

Visión y Compromiso™



FAMILY CAREGIVERS PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT 2021



PREPARED BY

EVALCORP
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND SELECTED FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Visión y Compromiso (VyC) is dedicated to improved community health by supporting promotoras. VyC's Family Caregivers Project (FCP) works with informal caregivers, otherwise known as Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers, to build their knowledge and skills to deliver quality care and support the development of healthy children. VyC relies on promotores, trusted community workers who hold high levels of expertise and established, strong rapport within their community. These community experts are critical to the success of the FCP, working not only as mentors/trainers but also as community liaisons who assist in recruiting new caregivers into FCP's FFN Caregivers Training. Since its launch, FCP has delivered customized training to hundreds of FFN caregivers in Latino and Mixteco communities across Santa Barbara, Kern, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Los Angeles Counties. The FCP consists of five key components, including: 1) a training curriculum; 2) outreach; 3) support groups; 4) a tool kit; and 5) parent engagement workshops. In 2021, EvalCorp partnered with VyC to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the FFN Caregivers Training, assess the impact of the training on caregivers, and identify core pillars of the FCP model for successful project replication. Selected findings from the evaluation are outlined below.

IMPACT OF TRAINING

FFN caregivers reported that they gained additional knowledge in all topics taught in the training including child development expertise, emergency preparedness, stress management, effective communication, and positive interactions with children. They also experienced increased recognition of the importance of their role as caregivers and the positive impact they have on the children in their care, the children's families and the greater community.

Long-Term Impacts	Percent Who Agreed (n=26)
<i>The way I parent has improved as a result of what I implemented from the class.</i>	100%
<i>I continue to implement the things I learned from the classes.</i>	100%
<i>I implemented one or more things I learned from the classes I attended.</i>	100%
<i>I recognize the great impact that my work as a caregiver of children has on the community.</i>	96%
<i>I recognize the great impact that my work as a caregiver of children has on the lives of children.</i>	96%
<i>I continue to use the information I learned from the classes I attended.</i>	96%
<i>I learned new parenting strategies that I was not aware of.</i>	92%
<i>I have shared information I learned with others in my community.</i>	88%

**After completing the
FFN Training,
100% of Trainees
reported engaging
differently with children
in their care**

METHODOLOGY

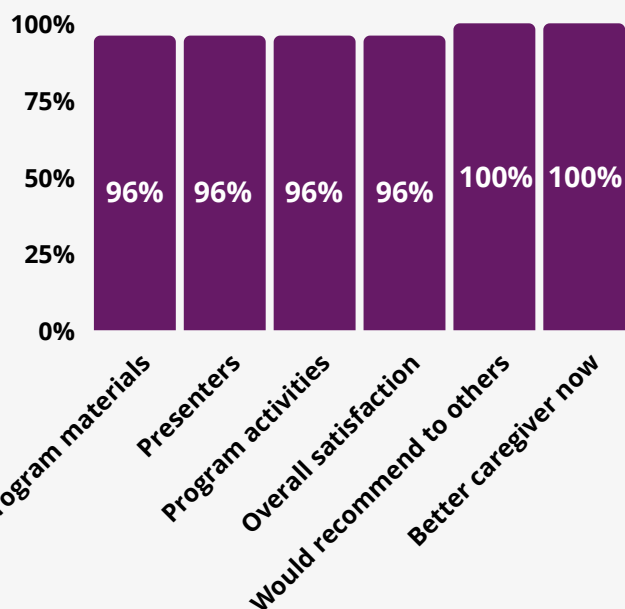
The comprehensive mixed- methods evaluation began with the development of a logic model outlining the activities intended and outcomes of the FCP. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to understand best practices in informal childcare training, recruitment, and delivery. Data collection included training observations, focus groups, key stakeholder interviews, and surveys. All data collection tools and activities were translated into Spanish and carried out in culturally and linguistically relevant ways in collaboration with VyC staff.

SATISFACTION WITH TRAINING

Alumni were asked about their experience with training materials, activities, and presenters to assess overall satisfaction with the training. Responses reflect a high level of satisfaction with each component of the training and with the project overall.

“Every module taught me a lot. I learned the importance and the impact of my responsibilities as a childcare provider.”

Participant Satisfaction & Outcomes



OVERALL STRENGTHS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, FFN caregiver trainees, alumni, staff, and promotores were satisfied with all aspects of the project. Furthermore, it was evident that VyC's FFN Caregivers Training helps individuals become better caregivers – and much, much more. The FFN caregivers gained more knowledge about child development and methods of discipline, communication, engagement, safety, and overall care. The training also allowed caregivers to recognize their positive impact and importance of their role to children, families, and their community. Another strength of the FCP is its ability to easily engage with the community because the promotores trainers know how to build trusting relationships with caregivers. Additionally, the project demonstrated resilience and adaptability by shifting its curriculum to an online format during the pandemic to continue supporting the caregivers.

Some recommendations to further enhance the FCP's impact on the community included offering the training at variable times during the day, providing childcare during training, incorporating additional modules into the curriculum, providing incentives for training participation, and conducting additional outreach for participant recruitment.

FCP MODEL FOR REPLICATION

The evaluation brought to light three core pillars of the FCP which are critical for successful adaptation of the project in other communities including: 1) Promotores provide Service from the Heart; 2) Honor and Respect of Community; and 3) Responsive Training. Additional detail regarding each pillar is available in the Family Caregivers Project Evaluation Report 2021.

“Every child is different, and you should give them an opportunity to express themselves so that you can learn more about them and what they need.”

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Visión y Compromiso (VyC) was established in 2000 to provide support and training to promotores and other grassroots community leaders throughout California. VyC believes that all children 0-5 should have access to culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate opportunities for high-quality and nurturing early care and education, regardless of socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, language, geographic isolation, immigration status, or engagement with the child welfare system. In 2017, with support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, VyC developed the Family Caregivers Project (FCP) to ensure that infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are on track for success, in school and in life, regardless of their family's ability to pay for care.

Today, the FCP is developing promising practices, tools, and resources in the emergent field of informal childcare. In California, experts say roughly 40% of children 0-5 are cared for in informal, home-based settings by Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers.¹ VyC relies on promotores, trusted community workers who hold high levels of expertise and established, strong rapport within their community. These community experts are critical to the success of the FCP, working not only as mentors and trainers but also as community liaisons who assist in recruiting new caregivers into FCP's FFN Caregivers Training.

