



The Power of Families Project

BUILDING EQUITABLE EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

The Power of Families Project, an initiative of the Community Service Council and the Center for Community School Strategies, supports Tulsa's Latino families in two ways:

- 1 Expands the capacity of Tulsa area family, friend, and neighbor care environments to provide successful, equitable early childhood experiences for children who are not accessing formal early childhood programs and/or whose first language is not English.
- 2 Increases families' knowledge of resources and develops a dense social network within schools and their community to support them in care giving and advocacy for their child.

The Need

Over the last decade, growth of the Latino population in Tulsa has been significant. Latino children now make up **32%** of the student population in the Tulsa Public School and Union Public School districts. Yet, Latino families are less likely than other racial/ethnic groups to access formal early childhood programs.

To increase opportunities for the successful development of Latino children, The Power of Families Project has engaged more than **200 children** under five and their families in Tulsa since 2014. Upon initial enrollment in our program, we found that **177** of the 200 children were not attending formal early childhood programs.

Additionally, of the **156 parents and caregivers** we serve, many reported low levels of engagement and empowerment within Tulsa's education system due to barriers such as unfamiliarity, language, immigration status and racism/discrimination:

The number of Latino children under 5 living in Tulsa increased

512%

from 1990 to 2015.

82%

of children in our program were not enrolled in any type of formal early childhood education.



66% of parents perceived they could not participate in their child's education



67% of parents perceived they did not have access to healthy foods



68% of parents perceived they did not have access to protection from police



72% of parents perceived they did not have access to social services/clinics



72% of parents perceived they did not have access to affordable housing



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The Strategy

Research shows that supportive and nurturing environments (at home, library, church, community, etc.) experienced early in life are key to healthy child development and future academic success. Our strategy includes the promotora model, which has primarily been used in the healthcare arena, to support the needs of marginalized communities and promote trust of local systems and institutions. Promotoras, individuals who have nascent leadership skills and empathetically understand the barriers that Latino immigrant families face, were recruited and trained on best practices in early childhood development.

To date, The Power of Families Project promotoras have served 156 families, with approximately **200 children** under the age of five. Our baseline developmental screenings show that of the children participating in our program, **64% had some developmental delay** that could potentially lead to learning difficulties later in life.

Our team of promotoras support families to be their child's first teacher and connect them with local resources, services and information, while assisting them as they navigate systems, such as physical and mental health, speech, housing, food, and various types of financial assistance. The promotoras also plan and organize opportunities to engage with their local community schools and libraries by hosting baby book clubs, health fairs, and education resource events.

The Results

In 2016, our promotoras planned and executed **43** community events, sharing early childhood development information and resources with **2,000+ individuals**

After **6 months** of families working with our promotoras, the percentage of children with a developmental delay **decreased by**

26%



Parents with children who aged out of our program reported **high levels of skills** needed for school readiness, as well as **increased feelings of empowerment** to navigate their child's school.