



Rupani Foundation
Empowering Communities

FINAL REPORT

Thriving
Together
Internal
Midline
Evaluation

2024



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Mid-Term Evaluation Final Report

Overview

Thriving Together is a two-year project (2023–2025) of Rupani Foundation, financed by the Harris County Early Childhood Impact Fund (ECIF). The project aims to improve early childhood outcomes in Harris County.

The project's ultimate outcome is to promote Early Childhood Development (ECD) as a transformational tool to increase access and opportunity for marginalized individuals living in underserved communities.

The two key intermediate outcomes of the *Thriving Together* project focus on:

1. Increased Rupani Foundation facilitator's knowledge of early childhood and child brain development.
2. Improved underserved communities' access to early childhood education services.

Midline evaluation plays a key role in project management by evaluating progress and identifying any necessary adjustments for the second year of the project and future iterations. It enables stakeholders to gauge how well the project is meeting its goals and timelines, pinpoint challenges that have emerged, and assess risks that could impact future success. This evaluation informs strategic decisions regarding goal refinement, and adaptation of project strategies to better align with evolving needs and circumstances. Furthermore, it fosters ongoing engagement with stakeholders, ensuring transparency, addressing concerns, and soliciting feedback to maintain support and alignment. Ultimately, the midline evaluation is a valuable opportunity for learning and improvement, leveraging insights gained from the first year to enhance performance and maximize the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes by project completion.

This evaluation, conducted by the Rupani Foundation Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator (M&E), has evaluated the **project's relevance, coherence, and effectiveness to understand its performance and generate actionable learning and recommendations to improve it**. As this evaluation was conducted early in year two of the year's project, it assessed progress on outcomes and identified components of the project design or implementation that could be strengthened in its final year. It has also generated actionable learning relevant to the *Thriving Together* project and to improving similar future Rupani Foundation projects based on what has been learned from delivering *Thriving Together*. This has been done by responding to the

following evaluation questions. These evaluation questions have been used to structure this evaluation final report.

- To what extent does the project respond to the current and future needs and priorities of the affected population?
- To what extent is the project on track to achieve its intended outcomes?
- How could the project be adapted or strengthened to improve performance against the intended outcomes?

The evaluation used a mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) design to assess *Thriving Together* performance. These findings will generate learnings to inform this and future projects.

The midline evaluation findings provide critical insights into the program's progress, impact, and areas for improvement. The evaluation highlights positive outcomes in key areas such as participant engagement, curriculum effectiveness, and parental involvement. It shows that the program has successfully increased parent participation in their children's learning, with many parents expressing greater confidence in supporting their child's development at home. The 12-week curriculum was found to be largely effective, though feedback suggests the need for periodic updates to better address diverse learning needs. Additionally, the evaluation identified opportunities for improvement in facilitator peer support, emphasizing the importance of fostering a collaborative learning environment among facilitators. While the program has made notable strides, the findings also underscore the need for enhanced scalability through stronger local partnerships. These findings serve as a foundation for refining strategies and ensuring the program's long-term success and broader impact.

Report Structure

This report begins by detailing the **methodology and design** of the evaluation, describing the sampling framework, tool development, data collection, and data analyses for both the quantitative and qualitative components of the study. Key **limitations** of the evaluation are then discussed, along with implications of how to interpret the findings considering these limitations. Next, the **findings** are reported to answer each of the evaluation questions above. Each section of the report details the evaluation question, criteria, and data sources. The report concludes with providing **recommendations** for the final year of the project and its future iterations.

Methodology and Design

Sampling and Participant Selection

The evaluation reached **98 participants** through parents and facilitators surveys (99 percent female and 1 percent male), and an additional **34 participants** through interviews and FGDs (97 percent female and 3 percent male) for a **total sample of 132 individuals**.

QUANTITATIVE SAMPLING FRAMEWORK

Sampling Overview

The quantitative sampling framework was designed to assess progress against intermediate outcomes, and percentages of improvement and satisfaction among participants (facilitators and parents).

Sample Selection

Parents were randomly selected out of the participant lists provided by the program team and those who had been enrolled for at least two months in the program. 40% of facilitators were selected using purposive sampling. All facilitators who joined the program before May 2024 are selected to participate in the survey. Before data collection, consent was provided by parents verbally. The parents were provided with a full description of the purpose of the survey, participation, confidentiality, and survey details.

Sample Size

Table 1 below outlines the details of the actual sample realized and its percentage of achieved target in the first year of the project.

Table 1: Quantitative sample size

Quantitative						
#	Stakeholders	Method	Qty	The actual program reached on July 2024	% sample of the reached target	Percentage of the sample achieved
1	Parents	Survey	85	243 (parents only)	35%	102% (87/85)
2	Facilitators	Survey	10	25	40%	110% (11/10)

The primary stakeholders in this project, based on the intermediate indicators, are the parents and facilitators. Parents were selected randomly to complete the survey, and they were contacted through one of three methods, depending on convenience and accessibility: by sharing the survey link, through phone calls, or in person during class sessions. To ensure broad

participation, the survey was made available in five languages: English, Spanish, Pashtu, Urdu, and Dari. The percentages in Table 1 indicate the entire sample have been overachieved.

Table 2 below also provides a gender breakdown of the sample. Around 99 percent of the entire sample consisted of female participants. This ratio was somewhat consistent across the qualitative data.

Table 2: Gender breakdown

Quantitative						
#	Stakeholders	Method	Male	Female	% of male	% of female
1	Parents	Survey	1	86	1%	99%
2	Facilitators	Survey	0	11	0%	100%

QUALITATIVE SAMPLING FRAMEWORK

The tools were designed to evaluate the relevance cohort and the effectiveness of the program. The qualitative tools included participatory focus group discussions (FGDs) with parents and Facilitators, Semi-Structured interviews (SSI) with apartment managers/community coordinators, and the program partners including The Hackett Centre for Mental Health (THC) and Children's Museum of Houston (CMH), and Key Informant Interviews (KII's) with Rupani CEO, *Thriving Together* program Director, and Coordinators, to capture the different experience of different stakeholders.

The tools were designed by the M&E Coordinator and validated by the Program Director.

The qualitative aspects of the evaluation were designed to complement the quantitative aspects, explain the data generated by the quantitative methods, and triangulate the findings. Table 3 outlines the type of qualitative method used with each participant.

The participants involved in qualitative data collection were selected through a purposeful random selection that gave sufficient weight to the type of stakeholders involved (parents, coordinators, management team, etc.).

Parents and facilitators were pre-selected to represent the categories described above. Parents were selected in collaboration with the program coordinators based on an already established relationship and trust since parents were usually invited to participate in regular meetings

organized by the program team including but not limited to the Mother Action Committee (MAC)¹.

Table 3: Qualitative Sample

Target participant	Male	Female	Total	Objectives
Key Informant Interviews				
CEO	1	0	1 0 F 1 M	To gather strategic insights and assess the overall progress, impact, challenges, and resource management of the Thriving Together program.
Thriving Together Program Director	0	1	1 1 F 0 M	To understand the milestones in implementation, effectiveness, and impact of the Thriving Together program and its various components.
Program Coordinators	0	3	3 3 F 0 M	To assess the implementation, effectiveness, and impact of the Thriving Together program and its various components, including the Informed Parents (IP) ² , Brain Builders ³ programs, and wraparound services.
Semi-Structured Interview				
Partners THC & CMH	0	5	5 5 F 0 M	THC: to assess the effectiveness, performance, and impact of the Brain Builders training program. CMH: to assess how the museum’s resources, such as the Welcome Baby Bags (WBB) and My

¹ The MAC is a group of parents who have completed the IP and Brain Builder training programs. They support the Rupani Foundation by recruiting new families, identifying community needs, and advocating for solutions to address those concerns. Their goal is to strengthen community engagement and ensure the voices of parents and children are heard.

