

The Impact of the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) on Knowledge, Skills and Positive Health Behaviours

In a study conducted by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) in May 2015, the **Community Action Program for Children (CAPC)** was found to have a positive impact on the development of knowledge, skills and positive health behaviours of the parents/caregivers and children who attend.

What is the CAPC 2015 Parent/Caregiver Study?

The CAPC Parent/Caregiver Study was conducted by PHAC to examine the following questions:

- What is the demographic and risk profile of CAPC respondents in this study?
- To what extent have respondents and their children gained development in knowledge, skills and health behaviours to support maternal, child and family health?
- Are improvements in knowledge, skills and health behaviours related to the level of participant exposure to the program, demographic characteristics, or the types of CAPC services received?
- To what extent are CAPC projects implementing practices to help parents and children feel welcomed and respected?

To answer these questions, a paper-based, self-administered survey was completed by a sample of primary caregivers in select CAPC projects during a one-month period (May 2015). Outcome areas examined by the survey included:

- Parenting Knowledge and Skills;
- Parent Support;
- Child Knowledge and Skills; and
- Experience with the Program.

The Community Action Program for Children

The CAPC is a national community based program funded by PHAC.

Launched in 1993, the CAPC program aims to promote the health and social development of vulnerable children (mainly 0-6 years) and their families. The program also seeks to promote the creation of partnerships within communities and to strengthen community capacity to increase support for vulnerable children and their families.

More than **223,000** parents, caregivers and children participate in the program every year at one of the **415** projects across Canada.

How many Projects and Parents/Caregivers participated in the study?

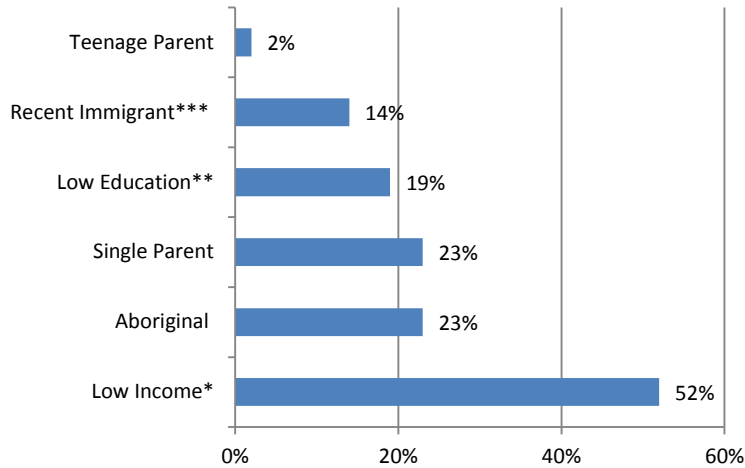
Sixty-two (**62**) randomly selected CAPC projects across Canada.

Surveys from **1,387** respondents were included in the analysis related to the parent/caregiver outcomes and **1,043** surveys were included in the analysis of the child outcomes.

What Did We Learn?

CAPC parent/caregiver respondents are from diverse social and demographic backgrounds.

Demographic Risk Profile of Respondents



CAPC is providing services to many vulnerable children and their families.

* Calculated using Statistics Canada's 2013 Low Income Cut-Offs; results represent 64% of respondents
** Less than high school
*** Living in Canada 10 years or less

CAPC parent/caregiver respondents reported their experience with the program to be positive and supportive.

Over **85%** of respondents agreed to all statements on this aspect of the survey. For example:

- **97%** of respondents reported staff treated them with dignity and respect.
- **97%** of respondents reported feeling welcomed and accepted at the program.
- **95%** of respondents reported staff responded to their concerns.
- **94%** of respondents reported staff helped them learn how to get resources they need for their child(ren).

Respondents viewed project staff as a reliable and helpful source of information and support, helping parents/caregivers to feel more supported and confident in their roles as parents.

Research has shown that how support is provided to parents has an impact on the outcomes achieved.

Providing services in a family friendly manner has been shown to increase parent's sense of parenting confidence and competence (Trivette & Dunst, 2009).

CAPC parent/caregiver respondents reported the program was having an overall positive impact on the health and wellbeing of themselves and their families.

A large percentage of respondents reported gains on the various items related to parenting and health and well-being. For example:

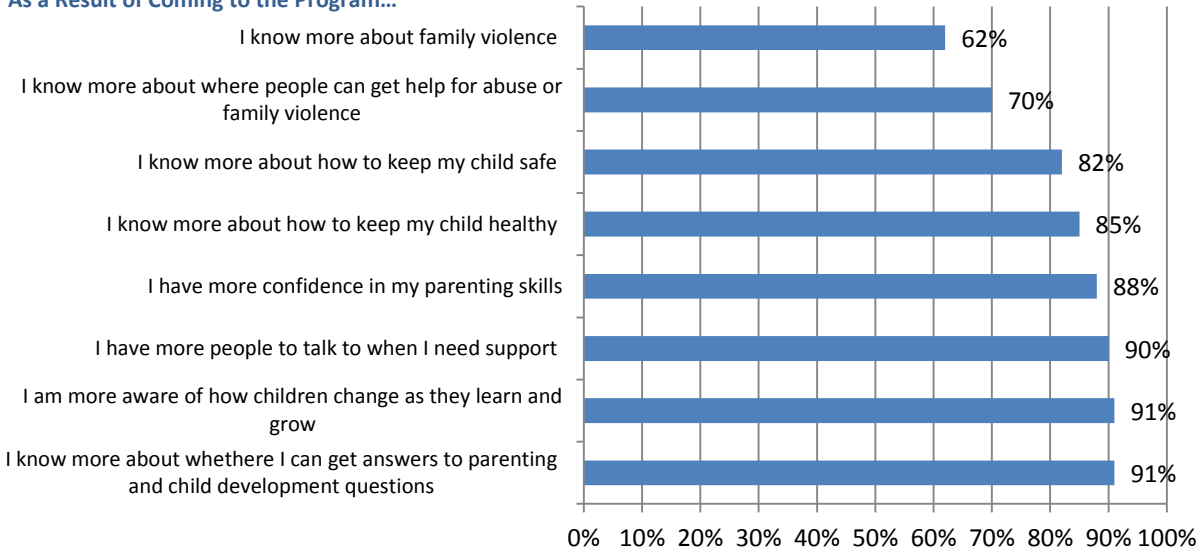
- **86%** of respondents stated the program has helped improve their parenting skills.
- **83%** of respondents stated the program has helped to improve their health and well-being.
- **90%** of respondents stated the program has helped to improve the health and well-being of their children.

CAPC parent/caregiver respondents report gaining knowledge and building skills to support maternal, child and family health as a result of coming to the program.

A significant percentage of respondents reported gains relative to the various items on the survey that examined parenting knowledge and skills. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents with valid responses who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with select items on the survey.

Respondents who "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" to Knowledge and Skill Survey Items*

As a Result of Coming to the Program...



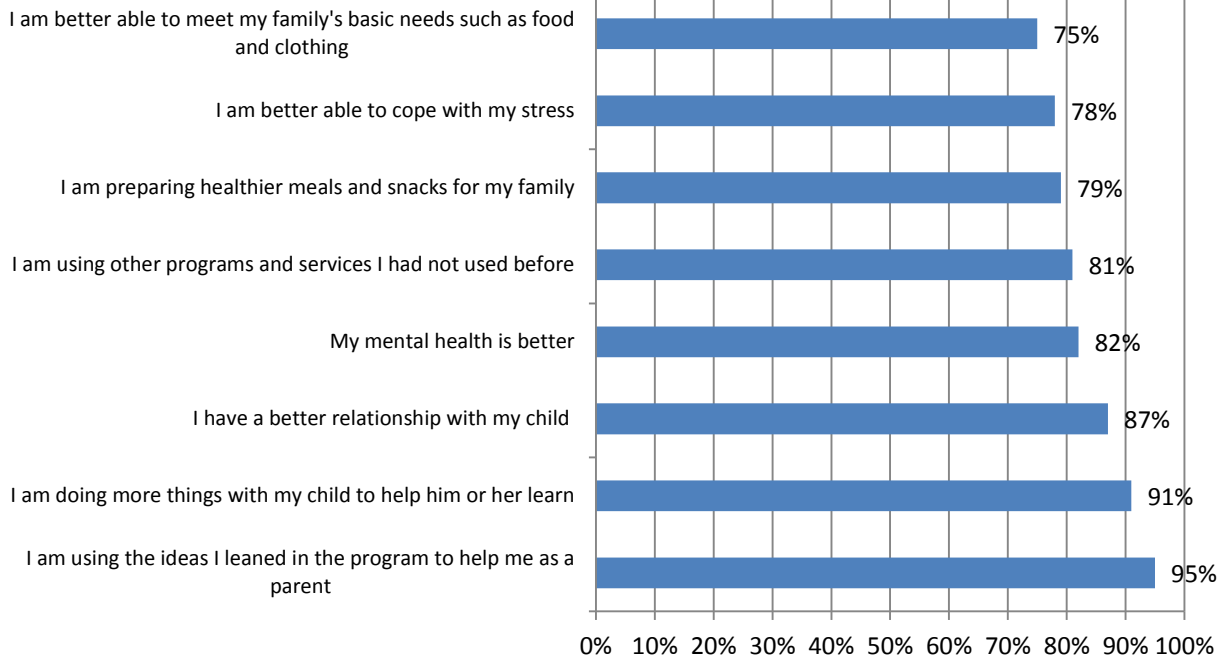
*Percentages reflect the percentage of participants with valid responses. Percentages do not include the percentage of participants who answered “not applicable” or who did not answer the question. As such the total sample size varies for each item.

CAPC parent/caregiver respondents report adopting positive health practices, as a result of coming to the program.

A large percentage of respondents reported gains relative to the various items on the survey examining positive health behaviours. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents with valid responses who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with select items on the survey.

Respondents who "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" to Health Behaviour Survey Items*

As a result of coming to the program...



*Percentages reflect the percentage of participants with valid responses. Percentages do not include the percentage of participants who answered “not applicable” or who did not answer the question. As such the total sample size varies for each item.

