



MazelTot Pilot Phase Evaluation Report

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MazelTotSM
Connecting young families to Jewish life

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Executive Summary

This Outcome Evaluation

The aim of the outcome evaluation was to provide an evidence-based appraisal of whether MazelTot succeeded in “connecting families with preschool children (under five years old) and expectant parents to Jewish life in the Denver/Boulder area and to one another.” The timing of this analytic report coincides with the end of the initial 2-year pilot. Research methodologies included administering online surveys; conducting group and individual interviews; analyzing data submitted by participating organizations; empirically examining website usage data; and documenting the implementation process.

MazelTot Initiative Background

On February 2, 2009, Rose Community Foundation’s Board of Trustees approved a grant to create MazelTot. This initiative is a collaboration between Rose Community Foundation and Jewish organizations serving families with young children in Greater Denver and Boulder. The initiative is geared toward parents-to-be and families with children under the age of five that have at least one parent who self-identifies as Jewish. The initiative provides discounts, free offers, and comprehensive information on Jewish activities and educational programs in the seven-county Denver/Boulder area. Each family that signs up for MazelTot can redeem up to three discounts on hundreds of Jewish activities. According to the *MazelTot Policies, Procedures, and Information Guide*, MazelTot was created because:

The Foundation supports efforts to create and sustain a vibrant Jewish community, in part by funding new ideas that connect Jews to Jewish life and to each other. MazelTot was created to support organizations in their outreach to young families, to promote collaboration between organizations, to encourage young families to try new Jewish experiences and to make those experiences more affordable.

With 1,131 registered families as of June 2011, MazelTot has surpassed its original goal of reaching 20% of the 5,300 Jewish and interfaith families with preschool-aged children residing in Greater Denver and Boulder.

MazelTot is connecting families to Jewish life and each other. As a result of MazelTot marketing efforts, families are learning about the website. They are using the website to lower the information barrier about classes, family celebrations, events, preschools, camps and retreats. Moreover, according to the grantee reports submitted by the participating organizations, families with young children are using the discounts to “sample” organizations. In this way, the initiative is encouraging families with young children and expectant parents to try new and more Jewish experiences. In addition, the participating organizations are benefiting from the grantee roundtable discussions that were designed to increase their change management expertise. The initiative is also achieving its goal to showcase the diversity of Jewish cultural, social, educational, spiritual and religious opportunities for families with young children.

With 1,131 registered families, MazelTot has surpassed its original goal of reaching 20% of the 5,300 Jewish and interfaith families with preschool-aged children residing in Greater Denver and Boulder.

Registered Users Are Diverse but the Majority Are Newcomers

The families tended to have one child under the age of five. The number of children in each age group was similar: 21% under one year old, 17% one year old, 20% two years old, 17% three years old; 15% four years old and 10% expectant parents. In comparison to the families surveyed for a 2007 community study conducted by Ukeles Associates, Inc. MazelTot families tended to be raising their Jewish at a far higher rate (79% vs. 47%). Fourteen percent of MazelTot families were raising their children Jewish and in another religion. Of this year's participants, 37% were Reform, 17% were Conservative and 18% were Orthodox. Nearly one-third of the registrants were secular, nondenominational, or not Jewish. In comparison to last year's early adopters, the families this year tended to be more Orthodox than Traditional and more Reform than Conservative. Eighty-eight percent of the families were married or partnered. Those who completed the *Registration Form* tended to be Jewish (86%). Of their spouses, 69% were Jewish, 3% "partially Jewish," 2% Jewish and something else and 24% were not Jewish. From Year one to Year Two, the percentage of interfaith families went up by over 100% from 14% to 31%. In terms of ethnicity, almost all the participants were white with a few Hispanic/Latino, multi-racial and African-American families. The parents of three families identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered (GLBT). The 2007 study defined "newcomers" as people living in the area for less than 10 years and found that 46% of 25-39 year olds were newcomers. By that standard, 58% of MazelTot families were newcomers: 9% of the families have lived in the area less than a year, 25% 1-4 years and 24% 5-9 years. Some of the families have lived in the Denver/Boulder area for a long time: 24% indicated 10 years or more, 9% lived in the area "all my life" and another 8% "almost all my life." In terms of where they live, 49% were from Denver, 18% from Boulder county, 17% from Arapahoe county, and the rest were from Adams (3%), Broomfield (2%), Douglas (7%) and Jefferson (5%) counties.

Most of all, the comments reveal that families with young children are seeking ways to become involved in Jewish life and they desire to see the community grow.

Perceptions Change: Jewish Community Now Seen as Welcoming

The families that registered for MazelTot after last year's launch responded to an open-ended question on the *MazelTot Registration Form* about their perceptions of the local Jewish community. The most salient themes that emerged from the families' descriptions of the local Jewish community were how hard it was to become engaged in the Jewish community, lack of knowledge of available activities, the fragmentation of the community, the uneven distribution of programs and activities, the high cost of participation in Jewish life and the benefits of living in a smaller community. Most of all, the comments reveal that families with young children are seeking ways to become involved in Jewish life and they desire to see the community grow. This year, one of the most salient themes was that the Jewish community is warm and welcoming. In particular, interfaith families felt welcome. The major change from last year is that there was not a single comment regarding the lack of knowledge of available activities.

Barriers Lowered

When registering, prior to their participation in MazelTot, 17% indicated that their family would become even more engaged in Jewish organizations or places if certain barriers were addressed including, particularly, the scheduling of programs or events. Of the families, 11% indicated the importance of location or transportation, 9% considered the "high level of Jewish literacy expected" a barrier, and 9% felt that non-traditional and/or interfaith families are not welcome. It is noteworthy that along the 15 potential barriers, there was a decrease from last year in almost every instance. It is noteworthy that there was a decrease from 28% to 17% in those who said that the scheduling of programs or events was a barrier.

Forty Percent of Families Learned About MazerTot Through Word of Mouth

In order to attract the attention and interest of families with young children and expectant parents, MazerTot marketed the initiative through search engine marketing, postcard mailings, radio stations, community newspapers, booths at events and flyers. Participants learned about MazerTot in the following ways: 32% from a participating organization; 24% from a friend; 12% from a flyer, advertisement, newspaper; 12% word of mouth; 6% family; 5% professional contact; 4% web advertising; 3% Google or other search engine; and 3% radio. While the percentages of those who learned about the initiative from radio or print (flyer, advertisement, newspaper) appear low, it is worth keeping in mind that 40% learned of the initiative from a friend, family member, or via “word of mouth.” On the *2011 Follow-Up Survey*, a parent wrote, “Your logo seems to be EVERYWHERE and I think that’s so important to families who are not connected.”

Parents Find Discounts Most Appealing Feature of MazerTot

Prior to registering for MazerTot, the families were interested in the initiative for social, educational, cultural, recreational, religious and spiritual experiences. Consistent with all the other data, the category that had the most responses was “social.” This is an indicator that new and expectant parents are interested in forming new friendships with other Jewish families. On the *2011 Follow-Up Survey*, the feature that most appealed to the parents was the discounts followed by “The opportunity to meet other Jewish families with young children” and “One-stop shopping for information about dozens of Jewish organizations at **mazeltot.org**.” Survey reports revealed why discounts were attractive to the families; 56% agreed that in the past five years financial costs prevented them from participating in Jewish cultural, educational, spiritual or recreational programs. In addition, 58% agreed that the discounts made it possible for them to afford participation in Jewish life in new or increased ways.