² The Rupani Foundation's Informed Parents Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos provides a structured guide to support parents in fostering their child's development across language, cognitive, physical, and social-emotional domains. The curriculum outlines a sequence of learning objectives and effective parenting practices, with facilitators observing progress over 12 weeks to encourage sustained developmental growth.

³ Brain Builders, developed by the Hackett Center for Mental Health, is a free program that offers mothers six weekly, 2-hour sessions led by professionally trained facilitators. The program aims to reduce stress, foster connections among moms, and lay a strong foundation for their children's mental and emotional well-being.

				Keep It kits (MKIK) ⁴ , are contributing to family engagement with early childhood learning.
Apartments Mangers/ Community Coordinators	0	3	3 3 F 0 M	To understand their experience of being part of the project, their insights on the implementation, and impact of the Thriving Together program within apartment communities.
Focus Group Discussions				
Parents/ Caregivers	0	10	10 10 F 0 M (1 FGDS)	To explore the change in parents' attitudes on ECD, their awareness of child development, and the impact of their positive parenting.
Facilitators	0	11	11 11 F 0 M (1 FGDS)	To explore the facilitator's knowledge and awareness of ECD practices and gather in-depth insights into the experiences, challenges, competencies, and personal reflections of facilitators working with the Brain Builders program and IP.

QUANTITATIVE TOOLS

In total, two distinct survey tools were used to gather quantitative data from each of the relevant groups (see Table 4 below). As these tools were designed for the first time, direct statistical comparison between previous data and midline data is not possible. However, the qualitative data collected can be compared with the quantitative findings in terms of alignment of responses, rather than through statistical comparison.

Some data were collected previously using a retrospective pre-post survey, but these tools were not used in the current evaluation. While the pre-post tool was simple to use, there were significant methodological issues. Most notably, there was no documentation of the protocols employed. Parents often rated themselves highly at the pre-assessment stage because they believed they understood the concepts being evaluated, even though they had not yet been

⁴ The Welcome Baby Bag and My Keep It Kit created by the Children's Museum Houston, provides parents with a custom bag designed to encourage talking, reading, and playing to stimulate brain development. The bag includes a book, mirror, wrist rattle, literacy resources, and a Family Pass, distributed through trusted community partners. WBB is provided for kids between 0-18 month while MKIK for ages 0-36 months.

exposed to the curriculum in detail. After going through the curriculum, parents tended to realize that their skills were not at the level they initially assessed, which led to a mismatch between their self-assessments and their actual understanding.

The quantitative tools used in the evaluation were designed to assess all aspects of the training material from the perspectives of both the receivers (parents) and providers (facilitators). These tools were largely based on the curriculum for the "IP" and "Brain Builders" programs. In addition to evaluating the core training content, the tools also incorporated feedback on the wraparound services provided to parents, including but not limited to, museum visits, educational kits, food fairs, hygiene kits, back-to-school events, and small gifts.

The design of the survey included situational questions based on real-life practices, typically using a 3- or 5-point Likert scale. This approach was chosen to simplify the process for parents, making the survey easier to understand and complete. This was particularly important because 57% of the surveyed parents had no formal education, which made open-ended questions challenging for them to respond to effectively.

The final midline survey tools were translated into Pashtu, Dari, Urdu, and Spanish, and were carefully cross-checked and revised in collaboration with the program director, who provided valuable feedback on the form, structure, and content of the tools. All suggested revisions were incorporated before the tools were programmed into Microsoft Forms. The survey was then administered by the program team in several ways: in-person in classrooms, via phone calls to parents, and by sharing a link with them. Before data collection began, program staff received training on the survey process, including how to conduct the data collection and what to expect throughout the process.

Table 4: Quantitative Survey Tools

Tool Name	Completed With
Parent Survey (Included Brain Builders Survey)	Parents: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Who has been enrolled in the program for at least 2 months or more 2- Who is part of the MAC 3- Who completed the program
Facilitators survey	Facilitators who are hired before May 2024

QUALITATIVE TOOLS

The qualitative tools were designed to reflect the objective and methodology of the evaluation. The main objective of the qualitative methods employed in the evaluation was to provide

clarification, contextualization, and interpretation of the quantitative data found at the midline. Thus, the qualitative data at midline are not compared with any qualitative data collected before.

The FGD was designed using a participatory approach to actively engage parents and facilitators in the process, ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to contribute their perspectives. The approach allowed participants to be not just passive respondents but active co-creators of the discussion, providing feedback and brainstorming solutions together.

Once approved by the program management, minor revisions were introduced to the FGD to ensure the highest level of participation from both the parents and the facilitators.

Table 5: Qualitative Survey Tools

Tool Name	Completed With
Key Informant Interview	Rupani CEO, Program Director, program coordinators.
Semi-Structured interviews	THC, CMH, and apartment manager/community coordinators
Facilitators Focus Group Discussion	Facilitators
Parents Focus Group Discussion	Parents

Data Collection

All data collection was managed and conducted internally by the program coordinators, the M&E Coordinator, and the program facilitators. Data collection began on 19 September 2024 and concluded on 28 October 2024. Coordinating data collection with THC and CMH, went very smoothly. Facilitators were cooperative and facilitated data collection for the surveys. Training sessions before data collection instructed facilitating on the overarching project, the specific tools and approach that would be used, and research ethics. Quality assurance checks demonstrated that facilitators complied well with instructions and survey and interview administration.

Analysis

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Each of the groups (i.e., parents, facilitators) was surveyed with different tools (see Table 4 above for a list of tools).

The survey tools centred around the different scales developed to operationalize the latent constructs implied by the project’s outcome indicators. Latent constructs constitute phenomena that are not directly observable (e.g., satisfaction, motivation, and attitude). The survey tools employed were programmed into Microsoft Forms. Data was then downloaded daily into the M&E Coordinator OneDrive to secure the data from any loss.

After retrieving and cleaning the data, the statistical analysis was centred on treating the current data point as a snapshot of the present situation. The focus was on identifying trends within this data set and comparing these trends to expected norms and relevant benchmarks for the study area and sample size. This approach was chosen because no baseline measurement was established at the outset of the study, making comparisons to a previous starting point unfeasible.

QUALITATIVE DATA

Qualitative data were thematically analyzed. Each of the main evaluation questions and criteria was linked to a set of questions across the different qualitative methods. FGDs, KIIs, and SSIs were typed in verbatim where possible.

Full transcripts/detailed summaries were then generated in English by the M&E Coordinator and uploaded to a secure cloud. The data was coded using Excel Spreadsheets based on the questions in each of the qualitative tools, and these codes were linked to the evaluation criteria. Then, data from different stakeholders were read together about each of the evaluation criteria.

The table below provides an overview of how each indicator was measured in the context of the midline evaluation, as well as the contribution of each data source to the assessment of these indicators.