The FFN Caregivers Training is designed to train informal caregivers to further the knowledge and skills required to deliver quality care and support the development of healthy children. In addition, the FCP builds capacity in FFN caregivers to effectively manage stress and communicate expectations with the parents of the children in their care, while simultaneously providing a peer network of social support.



Since the project started, hundreds of FFN caregivers in Latino communities have been trained to provide care and support the healthy development of children in their care. The FCP began in Santa Barbara and Kern counties, and has since been expanded to additional counties across California including Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Los Angeles. Although the project was designed to be delivered in person, the FCP staff successfully adapted to meet the emerging needs of their communities throughout the pandemic – making FFN Training available in both virtual and in-person formats (i.e., meeting community members where they are at with respect to current and emerging needs). In fact, despite pandemic restrictions, the FCP trained approximately 150 caregivers during 2020 and again in 2021.

FCP PROJECT COMPONENTS

The FCP consists of five key components, including: 1) a training curriculum; 2) outreach; 3) support groups; 4) a tool kit; and, 5) parent engagement workshops. Additional detail for each component is provided below.

Curriculum: VyC developed an adaptive 64-hour curriculum that supports caregivers in building skills to provide developmentally appropriate care for children ensuring their healthy development. Master trainers facilitate the curriculum which consists of five Core Modules along with three additional modules that are optional dependent upon the needs of the community. Each module incorporates adult learning theory and popular education methodologies. The primary goals of each module are determined after a comprehensive community needs assessment to ensure content meets specific needs of the community. Additional information about the FFN Caregivers Training is detailed below.

FFN Caregivers Training Modules

Module	Topic	Content
Module 1	The Vital Role of the Informal Care Provider	Explores the caregiver's complex role in child development and their impact on both children and their families.
Module 2	Positive Discipline and Limit Setting	Provides training on positive discipline and how to set limits effectively, as well as caregiver selfcare, including self-control, meditation, relaxation, and breathing techniques
Module 3	Child Development	Examines characteristics and needs of the various stages of physical, emotional, and cognitive development of children with special emphasis on brain development
Module 4	Childcare Activities	Introduces various types of activities that can expand children's areas of intelligence by building upon their cultural roots and provides a review of resources available in childcare
Module 5	Emergency Preparedness	Covers emergency preparedness including importance of having information on emergency numbers for each child in their care, preventative measures such as an emergency kit and emergency plans, and a parent checklist in the event of an emergency
Module 6	Nutrition and COVID-19	Provides training on child nutrition and COVID-19 prevention and preparedness
Module 7	Domestic Violence	Explores understanding of domestic violence and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), as well as the prevention of domestic violence in second and third generations
Module 8	CPR & First Aid Certification	Includes written and hands on CPR and first aid training relative to children and adults, including proper use of life saving equipment

FCP PROJECT COMPONENTS (CONT.)

Outreach: Trained promotores, trusted community members (many of whom are also FFN caregivers), provide ongoing outreach and support. They also identify and share information with FFN caregivers in the community and connect them to local community resources as needed.

Support Groups: Support group training and facilitation reduce isolation and create a peer network of social support among FFN caregivers. The support groups offer mentoring to help integrate lessons from the training into caregivers' daily lives.

Toolkit: Culturally and linguistically specific tools, resources, activities, and materials are used in FFN Training to enhance the overall learning experience.

Parent Engagement Workshops: Parenting education and support for parents are provided while increasing communication between parents and FFN caregivers, reinforcing the messages that FFN caregivers receive in training.



EVALUATION OVERVIEW

In 2021, EvalCorp was contracted to design and conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the FCP. The process began with the development of a logic model that articulated the activities of the FCP along with intended outcomes and how those outcomes would be measured.

A comprehensive literature review also was conducted to understand best practices in informal childcare training, recruitment, and delivery. The evaluation plan employed a mixed-methods approach to understand the impacts of the FFN Caregivers Training on caregivers and the potential for scalability of the project model to serve a greater number of families and communities.

Data collection sources and methodologies utilized in the evaluation are outlined below.

Data Sources and Methods	Purpose
Evaluation Observations	Observations to assess various aspects/components of the FCP curriculum and highlight project implementation
Focus Groups	Qualitative data to help illustrate project successes, lessons learned, and recommendations
FCP Staff Interviews	Qualitative data to capture staff's perspectives pertaining to project implementation and outcomes
FCP Alumni Interviews	Qualitative data to understand project outcomes, benefits, and recommendations
Alumni Follow-up Survey	Quantitative and qualitative data to assess participant satisfaction with the project, learnings, benefits, successes, and recommendations
Pre- and Post-FFN Caregivers Training Surveys	Quantitative and qualitative data to assess immediate/short term project outcomes
Tracking Log	Logs utilized by FCP staff to obtain and manage trainee/participant demographic and attendance data (i.e., track process evaluation data)

All data collection tools and activities were translated into Spanish and carried out in culturally and linguistically relevant ways in collaboration with VyC staff. Following data collection, all data were cleaned, structured, and integrated prior to analysis to inform the development of this report. The following pages outline collective findings from all evaluation data collection activities (e.g., surveys, focus groups, and key stakeholder interviews).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: FFN CAREGIVERS TRAINING

To better understand the short-term impacts of the training, the FFN caregivers were surveyed before and after training participation. In addition to reporting what they had learned from the training and how it has impacted the youth they care for, FFN trainees also had an opportunity to share their experiences through a focus group. Findings from the surveys and focus groups are detailed below. Of note, the FFN Caregivers Training was delivered in a hybrid format, in-person and remote, to ensure participants' and trainers' safety during COVID-19 pandemic.

PRE-/POST-FFN CAREGIVERS TRAINING SURVEYS

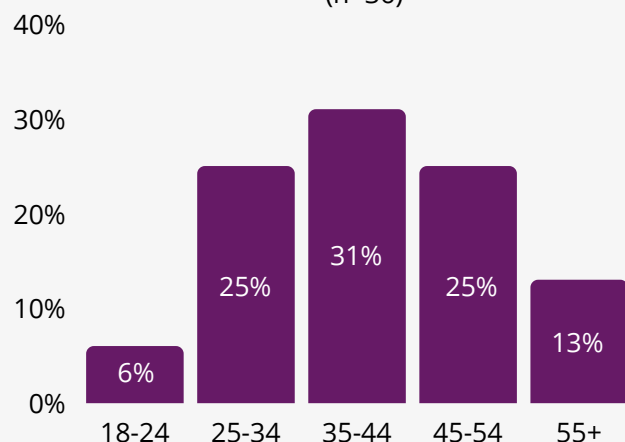
Pre- and Post-FFN Caregivers Training Surveys were conducted with two groups of trainees at the start and completion of FFN Caregivers Training.

