



# Creciendo Juntos: A Preparing for Life Program

June 4, 2024

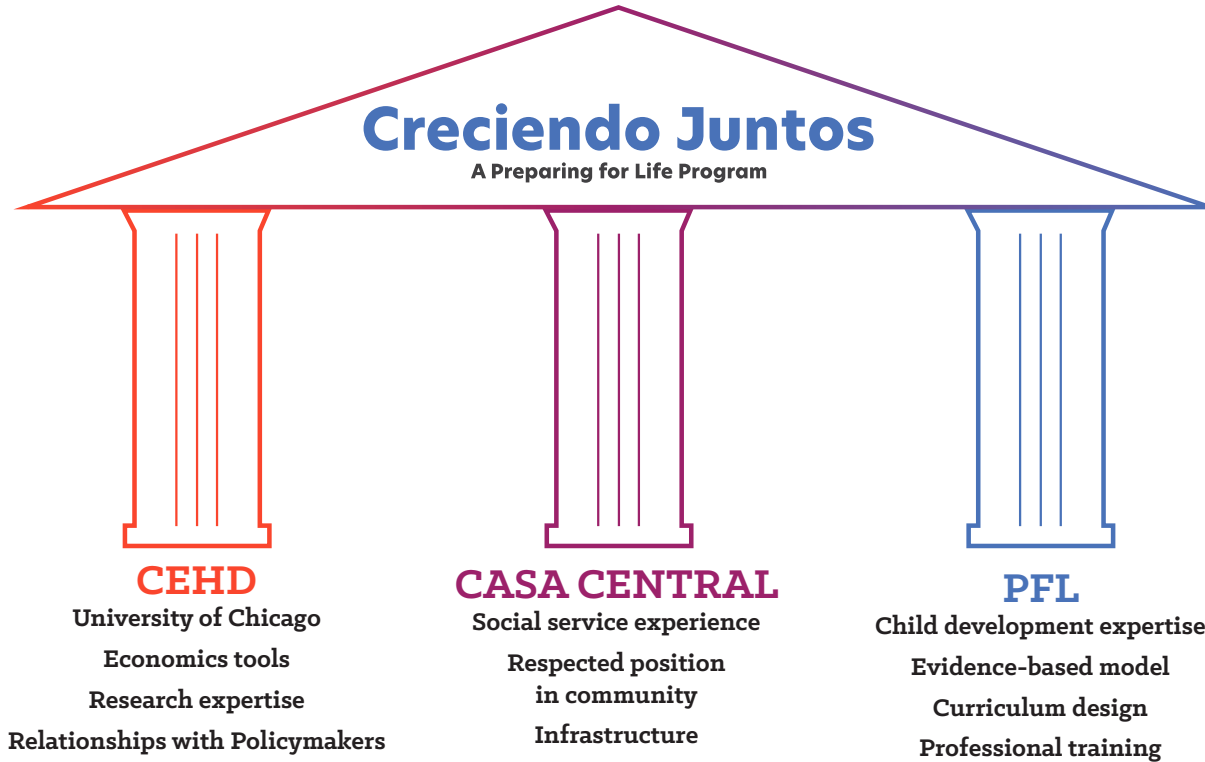


# What is Creciendo Juntos?

- RCT in Chicago with ~250 families. Prenatal to Age 5
- Intentionally designed
  - Parallel Process
- Replication of program from Ireland
- Trained Early Childhood professionals in homes
  - Coaching/mentoring
  - Facilitating interactions



# OUR STRUCTURE



# PFL CURRICULUM



## Listening and Talking

Babies learn to talk by hearing other people talking. As you listen and respond to your baby when he/she cries, smiles, whimpers, gurgles etc., you are teaching your child to communicate.

