

Guam's Early Childhood System of Care

Family Support Activities EVALUATION REPORT



January 2015

INTRODUCTION

Project Kariñu is Guam's early childhood System of Care for young children from birth – five years of age with social, emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs, as well as those who are considered “at risk”. Project Kariñu staff work in partnership with families and other service providers to meet the unique needs of each child by providing family supports, interventions, and individualized treatment. Family involvement is key to building family resiliency and creating positive outcomes. Project Kariñu works to increase family involvement through their Family Support Activities. This report provides a summary of initial findings from the evaluation of these activities from October 2013 – September 2014 and is the third in a series of Project Kariñu evaluation reports.

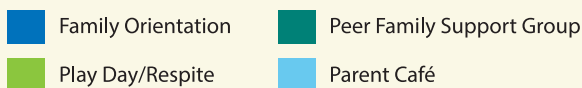
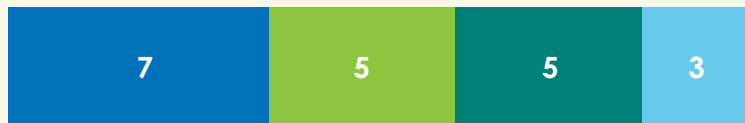
WHAT ARE FAMILY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES?

Project Kariñu's family support activities include: (1) New Family Orientation, (2) Play Days and Respite Care events, (3) Peer Family Support Groups, and (4) Parent Cafés. Families are also part of the Project Kariñu Team that participates in national System of Care conferences.

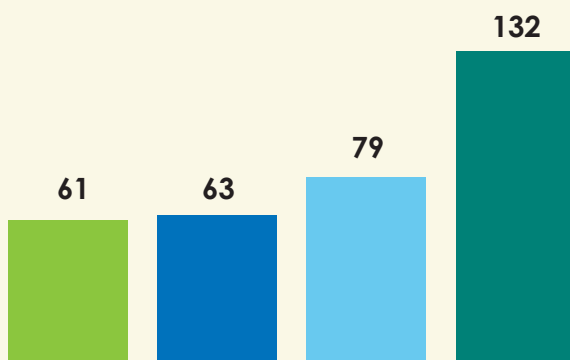
These activities are designed to:

- build strong relationships between families and staff
- nurture positive relationships between parents/caregivers and their children
- provide families with the information they need to participate in the System of Care
- build resiliency and teach new ways of parenting and managing stress
- provide opportunities to develop relationships with other caregivers
- develop self-advocacy skills and knowledge

