



EVALUATION OF THE 2013 COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM'S PARENT PROGRAM

Evaluation of the 2013 Community Violence Prevention Program's Parent Program

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Key findings

The evaluation of the Parent Program was designed to guide programmatic enhancements and funding decisions. Researchers used administrative data and multiple surveys to program staff and participants in order to obtain feedback on training for participants and general program operations. The following are key findings from the evaluation of the Community Violence Prevention Program's Parent Program for 2013.

About the trainings

- Most of participants in the Parent Leader training agreed with positive statements on the training (94 percent, $n=622$), trainers (96 percent, $n=677$), and what they learned (96 percent, $n=677$).
- Some training participants suggested spending more time on parent cafés and group discussions ($n=94$).
- Many enjoyed sharing, communicating, and interacting with other parents during the training ($n=233$) and many gained knowledge about parenting ($n=63$).
- Some suggested spending more time on the training as a whole, as well as parts of the training, such as parent cafés, activities, and discussions ($n=64$).

About program participants

- Overall, the program increased mean scores on protective factors to reduce child maltreatment from the beginning of the program to the end of the program, an increase of .24, which was statistically significant ($n=204$).
- The program increased mean scores on family functioning and resiliency, an increase of .23, which was statistically significant ($n=204$).
- Some communities had greater increases in mean scores of protective factors.
- The program served parents and/or grandparents as the average age of pre- and post-survey respondents was 45 years old ($n=204$).

About program operations

- According to the communities submitting administrative data, 1,121 parents were recruited to the Parent Program and 872 were trained.
- Almost half of the Parent Leaders surveyed learned about the program from a community agency ($n=58$).
- Most of the Parent Leaders highly rated the support from their administrative team (96 percent, $n=334$), materials (85 percent, $n=298$), and training (92 percent, $n=322$).
- A majority of Parent Leaders rated the program as successful or very successful (78 percent, $n=274$).
- Almost all of the Parent Leaders used what they learned in the training during the program (96 percent, $n=339$) and later in their daily lives (98 percent, $n=341$).
- A majority of Parent Leaders believed the service projects improved the community (68 percent) ($n=238$) and 77 percent thought the service projects increased protective factors that prevent child abuse and neglect ($n=270$).
- Parent Leaders suggested making no changes to the program ($n=100$) and expanding it and make it a year-round program ($n=43$).

- A majority of the administrative team members surveyed highly rated the training (86 percent, $n=41$), preparation for their roles (88 percent, $n=42$), and support from their Program Administrators/ Lead Agencies (71 percent, $n=34$).
- Some administrative team members expressed a need for funding to cover program-related transportation costs and to make the program longer in duration ($n=9$).

About community service projects

- According to administrative data, Parent Leaders dedicated 5,268 hours to 113 different community service projects.
- Many community members participated on teams to develop and conduct community service projects ($n= 647$) and an additional 3,588 worked on the projects.
- Many administrative team members thought the service projects improved the community (79 percent, $n=38$) and most thought the service projects increased protective factors (88 percent, $n=43$).
- A majority of administrative team members (63 percent) planned to continue service projects ($n=30$).

Based on the evaluation, the CVPP's Parent Program achieved its goal of building protective factors in families, as well as employing and training over 1,000 parents to complete service projects. The pre- and post-surveys revealed an improvement in measures of the protective factors. Overall, the parent trainings were very well received; the Administrative teams' responses were favorable to the program and parent participants indicated the program was well conducted and successful. Suggestions for programmatic improvement include increasing protective factors of social and concrete support, recruiting younger parents and primary caregivers, increasing participation of fathers, and collecting additional research data. Although more research is needed and there are opportunities for further impact, the program appears promising.

Introduction

In 2013, the Parent Program component provided 1,010 parents in 21 Chicago-area communities training and then coordinated their participation in community service projects. The Parent Program is one of three programs offered through the Community Violence Prevention Program (CVPP). Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) researchers used administrative data and developed four surveys to evaluate the Parent Program and answer key research questions. These included a training evaluation survey, a pre- and post-survey (given at the beginning and end of the program), and two exit surveys.

The following research questions guided the evaluation.

Research questions about **the parent trainings**:

- How did Parent Leaders learn about the program?
- To what extent did Parent Leaders complete the training?
- To what extent did the training meet its goals and objectives?
- How was the quality of the training?
- How satisfied were Parent Leaders with aspects of the training and the training overall?
- To what extent did the training prepare parents for their job as a Parent Leader?
- How confident were the Parent Leaders in implementing their training in their daily lives and in their communities?

Research questions about **the community service projects**:

- To what extent were Parent Leaders effective in leading the service projects?
- What did the participants learn and find beneficial from the service projects?
- Did Parent Leaders obtain the materials or resources necessary to complete the service projects?
- To what extent did Parent Leaders put into practice the skills learned at the training?
- To what extent did the teams work collaboratively?
- To what extent did the service projects align with protective factors?
- Were resources available for parent teams to continue the projects?

Research questions about **the program's effectiveness**:

- To what extent did Parent Leaders increase protective factors: parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, and social and emotional competence of children?
- To what extent were Parent Leaders able to implement any protective factors they acquired in training into strengthening their own families?

Literature review

Child maltreatment

In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that state and local child protective services received an estimated 3.7 million referrals for child maltreatment (child abuse and neglect). In federal fiscal year 2011, the U.S. had 676,569 reported victims of child abuse and neglect or nine victims per 1,000 children in the population. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). According to the CDC, child maltreatment is an act of commission or omission by a parent or other caregiver that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child (2012).

In 2008, the total lifetime economic burden resulting from child maltreatment in the United States was approximately \$124 billion (Fang, Brown, Florence, & Mercy, 2012). According to the CDC, the estimated average lifetime nonfatal cost for childhood health care for child maltreatment per person is \$32,648 (2012). Costs include short and long-term health care costs, productivity losses, child welfare costs, criminal justice costs, and special education costs.

The renowned ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) study found maltreatment put children at risk for the leading causes of illness and death as well as poor quality of life. In addition, child victims of maltreatment are 1.5 to 6 times as likely to be delinquent and 1.25 to 3 times as likely to be arrested as an adult (Children's Defense Fund, 2005). In addition, exposure to violence affects children's physical health and safety, as well as psychological adjustment, social relations, and academic achievement and the effects may be long-lasting (Morgolin & Gordis, 2000).

Risk factors for child maltreatment, violence

Risk factors for child maltreatment include lack of parental support and community involvement. In addition, lack of parental support and high family stress increase the risk for youth to be involved in violence (Saner & Ellickson, 1996). Those in homes where there is a risk for child maltreatment are likely under considerable stress, which may negatively impact a child's social and emotional development (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2003), further enhancing the likelihood a child will be involved in some form of violence.

Due to the lack of parental ties, youth may find support in his/her peers and be unduly influenced by their peer's behavior and attitudes towards violence. Youth in unstable or unsafe homes have lower social-emotional and academic functioning (Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998). Positive parenting and support is associated with reduced conduct problems and is a strong predictor of resilience in self-reliance, substance abuse, delinquency/school misconduct, and depression (Pearce, Jones, Schwab-Stone, & Ruchkin, 2003).

Protective factors to reduce child abuse and neglect

Be Strong Families, the agency leading the Parent Program, is grounded in the research-based and evidence-informed Strengthening Families' protective factors framework. The framework established by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, incorporates five protective factors to promote healthy families and reduce child abuse and neglect: 1) increasing parental resilience, 2) building the social connections of parents, 3) increasing knowledge of parenting and child development, 4) providing concrete supports in times of need, and 5) supporting the social and emotional competence of children. Be Strong Families developed a family strengthening and violence prevention program that focuses on training parents on the Protective Factors Framework to encourage engagement and sharing with the surrounding community.

Strategies to reduce child maltreatment

Parenting education and support

Parenting programs to prevent child maltreatment are based on improving parents' understanding of child development and effective child management techniques to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2003). The Center for the Study of Social Policy conducted a study and found an approach "organized around evidence-based protective factors that programs can build around young children by working differently with their families" (Horton, 2003, p.52). Parent-lead programs teach resilience and connection with other parents. By increasing the connections and support needed for parents, programs work toward the long-term goal of reducing child maltreatment and violence. Characteristics of very important persons in the adolescents' lives appear to play a significant role in the development of the behavior of youth (Burton & Marshall, 2005). Therefore, the importance of parents being involved, along with other adults in the youth's lives, can have a positive long-term effect on the youth and family.

Community-based approach

A community-based approach to reducing child maltreatment involves community leaders, families, and/or other community stakeholders to help strengthen and provide needed resources for families (Butler & Zaff, 2008). Research indicates that young people with a stronger sense of connectedness with the community, including school and family, show significantly lower rates of emotional distress, depression, violent behavior, and substance use (Zeldin, 2004).

About the Parent Program

The 2013 Parent Program provided funding for approximately 1,010 parents to receive training on parenting and program orientation and then to act as Parent Leaders for various community projects that promote protective factors for child maltreatment. The Parent Program is one of three program components offered through the Community Violence Prevention Program (CVPP). The other two programs are the Youth Employment Program and the Reentry Program. CVPP components work to empower and support youth, as well as strengthen Parent Leadership within communities.

In 2013, the Youth Employment Program (YEP) provided approximately 1,800 young people between the ages of 16-24 in 24 Chicago area communities with job readiness training, mentoring, and part-time employment. Employment was offered through partnering local businesses and organizations for nine weeks in summer 2013. All wages were subsidized by the CVPP state grant program without cost to employers. YEP was designed to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors associated with violence and strengthen social skills.

The 2013 Reentry program funded case managers who linked youth and young adults on parole in 12 Chicago communities to services to help them transition back to their communities and reduce recidivism.

The Illinois General Assembly approved a budget of up to \$15 million in grants for CVPP in State Fiscal Year 2013 (September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013), \$2.5 million of a \$5 million designation for grants to the Chicago Area Project for CVPP and \$9.2 million was disbursed to 23 providers.

ICJIA disbursed grant funds to the following organizations in SFY13 to operate CVPP.

- Albany Park Community Center
- Alliance of Local Service Organizations
- Black United Fund of Illinois
- Chicago Area Project
- Chicago Commons
- Children's Home & Aid Society of Illinois
- Circle Family Healthcare Network
- Community Assistance Programs
- Corazon Community Services
- Fellowship Connection
- Goodcity
- Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corp.
- Healthcare Consortium of Illinois
- Illinois African American Coalition for Prevention
- Organization of the North East Pilsen-Little Village Community Mental Health Center, Inc.
- Proviso-Leyden Council for Community Action
- Sinai Community Institute
- Southland Health Care Forum
- UCAN

CVPP was implemented in 24 Chicago area communities—20 in the City of Chicago and four in Suburban communities—selected based on high poverty and violent crime. Families with children living in low income communities have greater need for economic and social opportunities due to lower-quality schools, insufficient education, lack of employment

opportunities, and exposure to violence which cause physical and psychological harm and skill deficiencies (Koball et. al, 2011). Five communities were, in actuality, combinations of smaller nearby communities, such as Chicago Lawn, West Chicago, and Gage Park.

CVPP communities included:

- Albany Park
- Auburn Gresham
- Austin
- Brighton Park
- Cicero**
- East Garfield Park
- Englewood
- Grand Boulevard
- Greater Grand Crossing
- Hermosa/Belmont Cragin
- Humboldt Park
- Logan Square
- Maywood**
- North Lawndale
- Pilsen/Little Village
- Rich Township*
- Rogers Park
- Roseland
- South Shore
- Thornton Township*
- West Chicago/Chicago Lawn/Gage Park
- West Garfield Park
- Woodlawn

*Indicates South Suburban communities

** Indicates West Suburban Community

A previous state violence prevention program, the Neighborhood Recovery Initiative, was implemented by a different agency, the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority, and had operated for two years in communities with high levels of poverty and crime. That program built up an infrastructure and collaborations among community organizations among non-profits, faith-based organizations, schools and colleges, police and others. With some slight changes those communities were targeted for CVPP and that infrastructure was used to implement the program.

Data indicate that poverty may be the best predictor of maltreatment as children living in households with an annual income less than \$15,000 are 22 times more likely to be abused or neglected than children in households with incomes over \$30,000 (Children’s Defense Fund, 2005).

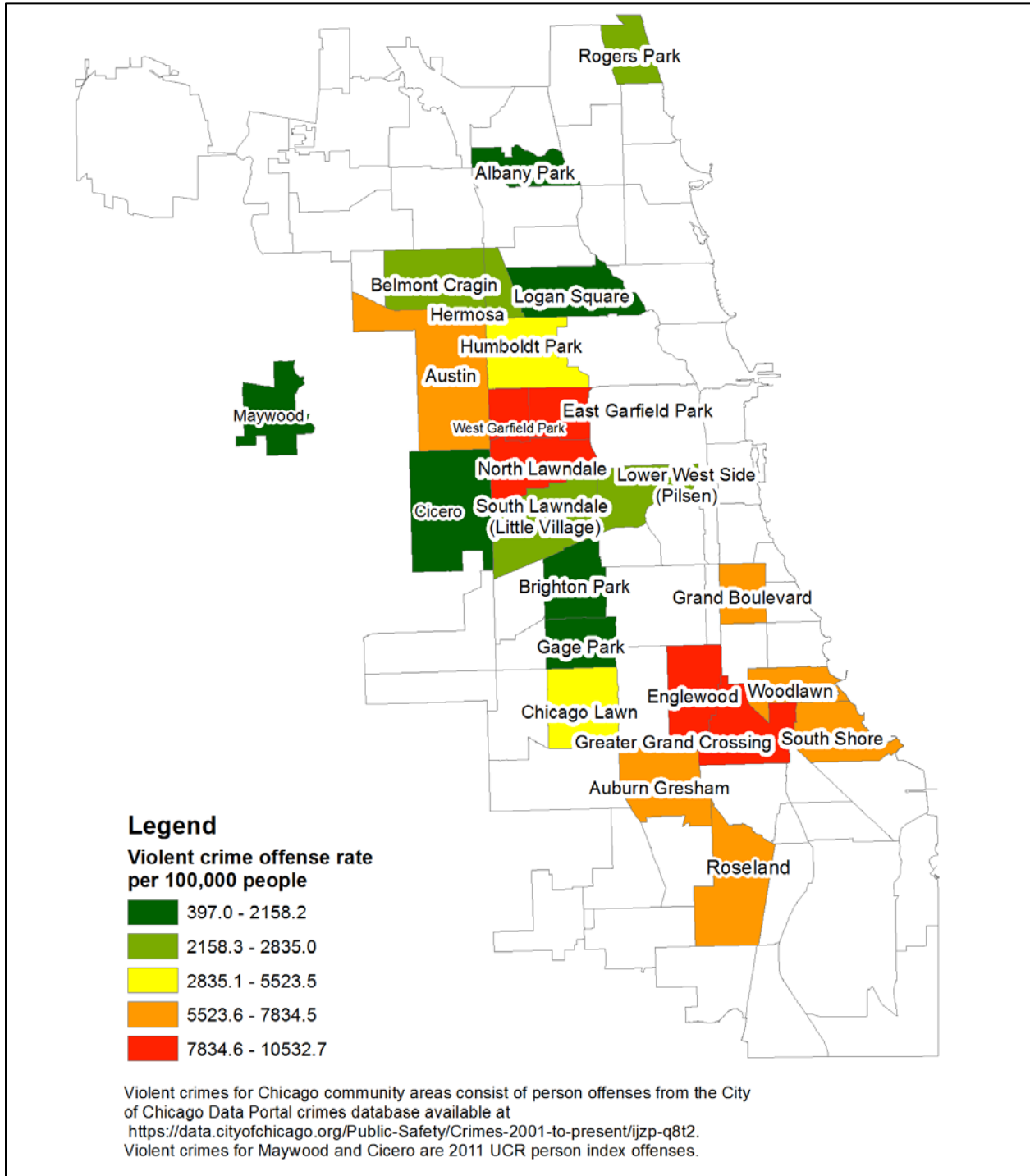
Table 1 and *Map 1* indicate rates of violent offenses per 100,000 persons reported to police in the CVPP communities for 2012. ICJIA staff analyzed data from the City of Chicago’s data portal at <https://data.cityofchicago.org/Public-Safety/Crimes-2001-to-present/ijzp-q8t2>. Rates were derived by calculating the sum of all violent offenses (homicide, criminal sexual assault, robbery, battery, ritualism, and assault) then dividing by populations calculated using census tract data from the 2010 census. Offense rates were not available for townships. The FBI Uniform Crime Reports for 2011 were available for the cities of Cicero and Maywood, but they may not label the same offenses as “violent” as the city of Chicago data.

