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# Familias Unidas: An Evidence-based Family Intervention

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## Familias Unidas Preventive Intervention

- Evidence-based, culturally-informed intervention for Hispanic youth and their families
- Prevents and reduces problem behaviors by increasing family functioning and parental monitoring of peer and school activities
- Delivered through family-centered, multi-parent groups that place parents in the change agent role and through family visits



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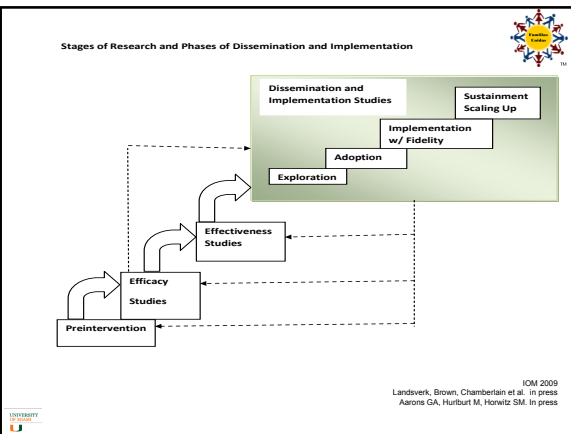
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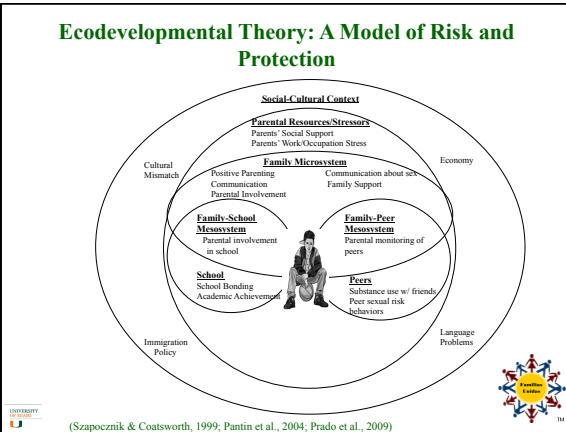
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### Familias Unidas Efficacy Study

*funded by NIDA Grant # R01DA025894 (Prado, PI)*

**ONLINE FIRST**

#### Effects of a Family Intervention in Reducing HIV Risk Behaviors Among High-Risk Hispanic Adolescents

*A Randomized Controlled Trial*

Guillermo Prado, PhD; Hilda Pantoja, PhD; Shi Huang, PhD; David Cardenas, PhD; Maria J. Tzota, MSW; Maria-Rosa Valenzuela, MPA; Meghan Coffey, MS; Shanday Helms, MPH; Margaret Aron, BS; Jane T. Yilmaz, MS; Giselle Leon Jimenez, MFT; Nicola Conn, BS; C. Hendricks Brown, PhD; Yonina Estrada, MSEd

Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2012;166(2):127-133.  
Published online October 3, 2011.  
doi:10.1001/archpediatrics.2011.189

