



Strengthening Families So Young Children Thrive:

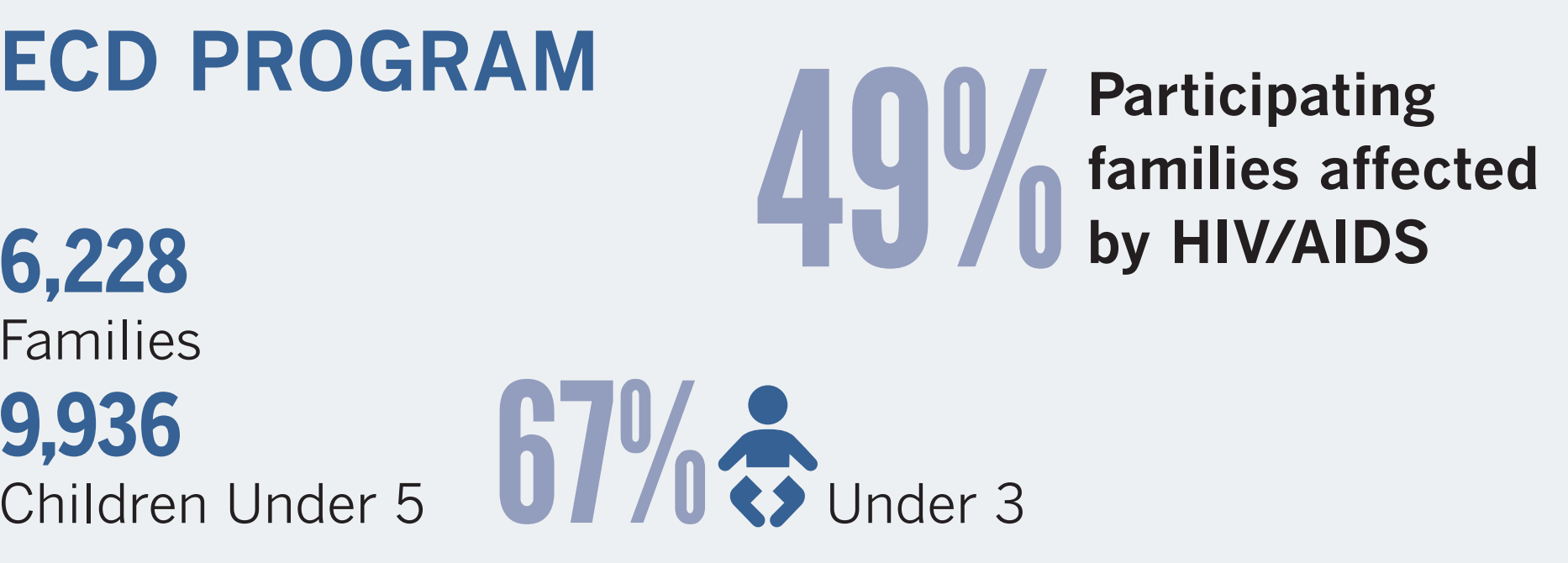
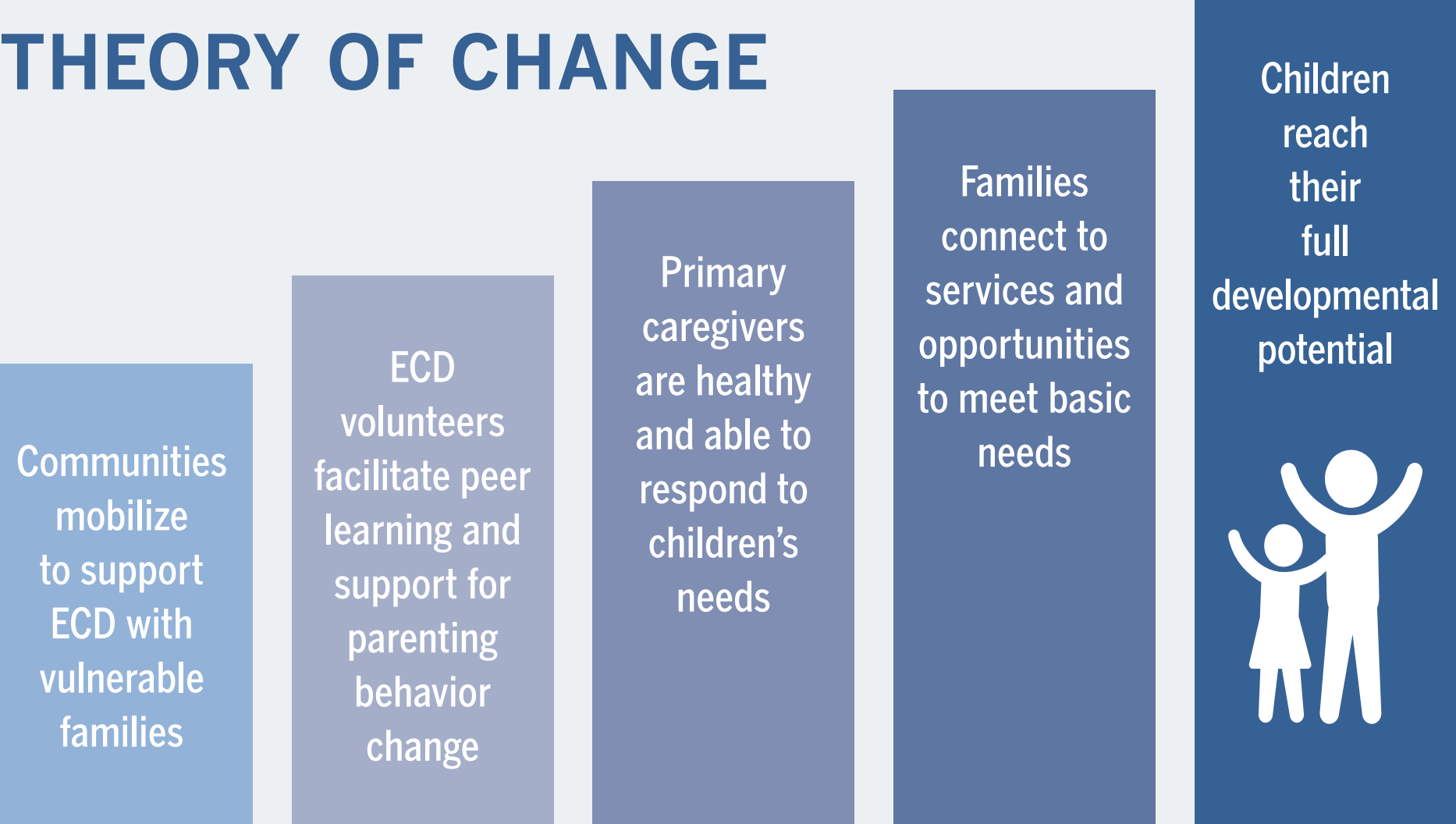
Evaluation Findings from a Zambian Early Childhood Development Program for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS



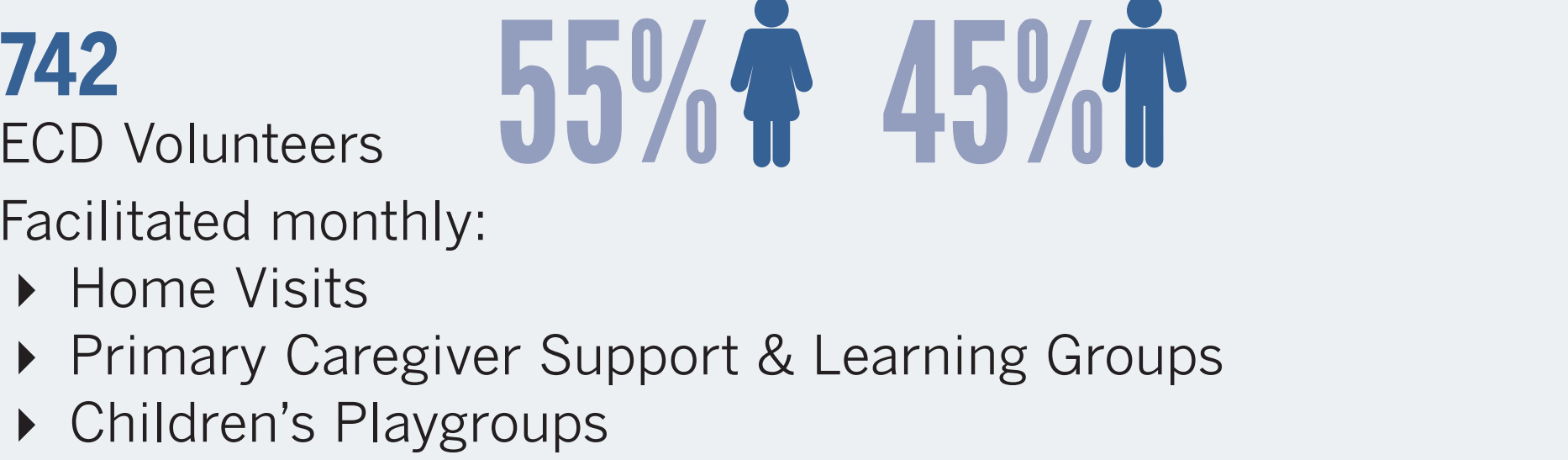
PROGRAM STRATEGY

A Community-Led, Holistic Approach

GOAL: Strengthen parents' and other primary caregivers' nurturing care and early stimulation of their young children, while supporting vulnerable families to improve their health, nutrition and livelihoods.



53 ECD Management Committees
► Oversaw volunteers and coordinated project activities and services provided by other stakeholders



EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

MIXED METHODS: Quantitative and qualitative
SAMPLING METHOD: Multi-stage, non-random sampling with probability proportionate to size
STUDY PARTICIPANTS: primary caregivers, ECD volunteers, staff
LONGITUDINAL SURVEY: 2014-2016
QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN: comparing outcomes between program participants and unexposed primary caregivers with a similar profile (simple control group)

642 Total Sample Size

KEY FINDINGS

1 ECD VOLUNTEERS WERE EFFECTIVE CHANGE AGENTS

- Gained sound knowledge of ECD and parenting practices
- Acquired facilitation and social and behavior change communication skills
- Worked effectively with primary caregivers:
 - Developed trusted relationships
 - Promoted adoption of parenting practices
 - Provided psychosocial support
 - Made referrals and linked families to needed services

2 PICTURE-BASED DIALOGUES CHANGED PARENTING BEHAVIORS

During home visits and peer group meetings, volunteers used the *Essential Package Visual Guides—Critical Needs and Actions for Young Children and for Caregivers* and a parenting skills manual's picture cards

- Primary caregivers cited volunteers' use of pictures as giving them a better understanding of critical parenting actions and motivating them to try new practices

3 COMBINATION OF ECD HOME VISITS AND PEER GROUPS PROVIDED REINFORCING BENEFITS

- **HOME VISITS**
Primary caregivers received one-on-one attention for their particular issues in a confidential setting
- **PRIMARY CAREGIVER SUPPORT & LEARNING GROUPS**
Primary caregivers gained new information, learned from others' questions, shared how they solved common parenting problems, positively influenced each other to practice what they learned and provided mutual support