Table 1
Violent offense rate in CVPP communities, 2012

Community Name	Violent offense rate
Albany Park	1,585.1
Auburn Gresham	6,376.3
Austin	6,715.8
Belmont Cragin	2,237.7
Brighton Park	2,138.1
Chicago Lawn	4,700.9
Cicero	396.9
East Garfield Park	9,802.1
Englewood	10,367.3
Gage Park	2,158.2
Grand Boulevard	6,603.1
Greater Grand Crossing	9,370.6
Hermosa	2,283.1
Humboldt Park	5,523.5
Logan Square	2,125.1
Lower West Side	2,415.5
Maywood	1,000.4
North Lawndale	9,537.2
Rogers Park	2,835.0
Roseland	6,607.1
South Lawndale	2,340.8
South Shore	7,834.5
West Garfield Park	10,532.7
Woodlawn	6,789.1
City of Chicago	3,539.1

Source: ICJIA analysis of Chicago Police Department and U.S. Census Bureau data.

Map 1
Violent offense rate in CVPP communities, 2012



Background

CVPP replaced the Neighborhood Recovery Initiative (NRI), a program of the former Illinois Violence Prevention Authority (IVPA). NRI implemented four program components in 23 neighborhoods in the city of Chicago and the suburbs. The goal of NRI was to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors associated with violence.

The four former program components included:

- *Mentoring Plus Jobs (M+J)* (Replaced by CVPP Youth Employment Program)- Provided part-time jobs for youth as peer leaders and educators, mentoring, and social/emotional skills and support.
- *Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN)* (Replaced by CVPP Parent Program)- Taught parents leadership, empowerment, and self-care skills to enable them to be community leaders, educators, and mentors for other parents.
- *School-Based Counseling* (Eliminated from CVPP due to budget reductions)- Offered early intervention and trauma-informed counseling services for students.
- *Reentry Programs* (Continued under CVPP)- Provided reentry services for youth and young adults returning to the community from correctional facilities.

For state fiscal year 2013, the Governor and the General Assembly transferred the appropriation from the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority although at a reduced level. In January 2014, the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority was dissolved by Public Act 97-1151 and all rights, duties, assets, and staff of IVPA were transferred to ICJIA.

External evaluation

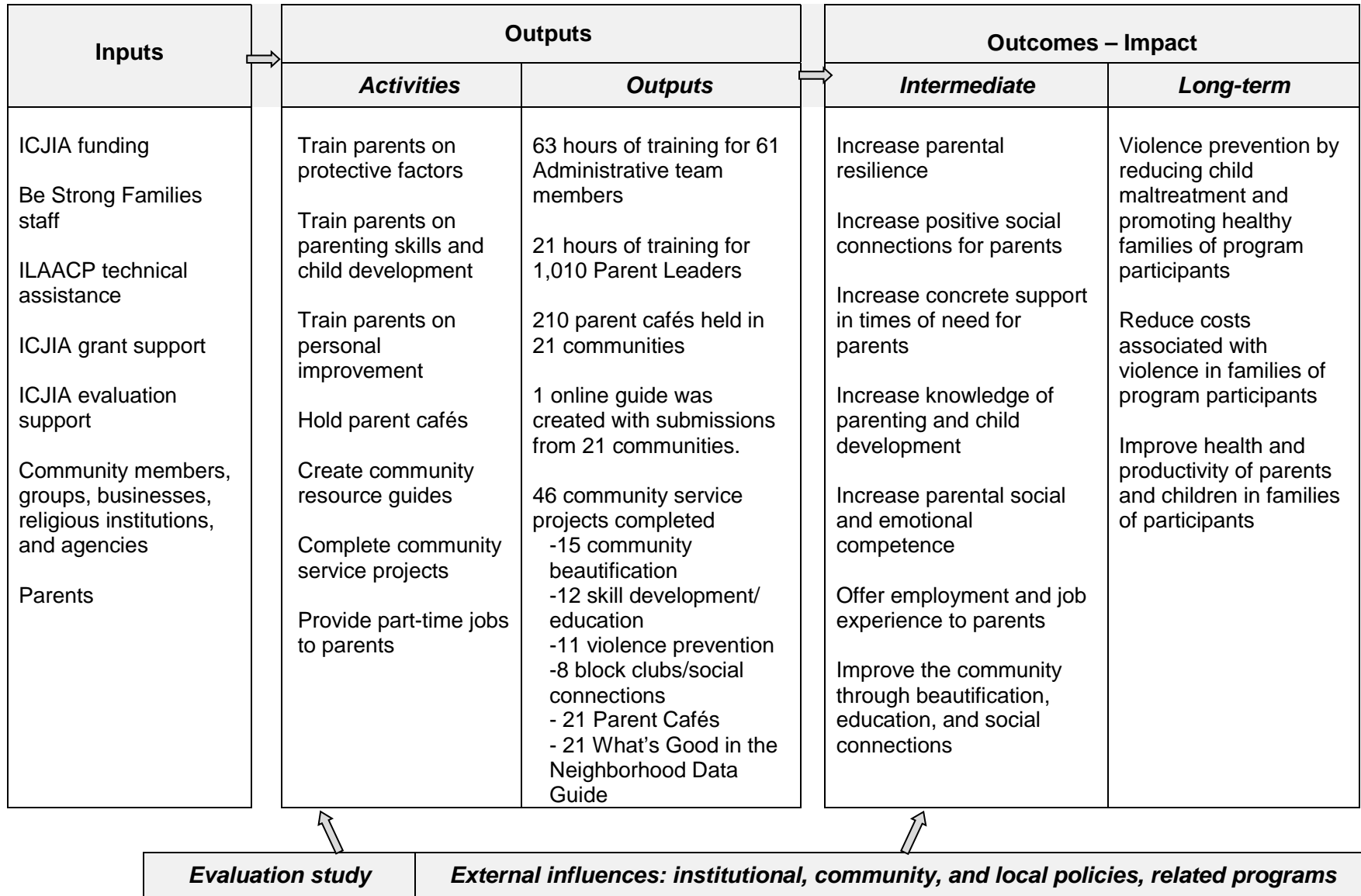
From 2011 to 2013, the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Institute of Juvenile Research, Department of Psychiatry provided research support for the two years of the former NRI and year one of the CVPP program through an inter-governmental agreement. UIC subcontracted with Social Solutions Inc. to develop and maintain a web-based data collection system to be used by lead agencies and managers to document program processes, activities, baseline measures and assessments, and program outcome measures. This evaluation focuses on year one of the CVPP program and uses an evaluation strategy that is different, and goes beyond, UIC methods.

Parent Program goals

There were two main goals of the 2013 CVPP, Parent Program. The first goal was to build protective factors in families with the objective to employ and train about 1,000 individuals (roughly 50 in each community) as Parent Leaders. The second goal was to build protective factors in communities. Under that goal was the objective to build five teams of 10 Parent Leaders to implement a minimum of five service projects in each community (two projects in south suburban communities). The number of community projects implemented varied based on funding.

Figure 1 depicts a logic model of the Parent Program. A logic model is a tool to provide graphical depictions describing logical linkages among program resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes of a program, and indicate a program's desired result (McCawley, 2010).

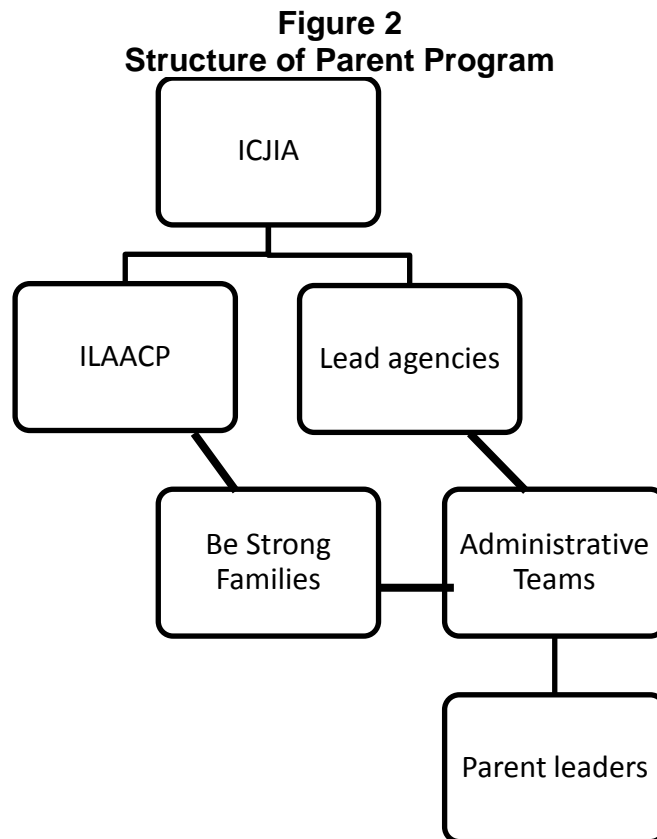
**Figure 1
Parent Program logic model**



Staff structure

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority administered and monitored the grant funds. ICJIA provided both external and internal websites to enhance program administration within the communities. The Illinois African American Coalition for Prevention (ILAACP) coordinated training and provided technical assistance and logistical support to ICJIA and lead agencies and build connected, informed, and engaged communities, enhancing capacity to deliver services. ILAACP is a statewide membership-based charitable organization that strengthens prevention systems, policies and programs in communities through research, training, and advocacy.

Be Strong Families¹ (BSF) was contracted to develop, coordinate and facilitate the program. BSF is a Chicago-based non-profit organization based with a mission to strengthen families from the inside out to achieve positive outcomes for all. The agency assists parents with keeping their families strong and children safe and to assist social service providers in effectively engaging and serving parents. BSF grew out of a primary child abuse prevention collaboration called Strengthening Families Illinois (SFI), active between 2005 and 2012. Six BSF staff served as technical assistance providers for the Parent Program and each served three to four communities. *Figure 2* indicates the structure of the Parent Program.



¹ For more information visit the Be Strong Families website at <http://www.bestrongfamilies.net>

Lead Agencies in each of the 21 Parent Program communities were responsible for performing background checks, conducting interviews, and selecting the administrative team members and Parent Leaders.

Each administrative team consisted of a Manager (working 28 hours per week for 19 weeks) and two Coordinators (working 16 hours a week for 19 weeks). Each CVPP community was responsible for hiring and employing 50 Parent Leaders (20 in south suburbs) to work eight hours per week for 13 weeks. Administrative teams were hired in April 2013 and Parent Leaders were hired in June 2013.

Below is the job description for the Program Manager. Their activities included:

- Participating in all required meetings, site visits, and events convened by the supervisor
- Responding to all communications and requests for information by the supervisor
- Providing supervision for Program Coordinators
- Assisting Program Coordinators in the recruitment, orientation and selection of the Parent Leader staff
- Participating in all orientation and staff development training
- Providing training delivery (in partnership with Program Coordinators) of Parent Program topics to Parent Leader staff
- Keeping organized project/employee files for each Parent Leader staff member
- Maintaining files on all service projects which will include documentation and results
- Participating in weekly meetings with Be Strong Families Technical Assistance team which will include weekly reporting on Parent Leader service project implementation activities
- Being a technical assistance liaison for one service project team in their community
- Tracking and processing payroll
- Preparing quarterly fiscal and program narrative reports as required

Below is the job description for the Program Coordinator. Their activities included:

- Working with Administrative Team on the recruitment, orientation and selection of the Parent Leader staff
- Keeping organized project/employee files
- Facilitating weekly meetings with Parent Leaders to support service project planning
- Participating in all orientation and staff development training
- Providing training delivery (in partnership with Administrative Team) of Parent Program topics to Parent Leaders
- Tracking and monitoring activities, progress and results of service projects
- Maintaining files on all service projects which will include documentation and results
- Participating in weekly meetings with Be Strong Families Technical Assistance team and reporting on Parent Leader service implementation activities
- Serving as a technical assistance liaison for two service project teams in their community

Each community employed 50 Parent Leaders. The positions were posted centrally by ICJIA and the candidate information was sent to the 21 different CVPP community agencies on a weekly basis. The primary criteria to be hired as Parent Leaders were their passion, desire, and

enthusiasm for making positive changes in their family and community. There were no age restrictions and all community residents who considered themselves parents were eligible for employment, including teen parents, grandparents, foster parents, and non-custodial fathers. Previous experience with, and training by, Strengthening Families Illinois was considered a plus.

Below is the job description for the Parent Leader. Their activities included:

- Attendance at orientation, staff development training, Parent Cafés, and other events
- Reflecting upon and actively applying information from training into their family life (e.g. Living the Protective Factors)
- Weekly technical assistance meetings with Administrative Team liaisons
- Ongoing meetings with Service Project teams to debrief project implementation
- Form teams with other parent leaders who will be responsible for developing Service Projects

Trainings

BSF provided a train-the-trainer model of training to Administrative teams to support their training delivery to Parent Leaders. Be Strong Families provided an implementation manual with a step-by-step, week-by-week agenda and all administrative forms necessary for implementation of the Parent Program for the Administrative teams and Parent Leaders.

Administrative team orientation and training

Eight BSF trainers conducted sessions for three regional Administrative team trainings (train-the-trainer) in different locations within the CVPP communities. BSF elected to keep the training group sizes to less than 30 people to enhance training effectiveness. Administrative teams were paid to attend 63 hours of training over the course of six weeks in April and May 2013. The purpose was to build protective factors in the Administrative team members and teach them the curriculum to train Parent Leaders. The *Developing Parenting Communities Leadership Training* consisted of the following:

- Orientation (5 hours, full group)
- Vitality training (4 hours, full group)- designed to build a foundation for health and wellness and includes basic lifestyle practices in order to be a strong parent and create a strong family.
- Wake up! to Your Potential, Module 1: Maximizing Positive Energy to Direct Your Life (7 hours)- helps participants learn who they are and learn what kind of person, parent and leader they want to become.
- Wake up! to Your Potential, Module 2: Clarifying Your Vision and Setting Your Goals (7 hours)
- Wake up to Your Potential and Vitality Train-the-Trainer (7 hours)
- Living the Protective Factors (7 hours)
- Parent Café Training Institute (12 hours)- Parent Cafés are guided small group conversations on parent-related topics.
- Living the Protective Factors Workshop (2 hours)

- Parent Café Planning (6 hours, full group)
- Parent Program Overview (6 hours, full group)

Parent leader training

Parent Leaders orientation, training, and planning took place over five weeks in June and July 2013. Some of the trainings were done in Spanish based on need. The training consisted of the following:

- Protective Factors training through Parent Café Delivery (10 hours or five, two-hour sessions)
- Leadership Training (8 hours)
 - Vitality
 - Wake Up! To Your Potential
 - Community Service Project Development
- Living the Protective Factors workbook, self-study (3 hours)

The *Protective Factors training* used parent cafés, or small group conversations, to educate parents on each of the Protective Factors and to model café delivery for those parents who would later be a part of the Parent Café Community Service Project Teams. The parent cafés were used for the training in order to build teams, encourage sharing, and promote meaningful connections among participants. Each two-hour café focused on one of the five protective factors to promote healthy families and reduce child abuse and neglect: 1) increasing parental resilience, 2) building the social connections of parents, 3) increasing knowledge of parenting and child development, 4) providing concrete supports in times of need, and 5) supporting the social and emotional competence of children. In addition, it modeled for Parent Leaders aspects of parent cafés such as creating a space conducive to parent cafés and how to encourage discussion around the protective factors. Parents who were a part of the Parent Café Community Service Project Team received more in depth training on table hosting and set up in the following weeks.

Community service projects

Once Parent Leaders were trained, they were assembled in teams of 10 individuals to design and implement service projects to build protective factors in their community. There were two mandatory service projects for each community— parent cafés and a resource guide.

Parent cafés

Be Strong Families Parent Cafés are a parent engagement strategy that uses small group conversations to facilitate self-reflection, peer-to-peer learning, support, and education on the Strengthening Families Protective Factors. Be Strong Families Parent cafés are adapted from the World Café process developed in 1995 by Juanita Brown and David Issacs for a small group meeting of business and academic leaders in California (The World Café, n.d.). World Cafés have been used around the world to facilitate groups to collaborate and discuss issues (Brown, 2001). There is one “café host” who guides the process and at each table while participants rotate among groups sitting at tables (like a café) to link what was learned by each group (Brown, 2001).