72% of families agreed that **mazeltot.org** played a significant role in connecting them to Jewish Life.

As of May 31, 2011, 764 discounts had been used. The number of families using one discount was 457, the number of families using two discounts was 131 and the number of families using three discounts was 15. The discounts are divided into categories. The following list includes the discount category, the number of discounts used and average value of the discounts: (1) Classes, 175 discounts used, \$71 average value; (2) Events, 283 discounts used, \$48 average value; (3) Independent Celebrations, 18 discounts used, \$188 average value; (4) Preschools and Camps, 239 discounts used, \$341 average value; and (5) Retreats, 49 discounts used, \$242 average value. Total discount funds used was \$121,294, which is 65% of the total funds granted as of May 2011.

MazerTot’s Website Plays a Significant Role in Connecting Families to Jewish Life

As a result of MazerTot marketing efforts, families are learning about the website, **mazeltot.org**. They are using the website to lower the information barrier about classes, family celebrations, events, preschools and camps, and retreats. For example, a parent wrote on the *2011 Follow-Up Survey*, “I love that it is a resource keeping me up to date on events.” Another parent explained that she benefited from the website by becoming “more open-minded about going to a program at an organization that I might have otherwise dismissed.” On the survey, 72% strongly agreed or agreed that “Information about things to do and organizations on **mazeltot.org** played a significant or very significant role in connecting my family to Jewish life.”

Website Traffic Is Growing

There are currently 1,149 families signed up for MazelTot. On average, there have been 55 sign ups per month for MazelTot. The website averages 1,385 visits per month—an increase over last year's 1,201. The average number of absolute unique visitors to MazelTot each month is 978, nearly 20% of the intended market of Jewish families in Greater Denver and Boulder with preschool-aged children. Last year, the average number was 764. Since the June 2010 analytic report, the site was visited 17,466 times. From September 2010 through May 2011, 53% of the visitors reached **mazeltot.org** via a search engine, 27% reached **mazeltot.org** by typing in the web address and 20% reached **mazeltot.org** through a link on another site.

MazelTot Family Networker's Outreach Is Effective

In encouraging families with young children to try new and more Jewish experiences, the **mazeltot.org** website is valuable but families also need to interact with a person. A MazelTot family networker was hired and provides guidance to newcomers, answers general questions about Jewish life and the community, encourages the development of play groups and other social events, and provides technical assistance in the use of the website and the discounts. Weekly emails are sent by the family networker to all registrants of MazelTot (unless they opted out of the emails), so each week that number grows; currently, 1,200 individuals receive the emails. The emails are usually sent on Wednesdays, although periodically more than one goes out a week if there is something more to highlight. In general, the emails present information on upcoming events and programs (Shabbat activities, other weekend activities, classes, retreats, etc.). Sometimes, an email is devoted entirely to one topic. For example, an email was dedicated to Passover options for families with young children. Another email was devoted to summer camps. There is also usually a section with instructions on how to receive free books from The PJ Library. Families interested in meeting other families in their area are provided with instructions to email their ZIP codes to the family networker, who will then connect them. In general, 34% of the families open the emails. A third (38%) indicated that they visit the website when they receive the weekly MazelTot email updates. Through the weekly emails MazelTot showcases all the programming that is currently available at the participating organizations. In this way, the initiative conveys to the families that there is “something for everyone.” The weekly emails also reinforce the idea that participating organizations are actively reaching out to families with young children.

Participating Organizations See Benefits

The greatest impact of the initiative was seen by the participating organizations in terms of making their programming more affordable as well as increasing the presence of their programs and their visibility in the Jewish community and increasing community awareness of what they do. The organizations are pleased with MazelTot and are very happy to be able to offer financial discounts to families. They like the fact that the website is comprehensive and reflects a vibrant local Jewish community. They are appreciative of the exposure that MazelTot gives them. “I love seeing our name in the MazelTot brochure and seeing the brochure available at the preschools.” They also like the fact that MazelTot recognized that participation would take administrative time and is compensating them for that time. Consistent with this finding, the factors that most influenced the organizations' decision to participate in MazelTot were the ability to post their information on **mazeltot.org**, the discount funds and the opportunity to participate in a network of organizations serving young families.

The participating organizations indicated that MazelTot added value to their organizations. On the 10-point scale (10 = “a great deal of positive change”), any score greater than 5 indicated that positive change had occurred. The scale was completed multiple times by the participating organizations as part of their quarterly reports. All the scores were above this threshold level, with most scores within the 6.0-7.5 range. On the following indicators, the organizations attributed this shift to MazelTot: marketing efforts, recruitment of new families, retention of current families, attendance, affordability of programming and connections among parents. Also, the participating organizations agreed that the convenings increased their knowledge of how to change marketing and web efforts to be more welcoming. According to the focus group discussions, the organizations tended to disagree that networking at the convenings increased their referral of families to other institutions, an explicit goal of the initiative. MazelTot appears to have had limited success in increasing collaboration. There were some anecdotes about referring callers to more appropriate resources, but in general collaboration does not appear to have changed. The participating organizations felt that they already referred people to other organizations prior to the initiative, although the baseline data indicates that the referrals and level of collaboration were minimal.

A consistent theme that emerged in the focus group discussions was that MazelTot is seen by the participating organizations to have many benefits for families. The focus group participants agreed that this initiative strengthens the Jewish community as a whole.

Families Increase Participation in Jewish Life: Information Is Key

The *Spring 2011 Follow-Up Survey* was sent to all registered MazelTot families (n=1,131) in May 2011. There was a 30% response rate. This is regarded as a relatively high response rate for a survey of this type. The families were asked to indicate whether there were changes in their Jewish life since signing up for MazelTot. Of the families, 75% strongly agreed or agreed that since signing up for MazelTot, “I am more aware of the diversity of opportunities at Jewish organizations,” 62% said “Overall, the number of activities my family participates in at Jewish organizations is increasing” and 58% indicated that “The Jewish life of my family is growing at home.” In addition, 53% strongly agreed or agreed that they are increasing their participation in programs at Jewish organizations that were already familiar to them, 51% indicated that they are trying programs at Jewish organizations that are new to them and 50% said that they use **mazeltot.org** to make informed decisions when selecting programs. These findings suggest that MazelTot achieved its goals for the families, especially in terms of encouraging them to take advantage of existing programming and “choosing Jewish not only for their children, but also for themselves.”

The families were asked to indicate which features of MazelTot played a significant role in connecting them to Jewish life. The feature that had the highest rating was “Information about things to do and organizations on **mazeltot.org**” (72%) followed by the discounts (70%). Since signing up for MazelTot, 34% attended one Jewish organization or synagogue for the first time, 26% two organizations, 10% three organizations and 5% four or more. This means that 75% of the families tried an organization for the first time. In its theory of change, MazelTot stated that it aims to encourage families “to try new and different institutional offerings.” It appears that MazelTot is succeeding in doing so.

Families Attribute Change in Their Jewish Lives to MazelTot

To what extent did the families attribute change in their Jewish lives to MazelTot? The families were asked to indicate the level of their change in terms of understanding Jewish customs and practices, ability to deepen Jewish living and learning for their families, positive and meaningful experiences at Jewish institutions, engagement in the Jewish community, and friendships with other Jewish children/families. In all cases, positive change was found.