From individuals who were trained as part of Group One, 17 pre- and 13 post-surveys were collected and analyzed. From Group Two, a total of 20 pre- and 15 post-surveys were obtained and included in the analysis. The FFN Caregivers Training Surveys were developed to assess the knowledge gained from the training, as well as identify changes in how the trainees viewed the positive impact they make in their community and in the lives of the families of the children in their care. Additionally, the surveys asked trainees whether they thought their work as a caregiver is important to the children, families, and community they serve. Of note, Group Two was asked about the overall impact of the training in their post-survey.

TRAINEES

Similar to observations made by training staff in recent years, a majority (83%) of trainees were female and most (81%) were between the ages of 25 and 54 (Figure 1). Although male trainees made up a smaller (17%) percentage, staff noted that they had seen a rise in attendance from male trainees since the start of the pandemic. This may be attributed to expanded opportunities to attend training due to FCP's quick adaptation to deliver the training virtually, and increased availability from those who may have experienced job loss during the pandemic.

Figure 1. Age of Trainees
(n=36)



KNOWLEDGE GAINED FROM TRAINING

To investigate the impact that the training had on the caregivers' knowledge of the curriculum, the trainees rated their knowledge on a scale from 1 (Nothing) to 5 (A lot) to show how much they knew about topics including child development, emergency preparedness, stress management, effective communication, and positive interactions with children on both the pre- and post-surveys. A rating of 1 or 2 was interpreted as a "lower understanding" while ratings from 3 to 5 were interpreted as a "medium to high understanding" of the content. Table 1 shows the percentage of individuals who reported having a medium to high level understanding of each topic at the beginning and completion of training.

Table 1. Knowledge Gained from FFN Caregivers Training: Pre- vs. Post-Survey

How much do you currently know about...	Group One Rating of 3 or higher			Group Two Rating of 3 or higher		
	Pre (n=17)	Post (n=13)	Change	Pre (n=20)	Post (n=15)	Change
The developmental stages of youth	65%	100%	↑	55%	67%	↑
CPR*	24%	77%	↑	16%	92%	↑
First Aid*	24%	62%	↑	21%	75%	↑
How to take into account other people's perspectives when I communicate with them	65%	100%	↑	55%	64%	↑
How to identify stress	56%	100%	↑	50%	73%	↑
Ways to cope with stress in a healthy way	65%	100%	↑	45%	80%	↑
Positive ways to interact with the children I care for	76%	100%	↑	60%	85%	↑
Inexpensive activities to keep the children I care for engaged	65%	100%	↑	50%	80%	↑
How to identify domestic violence**	n/a	n/a		50%	80%	↑
Resources in the community that I can use for assistance	53%	92%	↑	16%	67%	↑

* CPR and First Aid modules, normally delivered in-person with very interactive exercises, were delivered virtually and in a limited in-person setting due to the pandemic.

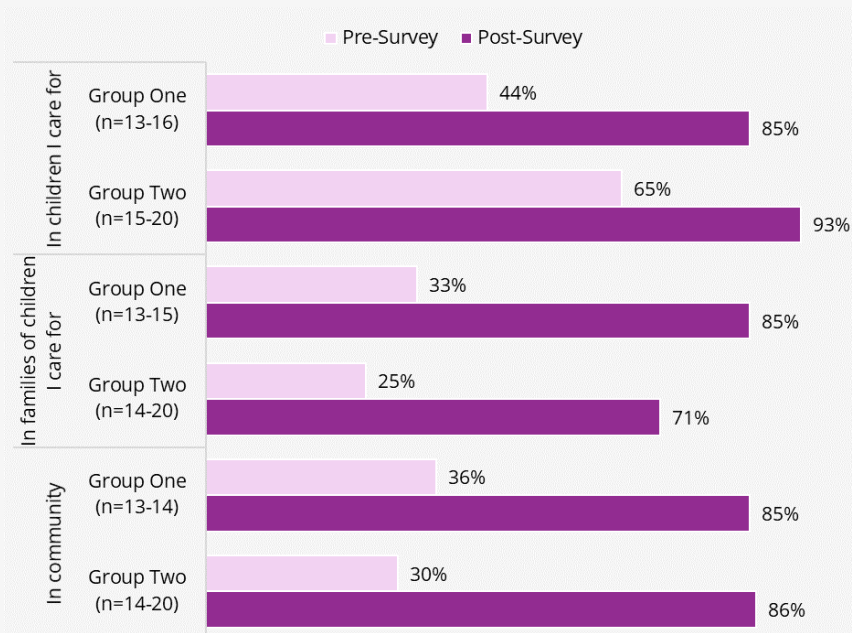
**The domestic violence module was not included in the curriculum for Group One due to differences in funding entities.

In Group One, the trainees experienced the highest percentage of growth in knowledge from the CPR training module. Only 24% of individuals went into the training feeling knowledgeable while 77% reported feeling knowledgeable about the topic at the completion of training, reflecting a 53% growth. Similar findings were observed for Group Two in which trainees also experienced the highest increase of knowledge from the CPR training. Also noteworthy is that the number of trainees who reported a medium to high understanding increased across all topics for both groups as a result of the training.

TRAINEES' RECOGNITION OF THEIR POSITIVE IMPACT

Groups One and Two were also asked if they recognized the positive impact they make in the children and the families of the children they care for, as well as the community. The chart below presents the percentages of trainees who answered "Yes" on the pre- and post-surveys (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Rate of Change in Trainee's Recognition of Their Positive Impact: Pre- vs. Post-Survey*



* Not all trainees responded to the questions on the pre- and post- surveys. The values reflect valid percent.

Across both training groups, 44% to 65% of participants came into the training recognizing the positive impact they make in the lives of the children they care for. This is higher than the percentage of participants who, prior to the training, recognized the positive impact they had in the children's family (25%-33%) or the community (30%-36%). As a result of the training, both groups reported an increased recognition of the positive impact they make in all three groups with significant growth of recognition for the children's families (increased by 46%-52%) and the community (increased by 49%-56%).

