



Background

On February 16, 2008, local Spanish-language media outlets, the Austin Independent School District, and a number of non-profit organizations worked together to create a community education fair, Feria Para Aprender. This was the second time that these groups came together for this event (the first Feria took place on February 17, 2007). The goal of the event was to provide information to community members, particularly Hispanic parents, about educational opportunities and the importance of education. The Feria Para Aprender was held at the Burger Activity Center in Austin, Texas.

The Annette Strauss Institute was pleased to help with the event by conducting an on-site event survey. Below, we report on data that was collected from 209 individuals who completed the survey in 2008. Where appropriate, we also include data from the 2007 event survey.

Feria Para Aprender Attendees

Local Spanish-language media outlets (television, radio, and print media), the Austin Independent School District, and the other event sponsors heavily advertised the Feria Para Aprender. The survey documented that attendees came from a variety of different locations and heard about the event from different sources.

Just over half of survey respondents (51%) identified that they were from zip codes surrounding the Burger Activity Center. Others traveled from various parts of Austin to attend the event. Zip codes named by more than five percent of respondents are shown in Table 1. The largest percentage of respondents (26%) came from 78745 or 78741. A smaller percentage of respondents from 78744 answered the survey in 2008 in comparison to 2007.

Table 1: Common Zip Codes

Zip code	2008	2007
78745	13%	9%
78741	13%	6%
78744	11%	21%
78758	8%	6%
78753	6%	6%
78704	6%	<5%

Table 2: Age of Children

Age of children	2008	2007
None	2%	4%
0 – 5	50%	52%
6 – 10	64%	59%
11 – 13	28%	29%
14 – 17	18%	18%
18 +	13%	9%

Most survey respondents (85%) had children between 0 and 10 years of age. The percentage of respondents who had children in each age range is shown in Table 2.

Thirteen percent of respondents, for example, had children who were 18 years of age and older. The 2008 results are similar to 2007.

*multiple responses permitted

Table 3: Event Information

Heard about event from ...	Respondents
School	50%
Television	49%
Newspaper	17%
Radio	16%
Friend/family member	13%
Other	9%

*multiple responses permitted

Over eight in ten respondents (82%) reported that they learned about the Feria Para Aprender from school or from television. Respondents also reported learning about the event from the newspaper (17%) or from radio (16%).

The 2008 event attracted a number of people who had not attended the previous Feria Para Aprender. Three-fourths of respondents were attending this event for the first time.

Table 4: Previous Event Attendance

Attended in 2007	Respondents
Yes	25%
No	75%

Table 5: Transportation to the Event

Took a school bus	Respondents
Yes	22%
No	77%

*does not add to 100% due to non-response

Nearly a fourth of respondents reported that they rode a school bus in order to attend the Feria Para Aprender at the Burger Center. Based on the survey, 50 percent of school bus riders were from 78704, 78741, or 78758.

Respondents were asked why they attended the Feria Para Aprender. Responses were categorized. Table 6 displays some of the popular reasons that respondents listed for attending the event.

Table 6: Frequently Mentioned Reasons for Event Attendance

Attended the event to obtain information ...	Respondents
About education/school (e.g. specific grades, after school programs)	19%
For their children/to help their children	18%
About community services/programs/organizations	8%
About higher education/college/university	6%
About financial aid/scholarships	5%
About babies/infants/pre-K	2%

Respondents with children in different age groups mentioned somewhat different reasons for attending the event. Respondents with children between 6 and 10 years of age were more likely to be looking for information about education/school (e.g. specific grades, after school programs). Respondents with older children (e.g. 14-17 years old) were more likely to be looking for college and scholarship information.

Here are some verbatim examples of the reasons that respondents provided for why they attended the Feria Para Aprender.

“To get information for my children because we just moved to Austin, so it was a learning experience for all of us.”

“We have a student in high school about to graduate and don't know where to start.”

“Asistí la Feria para preguntar acerca de la posibilidad de que mis hijos asistan a la universidad.”
Translation: “I came to the Fair to ask about the possibility of my children attending the university.”

“Porque necesito información acerca de las becas para estudiantes universitarios.”
Translation: “Because I need information about scholarships for university students.”

“Saber de escuela y salud, para becas de los niños, y ayuda a padres que no hablan ingles.”
Translation: “To learn about school and health, for scholarships for children, and help for parents that don't speak English.”

“To learn more about programs available to students and parents from my school.”

“Porque la educación de mi hija es muy importante y también para estar al día con la evolución de la educación en general.”
Translation: “Because the education of my daughter is very important and also to be up to date with development of education in general.”

“Para interesar a mi hijo en la educación.”
Translation: “To get my child interested in education.”

“Porque quería información aserca de como practicar la lectura con mis niñas.”
Translation: “Because I wanted information on how to practice reading with my daughters.”

Feria Para Aprender Assessments

Event sponsors endeavored to create an event that was both enjoyable and educational. Results document that they succeeded in both regards.