To determine whether MazelTot “enhanced the Jewish lives of families at a formative moment in their Jewish journeys,” the *Families’ Engagement in Jewish Life* scale was developed. This scale was developed so that the measurement of Jewish identity would not be limited to the performance of Jewish rituals (e.g., lighting candles on Shabbat). Thus, the scale contains items that relate to families’ cognitions, emotions, actions and ways of partaking in community. The full list of items that comprise the quotient appear in the full report. Moreover, one’s relationship to the Jewish people is far more complex than a simple “yes/no” on a list of behaviors. The frequency in which they engage in cognitions, emotions, actions and ways of partaking of community provides far richer (and more accurate) information. For example, instead of asking whether parents light Shabbat candles or not, the parents are asked to indicate how frequently they light candles (never, sometimes, usually, always). Instead of asking whether they celebrate Jewish holidays or not, the scale asks how regularly they celebrate Jewish holidays with other families. So, too, families are asked to indicate the intensity of their attendance at religious services at a synagogue and not whether they are members of a synagogue or not. In this way, the changing intensity of the families’ engagement in Jewish life may be tracked.

An analysis was conducted to discern whether those families who had been affiliated with MazelTot the longest had the highest scores on the quotient. Indeed, this was found to be the case. One possible explanation is that the early adopters started off with higher scores. To rule out this explanation, the scores of the families who joined in 2010 were compared to those who joined in 2011. The *Baseline Survey* is completed prior to families’ participation in MazelTot. The analysis revealed that the scores from 2010 and 2011 were more similar than different (i.e., a statistically significant difference was not observed). In fact, an additional analysis—that was conducted on November 2009 data—showed that the early adopters had scores on the quotient that were even lower than the rest of the families who joined during the first year. Thus, the positive change that was seen in the *Follow-Up Survey* was not due to pre-existing differences among the families.

As mentioned earlier, the percentage of interfaith families on the *Follow-Up Survey* was found to be 31%. The families with two Jewish parents tended to have higher scores on the quotient than the interfaith families.

The intensity quotient was computed by assigning a number of points to each item on the scale (that is, all items in the scale had the same weight). This “intensity” quotient can be understood as the summed total of a number of ways that Jewish families with young children may demonstrate their engagement to the Jewish people, past and present. One person, for example, may have an intensity rating of 10 and another person, 8. The higher the score, the more intensive the participants’ connectedness to Jewish life. At baseline, prior to families’ participation in MazelTot, the level of engagement in Jewish life tended to be low to moderate. For example, 65% never or rarely attend religious services at a synagogue; 75% never or rarely attended Jewish cultural events, film festivals, educational lectures or workshops;

72% never or rarely wear clothing or jewelry that shows that one is Jewish; 68% never or rarely sang or listening to Jewish or Israeli music; 65% never or rarely read Jewish websites, books and magazines; 65% never or rarely attended events and/or programs at the Jewish Community Center or other Jewish organizations; 56% never or rarely said Jewish blessings; 51% never or rarely told stories about Jewish events or holidays; 50% never or rarely celebrated Shabbat (e.g., light candles, special family dinner, say blessings). Of special relevance, 66% never or rarely participated in a Jewish program for families.

A Statistical Note

For the sake of readability, this *Executive Summary* does not present the probability levels and all the details of the statistical tests. Interested readers are referred to the full report to see this information in detail. One statistical note: to determine whether change was observed, a series of statistical analyses were conducted. There are three possible outcomes from these analyses: negative change, positive change, or no change whatsoever in families' level of engagement in Jewish life. The statistical tests are employed to learn whether positive or negative change was "statistically significant." In other words, could the change in families' level of engagement in Jewish life all be due to chance, or was a "nonchance" difference found? The tests do not indicate the magnitude of the change. Given the families' low level of engagement in Jewish life at baseline, no change was expected. The statistical tests disproved this expectation. (In research terms, this is known as "rejecting the null hypothesis"). To see the magnitude of the change, the data are presented in the full report. In general, a shift occurred among the families in terms of their engagement in Jewish life: At baseline, a very low level of engagement was seen; by the time of this report, the families had shifted to a moderate level of engagement. Within the world of Jewish education, a shift of this type is uncommon.

Baseline and Follow-Up Scores

The scores of the families on the *Baseline Survey* and the *Follow-Up Survey* were compared. Thus, the scores of the families on the quotient prior to participating in MazelTot and now were compared. The "now" scores were higher than the "prior" scores and the differences were not due to chance. This finding validates MazelTot's theory of change and demonstrates MazelTot's impact on families' engagement in Jewish life.

Families Who Scored in the Bottom Third on the Quotient

Of the families, 58% agreed that "Since signing up for MazelTot, the Jewish life of my family is growing at home." These families scored within the bottom third on the quotient at baseline (e.g., they were the least "affiliated" or least "connected" group). If this group of families experienced positive change in their Jewish lives as a result of signing up for MazelTot, then MazelTot's theory of change is validated: "Helping Jewish families connect with each other to be friends, co-learners and colleagues will enhance their Jewish lives and the Jewish community."

The families who scored in the bottom third on the quotient agreed at a higher rate that the MazelTot discounts made it possible for them to afford participation in Jewish life in new or increased ways. Furthermore, these families actually used the discounts at a far higher rate. The families also agreed at a far higher rate that "I have become a member/regular user of a Jewish organization as a result of participating in MazelTot." The families who used the discounts at a high rate and indicated that the Jewish life of their families was growing at home had an important outcome: their "intensity" quotient scores on the *Follow-Up Survey* were higher and the higher scores were not due to chance. This is additional evidence of the impact of MazelTot on families who had room to grow in their connectedness to Jewish life. This also speaks of the value of the discounts as a means to engaging families.

Discount Usage and Engagement in Jewish Life

A key research question is the role of the discounts. The families were asked the following question on the *Follow-Up Survey*: “One of the features of MazelTot is the offer of discounts at Jewish organizations for classes, events and more. Have you used a discount?” In general, 67% used discounts. An analysis was conducted to see whether use of the discounts was associated with higher scores on the quotient. Indeed, this was the case: those who used the discounts had higher scores on the quotient than those who did not.

Conclusion

MazelTot is nearing the end of its two year pilot. The participating organizations and the families urge Rose Community Foundation to continue funding MazelTot. More than this, ideas were offered for strengthening or expanding the initiative. For example, one parent wrote, “I would love to see MazelTot grow into MazelKids or MazelFamily.”

This third-party, independent evaluation appraised MazelTot’s theory of change and outcomes among the participating organizations and families. It is clear that MazelTot’s theory of change is sound: Indeed, new and expectant parents are searching for resources, information, services and connections in new ways and that this searching creates a teachable moment, an opportunity for parents to explore the array of offerings and choices and to begin or deepen their engagement in Jewish life. MazelTot is achieving its stated goals.



“I would love to see MazelTot grow into MazelKids or MazelFamily.”

