



The University of Texas at San Antonio
&
Bank of America



Child & Adolescent Policy Research Institute

Hispanic Serving Institutions Assisting
Communities Grant
2005 – 2008



Bank of America



CAPRI

The Bank of America - Child and Adolescent Policy Research Institute is a University of Texas at San Antonio research center that supports the study of topics such as:

- infant cognition
- language development
- early literacy
- juvenile justice
- child abuse prevention
- pediatric obesity prevention
- school readiness and dropouts.



CAPRI

The Institute fosters cross-disciplinary collaborations within the University and with research partners from the community, and will translate research results into policy recommendations.

Child & Adolescent Policy Research Institute

Grant: Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities (H.S.I.A.C.)

Source: U.S. Department of Housing (HUD) www.hud.gov
Office of University Partnerships www.oup.org
Washington, D.C.

Period: September 28, 2006 – September 28, 2009

Director: Dr. Harriett Romo, UTSA

Activities: 1 – Navarro Academy Early Childhood Development Center
2 – Jose Cardenas Child Development Center
3 – Small Business Development
4 – Neighborhood Networks Collaboration
5 – Parent Literacy Workshop
6 – Family, Friends, & Neighbors
7 – Foster Care Alumni Study



Activity 1: Navarro Academy Early Childhood Development Center

Partner: San Antonio Independent School District

Construction Costs: \$ 1 million 2001 SAISD Bond Program
\$ 250,000 HUD Grant

Facility: Navarro Academy
623 S. Pecos St.
San Antonio, Texas



Goal: Build a resource to showcase academic programs for 3-4 year old students. To serve about 90 children and function as a laboratory for SAISD teachers and UTSA students in early childhood education.

Navarro Early Childhood Development Center

Built with room for four large classrooms

Construction on the Center began in Sept. 2004



Navarro Early Childhood Development Center

Located on campus of
alternative high school
considered historic landmark



The Center opened its
doors in the fall of 2005



Navarro Early Childhood Development Center

Children are given toys and materials that are beneficial to their development.



UTSA students aide teachers in order to gain class credit.



Navarro Early Childhood Development Center



Parent Child Inc. collaborates in providing qualified teachers.



Navarro Early Childhood Development Center

HUD purchased computers are in each classroom giving the children valuable experience for school readiness.



Navarro Center: Playground Design

An old parking lot was removed to build the frame of the new playground.



Navarro Center: Playground Design

UTSA Architecture students were asked to compete with each other to build and propose a playground model that would be both eye pleasing and contribute to child development.



Navarro Center: Playground Design

The colorful new playground is safe for children & provides many activities.