Table 6: Indicators and data source

Indicators	Data source
% of IP reporting increasing knowledge in ECD (Language Development, Cognitive Development, Physical Development, Social-Emotional Development)	Parents FGD’s Parents surveys
% of resource recipients gain ideas for how to engage their children in learning at home	Parents surveys KII CMH
% of resource recipients reported that the bags and kits encouraged them to join or continue participating in the Thriving Together multi-session series.	Parents surveys KII CMH
% of facilitator trainees who increase knowledge of facilitating IP & Brain Builders	Facilitators FGD’s

Limitations

Before detailing the findings from the evaluation, the following outlines key considerations of the evaluation’s methodology and design and how to interpret results considering this.

KIDS PARTICIPATION

Although the Rupani team works with children, measuring their development has been challenging due to the high cost of early learning and development tools. The constraints of both time and budget have limited our ability to effectively assess their progress.

BASELINE TO MIDLINE COMPARISONS

To assess the project’s effectiveness and the extent to which it is on track to achieve its intended outcomes, the evaluation compares attainment at midline to baseline. However, there was no baseline conducted at the beginning of the program.

Findings

The evaluation found the *Thriving Together* project to be relevant, effective, and impactful. It responded to felt needs in the community and was widely appreciated and well-received. The project helped to build the capacity of facilitators and parents to support ECD, enrich positive parenting practices, and support their mental health. The findings of the evaluation are discussed below in response to each evaluation question.

Note: This section uses qualitative data from FGS, KIIs, and SSIs to describe how participants view the relevance of the project.

To what extent does the project respond to the current and future needs and priorities of the affected population?

RELEVANCE TO THE NEEDS OF THE POPULATION

Relevance to parents

This program addresses critical needs within the community by focusing on ECD, parental education, and mental health support for both children and parents. By emphasizing holistic development; covering social-emotional learning (SEL), motor skills, and language, the program prepares children for future educational success while equipping parents with the knowledge and tools to support their children's growth at home. Using low-cost or no-cost materials, often

incorporating everyday household items, ensures accessibility and sustainability for families facing financial challenges. Additionally, the program fosters a sense of community through both in-person meetings and digital platforms, strengthening social connections among participants, particularly immigrant and underserved groups who often lack strong local support networks. The evaluation found the program to be relevant for the parents and kids, which helped them in:

Supporting basic parenting knowledge

Many of the parents come from backgrounds with limited formal education. The program focuses on providing small, practical pieces of advice that can have a big impact on child development. For example, simple actions like talking to your child, playing with them, and ensuring they have a safe space to explore are emphasized. Parents are shown that these actions don't require expensive resources or special skills but can significantly support their child's growth.

Overcoming cultural barriers

The parents from the Afghan community, which represents 65% of the program participants; have not had formal schooling or exposure to modern parenting practices, so there was initially resistance to new ideas. However, through conversations and gentle education about child development; such as the importance of hugging, talking to, and engaging with children without yelling, parents began to understand the positive impact these simple actions have on their children's well-being.

EXAMPLE: *Rupani's ECD classes didn't just give me the tools to support my child's development, but also gave me the confidence to embrace my role as my child's first teacher. - Lina*

Improved parental interaction

The program has helped parents improve how they interact with their children. They are engaging more actively through activities like reading, pointing, and providing richer sensory experiences. Parents have learned new skills, like how to be more patient and deliberate in their interactions, often by shadowing facilitators or observing what they do in class.

Routine building

Establishing daily routines has been a key takeaway for parents. They now have strategies for building consistency in their children's daily lives, which supports learning and development.

EXAMPLE: *Sana expressed deep gratitude for the program, noting how it gave her daughter and her autistic nephew a chance to learn, grow, and socialize. She also highlighted the lack of support from other organizations, which made the free sessions from Rupani especially valuable.*

Strengthened family relationships

The program has helped strengthen parent-child relationships, and parents feel that this improvement

will continue even after the program ends. It has fostered a deeper sense of connection and collaboration within families.

Low-cost, creative learning tools

Parents have discovered they can create effective learning experiences for their children with minimal resources. Simple items like scarves, household objects, or homemade toys can become tools for building sensory and cognitive skills. This "low-cost, no-cost" approach has been empowering for families.

Learning through everyday activities

Parents began applying what they learned in the classes at home, engaging more with their children, and seeking additional resources to support their child's development. This proactive approach has helped parents notice milestones their children are reaching and has created a deeper sense of purpose in their parenting.

Parents are also finding ways to incorporate learning into everyday activities. They engage their children in home duties, share music and songs, and allow the children to learn numeracy and literacy skills naturally through these interactions.

Improved mental well-being

For families facing challenges, especially in immigrant or marginalized communities, the program offers not only developmental support for children but also mental health benefits for parents through Brain Builders training. The opportunity to meet others in similar situations, share experiences, and feel supported alleviated their isolation.

Relevance to facilitators

For facilitators, this program offers a valuable opportunity for personal and professional growth. It builds confidence in their skills, enhances their expertise in community health and ECD, and strengthens their ability to work effectively with families. The evaluation found the program to be relevant for the facilitators, which helped them in:

Growth in confidence and professional development

The facilitators become more confident, social, and experienced. They now consider themselves an expert in community health work (CHW), mental health, and case management, reflecting personal growth and a shift in self-perception.

They emphasize learning through practical experience, gaining confidence in their skills and understanding of the community they serve.

EXAMPLE: *"The program has not only empowered me to become more confident in my work and understanding of child development, but it has also deepened my connection with parents, helping them feel more equipped to support their children's growth, all while strengthening the sense of community and ongoing learning we share together." -Laysa*

Collaboration with parents and empowerment

The shift from working directly with children to collaborating with parents is a central theme. Facilitators highlight how the program empowers parents to care for their children, especially using low-cost materials and techniques that they can apply at home.

Building stronger connections with parents and the community is a key focus. Facilitators feel a sense of accomplishment in guiding parents and

improving their skills to support their children's development.

Positive impact of the program on the community

The facilitators strongly believe in the mission of the program and the significant difference it is making in the lives of parents and the community. There is a sense of purpose and pride in the program's ability to educate parents and make them more aware of ECD.

The program increased facilitators' community awareness about ECD and differentiated it from simply "babysitting," showing an educational and cultural shift in the community's understanding of child development.

Educational approach and curriculum

The curriculum, described as an "IP" and "Brain Builders," plays an important role in the facilitator's development. It enhances their understanding of attachment, stress, and child development, which they can then share with others.

The facilitators note that learning is an ongoing process, both from the program and the community, highlighting a commitment to continuous improvement.

The evaluation found that *Thriving Together's* intervention aligns with the community's needs about children's development and growth and stress management. The project's different components were seen as relevant to existing challenges in refugee communities, and these were priorities for the program team.

To what extent is the project on track to achieve its intended outcomes?

Note: This section focuses on understanding the **project’s effectiveness**. To do that:

- It uses **quantitative data** from **surveys** to detail the **progress** beneficiaries have made **until now**.
- It also uses **qualitative data** from FGS, KIIs, and SSIs to describe **how participants view** the **effectiveness** of the project.