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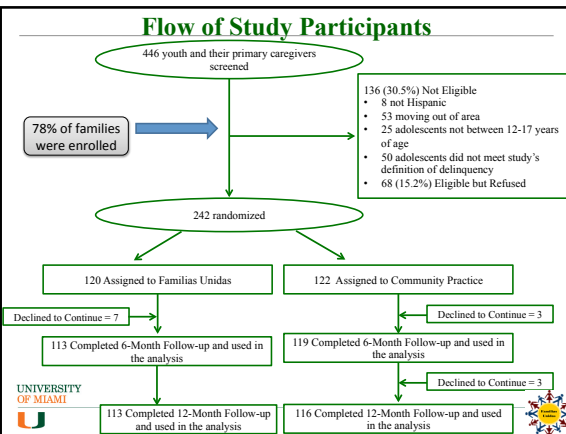
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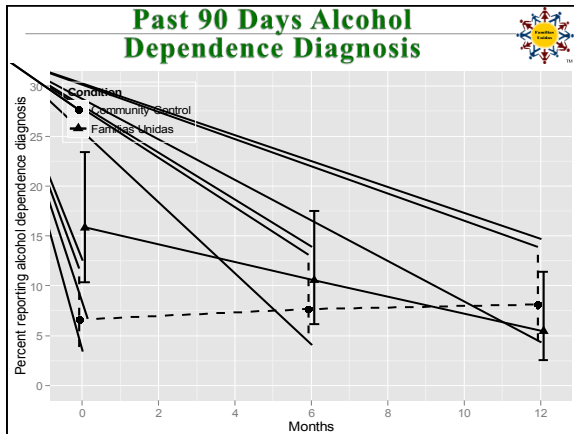
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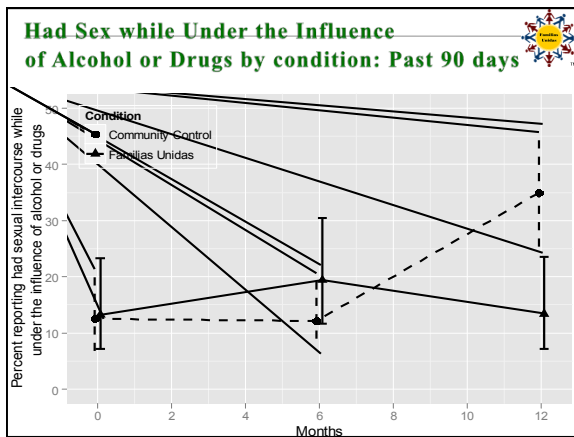
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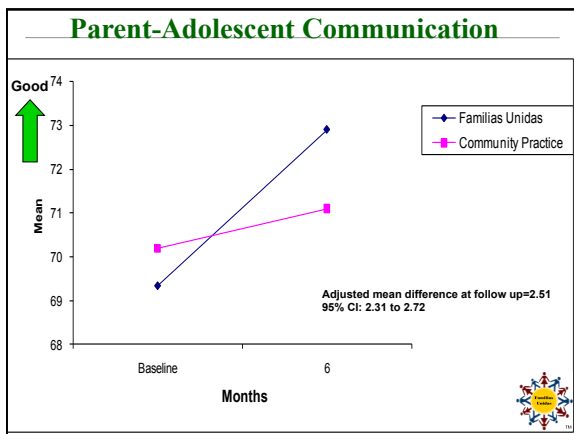
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## Familias Unidas Stage III Study: Preventing Substance Use in Hispanic Youth

*Funded by NIDA and NIAAA Grants # R01 DA025192 (Prado, PI) and DA025192S1 (Prado, PI)*


A collaboration between




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Miami-Dade County Public Schools



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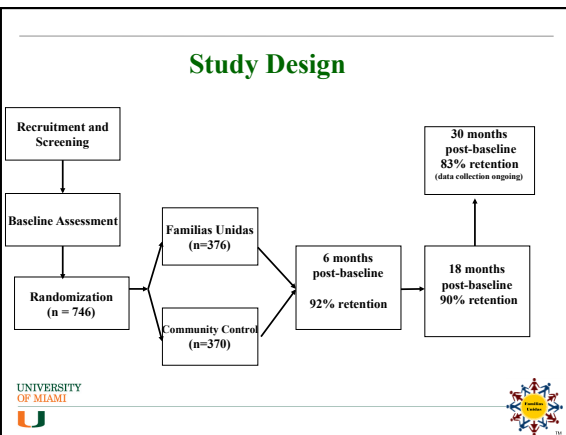
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### Training the Workforce to Deliver an Evidence-based Program with High Fidelity

- 4 days of training in the intervention
- Mean fidelity of 4.12 (SD = 0.57) on a 0-6 scale