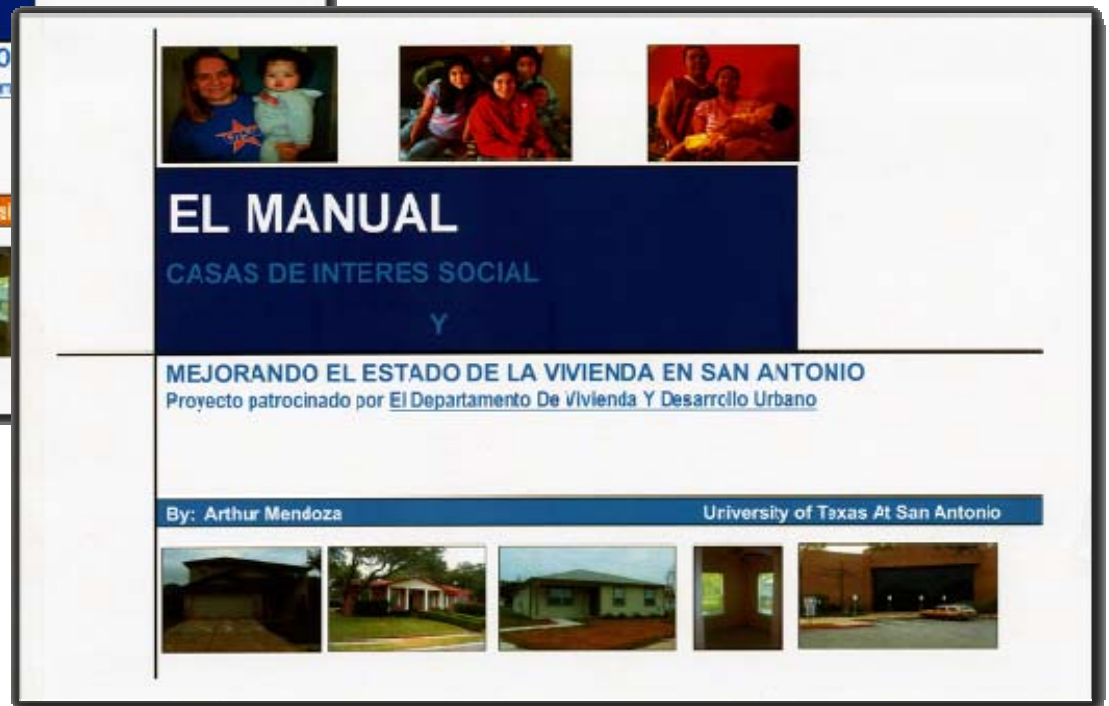
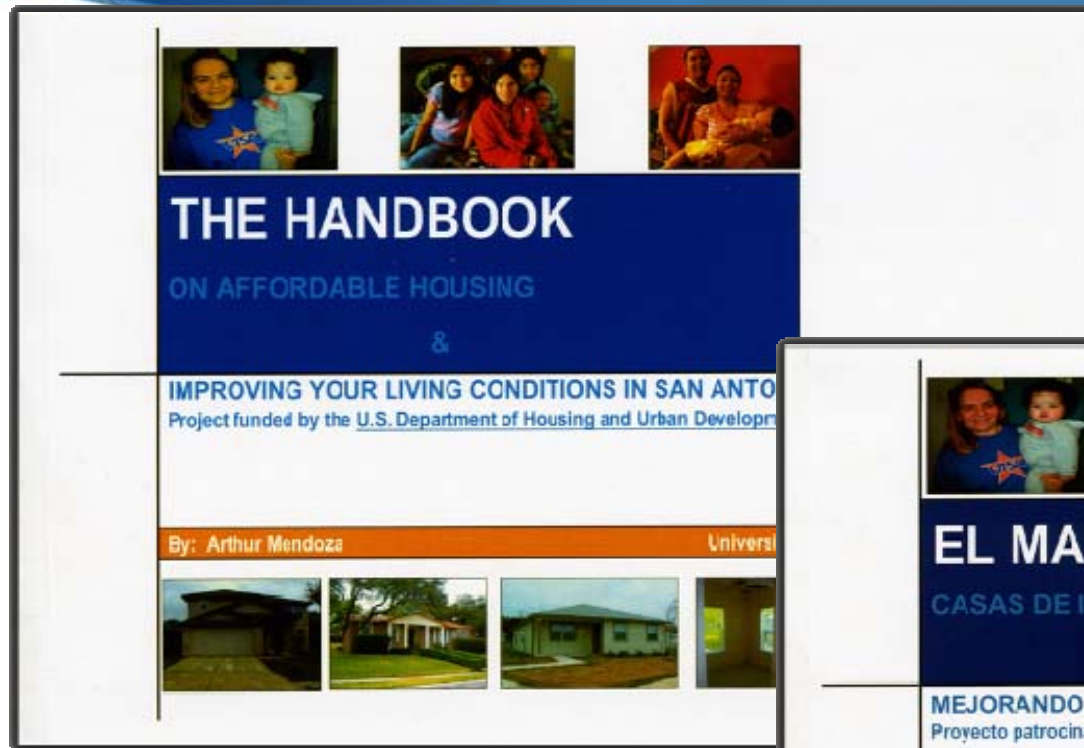
Navarro Center: Playground Design

The Bank of America funded the construction of the playground. A flag on each pole represents each of the partners for the project.



Individual Student Projects

An Architecture student developed this Handbook to help people in the target community find affordable housing.