The evaluation suggests that *Thriving Together* is achieving its goals. Findings indicated that parents and facilitators are showing excellent outcomes. Interviews with research participants demonstrated that *Thriving Together* is perceived to be effective in building the capacity and knowledge of parents and facilitators in early childhood and brain development and improving communities’ access to early childhood services.

Effectiveness is assessed through both direct and indirect methods during data collection processes. In terms of direct assessment, FGD, SSI and KIIs provided an opportunity to ask participants specific questions about their experiences and perceptions regarding the program, intervention, and services. These qualitative methods allowed us to gather in-depth feedback on what worked well, what didn’t, and what could be improved. In contrast, indirect assessment represented using standardized measurement tools, such as surveys, to capture more quantifiable data, such as satisfaction levels, changes in knowledge and behavior, or the perceived impact of the intervention. Together, these direct and indirect methods offer a comprehensive approach to evaluating effectiveness.

CHANGES IN KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOR

Parents skills development

From the sample size, the evaluation found that the program helped parents to improve their skills and knowledge in the following areas: *(The definition of each skill can be found in Annex 2 of the evaluation)*

Table 7: Skills gained/improved by parents

Skills	# of parents gained the skills from the sample size	% of parents gained the skills from the sample size
Improved communication	66/87	76%
Better understanding of child development	76/87	87%
More effective discipline strategies	58/87	67%
Enhanced play and learning activities	62/87	71%
Enhanced social skills	61/87	70%

The table above highlights that the majority of parents (87%) now have a deeper understanding of their child's developmental needs across several important domains. In terms of language development, parents are more aware of their child's ability to express themselves, communicate, and use orality and literacy in social interactions and learning. For cognitive development, there is a greater recognition of the importance of intentional and coordinated interaction with objects and the environment, as well as the development of scientific, mathematical, and symbolic reasoning. When it comes to physical development, parents are increasingly mindful of how their children coordinate large and small muscle groups with greater precision in everyday activities. Lastly, in the realm of social-emotional development, parents understand the significance of co-regulation and attachment, as well as their child's participation in social group activities. This enhanced understanding enables parents to better support their children's growth and development across these critical areas.

Additionally, the evaluation assessed the frequency with which parents engage with their children to support their learning across different domains. This was measured using situational scenarios designed to capture the frequency of specific practices related to each skill.

From Table 8, we observe that parents within the underserved immigrant community place a strong emphasis on practicing and nurturing social-emotional development in their children. This focus is not only insightful but also highly reasonable, given the unique challenges that immigrant families often face when relocating to a new country. Immigrant parents and their children are navigating a complex process of adaptation, adjusting to a new cultural, linguistic, and social environment.

EXAMPLE: *"Motherhood in a foreign country can be isolating and stressful but being part of a supportive group of women has been incredibly reassuring. Together, they have shared the challenges they face at work and in their roles as mothers. With the help of the facilitators, motherhood became more bearable and enriching. The program has opened many doors and offered valuable insights, creating a sense of community" -Ranya*

For these families, the move to a new country often comes with significant challenges, such as language barriers, economic hardship, and the need to establish new social networks. In the face of these stressors, parents may prioritize fostering emotional resilience and social skills in their children to better equip them for the emotional and social hurdles they are likely to encounter in their new environment.

Social-emotional development can be seen as a crucial tool for coping with these transitions. Parents within these communities often

recognize the importance of these skills in their children's successful adaptation. They intentionally engage in practices that promote emotional awareness, social skills, and resilience.

Table 8: Frequency of parent engagement

ECD skills		Always/Very Frequently		Occasionally, rarely		Very Rarely, never	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
1	Language development	67/87	77%	16/87	18%	4/87	5%
2	Cognitive development	70/87	80%	16/87	18%	1/87	1%
3	Physical development	69/87	79%	13/87	14%	5/87	6%
4	Social-Emotional development	77/87	88%	6/87	7%	4/87	5%

The evaluation found that 100% of the surveyed parents are confident in supporting their child's development after attending the training.

The focus groups' findings found that while parents have successfully acquired key skills through the program, their children have not yet fully reached the desired learning outcomes. This is a reasonable expectation, given that the 18-week duration (equating to 36 hours of training) is likely insufficient for complete mastery and visible progress in the children's development. However, the positive takeaway is that if the parents have gained these foundational skills, they can continue supporting their children's learning at home.

The evaluation found that 100% of the parents surveyed plan to continue applying the skills and knowledge they gained in the ECD classes with their children at home. Additionally, the evaluation revealed that the parents are highly attuned to their children's development, as follows:

Table 9: Parents' awareness of ECD

ECD skills	Awareness level	
	#	%
Child development stages: Infant, Toddler, and twos...	87/87	100%
Child skills development: skills in each stage	86/87	99%
Communication skills: parents supporting communication development for kids	86/87	99%
Language development: parents supporting their kids to talk	86/87	99%
Station time at home: do parents replicate the class at home	86/87	99%
Cognitive skills: parents supporting child's thinking skills	86/87	99%
Gross and fine Motor skills: parents supporting kids' motor skills development	86/87	99%
Positive relationship: parents' supportive relationship with kids	86/87	99%
Group participation: parents encourage their kids to participate in groups	86/87	99%
Adjusting parenting styles to different stages and needs	86/87	99%
Safe space: parents make the house a safe space	85/87	98%

Decision-making: parents confident in making decisions about their childcare and development	86/87	99%
Wraparound services provided by the program including health care and others	82/87	94%

The evaluation shows that all parents surveyed plan to continue applying the skills and knowledge gained in the ECD classes at home, highlighting the program's lasting impact. Table 9 reveals that parents have a high level of awareness across various aspects of child development. Almost all (99%) are well-informed about key areas such as child development stages, communication, language, cognitive skills, and parenting strategies. Additionally, 98% recognize the importance of creating a safe space for their children. While wraparound services have a slightly lower awareness (94%), parents clearly understand the broader support systems available to help their children. Overall, these results indicate that the ECD program has equipped parents with essential tools to foster their children's development at home, ensuring the program's continued impact and sustainability.

Moreover, the program team remains committed to supporting the parents' ongoing development. Even after the formal training concludes, the team continues to send supplementary e-learning materials designed for shadowing and practice. These resources empower parents to reinforce the skills they've learned, ensuring that the learning process extends beyond the classroom and is sustained in the home environment. By providing these materials and ongoing support, the program fosters long-term growth and improvement, both for the parents and their children.

The program is focused on building leaders from within the community through the MAC, and parents have played a crucial role in this process. They have been actively involved in community outreach and engagement, helping facilitators recruit new children for the program and ensuring that other parents attended classes on time by arriving early and making reminder calls. In addition, parents have served as key points of contact within the group, maintaining open communication with all members, distributing flyers, and promoting the classes within the community. They have also been instrumental in raising awareness about the importance of the IP Program and Brain Builder, its impact on child development, and its benefits for families, encouraging more mothers to get involved. As community advocates, they have acted as the voice of other parents, gathering feedback and concerns and sharing them with facilitators to ensure that the program is responsive to the needs of the community. The community has expressed several key concerns and feedback regarding the program. One major request is for an increase in the number of classes offered, as many feel that additional educational and skill-building opportunities would better serve their needs. Additionally, there is a pressing demand for more donations, particularly in areas such as diapers and medical assistance.