**When possible, hold your baby on your bare chest. This contact has many benefits for how they develop and in your heartbeat will help your baby to relax.**

**Share mutual gaze with your baby. Spend time giving relaxed eye contact and watching how he or she reacts to your facial expressions.**

**Cuddle and hold; rock and walk with your baby. Newborn babies prefer to be picked up rather than left in a cot on their own.**

**You can try carrying baby in a sling. Baby will be close to you and you can take him or her with you when the shop, a friend's house, to sports events or to the park. Spend time with baby and talk to her or him. Read a book, sing a song and play games.**

**Bathe your baby and give her or him a daily massage. This helps baby to feel relaxed and is a great part of daily routine. Think about your baby's reactions to you. How do you feel your baby smiles?**

**Dads' bond - Some Dads worry that their bond isn't as strong as the bond between a mother and baby. It's normal and many dads feel this way. Dads - consider taking paternity leave to spend time with your baby. You can do all of the activities mentioned above. You can do a great job once you practise the skills you need.**

**I am lovable, I am worthy of love.**

## Bonding with Mam and Dad

Mothers are able to start bonding during their pregnancy, but find it more difficult until baby arrives. You can encourage the bond.

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## Keep your relationships healthy

Everyone has a right to feel safe and not distressed or threatened. Unusually red cause distorted beliefs and values about family should behave.

Domestic abuse happens when one person in an intimate relationship tries to dominate and control the other person. Domestic abuse includes physical violence it is called domestic violence.

Domestic abuse can be carried out by your spouse, your partner, your son, your daughter or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with your family and the victim.

Both men and women can be abusive. Both can also be victims of abuse. Often, there is a lot of guilt and secrecy that surrounds domestic abuse.

Parents are role models who teach children about acceptable behaviour through what children observe at home. Their relationships create confusing and dysfunctional messages about what is normal, healthy and loving.

**Abusive behaviours include:**

- Psychological and emotional abuse - constant criticism, threatening, you, your children or members of your family, name calling
- Neglect - failing to provide consistent loving responses, no meals, adequate clothing or to ensure that children have a medical care and hygiene.
- Sexual abuse - forcing someone to take part in any intimate when they do not want to or do not understand what is happening
- Social isolation - controlling where you go, who you see, wear or isolating you from friends, family and potential support
- Physical violence - hitting, punching, kicking, slapping, shoving, choking or using weapons.
- Financial abuse - control over money, purchases and work.
- Destruction of property, stalking, harassment or intimidation.

Children can't understand why one member of their family is hurting another and they develop conflicting emotions very damaging for them.

## First Trimester of Pregnancy Weeks 1-12

Every week of your first trimester is full of excitement. Whether you know you're pregnant or not from when to expect common pregnancy symptoms to what size your baby will be each week, here's everything you need to know about your first trimester of pregnancy.

**Weeks 1-12**

The first signs of discomfort that many mothers are aware of is feeling extremely tired. This is caused by changes in your hormone levels as your body prepares to nurture your developing baby.

Changes to your diet and routine can help you to manage your energy levels.

- Talk to your doctor about starting a gentle exercise routine.
- Rest and relax when you can.
- Choose unprocessed foods that release energy steadily.

The first trimester is when nausea and changes in appetite can become apparent. Remember, morning sickness can affect you at any time of day. Even if you don't feel like eating, it's essential that you and your baby get water and a regular supply of nutritious, healthy food.

In the first few weeks many women notice tender and sore breasts that begin to increase in size. It is common for women to experience spotting - small amounts of blood from the vagina.

If you are in pain or concerned at all, contact your doctor or maternity hospital immediately.

All the extra fluid that your body is producing to keep baby safe and well means that you will need to use the toilet more frequently.

The increases in hormone levels may also contribute to mood swings and anxiety. You might feel alternately excited and frightened about the upcoming changes in your life and family. These feelings and worries are normal.

## Activities to Help Your Child to Become More Independent

Asking for something in the shops can be a daunting task for some children, and not for others. If this is a task your child has difficulty with, it can be done in a few simple steps:

