



**Arab-American Family
Support Center**

CAREGIVER-CHILD BONDING CIRCLES EVALUATION RESULTS

Examining the impact of
culturally-responsive early
childhood intervention &
caregiver support

AUGUST 2021



Published by the AAFSC Research Institute

CAREGIVER-CHILD BONDING CIRCLES

The Arab-American Family Support Center's (AAFSC) Caregiver-Child Bonding Circles (CCBC) are an innovative, linguistically accessible intervention program for caregivers and their children 0-3 years old to bond, play, connect, and learn, resulting in cognitive, social, and emotional well-being for both caregiver and child. The circles are defined by psycho-social-emotional education modules and resiliency-building tools to boost caregiver mental and emotional health and reduce stress, which is proven to benefit both caregivers and children. The circles are also structured with play-based learning strategies and principles of early-talk to support children in meeting critical development milestones, build foundations for literacy, strengthen bonds, and ultimately promote economic mobility across generations.

AAFSC's Dyadic-Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP)-informed specialists deliver the program in 10 week sessions in a safe, friendly group setting complemented by weekly individualized follow-ups. The curriculum includes objectives such as building a secure base and attachment, emotional regulation and modeling, tackling irrational behavior and managing big emotions, setting limits and boundaries, positive communication, sensory play, early talk, and early childhood literacy. The Circles explore the most important parts of child-caregiver relationships including exploration play, attachment, teaching, behavior, and emotional co-regulation. **Serving 448 caregivers and children in the past year, AAFSC's Caregiver-Child Bonding Circles are filling a gap in linguistically accessible service delivery for Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (AMEMSA) families.**

Many AMEMSA immigrants endured conflict in their countries of origin and struggle with the negative psychological and social effects of lingering trauma. Recognizing that caregivers who experience prolonged stress can have difficulty bonding with their children, and understanding the ramifications of early-childhood developmental delays at the critical ages of 0-3, AAFSC's CCBCs are designed to bring evidence-based interventions to vulnerable populations in a culturally and linguistically-competent manner. As a multi-generational service provider, AAFSC works to support the entire family, and we facilitate referrals to our suite of wrap-around programming, including free legal support, mental health counseling, case management for domestic violence survivors, English literacy classes, and more.



PROGRAM EVALUATION STYLE

AAFSC deploys a multi-faceted evaluation approach to assess participant progress and program performance in the CCBC. Our evaluation balances qualitative data collection, including interviews, one-on-one feedback, focus-group style sessions, as well as a pre-post survey informed by the Karitane Parenting Confidence Scale. AAFSC's culturally competent team conducts a formal feedback session at the conclusion of the course, where caregivers are asked to answer post-test questions that assess acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. This responsive evaluation style ensures that facilitators can discern program effectiveness in real time, pivot service delivery appropriately, and inform future curriculum adjustments. Finally, our pre-post assessment allows us to complement qualitative analysis with objective and standardized feedback from participants relating to key outcomes.

The Pre-Post assessment measures caregiver attitudes and confidence along our four major outcomes:

1. Time spent actively bonding through play time
2. Knowledge of tools and techniques to promote caregiver-child bonding
3. Knowledge of caregiving practices that promote early-childhood development
4. Confidence managing caregiver stress through coping skills
5. Sense of support and community among participants

The results of post-test responses from 157 caregivers participating between January and June 2021 illustrate the positive impact of participation on caregivers and their children.