Overall, parents in the MAC have served as a bridge between the program and the wider community, helping to connect more families to both the IP and Brain Builders programs, thereby strengthening the program's reach and sustainability

Additionally, the kits provided by the CMH played a significant role in fostering greater parent involvement and supporting children’s learning at home. An impressive 93% of parents reported that the kits helped them gain more ideas and strategies for engaging their children in learning activities at home, reinforcing the importance of continuous learning outside of the classroom. Furthermore, 95% of parents indicated that the kits were a key factor in encouraging them to join and continue participating in the IP sessions, highlighting the positive impact the resources had on maintaining parent engagement and sustaining their commitment to the program.

Facilitators skills development

The evaluation indicates that all facilitators developed the skills highlighted below through their participation in the program, with notable growth, particularly in the IP, Brain Builders, and CHW. *(The definition of each skill can be found in Annex 2 of the evaluation)*

Table 10: Skills gained/improved by facilitators

Skills	# of facilitators gained the skills from the sample size	% of facilitators gained the skills from the sample size
Knowledge of IP Curriculum	11/11	100%
Knowledge of Brain Builders Curriculum	11/11	100%
Effective use of materials “Low cost, No cost”	11/11	100%
Designing new tools and activities	11/11	100%
Engagement with parents and children	11/11	100%
Encourage participants to participate, including parents and children	11/11	100%
Provide support and feedback	11/11	100%
Follow standards and child safeguarding	11/11	100%
Problem-solving	11/11	100%
Support improvement in Parents' skills	11/11	100%
Confidence level	11/11	100%
Stress management skills	11/11	100%

The evaluation results demonstrate that all 11 facilitators who participated in the program achieved significant growth across a wide range of skills. With 100% of participants gaining proficiency in key areas such as the IP Curriculum, Brain Builders Curriculum, and the effective use of "Low cost, no cost" materials, the program appears to have been highly successful in building both the technical and pedagogical expertise of the facilitators. Notably, facilitators also

showed improvements in vital interpersonal skills, such as engaging with parents and children, providing constructive feedback, and encouraging participation, all of which are crucial for fostering a positive learning environment. The emphasis on problem-solving, confidence-building, and stress management further highlights the program's holistic approach to facilitator development. This comprehensive skill-building will likely enhance the overall quality and sustainability of the program's impact, benefiting both facilitators and the communities they serve. Given that every participant demonstrated growth in these areas, the program has proven to be not only effective but also highly impactful in empowering facilitators to perform their roles more competently and confidently.

This growth could also be attributed to the job learning, given that the facilitators have already gained substantial experience; conducting an average of 48 sessions for the IP program and 12 sessions for the 'Brain Builders' initiative. Building on this hands-on experience will allow facilitators to refine their skills, integrate feedback more effectively, and continue developing both their technical and interpersonal competencies.

In delivering the IP program, facilitators demonstrate a strong foundation in evidence-based knowledge and a deep understanding of the clients' needs, which allows them to tailor their approach effectively. Their positive attitude and ability to build strong relationships; especially with parents, create a supportive and trusting environment that fosters open communication. Facilitators also excel in active listening, which helps them engage with parents in a nonjudgmental and empathetic manner, ensuring that each participant feels heard and valued. These strengths collectively enable facilitators to create meaningful, impactful interactions that resonate with parents and support their learning journey.

Classroom management is also a key strength, with facilitators creating a safe, supportive environment that promotes active participation. In addition, their strong communication skills, coupled with a collaborative approach, foster a sense of teamwork and ensure that all participants are engaged. Facilitators' empathy and humility further enhance their ability to connect with and support parents and children, ensuring the program's success.

EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

This section summarizes the effectiveness of the program based on different stakeholders' experiences and perceptions of the program.

Rupani Executive and Programs team

General Program Implementation

The *Thriving Together* program has made significant progress since its inception, particularly in terms of structuring the curriculum and aligning team efforts. Initially, the program faced

challenges such as a lack of structured curriculum and uncertainty about how to engage with mobile communities. The introduction of the IP curriculum was a turning point, simplifying program delivery and making it easier for facilitators to implement. The clarity provided by a structured curriculum helped facilitators gain confidence and enabled the program to move forward more smoothly. Furthermore, the management team's approach to splitting roles and responsibilities allowed for a more efficient implementation process. Facilitators were systematically trained and shadowed, which helped build their competencies in ECD both theoretically and practically.

A key milestone was the program's ability to scale from working only in three to over 20 community centers, thanks to the growing trust and recognition of the program in local communities. However, challenges remain, particularly in enrolling children and maintaining parent participation. The challenge of engaging immigrant and refugee parents, especially those from the Afghan community, was met with strategic efforts such as using facilitators who spoke the same language to build rapport and trust. Additionally, there has been a growing need for English as a Second Language (ESL) support, which the program is beginning to integrate into its curriculum.

Informed Parents Program

The IP program has proven its effectiveness in improving parent-child interactions and understanding of child development, particularly in communities where parents have limited formal education. For example, many parents initially did not understand the importance of letting their children explore the environment, such as placing them on the floor to play. Through the IP program, parents have gained awareness of simple yet impactful parenting practices that do not require financial investment. This includes fostering attachment by hugging and talking to children and creating safe environments for exploration.

Feedback from parents has been overwhelmingly positive. Many parents report stronger connections with their children, increased participation in activities such as reading and singing, and an improved understanding of how their behavior affects their child's development. The program has been especially transformative for parents from the Afghan community, who were initially unfamiliar with many of these practices due to cultural differences. The use of handouts and role modelling in the classroom has been crucial in encouraging parents to consistently implement these practices at home. Parents also share photos and videos of their children engaging with the activities, reinforcing the positive changes.

Brain Builders Program

The Brain Builders program has also been well-received by parents, providing a space for them to discuss personal challenges, share experiences, and learn from one another. Many parents, particularly mothers, have found value in the stress management and self-care techniques taught in the Brain Builders sessions. The program has helped them appreciate their well-being, leading to a positive shift in their parenting approach. For example, a mother who previously rushed through daily tasks has learned to slow down and involve her child in activities like shampooing and washing, fostering a more engaged and nurturing environment.

EXAMPLE: *Dinar told us that the Brain Builder session resonated with her. It gave her the space to reflect on the challenges mothers face, including guilt and stress, and emphasized the importance of self-care. By the end of the program, Dinar felt a significant reduction in her worries, learning not only how to better care for her child but also how to take better care of herself." -Dinar*

One significant challenge in delivering the Brain Builders program was its initial separation from the IP program, which led some parents to prioritize completing the IP certification before fully committing to Brain Builders. To address this, the team integrated the Brain Builders program into a unified 18-week course, with certification given only at the end, thus encouraging greater engagement from parents throughout the full program. The Hackett Center's training for Brain Builders facilitators has been valuable, but the team has recommended additional time and focus on practical activities during the training to further strengthen facilitators' confidence.

Collaboration with partners

Partnerships have been a key factor in the success of the Thriving Together program. The Hackett Center has played a crucial role in providing training and ongoing technical assistance (TA) to facilitators. Initially, the Hackett Center offered training sessions online, but based on feedback from the Rupani Foundation team, these sessions were shifted to in-person formats to make them more interactive and reflective. The support from Hackett Center, especially regarding facilitator well-being (e.g., compassion fatigue training), has been instrumental in helping the team navigate the emotionally intense nature of working with vulnerable populations.