Activity 2: Jose Cardenas Child Development Center

Partner: Edgewood Independent School District

Facility: Jose Angel Cardenas School
3300 Ruiz Street
San Antonio, Texas



Goal: Renovation of a 4,500 sq ft building and a 3,500 sq ft playground.

Replace the roof, provide a new air conditioning system, replace floors, redesign existing walls and doors, paint, finish out, furnish.

Provide suggested models for playground, façade, and drop-off.



The blighted main entrance and walkway of the Cardenas Center, built in 1972.

The aluminum awning at the entrance of the building shows dents and damage.





Walls were made of partitions and were unstable.

Walls have been recently constructed to the ceiling creating a clean hallway and private rooms.





Ceiling tiles were swollen from water damage. Vents and light fixtures were not safely secured.

Ceiling tiles have been replaced. New vents and light fixtures have been secured, creating a safe learning environment.





Furnishings needed updating.
Stained carpet was evident throughout the building.

Carpet has been replaced throughout the building with colorful tile and freshly painted walls.





Corners were moldy and tile was broken.

Corners were painted and floors were retiled and painted.





Furniture has been replaced
with modern,
fun, child-size tables and
chairs.



Cardenas Center: Playground Design

UTSA architecture students
visit the Cardenas center



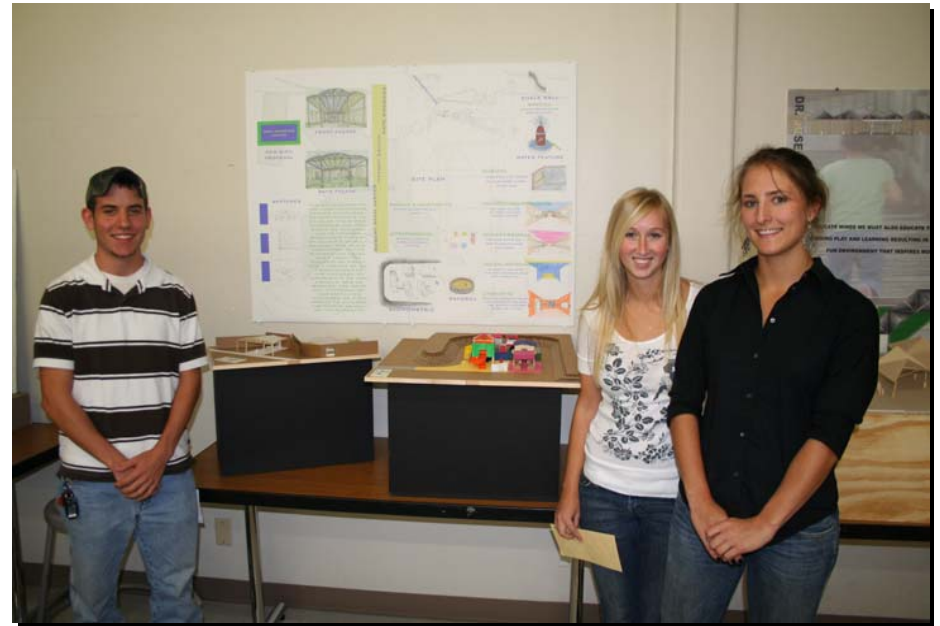
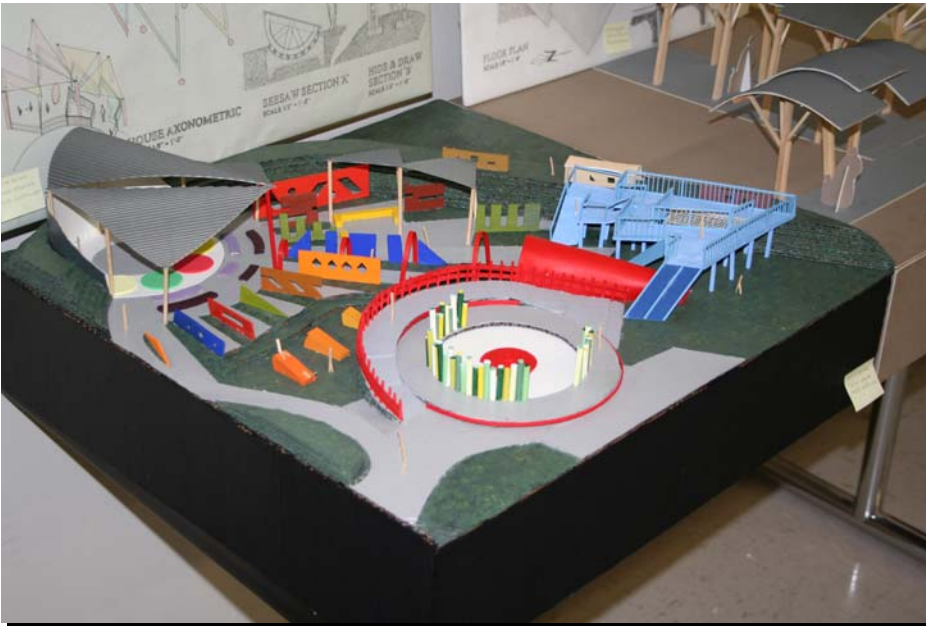
Students survey landscape
and take measurements