The World Café has seven design principles (The World Café, n.d.)

1. Set the context by considering the goals and purpose of the café
2. Create hospitable space that is welcoming, safe, inviting, and comfortable
3. Explore questions that matter and that are relevant to the concerns of the group
4. Encourage participation to gain everyone's ideas and perspectives, but allow those who wish to only listen to do so
5. Connect diverse perspectives by allowing people to move around, meet new people and connect to each other, and learn new insights and perspectives
6. Encourage people to listen and pay attention to themes, patterns, and insights
7. Share collective discoveries from small group conversations with the larger group

The World Café has five components (The World Café, n.d.).

1. Setting- an environment modelled after a café with small tables with chairs
2. Welcome and introduction- The Café Host welcomes and introduces the café process
3. Small group conversations- Three rounds of conversations take place for about 20 minutes. At the end of the time period, each member moves to a different table.
4. Questions- Each conversation is prefaced with a question on the content and purpose of the session. For parent cafés, the questions center around parenting to increase protective factors.
5. Harvest- After the rounds of conversations with small groups, individuals are invited to share insights from their conversations to the larger group.

Parent Leaders that were a part of this service project were responsible for planning and implementing at least five parent cafés before the end of the program period (August 30, 2013). To support their delivery of parent cafés in the community, each community's Administrative team was provided with three "Parent Café in a Box" question card sets, which provides over 200 discussion questions on the protective factors for café discussions.

The following were some themes of the Parent Program parent cafés in the community:

- The protective factors
- Family communication
- Family support
- Family resilience
- Relationships
- Parenting skills
- Nutrition
- Community violence
- Gangs
- Bullying

Resource guide

Parent leaders were instructed to collect information in the community for entry to an online resource guide called *What's Good in the Neighborhood?* Parent Leaders interviewed parents and community residents to find local businesses, churches, and service providers that were, in

some capacity, useful to families. The purpose of the guide was increasing the protective factors of *positive social connections* and *concrete support in times of need*. The specific goals were to:

- increase the knowledge of the neighborhood by community members;
- teach Parent Leaders more about the community, so they become resources;
- offer the ability to search community resources online;
- reduce the digital divide by encouraging information sharing through the Internet; and
- increase dialogue about positive (rather than negative) things in the neighborhood.

Launched in October 2013, the online resource guide offers resources in the 23 community sites recommended by parents as good for families and children. A consultant designed the Website for the resource guide located at <http://whgit.net>. Be Strong Families provided two virtual workshops (via webinar) and an in-person workshop to Parent Leaders and Administrative Teams on entering data onto the Website. The online research guide allows users to search for resources, such as businesses and service providers, in their communities and write reviews. The site is monitored by BSF and can be viewed in English and Spanish. The website was promoted by sharing the links from websites, newsletters, social media, e-mail, and word of mouth. On December 30, 2013, there were 510 resources posted and the website remains accessible.

Other community service projects

Parent leaders worked on community service projects with community members to increase individual and community protective factors. According to program data, 46 community service projects were completed by the 21 communities. Over 2,500 community members worked with Parent Leaders develop and conduct community service projects. The program reported that Parent Leaders dedicated over 4,500 hours to their community service projects.

Parent Program community service projects were in four categories:

- Violence prevention
- Social connections/block clubs
- Community clean-up/beautification
- Skill development/education

According to program data, violence prevention projects ranged from the broad to the very community-specific. For example, several communities noted they would train parent leaders to be “violence prevention ambassadors” and go into communities to give presentations and talk with community members about violence prevention. One community described a more specific plan: their parent leaders worked to renovate and restore a local park so that children and families would have a place to convene and play, and local sports teams would have a place to play and practice without having to travel to the next closest park, which involved crossing gang boundaries and being threatened with violence. Another community had parent leaders work to assure safe passage for children attending a new school, helped parents and children get to know each other by hosting a meet-and-greet, and oversaw youth peer mediation training, which would continue throughout the school year.

An example of skill development and education projects were workforce development workshops, in which Parent Leaders hosted events to help community members with job training and searching, as well as teaching parents about the five protective factors to increase their parenting skills. Another project had Parent leaders host workshops in conjunction with clinical professionals to help community parents with decision making, emotional management, job training, and parenting skills.

Several communities initiated clean-up/beautification projects. One community had Parent Leaders organize groups to revitalize abandoned lots, using these projects as an opportunity for youth to learn landscaping skills. Another site started an initiative to work with residents to clean streets block by block, while another site focused their cleanup efforts on local parks and other areas where gangs congregate.

In order to increase social connections, in one community, Parent Leaders revitalized an existing neighborhood block club by organizing regular meetings, reaching out to residents, and organizing cleanup days and a block party for residents to get to know each other better. Another site organized play groups for parents with young children, specifically families who have newly immigrated to this country and whose children are not yet enrolled in preschool. Parent Leaders used these groups, many of which were conducted in Spanish, to educate parents about community resources and events.

Prior to starting the projects, communities indicated the following protective factors they thought the community service projects would incorporate. Many sites indicated more than one protective factor per service project.

- Increasing parental resilience (34 projects)
- Building the social connections of parents (37 projects)
- Increasing knowledge of parenting and child development (25 projects)
- Providing concrete support in Times of need (36 projects)
- Supporting the social and emotional competence of children (28 projects)

Methodology

The evaluation was a process and outcome evaluation. The surveys of staff and participants provided information on the process—*how* the program operated. The evaluation used a validated measure of changes in protective factors of child maltreatment. According to Center for the Study of Prevention of Violence, “thoughtful evaluation can avoid the pitfalls of the ‘hurdle-mentality’ that attempts to prove the worth of a program, and can instead focus attention on the desire to learn, adjust, and improve” (Jackson, Williams, and Elliot, 1996, p.2).

ICJIA researchers utilized administrative data and developed four surveys to evaluate the 2013 Parent Program. Surveys included one pre- and post-survey of program effects, one training evaluation survey, and two exit surveys for Parent Leaders and members of the Administrative Teams. All forms were available in English and Spanish. Translations into Spanish were completed by an agency offering these services. Data was collected between May and August of 2013.

Administrative data

In lieu of a database capturing more individual data, each community was instructed to submit aggregated administrative data at the program’s end that offered information about the participants and activities of the program. The communities completed and submitted an Excel spreadsheet which included the number of parents trained for their roles, as well as the number of parent leader teams, the number of completed community service projects, and the hours spent on the projects. Out of 21 communities, 20 returned completed forms.

Training evaluation survey

A paper survey form was given to all participants who completed the Parent Leader training to obtain feedback that could gauge the quality of the training, satisfaction of the training, and what was learned at the training. The one-page hard copy survey had 10 questions and took about five minutes to complete. Federal regulations require that human subject participants in some research studies must give informed consent to participate in the study and so verbal consent was obtained through reading a script and the anonymous forms were collected in a single envelope. After collection, program staff returned forms by mail to ICJIA researchers. All data was entered into an Access database and then analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Researchers coded by hand the open-ended responses.

Approximately 1,010 participants attended the training and 708 completed an evaluation form (70 percent). Both English and Spanish forms were available and a total of 505 participants completed an evaluation form in English and 203 completed one in Spanish.

Protective factors survey

A paper survey form was given to Parent Leaders in the program as a pre-survey (Time 1, before programming began) and a post-survey (Time 2, after programming ended). The purpose was to

measure participant changes in protective factors of child abuse and neglect because the main goal of the Parent Program was to build those protective factors.

The questions were taken from the caregiver portion of the Protective Factors Survey (PFS) developed by the University of Kansas Institute for Educational Research & Public Service in partnership with the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention. PFS is free and in the public domain (see *Appendix A*).

PFS measures protective factors in four areas:

- *Family functioning/Resiliency* (5 items): Measures having adaptive skills and strategies to persevere in times of crisis, as well as family's ability to openly share positive and negative experiences and mobilize to accept, solve, and manage problems.
- *Social and concrete support* (6 items): Measures perceived informal support (from family, friends, and neighbors) that helps provide for emotional needs, in addition to perceived access to tangible goods and services to help families cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis or intensified need.
- *Nurturing and attachment* (3 items): Measures the emotional tie along with a pattern of positive interaction between the parent and child that develops over time.
- *Child development/Knowledge of parenting* (6 items): Measures the understanding and utilization of effective child management techniques and having age-appropriate expectations for children's abilities.

The four scales of the PFS demonstrate high internal consistency. Content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity were examined and indicated the PFS is a valid measure of multiple protective factors against child maltreatment. In two separate studies, the PFS subscales were found to be negatively related to stress, depression, and risk for child maltreatment, and positively related to adaptive coping and caregiver health (Counts, Buffington, Chang-Rios, Rasmussen, & Preacher, 2010).

The pre- and post-survey asked program participants to respond to 20 statements about them and their family, using a seven-point frequency or agreement scale (1=Strongly disagree/ never) and (7=Strongly agree/ always). The survey took approximately ten minutes to complete. Six statements were reverse coded items or were worded opposite direction; however, scoring was done so that increases in mean scores were all positive. Scores were created for each statement and protective factor area averaged for the pre-survey (Time 1) and post-survey (Time 2).

A unique identification code was used as a way to maintain the anonymity of respondents while allowing researchers to connect the pre-survey with a post-survey. The instructions asked respondents to create a unique ID code using the first letter of their first name and the first letter of their last name followed by their date of birth. For example, John Smith born January 1, 1995 would be ID# JS 01-01-1995.

The Principal Investigator instructed and reminded the Parent Program managers on the distribution of the pre- and post-surveys both in person and through regularly scheduled online meetings. A handout was provided to program staff administering the survey to provide to participants. Completed forms were collected in a single manila envelope and sent by mail to

ICJIA researchers. Data was entered into an Access database and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Out of 1,010 program participants (Parent Leaders), 889 completed pre- and/or post-surveys—613 completed pre-surveys (61 percent) and 276 completed post-surveys (27 percent). Researchers matched the pre- and post-surveys from the same adult participant by unique identification code and community. (Community and agency were derived from the return mail addresses). A primary issue was that many did not correctly or completely fill out the unique ID code. A total of 208 individuals were matched who completed both pre- and post-surveys; four individuals were removed who completed multiple pre- and/or post-surveys. The total of match cases was 204 or 20 percent of all Parent Leaders. Of those, 181 were the English version and 23 were the Spanish version.

Exit surveys

Parent leader exit survey

Surveys were administered to Parent Leaders at the end of the program to gain feedback on program implementation and their satisfaction with the program, as well as learn their suggestions for programmatic improvements. A paper survey form was given to all the Parent Leaders at the end of the program. The Principal Investigator instructed and reminded the Parent Program managers on the distribution of the exit surveys in person, through regularly scheduled online meetings, and email reminders. BSF assisted in reminding and encouraging the Administrative teams and managers to administer and return surveys.

The Administrative teams distributed surveys to Parent Leaders in person. A total of 349 completed surveys were submitted—220 in English and 129 in Spanish. The response rate was 35 percent. Data was entered into an Access database and analyzed in Excel and SPSS.

Administrative team exit survey

At the end of the program in August 2013, the Principal Investigator of the evaluation study sent 61 online surveys to the Administrative Team via e-mail. The surveys obtained feedback on program implementation and their satisfaction with the program, as well as suggestions for programmatic improvements. The Principal Investigator reminded Administrative team members to submit their responses through a web meeting, in-person at an event, and through a reminder email. A total of 48 completed surveys were submitted—42 in English and six in Spanish. The response rate was 79 percent, which is very good as the average online response rate is 30 percent (University of Texas, 2007). Data was exported from Survey Gismo to Microsoft Excel and analyzed using Excel and SPSS.

Limitations

A limitation to this evaluation was missing data. There were low response rates for some surveys. However, all the surveys were voluntary due to the guidelines set forth by the Institutional Review Board which protects human subjects of research. The ethical principles

governing research dictates that human subjects cannot be required or forced to respond to survey questions. In future evaluation, the researchers can establish more of a presence with the community sites, offering reminders and instruction to the sites on survey administration. In addition, survey forms can be made easily accessible online and answers to frequently asked questions can be offered. Another limitation was that this study did not have client-level data of all participants in the program, such as demographics, but relied on aggregate administrative program data from the community sites.

Findings: Administrative program data

Twenty communities out of 21 submitted administrative data at the end of the program about the number of parents trained, about the number of participants on service project teams, and community events at the beginning and end of the program. Administrative data was missing from the community of Roseland.

Participation in the Parent Program

According to respondents, a total of 1,121 parents were recruited to participate in the program, an average of 56 parents per community. A total of 872 parents were trained as Parent Leaders, an average of 43 parents, and a range of 20 to 58 parents per community. Each community was responsible for hiring and employing 50 Parent Leaders, 20 in south suburbs.

The programs were required to have at least six training sessions—five, two-hour sessions on protective factors training through Parent Café Delivery and an eight-hour leadership training which included three components—Vitality, Wake Up! To Your Potential and community service project development. The Parent Program had a total of 180 training sessions, an average of nine sessions per community, and a range of 5 to 20 training sessions per community.

Community service projects

Trained Parent Leaders created teams of individuals to conduct service projects to build protective factors in their community. According to respondents, the Parent Program formed a total of 94 teams, an average of 6.5 teams per community. Communities reported a total of 5,268 total hours spent on service project.

Community members were recruited to be on the teams to develop community service projects with Parent Leaders. A total of 647 community members were on the service project teams. In addition, additional community members, not on the team, could participate in a service project. There were an additional 3,588 community members who worked on projects, an average of 179 community members per project in each community.

The communities reported a total of 113 service projects completed. There were up to five teams for each project and the range of projects per team was 2 to 14 and average of 6.2 projects per team in each community. Some of the community service projects mentioned included:

- *Parent cafés* ($n=19$)
- *Violence prevention*: Parents became violence prevention ambassadors, began support groups for parents who lost children to violence, eased community tensions from school integration, and raised awareness of bullying and domestic violence ($n=17$).
- *What's Good in the Neighborhood resource guide* ($n=18$)
- *Community clean-up/beautification*: Parents improved communities by cleaning up parks and streets. Neighborhoods were decorated with wall murals and community gardens ($n=12$).

- *Skill development/education:* Parents held workshops and discussions on job skills development, community parenting resources, anger management, and holistic health ($n=11$).
- *Social connections:* Parents revitalized or started block clubs and reached out to community members through social activities ($n=5$).

Findings: Protective factors survey

The protective factors survey was distributed to Parent Leaders and was used to measure family functioning and resiliency; social and concrete support; nurturing and attachment; and child development/ knowledge of parenting. **Family functioning and resiliency** questions measured adaptive skills and strategies in times of crisis; higher average scores indicate higher family functioning/resiliency. **Social and concrete support questions** measured perceived informal and tangible support in times of need; higher average scores indicate higher social and concrete support. **Nurturing and attachment** questions measured emotional connections and positive interactions with children; higher scores indicated more nurturing and attachment between parent and children. **Child development and knowledge of parenting** questions measured the use of age-appropriate, child management techniques; higher scores indicated a higher understanding of child development and parenting.

The survey was administered to program participants (Parent Leaders) at two points in time—(Time 1) the start of program participation, prior to training, and (Time 2) after the program ended or at program disenrollment. The mean scores were compared at Time 1 and Time 2 to determine if there was an increase (or decrease) in knowledge of the four measures of protective factors. The responses used a seven-point frequency or agreement scale (1=Strongly disagree/ never) and (7=Strongly agree/ always) (see *Appendix A*).

Respondents

A total of 889 surveys were received—613 pre-surveys and 276 post-surveys. A total of 19 out of 24 communities returned surveys—18 returned pre-surveys and 12 returned post-surveys. There were 204 matched pairs with a pre- and post-survey.

Table 2 depicts the survey respondents by community of both the pre- and post-survey, just pre-surveys, just post-surveys, and those matched by pre- and post-survey.

