¡Haz Espacio Para Papi! Development of a Father-focused, family-centered program to prevent obesity and strengthen families

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It is widely recognized that behavior change in children occurs within a family system. Our formative work during the program development phase utilized a mixed-methods approach to examine perspectives of children, mothers, and fathers on dietary and activity behaviors and intra-family communication and active engagement. Fig. 1 shows the sequence of activities that described the importance of engaging fathers in programs to improve family health. We describe the development and planned deployment of Familias Saludables, a skill-based curriculum that is a culturally and contextually appropriate, father-focused and family-centered. This multiple-component intervention engages Mexican-heritage fathers, mothers, and children (age 5-11 years) in an experiential, Spanish-language curriculum to enhance father-child relationships and co-parenting strategies; increase knowledge, skills, self-efficacy, and preferences regarding nutrition and physical activity; and delivers this intervention in a group setting. ¡Haz espacio para papi! (Make room for daddy!) is a game changer by engaging Mexican-heritage fathers, co-parenting couples, and children in a family-centered intervention.

Setting and participants
- Recruitment
  - Elititation survey participants provided permission to be contacted for future studies
- 15 MH trials (father, mother, and child 9-11 y) from each of 6 clusters

Intervention
- Components - Learning as a Family
  - Welcome and introduction/training
  - Introductory activity/active games
  - Lesson on activities
  - Food prep/cooking
  - Physical activity break
  - Family time/eating together
  - Goal setting
- 3-4 home message and wrap-up
- Sessions
  - Individual sessions
  - Family development
  - Motivational interviewing

Intervention Development
- Formative work – two years of formative work that included ground-truthed community assessment, Spanish-language dyadic interviews (children and mothers), Spanish-language elicitation surveys (mothers and fathers), and monthly meetings with three community advisory boards.
- Workgroups – experienced teams with expertise in nutrition, physical activity, and family development

Background
- Familias Saludables builds on years of prior descriptive work with Mexican-heritage (MH) families in Lower Rio Grande Valley communities
- Development strategy: Design and development of components in English based on formative feedback and adaptation of existing activities; translated into Spanish by team Linguistics Core and reviewed by team promotoras to ensure semantic, conceptual, and normative equivalence
- Pretest and modification
- Vulnerabilities with current approaches, such as lack of cultural appropriateness in context; family-based and not family-centered; and lack of recognition of family relationships and communication patterns
- Sustainable behavior changes in children only possible with changes in family system & home environment
- Family programs need to address ever-changing nature of families, daily reality of families, roles of parenting and co-parenting in shaping child’s preferences and practices, and family involvement and empowerment

Abstract/Summary
- It is widely recognized that behavior change in children occurs within a family system. Our formative work during the program development phase utilized a mixed-methods approach to examine perspectives of children, mothers, and fathers on dietary and activity behaviors and intra-family communication and active engagement. Fig. 1 shows the sequence of activities that described the importance of engaging fathers in programs to improve family health. We describe the development and planned deployment of Familias Saludables, a skill-based curriculum that is a culturally and contextually appropriate, father-focused and family-centered. This multiple-component intervention engages Mexican-heritage fathers, mothers, and children (age 5-11 years) in an experiential, Spanish-language curriculum to enhance father-child relationships and co-parenting strategies; increase knowledge, skills, self-efficacy, and preferences regarding nutrition and physical activity; and delivers this intervention in a group setting. ¡Haz espacio para papi! (Make room for daddy!) is a game changer by engaging Mexican-heritage fathers, co-parenting couples, and children in a family-centered intervention.

Methods/Design
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Acknowledgements
- Familias Saludables is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award number 2015-68001-23328. We extend our sincere thanks to our three community advisory boards (Progresso Community Health Advisory Council [PCHAC], Food in Hand San Carlos [FHSOC], Advisory Committee for Health and Community [ACCHC]), and members of the Familias Saludables Logaritis Core (Tomas Johnson, Ruth Tello, Juan Ruiz, Daniel Menaual, and Edith Yello)

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