendees wait for everyone to show up. Additionally, that holding such trainings over the weekend forces parent leaders to give up precious time with their families. In some cases, parents have a difficult time recruiting other parents to come to trainings.

Lack of diversity: A number of parents report that the trainings lack significant ethnic diversity. There is a pronounced concern about the low representation of African-American and Latino families.

Time demands: An overwhelming number of parents describe the reports as too time consuming, Most significantly, that reports questions are redundant. A few comments on surveys suggest that the grant amendment process is too time intensive, and that expectations that all group leaders attend one-on-one meetings are too high for busy parents.

It is so time intensive. Amount of paperwork is overwhelming. Found it burdensome. Especially with a coop group because they already do so much. The paperwork- the questions were redundant within a report and across reports. The narrative and activity guideline combined was too extensive.

For all the good intentions, I don't think First 5 has understood how important time is for parents, and how our time can be best used in meetings or trainings.

III. Outcomes and Benefits

Impact on parent

Parents describe that their participation in the parent ACTION grant program enables them to expand their worlds by visiting new places, making new friendships, and finding support.

Broadens minds: Numerous parent ACTION grant parents describe how the Parent ACTION grant program provides opportunities to explore other parts of the city, learn new ways of approaching activities, and brings them out of their family unit to thinking about the community at large.

The activities we do with this group help us to develop the mentality about how to broaden the mind, both for our children, and ourselves. Because of Parent ACTION, I have learned of, and seen more places in San Francisco, places that I did not know about because they are in expensive locations. For example, we went to the Museum of Science. The Aquarium, same thing. We get a group discount, and the group is so happy to be there.

Each family has their own lives, but with this grant, we go out and have a small organization, so we reach out to the community. We have never done it before. We never before had a chance to get together or organize. There is a lot of work to do, of course, but we are enjoying the activities. It also helps us reach out to the community and not live our own lives.

More parent support and friendships: The grant brings parents together around a common goal, and gives people a reason to create new friendships and form bonds. These bonds, for some parents, are a critical source of emotional support.

There is a strong likelihood that I wouldn't have met these parents without the grant. I knew some parents from my son's school, but before the grant, we didn't really know each other well. Now we do, because we are working together on a common goal. Prior to the grant, parents might say informally "let's get together", but never do. With the grant, it is a lot more organized.

I am afraid to go out because I don't know too much about what is out there. Through this program, I get to stay with many other families, and I notice that I have more friends. I find that I can talk to other parents about my "headaches" (i.e., problems), and I can call them whenever I need them. I've gained a lot from this program: I feel much happier.

Impact on child

The uniqueness of the parent ACTION grant impacts parents' children. Numerous parents, those with and without previous community building experience, describe the

friendships their young children make as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant activities. Others describe the value of role modeling leadership behavior for their kids, or the simple benefit of receiving enrichment programming activities.

Child has leader as role model: Numerous parents describe the impact of their leadership responsibilities on their children. They describe their children's pride in their parent's accomplishments, and in the role-modeling opportunities that this participation in parent leadership affords them.

My child is just like a sponge, and eat up everything and she loves the fact that "mommy is the president" "my mommy does this, my mommy does that". And even my older children see me involved. They see that I am a caring parent, and that there is a whole other level of care going on when you care for other children and parents. My child asks if she can go to board meetings. She loves that I am that involved.

When my child grows up, after she observes how I problem-solve issues in front of her, my modeling is able to enhance her problem-solving skills. She (the child) learns from me. She learns from other parents too.

Child accesses enrichment programming: The parent ACTION grant provides funds for engaging experiences for children. Parents with community building experience describe this as a unique feature of the grant, and of tremendous value to their children.

As a cooperative, we have gone after a lot of grants. This was the first grant in a long time that was geared directly towards children's activities. Other grants were facilities grants like for a playground. And it was really, really nice to be able to give something so directly to the kids because that's what it is supposed to be about. But often when we fundraise, we don't have the opportunity to give the kids something so directly. To me, this means that the Parent ACTION grant is a more human oriented grant.

