

Madres Unidas

A friendly support group for Spanish speaking mothers of children with delays

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Observation

My name is Julie Lazzaris. I have been working in the birth to three system since 2008. Originally, I worked as a special education teacher. Currently, I am a behavior analyst working in early intervention and as an ABA provider. (Applied Behavior Analysis)

I am bilingual in English and Spanish.

The idea for Madres Unidas came to me through my observation of patterns that keep repeating over time: Hispanic parents missing out on resources and social connections. This capstone also has an intrinsic value for me to see people get their needs met or their mood improved.

- A child's behaviors
- Non-drivers
- Language barriers
- Undocumented

The equity solution: a local Spanish speaking support group with facilitation and geared toward mothers of children with delays and disabilities. This supports the group name I came up with: Madres Unidas, which means: United Mothers.

Mission Statement

“The mission of ‘Madres Unidas’ (United Mothers) is to empower, support, and connect mothers of children with delays, in the Spanish-speaking population. We strive to provide a safe and nurturing environment. We seek to overcome barriers of isolation and loneliness. Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for our children and their caregivers by implementing facilitated support among mothers. Together, we can better navigate the challenges and learn from each other.”

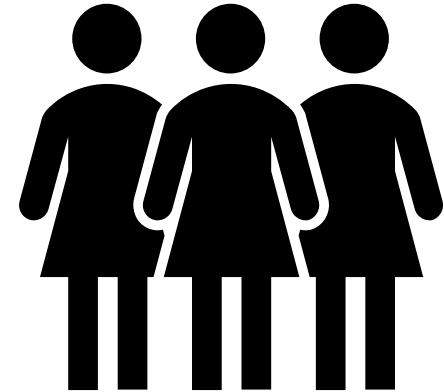


Image: three women standing together

Question

Will starting a Spanish speaking support group for mothers improve outcomes for parents and in turn improve outcomes for children?



Image: question mark symbol

Research

Note: In research this model is considered: Mutual Support Groups, Self-help Groups and 'Parent to Parent Support Group' (PPSG)

"The parent-to-parent support group effectively reduced stress and anxiety among parents of children with ASD and ADHD." (1)

"Two reasons were given for the importance of parent-to-parent support: to learn from each other, and to gain moral support and encouragement in a relationship that is more equal and less discriminatory than was experienced from others in society." (2)

"The results show that there is a consistent pattern of evidence, over a long period of time, which confirms the effectiveness of mental health support groups for carers and people living with mental illness. There is strong, scientifically rigorous evidence which shows the effectiveness of professionally facilitated, family-led support groups, psychoeducation carers support groups, and professionally facilitated, program-based support groups for people living with mental illness." (3)

Connecticut IFSP

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____ Meeting Start Date: _____

Section 2: Family Resources

Family Map (ECO Map): Who provides support to your family? This can include grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, groups/organizations (childcare, WIC, parent groups, religious groups), babysitters, doctor, nurse, etc. This helps us understand who's important in your family life and who might be a resource to you in achieving your outcomes. Start with the child and family members in the middle.

Any comments?

Additional information about resources and concerns is gathered using a family assessment tool. *(List tool used)*

Birth to Three supports the adults that regularly interact with your child. How do the adults in your child's life learn best (reading, doing, hearing, watching)?

Image 1: Page 2 from birth-3 IFSP document

Would you like to talk to a family that has been through a similar situation or whose child has gone through Birth to Three? *(check one)*

yes no not right now ask me again in _____ weeks months.

FAMILY OUTCOME PROGRESS UPDATE as of _____

Met
 Continue
 Discontinue

FAMILY OUTCOME PROGRESS UPDATE as of _____

Met
 Continue
 Discontinue

Copy page as needed for additional outcomes or transitions for family

Image: 2 Page 6 from birth-3 IFSP document

- The family resources section includes a page to identify current supports using the information a family volunteers and how skilled a service coordinator can interview
- The outcomes section includes three lines offering the parent-to-parent connection program. It may get revisited upon a service coordinator calling attention to it or during an IFSP review every 6 months or more frequently as needed.