Cardenas Center: Playground Design

Detailed model of
playground

UTSA Architecture
students next to their
model



Cardenas Center: Playground Design



The Bank of America Endowment



Based on the UTSA-HUD Collaboration Projects a \$1,000,000 endowment from the Bank of America funds graduate fellowships and undergraduate scholarships for students participating in the San Antonio Independent School District/UTSA Child Development Center at the Navarro Academy in downtown San Antonio.



Activity 3: Small Business Development Workshops

Partner: Edgewood Independent School District
San Antonio Small Business Development Center

Focus: Teen parents from two Edgewood high schools

Facility: University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA)
Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Goal: Provide the tools and information on potential small business development to teen parents by providing business advice in a consistent, efficient, and friendly manner.

Small Business Development Workshops: Key Focus

- Networking Exercise “Human Bingo”
- Business Success
- Dynamic Resume and Cover Letters
- Dress for Success
- Former Teen Parent Shares Experience
- UTSA Downtown Campus Tour

Social Networking



Students engage in “Human Bingo” an ice breaker & social networking exercise for the purpose of building interaction and communication

CAPRI undergraduate research assistants implemented this exercise to build on communication skills.



Business Success



Jaime Martinez,
Business Development Specialist SBDC

Presentation of steps to creating and maintaining a successful business

Focused on:

Entrepreneurship

Potential Customers

Demographics

Business Promotion

Building a Professional Team



Business Success



Yanet Gomez,
Sr. Business Development Specialist SBDC

Discussions for making
successful business plans and
goals



Dynamic Resumes and Cover Letters



Sara Cisneros, *UTSA Career Counselor*

Presented components of a good resume and cover letter and provided examples.

Key Focus:

Types of Resumes

Providing Only Relevant Information

Visually Appealing

Sectional Analysis of Resume



Dress for Success



HUD Researchers stood in as models for the “Do’s and Don’ts” of casual workplace attire as well as for professional interview attire.

A presentation to showcase the proper business attire for interviews and in the workplaces was given by HUD students.



Dress for Success



IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DRESS

First impressions DO COUNT when we are evaluating someone, particularly for a professional position.



People make assumptions about professional credibility and potential performance based upon appearance during a first meeting, and it is difficult to overcome a first impression, regardless of your knowledge and expertise.

“Starting Your Own Business”



DD Cobb, guest speaker and former teen parent, discusses becoming a successful entrepreneur and small business owner.

Students were able to relate to Ms. Cobb on a personal level as well as a business level with her clothing store *Chic Mama Maternity*.



Campus Tour

- A tour of the University of Texas at San Antonio was given to students to encourage them to think about college.
- Students were introduced to representatives from various offices including
 - Financial Aid
 - Enrollment Services
 - Career Services



Collaboration with San Antonio Small Business Development Center & UTSA Career Services

- SBDC provide workshops focusing on small business development for teen-parents from two different high schools in the Edgewood Independent School District.
- UTSA Career Service Center presented information on resumes and cover letters.
- SBDC provide assistance to small businesses with individual counseling on their small business development.

