

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



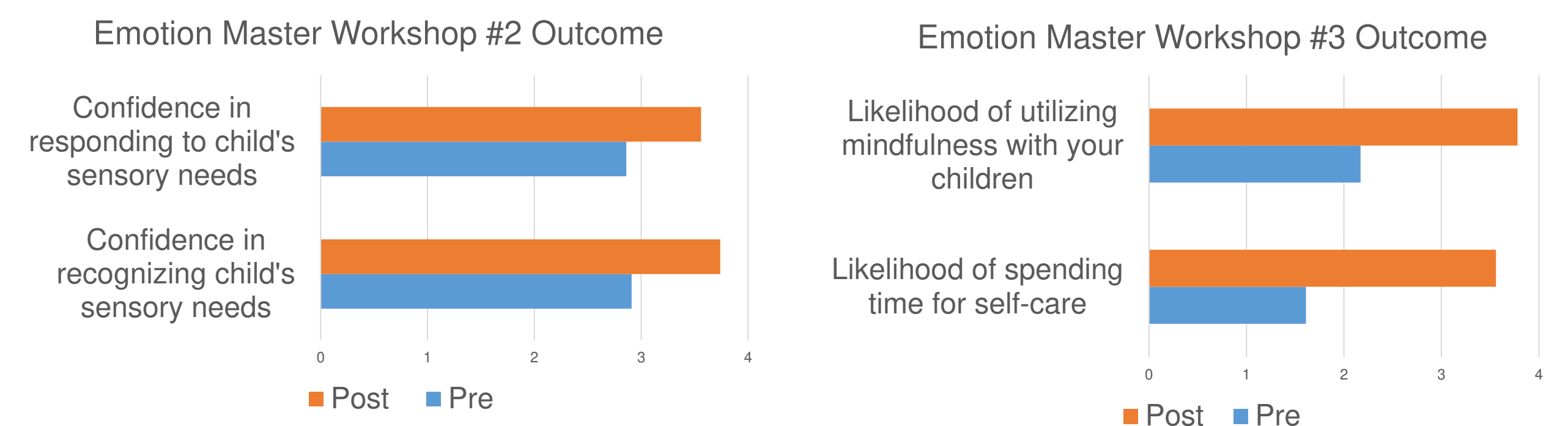
Program Content & Layout

- 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



Program Evaluation & Outcomes

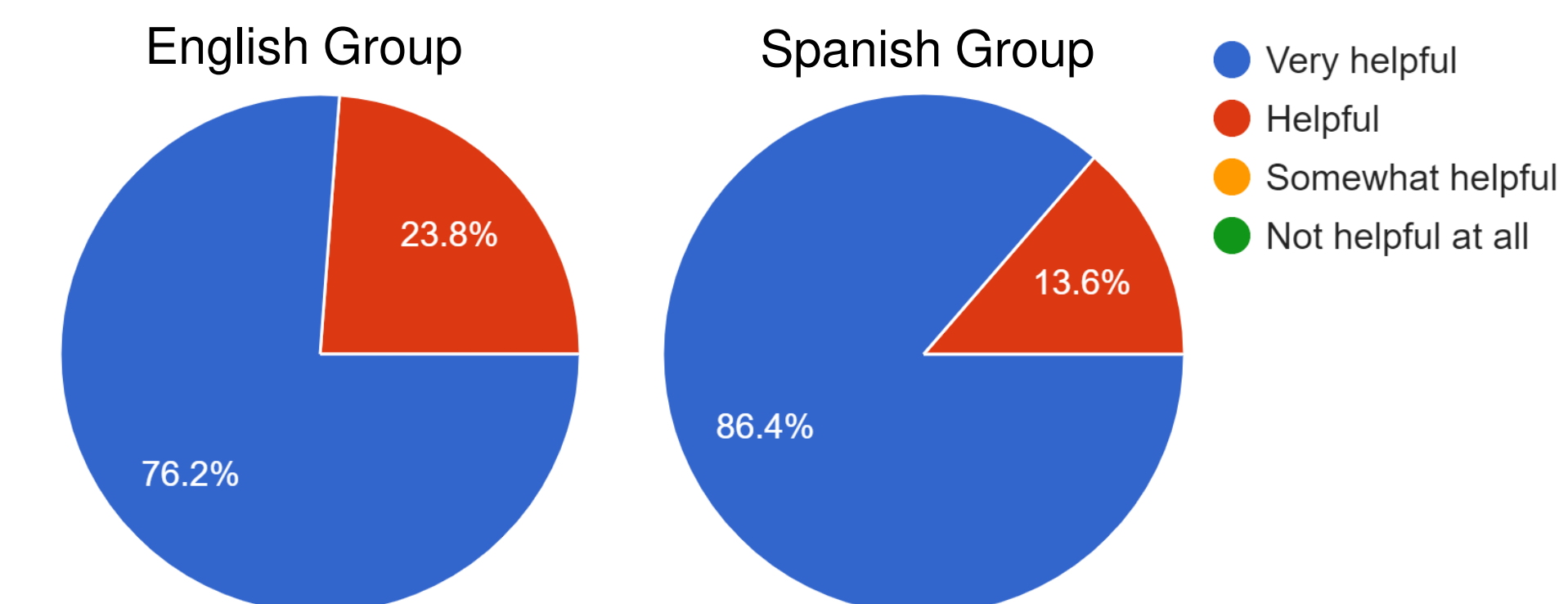
- Workshop 1:** 12%-13%% increase of confidence in parent-child interaction
- Workshop 2:** 20%-22% increase of confidence in address sensory needs
- Workshop 3:** 43%-55% increase in likelihood of practicing self-care & utilizing mindfulness
- Wilcoxon signed-rank test yielded **p-values <.001**