Child has more friendships: Parents describe how children involved in the Parent ACTION grant have an opportunity to participate in fun, social activities. For parents living under particular circumstances, such as having a child with special needs or being a child of gay parents, this is a unique opportunity for social time with children who share these similarities. These activities also provide children with a different environment from school or the family.

Gives him an opportunity for my child to make deeper friendships with children who are in a similar situation as his.

There are six parents that I know so much better now of Parent ACTION, and the parents in our group know that we will look out for each other. And our kids are bonded. Since our big field trip, when I got to our meetings, my kids always say "I wanna' see (name left out)". Its different from the friendships you make in school.

IV. Parent ACTION: A unique opportunity

The structure of the parent ACTION grant adds value to parent driven projects. These include ownership with latitude over funding and programming decisions, focus on children 0-5 years of age, structure, and the appreciation of fun in family life. Finally, it provides parents with time to grow over two years so that their leadership and programming skills can improve.

Ownership

Unlike other grants that indirectly benefit parents through family support centers and child care centers, the parent ACTION grant belongs to parents. It provides parents ownership over planning and financing activities, and creates opportunities for parents to develop their leadership skills. Such autonomy encourages parents to look for resources among themselves.

There was another center in Chinatown that had a similar program, but as participants, we had to follow their instructions and directions, and there was much less freedom and autonomy. Parent ACTION, on the other hand, gives us a lot of room to grow and develop skills. I am much happier participating in activities nowadays, and I feel that parental growth is reached through participating in this program.

When referring to some center-based work that the parents wanted to engage in this parent says,

It's not just about the money. The grant taught us to mobilize, and that we don't have to dig into our pockets all the time. It taught us to network in our community- it is getting parents to talk about the goal and say, "oh, I know somebody who drive a bus" or "who can donate paint". It helped us to utilize the resources that parents have.

Focus on 0-5

The focus of the Parent ACTION grant on children 0-5 years of age provides even seasoned community builders with a useful framework for building community relationships. In the quote below, a parent describes how her community beautification project grew when the 0-5 years focus was applied to their efforts to find community partners for their work.

Our group has grown with the grant. The grant forced us to focus our efforts. It's been a small group, and we have tried in the past to expand our members, but this (0-5 years) was a particular emphasis and it was very helpful. The grant caused us to focus, and to ask, "who's in the neighborhood that works with young children?". We approached a senior center to do intergenerational work, the Boys and Girls Club, and elementary school; We wouldn't have thought to partner with these groups if we didn't have the child focus. And these organizations have been very helpful with handling logistics and participating in the event.

Fun as a parent mobilization tool

Countless interviews describe the value of fun to parents' success in developing their community building skills, as well as in growing the size of their project. Fun brings parents together, while providing parents with the opportunity to learn leadership skills.

I find that my experience is very enjoyable because I get to plan things together with other families, and I get to have fun with other parents. For example, my group gets to play music and go swimming every week. Before participating in the program, I was hesitant to join any activities, and I was afraid to socialize with other families. This program turned me around. Also as a leader. It is training our leadership abilities. We are organizing our activities, so it's not only about having fun, but it is also training us to be leaders.

Last year, we started out with 3-4 parents in our child care center parent group. Now, because of Parent ACTION, we have 15-20 in our child care parent group. Because of Parent ACTION! Because we can have fun- and in that way, it's not just about problem solving.

Elaine [First 5 staff] was helpful for our second year. She advised that we have a work- party, and provide food etc., and that that would increase the volunteer participation. We had no idea we could use the grant for that. Now we have a lot more volunteers coming.

Time to grow

Unlike a number of parent leadership training programs which train parents over the course of days and/or weeks, the Parent ACTION grant program provides an unusually long period of 2 years for leaders to develop their skills, as well as for groups to develop their membership and project ideas. Countless interviews describe the ways in which their skills, friendships, and projects have grown over the course of this time.

