



Background

On January 29, 2011, local Spanish-language media outlets, several local school districts and universities, a number of businesses, and a host of non-profit organizations worked together to create a community education fair, Feria Para Aprender. This was the fifth time that this event took place in Austin (prior events occurred on February 17, 2007; February 16, 2008; February 7, 2009; and February 6, 2010). The 2011 event was chaired by its founder Sylvia Acevedo, CEO of CommuniCard, LLC, and organized by the Advancing America Foundation. The goal of the event was to provide information to community members, particularly Hispanic parents, about educational opportunities and the importance of education. In previous years, the Feria Para Aprender was held at the Burger Activity Center in Austin, Texas. In 2010, the event took place at the Travis County Expo Center. In 2011, the event took place at the North Lamar Event Center.

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 262 individuals who completed the survey in 2011. Where appropriate, we also include data from prior years for comparison.

Feria Para Aprender Attendees

Local Spanish-language media outlets, school districts, 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.

Forty percent of survey respondents identified that they were from the same zip code or zip codes surrounding the North Lamar Event Center.¹ This is higher than 2010, when 31 percent of respondents were from zip codes surrounding Travis County Expo Center. Zip codes named by at least five percent of respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Common Respondent Zip Codes

Zip code	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
78758	17%	11%	5%	8%	6%
78744	14%	10%	14%	11%	21%
78753	13%	12%	9%	6%	6%
78723	6%	10%	<5%	<5%	<5%
78745	6%	<5%	8%	8%	9%
78724	<5%	7%	7%	<5%	<5%
78752	<5%	6%	5%	<5%	<5%

Table 2: Age of Children

Age of children	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
None	2%	2%	1%	2%	4%
0 – 5	52%	51%	56%	50%	52%
6 – 10	68%	68%	69%	64%	59%
11 – 13	26%	29%	24%	28%	29%
14 – 17	19%	19%	16%	18%	18%
18 +	13%	9%	9%	13%	9%

*multiple responses permitted

Most survey respondents (90%) had children between 0 and 10 years of age. This is similar to previous years. The percentage of respondents who had children in each age range is shown in Table 2. Only thirteen percent of respondents, for example, had children who were 18 years of age and older.

Nearly all respondents (89%) reported that they learned about the Feria Para Aprender either from school or from television. This is similar to 2010, when 91 percent learned about the event from these sources. Learning about the event from other sources also was similar to prior years, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Event Information

Heard about event from ...	2011	2010	2009	2008
School	54%	60%	59%	50%
Television	54%	56%	52%	49%
Radio	20%	19%	22%	16%
Newspaper	13%	14%	9%	17%
Community Organization	10%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Friend/family member	9%	7%	11%	13%
Other	3%	4%	5%	9%

There were some demographic differences in hearing about the event. Those with children aged 6-10 were more likely to hear about the Feria from their school (60%) compared to other attendees (43%).

Repeat attendance has been steadily increasing over the past several years. In 2011, 43 percent of respondents had attended the Feria before. The event continued to attract a number of people who had not attended a previous Feria Para Aprender, however. Fifty-six percent of respondents were attending this event for the first time.

Table 4: Previous Event Attendance

Attended before	2011	2010	2009	2008
Yes	43%	36%	29%	25%
No	56%	62%	67%	75%

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

Around a fourth of respondents reported that they rode a school bus in order to attend the Feria Para Aprender (Table 5). Those with kids between 6 and 10 years of age were more likely to ride the bus (28%) compared to those without kids in this age range (13%). Bus riders came from different zip codes this year. In 2010, 51 percent of bus riders came from 78753, 78723, 78724, 78758, and 78744. This year, the largest percentage of bus riders came from 78744, 78745, 78721, 78723, and 78747, totaling 68% of bus riders.

Table 5: Transportation to the Event

Took a school bus	2011	2010	2009	2008
Yes	23%	26%	23%	22%
No	76%	70%	71%	77%

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

Feria Para Aprender Assessments

Respondents were asked to reflect on their favorite parts of the event, what they learned, and how navigable they found the event.