Special Needs Resources

GROUP	PARENT TO PARENT MATCH	GROUP FOR PARENT SUPPORT TO OTHER PARENTS	HISPANIC COMPONENT	ORGANIZED PLAYGROUPS	STRUCTURED PROFESSIONAL FACILITATION and PARENT TO PARENT SUPPORT
CTFSN	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
FAVOR	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
AFCAMP	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
SEPTO	Yes	Opportunities	Varies	No	No
CPAC	Yes	Yes	Yes	In a closed Facebook group	No

New: Parents Connecting Parents Pilot

- › [Parents Connecting Parents - Connecticut Office of Early Childhood \(ctoec.org\)](http://ctoec.org)

During research I discovered a new pilot program from the OEC for parent to parent connections
It is available in these communities:
Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain,
New Haven, New London, and
Waterbury.



Image: symbol for Parents
Connecting Parents program

Madres Unidas Proposal

GROUP	PARENT TO PARENT MATCH	GROUP FOR PARENT SUPPORT TO OTHER PARENTS	HISPANIC COMPONENT	ORGANIZED PLAYGROUPS	STRUCTURED PROFESSIONAL FACILITATION and PARENT TO PARENT SUPPORT
Madres Unidas	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

During my research review, there is no local support group held in Spanish, for mother's, that is locally accessible.

Procedure

- 1.) Advertise for support group
 - a.) Ask acquaintances for families of interest
 - b.) Post flyers in public locations for target audience
 - c.) Contact local EI agencies & local school district(s)
- 2.) Organize contact information for participants
- 3.) Have participants sign waiver
- 4.) Interview for locations
- 5.) Draft list of questions for potential locations
 - a.) Local/On a bus line
 - b.) Cost
 - c.) Food permitted
 - d.) Days & Hours of operation
- 6.) Find a business to donate food/drinks
- 7.) Have participants sign waiver
- 8.) Schedule and hold meetings
- 9.) Survey participants with pretest about their knowledge, current resources preferences, current topics of interest or ideas
- 10.) Survey participants with posttest about their knowledge, resources, preferences, current topics of interest or ideas

What to Avoid

REAL ISSUES

- › Dual relationships
- › Equity of location, time of day
- › Breach confidentiality

POTENTIAL ISSUES

- › Unknowingly excluding caretakers beside parents
- › Being unaware of caregivers disabilities

SOLUTIONS

- A waiver describing the information that is shared by group members is no longer private
- A clause in the waiver if there is a possible dual relationship
- A survey to help determine location cost
- Encouragement for mothers to share if they have a disability with the facilitator

Waiver Document Drafts

MADRES UNIDAS HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

"I, _____, understand that information I share will no longer be considered confidential once the group hears it.

I understand that it is my choice to share or not share information (spoken or written.)

I understand I can leave the group or stop participating at any time without explanation. "

Signature

Date

MADRES UNIDAS RENUNCIA A LA CONFIDENCIALIDAD

"Yo, _____, entiendo que la información que comparto ya no se considerará confidencial una vez que el grupo la escuche.

Entiendo que es mi elección compartir o no compartir información (hablada o escrita).

Entiendo que puedo abandonar el grupo o dejar de participar en cualquier momento sin explicación."

Firma

Fecha

Horizontal Scale Out

- Increase the amount of support groups for Hispanic caregivers
- Increase to different locations
- Expand format to online
- Transition the support group to fit caregivers of other demographics
- Implement the support group format with other populations
 - Attend staff meetings to share information about the support group
 - share with part c coordinators
 - share with part b coordinators
 - community programs

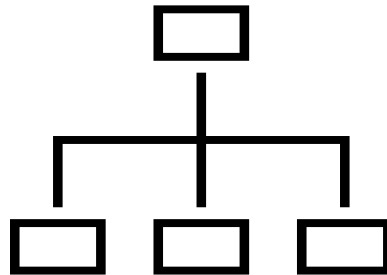


Image: sample flow chart

Vertical Scale Up

- Interstate participation share blueprint of support group
- Create or implement a formal curriculum based on research
- Connect with other agencies
- Connect with stakeholders to get funds allocated
- Connect the Connecticut Department of Education and the Office of Early Childhood
- Start a website
- Create a module for service coordination training for the support group
- Get involved through the Sparkler App