Table 2
Survey respondents by community

	All surveys		Pre (before)		Post (after)		Matched	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
Albany Park	12	1.3%	12	2.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Auburn Gresham	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Austin	46	5.2%	46	7.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Bloom/Bremen Township	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Brighton Park	54	6.1%	33	5.4%	21	7.6%	14	6.9%
Chicago Lawn/West Chicago/Gage Park	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Cicero	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
East Garfield Park	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Englewood	74	8.3%	39	6.4%	35	12.7%	29	14.2%
Grand Boulevard	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Greater Grand Crossing	48	5.4%	21	3.4%	27	9.8%	11	5.4%
Hermosa/Belmont Cragin	74	8.3%	48	7.8%	26	9.4%	18	8.8%
Humboldt Park	59	6.6%	31	5.1%	28	10.1%	20	9.8%
Logan Square	72	8.1%	41	6.7%	31	11.2%	26	12.7%
Maywood	80	9.0%	42	6.9%	38	13.8%	29	14.2%
North Lawndale	46	5.2%	46	7.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Pilsen-Little Village								
Rich Township	41	4.6%	32	5.2%	9	3.3%	4	2.0%
Rogers Park	38	4.3%	38	6.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Roseland	21	2.4%	21	3.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
South Shore	44	4.9%	44	7.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Thornton Township	26	2.9%	18	2.9%	8	2.9%	6	2.9%
West Garfield Park	70	7.9%	53	8.6%	17	6.2%	17	8.3%
Woodlawn	84	9.4%	48	7.8%	36	13.0%	30	14.7%
Total	889	100%	613	100%	276	100.0%	204	100%

The age range of the match sample respondents was 20 to 75 and the average age was 45 years old ($n=204$). The most common age or mode was 55 years old. Just under one-third of the match sample (31 percent, $n=63$) was in their 50s and about 28 percent was in their 40s ($n=52$). *Table 3* indicates the matched survey respondents by age.

Table 3
Matched survey respondents by age

Age	<i>n</i>	Percent
20s	20	9.8%
30s	47	23.0%
40s	57	27.9%
50s	63	30.9%
60s	15	7.4%
70s	2	1.0%
Total	204	100.0%

Matched pre- and post-surveys

Researchers matched the pre- and post-surveys from the same participants by unique identification code and community. The total number of matched cases was 204. *Table 4* indicated the results of the matched pre- and post-surveys by measure. There was a slight increase in mean scores from the pre-survey to post-survey on all the measures. The greatest change in mean scores was in the measure of family functioning and resiliency. A combined measure was created that incorporates all the protective factors—there was an increase in mean scores of .24. Each measure is described in detail below.

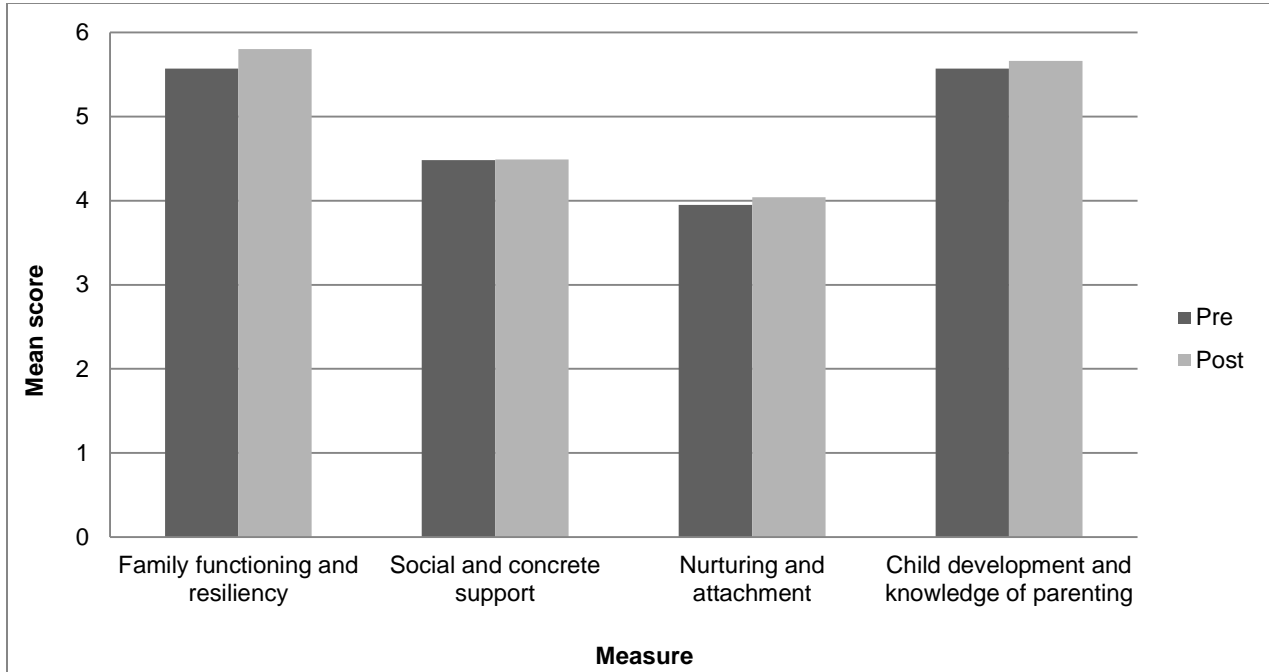
Table 4
Results of matched pre- and post-survey scores by measure

	<i>n</i>	Mean 1 (pre)	Standard deviation 1	Mean 2 (post)	Standard deviation 2	Change in means	t	Sig	Effect size
Family functioning and resiliency*	204	5.57	1.13	5.80	.95	.23	2.85	.005	.20
Social and concrete support	204	4.48	.99	4.49	1.05	.01	.18	.856	.01
Nurturing and attachment	202	3.95	1.06	4.04	1.22	.09	.87	.383	.06
Child development and knowledge of parenting	202	5.57	.67	5.66	.63	.09	1.55	.123	.11
Combined measures*	204	4.86	.63	5.00	.59	.24	2.06	.040	.02

*Statistically significant

Figure 2 graphically depicts the changes from pre- and post-survey by measure.

Figure 2
Change in pre- and post-survey by measure



Family functioning and resiliency

A paired sample t-test ($n=204$) was conducted to investigate differences in the pre- to post-survey of family functioning and resiliency. The t-test showed an increase from Time 1 (pre-survey) ($M = 5.57$; $SD = 4.13$) to Time 2 (post-survey) ($M = 5.80$; $SD = 0.95$, $t = -2.85$ $p = .005$). The change in means was .23. The difference between the average pre- and post-survey scores was statistically significant.

Cohen's d evaluates the degree (measured in standard deviation units) that the mean of the difference scores is different from zero. If the calculated d equals 0, the mean of the difference scores is equal to zero. However, as d deviates from 0, the effect size becomes larger. Effect size provides a measure of the magnitude of the difference expressed in standard deviation units from the first survey. Therefore, the effect size can indicate how big an effect we can expect from the program. An estimate of the effect size ($d = 0.20$) suggests a small effect.

There were positive increases in all five questions on family functioning. The largest increase in mean scores was how often two statements on family were true—a change of .28. One statement was, *When we argue, my family listens to both sides of the story*. Time 1 had a mean of 5.25 ($SD = 1.42$) to Time 2 had a mean of 5.53 ($SD = 0.28$). The other statement was, *My family is able to*

solve our problems. Time 1 had a mean of 5.23 ($SD = 1.30$) to Time 2 had a mean of 5.81 ($SD = 1.18$). Table 5 shows differences in questions at Time 1 and Time 2.

Table 5
Family functioning and resiliency questions of matched pre- and post-surveys

	<i>n</i>	Mean 1 (pre)	Standard deviation 1	Mean 2 (post)	Standard deviation 2	Change in means
In my family, we talk about problems.	203	5.74	1.31	5.85	1.25	.11
When we argue, my family listens to “both sides of the story.”	201	5.25	1.42	5.53	1.40	.28
In my family, we take time to listen to each other.	204	5.50	1.40	5.75	1.22	.25
My family pulls together when things are stressful.	203	5.84	1.38	6.07	1.18	.23
My family is able to solve our problems.	203	5.53	1.30	5.81	1.18	.28

Social and concrete support

A paired sample t-test ($n = 204$) was conducted to investigate differences in the pre- to post-survey of social and concrete support. The t-test showed an increase from Time 1 (pre-survey) ($M = 5.57$; $SD = 4.13$) to Time 2 (post-survey) (mean = 4.48; $SD = 0.99$, $t = -.18$, $p = .86$). The change in means was .01. The difference between the average pre- and post-survey scores was not statistically significant. An estimate of the effect size ($d = -0.01$) suggests a small effect.

There were positive increases in three social and concrete support questions and decreases in three questions. The largest change (but still small) in mean scores was a reduction in agreement with the negative statement, *If I needed help finding a job, I wouldn't know where to go for help* (reverse coded)—a change of $-.08$. Time 1 had a mean of 3.30 ($SD = 2.16$) to Time 2 had a mean of 3.22 ($SD = 2.16$). The second largest change (but still small) in mean scores was an increase in agreement with the statement, *When I am lonely there are several people to talk to*—a change of $.07$. Time 1 had a mean of 5.88 ($SD = 1.39$) to Time 2 had a mean of 5.95 ($SD = 1.27$). Table 6 shows differences in questions at Time 1 and Time 2.

Table 6
Social and concrete support questions of matched pre- and post-survey

	<i>n</i>	Mean 1 (pre)	Standard deviation 1	Mean 2 (post)	Standard deviation 2	Change in means
I have others who will listen when I need to talk about my problems.	203	6.01	1.32	5.99	1.30	-.02
When I am lonely, there are several people I can talk to.	202	5.88	1.39	5.95	1.27	.07
I would have no idea where to turn if my family needed food or housing.*	196	2.69	2.10	2.70	2.15	.01
I wouldn't know where to go for help if I had trouble making ends meet.*	200	3.03	2.24	2.93	2.19	-.10
If there is a crisis, I have others I can talk to.	199	5.98	1.43	6.04	1.25	.06
If I needed help finding a job, I wouldn't know where to go for help.*	200	3.30	2.16	3.22	2.16	-.08

*Researchers reverse-coded these items, so all score increases are positive, all score decreases are negative.

Nurturing and attachment

A paired sample t-test ($n=202$) was conducted to investigate differences in the pre- to post-survey of parental nurturing and attachment to children. The t-test showed a slight increase from Time 1 (pre-survey) ($M = 3.95$; $SD = 1.06$) to Time 2 (post-survey) ($M = 4.04$; $SD = 1.22$, $t = -.87$, $p = .38$). The change in means was .09. The difference between the average pre- and post-survey scores was not statistically significant. An estimate of the effect size ($d = -.06$) suggests a small effect.

There were positive increases in all three questions on nurturing and attachment. The largest increase in mean scores was with agreement with the statement, *I know how to help my child learn*. Time 1 had a mean of 5.96 ($SD = 1.38$) to Time 2 had a mean of 6.15 ($SD = 1.32$). The change in means was .20. *Table 7* shows differences in questions at Time 1 and Time 2.

Table 7
Nurturing and attachment questions of matched pre- and post-surveys

	<i>n</i>	Mean 1 (pre)	Standard deviation 1	Mean 2 (post)	Standard deviation 2	Change in means
There are many times when I don't know what to do as a parent.*	201	3.04	1.81	3.07	2.01	.03
I know how to help my child learn.	197	5.96	1.38	6.15	1.32	.20
My child misbehaves just to upset me.*	196	2.85	1.87	2.89	1.94	.04

*Researchers reverse-coded these items, so all score increases are positive, all score decreases are negative.

Child development and knowledge of parenting

A paired sample t-test ($n=202$) was conducted to investigate differences in the pre- to post-survey of child development and knowledge of parenting. The t-test showed a slight increase from Time 1 (pre-survey) ($M = 5.57$; $SD = .67$) to Time 2 (post-survey) ($M = 5.66$; $SD = .63$, $t = -1.55$, $p = .12$). The change in means was .09. The difference between the average pre- and post-survey scores was not statistically significant. An estimate of the effect size ($d = -.11$) suggests a small effect.

There were positive increases in all six questions on child development and knowledge of parenting. The largest increase in mean scores was agreement with the statement, *My child and I are very close to each other*. Time 1 had a mean of 6.42 ($SD = 1.07$) to Time 2 had a mean of 6.57 ($SD = .81$). The change in means was .15. Table 8 shows differences in questions at Time 1 and Time 2.

Table 8
Child development and knowledge of parenting questions of matched pre- and post-surveys

	<i>n</i>	Mean 1 (pre)	Standard deviation 1	Mean 2 (post)	Standard deviation 2	Change in means
I praise my child when he/she behaves well.	199	6.20	1.25	6.20	1.31	.00
When I discipline my child, I lose control.*	198	2.13	1.32	2.19	1.43	.06
I am happy being with my child.	197	6.60	.93	6.67	.86	.07
My child and I are very close to each other.	198	6.42	1.07	6.57	.81	.15
I am able to soothe my child when he/she is upset.	200	6.14	1.17	6.25	.99	.11
I spend time with my child doing what he/she likes to do.	201	5.96	1.14	6.06	1.07	.11

*Researchers reverse-coded these items, so all score increases are positive, all score decreases are negative.

Combined measures

All four measures—family functioning and resiliency, social and concrete support, nurturing and attachment, child development, and knowledge of parenting—were combined and averaged into one measure. A paired sample t-test ($n=204$) was conducted to investigate differences in the pre- to post-survey of the combined measures from Time 1 ($M = 4.86$; $SD = 0.63$) to Time 2 ($M = 5.00$; $SD = 0.59$, $t = 2.06$, $p = .04$). The change in means was .24. The difference was statistically significant. An estimate of the effect size ($d = 0.02$) suggests a small effect.

Unmatched pre- and post-surveys

The results of the pre- and post-surveys that were unmatched indicated a small increases in the average scores of all four measures— family functioning and resiliency; social and concrete support; nurturing and attachment; and child development/ knowledge of parenting, including a combination of all four measures (*Table 9*). However, these are not matched samples of the same participants' pre- and post-survey.

Table 9
Results of pre- and post-surveys by measure (un-matched)

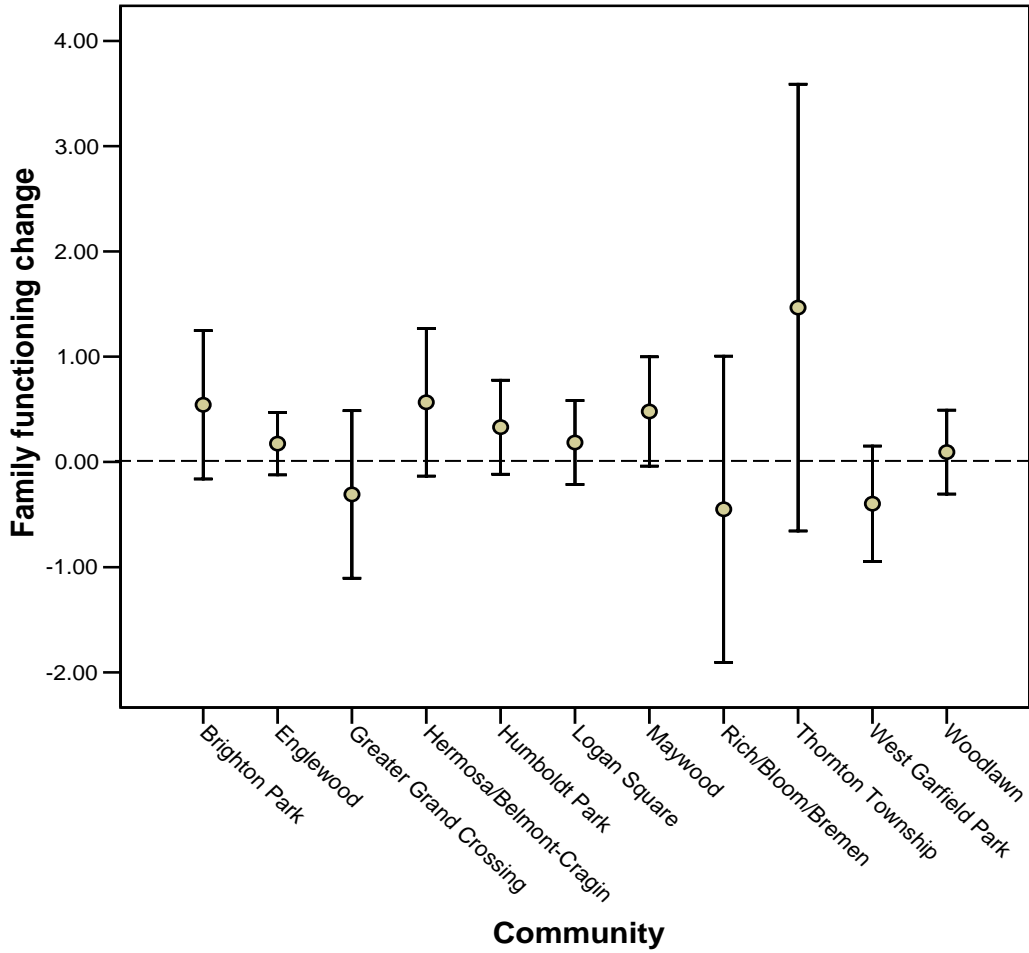
	<i>n</i>	Mean 1 (pre)	Standard deviation 1	<i>N</i>	Mean 2 (post)	Standard deviation 2	Change in Means
Family functioning and resiliency	613	5.51	1.16	276	5.80	.98	.29
Social and concrete support	613	4.45	.99	276	4.48	1.05	.03
Nurturing and attachment	613	3.99	1.11	274	4.00	1.22	.01
Child development and knowledge of parenting	612	5.57	.80	274	5.68	.63	.11
Combined measures	612	4.88	.62	274	4.99	.60	.11

Mean scores by community

The differences in mean scores by community were examined. There were positive increases in mean family functioning and resiliency scores in eight communities—Thornton Township had the highest increase. Three communities had reductions in mean scores—Greater Grand Crossing; Rich/ Bloom/Bremen Township; and West Garfield Park.