Now we are near the end of our second year, and all the families have bonded together. This year, we did better than last year. Last year, 3-4 families did the work. This year, all the families are sharing in some part of the work. Now that we have bonded, I hope that all of us can stay together as a group, and not only develop leadership skills for myself. I want to continue to learn how to advocate with other groups, other parties in the community. Already, we feel more comfortable advocating for our point of view because now we know how to do it. And the friendship we have built up over the 2 years is very precious.

ANALYSIS/CONCLUSION

I. Leadership and Parent Participation

Leadership responsibility in groups is widespread, but not for every group

About half of parent leaders report being at least somewhat satisfied with the number of parents who take on grant management responsibilities. This is important, since the burden of responsibility on too few parents can have the undesired effect of diminishing parent morale. As one parent without leadership support described, her experience as parent leader is “lonely”.

The remaining half of parent leaders are concerned that not enough parents are taking responsibility for grant leadership. This finding is surprising, since the majority of parent participants (67%) report that they want more responsibility for managing the parent ACTION grant. English speaking groups appear the most impacted by this problem. In contrast to Spanish and Chinese speaking groups, where parent participant interest in having more grant responsibility is high, in English speaking groups, nearly 75% of parent participants report a lack of interest in taking more responsibility for grant management. Interview data and comments supplied on the surveys suggest this might be a result of the number of English speaking groups that are cooperative child care centers. Cooperative groups already require a large amount of parent volunteerism. Two cooperative members report in interviews that interest among parents for contributing additional time is very low.

The number of parent participants who want additional responsibility for managing the Parent ACTION grant poses an interesting challenge for First 5 staff and parent leaders. From the current data, it is not possible to answer why parent participants who want to, are not exerting more leadership over grants. Most parent participants describe being happy with the quality of the parent leadership over their grants, and if there are problems such as insufficient delegation of responsibility by parent leaders, the questions posed in this evaluation did not capture them.

At the same time that parent participants report wanting more grant management responsibility, interviews with parent leaders suggest that the number of parents who take on responsibility for grants management often increases in second year of the grant, as grant leaders learn to delegate responsibilities.

Agency staff-parent relationship varies from empowering to disempowering

Findings from the parent leader surveys and interviews suggest that the agency staff-parent relationship, overall, encourages parent leadership over grant management. The

support from staff, according to most survey and interview data, is critical for grant success, most especially in the first year of the grant. Most parent leaders report they have more responsibility than agency staff for implementing grant activities, and for communicating with First 5 staff. Additionally, interview data show parents feel positively about the agency support they have received, believing that agency staff guidance helped develop parents' leadership potential. Half of the agency staff responses concur with this finding, responding that they "strongly agree" or "agree" that parents are comfortable facilitating meetings and arranging logistics. Interview data with parent leaders also suggests that agency staff have been less involved in grants management during the second year of the grant, as parents learn to take on more responsibility.

Despite these results, there is concern among nearly half of the agency staff that they have more responsibility for the Parent ACTION grant than they would like, and that parents are not sufficiently skilled in meeting facilitation and arranging logistics. This discrepancy in findings between parents' understanding about the extent of their leadership responsibilities and those reported by some agency staff suggests that communication between agency staff and parent leaders about grant roles and responsibilities needs further clarity. Additionally, interview data with one grantee, who describes her agency as overly directive, suggests that agency staff expectations about the grant being a "success" rather than an opportunity for trial and error might also cause staff to take on more leadership than is necessary.

Leadership development depends on prior community building experience

Parents who have different levels of organizing and planning experience upon entering the Parent ACTION grant program report different outcomes about the impact of the parent ACTION grant on their leadership skills. Parent survey and interview data show that more Chinese and Spanish speaking grantees and fewer English speaking grantees have developed leadership skills as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program. The kind of growth includes being better prepared to facilitate a meeting, plan activities, and being more likely to participate in other leadership activities that are not part of the parent ACTION grant.