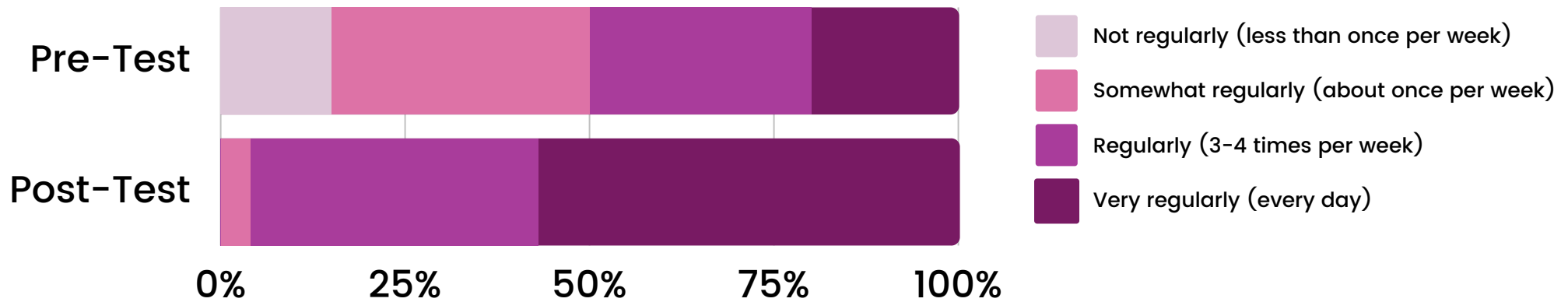
TOP LINE RESULTS

	Pre-Test Average Score	Post-Test Average Score	Score Change
Indicator 1: How frequently do you take time to sit and play with your child?	2.54 /4	3.52 /4	25%
Indicator 2: I know of tools and techniques that help me play with my child.	3.35 /5	4.57 /5	24%
Indicator 3: I understand the types of caregiving practices that foster my child's development.	3.21 /5	4.54 /5	27%
Indicator 4: I have tools that help me when I feel stressed and overwhelmed in my role as a caregiver.	2.91 /5	4.38 /5	29%
Indicator 5: I felt comfortable sharing my experience and discussing the challenges I face in my role as a caregiver. (Post test only)		4.32 /5	

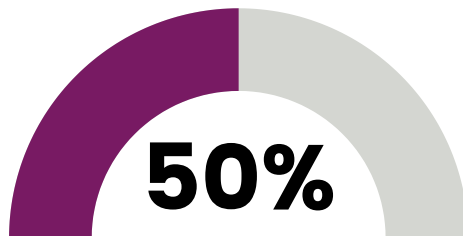


INDICATOR 1: BONDING TIME

How frequently do you take time to sit and play with your child?

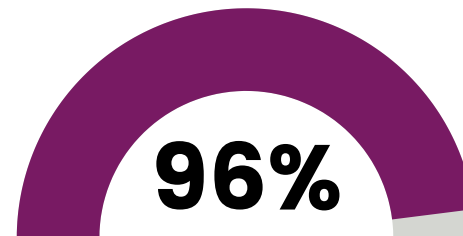


Pre-Test



Took time to sit and play with their child "Regularly" or "Very Regularly"

Post-Test

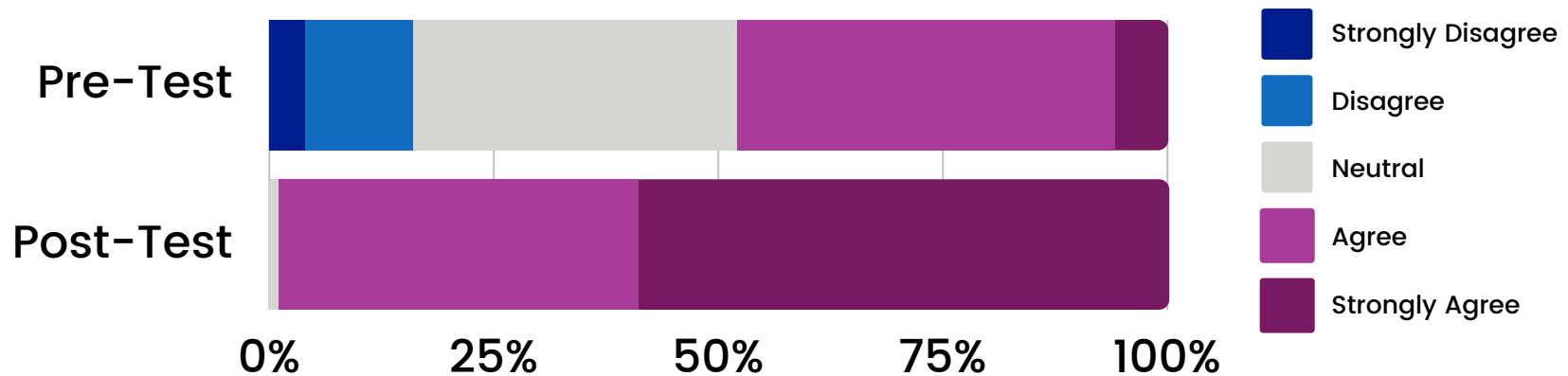


Took time to sit and play with their child "Regularly" or "Very Regularly"