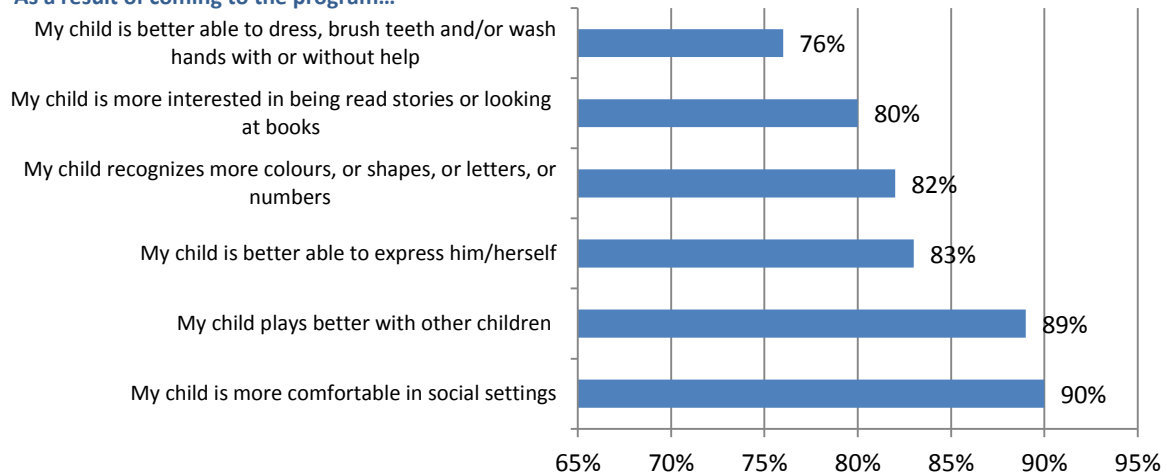


CAPC parent/caregiver respondents reported their children gained knowledge and skills, as a result of coming to the program.

Many respondents reported their child experienced gains relative to survey items examining child development. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents with valid responses who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with select items on the survey.

Respondents who "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" to Children's Knowledge and Skills Survey Items*

As a result of coming to the program...



*Percentages reflect the percentage of participants with valid responses. Percentages do not include the percentage of participants who answered “not applicable” or who did not answer the question. As such the total sample size varies for each item.



The extent to which respondents benefited from CAPC was related to aspects of program participation, demographic characteristics and the types of services received.

To address the impact of program exposure, demographic characteristics and program type, a series of regressions were conducted. The analysis examined which variables had the greatest impact on the outcome areas examined in the study. The areas examined included parenting knowledge and skills, parent support and child knowledge and skills.

Demographic Characteristics

The program was particularly beneficial for parents/caregivers experiencing certain risk characteristics. The participant characteristics shown to be having an impact differed based on the outcome area being measured.

Participants who identified as Indigenous status, recent immigrants to Canada and having low income consistently reported greater gains as a result of participating in the program.

Program Exposure

The frequency of parental/caregiver attendance in the program had an impact on the degree to which outcomes were experienced. Parents/caregivers who attended CAPC more frequently achieved better outcomes on all outcome areas measured.

Parents/caregivers who attended the program at least once a week reported greater benefits from attending the program.

Type of Program

The type of program the child attended was associated with improved child outcomes. The impact of the types of programs that parents/caregivers attended was not as clear-cut as for the children.

Four of the program types attended by children (i.e., individual or one-on-one support programs, preschool/child minding programs, other group programs) were associated with better scores on the various child outcomes. Further exploration of the impact of program type is required.

In Summary

- The CAPC is having a positive impact on the development of knowledge, skills and positive health behaviours. CAPC respondents report improvements in their own knowledge, skills, support and confidence, as well as improvements to their children’s social and emotional skills, language and literacy, and skills related to their health and wellbeing.
- By helping participants improve their knowledge and skills and in promoting the adoption of positive health practices the CAPC is contributing to the health and well-being of vulnerable children and their families

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the parents and caregivers and CAPC projects who actively took part in the implementation of this study. A considerable amount of time and patience was required and we thank you for your commitment.

Additionally, we would like to thank PHAC staff and other external experts, notably Dr. Carl Dunst, Dr. Karen Benzies, and Janice McAuley who shared their knowledge and advice regarding the development of the items on the survey.

The survey used in this study was informed by the following surveys:

- 1) Benzies, K, Clarke, D, Barker, L & Mychasiuk, R. (2012). Upstart Parent Survey: A psychometrically valid tool for the evaluation of prevention-focussed parenting programs. *Maternal Child Health Journal*.
- 2) BC Early Childhood Development Project. The ECD Evaluation Project: Parent Survey Rationale. (March 2013).
- 3) FRP Canada: E-Valuation. Participant Survey.

R.A Malatest and Associates were contracted to implement this study. They conducted the data analyses and produced the reports on which this summary is based.



REFERENCES

Trivette, C. & Dunst, C. (2009). Community-Based Parent Support Programs. Encyclopaedia on Early Childhood Development. Retrieved from www.child-encyclopedia.com/Pages/PDF/Trivette-DunstANGxp_rev.pdf.

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