Activity 4: Vista Verde Community Learning Center

Partner: HUD- Neighborhood Networks

Facility: Vista Verde Learning Center
910 N Frio St.
San Antonio, TX 78207



Goal: Provide computer training that increases exposure to employment opportunities, improves academic performance, and enhances communication.

Vista Verde Community Learning Center

- The majority of participants were:
 - Retired
 - Single parents
 - Spanish Speaking
 - Unemployed
 - Almost no previous computer interaction
- The same module was instructed twice a month
 - once in the afternoon hours
 - once during evening hours.

Vista Verde Community Learning Center

- Curriculum focused on the most basic of computer skills to ease the intimidation factor of learning something new:
 - Basic computer parts and functions (keyboard, mouse, etc)
 - What is a web page and how to navigate it
 - How to take advantage of search engines to find useful information
 - Creating and using an email address for worldwide communication
 - Correct methods of typing

Vista Verde Community Learning Center

Vista Verde Apts.
Learning Center



Residents were given
one-on-one instruction



Vista Verde Community Learning Center



Hardware components including the monitor, cpu, keyboard, and mouse were strongly reinforced.

Vista Verde Community Learning Center

Challenges & Barriers

- Have never used a computer before.
- New terminology and language
- Difference between a keyboard on a typewriter and that of a computer.
- Controlling the mouse with one hand frustrated people
- Left and Right clicking with the mouse
- Little time to practice
- Limited access to computers to practice

Vista Verde Community Learning Center



Participants gained:

- A sense of confidence with computers and many wanted to purchase computers for their homes.
- Real experience using common programs such as Microsoft Word.
- A new knowledge of how to best take advantage of everything a computer has to offer.

The module is now available to be used again within the community.

Vista Verde Community Learning Center

“Hi David,

I would like to learn, how to be able to control the mouse. Maybe with some practice, I hope to do better. I really would like to communicate with my daughters. That's why I need to learn how to work this computer's language. And be able to E-Mail them. And send them copies of pictures that they have been waiting for so long. I am really going to try hard to learn as much as I can. This is really great.

Thank You.”

Activity 5: Parent Make-and-Take Literacy Workshop

Partner: Edgewood Independent School District

Facility: Jose Angel Cardenas School
3300 Ruiz Street
San Antonio, Texas



Goal: Teach parents educational activities that can be used at home. Activities focused on letter and sound recognition, rhyming, math skills, and reading comprehension.

Parent Make-and-Take Literacy Workshop



Parents were given worksheets and materials to take home.

This worksheet focused on the proper writing technique for the entire alphabet.

Parent Make-and-Take Literacy Workshop



Parents were taught the importance of implementing rhyming into the language development of their children.