Results of the survey showed that respondents felt that the event either met or exceeded their expectations. As shown in Table 7, 65 percent of respondents reported that the event exceeded their expectations. This represents an increase from 2007, where only 49 percent reported that the event exceeded their expectations. There were no differences in event expectations based on the age of the respondents' children.

Table 7: Event Expectations

Expectations	2008	2007
Exceeded my expectations	65%	49%
Met my expectations	33%	44%
Did not meet my expectations	1%	1%

*does not add to 100% due to non-response

Survey respondents were asked about their enjoyment of the event. Respondents reported enjoying the event a great deal. Eight-nine percent strongly agreed that they enjoyed the FERIA Para Aprender, the same percentage as reported enjoying the event in 2007 (Table 8). Further, parents with children of different ages enjoyed the event equally.

Table 8: Event Enjoyment

I enjoyed the FERIA	2008	2007
Strongly agree	89%	89%
Somewhat agree	9%	6%
Neither agree nor disagree	1%	1%
Somewhat disagree	0%	1%
Strongly disagree	0%	3%

* does not add to 100% due to non-response

Table 9: Frequently Mentioned Event Learning

Learned about ...	Respondents
Community services/programs	25%
Information about education/schools	10%
General information/lots of things	10%
Information on scholarships/financial aid	9%
Benefits or importance of school/college	8%
Information on childhood development/discipline/reading	7%
Information about education and healthcare	6%
Information about college	4%

Respondents were asked what they learned at the event. There were many different responses. As shown in Table 9, 25 percent of respondents reported learning about available programs and community services. Ten percent reported learning something about education or schools. Other frequent responses included learning about college, scholarships, and financial aid. Results are shown in Table 9.

Some examples of the responses provided by respondents regarding what they learned are below.

“Aprendí que con la educación se puede llegar muy alto en la vida y se puede tener mejores trabajos.”
Translation: “I learned that education can get you far in life and you can get better jobs.”

“Que tenemos que terminar la universidad, aprendimos que hay mucha gente que nos puede ayudar.”
Translation: “That we need to finish college, we learned that there are a lot of people who can help us.”

“Aprendí los lugares para aprender inglés.”
Translation: “Learned about places where I can learn English.”

“Aprendí tips para controlar a sus hijos sin golpes y paciencia.”
Translation: “Learned tips on how to control children without hitting/spanking them and patience.”

“La importante de leerles a los niños.”
Translated: “The importance of reading to your children.”

“Que es bueno que nuestros hijos hablen los 2 idiomas.”
Translation: “That it’s good for our children to speak two languages.”

“Como ayudar a mis hijos en la escuela, y como mis hijos pueden calificar para becas.”
Translation: “How to help my children in school and how my children can qualify for scholarships.”

“Es importante llenar la forma FASFA”
Translation: “It’s important to fill out the FASFA form.”

Table 10: Frequently Mentioned Suggestions for Improvement

Most respondents had no suggestions for improving the event. Nearly one-fourth of respondents explicitly noted positive comments and recommended keeping the event the same. Other suggestions listed by more than five respondents are included in Table 10.

Ideas for the next Feria	Respondents
Keep the event the same/everything good	22%
More information	7%
Larger location	6%
Different date/More often	5%
More activities/entertainment /giveaways	4%
Better attended/more publicized	3%

Below are several examples of the verbatim suggestions respondents had for improving the Feria for next year.

“Otra temporada.”
Translation: “Other time of year.”

“More than once a year.”

“Invitar más organizaciones e universidades.”
Translation: “Invite more organizations and universities.”

“So far everything was well organized, more room.”

“Creo que debe ser en un lugar con más espacio.”
Translation: “I think it should be in a place with more space.”

“Pogen un changing table en la baño.”
Translation: “Put a baby changing table in bathroom.”

Information Obtained at the Feria Para Aprender

Respondents were asked to report whether they obtained information about infants/toddlers, elementary school, middle school, high school, GED, or college at the Feria Para Aprender.

Table 11: Information Obtained at the Event

Information about ...	Respondents
Infants/toddlers	40%
Elementary school	67%
Middle school	40%
High school	34%
GED	12%
College	32%

Respondents made use of all of the types of information at the event. Two-thirds of parents reported obtaining information about elementary school at the event – the most frequently mentioned category. Other results are displayed in Table 11.

*multiple responses permitted

Table 12: Information Obtained at the Event by Children’s Age Group

Information about ...	Respondents with kids in the appropriate age range
Infants/toddlers gained by parents with kids aged 0-5	60%
Elementary school gained by parents with kids aged 6-10	80%
Middle school gained by parents with kids aged 11-13	71%
High school gained by parents with kids aged 14-17	62%
College gained by parents with kids aged 18 and over	48%

Respondents were successful at obtaining information relevant to their children. As shown in Table 12, 60 percent of respondents with children between the ages of 0 and 5 said that they received information about infants/toddlers. Eighty percent of respondents with children between the ages of 6 and 10 said that they received information about elementary school. Only 48 percent of parents with children over the age of 18 gained information about college. This could have been because this group of parents did not attend the event to obtain information about their children.