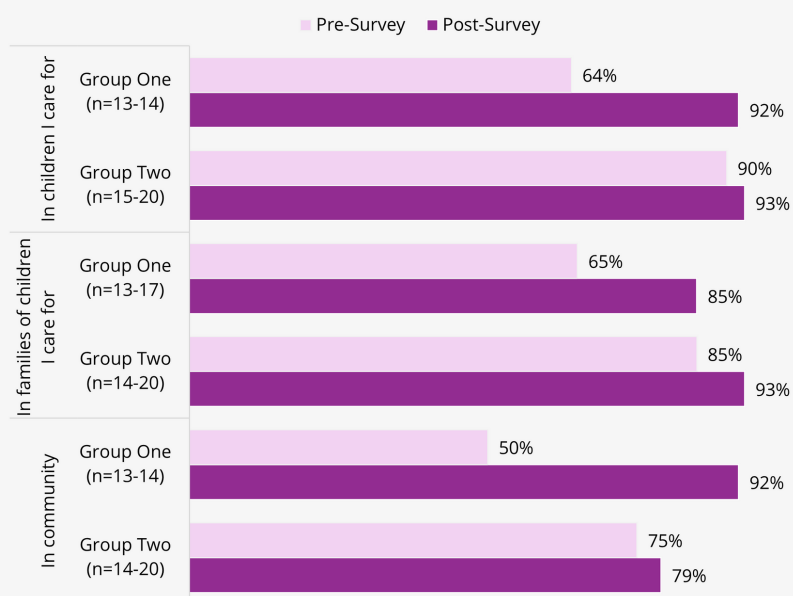




TRAINEES' RECOGNITION OF IMPORTANCE OF ROLE

Similarly, the trainees were asked if they thought their work as a caregiver was important for the children and the families of the children they care for, and the community. The percentage of individuals who answered “Yes” on the pre- and the post-surveys are displayed below (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Rate of Change in Trainee's Recognition of the Importance of Their Role as a Caregiver: Pre-vs. Post-Survey*



* Not all trainees responded to the questions on the pre- and post- surveys. The values reflect valid percent.

Many trainees in both groups reported that they recognized the importance of their role in the lives of the children, families, and community even before the training. Again, both groups experienced an increased recognition of the importance of their role, with the most notable growth seen in Group One.

“Every module taught me a lot. I learned the importance and the impact of my responsibilities as a childcare provider.”

IMPACT OF TRAINING

To assess the overall impacts of participating in the FFN Training, participants of Group Two were asked to share their levels of agreement about what they had learned and implemented, and whether they had shared the information they learned with others (Table 2).

Table 2. Impacts From Participating in FFN Training

Short-Term Impacts	Percent Who Agreed (n=10-15)
<i>Overall, I think I am a better caregiver as a result of implementing what I learned in this program.</i>	100%
<i>I would recommend this program to other caregivers.</i>	100%
<i>I learned more about the developmental stages of youth.</i>	93%
<i>I implemented one or more things I learned.</i>	87%
<i>My interactions with the parents of children I care for have improved.</i>	73%
<i>I have shared information I have learned with others.</i>	73%

All trainees agreed that the training helped them become a better caregiver and that they would recommend the FFN Caregivers Training to other caregivers. More than 85% of trainees learned about the developmental stages of youth and reported implementing one or more things that they learned in the training. Additionally, a high percentage of trainees (73%) indicated that their interactions with the parents of the children improved and they have shared information they learned in the training with others.

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES

Trainees from Groups One and Two were asked about their experiences throughout the training on the post-survey. Trainees shared the vast amount of knowledge gained from the course and the positive changes they have seen in the youth they care for. When asked whether they found the training useful and what recommendations they had for program improvement, trainees in Groups One and Two responded that overall the training was useful to them. Most said all components were useful, including how it impacted their lives outside of childcare. Some specifics mentioned were techniques for communication, child interaction and engagement, managing child behavioral problems, nutrition, managing emotions and stress, and demonstrating patience. One trainee stated that she had “learned so much like how to control stress to have more patience towards the children. Better communication with the children and make more activities with the children.” Recommendations for project improvement were infrequent; however, the most common recommendation centered around offering shorter training sessions and/or a more flexible class schedule. Other recommendations for improvement included:

- additional topics to extend the length of the project
- offering the project in other cities
- more examples and toolkits
- a greater variety of information covered in the training
- use of more visual aids
- recording of courses so that they can be accessed at a later time

“Personally, it helped me a lot in all aspects, not only with the children but with my partner as well.”

When individuals from both training groups were given a chance to describe which topics they felt they learned the most about, top responses reflected a greater ability to communicate and interact with the children in their care. Other examples of topics that the trainees showed appreciation for having learned were:

- the importance of patience with children
- increased awareness of child development
- how to manage stress
- increased understanding of domestic violence resources
- age-appropriate nutrition
- increased awareness of resources available in their community

Overall, all trainees commended the project, and greatly appreciated the trainers and levels of preparation and dedication they brought to each class.

“Every module taught me a lot. I learned the importance and the impact of my responsibilities as a childcare provider.”

FOCUS GROUPS WITH TRAINEES

To better understand the motivations of caregivers to participate in the FFN Caregivers Training, the impact of the training on caregivers, and any recommendations for improving the training, two focus groups were conducted with a total of 13 trainees. Below are the findings from these focus groups.

When asked about motivation for participation in FFN Training, the trainees spoke about their desire to not only gain a deeper understanding of topics such as child development and communication, but also to become a better parent or caregiver as well. Other reasons mentioned included earning their credentials to become a childcare assistant and learning first aid.

IMPACT

Lessons Learned

To explore the impacts of the FFN Training from the caregivers' perspective, trainees were asked to describe what they learned and had found most valuable. Similar to the pre/post survey results, the trainees identified strategies for communicating and engaging with children in their care as most important. In addition, they found significant value in learning about identifying and reacting to abuse and managing their own stress. Other topics noted as being most helpful included role play, first aid for babies, and learning to be patient.

Engagement

FFN trainees were asked if participating in the training impacted how they engage with children in their care and the children's parents. All expressed that the training positively impacted how they communicate and play with the children in their care, learning to communicate in a calm and patient manner and to build trust with children in their care. Trainees also found the training to positively impact the ways they communicate with parents about pay, supplies, boundaries, and scheduling.



Valuable Lessons

"Every child is different, and you should give them an opportunity to express themselves so that you can learn more about them and what they need."

RECOMMENDATIONS

FFN trainees' recommendations for future trainings included showing video scenarios of lesson examples and offering a different class schedule. Additionally, they recommended that the sessions be made shorter and take place in the mornings to accommodate childcare schedules and obligations.

When asked what would improve the training, individuals responded that they would not change anything. The only topic of interest mentioned for addition to the curriculum was techniques for handling physical abuse. The trainees expressed praise for the facilitators of the training and appreciation for their devotion to the project and their community.

