



# ¡Haz Espacio Para Papi!

## Development of a Father-focused, family-centered program to prevent obesity and strengthen families

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Abstract-Summary Statement

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 *Famílias 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 9-11 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.

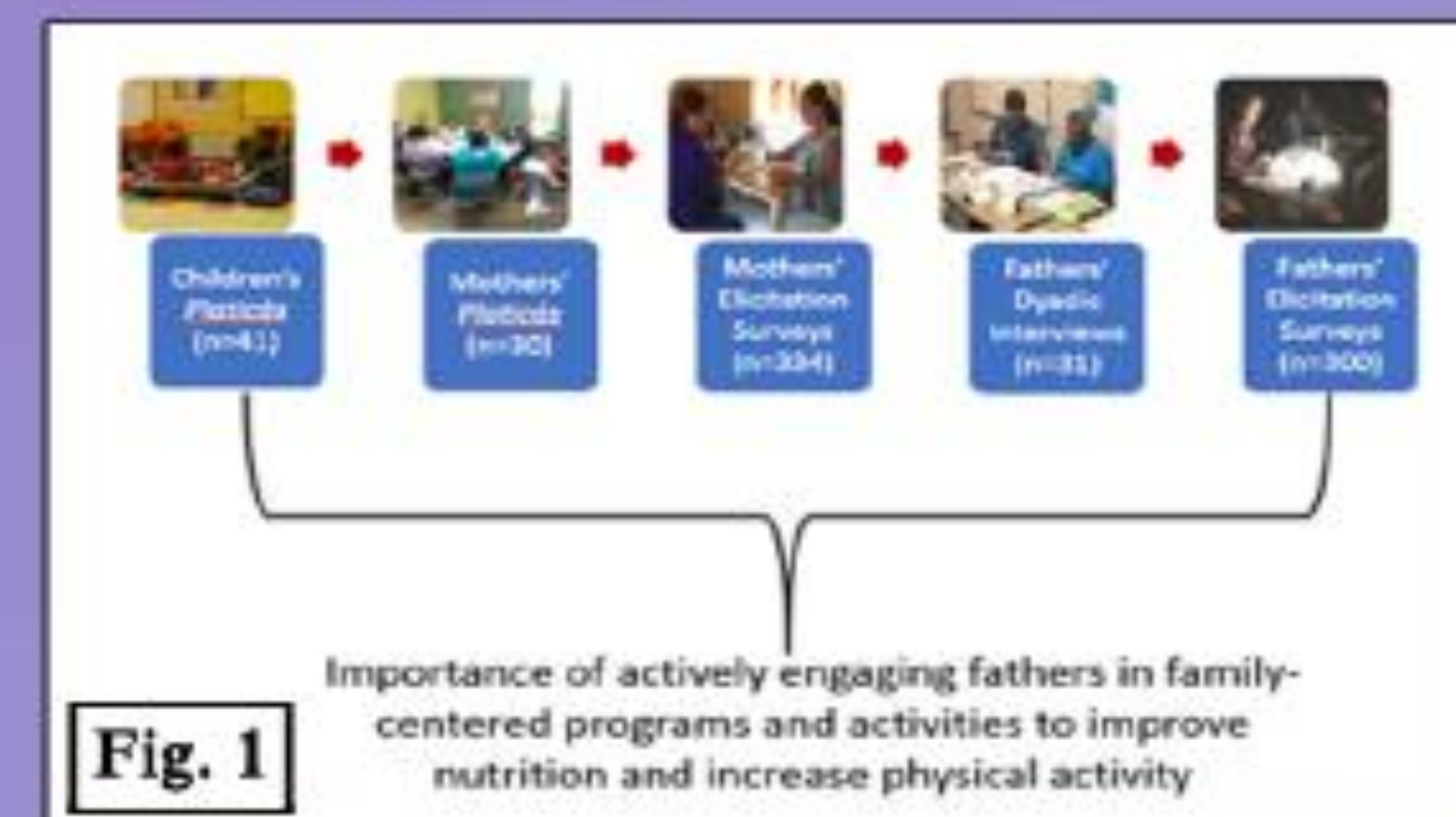


Fig. 1

- Geographical areas (Fig. 2) – 16 clusters; 6 clusters randomly identified

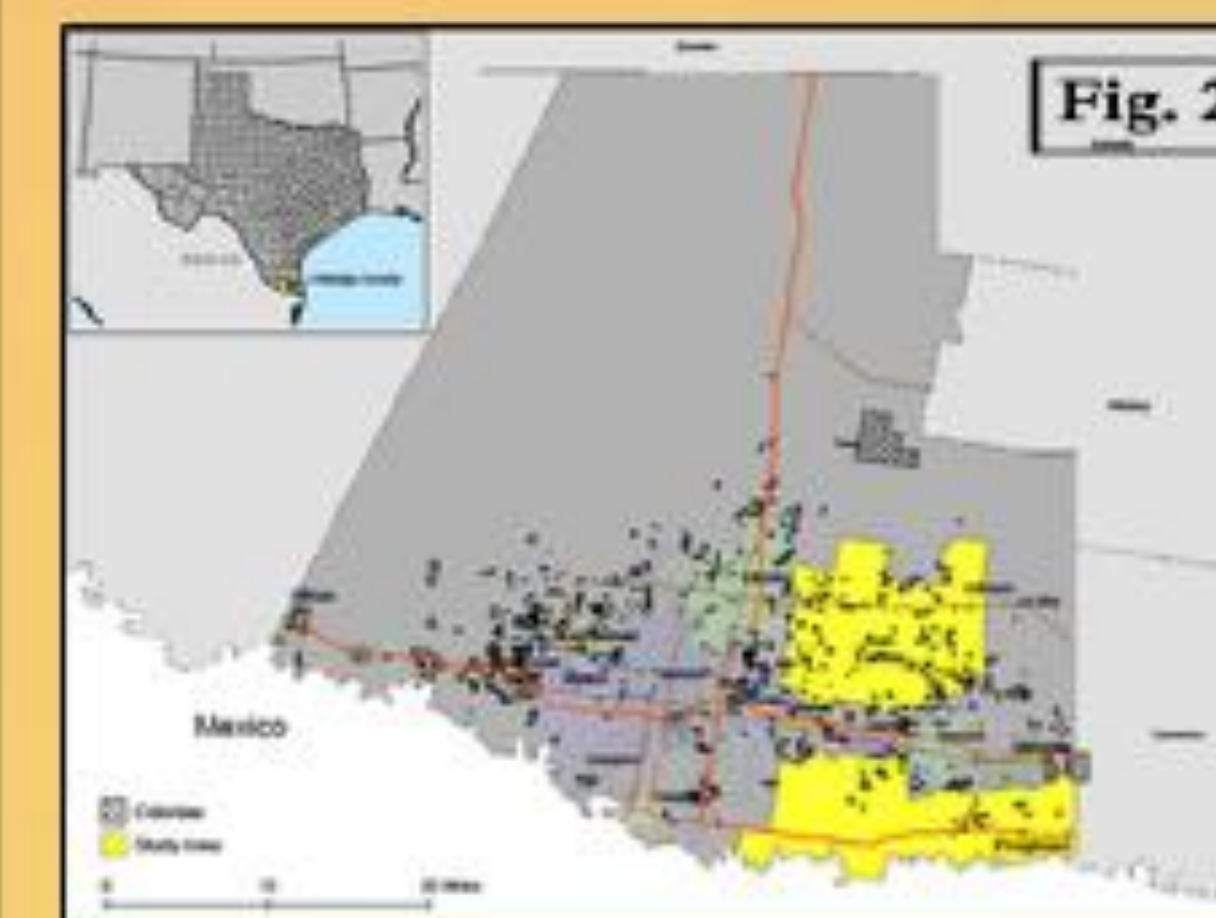


Fig. 2

### Setting and participants

- Recruitment
  - Elicitation survey participants provided permission to be contacted for future studies
  - 15 MH triads (father, mother, and child 9-11 y) from each of 6 clusters
- Study design
  - Stepped wedge (Fig. 3)

