

Family Engagement in Migrant and Seasonal Head Start

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Goals and Research Question

Our goal is to explore family engagement activities and strategies within the context of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS). Using nationally representative data from the MSHS Study (2017), we aim to identify distinct profiles of family engagement. These profiles will explore the alignment between the types of activities that MSHS staff offer to families, relative to families' actual participation rates in these activities.

Our central research question is: To what extent is there alignment between (A) the family engagement activities and strategies that MSHS staff offer to parents—compared to (B) what parents actually engage with?

Introduction

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) is one of twelve regions within the larger Head Start community. MSHS programs are distinct in a few notable ways: operational periods are adjusted to reflect agricultural seasons and migration patterns, programs serve children birth to kindergarten (whereas Head Start only serves preschool-age children), and families are primarily Mexican-American and Spanish-speaking. Foundational to Head Start's two-generational model is the belief that parents are an essential ingredient to achieving positive child outcomes. This is reflected in both the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework and the MSHS Conceptual Framework.

Hypothesis

Based on research by Bulotsky-Shearer and colleagues (2012), we anticipate a mix of profiles with some showing exceptional engagement strategies and activities and others meeting the basic requirements.

Additionally, we anticipate that there will be general alignment, with higher rates of engagement in programs using more robust strategies and activities.

However, we anticipate other potential profiles might indicate partial alignment. For instance, we may see a profile emerge where centers and teachers are employing a variety of engagement strategies, but there is relatively low utilization or uptake by parents.

Analysis

Our approach will be modeled on prior research by Bulotsky-Shearer and colleagues (2012) who identified profiles of family involvement and classroom quality in Head Start using FACES data. This analysis approach used Mplus 8.9 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2010) to conduct latent class analysis to identify distinct classes of parent engagement in Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and profiles of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Center's engagement of parents.

Engagement Variables

Center Variables

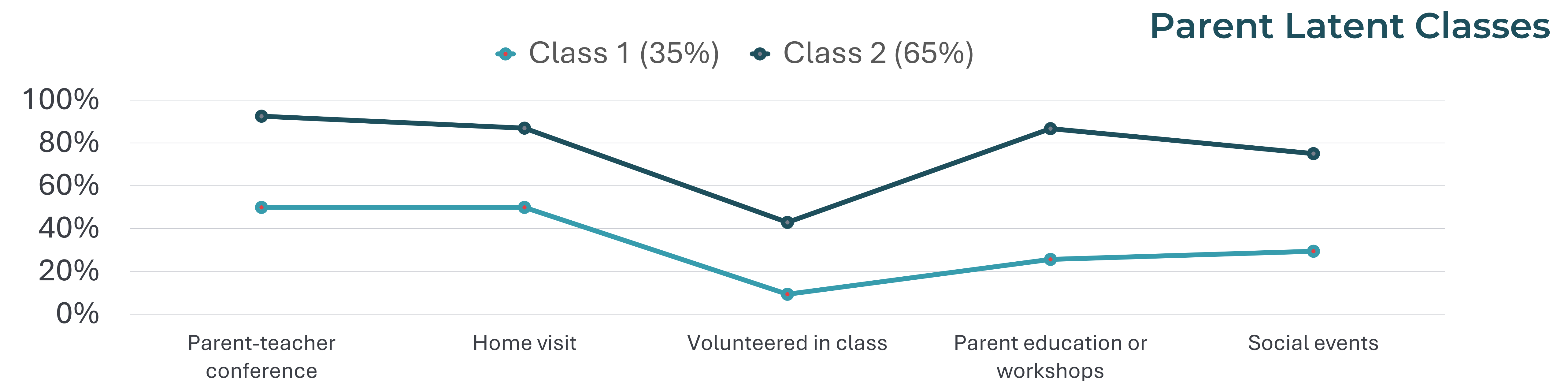
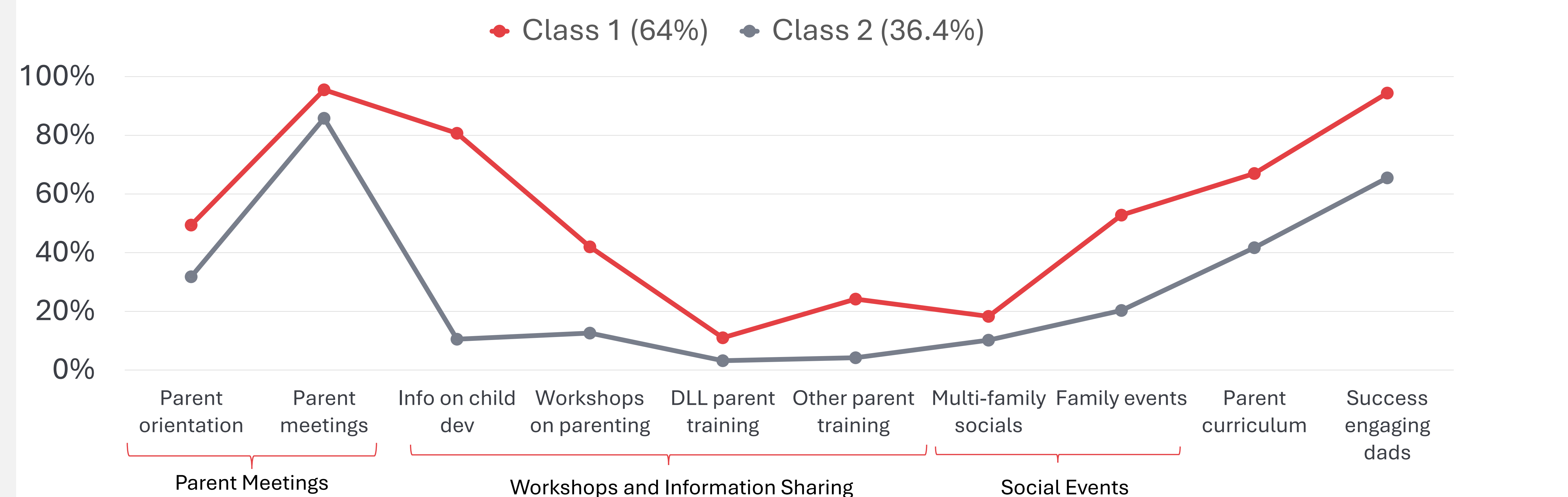
- **Activities offered to families** (Parent orientation, parent meetings, info on child development, workshops on parenting, DLL parent training, other parent training, family events and multi-family social events)
- **Use of parent education or support curriculum**
- **Success in involving fathers**
- Barriers to engaging parents
- Strategies to engage diverse families

Parent Variables

- **Frequency of participation in MSHS Center activities, made binary** (Parent teacher conference, home visiting, volunteering, parent education or workshops, social events)
- Services received from center
- Barriers to participation
- Frequency of communication from MSHS program

*Bold indicates inclusion in current analyses

Preliminary Results



Discussion Questions

- Is there sufficient variation across these classes or does it seem line scaled groupings of a single pattern?
- Are there other engagement variables that seem important to include in these classes?
- Should activities be combined into a scale rather than treated as distinct given similar patterns of engagement?

Next Steps

We will continue to hone which engagement constructs to include in our engagement profiles. Additionally, future analyses will combine parent and center analyses into a multilevel latent class analysis accounting for the nested structure of the MSHS data (with parents nested within centers).



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