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## Engagement Rates

- 78% engaged
- Mean number of sessions attended 6.4, SD 4.2

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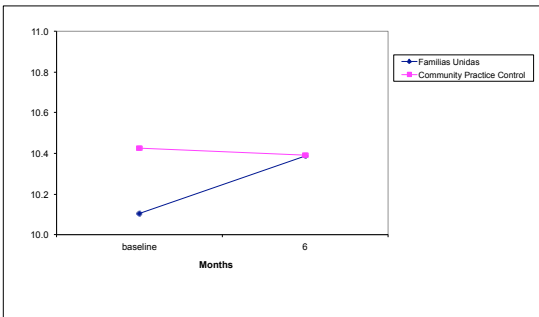
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## Parent-Adolescent Communication



Months	Familias Unidas	Community Practice Control
baseline	10.1	10.4
6	10.4	10.4

Time\*Condition:  $F(1,692)=6.3, p=0.012$

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## Internet-Based Familias Unidas

- 8 sessions consisting of “mock groups” and telenovelas
- 4 online family visits



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### Acceptability of an Online Version of Familias Unidas

- Focus group or individual interviews with 16 participants
  - All parents reported that they enjoyed watching the intervention and found it entertaining
  - Parents felt that the intervention helped them better communicate with their adolescents
  - Parents identified with the characters and the situations in the mock group and telenovelas, including not listening appropriately and difficulties with language barriers




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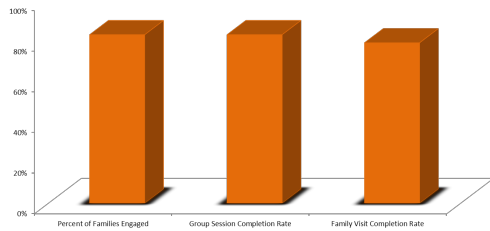
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### Feasibility of Delivering an Online Version of Familias Unidas: Results from a Pilot Study




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### Is it worth the Investment?

	Target	Drug Use	Condom Use	Drugs with Unprotected Sex	Depressive Symptoms	Physical Activity	Alcohol Dependence
Familias Unidas	Hispanic Adolescents	40% Less Drug Use	60% More	64% Less	38% Less. Moderated by Poor Family Communication	14% More. Moderated by Parental Involvement and Physical Activity	50% Less



→ \$200/family



### How do we pay for it?

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## Focus Group Father:

I would say, it's great that I found out about this program through you [University of Miami]. I am no longer the same person. Every day I am different in the sense that, in the communication with my children and the way I treat them, well, it has changed. I have truly changed. I have changed. It has helped me. It has helped me as a person. I have...like we say, "machismo"...we have those little things, we men...but honestly, I am another person.



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## How does FAMILIAS UNIDAS operate?

- Guided by Ecodevelopmental Theory
- Aims to improve family functioning, parent-adolescent communication, and parental involvement
- Facilitators engage parents through:
  - Group Sessions
  - Family Sessions
  - Homework Activities



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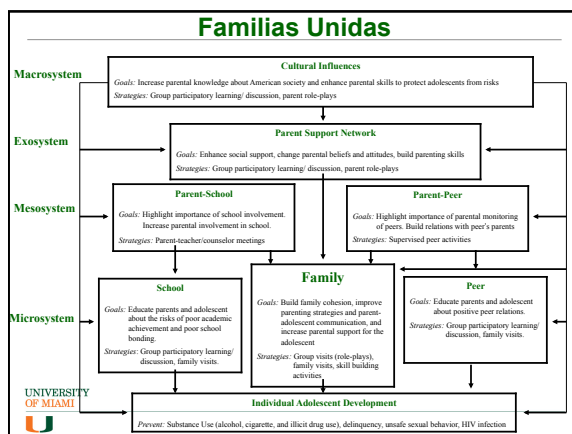
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### What can FAMILIAS UNIDAS achieve?

- The most important worlds for adolescents:
  - Family World
  - Peer World
  - School World
- How do we impact these worlds with the intervention?



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### What can FAMILIAS UNIDAS achieve in the Family World?