Tracking Respondents at the Feria Para Aprender

In addition to the survey, the event sponsors distributed a “passport” that was given to attendees when they entered the Feria Para Aprender. The purpose of the passport was threefold: (1) to encourage attendees to approach multiple booths, (2) to encourage attendees to complete the on-site survey, and (3) to allow attendees to enter the raffle for a variety of prizes. On the passport, there were six boxes and attendees were told to obtain a sticker for each box from different booths at the Feria. The volunteers at the booths at the event were instructed to place one sticker per box and to place the stickers in order (e.g. the first booth would place their sticker in the “1” box, the second booth would place their sticker in the “2” box, etc.). Though 74 percent of those who completed the passport did have only one sticker per box, 26 percent had more than six stickers on the passport. At the bottom of the passport, attendees were asked to report the ages of their children. Below, we provide some analysis of the passport data.

Table 13: Age of Children

Age of children	Survey	Passport
None	2%	6%
0 – 5	50%	47%
6 – 10	64%	59%
11 – 13	28%	25%
14 – 17	18%	15%
18 +	13%	8%

Attendees completing the passport had a similar age distribution in comparison to those who completed the on-site survey, as shown in Table 13. Using either data collection method, most event attendees had children between 0 and 10 years of age.

*multiple responses permitted, those not marking any age group are not included

Table 14: First Sticker on Passport

Information about ...	Kids 0-5	Kids 6-10	Kids 11-13	All Respondents
Infants/toddlers (Kinder)	18%	22%	23%	20%
Elementary school (Primaria)	28%	26%	23%	25%
Middle school (Secundaria)	9%	12%	16%	9%
High school (Preparatoria)	0%	3%	0%	4%
College (Universidad)	5%	3%	5%	6%
Other (Comunidad)	39%	34%	34%	37%
<i>Number of passports</i>	74	98	44	199

*not enough respondents had no kids or had kids older than 13

Table 14 shows where those who completed the passport obtained their first sticker. Only those passports that were filled out properly (e.g. with a single sticker in each box) are included in Table 14. Based on the passport data, there was relatively little variation in where event attendees obtained their first sticker based on the age of their children. Most stopped at the infants/toddlers section, the elementary school section, or the community section first. This could have been a function of the layout of the room, where these three sections were the first ones that event attendees encountered when they entered the Burger Center. Event sponsors may consider different layouts in future years so that attendees can more quickly connect with the most valuable information for their children's age group.

Table 15: Any Stop on Passport

Information about ...	Kids 0-5	Kids 6-10	Kids 11-13	All Respondents
Infants/toddlers (Kinder)	69%	58%	56%	56%
Elementary school (Primaria)	70%	62%	61%	63%
Middle school (Secundaria)	43%	45%	54%	41%
High school (Preparatoria)	24%	31%	39%	32%
College (Universidad)	27%	26%	32%	31%
Other (Comunidad)	62%	59%	65%	61%
<i>Number of passports</i>	105	132	57	271

*not enough respondents had no kids or had kids older than 13

Table 15 documents whether those who completed the passport were able to obtain the information most relevant for children in each age group. Here, even passports that were not filled out properly (e.g. where there was more than a single sticker per box) are included in the results. Those with children between the ages of 0 and 5 were most likely to have obtained stickers from the infants/toddlers section and from the elementary school section. Those with kids between the ages of 11 and 13 were most likely to obtain information from the middle school or high school sections. Among all respondents, 63 percent had at least one sticker from the elementary school section and 56 percent had at least one sticker from the infants/toddlers section. The fewest respondents had stickers from the high school and college sections. This could be based on the event attendees (many had younger children) or it could be based on the layout of the event.

Methodology

At the 2008 Feria Para Aprender, volunteers from the event and the Annette Strauss Institute passed out surveys. In total, 209 surveys were completed. For the 2007 on-site survey, 216 surveys were completed. Both years, surveys were available in both Spanish and English, and volunteers were available to consult with respondents in both Spanish and English. Efforts were made to pass out only one survey per family. Passing out surveys at the event has a number of limitations. First, there is no guarantee that the individuals who completed the survey were representative of those who attended the event. Volunteers did their best to approach as many people as possible and most agreed to complete the survey, but it is not possible to assess whether the results can be generalized to all event attendees. Second, there may be some response bias because at the event, respondents may have felt obligated to respond positively to the questions posed on the survey. Volunteers were instructed to tell survey respondents that they were not representing the event sponsors and that they greatly appreciated the respondent's honesty to try to decrease response bias.

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About The Annette Strauss Institute

The Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Participation was established at The University of Texas at Austin in 2000 to respond to growing political cynicism and disaffection in the United States. The goals of the institute are (1) to conduct cutting-edge research on the ways in which civic participation and community understanding are undermined or sustained, and (2) to develop new programs for increasing democratic understanding among citizens.