Figure 3 depicts the change of mean scores on family functioning and resiliency and 95% confidence interval by community.

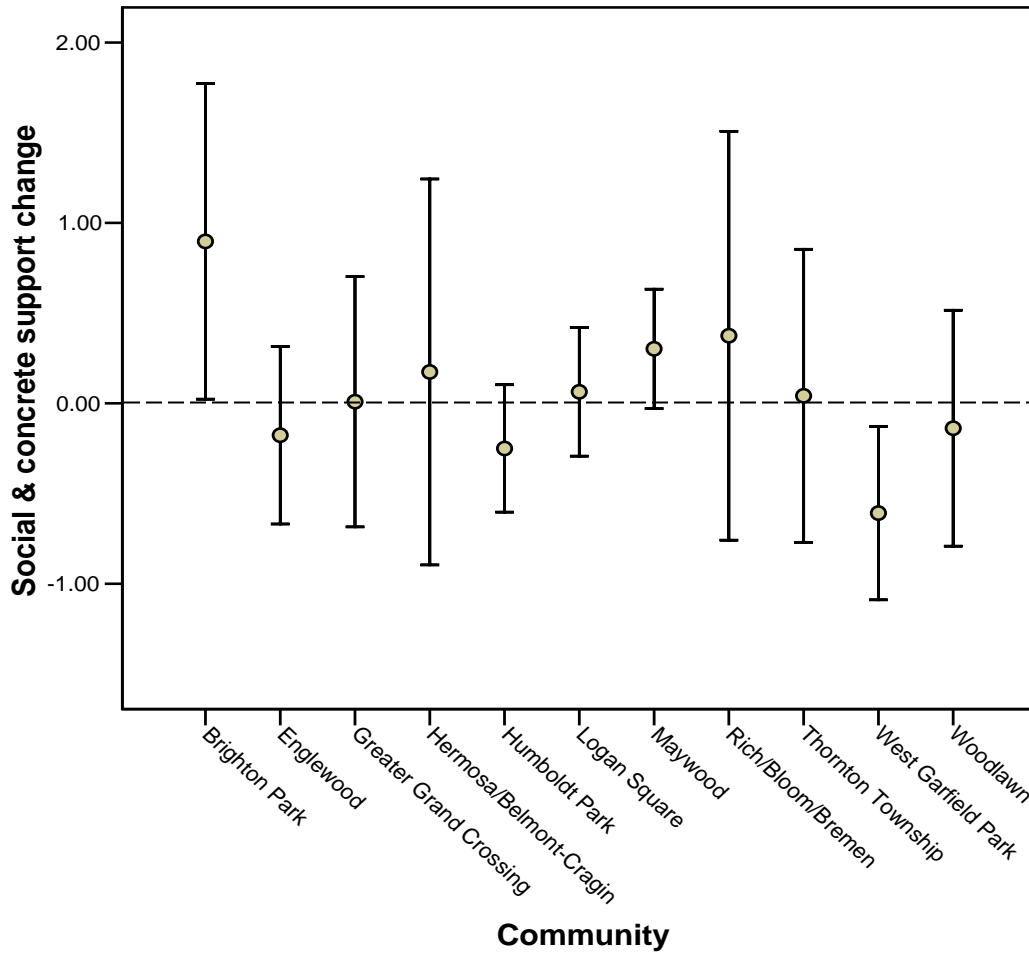
Figure 3
Change of mean scores on family functioning and resiliency by community



Note: None statistically significant at $\alpha < .005$.

There was a positive increase in mean scores on social and concrete support in six communities—Brighton Park had the highest increase. There were no changes in the community of Greater Grand Crossing and slight decreases in four communities. *Figure 4* depicts the change of mean violence scores and 95% confidence interval by community.

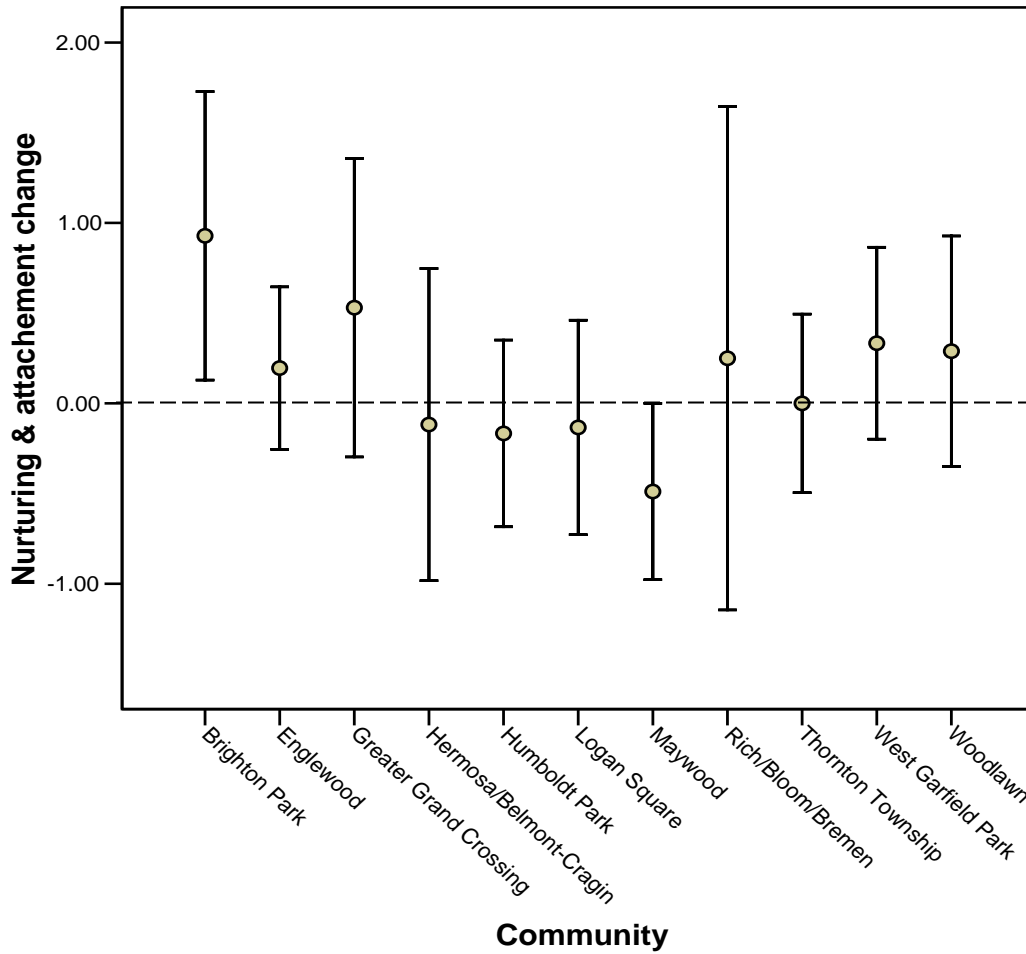
Figure 4
Change of mean scores on social and concrete support by community



Note: None statistically significant at $\alpha < .005$.

There were positive increases in mean scores in nurturing and attachment in six communities—Brighton Park had the highest increase. There was no change in one community, Thornton Township, and slight mean decreases in four communities. *Figure 5* depicts the change of mean scores in nurturing and attachment and 95% confidence interval by community.

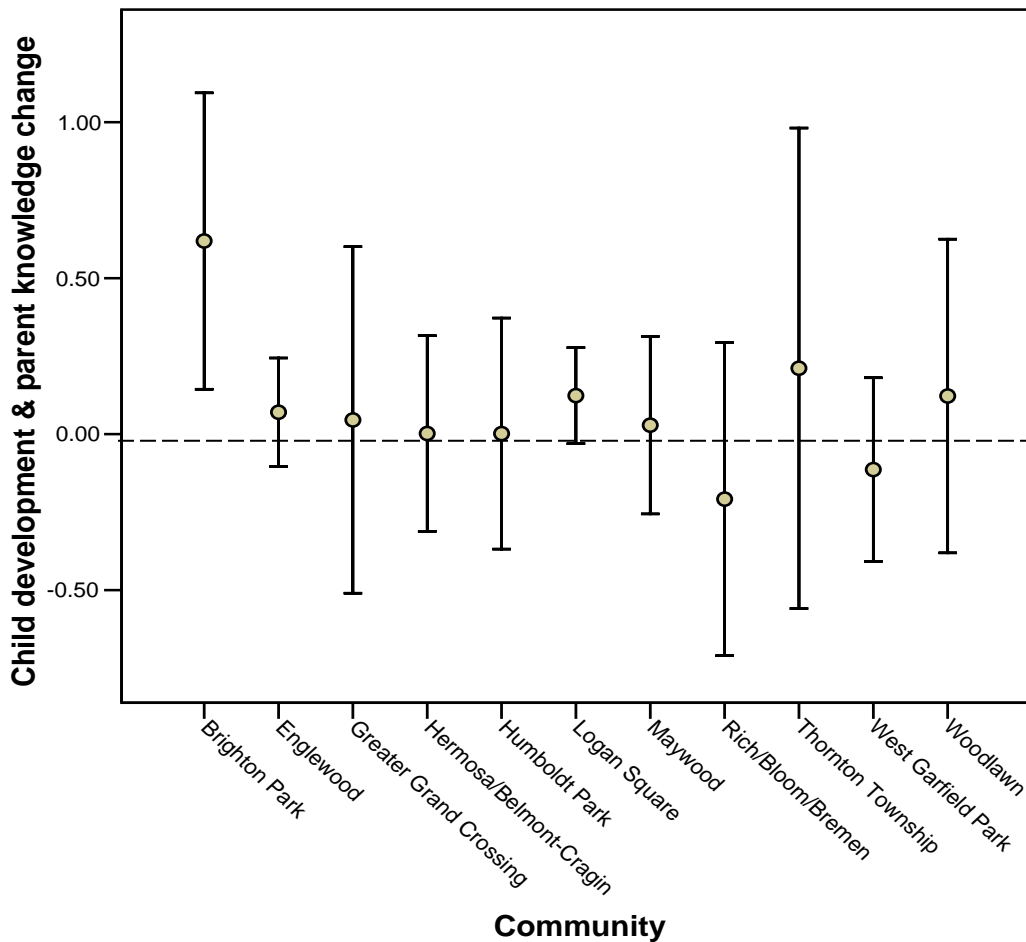
Figure 5
Change of mean scores on nurturing and attachment by community



Note: None statistically significant at $\alpha < .005$.

There were positive increases in mean scores on child development and knowledge of parenting in seven communities—Brighton Park had the highest increase in mean scores. Two communities had no change in mean scores, Hermosa/Belmont Cragin and Humboldt Park. Two communities had decreases in mean scores, Rich/Bloom/Bremen Township, and West Garfield Park. *Figure 6* depicts the change of mean scores on child development and knowledge of parenting and 95% confidence interval by community.

Figure 6
Change of mean scores on child development and knowledge of parenting by community



Note: None statistically significant at $\alpha < .005$.

Mean scores by age

Since the Parent Program started in June 2013 and ended in August 2013, the age of participants for the pre- and post-surveys was calculated on July 31, 2013 which was approximately the mid-point of the program. The biggest change in the combined measures was in the participants in their 60s followed by 40s and 50s. *Table 10* depicts the results of matched pre- and post-survey mean scores by age.

Table 10
Pre- and post-surveys mean scores by age ranges

	<i>n</i>	Mean 1 (pre)	Mean 2 (post)	Change in means
Family functioning and resiliency				
Age 20-29	20	5.42	5.69	0.27
Age 30-39	47	5.70	5.89	0.19
Age 40-49	57	5.62	5.83	0.21
Age 50-59	63	5.44	5.73	0.29
Age 60-69	15	5.65	5.80	0.15
Age 70-79	2	6.10	6.40	0.30
Social and concrete support				
Age 20-29	20	4.41	4.32	-0.09
Age 30-39	47	4.42	4.36	-0.06
Age 40-49	57	4.48	4.61	0.13
Age 50-59	63	4.51	4.50	-0.01
Age 60-69	15	4.60	4.72	0.12
Age 70-79	2	4.50	4.25	-0.25
Nurturing and attachment				
Age 20-29	20	3.83	3.60	-0.23
Age 30-39	47	4.01	3.95	-0.06
Age 40-49	57	3.98	4.08	0.10
Age 50-59	63	3.93	4.08	0.15
Age 60-69	15	3.84	4.50	0.66
Age 70-79	2	4.33	4.33	0.00
Child development and knowledge of parenting				
Age 20-29	20	5.72	5.74	0.02
Age 30-39	47	5.67	5.79	0.12
Age 40-49	57	5.52	5.64	0.12
Age 50-59	63	5.46	5.51	0.05
Age 60-69	15	5.64	5.74	0.10
Age 70-79	2	5.92	6.17	0.25
Combined measures				
Age 20-29	20	4.84	4.84	0.00
Age 30-39	47	4.95	5.00	0.05
Age 40-49	57	4.90	5.04	0.14
Age 50-59	63	4.83	4.97	0.14
Age 60-69	15	4.94	5.17	0.23
Age 70-79	2	5.21	5.29	0.08

Table 11 depicts the results of matched pre- and post-survey mean scores by age range. Age ranges used were under 45 years old, and 45 years old and older. The older group had higher increases in means on three measures, except for the protective factor of child development and knowledge of parenting. The biggest difference between the two groups was an increase of the mean scores on the protective factor of nurturing and attachment of those 45 years old and older of .20 and a decrease of .05 by those under 45 years old.

Table 11
Pre- and post-surveys mean scores by age range

	<i>n</i>	Mean 1 (pre)	Mean 2 (post)	Change in means
Family functioning and resiliency				
Under 45 years old	96	5.64	5.85	.21
45 years old and older	108	5.51	5.76	.25
Social and concrete support				
Under 45 years old	96	4.48	4.44	-.04
45 years old and older	108	4.47	4.54	.07
Nurturing and attachment				
Under 45 years old	96	3.99	3.94	-.05
45 years old and older	108	3.92	4.13	.20
Child development and knowledge of parenting				
Under 45 years old	96	5.66	5.75	.09
45 years old and older	108	5.49	5.57	.08
Combined measures				
Under 45 years old	96	4.94	4.99	.05
45 years old and older	108	4.85	5.00	.15

Conclusions from pre- and post-surveys

The largest change in means was an increase of .24 for the mean score of a combined measure for all the protective factors, which was statistically significant. In addition, the mean scores of family functioning and resiliency increased .23 and were also statistically significant. However, two of the four measures had changes in means less than .10 (social and concrete support; nurturing and attachment). Therefore, there is room for improvement in those areas.