-MazelTot Parent



MazelTot's Theory of Change

A theory of change is an articulation of the reason(s) for the initiative as well as an explanation of why the initiative should work. The theory of change is typically articulated during the design stage of the initiative and it is often modified when the initiative is piloted. The program designers articulate MazelTot's theory of change in this way:

- New and expectant parents are searching for resources, information, services and connections in new ways. This searching creates a teachable moment, an opportunity for parents to explore the array of offerings and choices and to begin or deepen their engagement in Jewish life.
- Parents have various interests, some based on the age of their child and other factors; however, we hope MazelTot will encourage them to try new and different institutional offerings as well as home-based celebrations or get togethers with other Jewish families.
- We do not know if current institutional programming for parents meets their needs or interests. MazelTot will provide discounts on current offerings prior to stimulating new program development. (For the first year of the initiative, MazelTot discounts could only be used for programs in existence prior to the launch of the initiative so as not to create a feeding frenzy of new programs. The website did showcase new programs, but they were not discounted. Beginning in September 2010, the partner organizations were able to offer MazelTot discounts on new programs for this demographic. In addition, organizations are now able to apply for Experiment Grants of up to \$1,000 to support program improvements or new program development to fill gaps in existing programming or to respond to feedback from MazelTot parents about the barriers they identify to participation in Jewish life.)
- A lack of easy access to information and perceived high cost of programs create barriers to Jewish participation, especially for families with young children, for whom time and money are often limited commodities.
- Lowering informational and/or financial barriers and promoting participation through welcoming marketing and word-of-mouth outreach may encourage more expectant parents and families with young children to take advantage of existing programming.
- Parents who have positive and meaningful experiences at Jewish institutions or who observe their children having positive experiences at Jewish institutions may continue to “choose Jewish” not only for their children but also for themselves.
- Institutions will attract and retain more participating young families if they actively welcome this demographic and respond to their interests and needs.
- The presence of new young families and their children in the Jewish community will enrich and enhance Jewish institutional life with an infusion of new people, new ideas and new financial resources.
- Helping Jewish families connect with each other to be friends, co-learners and colleagues will enhance their Jewish lives and the Jewish community.
- Young families are the Jewish future: the more we engage them now, the more the Jewish community will thrive and grow in the future.

This theory of change encompasses both components that are easily measured in the here-and-now as well as components that may be measured only over time.



Methodology

The aim of the outcome evaluation was to provide an evidence-based appraisal of the impact of MazelTot on families and the participating organizations that serve them. Research methodologies included administering online surveys; conducting group and individual interviews; analyzing data submitted by participating organizations; empirically examining website usage data; and documenting the implementation process.

Families complete online surveys at several transition points. During the registration process, families complete the *Registration Form*. The form asks parents to provide such demographic information as the ages of their children, county of residence, years in residence, denomination of the family and the religion in which their children are raised, and their impressions of the local Jewish community. The *Baseline Survey* is completed by MazelTot participants when they request their first discount for an event or program. Sections of the survey include a scale that measures the families' engagement in Jewish life prior to their participation in MazelTot; a scale that addresses potential barriers to engagement in Jewish life; and a section that asks the participants for more detailed information on family background than the *Registration Form*. The original plan was to administer a *Third Discount Survey* when the families requested the third discount. Given the timeframe of the evaluation, it was decided to not wait until this point. The core of the *Third Discount Survey* informed the development of the *Spring 2011 Follow-Up Survey*. To determine whether increases in the families' engagement in Jewish life could be discerned and attributed to MazelTot, the very same scales appeared on both the *Baseline Survey* and the *Follow-Up Survey*.

During November 2010, four focus group discussions were held with representatives from 23 organizations that are participating in the MazelTot initiative. This segment of the outcome evaluation was conducted by a local, Denver-based research company: Market Views. The representatives were asked by the facilitator to address the expectations that they have for MazelTot, organizational change, the impact of MazelTot on participating families, customer service, barriers, collaboration and interactions with Rose Community Foundation.

Website usage was determined by Google Analytics. These were based on data regarding unique visits to MazelTot's website, how families reached the website (e.g., directly typing in the web address, link on another site, search engines), average time spent on the site per visit, average number of pages viewed per visit and total visits in a given month.

The participating organizations submit quarterly reports. The sections of the quarterly reports were developed by the MazelTot leadership team and the outcome evaluator. In general, the report template was modified prior to each quarter in order to measure changes to the initiative and address new topics. The February 2011 report template included the following sections:

- To what extent has MazelTot added value to your organization?
- What actions has your organization taken this quarter to let young families know about MazelTot?
- What barriers prevented you from promoting MazelTot this quarter?
- What do families say about the discounts? Have you noticed discounts bringing in families who would not otherwise have participated?
- Given the demands on your time, would you say the convenings are a good use of your time?

The quarterly reports also ask the participating organizations to rate the impact of the initiative on their organizations and on families.

Description of MazelTot Families

The families tended to have one child under the age of five. The number of children in each age group was similar: 21% under one year old, 17% one year old, 20% two years old, 17% three years old; 15% four years old, and 10% expectant parents. In comparison to the families surveyed for a 2007 community study conducted by Ukeles Associates, Inc. MazelTot families tended to be raising their Jewish at a far higher rate (79% vs. 47%). Fourteen percent of MazelTot families were raising their children Jewish and in another religion. Of this year's participants, 37% were Reform, 17% were Conservative, and 18% were Orthodox. Nearly one-third of the registrants were secular, nondenominational, or not Jewish. In comparison to last year's early adopters, the families this year tended to be more Orthodox than Traditional and more Reform than Conservative. Eighty-eight percent of the families were married or partnered. Those who completed the *Registration Form* tended to be Jewish (86%). Of their spouses, 69% were Jewish, 3% "partially Jewish," 2% Jewish and something else, and 24% were not Jewish. From Year One to Year Two, the percentage of interfaith families went up by more than 100% from 14% to 31%. In terms of ethnicity, almost all the participants were white with a few Hispanic/Latino, multi-racial, and African-American families. Three families were gay, lesbian, or transgender. The 2007 study defined "newcomers" as people living in the area for less than 10 years and found that 46% of 25-39 year olds were newcomers. By that standard, 58% of MazelTot families were newcomers: 9% of the families have lived in the area less than a year, 25% 1-4 years and 24% 5-9 years. Some of the families have lived in the Denver/Boulder area for a long time: 24% indicated 10 years or more, 9% lived in the area "all my life" and another 8% "almost all my life."

Table 1
Children Registered by Age

Age	Count	Percent
Under One Year Old	338	21%
One Year Old	277	17%
Two Years Old	330	20%
Three Years Old	269	17%
Four Years Old	239	15%
Parents-to-be	161	10%

From the first year to the second, there was an increase in families raising their children “Jewish and something else” and a decrease in families raising their children only in Judaism. Despite this, the early adopters were not more connected to Jewish life than the families who joined during the second year, as will be seen later in this report.

Table 2

Comparison of MazelTot Families to the 2007 Community Study Benchmark in Terms of Raising Children Jewish

Indicator	MazelTot Families 2010	MazelTot Families 2011	Benchmark 2007 Community Study
Raising children Jewish	84%	74%	47%
Raising children Jewish and something else	10%	17%	9%
Raising children undecided	3.7%	5%	20%
Raising children not in a religion	1.5%	2%	16%
Raising children in another religion	.2%	.5%	9%
Say that being Jewish is very important	71%	68%	61%

Table 3

Denominational Affiliations of the Families

Denomination	Percent 2010	Percent 2011
I am not Jewish	4.8%	4%
Orthodox	8.9%	18%
Traditional	10.5%	4%
Conservative	23.8%	17%
Reform	28.6%	37%
Renewal	2.9%	2%
Reconstructionist	3.5%	1%
Secular, just Jewish; not religious	10.8%	11%
Other	1.0%	11%
I do not affiliate with a specific denomination	5.4%	6%

[Source: Year One and Year Two Baseline Surveys]

In comparison with the 2007 Community Study, there were fewer LGBT MazelTot families, Jews of color, interfaith and single parent families.

