

## DCE Site: Volunteers of America

- Volunteers of America Los Angeles (VOALA) is the Los Angeles branch of the non-profit organization Volunteers of America. One of Los Angeles's oldest and largest human services non-profit organizations
- Children's Services Division established early education and head start program in 1965
- Mission:** To provide quality education and comprehensive services to children, families, and communities; through support, guidance, resources, and advocacy

## Identified Needs

- Provide parent/caregiver education on addressing children's social-emotional needs at home and promote parent-child interaction
- Provide direct support and education for teachers to respond to children's social-emotional needs in early-head-start classrooms
- Advocate for the occupational therapy profession and promote awareness of OT services within the agency

## Project Objectives

- Design, implement, and evaluate a family-centered program to help fulfill and increase parents' confidence when responding to children's emotional regulation needs when interfering with expectations at home
- Provide direct support for teachers in early-head-start classrooms to help increase teachers' confidence when addressing children's social-emotional needs
- Improve skills and gain confidence in advocating for OT and collaborating with the interdisciplinary team

## Literature Review

- Play-based, caregiver-administered programs demonstrated effectiveness on helping families address children's social-emotional needs (Duch et al., 2019; Hughes-Scholes & Gavidia-Payne, 2019)
- The benefits for occupational therapists to address sensory processing concerns and provide basic sensory integration education to parents on ways to address children's needs (Miller-Kuhaneck & Watling, 2017; Gourley et al., 2013)
- Mindfulness-based intervention promoted parents' confidence in child rearing and responding to children's social-emotional needs, and reduced parental stress (Osborn et al., 2020)

## Program Description

### Emotion Master Social-Emotional Learning Program

- For parents/caregivers of children who attend VOALA's early-head-start and head-start programs
- Virtual platform (Zoom)
- English & Spanish groups
- Once a week; 1.5hr/workshop; total of 3 workshops



### Program Content & Layout

- Virtual platform (Zoom); interactive & engaging
- English & Spanish groups
- Once a week; 1.5hr/workshop; total of 3 workshops
- Certificate of Completion for those who attended all 3 workshops