There were increases in mean scores on 17 of 20 statements and small reductions in mean scores on three statements. These statements related to the protective factor of social and concrete support. The statements were:

- *I have others who will listen when I need to talk about my problems.*
- *I wouldn't know where to go for help if I had trouble making ends meet.* (reverse coded)
- *If I needed help finding a job, I wouldn't know where to go for help.* (reverse coded)

In addition, there were some increases in mean scores in certain communities, but it is uncertain why they had more positive outcomes. Brighton Park in particular had increases in all four measures of protective factors; in addition, Englewood, Logan Square, Maywood, and Woodlawn had increases in 3 out of 4 measures. This could be attributed to characteristics of the parents in the program, how the program operated such as staff involved, or some attribute(s) of the communities themselves. More investigation can be done to try to ascertain what specific aspects of these programs contributed to their increases in mean scores when other communities did not achieve similar increases.

Based on the respondents to the survey, the program served older parents and/or grandparents. Only 10 percent were in their 20s and none were in their teens. However, there were greater increases in mean scores for protective factors among older participants.

Findings: Exit surveys

Surveys were administered to the Administrative team and Parent Leaders at the end of the program in order to learn how the program was implemented, the level of satisfaction with the program, and to gather suggestions for programmatic improvements.

Survey of Administrative teams

A total of 48 completed surveys from the Parent Program Administrative teams—Coordinators and Managers—were submitted online. Just over half were Coordinators (56 percent, $n=21$) and 44 percent were Managers ($n=36$).

Program ratings

Administrative teams were asked to rate the quality of support from ICJIA. Three-fourths of respondents (75 percent) indicated that support was good or very good (average of 4.02 out of five). Administrative teams were asked to rate the quality of support from Be Strong Families and 90 percent indicated good or very good (average rating of 4.43). The survey asked teams the quality of their support from their lead agency; most (71 percent) responded good or very good (average rating 4.09). They were asked to rate the quality of their training for their roles; 86 percent chose good or very good (average rating 4.43). Administrative teams were charged with training and preparing Parent Leaders for their roles in the Parent Program and 88 percent felt Parent Leaders were prepared or very prepared for their roles.

Table 12 indicates Administrative team exit survey responses.

Table 12
Administrative teams ratings of aspects of Parent Program

Quality of support from ICJIA		
	<i>n</i>	Percent
Very good	13	27.1%
Good	23	47.9%
Average	8	16.7%
Poor	2	4.2%
Very poor	0	0%
No response	2	4.2%
Quality of support from BSF Technical Assistance Team		
Very good	24	50.0%
Good	19	39.6%
Average	4	8.3%
Poor	0	0%
Very poor	0	0%
No response	1	2.1%
Quality of support from Lead Agency		
Very good	20	41.7%
Good	14	29.2%
Average	9	18.8%
Poor	2	4.2%
Very poor	1	2.1%
No response	2	4.2%
Quality of training for your role as Coordinator or Manager		
Very good	26	54.2%
Good	15	31.3%
Average	4	8.3%
Poor	1	2.1%
Very poor	0	0%
No response	2	4.2%
Preparation of Parent Leaders for their roles		
Very prepared	17	35.4%
Prepared	25	52.1%
Neutral	3	6.3%
Unprepared	2	4.2%
Very unprepared	0	0%
No response	1	2.1%
TOTAL	48	100%

Community service projects

When the Administrative teams were asked, *Do you think the service projects improved the community*, 79 percent wrote “yes” ($n=38$) and only one person indicated “no” (17 percent unsure and 2 percent did not respond). When asked if the service projects increased protective factors, 88 percent wrote “yes” ($n=43$); no one wrote “no.” *Figures 7 and 8* depict responses on the efficacy of service projects.

Figure 7
Did service projects improve the community?

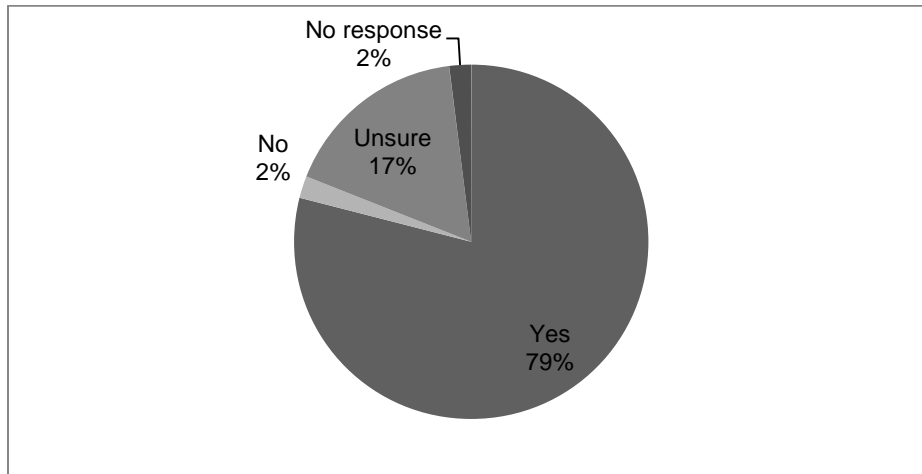
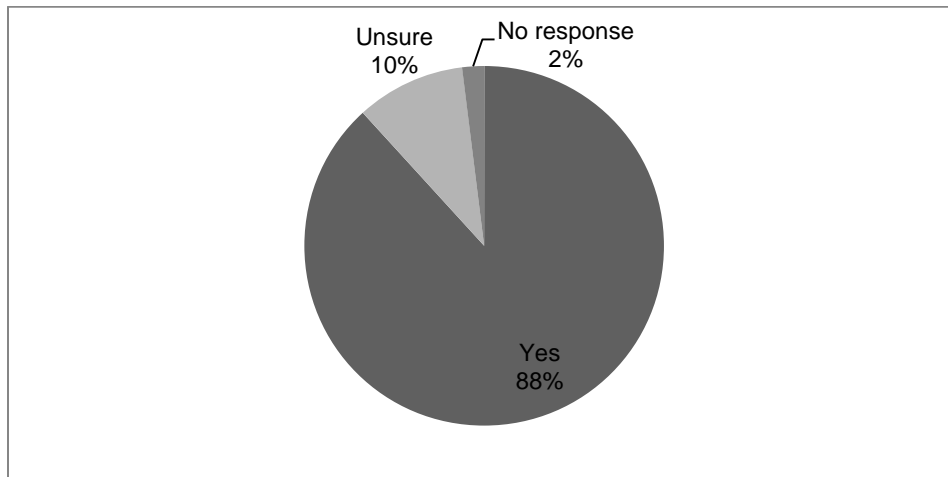


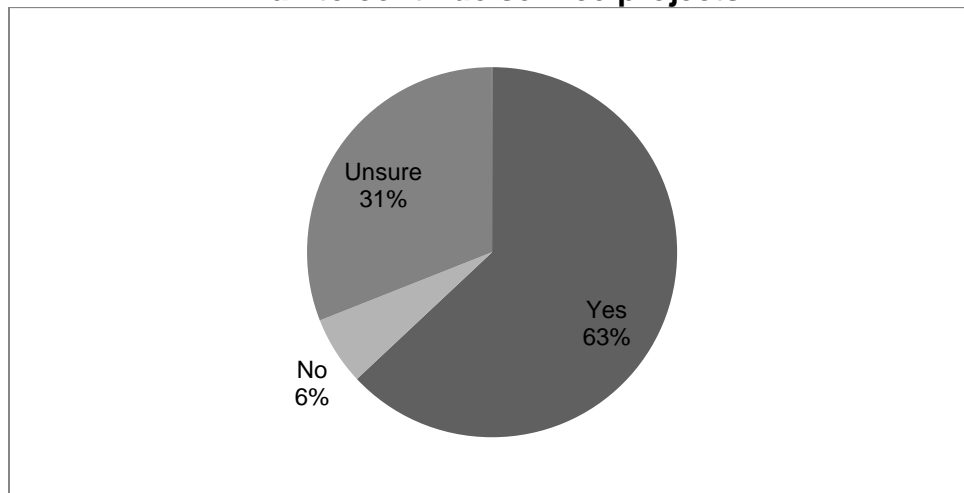
Figure 8
Did service projects increase protective factors?



Administrative team members were asked, *Does your agency plan on continuing any of the service projects that were started?* A majority (63 percent) responded “yes” (n=30), 31 percent were unsure (n=15), and 6 percent said “no” (n=3). *Figure 9* depicts respondents’ plans to continue service projects. Over half (56 percent) planned to continue parent cafés and 17 percent planned to continue the online resource guides (*What’s Good in the Neighborhood*). Of those not continuing service projects, four team members indicated that it was due to funding. One shared,

“Supplies needed for projects such as the Parent Cafés have to be found, not in agency budget. The Parent Café Team is working on finding office supply retailers who might be willing to donate needed paper supplies and other contacted community partners who might be willing to donate whatever else is needed.”

Figure 9
Plan to continue service projects



Many (44 percent) responded that they would continue a project other than the parent cafés or service guides (n=21). Other projects fell into the following categories.

- Anger management (n=5)
- Community beautification, clean up (n=5)
- Parent classes (n=4)
- Open mic/community gathering (n=3)
- Safe Passage (n=2)
- Violence prevention (n=2)
- Book clubs (n=2)

Changes to the program

Additional training needs

The Administrative team members were asked in the survey to indicate anything on which they needed more information or training. Seven respondents indicated they needed more information or training on administrative tasks such as budgeting and grant spending allowability. Six people said there was nothing they needed more training or information on. One person praised the training by stating, *“The materials and training were thorough and complete to adequately present a course curriculum that allowed for the Parent Leaders, Coordinators, and Program Managers to successfully gain knowledge of utilizing each of the protective factors personally.”*

Finally, four people commented that the program should be longer in duration and two wanted more training on the parent cafés.

More resources

The Administrative team members were asked to share what additional resources would help improve the program. Nine respondents commented that more funding was needed for transportation, to make the program longer in duration, or for training. One person wrote, *“I think that the Parent Program should be year round.”* The following is a quote from a respondent on additional funding needed for transportation and training.

“Bus passes were needed for parents to get to the sites we were directed to participate in. The passes cost \$28 a week. They only work for 8 hours a week broken into two sometimes three days which was an added hardship for those that could not walk or get a ride to the site.”

“[Funds are needed] to cover trainers for domestic violence. Many of the parents suffered from being battered and this helped to empower them to make sound decisions.”

A few team members wanted additional training. For example, one person shared the following.

“We encountered a lot of distrust and confusion over why we were asking residents for their input--and a lot of people did not want to share their names and/or contact information. Even though we worked on communication skills and goal-setting, when people got defensive towards my team members, they would easily get defensive back. I think this is typical for our neighborhood and I do think we peeled back some layers of distrust, but I think we could really take it to the next level with more concrete training and support for this street team of ‘resource ambassadors’.”

Additional comments

A total of 23 members of Administrative Teams provided additional comments. The responses were almost all positive—13 offered positive comments. Again, there were no identifiers on the survey, so survey participants could provide comments anonymously. Five individuals provided suggestions to improve the program, and five shared other comments about the program.

Thirteen members of Administrative Teams took the opportunity to express and share how the program was good, useful, and helpful. The following quotes illustrate some of the respondents' feelings about the program.

"I saw my Parent Leaders come into this program one way and leave with a new outlook. My team and I will continue this project on our own; we know it is needed in the communities. After each café, you hear the same response 'this program is awesome' or 'I learned something today I could use.' Or the weary parent who just needed someone to talk to, who left the parent café with tools she can use for her family. Funding or not we will continue to strengthen our community with this wonderful program. Thank you for funding such a wonderful program."

"I believe that the trainings, cafés, and projects definitely had a positive impact with the parents we worked with directly. That is evident."

"This is a great program and the parents have been enlightened that they have control of things in their life. They show positive growth and development to go outside of boundaries they have set for themselves."

"[Parents] were able to share that we all have common problems, this helps to form parents to be committed to make a change starting with their families, consequently less violence on the streets, the example at home is very important, so encourage our community to change and be strong families."

"This year was so different and gratifying, having the chance to be hands on and actually make a difference in the neighborhood (or in an individual's life) was a great experience. Learning about protective factors and applying them to my everyday life is a tool that I can take with me and teach my children."

Three respondents provided additional comments that the program should be longer in duration. One person stated:

"We need to make this program all year round, our communities want to be involved and make changes in their communities, but that only would happen if we make a commitment with them, not only for couple of months but make it a sustainable program FROM the community and FOR the community."

One person wanted more community support for the program and another thought there should be weekly in-person meetings to report progress.

Conclusion on Administrative Teams survey

Overall the Administrative Teams' ratings of the program were positive; however, there could be room for improvement regarding support from ICJIA and Lead Agencies. A couple respondents suggested improving support through more frequent meetings. Most team members (79 percent) planned to continue service projects, but often it depended on funding. Respondents expressed a

need for funding to cover program-related transportation costs and to make the program longer in duration.

Survey of Parent Leaders

A total of 349 Parent Leaders completed surveys at the end of the program. *Table 13* depicts the 13 communities that returned surveys (one community was unknown).

Table 13
Respondents by community

Community	<i>n</i>	Percent
Albany Park	23	9.7%
Austin	35	2.6%
Brighton Park	28	3.7%
East Garfield Park	17	9.4%
Greater Grand Crossing	34	6.6%
Hermosa/ Belmont Cragin	33	10.0%
Maywood	39	4.9%
North Lawndale	27	7.7%
Pilsen/Little Village	41	11.1%
Rich/ Bloom/ Bremen Township	9	9.7%
Thornton Township	16	11.7%
West Garfield Park	17	4.9%
Unknown	34	8.0%
Total	349	100%

Learned about program

Respondents were asked how they learned about the program. Almost half (46 percent) learned about it from a friend and 17 percent wrote “*community agency*.” Almost one-fourth of the respondents (23 percent) said “other.” Participants who wrote “other” specified how—25 people had previous involvement with the prior NRI program, 13 learned about the program from their churches, eight from a family member, and four from their child's school. *Table 14* shows the ways participants learned about the program.

Table 14
How participants learned of the program

	<i>N</i>	Percent
Online, website	37	10.6%
Friend	161	46.1%
Radio	0	0.0%
Flyer	9	2.6%
Community Agency	58	16.6%
Other	81	23.2%
No response	4	1.1%
TOTAL	349	100%

Program ratings

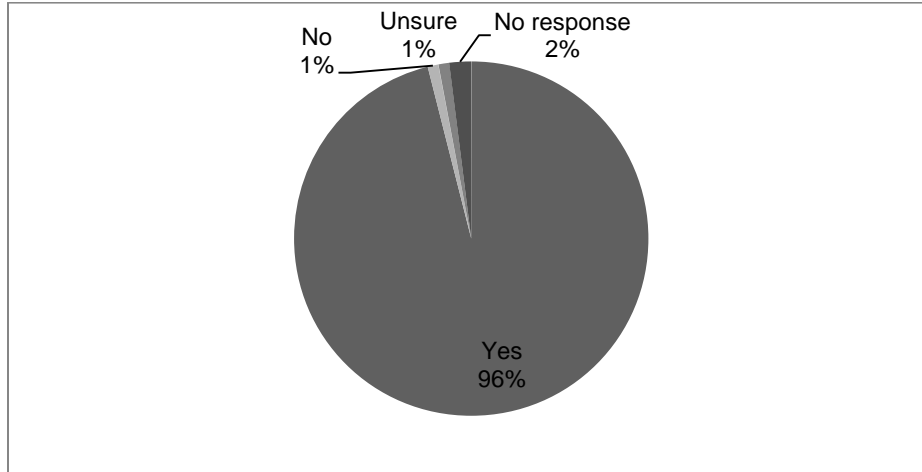
Parent Leaders were asked to rate the quality of support from their managers and coordinators. Almost all (96 percent) indicated that support was good or very good (average of 4.66 out of five). Parent Leaders were asked to rate the quality of materials or resources to complete service projects and 85 percent indicated good or very good (average rating of 4.32). The survey asked respondents to rate the quality of the training for their role of Parent Leader; almost all (92 percent) responded good or very good (average rating 4.50). Finally, they were asked to rate how successful the Parent Program was; 78 percent chose successful or very successful (average rating 4.20). *Table 15* indicates Parent Leader exit survey responses.