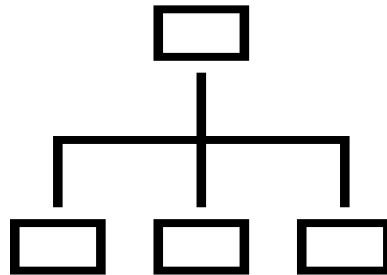


Image: sample flow chart

The Sparkler App

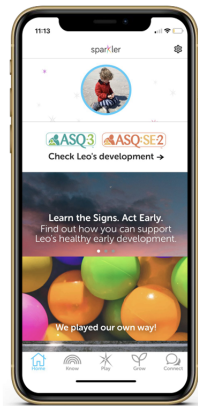
Learn through play with sparkler

Sparkler sparks healthy early development for children (0-5) and families in Connecticut. Check in on your child's development and get a library of 1000+ play activities just right for your child's age. Get regular coaching and advice. Sparkler is in English and Spanish, for iOS or Android.

How to Get Started with Sparkler:

1. **Download Sparkler** from the [Google Play Store](#) or the [Apple App Store](#). Or scan this QR Code with your mobile device to go straight to the right place for downloading.

2. Open app and tap **Create a New Account**.



3. Enter **Your Sparkler Access Code** to create your account.

CT

4. **Set Up** (enter your email, password)

5. **Create Account** (name, address, ZIP, and mobile phone number)

6. **Add a Child** (name, pronoun, birthday, prematurity if under 2 are required). Add one child and you can add another at the end of the process.

7. **Profile Questions** (optional)

8. Review **Sponsoring Partners** and **Privacy**

Image: Screenshot information page for Sparkler app with QR code

This app from the OEC is available to families of young children. It can track a child's development, connect a family with developmental support, and it provides activities to support the child's learning. The app keeps track of the child's age and makes age appropriate suggestion.

Parent support groups like Madres Unidas would be a nice addition to The Sparkler App

Elevator Speech

“Madres Unidas is a support group I want to start Spanish speaking mothers of children with special needs. Madres Unidas will be local to where they live, catered to the needs of the group, and information would be provided in their native language.

This will improve equity, among gets resources to different populations, reduce stress among mothers, develop a sense of community and support. This will have the trickle down affect for families, schools, and communities to function seamlessly because the support group provides a way for their needs to be met and problems to be solved. Mental health will improve and people’s lives will change for the better. Madres Unidas will be the first local support group held in Spanish and aimed at mother’s that is locally accessible. And you could be responsible for making that happen. Let’s meet next week to review my proposal.”

Stakeholders:

- Office of Early Childhood
- State Department of Education
- Appropriations Committee/Senators/Local Representatives
- Universities
- Other agencies that work with families



Image: two women talking

References

Sharma S, Govindan R, Kommu JVS. Effectiveness of Parent-to-Parent Support Group in Reduction of Anxiety and Stress Among Parents of Children With Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*. 2022;44(6):575-579.
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McCabe, H. (2008). The importance of parent-to-parent support among families of children with autism in the People's Republic of China. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 55(4), 303-314.

Worrall, H., Schweizer, R., Marks, E., Yuan, L., Lloyd, C. & Ramjan, R. (2018). The effectiveness of support groups: a literature review. *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, 22 (2), 85-93.

Stock images from Microsoft Clip Art

Local Groups & Resources

- › African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities AFCAMP www.afcamp.org
- › Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center CPAC www.cpac.org
- › FAVOR, Inc www.favor-ct.org
- › CTFSN www.ctsfn.org
- › CT Bureau of Special Education: [Bureau of Special Education \(ct.gov\)](http://www.ct.gov)
- › Birth to Three: [Birth23.org – Connecticut Birth to Three System](http://www.birth23.org)
- › [Parents Connecting Parents - Connecticut Office of Early Childhood \(ctoec.org\)](http://www.ctoec.org)
- › [Sparkler - Connecticut Office of Early Childhood \(ctoec.org\)](http://www.ctoec.org)