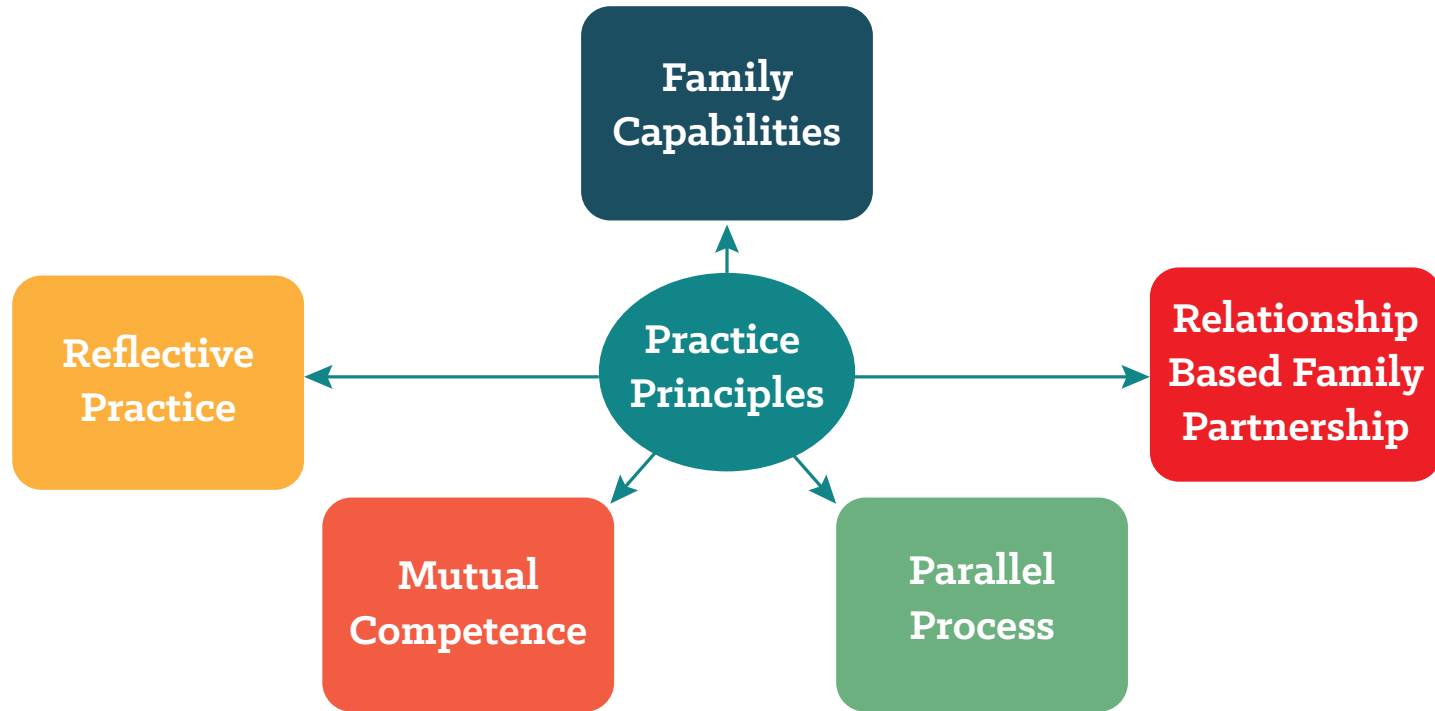
- Set example, show your child how you ask for something in the shops.
- Ask your child what they might say if they were to ask for something in the shops.
- Use role play within play time at home (i.e. playing shop).
- Let your child have their own shopping list.
- Let your child pay for the shopping.
- Then suggest the next time you are in the shops, encourage them to ask for an item that you need.

**Helping with dinner**

Encouraging your children to help with household chores not only does this support independent skills, it can also encourage children to take responsibility around their home.

- Get your child to help you set the table, if confident they might be able to do this on their own under supervision.
- Encourage your child to sit where they can see you prepare the dinner.
- Allow your child to make their own simple snacks such as a sandwich.

# VALUES & PRACTICE PRINCIPLES



# RESEARCH ON PREPARING FOR LIFE

- The Preparing for Life intervention was evaluated by a randomized control trial (RCT)
  - 233 families
  - 5 year intervention
  - Regular follow-ups to age 9

Key Results	Impacts during the programme	Impacts at School Entry
Cognitive Development	Cognitive improvements from 18 months onwards	10 point IQ gap between children in the high and low treatment groups
Language Development	High treatment children were better at combining words at 24 months	25% of high treatment children had above average verbal ability compared to 8% of low treatment children
Approaches to Learning	High treatment children showed better approaches to learning from 36 months	High treatment children were better able to control their attention than low treatment children
Social & Emotional Development	2% of high treatment children were at risk of behavioural problems compared to 17% of low treatment children at 48 months	25% of high treatment children 'not on track' in their social competence compared to 43% of low treatment children
Physical Wellbeing & Motor Development	24% of high treatment children were classified as overweight compared to 41% of low treatment children at 48 months	High treatment children had better gross and fine motor skills