Table 4
Demographic Profile of MazelTot Families in Comparison to the 2007 Community Study

Indicator	2010	2011	Benchmark 2007 Community Study
LGBT	1%	<1%	4% (this is of overall population)
Jews of color	2%	5%	18% of respondents age 18 to 39 are not white
Interfaith	14%	31%	53%
Single parent	2%	4%	10% of households with minor kids are single parent families

Source: Year One Registration Form (n = 652) and Year Two Baseline Survey (n=308)

Interfaith Families

Learning how families connect to Jewish life is important information because 31% of MazelTot families are interfaith, an increase from last year's 14%. Thus, it makes sense that 69% of the respondents indicated that their spouses or partners were Jewish.

Families' Connection to Jewish Life

Families were asked to describe ways in which they are connected to Jewish life (other than the list of potential ways provided in the survey). In response to this question, many respondents mentioned that their children were enrolled in a Jewish preschool or day school. The following are other ways, besides choosing Jewish education for their children, in which families connect to Jewish life:

- By keeping in touch with my family in Israel and their traditions
- Celebrating the holidays as a family
- Consistently have get-togethers with other young Jewish children to promote this way of life
- Cooking and enjoying Jewish foods; observing Jewish holidays at home with family; praying
- Facebook
- Family get-togethers, informal get-togethers with families from temple
- I go to friend's house for Shabbat dinner and high holidays. My son goes to pre-K school at the Temple Emanuel.
- I want to give my children more access to learn about Judaism than what I had growing up. Since I am learning myself about what it means to be Jewish, I need all the help I can get!
- Interfaith group celebrates Rosh Hashanna, Chanukah and Passover together every year.
- Inviting people for Shabbat and holidays
- Jewish Preschool, spending time with family for Jewish Holidays and events



"I want to give my children more access to learn about Judaism than what I had growing up. Since I am learning myself about what it means to be Jewish, I need all the help I can get!"

-MazelTot Parent

- Live our daily lives like good Jewish people
- Modern orthodox, attending services regularly
- Mostly on the holidays
- Mostly through Family and JCC, but also Temple Emanuel
- My husband's family is Jewish. They live in CA, so when we visit, it's typically for a Bar- or Bat- Mitzvah. Most of our experiences are in CA and a few in CO.
- Neighborhood Chavurah
- Observe kashrut in our home
- Personal conversations and discussions about what faith means to me and what my relationship with the world around me looks like, conversations around how to pair my Judaism with my husband's Catholicism as we raise our 1-year-old daughter
- We are active members in Beth Ami CCHJ, a Humanistic Jewish community.
- We are members at the JCC and are planning to send our daughter to Camp Shai in the Summer. Most other things we do with our immediate family, but not so much socially.
- We celebrate holidays and have Jewish friends.
- We give *Tzedakah* to Jewish organizations and causes when we financially can.
- We love to be with Jews.
- We spend time with family members who are active in the Jewish community in Denver.
- We travel to Israel at least once a year to visit family.
- With family and friends celebrating Shabbat

During Year Two, a question was added in order to obtain a more accurate profile of the geographic representation of the MazelTot participants. The results of this question are included in Table 5 and 6.

Table 5
MazelTot Registrants and MazelTot Partner Organizations by County

County	MazelTot Registrants	MazelTot Partner Organizations*
Adams	3% (31)	3% (1)
Arapahoe	17% (189)	3% (1)
Boulder	18% (200)	17% (5)
Broomfield	2% (21)	0% (0)
Denver	49% (562)	62% (18)
Douglas	7% (74)	3% (1)
Jefferson	5% (60)	10% (3)

* Two MazelTot organizations offer programs in multiple locations and are not counted here for any one county.

According to the 2007 Community Study, 46% of respondents under 40 were newcomers (defined as less than 10 years in the area). According to this definition, 58% of MazelTot families were newcomers. It is interesting to note that 25% of the respondents to the Community Study had lived in the area between 10-19 years and, similarly, 24% of the MazelTot families said that they lived 10 or more years in the area.

Table 6
 Participants by Years Resident of Denver/Boulder Area

Years Resident of Denver/Boulder Area	Count	Percent
Less than a year	99	9%
1-4 years	277	25%
5-9 years	268	24%
10 or more years	266	24%
Almost all my life	87	8%
All my life	100	9%

[Source: Year One and Year Two Registration Form (n=1097)]



Impressions of the Local Jewish Community

The families that registered for MazelTot after last year's launch responded to an open-ended question on the *MazelTot Registration Form* about their perceptions of the local Jewish community. The most salient themes that emerged from the families' descriptions of the local Jewish community were how difficult it was to become engaged in the Jewish community, lack of knowledge of available activities, the fragmentation of the community, the uneven distribution of programs and activities, the high cost of participation in Jewish life, and the benefits of living in a smaller community. Most of all, the comments reveal that families with young children are seeking ways to become involved in Jewish life and they desire to see the community grow. This year, one of the most salient themes was that the Jewish community is warm and welcoming. In particular, interfaith families felt welcome.

Families described their impressions of the local Jewish community in the following ways:

- Welcoming to mixed faith families
- We love our community!!
- That is a wonderful, accepting and giving community; we can't wait to move into our new house.
- Very welcoming to interfaith families
- Friendly and accepting
- It is inviting and welcoming for the most part. I grew up in Colorado so it is all I know. Initially was not as inviting for non-Jews, but has improved over the years.
- Good, caring community
- The community is larger than I expected, very welcoming and have already met a lot of other families.
- We feel that the Jewish community in Denver is very welcoming and warm. We are very happy here.
- Very welcoming, friendly, active and inclusive
- A very diverse and homey community; one that eagerly extends a helping hand to newcomers
- Warm and accepting
- Warm and welcoming
- Wonderful warm community
- The Denver and Boulder areas have strong, welcoming communities.
- Tight knit and friendly
- Very friendly and welcoming
- Very helpful and supportive
- Very inclusive and family oriented

One of the most salient themes was that the Jewish community is “warm and welcoming.” In particular, interfaith families felt welcome.

A related theme was that the community is vibrant. For example, one parent wrote, “Vibrant, diverse, and inclusive.” Another parent wrote, “Vibrant and engaging.” Newcomers tended to say that they were surprised at how vibrant the community is—despite its small size. As one parent stated, “It is small and connected.” In the words of another parent, “Very friendly, a lot going on for a smallish town. We relocated from Los Angeles this summer, so it is definitely different!”

A few families mentioned that they perceive the Jewish community as “disjointed.” One wrote that “I love how it is low key, but I wish it were less divided.” Another parent mentioned that the community “needs more cohesion.”

The major change from last year is that there was not a single comment regarding the lack of knowledge of available activities and there was only one comment regarding the high cost of participation in Jewish life.