The collaboration with the Children's Museum Houston has also been highly beneficial. The museum's welcome Baby and My Keep It kits, which include resources and tips for parents, have been well-received by families, with many reporting that they help them implement the practices learned in class at home. These kits have become an important resource for parents, especially those who may not have access to other educational tools. The museum visits have been a fun and engaging part of the program, offering an opportunity for children to learn through play in a new environment.

Program Impact and Sustainability

The *Thriving Together* program has had measurable success in increasing parents' understanding of child development and enhancing their parenting practices. The program has particularly benefited marginalized families, helping them overcome isolation and build social networks. Parents have become more attuned to their children's developmental needs, including social, emotional, and cognitive milestones, which has a direct impact on school readiness. The wraparound services offered by the program, such as health and hygiene support, have helped address basic needs, ensuring that families can fully participate in the program without being hindered by unmet necessities.

The program's success in engaging parents and fostering school readiness suggests a strong potential for long-term impact. The team is now focusing on sustaining the program's effects beyond its two-year period by strengthening community partnerships and exploring new avenues for continued support, including leadership development within the communities served through the MAC. The experience of having multiple partners like The Hackett Center and Children's Museum Houston has highlighted the importance of continued collaboration and resource sharing to enhance the program's effectiveness.

Conclusion and Moving Forward

The *Thriving Together* program has demonstrated impressive adaptability, from addressing early challenges in community engagement and curriculum structure to evolving in response to parent feedback. Moving forward, the team plans to continue refining their approach, including integrating more ESL components, expanding the reach of the Brain Builders program, and fostering stronger community ownership to ensure sustainability. The positive impact on both parents and children, as well as the strengthened partnerships with organizations like Hackett Center and the Children's Museum, position the program well for future growth and success in empowering marginalized families.

Apartment manager/ Community Coordinators

The apartment manager and community coordinators play a vital role in the successful implementation of the program within the apartment complex. As the primary point of contact for residents, the apartment manager is responsible for introducing the program to the community, and ensuring that residents are informed about its purpose, benefits, and how to get involved. They help facilitate communication between the program team and the residents, providing updates and answering questions as needed. Additionally, the apartment manager may assist in identifying and nominating parents who would benefit from the program, ensuring that the right individuals are selected for participation. By fostering a welcoming and supportive

environment, the apartment manager helps build trust within the community, encouraging residents to engage with and participate in the program. Their role is essential in creating a positive experience for both the residents and the program's organizers.

From the perspective of apartment managers and community coordinators, the effectiveness of the Rupani Foundation's program evaluated through several key areas: community engagement, program impact, participant satisfaction, and potential for continued involvement.

Community Engagement and Cultural Inclusivity

The program fostered a strong sense of community by encouraging active participation from a diverse group of residents. Despite language barriers, the program was inclusive, allowing mothers with limited English proficiency to engage enthusiastically. The program's ability to bridge cultural and language gaps was noted as a significant success. It brought families together, creating a welcoming environment where both children and parents could learn and grow. This is crucial for community coordinators, as it aligns to foster inclusivity and cultural connection within the community.

Impact on Children's Development

One of the most notable successes was the positive change in the children's behavior and self-confidence. The program's curriculum, focusing on language and literacy, cognitive/sensorimotor skills, and social-emotional development, showed tangible results. Children who were initially shy began to emerge from their shells and were more socially interactive. This transformation was particularly heartening for the mothers, who saw firsthand how their children benefitted from the program. This reinforces the value of early childhood education in a community setting, making it a meaningful experience for both parents and children.

Parent Engagement and Satisfaction

The program not only benefited the children but also contributed significantly to the mothers' engagement with their children. The bonding between mothers and their children was enhanced through shared activities, and parents started integrating learning into their daily routines, like singing songs learned during sessions and involving their children in housework. For community coordinators, the mothers' involvement is a key indicator of the program's success, as active parental participation is crucial for reinforcing learning outside of the classroom.

Moreover, the presence of the Rupani Foundation's facilitators was highly praised. Their professionalism, enthusiasm, and compassionate approach made a strong impression on both children and parents. This positive feedback from apartment managers and community coordinators is essential for building long-term trust and engagement in the community.

Sustainability and Continued Engagement

The apartment managers and community coordinators expressed interest in continuing to engage families beyond the regular sessions. The idea of hosting monthly birthday celebrations or similar community-building events could help maintain a connection with the families, encouraging continued participation and a sense of belonging. Such events could also foster an ongoing relationship between the Rupani Foundation and residents, ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of the program.

Graduation and Community Impact

The graduation ceremony was a highlight, with a strong emotional connection to the residents and their children. The involvement of Rupani Foundation's leadership, along with the participation of local donors and community members, reinforced the program's importance and impact. The ceremony itself, alongside the back-to-school event, showcased the broader support from the community, further strengthening the ties between the residents and the outside community. The donation of school supplies also highlighted the continued support for educational initiatives within the community, adding to the program's sense of importance and impact.

Children's Museum of Houston

The effectiveness of the intervention in the partnership between the Children's Museum Houston (CMH) and the Rupani Foundation is evident in several key areas, demonstrating positive outcomes for the target population, particularly in terms of ECD, parent engagement, and community support. Here's a breakdown of the intervention's effectiveness based on the Key Informant Interview (KII) insights:

Increased Parental Knowledge and Confidence

The kits have been particularly effective in raising parents' awareness about ECD. Parents gained a deeper understanding of how critical the early years are for brain development and the importance of interacting with their babies from a young age. The serve and return concept⁵, central to the kits, has empowered parents to engage more intentionally with their children, which has been shown to have a positive impact on cognitive and emotional development.

Parents reported a new awareness, exemplified by the sentiment: "I wish someone had told me how early my child's brain starts developing".

⁵ Serve and return interactions in child development refer to focused, back-and-forth, two-way interactions between an infant and an adult. These interactions, such as babbling, gestures, or eye contact, help build and strengthen neural connections in the child's brain, supporting the development of communication and social skills.

Enhanced Parent-Child Engagement

The intervention led to increased engagement in key developmental activities, particularly reading and interactive play. Post-surveys indicated that parents were engaging more frequently with their children, particularly through reading and serve-and-return interactions. This increased engagement is vital for enhancing cognitive development and fostering emotional bonding between parents and children.

This shift in behaviours highlights the intervention's effectiveness in encouraging parents to view themselves as active participants in their child's learning and development.

Supportive Learning Environment

The museum visits, although not fully evaluated in terms of exhibit interactions, were observed to offer families a valuable bonding experience. By offering self-guided tours, the museum allowed families to engage in shared learning experiences, fostering both educational growth and social connections. These visits supported the overall developmental goals of the program by creating an enriching, interactive environment where families could reinforce what they learned from the kits.

The museum's role in complementing the in-home learning provided by the kits is a testament to the program's effectiveness in creating a cohesive, multi-faceted learning experience for families.

Community Support and Advocacy

The program not only educated parents but also empowered them to advocate for their child's development. Parents reported feeling more confident in discussing their child's progress and developmental milestones with pediatricians', indicating a deeper engagement in their child's healthcare and overall well-being.

This empowerment is an important indicator of the intervention's effectiveness, as it encourages parents to take an active role in both their child's developmental journey and in accessing resources that support their growth.