"For me this program was very detailed, and I learned a lot. As a parent I found it to be very valuable and would encourage other parents to participate."

"I liked everything about the classes. They were very good at teaching us to be respectful in how we communicate with parents. They were very clear in how they taught each session, and it was very helpful."



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: FFN CAREGIVERS TRAINING ALUMNI

ALUMNI FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

Caregivers who had completed the FFN Caregivers Training within the past year were surveyed to assess their overall satisfaction with the training and longer term impacts of having participated in the FFN Caregivers Training.

ALUMNI

Similar to caregivers trained most recently, alumni responding to the survey were primarily female (96%) between the ages of 35 and 54. A majority of the caregivers had completed the training less than 6 months prior to completing the survey (n=22) while three had completed the training 6-12 months prior to taking the survey (Figure 5).



Figure 4. Age of FFN Training Alumni
(n=26)

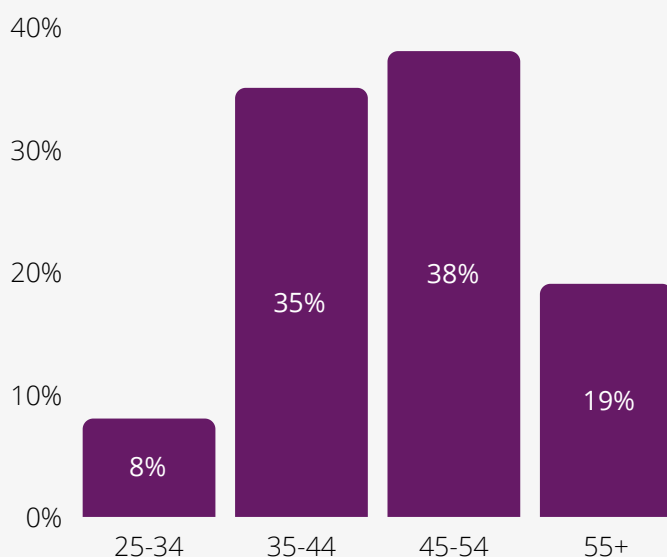
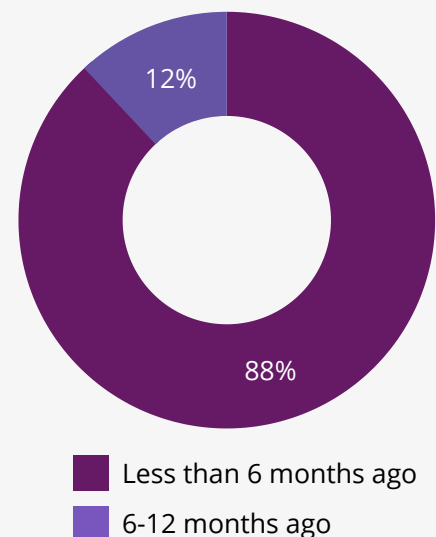


Figure 5. Length of Time Since Completion of Training
(n=25)



LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF TRAINING

To better understand the long-term impacts of the training, alumni were asked a series of questions related to changes in knowledge, beliefs, and behavior that were a result of the training. All caregivers agreed that they continue to implement what they learned and their ability to take care of children has improved. Their responses reflected significant improvement in their knowledge of caregiving and skills they are implementing.

Table 3. Alumni Perceptions of Long-Term Impacts of FFN Training

Long-Term Impacts	Percent Who Agreed (n=26)
<i>The way I parent has improved as a result of what I implemented from the class.</i>	100%
<i>I continue to implement the things I learned from the classes.</i>	100%
<i>I implemented one or more things I learned from the classes I attended.</i>	100%
<i>I recognize the great impact that my work as a caregiver of children has on the community.</i>	96%
<i>I recognize the great impact that my work as a caregiver of children has on the lives of children.</i>	96%
<i>I continue to use the information I learned from the classes I attended.</i>	96%
<i>I learned new parenting strategies that I was not aware of.</i>	92%
<i>I have shared information I learned with others in my community.</i>	88%

“I have realized how important it is to provide care in addition to the enormous responsibility of it.”

SATISFACTION WITH TRAINING

Alumni were asked about their experience with training materials, activities, and presenters to assess the overall satisfaction with the training. A resounding response was conveyed by the caregivers which reflected a high level of satisfaction with each component of the training mentioned and with the project overall.

Table 4. Alumni Training Satisfaction

Component	Percent Who Agreed (n=26)
<i>Class/program handouts, slides, worksheets</i>	96%
<i>Presenters</i>	96%
<i>Class/program activities conducted during the sessions</i>	96%
<i>Classes overall</i>	96%

Open ended items from the Alumni Follow-Up Survey explored whether caregivers have continued to implement the strategies they learned from the FFN Caregivers Training, what topics have been most useful, and what recommendations they wanted to share to make the classes more useful. Alumni caregivers expressed that they have continued to implement all of their learnings since completing the training. When asked about the ways in which the training has been useful or valuable, caregivers expressed that the information they learned was useful and of value, in addition to how they grew personally from the experience. They also spoke of an increased knowledge in childhood development, emergency preparedness, domestic violence, and better childcare. Alumni sent a clear and resounding message that the training had a lasting impact on them as caregivers, and many expressed a deep appreciation for the techniques learned to communicate with parents and children. They spoke about how they have continued to implement these techniques since completing the training. Several alumni had recommendations for the training which included: adding more modules on emotional intelligence and activities to do with children, recording the classes, offering more classes on Zoom, and having more flexible class times.

"I now know how to treat them better and always understand them. I know how to give them love and educate them without violence."

INTERVIEWS WITH FFN CAREGIVERS TRAINING ALUMNI

Twenty alumni of FFN Caregivers Training were interviewed to highlight the impact, accomplishments, and successes of the project, as well as to collect any recommendations for improvements. Most alumni reported participating in the training to learn information about children and strategies for caregiving (n=18). Other reasons included an interest in the curriculum and wanting to become CPR & First Aid certified. Many were recruited to participate in the training through “word of mouth” (n=9). Other ways caregivers found out about the project included Facebook, at church, or from flyers posted at a school. Alumni expressed appreciation for the project and recommended it to others.

“*I want to thank them. Aside from knowing about the VyC – it’s a very big support that I wasn’t aware of. It’s helped me tremendously. And I’m always wanting to know more. It really helped me personally. If I could take it again, I would!!*”

IMPACT

Alumni were asked about the most memorable or their favorite part of the training. A common theme in responses highlighted learning opportunities that involved different activities to keep children entertained and stimulate their development. Additionally, they mentioned learning about parenting and childhood development in general as most memorable.