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)

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

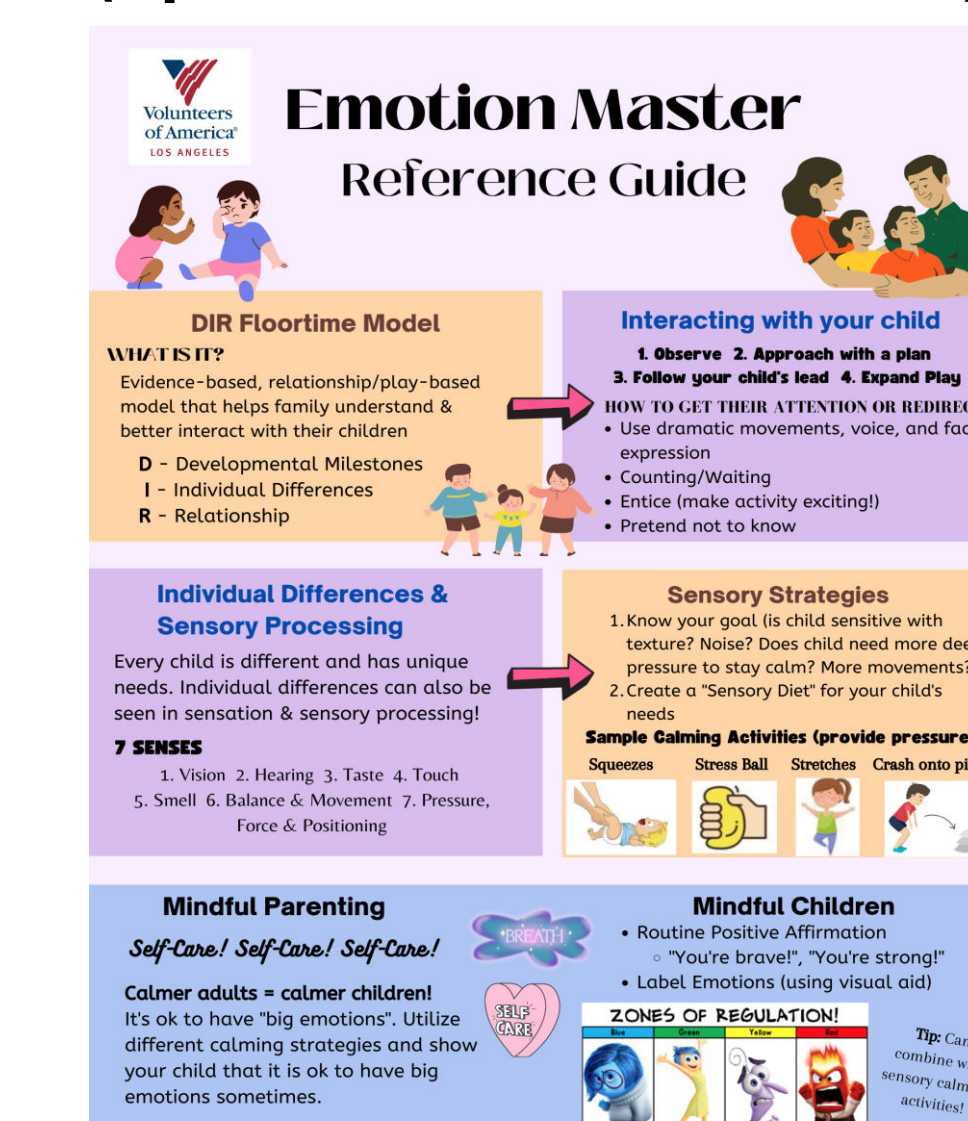
- Providing affirmations
- Mindfulness & Mindful parenting
- Playing with children at their level (play skills)

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

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