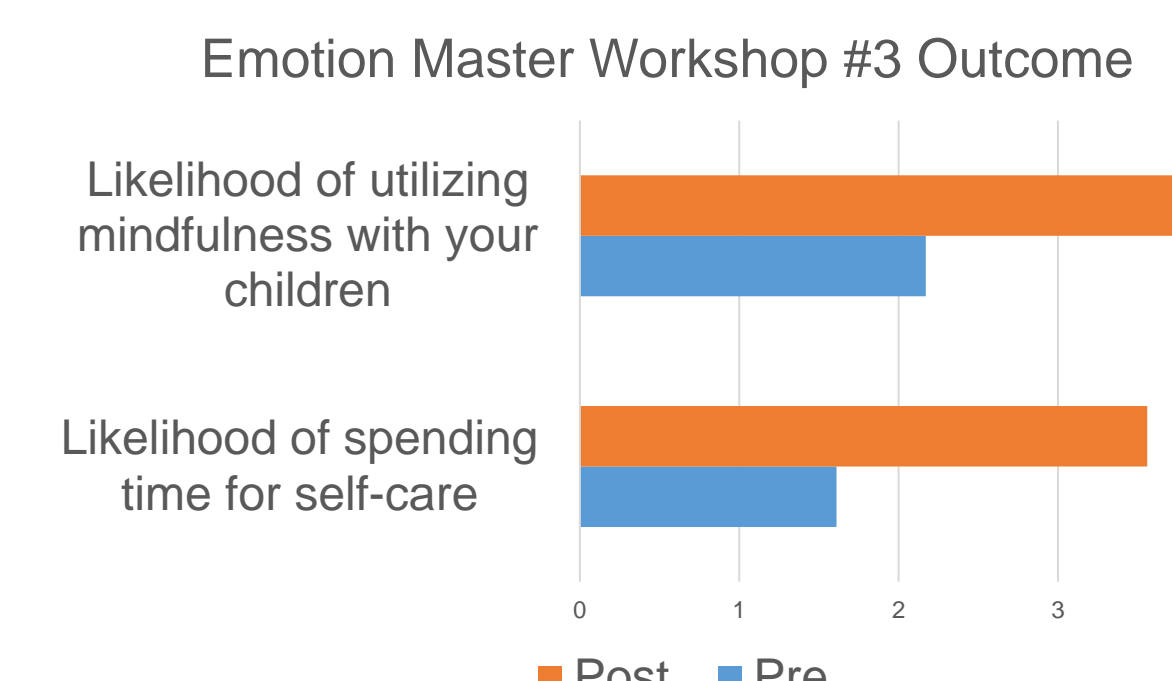
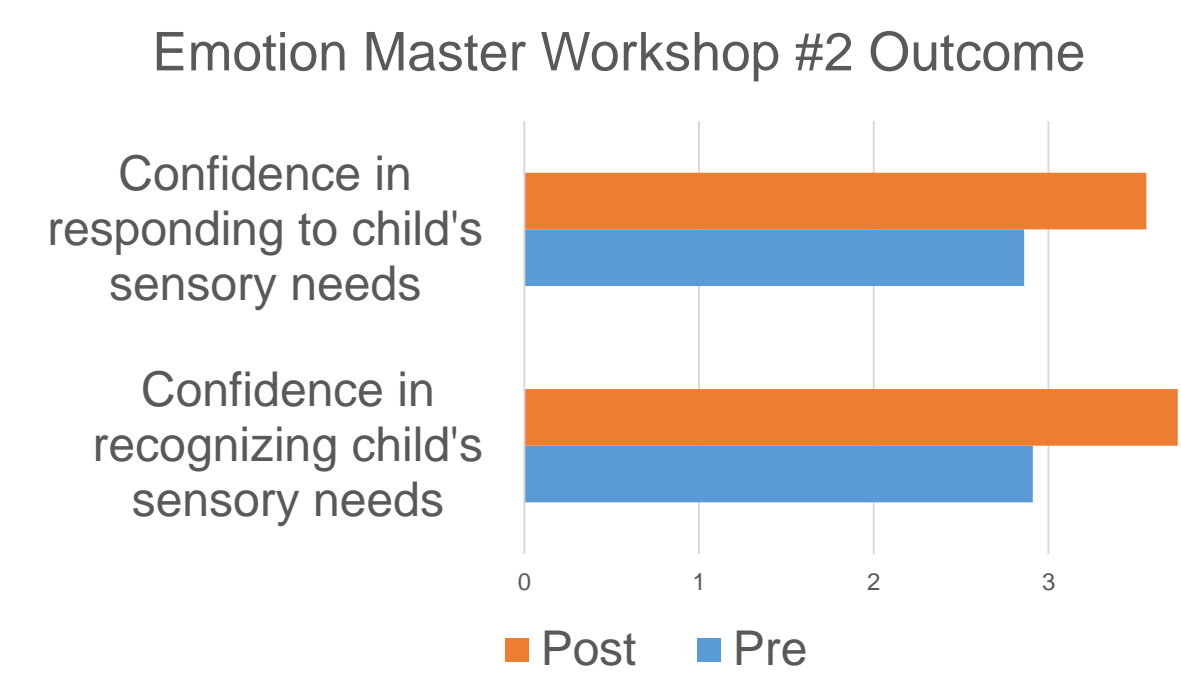
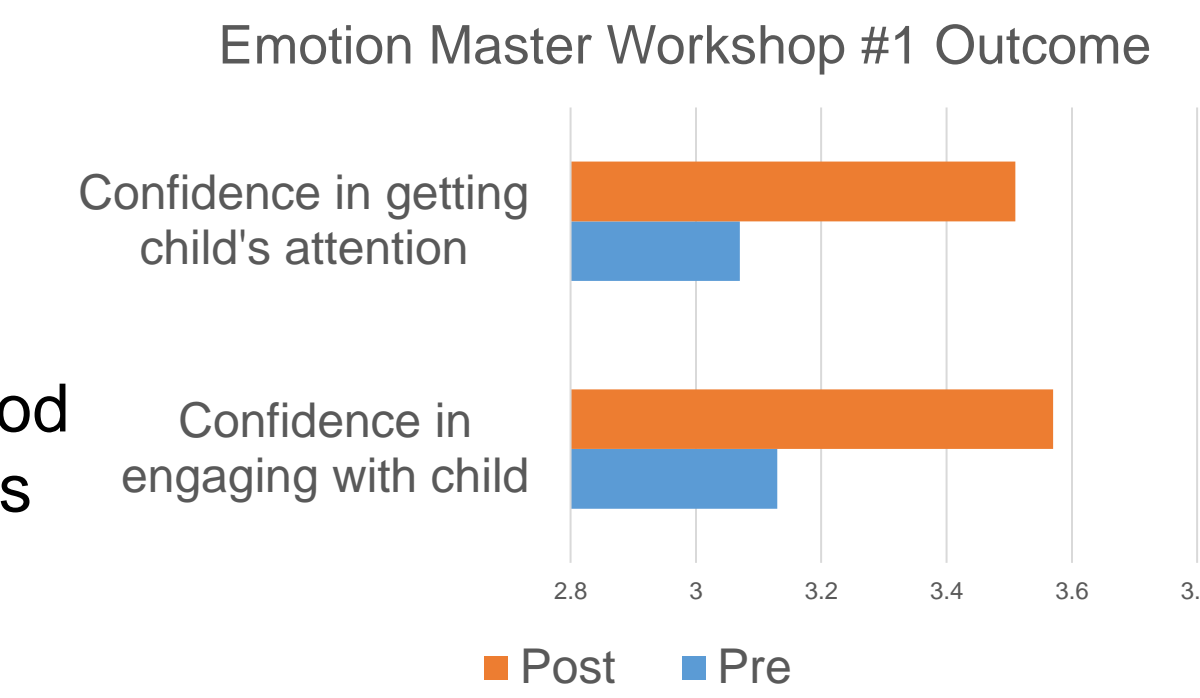
**Workshop 1**  
Parent-child interaction & Play Skills