Grantees understand Parent ACTION grant mission and purpose

Survey data from parent leaders and participants suggest parents have a solid understanding of the Parent ACTION grant mission and purpose. One interviewee commented, however, that First 5 technical assistance workshops could do more to remind parents of the larger social value of civic engagement.

II. Technical Assistance

One-on-one technical assistance is positive, but too demanding

Survey data from parents and agency staff suggest that parent leaders have a good relationship with First 5 San Francisco staff. The majority of leaders report First 5 San Francisco staff encourages an exchange of ideas, and is helpful for getting grant activities on track. The majority of agency staff report they would approach First 5 San Francisco staff for problem solving help around group conflicts or lack of group direction. Furthermore, interview data with parent leaders suggest that First 5 San Francisco staff is highly responsive to grantees, and interested in feedback about the grants management program.

A few grantees provide comments on survey instruments, as well as in interviews, that First 5 staff is not sufficiently sympathetic to the time demands of the program. This finding is corroborated with parent leader survey data, which ranked #2 a priority that the Parent ACTION grant program “demonstrate more understanding towards the challenges grantees face”. Interview data and survey data describe parents as feeling overwhelmed by the degree of email correspondence, the expectations for in-person rather than phone meetings, and the length of workshops. Of great concern should be a survey comment and three interview comments that suggest the requirements of the grant are a deterrent to pursuing the grant again, and have deterred others whom they know from pursuing the grant at all.

First 5 San Francisco trainings are helpful, but not appropriate for all skill levels

Survey data from parent leaders and agency staff suggest technical assistance workshops help parents learn skills about report writing, financial accounting, meeting facilitation, advocating with government officials, and designing parent ACTION activities. Interview data and comments on surveys confirm that many parents found trainings useful for their leadership development, and that smaller trainings were more useful than large group trainings. But parent interview data also present more negative views of the workshops. These are as follows:

- There is unanimous agreement that at 3-4 hours, the workshops are too long
- The content of workshops is too simplistic for more experienced grantees
- Workshops are too top-down and should draw more upon the expertise of existing grantees
- Workshops do not allow for enough exchange between parents
- Language barriers compromise parents’ abilities to interact across groups

Interview data with grantees with more community building experience consistently reveal that the current training topics are too basic for their skill level. At the same time, parent survey data shows that the highest ranked among areas for improvement to First 5 technical assistance is creating more opportunities for grantees to learn from one

another. The desire for skill-appropriate trainings and increased sharing among grantees creates a conundrum for workshop programming. Grantees' experience with community building in this program often correlates with participants' English skills, as well as to life experience (such as with being homeless or a long history of addiction to drugs). Tailoring training content to specific skill levels will create training tiers that in great part, are separated by socio-economic backgrounds. Thus, parents with less community building experience will miss an opportunity to learn from those with more community building experience, and both groups will miss an opportunity to create community with those from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Parents and agency staff report numerous additional technical assistance needs

Parent participant survey data show a strong interest in numerous kinds of technical assistance. This include experts to groups about child development; experts to provide music and art lessons; learning more about how to advocate with government officials; finding more organizations to partner with; and learning more leadership skills. Agency staff and parent leader data show that both are the most interested in technical assistance that supports parent leadership development.

Most parent participants report they want to attend First 5 technical assistance trainings, suggesting there is opportunity to increase enrollment, and provide additional parents with skill building opportunities. Parent leaders and parent participants report relatively few requests for fewer trainings when given the option.

The problem posed by these additional and on-going technical assistance needs is how to best provide parents with these resources. Most parents report not using the Parent ACTION handbook (which lists resources on child development and enrichment for parents). At the same time, a number of parents already report that the trainings are too long. The programming issue is how to introduce parents to these resources when interest in attending more or longer trainings, or using the First 5 Parent ACTION resource handbook is low.