Table 15
Parent Leader ratings of aspects of Parent Program

Quality of support from managers and coordinator		
	<i>n</i>	Percent
Very good	252	72.2%
Good	82	24.0%
Average	13	3.7%
Poor	0	0.0%
Very poor	0	0.0%
No response	2	1.0%
Materials or resources to complete service projects		
Very good	214	61.0%
Good	84	24.1%
Average	29	8.3%
Poor	8	2.3%
Very poor	0	0.0%
No response	14	4.0%
Training for your role of Parent Leader		
Very good	243	69.6%
Good	79	22.6%
Average	13	4.0%
Poor	0	0.0%
Very poor	0	0.0%
No response	14	4.0%
Overall, how successful do you think the Parent Program was?		
Very Unsuccessful	151	43.0%
Successful	123	35.0%
Neutral	22	6.0%
Unsuccessful	0	0.0%
Very unsuccessful	1	0.0%
No response	52	15.0%
TOTAL	349	100%

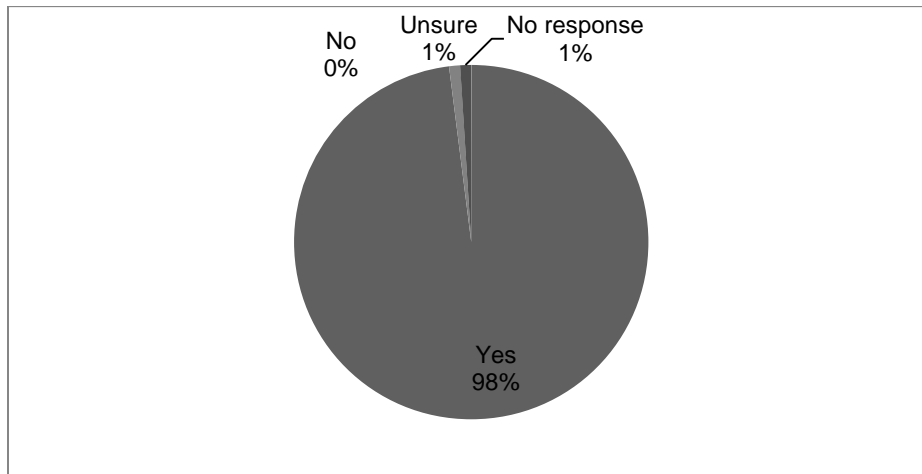
Respondents were asked to indicate if they used what they learned in training during their participation in the Parent Program. Almost all (96 percent) said *yes* ($n=339$) and two said *no*. *Figure 10* depicts the responses.

Figure 10
Use what learned in training during the Parent Program?



Respondents were asked to indicate if they had begun to incorporate what they learned in the Parent Program in their everyday life. Almost all (98 percent) said *yes* ($n=341$) and no one said *no*. *Figure 11* depicts the responses.

Figure 11
Incorporate what learned in Parent Program in your everyday life?



Community service projects

Parent Leaders were asked to indicate what service project their team completed. Most (90 percent) indicated one or more projects ($n=315$). The question was opened-ended and the following are categories of responses.

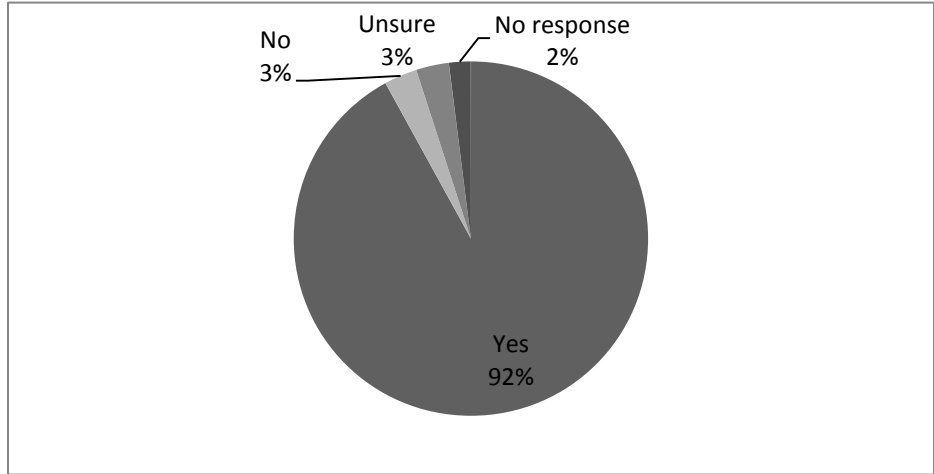
- Parent cafés ($n=106$)
- What's good in the neighborhood resource guide ($n=52$)
- Community beautification ($n=35$)
- Safe passage ($n=16$)
- Informative book club ($n=12$)
- Parent conferences ($n=10$)
- Health events ($n=10$)
- Back to school programs ($n=9$)
- Violence prevention/domestic violence ($n=9$)
- Parents educating parents ($n=8$)
- Transforming dangerous spaces ($n=7$)
- Anger management ($n=6$)
- Love and logic workshop ($n=6$)
- Violence Prevention Ambassador ($n=5$)
- Parent angels support group ($n=5$)
- Open mic / community gathering ($n=4$)
- Lamp ($n=3$)
- Mentoring ($n=2$)
- Worked with police ($n=2$)

Transforming dangerous spaces was a community beautification effort which re-purposed or cleaned up abandoned properties. Love and Logic was a free workshop for the community to provide practical techniques to improve their parenting and communication skills. Violence prevention ambassadors offered violence prevention discussions and presentations in the community. Parent angels support group is a support group for parents and family members who have lost their children and loved ones to gun violence. Open mic or community gatherings discussed themes, such as bullying, in a public forum using poems, spoken word, rap, and monologues.

Seven respondents indicated they worked on “*community service*,” four worked on “*all*,” two did not work on a project, and four had a response that did not fit into any category.

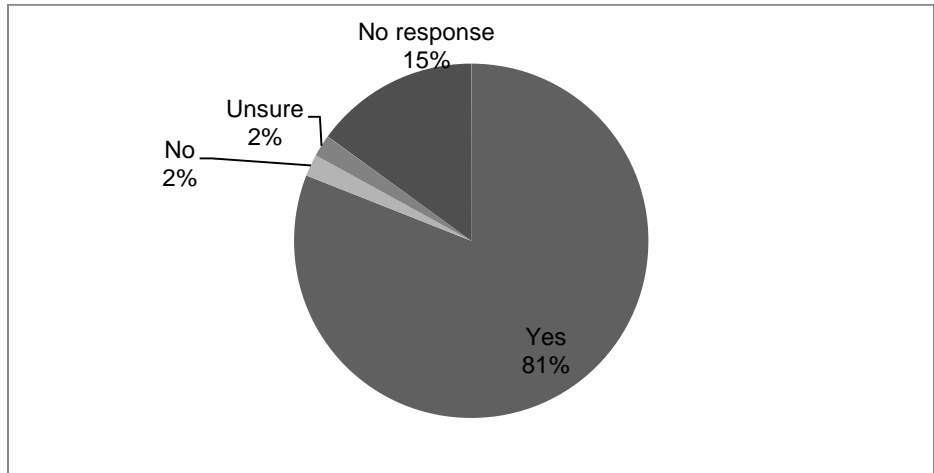
Respondents were asked if they received adequate materials or resources to complete their service projects. Almost all (92 percent) indicated *yes* ($n= 321$) and 3 percent ($n=10$) indicated *no*. *Figure 12* depicts their responses.

Figure 12
Did you receive adequate materials or resources to complete service projects?



Parent Leaders were asked if their service project members worked collaboratively with each other. A majority (81 percent) indicated *yes* ($n= 283$) and 2 percent ($n=6$) indicated *no*. *Figure 13* depicts their responses.

Figure 13
Did service project members work collaboratively with each other?



When the Parent Leaders were asked, *Do you think the service projects improved the community?*, a majority (68 percent) responded “yes” ($n=238$) and 2 percent indicated “no” ($n=7$). When asked if the service projects increased protective factors, 77 percent wrote “yes” ($n=270$); 2 percent “no” ($n=6$). *Figures 14 and 15* depict responses on the effectiveness of service projects.

Figure 14
Do you think the service projects improved the community?

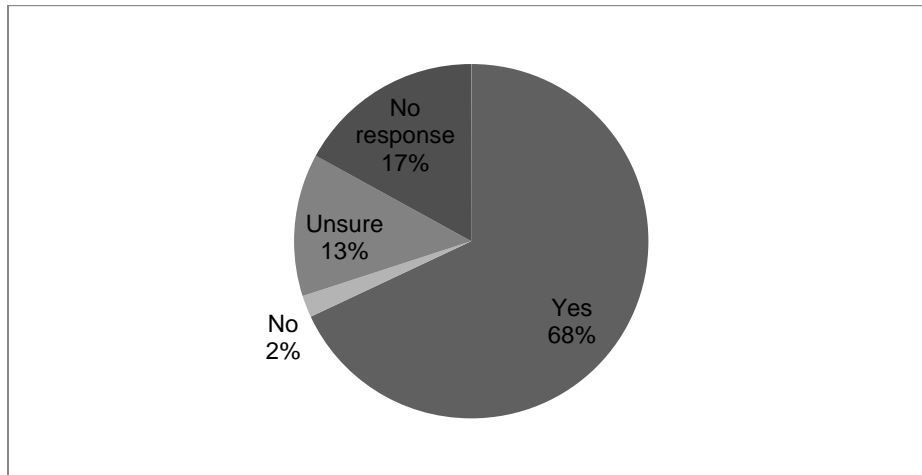
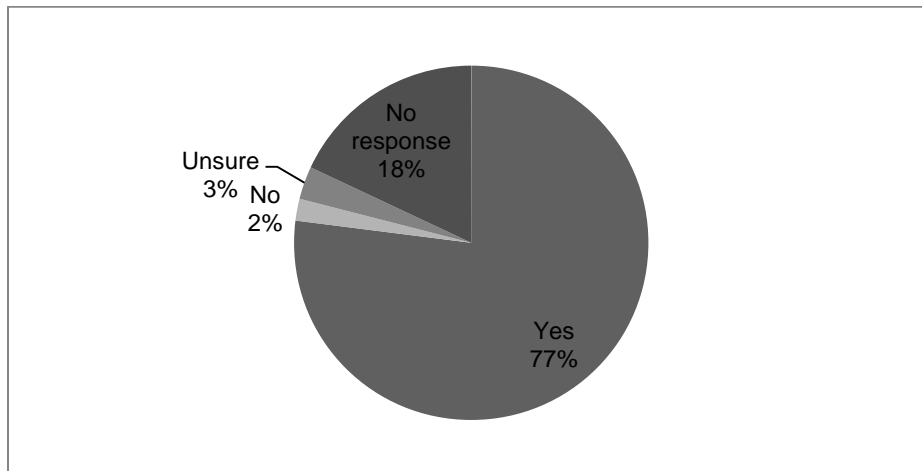
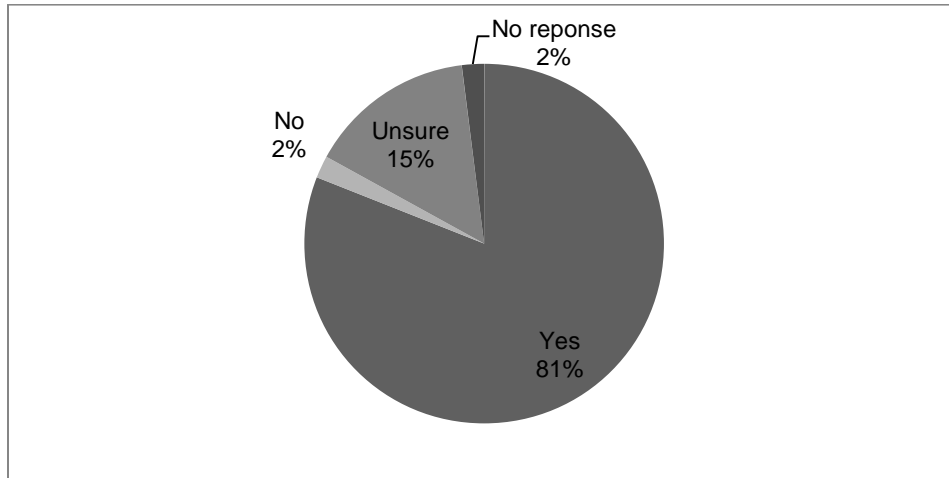


Figure 15
Do you think the service projects increased protective factors?



Parent Leaders were asked, *Do you plan to continue as a volunteer on a Parent Service Project?* Most (81 percent) responded “yes” ($n=284$), 15 percent were unsure ($n=52$), and 2 percent said “no” ($n=6$). *Figure 16* depicts respondents’ plans to volunteer on service projects.

Figure 16
Plan to continue as a volunteer on a Parent Program service project?



Parent cafés

All communities were charged with having a service project team hold parent cafés. Only some of the Parent Leaders would have been on the parent café service project team. About half of the Parent Leaders responding to the survey (47 percent) were involved in parent cafés and of those, they facilitated an average of 3.62 parent cafés.

Parent leaders were asked to indicate the main themes of the cafés. Just over half of the respondents (60 percent, $n=208$) provided one or more main themes and 40 percent did not respond or indicated it was not applicable ($n=140$). The following are the responses in categories—four individuals had responses that fit in no category.

- The protective factors ($n=89$)
- Communication ($n=58$)
- Support ($n=31$)
- Resilience ($n=30$)
- Relationships ($n=15$)
- Knowledge ($n=13$)
- Parenting skills ($n=11$)
- Strengthening families ($n=10$)
- Nutrition ($n=6$)
- Community violence ($n=6$)
- Gangs ($n=3$)
- Bullying ($n=2$)
- Community ($n=2$)

Changes to the program

Additional training needs

The Parent Leaders were asked in the survey to indicate anything on which they needed more information or training. One-third of respondents (34 percent, $n=118$) expressed that they required no additional information or training. One person shared, *“Everything was perfect! I learned so much that I never knew before.”* Another said, *“I can only comment that I learned a lot by participating in this project. I feel more able to better carry my daily life as a leader.”* Seventeen respondents indicated wanting more and longer training. One person said he or she would like, *“More time to go and touch on different topics.”* The following is a quote from a Parent Leader.

“I understood my role as a parent leader, however I would have liked the training my supervisors received. They had a short amount of time to teach a lifetime of skills. But their training seemed to be what is needed and I feel I would have like to have more time as they did. They were really great. I am thankful for them as I learned new ways to parent (that I needed). I hope I passed these factors on to my community as they were passed on to me.”

Another 15 survey respondents noted wanting more parent café training. One respondent shared, *“I would like to receive more training with the cafés (facilitate, hosting).”* Another wanted, *“More training on being a better facilitator by going to other parent cafés and observing.”*

Eleven Parent Leaders wanted more time on community projects and another 11 wanted more resources for community youth.

Other suggestions for additional training included the following:

- Job readiness or job search help ($n=7$)
- More programmatic organization ($n=6$)
- Help with parenting ($n=5$)
- Working with businesses ($n=5$)
- Communication ($n=4$)
- More resource materials—handouts, brochures, or videos ($n=3$)
- Online resources or training ($n=2$)

More resources

Parent Leaders were asked to share what additional resources would help improve the program. Twenty-two respondents mentioned having more time for the program. Another 18 individuals mentioned increasing community outreach. One person mentioned, *“Getting more parents to come to the programs.”*

Twelve said more funding for the program and to complete service projects and 10 wanted more supplies for the program. For example, one respondent wrote wanting, *“Better supplies for café,*

easel, dry erase board.” Nine individuals wanted flyers or handouts on materials learned, including the five protective factors.

Additional resources also included the following:

- More parent cafés ($n=8$)
- More community projects ($n=7$)
- One steady location ($n=7$)
- Sufficient parking ($n=7$)
- More speakers ($n=7$)
- More activities with youth ($n=6$)
- Additional programming ($n=6$)
- Elected officials ($n=6$)
- More information on community safety ($n=4$)
- More organization ($n=4$)
- Resources for participants ($n=3$)
- Improve communication ($n=2$)
- Provide food ($n=2$)

Other changes

Parent Leaders were asked to share “*What, if anything, would you change about the Parent Program?*” Some of the Parent Leaders said nothing (29 percent, $n=100$). Forty-three respondents suggested extending the program—making it year round and longer hours. Twenty-six individuals wanted more time spent on certain aspects of the program such as more cafés or more community outreach projects. Sixteen respondents thought that the program should strive to increase participation by getting more parent and community members involved. Fourteen individuals mentioned wanting a more fixed location and hours of work. Twelve people wanted to improve the program’s organization. For example, said one, “*I would like to see more organization and for our teachers to prepare slightly more in advance, so that stumbling isn't done in front of the parents.*”

Other suggested changes in the program included the following:

- Improve leadership ($n=8$)
- Improve communication ($n=5$)
- Increase male participation ($n=4$)
- Increase pay ($n=3$)

Additional comments

A total of 153 Parent Leaders provided additional comments. While most were positive, some provided suggestions to improve the program.