20 Family Support Activities were Conducted



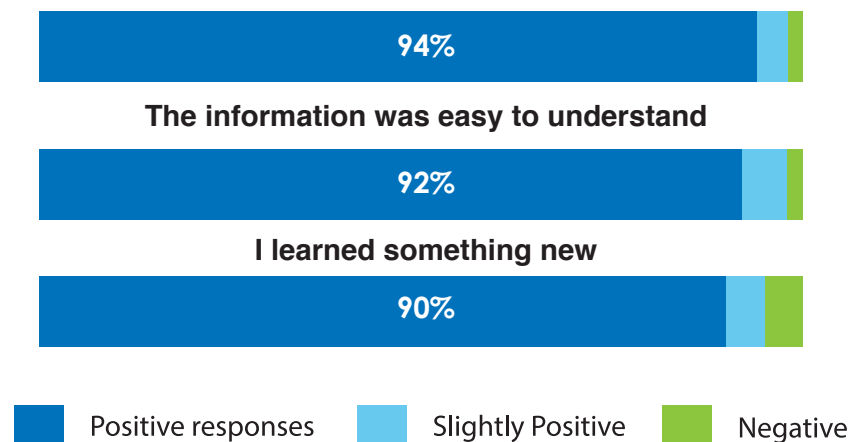
Number of Participants



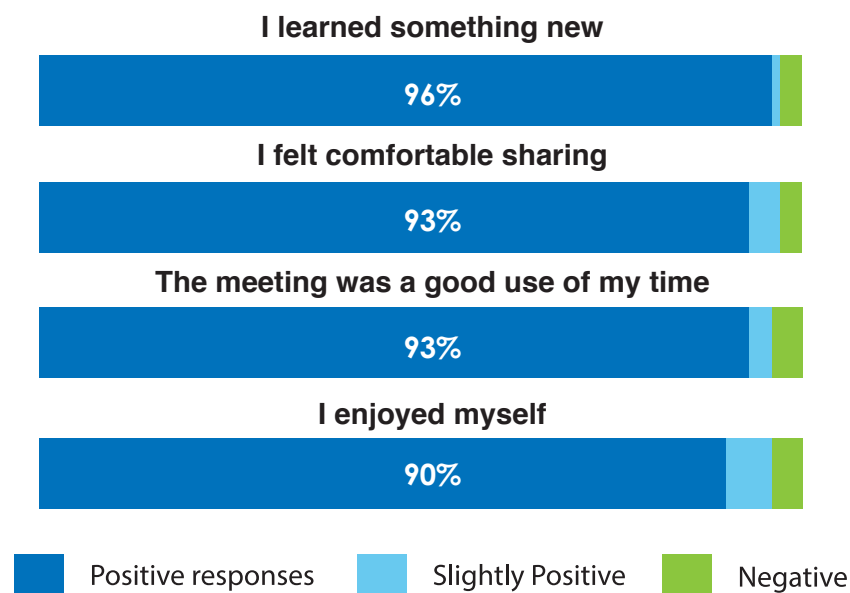
FAMILIES REPORT POSITIVELY AFTER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

New Family Orientation sessions are conducted monthly and are opportunities for families who are new to Project Kariñu to meet the entire staff and other families of young children, complete initial screening questionnaires, and learn about the program and the System of Care approach.

I understand how Project Kariñu can help my child & family



Peer Family Support Groups are informal gatherings of parent/caregivers that focus on a particular theme or topic. The groups provide opportunities for families to get to know each other, share their successes and challenges, as well as showcase their skills. Periodically, professionals are invited to join the group to share specific information of interest to families.



THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY AND RESPITE

Play is a powerful way to nurture positive relationships and promote children's social emotional skills. To achieve this, Project Kariñu offers structured play dates at a local play center. Raising a child can be stressful and parents/caregivers need time to recharge and engage in self-care. To meet this need, Project Kariñu, in collaboration with a licensed childcare center, offers respite care. Families shared that play dates and respite care resulted in positive experiences for them and their children.

"I liked that the kids had a chance to do something fun outside of our home."

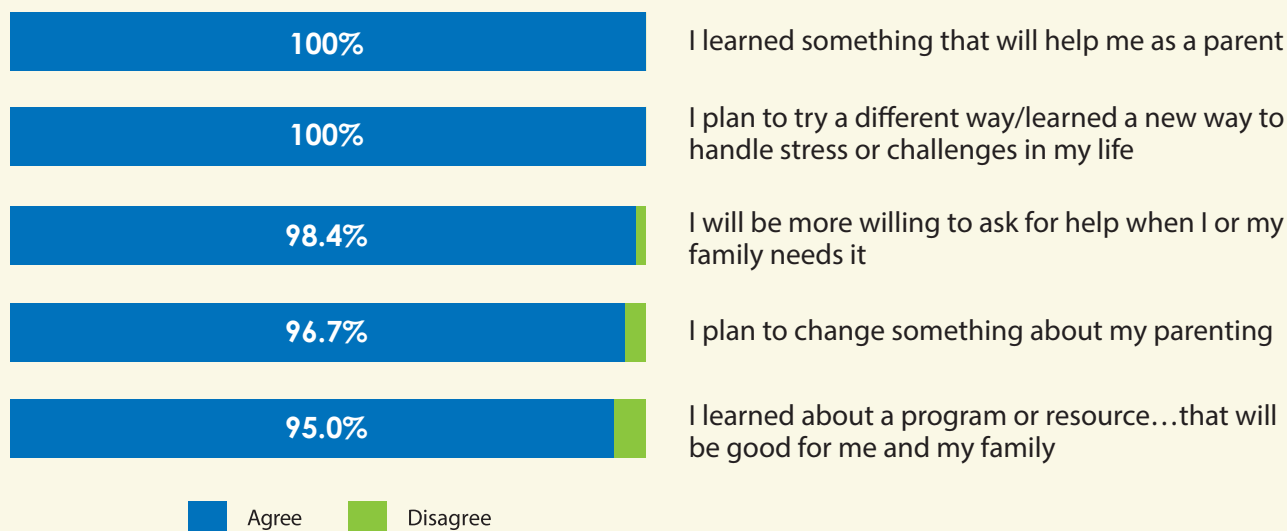
"It gave my child a chance to interact with other children."