Alumni spoke favorably about the emergency preparedness training and CPR & First Aid certification. These two topics were also commonly shared when they were asked to recollect what they had learned from the training. Most expressed that the two topics were their most memorable or favorite parts of the training because the information being shared was relevant to them, and that they now feel they are a better caregiver or parent because of their participation. Others brought up the certification they received from the courses and the appreciation of the comradery and shared learning during the training.

All but one respondent reported taking care of children while taking the course, and all alumni reported continuous implementation of what they had learned from the training.

"I use what I learned about the nine levels of intelligence. I use it to tailor how I teach kids in my care. I also use my authority but with kindness, to manage children's behavior. Treat them with love and respect and they will treat you the same."

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SUCCESSES

All caregivers shared that they have engaged differently with the children they care for regarding methods of discipline, communication, activities, safety, and overall care since completion of the training.



Trainees engage differently with the children after the training.

"Before I wanted to treat all kids the same – discipline the same way – but now I am able to learn to address each kid based on their personality and the different ages."

Alumni caregivers also reported being able to better communicate with the parents of the children in their care. They said they are now able to set boundaries and collaborate with parents. Although a couple of caregivers reported that their relationship with parents remained the same after completing the training, most reported a significant improvement in their relationship with parents.

When asked about the most useful things that they gained from participating in the training, several alumni said everything they gained from the training was useful. Most identified techniques for communication with parents and children as most useful, followed by the CPR & First Aid Certification, emergency preparedness, and self-care. Alumni also expressed that learning about child development and strategies for discipline and the support they gained from the facilitator and other participants were helpful.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When alumni were asked if they had any recommendations for enhancing the training, most said that they liked everything and would not do anything differently. Examples of things that were mentioned included:

- shorter training sessions
- more in person training
- offering classes at different times
- peer training
- extending the training to include more modules
- information on how to care for older adults
- a class for kids on life skills
- no late entry

"The instructor left me with my mouth open – for how she explains the information and ease in explanation. And she explains things very well and very educated."

FOCUS GROUPS WITH FFN CAREGIVERS TRAINING ALUMNI

Six alumni participated in a focus group and shared their common motivations to engage in the FFN Caregivers Training — to be a better caregiver whether that be to their own or others' families. Some of the alumni wanted to learn specific techniques such as how to deal with behavior problems and first aid and CPR.

IMPACT

Lessons Learned

All participants of the focus group agreed that one of the most valuable teachings from the training was learning that they need to take care of themselves to best care for others. They also mentioned that learning to break the cycle of violence, value family, and communicate calmly with children were beneficial. One participant mentioned that they liked everything about the courses, specifically the courses about CPR, how to better communicate with children and their parents, and how to manage stress. All participants found the support system they formed in the group to be the most helpful part of the training, along with what they were able to learn from one another.

Engagement

Alumni were asked if participating in the training impacted how they engage with children, and the parents of the children they care for. As with the caregivers currently in training, they expressed that the training had positively impacted how they communicate and play with the children in their care, learning to be more patient and to communicate calmly. Additionally, they learned to be more aware of what their children need and to prioritize spending time with their family. Alumni also found that the training had positively impacted the ways they communicate with parents about their expectations and the needs of the children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One suggestion for improving the training was to include information on substance use prevention and addiction as it is relevant for preteen and teen caregiving. Additionally, the alumni recommended having a course on helping children cope with bullying, offering this project in schools to reach more parents, and encouraging more fathers to participate in the courses.

“*It's perfect. I recommend it to everyone.*”

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS- FCP STAFF

INTERVIEWS WITH FCP STAFF

Interviews were conducted with nine FCP staff to highlight the accomplishments, successes, and impact of the FCP, as well as determine any challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations for the successful expansion of the FFN Caregivers Training to other communities. We spoke to the executive director, grant writer of the project, project coordinator, those who developed the training curriculum, promotores supervisors, and promotores, using a semi-structured interview protocol.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND SUCCESSES

FCP staff identified many accomplishments and successes of the FCP related to training participation, funding, and impact. They shared that the training has reached participants of a “hidden population,” who are either undocumented, unlicensed, or both, who have come “out of the shadows” to participate in the training and learn to value themselves. The project has been able to connect with caregivers and sustain the training with a high level of attendance. Other successes identified included being able to provide information to caregivers when they need it and teach parents and caregivers how to encourage their children and care for them better. Even with the challenges of the pandemic, the project managed to have new successes. The staff gave financial assistance to caregivers during the pandemic when the parents of the children they cared for could not afford to pay them.

With the shift to online learning, FCP staff were able to reach people in rural areas who do not have transportation and teach participants how to use new technology. Several staff members mentioned that another great accomplishment was their continued funding from the Packard Foundation to support the project, as well as a potential new funding opportunity. Staff identified that a key factor in contributing to the success of the project was the development of a trusting relationship with the community. Other factors included the utilization of focus groups to identify the community's needs and desires to guide the development of the project, and the willingness to adapt the delivery of curriculum when necessary.

“*The information is so valuable it doesn't matter the language – it will help so many people.*”

”

IMPACT

Staff were asked to indicate the impact training participation has had on interactions between caregivers and the parents of the children they care for, and the impact of caregiver's participation in training on the children they provide care for. Several staff mentioned that participating in the training taught caregivers how to better communicate with the parents of the children in their care. They learned respectful communication techniques to better express their needs and to set boundaries with parents. Many caregivers now have agreements with parents and paperwork on the children they care for regarding medication needs, appointments, etc., that they did not have previously. In addition, the project's impact was seen in how the FCP staff continue to be available to FFN caregivers even after they have completed the training. Staff indicated that alumni caregivers stay up to date on CPR and First Aid certification; moreover, approximately 70% of trained caregivers continue to stay in touch with VyC to ask questions and stay connected.

70% of caregivers continue to stay in touch with FCP staff even after completing the training.

After participating in the FFN Caregiver Training, caregivers have more ownership and a greater understanding of their role, and the ways in which they enhance the lives of children. One staff member asserted that when the caregiver is more assured in what they are doing, the child is healthier. Moreover, caregivers have better communication and a better relationship with the children in their care. It was reported to a staff member that what participants liked most about the training was learning about different books and resources as well as ways to utilize things around the house to entertain and stimulate children. Other components of the training participants reported liking most to the staff were learning about ways of positive reinforcement instead of punishment, gaining the ability to identify domestic violence, and talking to parents about their role in protecting their children.