- Parents can learn & practice:
  - Skills for effective communication
  - Skills for warm & nurturing relationships
  - Effective behavior management skills
- Heighten parents' awareness of prevalence of risks in adolescents lives
- Increase parents' sense of responsibility & perceived control over their youth



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### What can FAMILIAS UNIDAS achieve in the Peer World?

- Strengthen relationships between parents & adolescents' peers
- Strengthen relationships between parents & peers' parents
- Encouraging connections with pro-social peers
- Provide parents with skills for monitoring adolescents



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### What can FAMILIAS UNIDAS achieve in the School World?

- Strengthen collaborations between parents and schools
- Parents learn that collaborating with school personnel is crucial to protecting adolescents from risky behaviors
- Effective monitoring by putting parents in leadership positions



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### How does FAMILIAS UNIDAS accomplish these goals?

- 1) Engage and motivate.
- 2) Instill hope in parents.
- 3) Places parents in positions of leadership.
- 4) Strengthen parental investment/collaboration with adolescent worlds.
- 5) Creates support networks for parents.
- 6) Provides skills to effectively deal with youth substance use and risky sexual behaviors.
- 7) Restructure interactions with family, school, and peer relationships.



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### The Role of the Facilitator

- The facilitator learns:
  - Joining techniques
  - Group process techniques
  - Participatory learning
  - Restructuring family relationships
  - How to empower parents
  - Teach skill content
- Proper implementation and adherence
  - Training and Ongoing Supervision
  - Adhering to the intervention manual
  - Videotaped sessions
  - Clinical Support and Supervision



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
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What are some aspects of **Familias Unidas** which contribute to its success?


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**Intervention Activities**





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*Familias Unidas* consists of...

	Group Sessions
	Family Visits
	Parent-School Personnel Meetings
	Family-Supervised Activities
	Family Homework Assignments

These activities build upon each other to achieve the goals of the intervention.


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## Group Sessions

*Weekly parent groups with facilitators to discuss ways to become involved in their adolescents' lives*

- Objectives are to increase:
  - Social support for parents
  - Parental investment
  - Skill acquisition
  - Parental self-efficacy
- These objectives are accomplished by:
  - Providing a context for parent participation
  - Role-playing
  - Participatory learning



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## Family Visits

*Provide parents with the opportunity to practice skills learned with their families*

- Objectives are to:
  - Restructure family interactions in the adolescents' worlds
  - Increase parent-child communication
  - Increase effective parental monitoring
  - Foster more nurturing, supportive relationships
- These objectives are accomplished by:
  - Restructuring family interactions
  - Utilizing the skills and knowledge learned in the group sessions



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## Parent-School Personnel Meetings

*Parents are given the opportunity to meet with school personnel as a group or individually*

- Objectives are to:
  - Establish strong parent-school collaborations
  - Increase parental involvement in the school
- These objectives are accomplished by:
  - Increasing parental awareness of school services
  - Restructuring relationships between parent and counselor



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## Family-Supervised Activities

*Parents meet their child's peers and their parents. These activities can take any form: parties, picnics, field trips*

- Objectives are to:
  - Increase parental involvement in peer world
  - Enhance parental monitoring of adolescent-peer activities
  - Create natural support networks that can continue beyond the intervention
- These objectives are accomplished by:
  - Establishing positive relationships with peers' parents
  - Supervising adolescent interactions






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## Family Homework Assignments



*Provide parents with the opportunity to practice skills developed during group sessions and family visits*

Objectives are to:

- Increase parental involvement
- Practice new skills
- Develop self-efficacy

- These objectives are accomplished by:
  - Parents practice with their families and adolescents
  - Group process experience



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# Intervention Strategies for Facilitators




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## Strategies

- Joining/Engagement
- Building Cohesive Group Environment
- Participatory Learning
- Differentiating Process & Content
- Parent Skill Development
- Skill Transfer from Parent to Adolescent
- Restructuring




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## Joining/Engagement

- Research shows that joining/engagement is one of the most important strategies to engage individuals and families
- During the first phase of Familias Unidas, and throughout the intervention, facilitator must "join" the family
- Joining begins with the **first contact** with the family.