Program Integration and Synergy

The partnership between CMH and the Rupani Foundation aligns well with the *Thriving Together* program's goals, particularly the IP component. The interactive nature of the kits and the community outreach efforts from CMH complement the broader mission of improving ECD in underserved communities.

The synergy between the museum's resources and the kits suggests that the program is effective in providing families with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities for holistic development, not just in terms of gained knowledge but also in terms of fostering social connections and community engagement.

The Hackett Centre for Mental Health (THC)

The intervention's effectiveness, particularly the Brain Builders facilitator training and subsequent technical assistance (TA) sessions, has been evaluated internally by THC through several methods, including pre-and post-tests, surveys, and anecdotal feedback from both facilitators and parents. THC shared the key findings and insights with the evaluation team as follows:

Facilitator Training and Knowledge Gain

Facilitators show significant improvement in their knowledge and skills after the training. For example, participants' correct answers to core questions about serve and return and child development increased from 53% before the training to 81% by the third TA session.

At the end of the training, 93% of facilitators felt they had learned skills to create a safe space and felt more confident in delivering the Brain Builders curriculum. However, knowledge of specific elements like the theory of change of the Brain Builders training and the components of facilitation was less strong, indicating an area for improvement during the upcoming TA sessions.

Adapting to Staff Needs

The TA sessions were adjusted based on feedback from the Rupani team. Initially, the sessions were held virtually, but the team expressed a preference for in-person meetings, especially to better address challenges specific to immigrant and refugee populations dealing with trauma.

The focus on creating a safe and supportive space for parents has been central to the training's success. Initially, Rupani staff were unsure of their ability to create such a space, but by the later TA sessions, there was a notable improvement in their confidence in this area.

Cultural and Language Considerations

The intervention has been tailored to meet the specific cultural and linguistic needs of the populations served. For example, the Rupani staff requested the training materials be available in additional languages (like Urdu) and more culturally sensitive resources, which are being explored. Facilitators have been trained to move beyond didactic teaching and instead engage parents through interactive activities that promote social cohesion. This approach has fostered stronger connections among caregivers, who report feeling supported and empowered by the program.

Impact on Parents

Feedback from parents (through anecdotes shared by facilitators) suggests that they feel more confident in their parenting, with many reporting feelings of accomplishment and improved understanding of their child's development.

The program's emphasis on "social cohesion" and creating a space where parents can connect has been highly effective, with parents expressing a desire to continue meeting beyond the formal sessions.

Ongoing Adjustments and Future Plans

The team discussed the need for culturally responsive videos and activities to better resonate with the diverse communities served by Rupani, potentially including voiceovers for videos in multiple languages and adjusting content to reflect cultural norms and values.

Overall, the intervention has been effective in increasing facilitators' confidence and skills, engaging parents, and adapting to the unique needs of the communities being served. The continuous feedback loops and flexibility in the training approach have been key to its success, and there are ongoing efforts to refine the program based on participant needs and cultural considerations.

How could the project be adapted or strengthened to improve performance against the intended outcomes of the project in the final year and future iterations?

Note: This section details recommendations that could be implemented in the final year of the project and in future iterations to help it improve its relevance, and effectiveness.

To strengthen the program and ensure its long-term success, several key strategies should be implemented across various areas. These strategies will focus on curriculum revision, parental involvement, local partnerships, facilitator development, and scalability. Each component plays a vital role in ensuring that the program remains effective, sustainable, and capable of expanding to new communities. Below is a breakdown of each area:

Reviewing and refining the 12-week curriculum

The 12-week curriculum is a crucial component of the program. Since it operates within a condensed timeline, it is essential that the curriculum be periodically reviewed and refined to ensure that the key learning objectives are still met. This involves gathering regular feedback from various stakeholders, including parents, facilitators, and the community at large. Input from these groups can help identify areas where the curriculum may need adjustment or improvement.

Provide home-Based visits and guidance for Parents

To promote long-term learning retention, it's important to extend the educational experience beyond the classroom and after graduation. This can be achieved by incorporating home-based visits and providing guidance for parents. These actions and resources can help parents reinforce what their children are learning during the program and give them tools to continue the learning process at home. By involving parents in the educational journey, the program ensures that learning is sustained and reinforced in a supportive environment, increasing the likelihood of long-term retention.

Increasing Parent Involvement after the program duration

Increasing parental involvement is critical to fostering a supportive and engaged learning environment. One effective way to do this is through the creation of opportunities for parents to engage in online discussions, attend workshops, and participate in monthly check-ins with facilitators. These initiatives can strengthen the connection between home and classroom, ensuring that parents remain active participants in their children's education. Furthermore, developing a "parent leadership" program could empower parents to take on mentoring roles, guiding and supporting new families entering the program. This creates a cycle of mentorship that can help ensure the program's sustainability and foster a sense of community ownership.

Structured Parent Feedback Loops

To continuously improve the program and ensure that it meets the needs of the families it serves, structured feedback loops during the IP and Brain builders' implementation should be established. This could involve regular surveys, focus groups, spot checks and one-on-one check-ins with parents to gather insights into their experiences and perspectives. By actively listening to the parents' feedback, the program can make data-driven decisions about necessary changes or adjustments, allowing for ongoing improvements and refinements. This responsiveness to parent input will help build trust and enhance the overall effectiveness of the program.

Continue Expanding the Support Network Through Local Partnerships

Strengthening local partnerships with community organizations, businesses, and other institutions can provide valuable resources and mentorship opportunities. These partnerships can enhance the program's effectiveness by offering additional support, such as educational materials, professional development for facilitators, or access to guest speakers and mentors. By expanding the support network, the program can also tap into a wider range of expertise, ideas, and resources, enriching the learning experience for participants and ensuring that the program remains relevant and well-resourced.

Creating Peer Learning Opportunities for Facilitators

Facilitators are at the heart of the program’s success, and their ongoing development is crucial. One effective way to enhance facilitator performance is by creating peer learning opportunities. Facilitators can share best practices, discuss challenges, and collaborate on solutions in a structured environment. This peer exchange can foster a culture of continuous improvement and ensure that facilitators remain motivated and well-equipped to meet the needs of their students. In addition, peer learning helps facilitators feel more connected and supported, which can increase their overall effectiveness in the classroom.

Building a Scalable Model for Replication

For the program to have a broader impact and ensure long-term sustainability, it is essential to develop a scalable model that can be replicated in other communities. This involves creating a blueprint for how the program operates, including documenting key components like facilitator training, parent involvement strategies, and local partnerships. By standardizing and documenting these elements, the program can more easily be adapted and implemented in different regions of Texas, thus extending its reach and ensuring that its positive impact continues to grow. Scalability will also help the program attract new funding sources and partnerships, contributing to its continued success.

In conclusion, strengthening the program demands a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach. This includes regularly updating the curriculum to stay relevant, increasing parental involvement to support students’ learning at home, and establishing a robust feedback system to drive continuous improvement. Additionally, building strong local partnerships will provide crucial resources and mentorship to sustain the program. By fostering a culture of empowerment for both facilitators and parents, and by creating a scalable model that can be replicated in other communities, the program will be well-positioned for long-term success and have a lasting, meaningful impact on a broader scale.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the Final Year of the Project

Continue Engagement with Parents

Strengthening engagement with parents is essential for the program's success and long-term impact. Regular communication during the implementation of the IP and after should be prioritized through weekly updates, personalized check-ins, and active invitations for parents to participate in program activities. Offering additional classes, such as parenting workshops, digital

literacy sessions, or practical skill-building opportunities, would provide extra value and empower parents to support their children’s development more effectively.