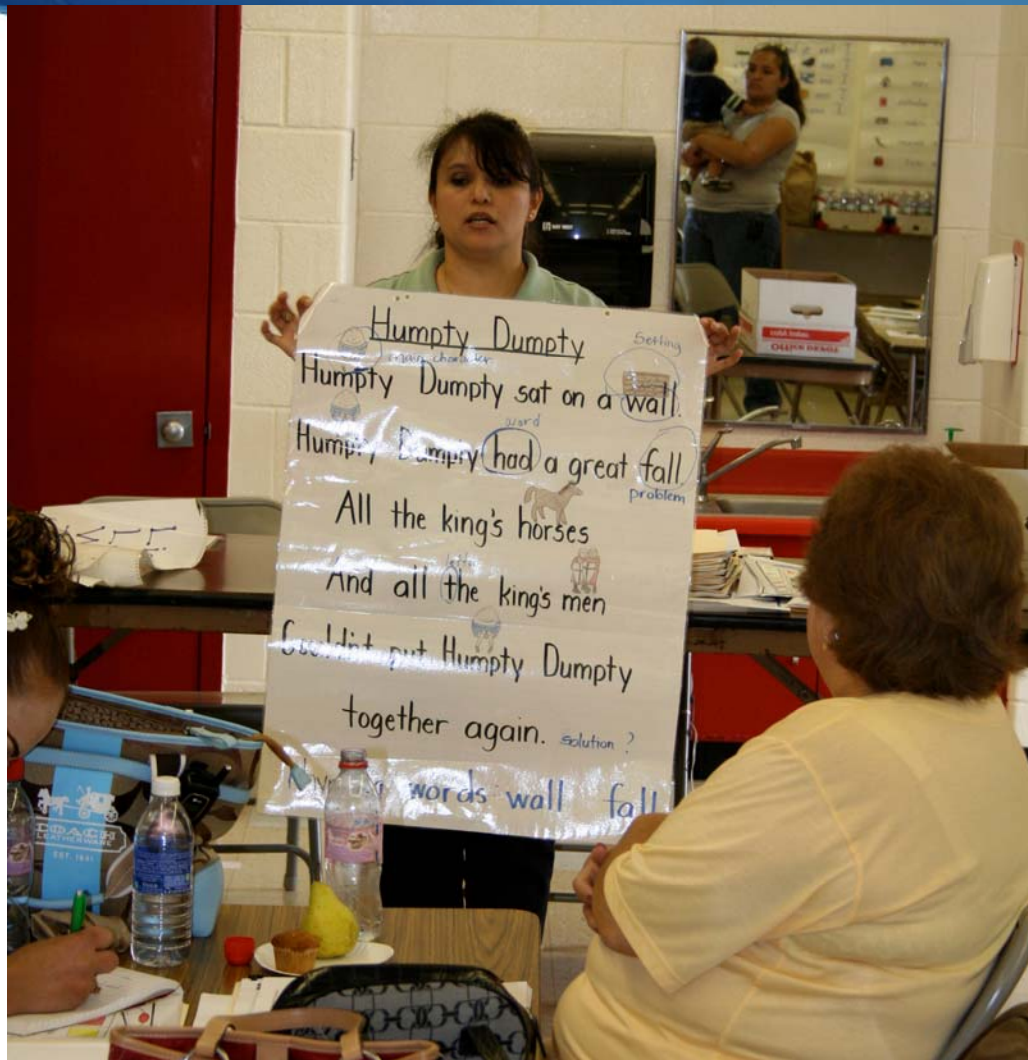
Parent Make-and-Take Literacy Workshop



Children's books in both English and Spanish were given to parents.

The importance of having literature around your home and expressing a joy in reading was greatly stressed.

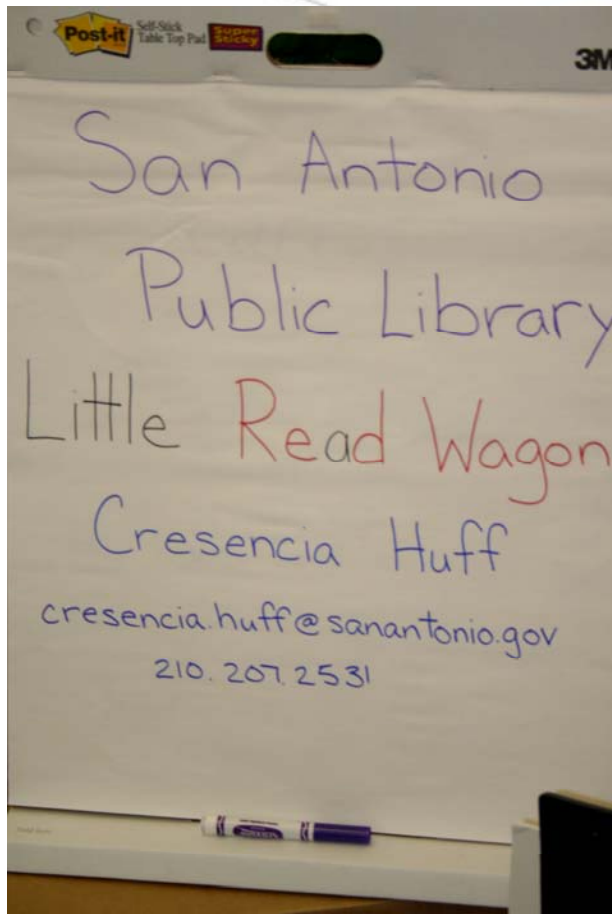
Parent Make-and-Take Literacy Workshop



Parents were shown a sample teaching lesson that would be taught to their children on a regular school day.