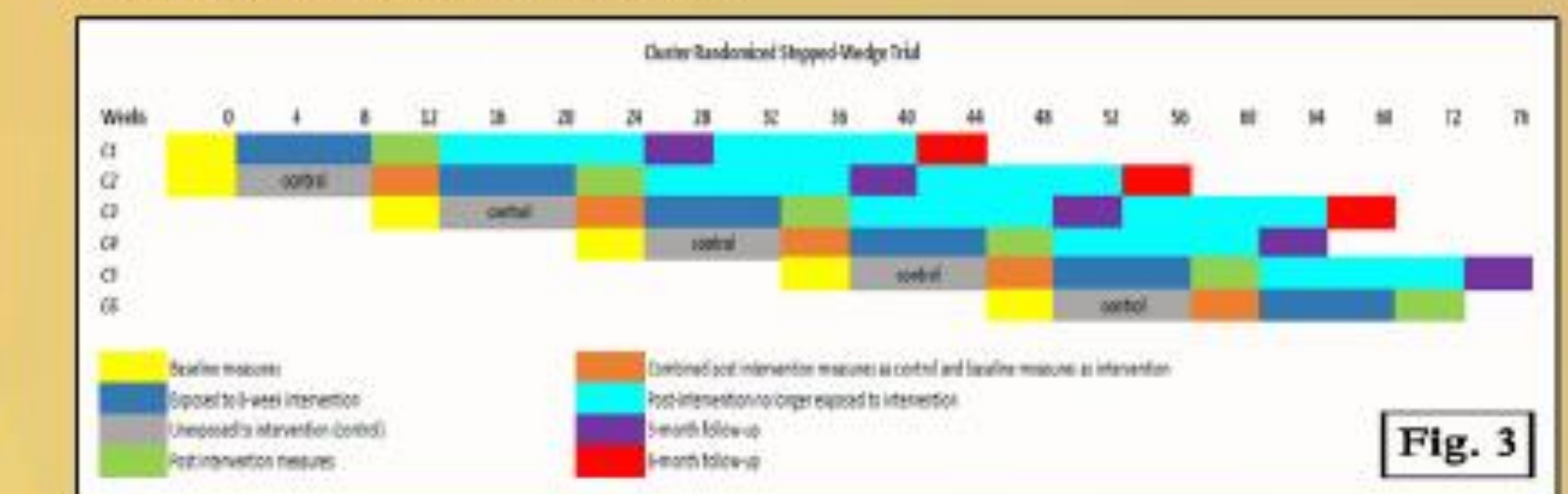
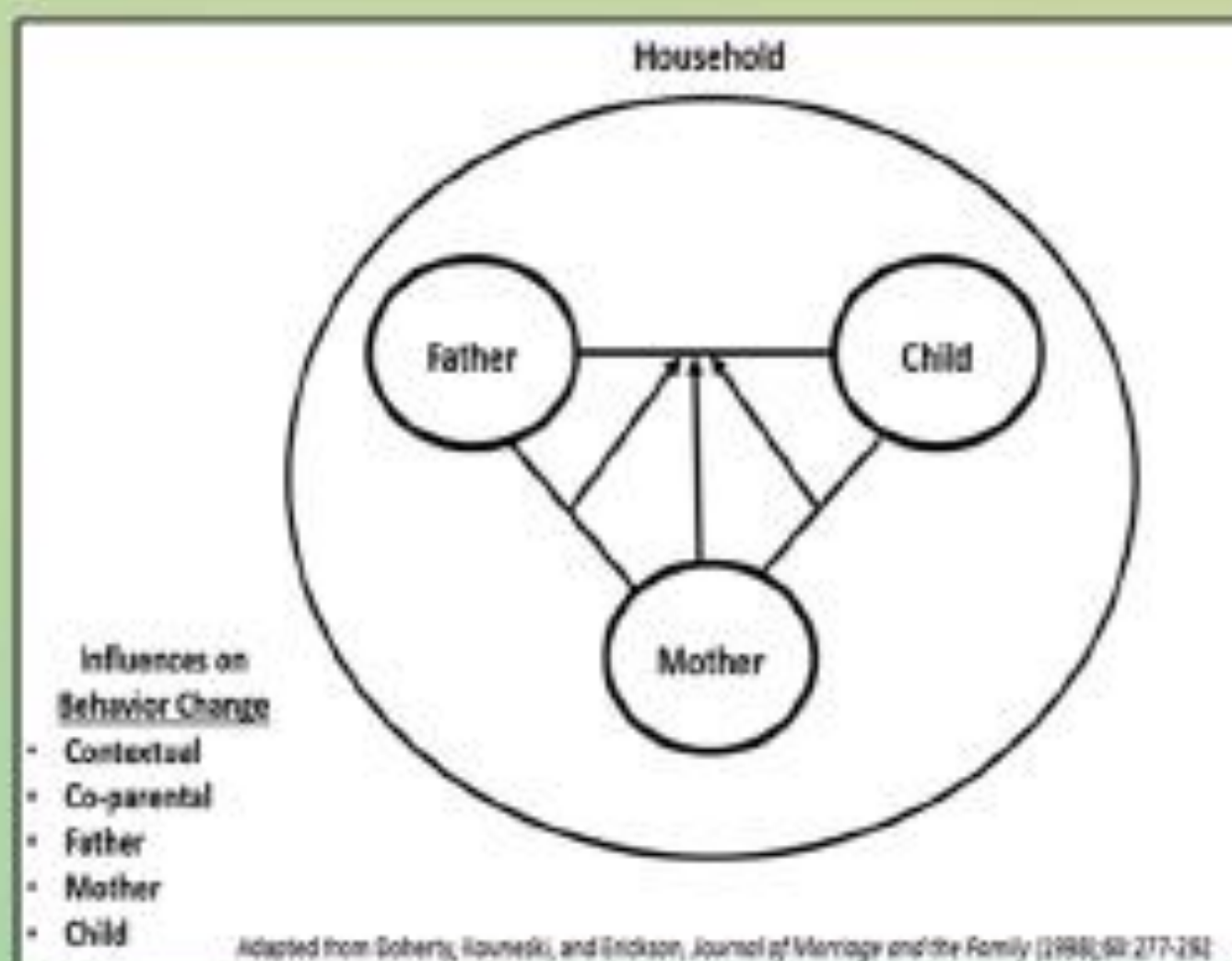


Fig. 3

Background



- Mexican-heritage (MH) children have persistently high rates of overweight and obesity and increased risk for Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and asthma
- Many reside in economically and geographically disadvantaged areas, with limited food and activity choices
- MH families are hard-to-reach; current social, economic, and political situation makes it even harder to recruit and retain program participants
- Engagement of *promotoras* (community health workers) and community-based approaches are critical for program success!
- 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

### Intervention

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



Methods/Design

### Intervention Development

- *Famílias Saludables* builds on years of prior descriptive work with Mexican-heritage (MH) families in Lower Rio Grande Valley *colonias*
- 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
- Formative work – two years of formative work that included ground-truthed community assessment, Spanish-language *platicás* (children and mothers), Spanish-language dyadic interviews (fathers), 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

### Acknowledgements

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