# PFL IMPACTS ON SCHOOL READINESS

## At Kindergarten Entry

High Treatment Children:



**IQ Scores**

**Language and Communication Skills**

**Attention and Prosocial skills**

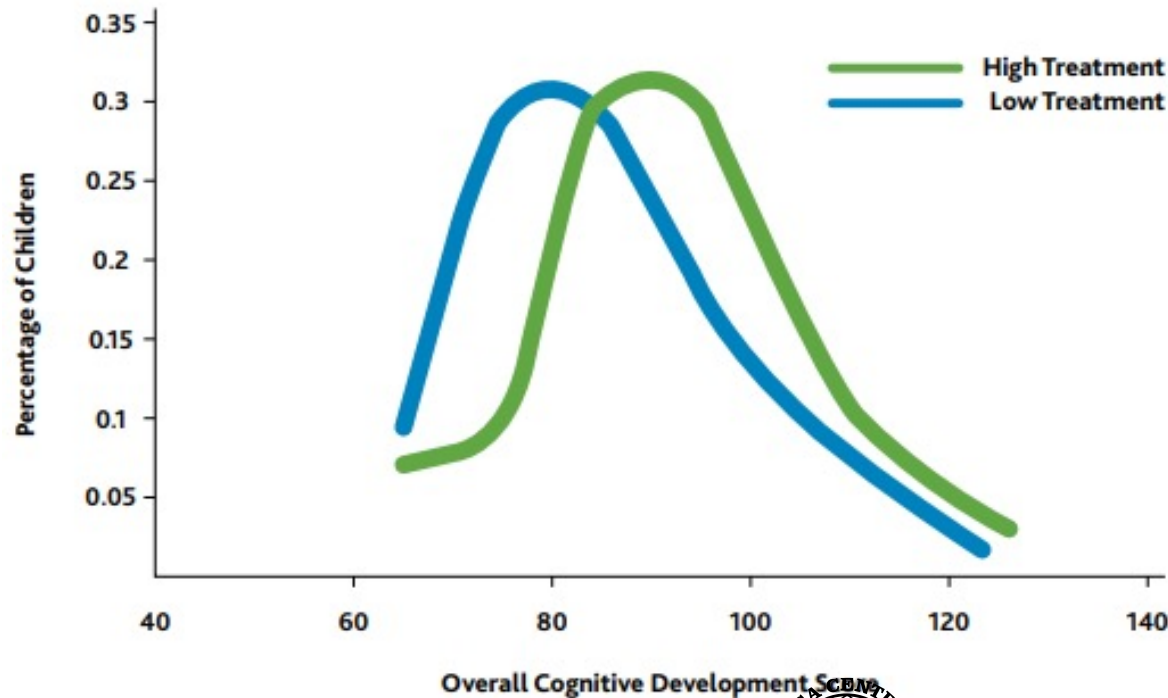


**Behavior Problems**

**Urgent Hospital Visits**

# PFL IMPACTS CONTINUED

Distribution of Overall Cognitive Development Scores

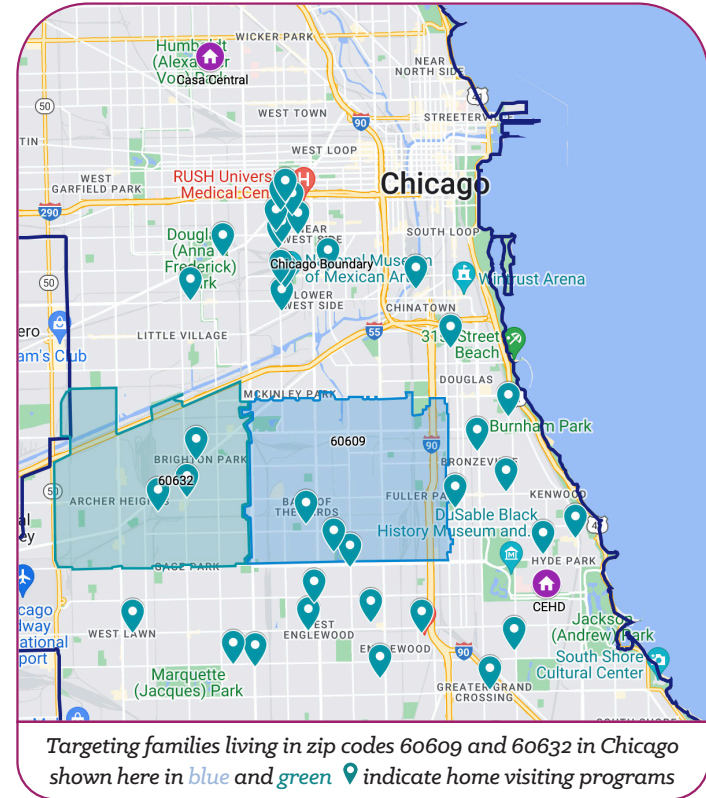


\*Source: [Preparing For Life Early Childhood Intervention, Final Report: Did Preparing For Life Improve Children's School Readiness? 2016](#)



# RESEARCH DESIGN

- Recruitment area of low-income households
- Least competing home visiting programs
- Randomization by computerized probability (no stratification or blocking)



# CURRENT STATUS

- Adaptation, Preparation
  - Adaptation of curriculum (“Americanization” -> Spanish Translation)
  - Building relationships with community partners for referrals
- Pilot Phase
  - Recruit families (10-12)
  - Ongoing staff mentoring
  - Research Design

# THREE PHASES OF ADAPTATION

## American-English Translation

- **Spellings:**  
“colour” to “color”
- **Words:** “nappies”  
to “diapers”
- **Phrases:** “go to  
the shops” to “go  
shopping”

## Spanish Translation

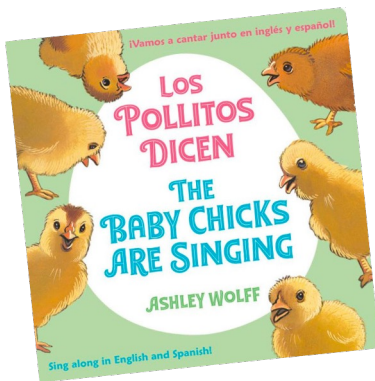
- Ensures  
accessibility

## Cultural Adaptation

- Ensures relevance

# CULTURAL ADAPTATION

1. Assembling a team with cultural and linguistic knowledge
2. Identifying elements in the curriculum that might make cultural relevance to the target population
  - a. Wording elements
  - b. Visual elements
3. Implement a continual process of change and review  
(community/family advisory)