"A lot of caregivers really see the value they add and going through the program opens their eyes to that and they take greater ownership in the role as caregiver. They learn how to ask for what they need, set boundaries with parents, and get the necessary info needed to be the best caregiver."

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As with all programs that were conducted between 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges to implementation of FCP. Several staff we spoke with cited the pandemic as a barrier to implementing and maintaining the project. To overcome these barriers, the training transitioned to an online format. Staff members reported that although more caregivers had completed the training through virtual delivery, the remote learning had lost some of the important peer support aspect of the project. Moreover, the staff expressed that in-person learning allows participants to ask questions one on one that they may not want to ask in front of others, as well as get out of the house for “self-growth time.” The in-person learning is also more accessible for participants who have low internet bandwidth. To overcome the challenges and support online learning, the staff mailed out materials that would have been utilized in class to participants so that no part of the curriculum was compromised. Additionally, information on COVID-19 was added to the curriculum, as well as a training on Zoom and internet use, to address the changing needs of the caregivers.

CHALLENGES

Aside from the COVID-19 pandemic, there were several challenges the project faced including having first-time parents who were “still in [their] old ways” be receptive to new information; caregivers initially feeling like they are being judged for the way they care for children; and unknowingly breaking laws. Staff overcame each of these challenges by giving clear examples and reasoning for the information they are sharing; making known that they are only sharing information and are in no way passing judgment; and informing caregivers of legalities so they do not unintentionally break any laws. Another challenge is the hesitancy of undocumented caregivers to “come out of the shadows,” which the staff plan to address by doing advocacy work around the issue now that the project is growing. Staff are also continuously trying to incorporate support groups into the project so that caretakers can learn from one another.



LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

While there were a couple of staff members who said they would not change or do anything differently with the project, others had some suggestions for adjustments. One promotora said that although she has had good results every time she has taught the training, the zoom classes may be too big. Another would like to see how the project has impacted kindergarten readiness and explore ways informal caregivers can be paid when the parents of the children they care for cannot make payments. Others recommended providing childcare during in-person training sessions for caregivers and parents who need to bring children with them. Moving forward with the project, promotores recommended facilitating fun community events such as training completion celebrations and other events to share information from the project, as well as adding an online support group. Another area for improvement mentioned was to adapt the project to different areas and situations, rural vs. urban for example, and to accommodate the communities' availability for the promotores training, rather than having an 8-hour day training session.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPLICATION

Staff shared the essential project elements that are necessary for successful replication in other communities. It is recommended those who want to duplicate the project, first, conduct a focus group in the community to ask caregivers what they need, and adjust the curriculum based on those needs. The location and community context must be considered when developing the program, and it is necessary to conduct outreach to the community being served. One staff member we spoke to recommends keeping the curriculum as is or adding to it, and several expressed that the qualities of the trainers are very important. Another staff member emphasized that when duplicating the program, it is important to keep it free for caregivers, have confidence in the FFN caregivers, provide resources to them, and engage caregivers and parents in the curriculum, encouraging them to think for themselves.

Lastly, the staff shared that promotores were at the core of what made FCP successful in making an impact in the community. As community members who act as natural helpers and liaisons to connect the community to important information and resources, promotores address barriers that may arise from cultural and linguistic differences in native-born and immigrant communities. Promotores have a unique ability to generate high levels of trust within the community by embodying the community's identity and experiences. The promotores who do exceptional work building and maintaining sustained relationships across the community are then able to successfully identify individuals in need and bring the FFN Caregivers Training to them. Through the promotores' dedication and commitment to advocate for and improve the lives of their neighbors and families, communities are transformed.

“Heart and patience of teaching” and “heart to serve the community” often came up across the course of the interviews. A promotora expressed that whoever is teaching the program curriculum needs to understand the objectives, know the material, which should be comprehensive and understandable, and implement it in their own lives in order to best teach it. When recruiting promotores, the program staff should recruit individuals who have natural empathy and the ability to connect with people who have similar characteristics and experiences and to build community and foster relationships. The promotores, who may also choose to become FFN trainers themselves, must be committed and empathic, have the “heart to serve the community”, enjoy sharing information, and have childcare experience.

VYC'S THEORY OF CHANGE:



“ Have humility with the culture you are working with because you only know the surface level of what is going on. And we need to listen to and learn from the community about what they need because they know what they need. **”**

FOCUS GROUPS WITH FCP STAFF

The promotores participating in the focus group expressed that they became promotores because they wanted to care for others. One promotora previously did similar work as a social worker. Others expressed that promotores have empathy and a desire to share information with the community, and that they must have humanity and humility. These promotores found out about the job with VyC from friends, on Facebook, and from taking the FFN Training themselves.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The promotores identified the primary responsibilities of a promotora which included planning when and where training will take place, recruiting participants, and maintaining contact with families. Additionally, the promotores reported that they have the responsibility of teaching classes and training caregivers to be promotores themselves so that they can share the information with other caregivers. They emphasized that a promotora must be educated and prepared to give their community empathy, help that is “above and beyond”, answer any questions they have, and deliver information on existing community resources. Lastly, the promotores stated that it is also their responsibility to validate the emotions of the community members, be punctual and empathetic, and have humility to ensure their readiness to learn from the community.

Recruitment

The promotores explained that participant recruitment involved work that went beyond simply recruiting individuals needed to meet the quota for a class. The promotores who are already immersed within the community persistently build the foundation for trust and respect with community members by participating in community activities, visiting people in their homes, listening to people’s experiences, and sharing helpful information and resources. This work allows promotores to alleviate the distrust that community members may have toward outside organizations, and successfully connect them to FCP’s FFN Caregivers Training. Due to the promotores’ strong relationship with the community based on empathy, love, and compassion, the training is received with receptiveness from the FFN caregivers and helps maintain participant retention throughout the 8-week curriculum.

Much of the program recruitment happened at churches, during food outreach and other fairs, on social media, door-to-door outreach, and through referrals. Through their persistent outreach and engagement with the community, promotores made it possible for the FFN Caregivers Training to continue during the pandemic. However, some promotores pointed out that barriers they faced with recruitment during the pandemic were: participants' availability during class times offered by VyC and difficulty keeping people engaged during the online training sessions.

SUCCESSFUL PROMOTORES

The focus group uncovered that the key to becoming a successful promotora is having expertise in the topic and living in the community as a recognized and trusted leader. In addition, the promotores expressed that a successful promotora would have *servicio de corazón*, or service from the heart, an innate desire to help others, and the humility necessary to “make even strangers feel like they are a part of their family.”