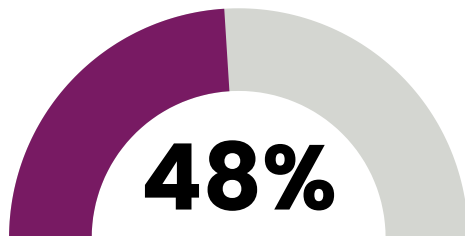


INDICATOR 2: BONDING TECHNIQUES

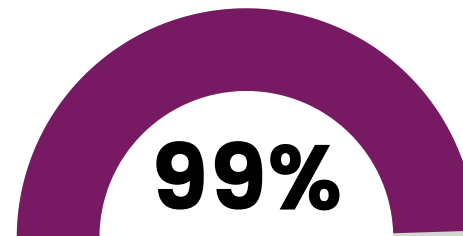
I know of tools and techniques that help me play and bond with my child.



Pre-Test



Post-Test



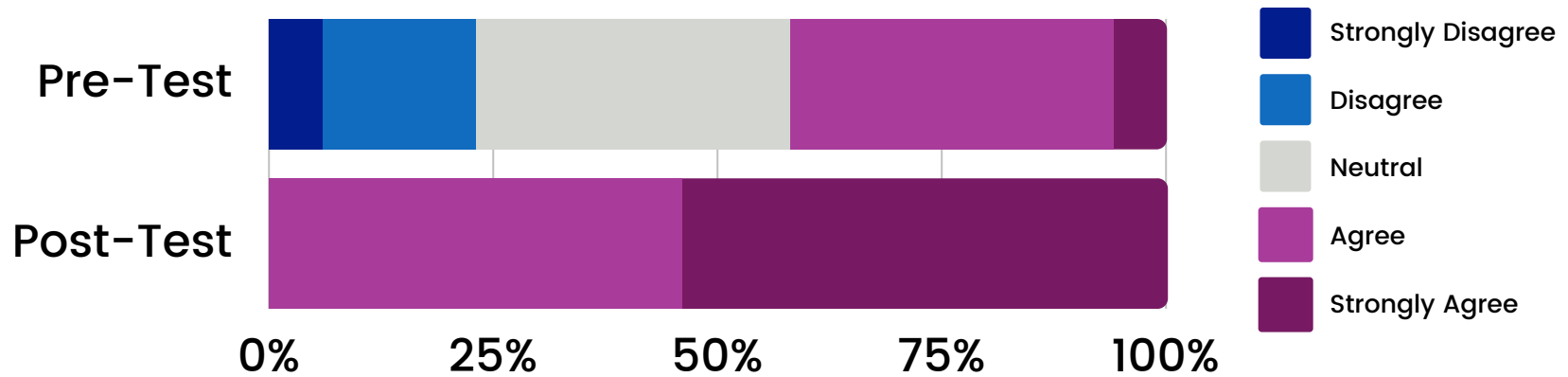
"Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they know of tools and techniques that help them play and bond with their child.

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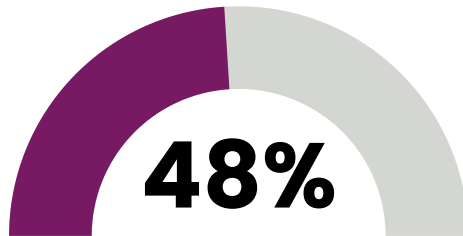


INDICATOR 3: CHILD DEVELOPMENT

I understand the types of caregiving practices that foster my child's development.



Pre-Test



"Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they understand the types of caregiving practices that foster early-childhood development.