The families were interested in MazelTot for social (20%), educational (18%), cultural (18%), recreational (16%), religious (15%) and spiritual experiences (13%). When registering, prior to their participation in MazelTot, 17% indicated that their family would become even more engaged in Jewish organizations or places if the scheduling of programs or events was addressed, 11% indicated the importance of looking at location or transportation, 10% considered the “high level of Jewish literacy expected” a barrier, and 8% felt that non-traditional and/or interfaith families are not welcome.

The families were asked about potential barriers to become even more engaged in Jewish organizations. They were provided with a list of 15 common barriers. It is noteworthy that in almost every instance, there was a decrease from last year [Table 7]. It is noteworthy that there was a decrease from 28% to 17% in those who said that the scheduling of programs or events was a barrier. The focus group discussions with the participating organizations revealed that most organizations have not changed the hours of their programs or their locations to better fit with the demands of young families. Some were not sure which hours would be most appropriate for young families.

Table 7

Our Family Would Become Even More Engaged in Jewish Organizations or Places if the Following Barriers Were Addressed:

Barriers	2010	2011
Location or transportation	13%	11%
Events held only in religious institutions	4%	3%
Non-traditional and/or interfaith families are not welcome	13%	9%
High level of Jewish literacy expected	13%	9%
Offerings do not appeal to young parents	14%	8%
Little attention paid to opportunities to change the world, be part of a community, or pursue social justice	8%	6%
Website and other materials reflect an ambivalence about diversity	3%	2%
Lack of programming that is suitable for my child	12%	7%
No invitations to participate in learning or worship	2%	3%
No way to grow as Jews	3%	2%
Lackluster lifecycle events and services are not sacred or joyful	5%	3%
Tend to be ignored when trying out a Jewish organization or Temple/Synagogue	8%	5%
No need: I can be Jewish without joining a Jewish organization or place of worship	11%	7%
Lack of access to information regarding what is going on in the Jewish community	8%	8%
Scheduling of programs or events	28%	17%

[Source: 2010 First Discount Survey (n=322), 2011 Baseline Survey (n=308)]

Table 8 shows the reasons why the families were interested in MazelTot. Consistent with all the other data, the category that had the most responses was “social.” This is an indicator that new and expectant parents are interested in forming new friendships with other Jewish families.

Table 8

I Am Interested in MazelTot Because I Would Like the Following Kinds of Experiences for My Family:

Experiences	Count	Percent
Social	230	20%
Educational	215	18%
Cultural	211	18%
Recreational	182	16%
Religious	176	15%
Spiritual	157	13%

[Source: Year One and Year Two Baseline Surveys]



Attracting the Attention and Interest of Families

In order to attract the attention and interest of families with young children and expectant parents, MazelTot marketed the initiative through postcard mailings, radio stations, community newspapers, booths at events and flyers. MazelTot’s strategy was to market around Jewish holidays—the times of the year that families are more likely to be aware of their Jewish heritage and searching. All paid marketing was in secular media outlets.

Participants learned about MazelTot in the following ways: 32% from a participating organization; 24% from a friend; 12% from a flyer, advertisement, newspaper; 12% word of mouth; 6% family; 5% professional contact; 4% web advertising; 3% Google or other search engine; and 3% radio. While the percentages of those who learned about the initiative from radio or print (flyer, advertisement, newspaper) appear low, it is worth keeping in mind that 40% learned of the initiative from a friend, family member, or via “word of mouth.”

The participating organizations showed variety in the ways they are marketing MazelTot. Most attach a link to MazelTot when they are advertising an event or program online. Other marketing activities include:

- Putting a MazelTot flyer in preschool registration packets
- Making flyers available at High Holiday services
- Sending letters to congregation member families with young children telling them about MazelTot
- Adding MazelTot information on event registration forms; adding the words “Families are eligible to attend for free”

Table 9
How Participants Learned of MazelTot

I learned about MazelTot from:	Count	Percent
Participating organization	366	32%
Friend	266	24%
Flyer, advertisement, newspaper	132	12%
Word of mouth	133	12%
Family	72	6%
Professional contact	55	5%
Web advertising	43	4%
Google or other search engine	34	3%
Radio	23	3%

[Source: Year One and Year Two Registration Form]

On the *2011 Follow-Up Survey*, families commented on the impact of the marketing of MazelTot. The following are typical comments:

- Your logo seems to be EVERYWHERE and I think that's so important to families who are not connected.
- I hear you've done a great job. I like that I hear MazelTot advertised on NPR too!
- I think that you've done an amazing job very quickly penetrating into the Jewish young market.

By way of contrast, during the focus group discussions the participating organizations said that the majority of families were unaware of MazelTot when they come to register for preschool or events.



Providing Multiple Points of Entry to Jewish Life: MazerTot's Website

As a result of MazerTot marketing efforts, families are learning about the website. MazerTot's website was designed to showcase the diversity of Jewish cultural, social, educational, spiritual, and religious opportunities in the Denver/Boulder area for families with young children. Designed by Elevated Third, a Denver-based web design agency, the key features of the site include:

- Community calendar (searchable by location/date/age of child) of one-time events for young families in the greater seven-county Denver area that includes all MazerTot discount-eligible events and also all free events from participating and non-participating organizations (e.g. Tot Shabbats, concerts, festivals)
- Database of MazerTot discount-eligible programming/classes for young families that is searchable by age of the child(ren), type of program and location
- Pages for each participation organization with mission, description, MazerTot discount-eligible programming and contact information
- Direct links to Meetup and Facebook groups so parents can connect with one another through social networking platforms they already use
- Capacity for feedback from users — including a request for comments

Designed with advanced technology as an “open content management” site, participating organizations are able to update and administer their programs and calendar information. The website also serves as the virtual “back office” for the participating organizations for such purposes as verifying a family's eligibility and tracking an organization's use of grant funds to subsidize family discounts.

Families are using the website to lower the information barrier about classes, family celebrations, events, preschools and camps and retreats. For example, a parent wrote on the *2011 Follow-Up Survey*, “I love that it is a resource keeping me up to date on events.” Another parent explained that she benefited from the website by becoming “more open-minded about going to a program at an organization that I might have otherwise dismissed.” On the survey, 72% strongly agreed or agreed that “Information about things to do and organizations on **mazeltot.org** played a significant or very significant role in connecting my family to Jewish life.”

On average, there have been 55 sign ups per month for MazerTot. The website averages 1,385 visits per month—an increase over last year's 1,201. The average number of absolute unique visitors to MazerTot each month is 978. Last year, the average number was 764.

From September 2010 through May 2011, 53% of the visitors reached **mazeltot.org** via a search engine, 27% reached **mazeltot.org** by typing in the web address, and 20% reached **mazeltot.org** through a link on another site.

As a benchmark, it is worthwhile to compare **mazeltot.org**'s website visits to those of another website for parents of young Jewish children. In September 2010, MyJewishLearning launched **kveller.com** with the support of the UJA-Federation of New York. **kveller.com** recruits visitors from all over the country in contrast to **mazeltot.org**'s focus on the local community. Moreover, **kveller.com** is an editorial site with much deeper and richer content that is constantly being refreshed. Still, on several metrics

mazeltot.org had similar outcomes. According to their data, **kveller.com** is engaging and “sticky” (once people visit, they tend to stay on the website to explore). In its first quarter, from October 2010 to December 2010, **kveller.com** averaged 4.18 pages viewed per visit (on the average, visitors browsed more than 4 different pages according to the MyJewishLearning annual report). During **mazeltot.org**’s first year, the average pages viewed per visit was 4.2. In **mazeltot.org**’s second year, the average was 3.8 pages viewed per visit. In terms of the “conversion rate” (the number of people who visit a website and then sign up), the rate for **kveller.com** was 5% and the rate for **mazeltot.org** was 4%. The conversion rate was similar despite the fact that signing up for MazelTot entails far more than signing up to receive an email newsletter, as is the case with **kveller.com**.