Seventy-three Parent Leaders offered compliments of the program, rather than suggestions, changes, or other general comments. Again, there were no identifiers on the survey, so survey participants could provide comments anonymously. Some words used to describe the program were “*excellent,*” “*very good,*” “*empowering,*” “*great,*” “*useful,*” “*uplifting,*” and “*encouraging.*” The following quotes are representative of many respondents’ comments about the program.

“I am very happy and grateful to the program because it made me see things from another point of view and helped me be a better father and a better person.”

“I loved working with other parents knowing there's someone out there going through what I'm going through and helping me through, it's priceless.”

“It really helped me with a lot of things I was going through as a single parent. Now I know I'm not alone and how to be flexible and don't be afraid to ask for help no matter what it may be!”

“This program should have been offered many, many years ago. The program is very helpful at home, community, etc. It's a good program to continue and keep around.”

Some of the Parent Leaders made additional comments on expanding the program—more participants, all year long. One person stated, *“This program should be going on throughout the school year. During the school months it's very vital.”* Another commented, *“This program should be helping all women, children, and family shelters in the city of Chicago.”*

Some individuals wanted the program to increase a focus on community safety ($n=14$). For example, one respondent shared, *“I believe we should have invited some individuals in the community to come in and talk with us about the violence in the community.”*

Conclusion on Parent Leader survey

Almost half of the Parent Leaders (46 percent) heard about the program from a community agency. They rated highly the support from their Administrative team, materials, resources, and training. A majority of respondents (78 percent) rated the program as successful or very successful. Most said they used what they learned in the training during the program and what they learned in the program, they used in their daily lives. A majority (68 percent) thought that the service project improved the community and 77 percent thought the service projects increased protective factors of child maltreatment. Many comments provided were to either make no changes to the program or to expand it and make it a year round program.

Findings: Training evaluation

A training evaluation form was distributed to all Parent Leaders. The evaluation form covered all three parts of the Parent Leader training: protective factors training through parent café delivery, leadership training, and living the protective factors workbook. A total of 708 Parent Leaders completed an evaluation form representing 13 out of the 21 communities, including:

- Albany Park
- Austin
- Bloom Township/Bremen Township
- Brighton Park
- Hermosa/Belmont Cragin
- North Lawndale
- Rich Township
- Rogers Park
- Roseland
- South Shore
- Thornton Township
- West Garfield Park
- Woodlawn

Parent Leaders were asked to rate their agreement with eight statements on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Across all eight statements, participants strongly agreed with the positive statements provided about the training seminar. Almost all of the participants (94 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that the training was well-designed which included pacing and adequate time for questions and answers. The average rating of agreement about the helpful design of the training was 4.58 out of five. Almost all (96 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that the trainers were knowledgeable and helpful (average rating of 4.68). Ninety-five percent agreed or strongly agreed that the materials and handouts provided useful information (average rating of 4.65). Almost all participants (96 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that the protective factors (for child abuse and neglect) were adequately covered in the training (average rating 4.65).

Parent Leaders were asked to share what was learned during the training. Most (95 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they learned ways to strengthen their own families (average rating 4.68) and 90 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they learned ways to strengthen their own community (average rating 4.53). A majority of respondents (89 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they learned how to form parent teams (average rating 4.47). Parent Leaders were charged with forming teams to complete community service projects. Eighty-seven percent of Parent Leaders agreed or strongly agreed that they learned how to create and/or implement community service projects (average rating 4.38). *Table 16* depicts the ratings of their agreement about statements on the training seminar.

Table 16
Ratings of Parent Leader training

The training was well-designed	n	Percent
Strongly Agree	466	65.8%
Agree	196	27.7%
Neutral	28	4.0%
Disagree	3	0.4%
Strongly disagree	8	1.1%
Unanswered	7	1.0%
Trainer(s) were knowledgeable and helpful		
Strongly Agree	518	73.2%
Agree	159	22.5%
Neutral	22	3.1%
Disagree	2	0.3%
Strongly disagree	5	0.7%
Unanswered	2	0.3%
Materials provided useful information		
Strongly Agree	496	70.0%
Agree	178	25.1%
Neutral	20	2.8%
Disagree	3	0.4%
Strongly disagree	5	0.7%
Unanswered	6	0.8%
Protective factors were adequately covered in training		
Strongly Agree	501	70.8%
Agree	176	24.9%
Neutral	23	3.2%
Disagree	1	0.1%
Strongly disagree	5	0.7%
Unanswered	2	0.3%
I learned ways to strengthen my own family		
Strongly Agree	520	73.4%
Agree	155	21.9%
Neutral	24	3.4%
Disagree	2	0.3%
Strongly disagree	4	0.6%
Unanswered	3	0.4%
I learned ways to strengthen my community		
Strongly Agree	440	62.1%
Agree	200	28.2%
Neutral	45	6.4%
Disagree	8	1.1%
Strongly disagree	4	0.6%
Unanswered	11	1.6%
I learned how to form parent teams		
Strongly Agree	414	58.5%
Agree	219	30.9%
Neutral	57	8.1%
Disagree	6	0.8%

Strongly disagree	6	0.8%
Unanswered	6	0.8%
I learned how to create, implement community service projects		
Strongly Agree	377	53.2%
Agree	242	34.2%
Neutral	67	9.5%
Disagree	10	1.4%
Strongly disagree	7	1.0%
Unanswered	5	0.7%
TOTAL	708	100%

Training items to spend more time on

Parent Leaders were asked to provide feedback on what they thought trainers should have spent more time on. The question was open-ended, so the responses were quite varied, but were put into categories. Sixty participants indicated more time should be spent on the parent cafés and another 34 said more time was needed for group discussions. Twenty noted that more time was needed in general for the training.

Fifteen participants responded that more time was needed on training and completing community service projects. A parent explained that they would like to spend more time on *“training on service projects and health education to the community.”* Thirteen Parent Leaders replied that the program would benefit from more interaction with the community in general. Ten said more time was needed in one-on-one discussions. The one-on-ones were a part of the parent cafés in which two individuals sat facing each other and each answered a few questions about themselves while the other person was instructed to listen without speaking. Ten others mentioned spending more training time on the collage/ art project and ten indicated more time should be spent on the protective factors.

Like best about the training

Parent leaders were asked to indicate what they liked best about the training. It was an open-ended question, so the responses were diverse. A total of 155 participants mentioned “sharing information or communicating” as what they liked best. One participant wrote, *“Everybody is very open minded, honest, and share their testimony or experience.”* Another said, *“Everybody participated, listened, and talked with honesty and love. I'm learning a lot.”* One participant shared she liked, *“the communication that there is between the people, everyone learns to listen without interruptions.”*

Seventy-eight participants commented that “interaction with other parents” was the best part of the training. One Parent Leader said, *“Knowledge of other parents help me to be a better mom.”* Another added, *“The opportunity to discuss issues with other parents, see how others handled situations. I realized that we all face similar situations. We are not alone. Together we can combine knowledge and resources to become better parents.”* Another training participant commented, *“The training was empowering, rewarding, and giving individual a sense of*

direction. When I attended the parent café for the first time I found it to be so enlightening. It was so awesome to listen to other parents' experiences."

Sixty-three Parent Leaders noted that the information on parenting provided in the training was the best part of the training. For example, one person wrote, *"I learned how to maintain communication with my children."* Another shared, *"I learned to be a good mother with the children and communicate."*

Multiple training participants indicated they liked the following aspects of the training the best:

- Sharing/ communicating ($n=155$)
- Parental interaction ($n=78$)
- Parenting information ($n=63$)
- Fellowship, teamwork, companionship ($n=36$)
- Parent cafés ($n=34$)
- Protective factors ($n=15$)
- Everything ($n=14$)
- Trainers ($n=11$)
- Vitality collage ($n=9$)
- Personal improvement ($n=9$)
- Diversity ($n=6$)
- Game ($n=5$)
- Vitality training ($n=3$)
- Listening skills ($n=3$)

Suggestions to improve the training

Participants in Parent Leader training were asked to offer suggestions to improve the training. The question was open-ended which led to a myriad of responses. Many ($n=198$, 28 percent) wrote there was nothing that could improve the training and used positive words to describe the training such as *"good," "perfect," "fine," "excellent," "awesome,"* and *"great."* However, multiple training participants suggested the following to improve the training:

A total of 64 participants suggested spending more time on certain general aspects of the training, such as groups, parent cafés, activities, and discussions. Fifteen respondents wanted the training to be more organized. Thirteen people mentioned having issues with English or Spanish. One person mentioned having trouble understanding the training which was given in English.

Conclusions on training evaluation

Overall, the series of Parent Leader trainings were well received. The majority of participants who completed an evaluation form agreed with the positive statements on the training, trainers, and what they learned. Many participants wanted to spend more time on parent cafés and group discussions ($n=94$). Many enjoyed sharing, communicating, and interacting with others, especially other parents during the training and many gained knowledge about parenting. Some suggested spending more time on the training as a whole or parts of the training including parent cafés and discussions.

Implications for policy and practice

Increase protective factor of social and concrete support

Established by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, incorporates five protective factors to promote healthy families and reduce child abuse and neglect: 1) increasing parental resilience, 2) building the social connections of parents, 3) increasing knowledge of parenting and child development, 4) providing concrete supports in times of need, and 5) supporting the social and emotional competence of children. Overall, participants indicated that the program increased protective factors of the parent participants. There were very small reductions in mean scores on the pre- and post-survey on three statements measuring the protective factor of social and concrete support. The statements were:

- *I have others who will listen when I need to talk about my problems.*
- *I wouldn't know where to go for help if I had trouble making ends meet.* (reverse coded)
- *If I needed help finding a job, I wouldn't know where to go for help.* (reverse coded)

Reverse coded items were phrased in the semantically opposite direction, but scoring was reversed, so decreases were consistently negative.

This suggests the program should make a point to let program participants know program staff are available as resources they can talk to or go to for help. The program could encourage participants to share contact information with each other, so they could have each other to talk to about problems. In addition, concrete services and resources could be shared about where to go for help with food, clothing, and shelter; and help with employment. In addition, a resource list of programs and services to aid individuals and families could be shared. Although the intent of the *What's Good in the Neighborhood* resource guide was to share services, many entries did not offer concrete services and resources, but were local business such as restaurants and stores. In addition, it is unknown how often the resource guide is accessed and there has been no additional resources added since October 2013.

Recruit younger parents, primary caregivers

Based on the respondents to the pre- and post-survey, only 10 percent of program participants were in their 20s and no participants were in their teens. Children of younger parents are more at risk of abuse and neglect, poor cognitive and behavioral skills, and placement in foster care than children of older parents (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2007) and parenting programs often prove more effective for younger parents (Kellermann, Fuqua-Witley, Rivara, & Mercy, 1998). Therefore, recruiting a younger population would have a greater impact. However, the program needs to be prepared to meet the special needs of this population. In addition, for participants under the age of 45, there were small reductions in mean scores on the child maltreatment protective factors of social and concrete support, and nurturing and attachment. This finding suggests more could be done to make improvements in those areas in particular for younger participants.

Based on responses to the pre- and post-survey, 39 percent of program participants were age 50 years old or older. There were no age restrictions and “parent” was defined loosely as either

having a child or serving in an active parenting role. Based on the parameters, parents with grown children or those with little contact with their children could participate. The program should make sure older individuals are primary caregivers; otherwise there will be diminished likelihood that the program will help reduce child maltreatment or strengthen families. Unless the older participants are grandparents serving as primary caregiver for grandchildren, the age of participation should be capped around 50 years old.

Increase participation of fathers

It is unknown how many fathers participated, but a handful of Parent Leaders recommended increasing male participation. Fathers have a direct impact on the well-being of their children—negatively, they may be perpetrators or contributors of child maltreatment; positively, their presence may be a protective factor (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006). In poor, urban communities, fathers' relationship with mothers, their own childhood experiences, or views of manhood can prevent them from getting involved in raising their children (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006). However, the involvement of a father in the life of a family is associated with lower levels of child maltreatment, even in families facing other risk factors, such as unemployment and poverty (Marshall, English, & Stewart, 2001). Therefore, the program should make efforts to recruit male parents.

Collect additional data

Additional data should be collected to learn more about the program operations and to be able to make improvements. In particular, it is important to learn more about the Parent Leaders. Additional data about program participants include:

- Age and gender of Parent Leaders
- Number and ages of children
- Status as primary caregiver

There was a lack of data on the community service projects and how they fit into the overall program goal of violence prevention by reducing child maltreatment and promoting healthy families. Parent Leaders were trained for five weeks of the 13 week program primarily on protective factors and personal development, so it is uncertain how their training prepared them for non-family-related community service projects, such as community beautification. Additional data to collect about service projects include:

- How the projects relate to, and increase, protective factors
- Community member feedback on the service projects
- Number of participants/attendance per project
- Duration of service project
- Accessibility and utility of the resource guide

By knowing more about the service projects, researchers will be able to learn which projects fit best into the program's goals, as well as which ones were well attended and well received by community members outside of the program.

Conclusion

Based on data collected through the evaluation, the CVPP's Parent Program achieved its goals. It built protective factors in families by employing and training 1,010 community members as Parent Leaders and built protective factors in communities through the completion of service projects.

According to administrative data, over 950 parents were recruited to the Parent Program, over 800 trained, and over 750 participated in community service projects along with almost 3,000 community members. Parent cafés or violence prevention activities were the most common projects.

Overall, the series of Parent Leader trainings were very well received. Many participants wanted to spend more time on parent cafés and group discussions and enjoyed sharing, communicating, and interacting with other parents and gained knowledge about parenting.

The pre- and post-survey revealed an improvement in measures of the protective factors. Only three statements on the protective factor of social and concrete support had very slight decreases in mean scores from the beginning and end of the program. Increases in mean scores varied by community. Based on survey responses, the program served older participants.

Overall, the Administrative teams' responses were favorable to the program. A majority of Administrative team members would continue service projects if funding was available. Respondents wanted additional funds to extend the program and to cover transportation costs.

Overall, Parent Leaders responses indicated the program was well conducted and successful. A majority thought the community service projects increased protective factors to prevent child abuse and neglect. Many wanted the program to be longer in duration.

There were several suggestions for programmatic improvement: increase protective factors of social and concrete support, recruit younger parents and primary caregivers, increase participation of fathers, and collect additional data.

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Appendix A: Protective factors survey

PARENT PROGRAM Pre- and Post- Protective Factors Survey

Before program start After program disenrollment

INSTRUCTIONS: Please create a unique ID number using the first letter of your first name and the first letter of your last name followed by your date of birth. For example, John Smith born January 1, 1995 would be ID# JS 01-01-1995.

1. Your ID #: _____ - _____ - _____

About family ...

Please circle the response that best describes how often the statements are true for you or your family.

		Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	About half the time	Frequently	Very Frequently	Always
1.	In my family, we talk about problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	When we argue, my family listens to "both sides of the story."	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	In my family, we take time to listen to each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	My family pulls together when things are stressful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	My family is able to solve our problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

About social connections and support...

Please circle the response that best matches how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

		Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I have others who will listen when I need to talk about my problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	When I am lonely, there are several people I can talk to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I would have no idea where to turn if my family needed food or housing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I wouldn't know where to go for help if I had trouble making ends meet.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	If there is a crisis, I have others I can talk to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	If I needed help finding a job, I wouldn't know where to go for help.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

About parenting ...

Please circle the response that best matches how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

		Strongly disagree	Mostly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	There are many times when I don't know what to do as a parent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I know how to help my child learn.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	My child misbehaves just to upset me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

About your child and family ...

Please circle the response that best describes how often each of the following happens in your family.

		Never	Very Rarely	Rarely	About half the time	Frequently	Very Frequently	Always
1.	I praise my child when he/she behaves well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	When I discipline my child, I lose control.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I am happy being with my child.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	My child and I are very close to each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	I am able to soothe my child when he/she is upset.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	I spend time with my child doing what he/she likes to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



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