Reporting requirements provide motivation through structure, but are too burdensome

Interview data suggests that for some parents, the parent ACTION reporting requirements motivate parents to keep moving forward with their projects. They suggest that "having to spend down money" forces them "to do something". Reporting on progress and designing activities also keeps parents focused.

At the same time, parent leaders unanimously describe in interview data that the parent ACTION reporting requirements are too burdensome.

The dilemma in programming for technical assistance is achieving a balance in reporting that obtains the optimum affect of creating questions and goal setting templates that help parents clarify their project without creating work that is duplicative or unnecessary.

III. Impact and Benefits

Increased networking and sharing of child-based resource information

Survey and interview data about participation in the parent ACTION grant program suggest that the program strongly increases parents' social circle. Parent leaders express even more emphatically than parent participants that their participation in Parent ACTION has resulted in more relationships with other parents and more peer support.

These peer-based relationships coincide with greater information sharing and increased awareness of child-centered resources like preschool, enrichment activities, and ideas for spending quality time with a child. Additionally, parents report being more likely to access resources that are outside of their neighborhood and outside of their own language and/or ethnic group. Survey data reveals this impact is highest with non-English speaking grantees.

Child well-being

Data with parent leaders reveals that children experience benefits from the Parent ACTION grant program. Indirect benefits that have already been described include a likelihood of accessing better child care and enrichment resources as parents are more informed about these resources through the Parent ACTION network.

Interview data describe children's direct benefits from the Parent ACTION grant activities. These include joy at participating in fun activities, opportunities for developing social skills, and increased confidence as children acquire skills in activities like swimming, playing an instrument, or participating in gardening. Finally, a number of parent leaders report in interview data that through Parent ACTION, parents become better role models for their children as they take on more leadership responsibilities and exhibit caring in the larger community.

Agency staff gains confidence in parent leadership skills

The majority of agency staff survey data report that as a result of their participation in the Parent ACTION grant program, they have more confidence in parents capacity to take on leadership roles in their community. This kind of benefit has the potential to not only impact parents involved in the parent ACTION grant program, but all parents in the agency and child care center where staff work.

RECCOMENDATIONS

(made in consultation with First 5 San Francisco staff)

1. Ensure all groups have adequate leadership responsibility by the second year of the grant
 - Tap into parent participants' interest in leadership development by providing talks to groups about the Parent ACTION grant program within the first 2 months of their initiation.
 - Offer at least one optional training for parent participants on leadership development
 - Encourage agency staff to permit leadership development through trial and error using best practice panels and presentations from parents about helpful agency guidance

2. Balance relevancy of training topics with diversity of projects and grantee backgrounds
 - Create two training tracks, one for more experienced grantees and one for less experienced grantees
 - Provide a menu of optional trainings for parents who want to develop more leadership skills
 - Replace training participation responsibilities for more experienced grantees with an option of providing training content to less experienced grantees
 - Ensure at least two trainings a year provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning using panel presentations and question and answer sessions
 - Enable experienced grantees to work as project consultants (paid or unpaid) once they "age" out of the program

3. Increase the socio-economic diversity of grantees and their skill levels
 - Conduct outreach with other established community organizing through the PICO foundation, ACORN, and other groups with a history of organizing experience, and with people of color
 - Conduct more outreach into less represented African American and Spanish speaking communities

4. Reduce the demands of the Parent ACTION grant program
 - Simplify mid-year reporting requirements. For example, have parents check a box next to each of their original goals indicating to what extent (100%; 75%; 25%) goals were met during the six months rather than writing out responses.
 - Reduce the length of workshops to two hours, and consider hosting some workshops in the evening.

5. Encourage second year parent groups to partner with new organizations and broaden the reach of their programming
 - Sponsor guest presentations by parent ACTION groups that have partnerships with local organizations
 - Sponsor local organizations and institutions like the Department of Parks and Recreation, the library, and schools to discuss ideas for partnership