Table 10
Traffic on **mazeltot.org**

Note: Data from September 2009 to January 2010 reflects the usage of all visitors to **mazeltot.org**, including the staff at grantee organizations who must visit the site regularly. Data from February 2010 onward filters out organization visits to **mazeltot.org**.

Month (September 2009 and May 2011 are partial months)	Total Visits Number of times the site was visited this month	Absolute Unique Visitors Number of individuals who visited the site this month
September 2009	1,361	721
October 2009	1,354	645
November 2009	862	454
December 2009	1,354	791
January 2010	1,159	732
February 2010	1,212	876
March 2010	1,614	1,213
April 2010	1,098	824
May 2010	796	625
June 2010	816	598
July 2010	986	741
August 2010	1,360	1,100
September 2010	2,070	1,569
October 2010	1,202	916
November 2010	1,966	1,439
December 2010	1,872	1,396
January 2011	1,470	1,074
February 2011	1,095	742
March 2011	2,024	1,458
April 2011	2,119	1,685
May 2011	1,302	944

Table 11

Comparing mazel.org Visits to Other “Similar” Sites

This data is based on all visits from MazelTot’s first year, September 2009 through August 2010

	mazel.org	Google Benchmark based on “parenting and family sites of a similar size”
Average time spent on the site per visit	3 minutes 35 seconds	27 seconds
Average number of pages viewed per visit	4.2	2
Average visits per month	1,164	41

Table 12

Traffic Sources for mazel.org

Traffic Sources	Year 1	Year 2
Direct traffic (user typed in web address)	29%	27%
Referring site (user visited from a link on another site)	22%	20%
Search engines	49%	53%



“They [Rose Community Foundation] are forcing us to think like the people we are trying to attract.”
-Participating Organization

From the focus group discussions with the participating organizations, it emerged that the concept of a website with information about a broad range of activities for young families receives near universal approval and generates enthusiasm. The following are selected comments:

- The website is a great way to see the options. All the events are in one place.
- So many different things are happening. I think it’s tremendous.
- It lets parents find activities that fit their families.
- One stop shopping is nice, especially for newcomers.

Presenting programs on a website of this type has been a challenge for some professional staff members in the participating organizations. They are relationship-based and prefer just to talk to new people on the phone. However, they recognize that a new generation is comfortable with different kinds of communication, especially web-based communication. “They [Rose Community Foundation] are forcing us to think like the people we are trying to attract.”



Encouraging Families with Young Children and Expectant Parents to Try New and More Jewish Experiences

In encouraging families with young children to try new and more Jewish experiences, **mazeltot.org** is valuable but families also need a person who can welcome them, answer their questions and help them connect. The MazelTot family networker provides guidance to newcomers, provides technical assistance in the use of discounts and website, answers general questions about Jewish life and the community, and encourages the development of play groups and other social connections.

The Public Face of MazelTot

The family networker is responsible for helping families with young children connect with other families and Jewish programs. Once the family networker sees that a parent has signed up for MazelTot, she calls to introduce herself and make sure that the parent understands all the benefits of MazelTot. Afterwards, she will follow up with an email. The following is a sample email:

It was so nice speaking with you.

I want to just recap what we spoke about so you'll have something to reference if you should need it.

*As a member of MazelTot, you can redeem 3 discounts over a 2-year period – but each discount can only be used in each category once. MazelTot offers 5 different ways you can use your discounts: Preschool & Camp, Classes, Events, Retreats and Independent Celebrations. Use the “Find Programs” and “Find Events” tabs on **mazeltot.org** to browse experiences and figure out how you'd like to use your discounts. Be sure to check out the Independent Celebration category, it's a home-based activity or personalized ceremony, like a baby naming or a challah baking lesson, designed around your family's Jewish interests and facilitated by a teacher, rabbi or ritual leader. You can use a MazelTot discount to cover the full cost!*

Another benefit of being a MazelTot member is that you can sign up for The PJ Library (restricted to new PJ Library members) and start receiving one free book a month for your child for the next two years! Just sign into your MazelTot account and under the FAQ section you will see a clickable link to fill out the form online.

We also have a couple social networking sites where other MazelTot Families are talking to each other. Visit us on Facebook and Meetup.

I look forward to speaking with you again!

On average, the family networker corresponds by email with 60 families per month. Also, “contact us” forms that families complete on the website are sent to the family networker. On average, she responds to 15 forms a month.

The family networker maintains a log of communications with families. This log provides a great deal of insight into the questions that the families have about MazelTot and their needs.

For example, there were questions about the discounts. A parent who currently resides in New York registered for MazelTot in anticipation of her move to Colorado in six months. On 2.28.11, she expressed her concern to the family networker regarding whether the discounts would expire prior to her arrival. On 2.2.11, a grandparent called and asked if he could sign up his grandchildren for The PJ library. On 1.12.11, a parent asked whether after one year she could use the discounts all over again. On 11.10.10, a parent called because she realized that she used a discount for the wrong event. In general, most of the contacts regarding the discounts were technical in nature. At times, parents had difficulties figuring out how to sign up for events or how to activate the discounts. The family networker offered a friendly public face to the families while providing them with technical assistance.

The communications log also contains information regarding how newcomers were welcomed to the community. On 12.16.10, a parent spoke with the family networker; she had just moved from an area in west Texas without a Jewish community and she was looking to connect. On 1.19.11, a parent wrote in response to the networker's welcome email asking for guidance in identifying a reform synagogue close to her new home; the networker provided information that was not readily available in a public directory of Jewish organizations (e.g., size of congregation). A newcomer who had spent the previous 10 years in Dubai was welcomed by the networker on 11.1.10. Another newcomer contacted the networker on 11.22.10 because she was looking for a preschool or nursery school in her area; she had identified a Reform temple in the area, but it was too far from her home. The networker provided her with the name of a closer Jewish preschool. Often, the family networker coordinated efforts with the family programs coordinator at the Robert E. Loup Denver JCC. She organizes Warm Welcome Visits, which welcome Jewish families with new babies (up to six months of age) to the Jewish community, and provides them with resources and some giveaways.

The log also documents the efforts of the networker to encourage the development of play groups. The following is a sample email:

*Dear MazelTot families in Littleton (80127 & 80128),
Most families who sign up for MazelTot tell us that they are hoping to connect with other Jewish families. We have found that there are a number of families in your area with children under the age of 5. Would you like to get together with them for play dates or to start a neighborhood playgroup of MazelTot families? I will only share your information with each other if you give your permission, so please let me know if you'd be interested in getting connected with other families near you.
Thanks and I look forward to hearing from you,*

In all, the family networker has connected over 20 MazelTot neighborhood playgroups.