**Workshop 2**  
Sensory Processing Needs & Strategies

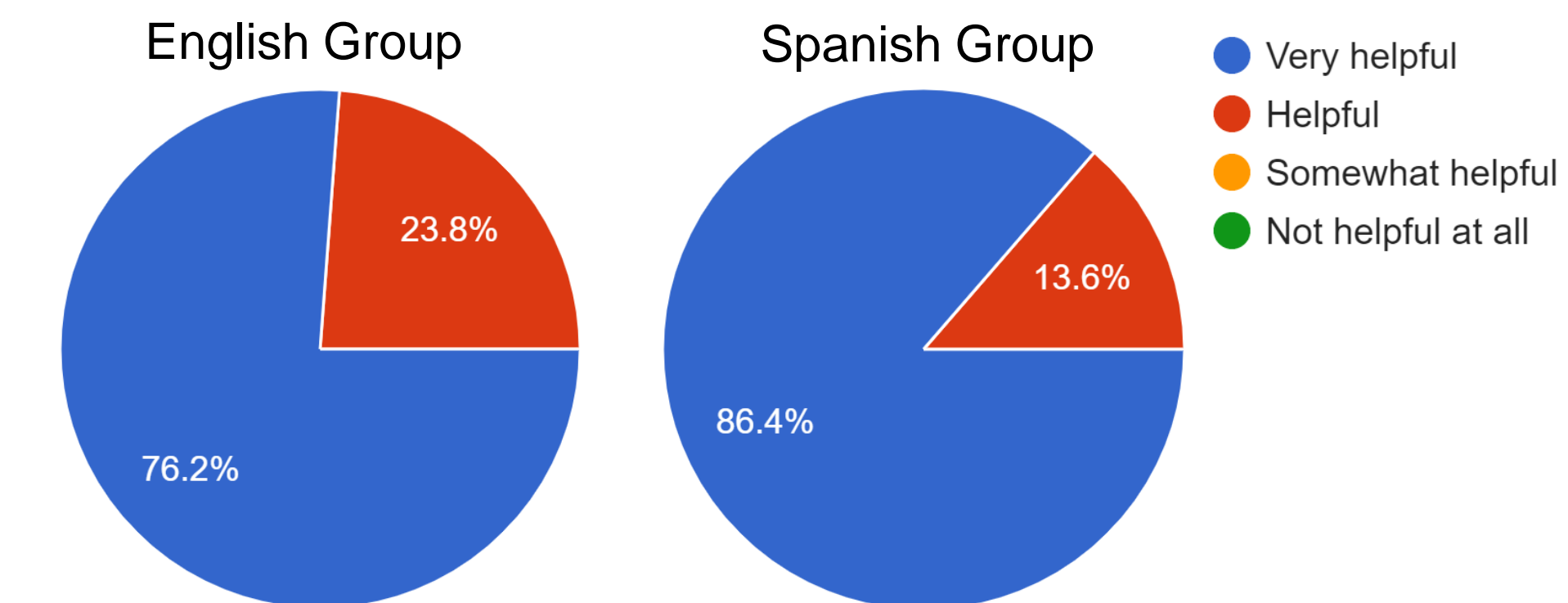
**Workshop 3**  
Caregiver Self-Care & Mindfulness

## Program Evaluation & Outcomes

- Workshop 1:** 12%-13%% increase of confidence in parent-child interaction
- Workshop 2:** 20%-22% increase of confidence in address sensory needs
- Workshop 3:** 43%-55% increase in likelihood of practicing self-care & utilizing mindfulness
- Wilcoxon signed-rank test yielded **p-values <.001**



### How helpful was the *Emotion Master* in addressing parent/child interaction, sensory processing, mindfulness, and self-care?



### Most-Used & Effective Strategies Learned from the Program

- Providing affirmations
- Mindfulness & Mindful parenting
- Playing with children at their level (play skills)

### Program Outcome Themes

- Workshops were highly enjoyable
- Program provided safe space to participants to share experiences and concerns
- Requests & needs for continuous training on sensory strategies

### Family Outcome Survey (FOS) Results

- 10% increase in understanding child's needs and delays (p <.001)
- 10% increase in ability to help child learn new skills (p<.001)
- 7% increase in ability to understand child's progress (p<.001)
- 6%-10% increase in feeling comfortable to reach out to resources and loved ones (p=.004)

## Scholarly Deliverables

### Reference Guide for Parents (Spanish version available)



### Reference Guides for Teachers



## Acknowledgment

I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Picus for helping me ensure my program was up-to-date and accurate. Big appreciation of all the support given by my site mentors Gaby and Alma, as well as the rest of the mental health team at VOALA. I truly had the dream team for completing this project surely and strongly. Wouldn't have made it without your support. Thank you!

## References

