



3RD COHORT EVALUATION SUMMARY

THE CONTEXT

The 3rd cohort of The Magnolia Mother's Trust, a guaranteed income initiative providing **Black mothers in Jackson, Mississippi with \$1,000 per month for 12 months and a \$1,000 deposit in a 529 Children's Savings Account for each of their children, began in April 2021 and continued through March 2022.** The economic, social, and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to play out most devastatingly in low-income communities and communities of color. The Delta surge in the summer of 2021, which hit particularly hard in the Deep South, and the Omicron surge in the beginning of 2022 added additional layers of unpredictability as school remained virtual for many Jackson families or was disrupted by unplanned closures. Low-wage workers

continued to be laid off or fired when childcare was not available or individuals became ill, and families dealt with the physical and emotional toll as sickness and loss came to their own family. According to national data collected throughout the pandemic, material hardship, or the inability to pay for basic needs like housing, food, and utilities, was a major contributing factor to parental emotional distress.¹ Additionally, unpredictability, particularly in the ability to provide for a family's basic needs, affected family well-being more than even prepandemic household income.² With cost of living expenses and inflation on the rise, families who were just starting to find a sense of stability began to again report increased material hardship and instability.³

WHAT WE SAW

In contrast to national trends, The Magnolia Mother's Trust, provided consistency and a baseline of support in a world that continued to be increasingly unpredictable. Throughout the duration of the program, Magnolia Mother's Trust participants reported an enhanced sense of self-efficacy and agency, allowing them to make their own decisions around work, prioritize the care of the children and family, and demonstrate a stronger sense of self and emotional well-being for both themselves and their children. At the end of the program:

- **97.6%** felt somewhat or extremely supported by The Magnolia Mother's Trust to meet their family's needs.
- **79%** of mothers reported feeling more hopeful about their future
- **82%** felt more hopeful about their children's futures
- **70%** felt capable of caring for their own emotional, physical, and mental health needs.

“The program has taught me a lot. It taught me to communicate more with people. It taught me how to voice my opinion. It taught me how to better myself as a mother, spend more time with my kids instead of working a whole lot. It helped me financially, do more things with them, because I normally work more than one job to make ends meet... It has shown me, ‘You are a better person than that’... I’m gonna just push myself to do better and not be afraid to do what I want to do in life.”



¹ “Emotional Distress On the Rise for Parents... Again.” Rapid Survey Project. Last modified November 4, 2021. <https://rapidsurveyproject.com/our-research/emotional-distress-on-rise-again>.

² “On Shaky Ground: Unpredictability in Ability to Pay for Basic Needs Affects Family Well-being.” Rapid Survey Project. Last modified July 1, 2021. <https://rapidsurveyproject.com/our-research/unpredictability-in-ability-to-pay-for-basic-needs>.

³ “Not Letting Up: More Families Experience Material Hardship as Cost of Living Rises.” Rapid Survey Project. Last modified July 1, 2021. <https://rapidsurveyproject.com/our-research/more-families-experience-material-hardship-as-cost-of-living-rises>

Throughout the year, there was a tangible shift from mothers feeling they could only react to the circumstances around them to **feeling they were able to drive the circumstances around them**. When moms felt seen and supported in the program, they started to own their power.

When The Magnolia Mother's Trust said "Yes!" to mothers, moms in turn felt they could say "Yes!" to their children and families.

SENSE OF SELF

Through question prompts and interviews, MMT moms demonstrated an enhanced sense of **self-efficacy**, or one's sense of feeling capable to succeed and achieve personally meaningful goals⁴. As mothers continued to make their own decisions throughout the program and saw the changes in both themselves and their children, mothers also reported being more motivated to pursue their own goals, sustain that motivation, and recognize their own **agency**, or one's ability to leverage internal and external resources in order to achieve goals, mastery, and/or personal successes.

72% reported feeling more self-confident by the end of the program.

While those who entered the program with additional resources and stability (e.g. reliable transportation, secured childcare) were able to make more progress toward long-term goals in the 12 months of the program, this enhanced sense of self-efficacy and recognition of agency gives all mothers an important tool to continue working toward and reaching their goals beyond the duration of the program.



WORK AND CAREER

The increased sense of self-efficacy and agency allowed mothers the opportunity to think about work and economic security for their family in new ways. **51% of mothers reported losing their job due to the pandemic**, but still approximately the same number of mothers were employed at the beginning and the end of the program, refuting the notion that a guaranteed income would cause individuals to immediately leave the workforce.

More importantly, though, were the **new ways mothers were able to think about work**. Mothers who previously worked multiple jobs to make ends meet were able to reduce to a reasonable number of working hours or find more flexible employment to be able to care for their children or leave jobs that felt unsafe or placed them at high risk for COVID-19 exposure. Some mothers reported being able to finally afford childcare, allowing them to choose a job with a higher income or that fit their family's needs. Others reported being able to stay home and focus on their role as a mother, particularly as many children were still in virtual school through December 2021.

"I work two to three jobs to make sure ends meet. Because like I said, this has helped me not to work as much as I was working, because [previously] I would leave one job onto the next one."

CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Throughout the evaluation, it was clear that a mother's well-being was intrinsically tied to her child's well-being. The first and most consistent change mothers reported seeing was happier children and being able to spend more quality time with their children. The percentage of mothers who were able to regularly purchase new clothes and shoes for their children increased from 61.9% to 76.2% and mothers reported being able to take kids on trips, pay for extracurricular activities, and consistently afford things their children needed, like school supplies.

"Less stressed, more time with my children, not so overwhelmed, not so uptight... Not have to work a second job. I'm able to, you know, relax on weekends, besides cleaning up and do other things. I'm able to spend time with [my kids]. I'm able to get my self-care time in."

"I just feel like they're happier... that they're doing something that they love; and they don't feel left out to see other kids to get to do things that they love and they're not because their mom don't have the money... they feel like their mom's support is able to support them. Because if you don't have that support it kind of brings you down and keeps you in this dark space not having that as a child. Having that as a child I feel like really changes your attitude about life, and I really think they see a brighter future for themselves."

"I mean, just knowing that my baby realize she can get what she wants or need, for me it's a good thing and see that smile on her face or whatever. Like it just does something to my soul. It makes me happy. It makes me feel like I'm a good parent."



⁴ Bandura, Albert. "Toward a Psychology of Human Agency." Perspectives on Psychological Science 1, no. 2 (June 1, 2006)