This one focused on a well known nursery rhyme “Humpty Dumpty”

Parent Make-and-Take Literacy Workshop



Representatives from the San Antonio Public Library were invited to speak to parents about Little Red Wagon, a literacy program for children that provides books for children of all ages.

Parent Make-and-Take Literacy Workshop



Packets were prepared for parents to take home that included several learning activities.

Activities were chosen specifically to be utilized during the summer so there would be no regression in the child's learning.

Activity 6: Family, Friends, & Neighbors

Goals: Conduct interviews with the community to find out specific needs of low income informal child care.

Present information and make recommendations to promote the development of new programs for child care providers.

Collaboration: City of San Antonio

HUD Students conducted the research:

- 33 participants were interviewed
- Students identified the needs of informal childcare providers
- Interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and coded by emerging themes
- Students reported back to city, agencies, providers

Family, Friends, & Neighbors: Types of Providers interviewed

Family:

Usually relatives or neighbors who take care of children in their homes
Grandparents or Aunts
Lower to middle income families

Home-business child care:

Child care providers who take care of children in their homes for a fee

After-school care centers:

Community centers that offer activities for children during after-school hours.
(Neighborhood)

Family, Friends, & Neighbors: Hispanic Children Under age of Three

- Hispanic children represent the fastest, growing segment of the US child population
- Hispanic children under the age of three account for 1 in 5 (21.8%) of all infants and toddlers in the USA
- 27.9% reside in linguistically isolated households (Spanish)
- 67% of Hispanic children under the age of 3 live in homes with income that is 200% below the federal poverty threshold
- 63% lack access to regular medical providers, which is important for healthy development and school readiness

Family, Friends, & Neighbors: Hispanic Children Under age of Three

- 39.2% have mothers who did not finish high school
- 66% rely on themselves or their relatives for child care
 - 21% cared for by parents
 - 47% cared for by relatives
 - Fewer than 12% cared for by formal programs



Negative Characteristics: Low Income Informal Family Child Care

- Poor and unsafe housing facilities
- Lack of awareness in child development
- No First Aide/CPR Training:
- Lack of support and help for children with disabilities/health conditions
- Providers who are relatives are usually not interested in being licensed or registered
- Providers and parents sometimes have different rules/expectations for the children



Positive Characteristics: Low Income Informal Family Child Care

- Trust and familiarity with the caregivers
- Relatives take care of the children free of charge or at a very low cost, which makes this an attractive option for working families
- Typically the number of children under their care is small.
- Flexibility of hours: often hours are extend beyond normal working hours with the children sometimes spending the night



Recommendations for Informal Child Care

- Financial support for learning materials, educational trips, and healthcare
- Programs to combat social problems: gangs, drugs, school dropout
- CPR/ First Aid training (most expressed a willingness to learn)
- Various curriculum, lesson plans, and cognitive developmental goals.
- Since so many Latino infants and toddlers are cared for in informal settings, greater efforts are required to reach out to these parents and caregivers with child development information.

Activity 7: Foster Care Alumni Housing Project

Partner Facilities:

Baptist Child & Family Services
1900 North Main
San Antonio, Texas 78212

Casey Family Programs
816 Camaron Suite 102
San Antonio, Texas 78212



Goal: To understand the housing needs of Foster Care Alumni and provide recommendations to community agencies.

Facts about Foster Care Youth

- Approximately 20,000 youth age out of Foster Care each year.
- Approximately 25%-70% of Foster Care youth end up homeless.
- Inadequate information about housing leads to homelessness.
- Preparation for independent living occurs when adolescence are 16 to 18. Information is difficult to retain when they age out.

Understanding the Housing Experience

- “ When you age out of care, if you don’t talk to the right people or talk to the right people in time, you never know where you’re going to sleep, whose sofa you’re going to sleep on, who you’re going to go to and what you’re going to do.”