Post-Test

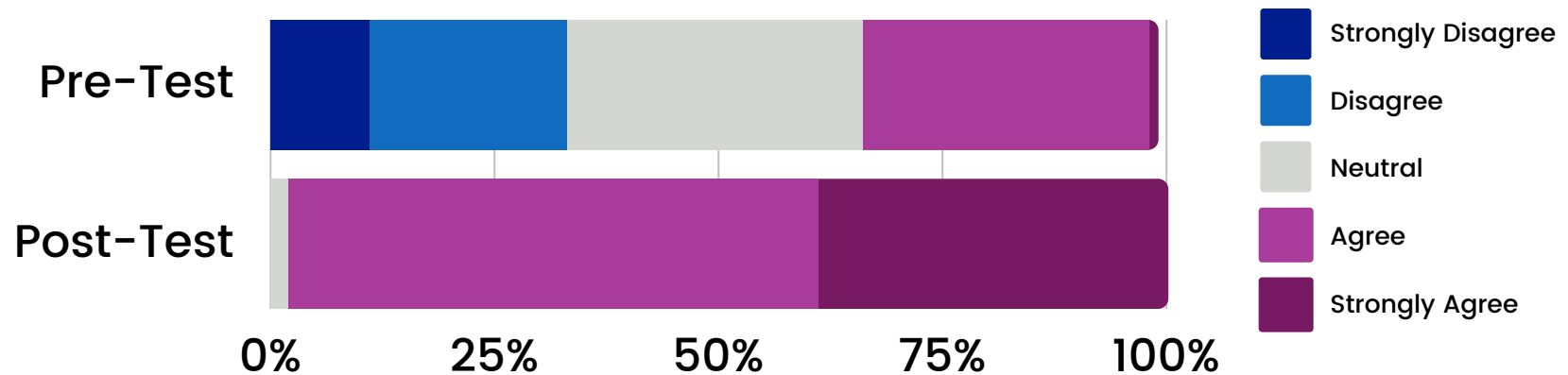


"Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they understand the types of caregiving practices that foster early-childhood development.

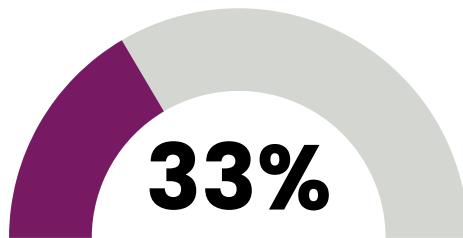


INDICATOR 4: CAREGIVER WELL-BEING

I have tools that help me when I feel stressed and overwhelmed in my role as a caregiver.

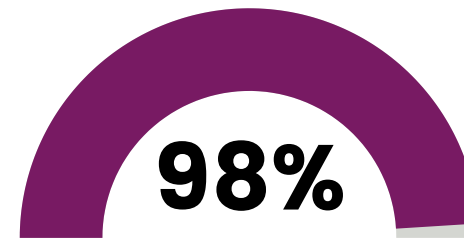


Pre-Test



"Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they have the tools they need to manage stress in their role as a caregiver.

Post-Test



"Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they have the tools they need to manage stress in their role as a caregiver.



INDICATOR 5: CAREGIVER SUPPORT

I felt comfortable sharing my experience and discussing the challenges I face in my role as a caregiver.



In the post-test survey, **89%** of participants "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" that they felt comfortable sharing their experience and discussing the challenges they face as a caregiver.



CONCLUSION

A comparison of pre- and post-test responses demonstrates a strong improvement across all outcome indicators and an adoption of knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to support bonding and early-childhood development. Results also indicate high participant satisfaction and agreement that the program setting fostered a safe environment for caregivers to share experiences and connect with individuals facing similar challenges. Through interviews and observation, program facilitators noted significant enthusiasm from participants – as further evidenced by the 261% increase in program enrollment compared to the previous year.

In spite of the unprecedented challenges exacerbated by COVID-19, this past year has been transformational for the Caregiver-Child Bonding Circles as opportunities for connection, learning, growth, and healing were met with tremendous enthusiasm and demand from the community. Utilizing a hybrid program model featuring weekly group-based sessions complemented by one-on-one support, participants engaged in group conversation and discussed sensitive issues with a trusted advisor. The programming style has provided incredible opportunities for community building and learning as participants continue to dive into the content, connect with fellow caregivers and children, address stress and anxiety, navigate taboo concepts, and develop skills, techniques, and confidence in early childhood development.

AAFSC is committed to measuring our impact and leveraging evaluation tools for continuous program improvement. We look forward to expanding our Circles across New York City and in additional languages, and we are eager to share our findings in the years to come.



AAFSC's Research Institute is a hub for research & evaluation that measures community needs and analyzes the impact of culturally and linguistically-responsive programs and initiatives. For more reports and insights, visit our Impact page at aafscny.org/our-impact.



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