Survey respondents were asked to identify their favorite part of the event. The two most popular responses were the astronaut (42%) and the bilingual classrooms (37%), as shown in Table 6. Of those respondents noting some other aspect of the event (11%), 41 percent said “everything” or something similar and 21 percent mentioned college or scholarships.

Table 6: Enjoyment of Event Components

Favorite Part	2011
Astronaut	42%
Bilingual classrooms	37%
Exhibits	23%
Planetarium	19%
Photos	17%
Theater	14%
Science Truck	13%
Other	11%

* multiple responses recorded

Table 7: Subject Learning

Learned about ...	2011
Health/ Health Care	74%
Science	56%
Learning English	42%
Video Games	40%
Computers	35%
Math	35%
Space	34%
Engineering	31%

* multiple responses coded

Respondents were asked whether they learned about any of eight different subjects at the Feria. Nearly three-fourths of respondents reported that they learned about health and health care at the Feria. Just over half of respondents reported learning something about science (see Table 7).

There were some differences in learning about engineering. Those with children between 0-5 were less likely to have learned about engineering (23%) compared to other respondents (40%). Those preferring that people use Spanish-only at the Feria also were less likely to have learned about engineering (25%) compared to those who preferred a mix of Spanish and English or English-only (43%).

Respondents were asked how easy or difficult it would be for them, personally, to do a science experiment. As Table 8 shows, respondents were divided on whether they thought they could conduct an experiment. Fifty-five percent reported that the task would be somewhat or very difficult. In contrast, forty-two percent reported that it would be somewhat or very easy. A larger percentage of those preferring Spanish reported that doing an experiment would be somewhat difficult or very difficult (62%) compared to those with English or English and Spanish language preferences (45%).

Table 8: Perceived Difficulty of Doing a Science Experiment

Would be ...	2011
Very Difficult	18%
Somewhat Difficult	37%
Somewhat Easy	29%
Very Easy	13%

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

Table 9: Learning about a new career

Learned ...	2011
Yes	48%
No	44%

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

Respondents also were asked if they learned about a career that they didn't know about previously at the Feria Para Aprender. As shown in Table 9, nearly half of respondents reported learning about a new career at the event.

Respondents noting that they learned about a career were asked to identify the career about which they learned. Eighty-one respondents provided an open-ended response. We reviewed these responses and categorized them as follows. Twenty-one percent of respondents learned about a career in the technology field (including video games or computers), 16 percent about a career in education, 15 percent learned about a career in math or science (e.g. astronaut, engineer), and 11 percent about a medical or health-related career (e.g. dental, doctor, nurse). Six percent of respondents noted a career in arts, theater, or architecture and five percent a career in fighting crime (e.g. cop, detective). Other responses were mentioned by fewer than 5 percent of respondents.

Respondents were asked, "In the United States, how many years of school are children required to complete?" Response options included: 5 years, 8 years, 10 years, 12 years (the correct response), and not sure. Seventy-six percent of respondents answered this question correctly, with an additional one percent noting that 12 years or more were required. We recommend for next year that we include the word "minimum" in the question for clarification. Fourteen percent of respondents checked the box noting that they were not sure of the answer. Respondents with children 14 years of age and older were more likely to know the right answer (89%) compared to other respondents (72%).

A message that the event sponsors sought to convey to attendees was that high school graduates can earn \$1 million in their lifetime. The survey asked respondents how much money they thought that high school graduates could earn in their lifetime. They could choose from four different dollar amounts (e.g. \$1,000) and a "not sure" option. Only 32 percent of respondents answered correctly. The most frequent response was "Not sure", which was selected by 36 percent of respondents.

Navigating the Feria

Respondents were asked about how they navigated their way around the Feria. Although a majority of respondents (60%) found their way around very or somewhat easily, 38 percent reported encountering some difficulty. These percentages are almost identical to those we obtained in 2010. Those with young children (0-5) were less likely to report that the event was very or somewhat easy to navigate (54%) compared to other attendees (69%).

Table 11: Used colors to help find your way

Colors helpful	2011
Yes	86%
No	11%

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

In 2010, respondents were asked which language they would like people to use at the Feria with three response options: Mainly Spanish, Mainly English, or Both Spanish and English. In response to this question, nearly six in ten (58%) noted that they preferred a mix of English and Spanish at the Feria.

