

***From Reality TV to Scripted Drama: The Role of Entertainment Storytelling in
Early Childhood Parenting Support for U.S. Hispanic Parents***
Summary of Findings
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In 2017, researchers at American University's Center for Media and Social Impact conducted an independent evaluation of the Univision / Too Small to Fail *Pequeños y Valiosos* campaign, including the campaign's programming content and our text messaging program for parents.

Using a pre-post-test controlled experimental design, researchers evaluated how Hispanic parents of children ages 0-5 were engaged by *Too Small to Fail's* messages across Univision's three distinct TV platforms: reality (*Pequeños Gigantes*), scripted drama (*La Fuerza de Creer*), and news (*¡Despierta América!*). Here's what we learned:

- After consuming Too Small to Fail's messages across Univision's programming genres, AU researchers saw significant increases (11% - 14%) in intent to engage in behaviors associated with the campaign messages, such as talking, reading, singing, engaging in math activities, and speaking two languages daily. On the other hand, those in the control condition showed no change.
- American University (AU) researchers concluded that entertainment was more impactful than news in convincing viewers about the importance of connecting with their children. Viewers who watched reality (*Pequeños Gigantes*) and scripted drama (*La Fuerza de Creer*) showed a positive shift in the perceived importance of talking, reading, singing, and doing math with their children.
- AU researchers also concluded that packaging information about early literacy into highly entertainment programming – and especially within content that is positive and hopeful – is an effective strategy for engaging Hispanic parents. Across the three program genres, the audience's experience of positive emotions – including optimism, hope, and sympathy – was the most consistent predictor of shifts in knowledge, efficacy, importance, and behavior.

In addition, AU researchers interviewed a random sample of subscribers to the campaign's text messaging program, and learned that our subscribers are **more than**

twice as likely to report talking, reading, singing or engaging in early math activities compared to the national average for Hispanics. Two-thirds of subscribers report regularly engaging in the tips and activities provided by the service, and about the same number report sharing the tips with other parents. And finally, our subscribers feel empowered – 94% acknowledge that the messages have helped reinforce that parents play a major role preparing children for kindergarten. What’s especially important — our subscribers are exactly the parents we want to reach. The medium household income of our subscriber base was \$27,352, over 90% are moms, over 85% were born outside the United States, and more than 75% are Spanish-dominant.