"It helps me get my errands done while having a little time of quietness..."

"It helped me and my other half do something, even if it is for a short time."

PARENT CAFÉS BUILD PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Parent Cafés strengthen families and develop parenting skills through building five protective factors: (1) parental resiliency; (2) social connectedness; (3) knowledge of parenting; (4) concrete support in times of need; and (5) social and emotional competence of children. Parents participating in the Cafés overwhelmingly agreed that they learned something new and most plan to take action based on what they learned.



What families had to say about Parent Cafés

"This was an outstanding experience for me as a single mother. To be able to strengthen me in all areas of my life."

"This is an amazing experience. It was very helpful and made me feel better knowing that there are people you can reach out to for help..."

"I was surprised at how everyone got a chance to listen, speak, and meet new people. Keep us parents strong and open."



FAMILIES ATTEND NATIONAL CONFERENCES



When I was asked if I would be interested in attending the Georgetown University's Training Institute in July, my immediate response was yes! The thought of attending anything from a prestigious institution like Georgetown University was appealing to me. It also meant that I would be learning more skills that would help me raise my son in the best way possible. Although I would have been content with gaining more parenting skills, the information and knowledge I gained went far beyond any of my expectations. From the inspiring stories of Father "G" and Kevin Hines, to the enthusiasm of all the presenters of all the courses I

attended, I walked away not only as a better parent, but a better person. I am a lot more aware of how my actions affect others, especially children. I also got to see that my son was a lot more resilient than I gave him credit for. I will forever be grateful for the many learning opportunities I received from the Georgetown University's Training Institutes.

-Jolene Dagame



Having the opportunity to attend the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health's 24th Annual Conference was certainly a valuable experience. As a parent, I am constantly striving to increase my awareness and improve services for my daughter. A very important aspect of the conference was its focus on a Family and Youth-Driven approach. Often, we receive recommendations and direction from experts and professionals. While it is necessary and important to get their feedback, it is just as important to look into the situation from the perspective of the family and the child and incorporate that perspective to achieve success.

The conference taught me several things that I will pursue: sharing best practices – what are others doing that may be in a similar situation as me and how are they tackling it; networking – get to know people and what

resources are out there; relationship-building – a positive relationship with your child and with those interacting with your child is imperative in maintaining a good system of care; and consistent learning – the world is ever-evolving with changes in policies, legislation, the situation of our children, services provided, etc. We have to constantly be on top of it and be diligent in continuing to learn and research what's out there. We have to be knowledgeable to be able to liaise effectively with all the entities that will be involved with our children.

Many times, we as parents feel alone in all of this. For inspiration, I refer to a quote from a piece of art created by George E. Miller II, who I met at the Conference. This piece, "Hugs", states "To the world you may be one person; but to one person you may be the world." Our children depend on us to help them on their journey in maximizing their potential. The conference was definitely a forum in helping parents, caregivers, and professionals. It increased my awareness and helped me to identify ways to improve services for my daughter. I am grateful that I was able to attend.

-Anna Catahay

If You're Concerned About A Young Child Because Of:

- ☒ Poor weight gain or slow growth
- ☒ Problems sleeping
- ☒ Problems being comforted or soothed
- ☒ Excessive fears or fussiness
- ☒ Delayed development

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