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## Joining/Engagement

Joining involves a working alliance with all family members by:




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## Building Cohesive Groups

- *Group Cohesion* refers to:
  - Group connectedness
  - Working together toward a common goal
  - Constructive engagement around common themes
  - Openness to sharing personal material
- *Group Cohesion* is accomplished by:
  - Punctuating commonalities between group members
  - Encouraging direct group member-to-member exchanges, member-to-member empathy and validation
  - Blocking negative interactions between group members



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## Participatory Learning

- *Participatory Learning* refers to:
  - Learning through dialogue rather than instruction
- *Participatory Learning* is accomplished by:
  - Problem-posing questions for open discussion
  - Placing parents in a key role of the learning process
  - Eliciting responses from parents rather than using didactic instruction



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## Differentiating PROCESS & CONTENT

Every session has two important dimensions that the facilitator must attend to:



**CONTENT:**  
The “what” of the session.



**PROCESS:**  
The “how” of the session.



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## Parent Skill Development

- *Parent skills include:*
  - Effective communication
    - For example: Communication about drugs, alcohol and sex
  - Parental support and monitoring of the adolescent
  - Effective behavior management
  - Parental investment in school



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## Parent Skill Development

- *Parent skill development is accomplished by:*
  - Role-plays during group sessions, with another parent playing different roles
  - Repeated practicing of the skill directly with the adolescent/family, alone and with the facilitator during Family Visits.
  - Parents are given full credit for their participation
  - Validating feedback, positive reinforcement



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## Skill Transfer from Parent to Child

- *Parent Skill Transfer refers to :*
  - The process by which parents practice their new skills with their adolescents and at the same time promote the acquisition of this skill by the adolescent and other family members
- *Parent Skill Transfer is accomplished by:*
  - Enacting skills with the adolescent and family members during family visits and homework assignments
  - Parents rehearse what they learned in the group with their family



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## Restructuring

—The facilitator actively changes existing maladaptive interactions a more adaptive set of interactions within the adolescent's:

- Microsystem
  - parent-adolescent relationship
- Mesosystem
  - parents' interactions with schools
  - parents' interactions with peer world



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*Together these intervention strategies are intended to have a cascading effect, building skills in parents and youth and transforming parents into agents of change.*



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## Intervention Outline

-Family Visit #1: Engagement and Orientation to FAMILIAS UNIDAS

-Group Session #1: Family Functioning: Parental Investment in "Adolescent Worlds"  
-Group Session #2: Family Functioning: Enhancing Communication Skills

-Family Visit #2: Family Functioning: Enhancing Communication Skills

-Group Session #3: Family Functioning: Supportive Relationships / Behavior Management  
-Group Session #4: Family Functioning: Parental Monitoring of Peer World  
-Group Session #5: Adolescent Drug Use / Peer Pressure

-Family Visit #3: Parental Monitoring of Peer World / Drug Use

-Group Session #6: Parental Investment in School  
-Group Session #7: Adolescent Risky Sexual Behavior and HIV

-Family Visit #4: Adolescents Risky Sexual Behavior and HIV

-Group Session #8: Prevention Has to Be Achieved All Over Again Everyday



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Acknowledgements

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Participating Families

Research Team

PREVENTING HIV IN HISPANIC ADOLESCENTS VIA AN INTERNET-BASED FAMILY INTERVENTION (CDC 5U01PS003316-02)

FAMILIAS UNIDAS STAGE III: PREVENTING SUBSTANCE USE IN HISPANIC YOUTH (NIDA R01 DA025192-01A1)

PREVENTING DRUG ABUSE AND HIV IN HISPANIC FIRST OFFENDERS (NIDA 1R01DA025894)


PREVENTING HIV RISK BEHAVIORS IN HISPANIC ADOLESCENTS (CDC 1U01PS000671-01)

PREVENTING DRUG ABUSE AND HIV IN HISPANIC ADOLESCENTS (NIDA R01 DA 017462-01)

Thank you!


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