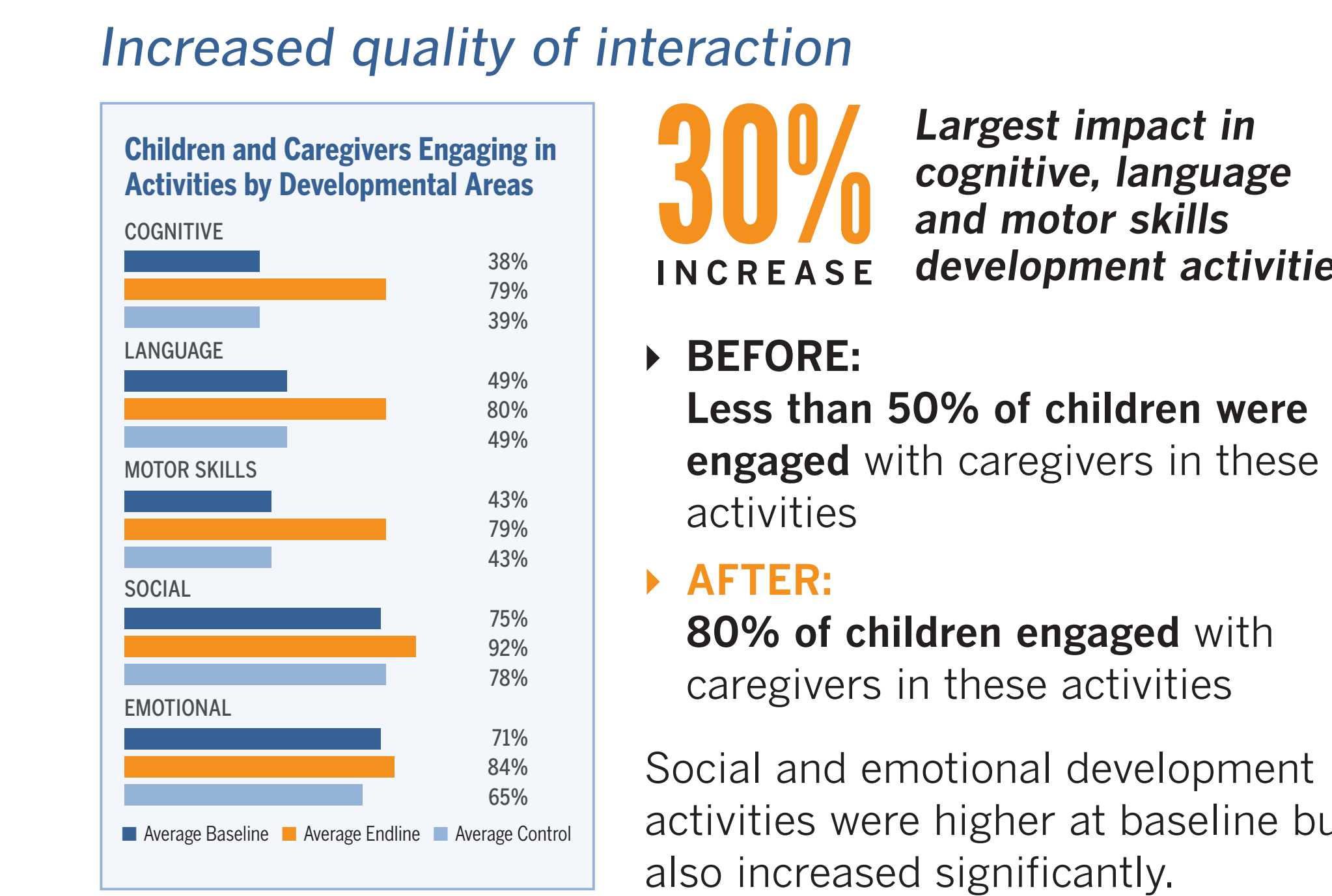
4 REDUCED STIGMA AROUND HIV/AIDS AND INCREASED HIV TESTING

- Increased knowledge of HIV prevention and transmission
- Caregivers cited changes in attitudes that destigmatized HIV and encouraged testing
- Improved care for children whose parents had died of HIV/AIDS after people understood how HIV/AIDS is transmitted
- Trusted relationships through peer groups and home visits contributed to increase in parents/primary caregivers coming forward for HIV testing and treatment, if positive