~Angel

- Leaving foster care with nowhere to go



Approach

- 32 predominately Hispanic Alumni of Foster Care, 44% Male and 56% Female, ages 18 to 26 were interviewed
- Alumni were approached at facilities serving the Westside of San Antonio
- Structured interviews with open-ended questions were used
- Questions concerned life and housing experiences
- Responses were transcribed and coded for themes

Emerging Themes

- Housing fears at 18
- Episodes of “Couch Surfing”
- Episodes of Homelessness:
 - shelters, hotels, streets
- Barriers to adult transition
- Barriers to housing assistance
- Housing impacts employment and education



Housing fears at 18

“Oh my god, I’m going to be on my own. I don’t have any money. I need to get a job. I don’t have a car. Where am I going to live? What am I going to do?”

- The reality of her housing situation

~Amanda

“I guess the fear of being alone...Wow, I’m in this world by myself. It’s really hard to live on your own regardless if you have family or not and then when you don’t, that’s even harder.”

- Seeking housing without family

~Maggie

Episodes of Couch Surfing

➤ Couch Surfing

“I was living with people... Because I was staying here and there with whoever, I started getting tired of not knowing where I was going to go...”



~Leslie

Episodes of Homelessness

➤ Streets

“ I’ve been sleeping under bridges, in the woods, underneath cars, abandoned trucks just so the cops won’t pick me up because I don’t have an I.D. I’ve been trying everything I can just to get a little sleep.

~Joseph

➤ Shelter and Hotel Stays

“I stayed at the shelter for about three weeks and with my friend at a hotel for like three days then he left and I stayed with another friend for like maybe two weeks...”

~Jeremiah

Barriers to Adult Transition

“A lot of transitional places now, you’ve got to be on medication, have children...it would have been easier for me to get into some of these places...”

➤ Qualification issues

~Lisa

“They had some idiotic rules. I understand working and going to school, what I don’t understand is you have to be home by nine o’clock. Let’s say I have to work till eleven. I wouldn’t be able to come home.”

➤ Rules hinder transition

~Jacob

Barriers to Housing Assistance

“I just would have thought that somebody would at least let me know how I could get some kind of housing assistance or anything like that. Nobody informed me.”

➤ Lack of information

~Adam

“I guess it was more obvious who her favorites were. That time when she picked someone over me and I was like, you know I don’t understand, I was homeless for a day.”

➤ Referral favoritism

~Richard



Housing Impacts Employment and Education

“ I was worried that I wasn’t going to find anywhere to live. I didn’t have transportation to go to and from where I was living to work. I needed something that is close to where I’m going to work. I was always worried about not being able to afford one or the other.”

- Housing location affects employment

~Rodney

“When I stayed in the shelters I didn’t go to school because I had no sitter for my child. I couldn’t make tutoring hours. I had to split my day into working and school. I might not have a place to rest my head at night. The last thing I was worried about was studying for some test. I really saw the big disconnect between school and housing.”

- Inadequate Housing affects Higher Education

~Candy

Recommendations to Community Agencies



- Report barriers to community agencies
- Emphasize better communication between case managers and youth
- Youth need a receiving facility upon aging out of care
- Prior to youth aging out caseworkers should encourage youth to seek assistance at receiving transition facility

What Can A Receiving Facility Do?

- Provide immediate temporary housing as youth age out
- Evaluate physical and psychological needs
- Help youth secure important documents
- Assist with employment and educational opportunities
- Stress preparation for adult living training
- Assist youth in finding their own home to create needed stability

Recommendations to Institutions of Higher Education

- Be sensitive to the needs of the foster care youth entering college campuses
- Develop collaborations and dialogue between foster care community agencies and educational institutions
- Assist housing needs with aid or stipends
- Provide incentive programs to reward youth who are enrolled in school or have maintained stable employment

Conclusion

- “I knew it would be hard for me to live on my own. I knew it was time. I had already experienced this whole foster care thing. I was just ready to live my life. I will eventually want to make it on my own.”

~Maggie

- Youth desire independence and housing is a big part of independence.