# PROJECT INPUTS

## COMMUNITY

Families

Home  
Visitors

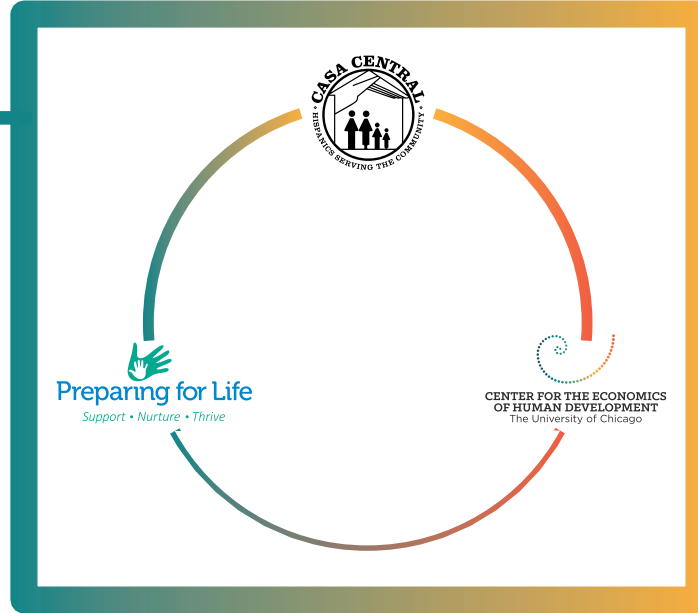
Stakeholders

## SCHOLARS

Economists

Psychologists

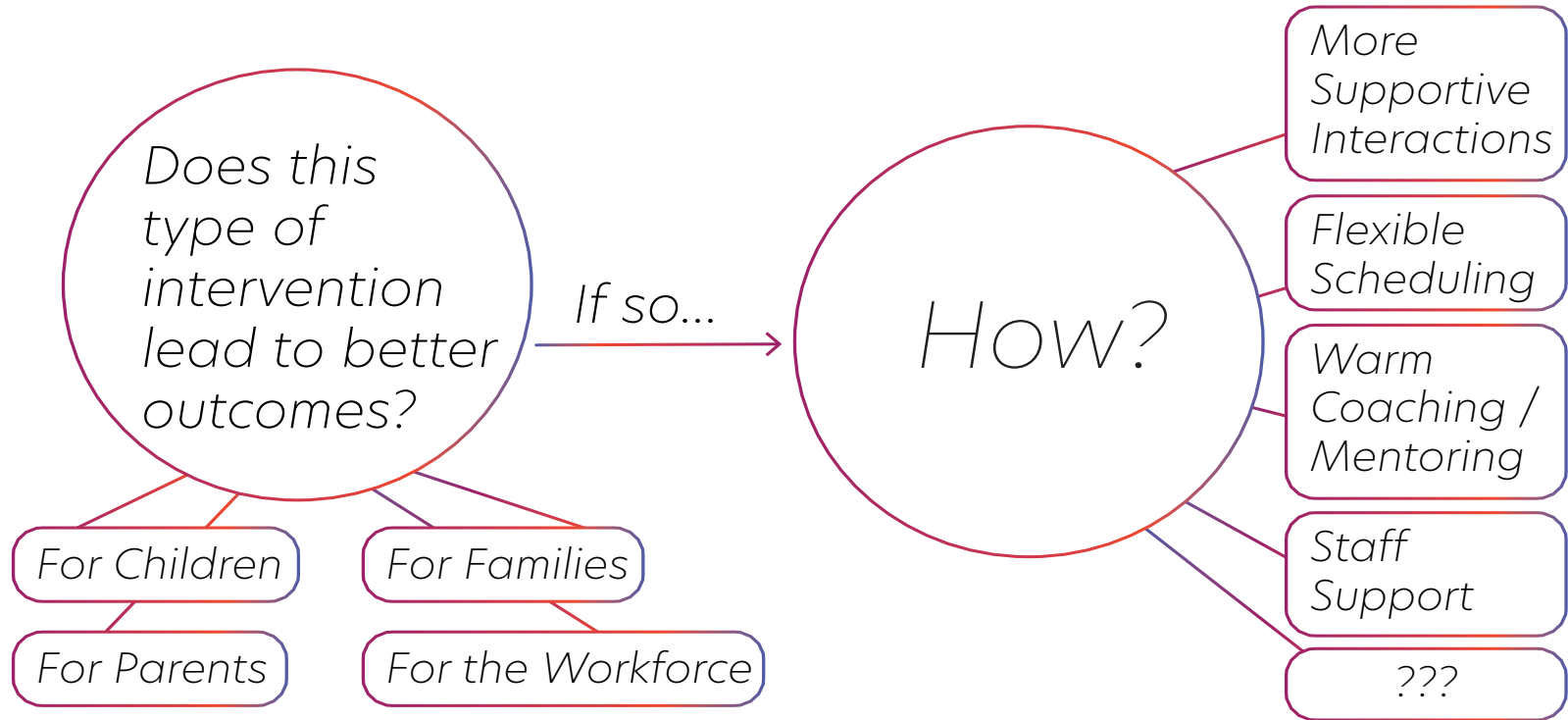
Home  
Visiting  
Experts



# CRECIENDO JUNTOS STUDY

- A few of our many questions:
  - Does this program work with Latino families in the US?
  - What makes home visitors effective in promoting parent-child interaction?
  - What new measures can we co-design with participants to study program effects?
  - What other data are critical to a model of parenting and child development?

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS



# CONTACT US

For more information and to sign up for our newsletter, visit our website:

[cehd.uchicago.edu/creciendojuntos](https://cehd.uchicago.edu/creciendojuntos)