“It’s very important for a promotora to have empathy, care for the needs of others to make a difference.”

IMPACT

The promotores were asked about the greatest benefits that they provide as promotores, and the common answer was “support.” They shared that promotores can be the best support for a community that does not typically go to therapists or to the doctor. The promotores explained that they provide social and spiritual support and resources, information on economic resources, and help for children. Additionally, they guide the caregiver community to resources so they can be self-sufficient. Overall, the promotores felt that everything about the training curriculum is useful and applicable in all areas of life.

“

This program is very thorough and complete. It’s such great information – should be provided as is but be prepared to be flexible with each group that you have. Every group is different and has different experiences, hardships and needs.

”

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Project

The promotores in the focus group had no recommendations for the project. They felt that it is important for more people to get the information from the courses to become better parents, uncles, aunts, and grandparents, and learn how to handle emergencies.

For the Training Process

Recommendations for the training process include more time allotted to recruitment, continued education of the promotores, and technology support for participants.

For Project Replication and Expansion

The promotores shared that there must be an understanding of the needs of the community, as well as empathy and compassion for the community, for a successful project replication. It is recommended that the project be offered in other languages so that it can have an impact on more people and children.

“Many agencies take the model and create it in their image. They need to partner with local experts. They need to go to the community and ask what they need.”

”



OVERALL FCP STRENGTHS & RECOMMENDATIONS

“The FFN Training model applies to anyone and anywhere because it’s about how one individual can support other individuals.”

As evidenced by the accounts of current FFN caregiver trainees, FFN caregiver alumni, and FCP staff, the FCP helps individuals become better caregivers — and much, much more. Specifically, it was reported that participating in the FFN Caregivers Training taught caregivers to communicate and engage differently with the children in their care and the parents of the children in their care. The knowledge of caregivers regarding child development and methods of discipline, communication, engagement, safety, and overall care increased for all who participated in the training. The training also allowed caregivers to recognize their positive impact and importance of their role to children, families, and their community.

Another strength of the FCP is its ability to engage with the community and build trust between the promotores trainers and caregivers. Additionally, the project’s resilience and adaptability to shift its curriculum to an online format during the pandemic and its continued flexibility in supporting caregivers are great strengths. The project staff gave one on one technical assistance for those learning to use the internet and Zoom for the first time so they could continue to participate in the training.

Overall, FFN caregiver trainees, alumni, and staff were satisfied with all aspects of the project. However, some recommendations were made to further enhance the already successful FCP. Examples of ways to enhance the project based on their feedback involved different class times, continued training, additional modules, and enhanced outreach. To best accommodate participating caregivers’ schedules and learning, it is recommended that classes are offered at variable times during the day, and that childcare is available for those who must bring their children with them to training. There is also a preference for shorter class times and in person training. Making these accommodations, as well as tailoring the curriculum to the interests and needs of the caregivers have been found to help with caregiver retention. Other possible incentives for participating in training could include giving out health and safety kits, first aid kits, books, and cash.



Caregivers also expressed having a desire to learn more information on caretaking outside of caring for young children. Expanding the project to also share information on how to care for older adults and teenagers would benefit this community of caregivers. The desire to learn more information also extends to requests for including information on how to help children cope with bullying and addiction. Another recommendation was to explore ways informal caregivers can be paid when the parents of the children they care for cannot afford childcare.

Moving forward with the FCP, additional outreach could be conducted through facilitating fun community events such as graduation celebrations to share information from the project, as well as adding an online support group. Additionally, it is recommended that more time is allotted for continued emphasis on recruiting trainees to continue FCP's important and significant impact on communities.

EXPANDING VYC'S REACH: PILLARS OF SUCCESS FOR REPLICATION OF THE FCP

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Elements essential for the Family Caregivers Project's successful replication in other communities include an understanding of the needs of the community to be served, and a thoughtful selection, onboarding, and training of promotores.

HONORING COMMUNITY

The location and community must be considered when determining how to develop the FFN Caregivers Training which requires intentional outreach to assess the needs of the community. In order to gain an understanding of the community's needs, it is recommended that focus groups or community listening sessions be conducted to assess the needs of community caregivers and that the curriculum be adjusted accordingly.

SERVICIO DE CORAZÓN

The qualities of the trainers, or promotores, are important for successful replication in other communities. They must have “servicio de corazón,” service from the heart. As such, these individuals would embody the true meaning of interdependent communication when working with others and serve with their whole heart invested in the children and families living within their community. It is necessary that whoever is teaching the project curriculum has technical knowledge of the curriculum objectives, has a full understanding of the training material, and “walks-the-walk” in their own lives with how they care for and serve others. When recruiting promotores, individuals should be recruited from the community who have natural empathy and can build community and foster relationships.

Additional important aspects of the project are to: keep the training free for caregivers; respect the years of both formal and informal experience and expertise; and honor the collective wisdom of the community.

EXPANDING VYC'S REACH: PILLARS OF SUCCESS FOR REPLICATION OF THE FCP

FCP MODEL

In addition to capturing the Family Caregivers Project's (FCP) reach and impacts of the FFN Caregivers Training, the comprehensive evaluation assessed the project model for its potential scalability for replication. The evaluation brought to light three core pillars of the FCP which are critical for successful adaptation of the project both within and across communities.

1 Promotores Provide Service From the Heart

The project and caregivers training are run by promotores. These individuals have “servicio de corazón,” or service-oriented hearts, and form strong bonds with those in the community through their compassion, empathy, and shared experiences. The trainers who directly interact with caregivers not only have the technical skills to effectively communicate and explain concepts, but also connect with the caregivers at an emotional level. The strong bond between promotores and caregivers increases receptiveness for information during training and maintain a high attendance rate, and lasting change at both the individual and community levels.

2 Honor and Respect of Community

Promotores train caregivers and demonstrate humility. Promotores remember that the community knows best about their needs and they learn from the community. Project staff and promotores come from a place of humility, that is, they never prescribe what they think is best for the community. Instead, they think of the community as experts in the field and as partners for success of the project. The community lends their expertise to inform the project staff about their current and changing needs which are reflected in the training curriculum.

3 Responsive Training

There is flexible adaptation of the training curriculum to fit the community's fluid culture and needs. This includes continued assessment of the community's changing circumstances and adjusting to requests during training. By employing these practices, FCP is able to best serve their caregivers in the most respectful and culturally competent ways.