This year, we changed the question wording to ask respondents which language they would like people to use at the Feria. We asked respondents to “check all that apply” and listed Spanish and English separately. The respondents favor the use of Spanish to a greater degree than in 2010. In 2011, 66 percent of respondents preferred Spanish.

Table 10: Ease of Navigation

Finding way around was	2011	2010
Very Difficult	3%	4%
Somewhat Difficult	35%	34%
Somewhat Easy	34%	27%
Very Easy	26%	34%

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

Respondents were told that each section of the Feria Para Aprender had a different color. They were asked whether the colors helped them to find their way around. Most respondents, 86 percent, did use the colors to help them find their way around. Those preferring Spanish-only reported finding the colors more helpful (92%) than others (83%).

Table 12: Language Preference at the Feria

Preferred Language	2011
Both Spanish and English	25%
Spanish	66%
English	8%

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

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 13: Information Obtained at the Event

Information about ...	2011	2010	2009	2008
Infants/Toddlers	44%	35%	34%	40%
Elementary School	60%	63%	71%	67%
Middle School	46%	40%	36%	40%
High School	43%	34%	28%	34%
GED	24%	24%	22%	12%
College	60%	51%	43%	32%

*multiple responses permitted

Respondents made use of all of the available information at the event. Sixty percent of respondents reported obtaining information about elementary school at the event – the most frequently mentioned category. Other results are displayed in Table 13. The percentage of respondents who learned about college at the Feria continued to increase this year, reaching its highest level yet (60%). The percentage obtaining information about high school increased from 34 percent in 2010 to 43 percent in 2011. A similar increase appeared for those gathering information about infants/toddlers.

Table 14: Information Obtained about Child’s Age Group at the Event

Information about ...	2011	2010	2009	2008
Infants/toddlers gained by parents with kids aged 0-5	58%	50%	46%	60%
Elementary school gained by parents with kids aged 6-10	67%	71%	79%	80%
Middle school gained by parents with kids aged 11-13	72%	66%	69%	71%
High school gained by parents with kids aged 14-17	59%	54%	47%	62%
College gained by parents with kids aged 18 and over	79%	68%	56%	48%

Respondents were fairly successful at obtaining information relevant to their children. As shown in Table 14, 58 percent of respondents with children between the ages of 0 and 5 said that they received information about infants/toddlers. Sixty-five percent of parents with children between the ages of 0 and 5 received information about the next educational step for their children, elementary school (see Table 15).

Sixty-seven percent of respondents with children between the ages of 6 and 10 said that they received information about elementary school 48 percent obtained information about middle school – the next level of education for their child.

Seventy-two percent of respondents with children between the ages of 11 and 13 said that they received information about middle school and 62 percent received information about high school.

Fifty-nine percent of parents with high school aged children received information about high school and 67 percent received information about college. Seventy-nine percent of parents with children over 18 obtained information about college, following an increasing trend over time.

Table 15: Information Obtained about Child’s Future Age Group at the Event

Information about ...	2011	2010	2009	2008
Elementary school gained by parents with kids aged 0-5	65%	70%	76%	80%
Middle school gained by parents with kids aged 6-10	48%	41%	42%	48%
High school gained by parents with kids aged 11-13	62%	46%	46%	50%
College gained by parents with kids aged 14-17	67%	64%	51%	43%

Methodology

At the 2011 Feria Para Aprender, volunteers from the event and researchers from the Annette Strauss Institute passed out surveys and gathered data from 262 event attendees. In 2007, 216 on-site surveys were completed. In 2008, 209 on-site surveys were completed. In 2009, 276 on-site surveys were completed. In 2010, 425 on-site surveys were completed. All years, surveys were available in both Spanish and English, and volunteers were available to consult with respondents in both Spanish and English. In 2011, 86 percent of the surveys were completed in Spanish and 14 percent of the surveys were completed in 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.

¹ Note that we included 78727, 78758, 78660, 78752, and 78753. The event center is in 78753. If we also include bordering 78653, 78728, and 78757, the percentage increases to 44 percent.