Culturally Relevant Materials

Tailoring program materials to the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of participants is vital to ensuring relevance and resonance. Offering class materials in Dari/Pashto and other widely spoken languages in the community would make the content more accessible to non-English-speaking parents. Additionally, it’s important to integrate culturally relevant content into the curriculum, especially in programs like Brain Builders, which focus on Brain development. To make the program more culturally relevant, the team could incorporate elements like stories, history, songs, or idioms from the culture of the group they are working with. For example, for a Spanish-speaking parents, instead of just focusing on general brain development concepts, the materials might include a well-known folk tale or story from Hispanic culture that highlights themes of learning or growth.

By ensuring that content reflects the values, traditions, and practices of diverse families, the program can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

Recommendations for Future Iterations

Increasing Program Length and Frequency

The program's impact would benefit from extending the length and frequency of sessions. By increasing class duration or offering more frequent sessions, parents would have more time to absorb material, engage with facilitators, and interact with fellow participants. Additionally, while the program already makes efforts to adapt the class schedule based on parents' availability, further flexibility is being requested to increase accessibility. Offering options such as weekend sessions or evening classes could help accommodate working parents or those with more variable schedules, allowing more families to participate.

Increased Funding and Equipment

Additional funding and resources are necessary to ensure the program’s smooth operation. This could include purchasing more storage space for supplies. A diaper bank or food pantry could help provide support to low-income families, alleviating some of the financial strain and ensuring that all families have the resources needed for their children’s development. By bringing these resources directly to our community, we’re ensuring greater access to essential items that support children’s development, alleviate financial strain, and promote equitable access for the families we work with.

Stronger Collaboration and Partnerships

Expanding the program's impact can be achieved by forming stronger partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and government entities. Larger corporations, foundations, or nonprofit organizations can provide financial support, donate materials, or offer expertise to enhance the program.

ANNEX 1: PARENTS SKILLS DEVELOPED

The parents' skills are defined as follows:

Improved Communication of Parents

Strengthening parents' ability to communicate effectively with their children, partners, and other caregivers. This includes active listening, clear expression of thoughts and emotions, and using positive language to foster understanding, cooperation, and connection within the family.

Better Understanding of Child Development

Equipping parents with knowledge of the key stages of their child's physical, cognitive, and emotional development. This helps parents respond appropriately to their child's needs, manage expectations, and provide the right support at the right time to foster healthy growth.

More Effective Discipline Strategies

Helping parents adopt positive discipline approaches that encourage respectful behavior and self-control in children. This includes using clear boundaries, consistency, natural consequences, and teaching problem-solving skills, rather than punitive measures, to promote long-term behavioural development.

Enhanced Play and Learning Activities

Empowering parents to create rich, interactive play and learning experiences at home. This involves guiding parents in providing activities that stimulate their child's imagination, creativity, critical thinking, and social skills, all while fostering a positive and enjoyable learning environment.

Enhanced Social Skills

Supporting parents in developing and practicing the social skills needed to interact positively with others in their community and within their family. This can include managing conflicts constructively, building strong relationships, and modeling empathy, communication, and respect for their children.

ANNEX 2: FACILITATORS' SKILLS DEVELOPED

The facilitators' skills are defined as follows:

Knowledge of IP Curriculum

Understanding and applying evidence-based practices and frameworks that guide parents in fostering their children's development, enhancing their skills, and creating effective learning environments at home.

Knowledge of Brain Builders Curriculum

Familiarity with research-backed programs designed to support parents' mental health and stress management.

Effective Use of Materials “Low cost, No cost”

Utilizing educational tools, resources, and materials in a way that maximizes their impact on learning and development, ensuring they align with the curriculum goals and the needs of children and families.

Designing New Tools and activities

The ability to create and customize resources, activities, or teaching aids that address specific learning objectives or challenges, enhancing the educational experience for both children and parents.

Engagement with Parents and Children

Building and maintaining positive, collaborative relationships with parents and children through active communication, trust, and involvement in the learning process, fostering an environment of support and growth.

Encouraging Participation

Motivating and inspiring parents and children to actively engage in learning activities, take initiative, and feel confident in their involvement, by creating an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere.

Providing Support and Feedback

Offering constructive feedback and guidance to parents and children to reinforce positive behaviour and outcomes, while identifying areas for growth and providing the necessary resources to address challenges.

Following Standards and child safeguarding

Adhering to established guidelines, best practices, and ethical standards in all aspects of teaching, program design, and interaction with families, ensuring consistency and quality in educational delivery.

Problem-Solving

Identifying and analysing challenges or barriers in the learning process, developing effective strategies to overcome them, and finding innovative solutions that enhance learning outcomes for both parents and children.

Support improvement in Parent Skills

Supporting parents in the development of their own skills, including parenting techniques, communication strategies, and emotional regulation, to create a more effective and nurturing learning environment for their children.

Confidence

Confident in the skills and ability to deliver the training and dealing with parents with different backgrounds and culture.

Stress Management

Helping parents and children recognize and manage stress, providing tools and techniques for maintaining calm and focus, promoting emotional well-being, and fostering a balanced approach to learning and daily challenges.

ANNEX 3: PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHICS

PARENT

Language	#	%
English	21	24%
Spanish	26	30%
Urdu	4	5%
Dari	35	40%
Pashto	1	1%
Total	87	100%

Year enrolled in the program	#	%
2023	6	7%
2024	81	93%
Total	87	100%

Center	#	%
Ashford St. Cloud	2	2%
Baker Ripley @Gulfton	4	5%
Brompton Square	3	3%
Burnett Bayland	3	3%
Gables	29	33%
Hillcroft	11	13%
Pointe at Crestmont	4	5%
South Rice	5	6%
Southern Oaks	2	2%
The Grand Hampton	5	6%
Tierra Bella Center	5	6%
Universal Church	1	1%
Westward Center	8	9%
Windswept	5	6%
Total	87	100%

ZIP code	#	%
77081	18	21%
77004	4	5%
77055	3	3%
77063	29	33%
77074	17	20%
77048	4	5%
77057	7	8%
77062	5	6%
Total	87	100%

Status of enrollment	#	%
Enrolled	56	64%
Graduated	30	34%
Left	1	1%
Total	87	100%

Age	#	%
Under 25	11	13%
25-34	63	72%
35-44	13	15%
Total	87	100%

Race	#	%
Asian	51	59%
Black/African American	7	8%
Hispanic/Latino/Spanish Origin	29	33%
Total	87	100%

Gender	#	%
Female	86	99%
Male	1	1%
Total	87	100%

FACILITATORS

Facilitator	#	Female
	11	11

Experience in ECD	Less than 1	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10 years
	2	2	4	3

Experience with IP Program	1-6 months	6-12 months	More than 12 months
	1	9	1

Average sessions in IP curriculum hosted	48
Average sessions in the Brain Builders curriculum hosted	12
The average number of children in your active sessions	15
The average number of parents in your active sessions	12

Education	Bachelor	Master
	8	3