



**LISTENING CAMPAIGN
MOTHERS FROM SALINAS
2016 - 2017**

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

REPORT OVERVIEW



This summary of key findings from the **Salinas Parent Listening Campaign** draws on data collected from March 2016 to May 2017.

The Salinas Parent Listening Campaign was launched to deepen an understanding from a parent perspective.

ABOUT SALINAS

Out of the total population in Salinas (155,366), seventy-five percent (75.8%) is Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 – 2015 American Community Survey). Over one third of the population (37.7%) is foreign-born, and twenty percent (20.2%) lives below the poverty level. The median household income is \$49,840, with a male median income of \$21,987, and a female median income of \$18,031. The median age is 29.7 years, below the state median of 35.2 years. Just over half of the population (59.5%) possesses a high school degree or higher. Data from Roosevelt Elementary School's 2015-16 School Accountability Report Card demonstrates that out of total student enrollment (653), the majority of students (95.6%) are Latino, over half (67.1%) are English Learners, and nearly all (96.6%) are identified as "Socioeconomically Disadvantaged."



METHODOLOGY

FLOWER MAPPING



Arts-Based

Relational

IMAGE-BASED INQUIRY



Strength-based

KEY LEARNINGS



PARTNER LEADERSHIP

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE + RELATIONSHIP + TRUST + DIVERSE SKILLS + DELEGATION



PARENT COHESION

SUPPORT + TRUST + SHARING + MOTIVATION + INSPIRATION



PARENT RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP + CONFIDENCE + STRENGTH + HOPE



PARTNER LEADERSHIP AS THE FOUNDATION

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE + RELATIONSHIP + TRUST + DIVERSE SKILLS + DELEGATION

The emergence of a partner leadership team was a foundational element for the Salinas Listening Campaign. A core team, composed of seven partners from five organizations, new to working together, planned and debriefed the parent listening campaign. Three additional partners provided support and attended some sessions. Four core partners co-led the parent listening sessions with the consultant, which shifted over time to become completely partner-led. Core partners conducted initial outreach to invite parents and then communicated with participating parents to inform them about listening sessions.

The development of this cross-sectoral team of partners was built upon a reflective practice of pre- and post-listening sessions. The City of Salinas partners provided the space, logistics, communications, and leadership to the team. The approach for engaging partners paralleled, in many ways, the relational design of the parent listening sessions. Partners utilized image-based inquiry methods providing a “pilot test” of tools that would be used with the parents, while also deepening their understanding of one another in a supportive, trusting environment, grounded in shared values, and in recognition of each other’s skills, talents, and expertise.

Partner organizations: Community Alliance for Safety and Peace, City of Salinas; Parents as Teachers, Action Council; Read to Me Project; Building Healthy Communities, Action Council; Monterey County Department of Child Support; Alisal Family Resource Center; Salinas City Elementary School; Recreation and Community Services, City of Salinas

A partner team was formed that was built upon **trust, shared values, and diverse expertise.**



PARENT COHESION AS THE ROOTS

SUPPORT + TRUST + SHARING + MOTIVATION + INSPIRATION

Power.

Don't feel alone.

Something positive.

With more solidarity...more strength.

- Participating Parent reflections translated from Spanish

A parent support network appeared to develop out of the parent listening sessions. Over time, parents increasingly demonstrated a growing sense of social cohesion.

From an individual reflective process, the parents began offering each other support and encouragement, sharing ideas for leadership and cross-learning, reflecting on the learnings as a collective, and identifying similar beliefs, aspirations, experiences, memories, feelings, and desires.

Some common themes that emerged out of the inquiry included the following.

- Geographic separation of families in Mexico
- Social-emotional needs of children
- Children with special needs
- Importance of preschool
- Childhood in Mexico



PARENT RESILIENCE AS VIBRANT FLOWERS

LEADERSHIP + CONFIDENCE + STRENGTH + HOPE

The most prominent learning observed from participating parents was a sense of resilience. The image of a bold, upright flower, utilized throughout the inquiry symbolized this learning, and was referenced with frequency by participating parents.

While innumerable challenges - some shared - affect many participating families, the narrative that rose up most evidently may be best described in the words of a participating parent, "we rise up like the flowers."

Additional observations that point to this outcome include the following.

- Increased confidence in sharing opinions, providing testimony to the Monterey County Board of Supervisors
- Sharing increasingly personal information about themselves and their families
- Identified each other's strengths, built consensus, and demonstrated leadership

Be an example for our children.

Give what I wish I could have had.

Don't want to repeat the painful mistakes my parents made.

Sad but happy that my daughter went to Mexico to see my mom over the holidays. Sad without my daughter and without my mother, but happy that they were together.

- Participating Parent reflections translated from Spanish



RESEARCH TO ACTION: PARENTS LEADING

A VISION FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

My neighbor's child is my concern.

If they want a future, invest in the early years.

We know that the county has low academic rates.

Preschool helps everything. It should be for everyone, it should not be a problem to qualify, it should be law.

Struggle to get child in is too difficult. If both parents work, they won't qualify. Shouldn't have to battle for preschool.

I see the difference between my kids. One with preschool and one without preschool. I am pushing something that doesn't even effect me personally...for others.

- Participating Parent reflections translated from Spanish

Participating parents of the Salinas Listening Campaign completed their inquiry with the following shared vision.

VISION

Universal Preschool for All

CHANGES

- Qualifying barriers removed
- Kindergarten prepared
- All day preschool

STRATEGIES

- Develop an organizing plan

ROOT CAUSES

- Begin at 3 years old
- Not prepared for kinder
- Preschool is only for 3 hours
- Lack of flexibility in the work place
- Very difficult to qualify for preschool
- Two parents working and cost of living



RESEARCH TO ACTION: PARENTS LEADING



We are taken into account.

- Participating Parent reflections translated from Spanish



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you to the Parent Listening Partner Team

Rafael Hernandez, Read to Me Project

Lilia Wanless, Parents as Teachers, Action Council

Maria Ramirez-Moya, Parents as Teachers, Action Council

Martha L. Martinez, Salinas City Elementary School District

Fernanda E. Ocaña, Community Safety Division, City of Salinas

Alma Cervantes, Building Healthy Communities, Action Council

Efrain Serrano, Recreation and Community Services, City of Salinas

José Arreola, Community Alliance for Safety and Peace, City of Salinas

Maria E. Cuellar, Monterey County Department of Child Support Services

Carissa Purnell, Alisal Family Resource Center, Alisal Union School District

A special thank you to the core team of participating Salinas Parents

Elsa Martin

Sofia Garza

Beatriz Garza

Diocelina Villicaña

Maria Elena Garcia

Appreciation to the City of Salinas and the gracious support of José Arreola and Fernanda E. Ocaña

As host and leaders of the Partner and Parent Listening Sessions

With appreciation for support

Nina N. Alcaraz, Bright Beginnings, Monterey County Children's Council Initiative