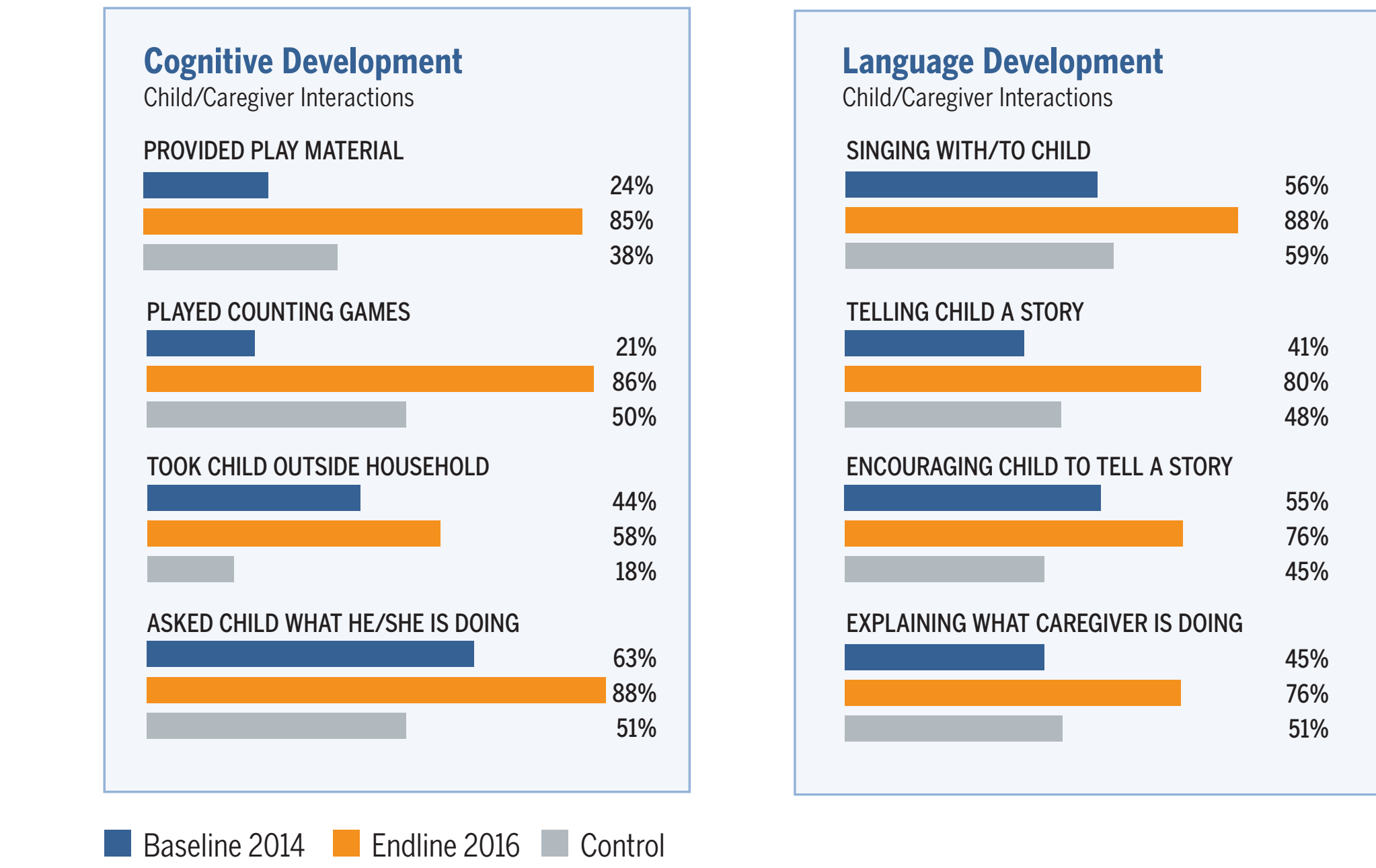
5 INCREASED NURTURING CARE AND STIMULATION

Increased frequency and duration of intentional parent-child interaction

- Caregivers in the ECD Program spend **50%** more time interacting with their children each day than caregivers in the control group



- Primary caregivers reported immediate changes in their children's behavior and development as a result of their new parenting practices
- Caregivers were motivated to continue and share what they learned with neighbors



“ We have learnt that talking to our children is important. In the past, we just used to leave children on their own. We now tell stories to our children, we sing to them and we play with them because we understand that even before the child goes to grade one they are supposed to learn.”

—MALE CAREGIVER

AREA FOR STRENGTHENING

Primary caregivers increased their use of positive discipline practices. However, corporal punishment needs to be further reduced and the program will intensify focus on this.

6 CHANGED ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR: FATHERS' ROLE IN PARENTING

- Fathers reported new understanding of the importance of men taking an active role in care and nurturance
- Fathers' increased their interaction with children by:
 - Talking, storytelling and playing with children
 - Helping take care of children
 - Taking children to growth monitoring and health services

7 IMPROVED HEALTH, NUTRITION AND LIVELIHOODS

- Increased health and nutrition knowledge and practices by primary caregiver which led to improved child health and nutrition
- Increased economic strengthening through formation of caregiver-run savings & loan groups and development of social funds to assist members with emergency needs

CONCLUSIONS

PARENTING EMPOWERMENT

The program had a significant impact in strengthening parent-child relationships and interactions, thereby improving the development of the most vulnerable young children.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND NETWORKS

The strong sense of community ownership, leadership committee structures and extensive network of multi-sectoral stakeholders created a solid basis for sustainability.

PROGRAM REPLICABILITY

The program provides an integrated, cost-effective model replicable in other rural settings in Africa with similar demographic characteristics. The model should be scaled up to provide equitable access to improving child development outcomes, particularly for children affected by HIV and other vulnerabilities.

External program evaluation conducted by Dr. Beatrice Matafwali and Matthias Zingel

Poster Authors
Abiy Seifu, Dawn Murdock and Chou Nuon
Episcopal Relief & Development
Felicja Sakala, Zambia Anglican Council Outreach Programmes

Reference
Essential Package: Holistically Addressing the Needs of Young Vulnerable Children and Their Caregivers Affected by HIV/AIDS is a resource developed by the Inter-Agency Task Force on ECD and AIDS within the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development.