The Weekly Emails

Weekly emails are sent by the family networker to all registrants of MazelTot (unless they opted out of the emails) so each week that number grows. As of May 2011, 1,200 individuals received the emails. The emails are usually sent on Wednesdays, although periodically more than one goes out a week if there is something more to highlight. In general, the emails present information on upcoming events and programs (Shabbat activities, other weekend activities, classes, retreats, etc.). Sometimes, an email is devoted entirely to one topic. For example, an email was dedicated to Passover options for families with young children. Another email was devoted to summer camps. There is also usually a section with instructions on how to receive free books from The PJ Library. Families interested in meeting other

families in their area are provided with instructions to email their zip codes to the family networker, who will then connect them. In general, 34% of the families open the emails. This open rate is higher than nonprofit industry standards.

Prior to Passover, for example, MazelTot registered families received an email with the subject line “Attend a Community Seder for Free.” The email contained 21 ways in which the families could celebrate with their children. Headlines included “Family-friendly Seders,” “Connect with other families,” and “Save with discounts.” Highlighted activities included

- A Matzo bakery
- A Passover music sing-a-long
- Passover with Stepping Stones for interfaith families
- A chocolate Seder (a family program)
- Many community Passover Seders
- An “Early Start Early Finish Seder”

Families were also encouraged to plan their own Passover Seder by using a MazelTot “independent celebration” discount to cover 100% of the cost.

In addition, there was a link to the Spring holidays issue of *Apples & Honey*, a publication of the Robert E. Loup Denver JCC, which included tips for celebrating Passover with young children. Advice included:

- One crucial element of the Seder is that it is experiential. Some ways to make Pesach an experience kids will remember are to put strips of red crepe paper on each doorpost, or to begin the Seder by having each participant wrap a piece of matzah in a napkin, carry it on his or her shoulder, and relive the Exodus by walking around the house before the meal. You will probably be able to think of other ways to turn this holiday from an abstract idea to a tangible reality.
- Families were also guided to make a plague kit that kids can play with during the Seder, invite an elderly or lonely person to the Seder, or record the names of the Seder participants in a Haggadah for future reference.

In summary, through the weekly emails MazelTot showcases all the programming that is currently available at the participating organizations. In this way, the initiative conveys to the families that there is “something for everyone.” Also, on the *2011 Follow-Up Survey*, more than one-third (38%) indicated that they visit the website when they receive the weekly MazelTot email updates. The weekly emails also reinforce the notion that the participating organizations are actively reaching out to families with young children.



Affordability of Programming and Community Awareness

From the focus group discussions with the participating organizations, it emerged that the organizations are quite pleased with MazelTot and are very happy to be able to offer financial discounts to families. They like the fact that the website is comprehensive and reflects a vibrant local Jewish community. They are appreciative of the exposure that MazelTot gives them. “I love seeing our name in the MazelTot brochure and seeing the brochure available at the preschools.” They also like the fact that MazelTot recognized that participation would take administrative time and is compensating them for that time.

The greatest impact of the initiative was seen by the participating organizations in terms of the value MazelTot added to the organizations’ ability to make their programming more affordable as well as increases in their presence and visibility in the Jewish community and community awareness of what they do.

These statements are based on data collected from the grantee reports that the participating organizations are required to submit. For the October 2010 grantee report, for example, the organizations were provided with a list of 12 potential ways in which they may have experienced positive change as a result of MazelTot [Table 13]. The organizations were provided with the following directions: “Please rate your organization on the following aspects prior to MazelTot and now. When thinking about “now,” please keep in mind changes that may be attributed, at least in part, to MazelTot. If an aspect is not relevant to your organization, just skip it.” On a scale of 1-10 (with 10 indicating “a great deal of positive change”), MazelTot added the most value to the organizations by increasing community awareness of what they do. This was followed by increasing the affordability of their programs. MazelTot had the least impact on the retention of their current families.

The organizations were again asked to indicate the extent to which MazelTot added value to their organization for the May 2011 grantee report [Table 13]. The responses were similar.

Table 13

Value Added to Organizations

1= a great deal of negative change, 5 = no change, 10 = a great deal of positive change

To What Extent has MazelTot Added Value to Your Organization?	Rating Mean October 2010	Rating Mean May 2011
Our organization’s marketing efforts	6.50	*
Overall MazelTot marketing	6.74	*
Our program’s recruitment of new families	6.50	6.22
MazelTot’s help in bringing families to our organization	6.29	6.29
Our retention of current families	5.59	5.50
Attendance at our programs	6.37	5.54
Attendance at our one-time paid events	6.33	6.13
Attendance at our free events	5.67	5.50
Affordability of our programming	7.00	6.96
Our presence and visibility in the Jewish community	7.14	7.33
Community awareness of what we do	6.64	7.00
Connections among parents in our programs	5.85	5.85

[Source: October 2010 and May 2011 organizational quarterly reports] *The first two items were asked in 2010, but not in 2011



The Families and the Discounts

As of May 31, 2011, 764 discounts had been used. The number of families using one discount was 457, the number of families using two discounts was 131 and the number of families using three discounts was 15. The total discount funds used was \$121,294, which was 65% of the total funds granted at that time.

The participating organizations were asked on the quarterly reports to indicate what the families say about the discounts. The following are typical comments:

- The discounts are an incentive to participate. We have had discounts bring people in who otherwise would not have participated.
- Families appreciate the discounts.
- Preschool families love the discount but it is not the reason for picking the [program] for their child. The discount is a nice incentive, but not necessarily the driving force to attend/register.
- I am not sure if people are coming only because of the discounts, but they definitely appreciate them!
- When it comes to camp and they are saving approximately \$300, it makes them join for more weeks as well.
- The discounts are helpful but no one is making their decisions based on the discount. Our half-day [preschool] program costs \$6,300 a year so the \$500 discount is great but not a deal maker.”
- Thirteen families who had not attended in the past—and may have otherwise not attended [were it not for the discounts]—joined us.
- Parents are thrilled and feel grateful.
- Discounts and money-saving opportunities are always appreciated. When applicable, our families have enjoyed using the discounts. We have not seen any truly new families who are unfamiliar with our school participating due to MazelTot.
- Families are very grateful to have the discounts, especially for the Baby Naming subsidy; however, generally we find that the families who use the discounts find us first and we direct them to **mazeltot.org**.
- Families are appreciative of the MazelTot discounts and have used them whenever possible. There are a few new families planning to attend [our program], in part because of the MazelTot discounts.
- Of course families love the discounts. . . I definitely think it attracted families who might not have participated otherwise.
- The discounts do serve as an incentive though I am not sure how many would not have enrolled without MazelTot. I feel like MazelTot helps us bring families into [our program], and our job is to offer them programming that will retain their interests.
- They are helpful and sometimes a very pleasant surprise. One mom could hardly believe that the discount would almost cover the entire community seder cost for her family of five.
- I don't think the discounts bring in new families [to the school], but they make the tuition commitment feel better. I think that the school connects many to MazelTot and that is positive for the family. After they sign up for MazelTot, many seem to get more involved in the Denver Jewish community.
- Our [program] has seen an increase in participants who previously would not have come [thanks to the discounts].



“After [families] sign up for **mazeltot.org**, many seem to get more involved in the Denver Jewish Community.”

-Participating Organization

In their comments, the schools and the other organizations appear to differ in the perceived value of the discounts. For example, a \$50 discount may attract a family that would not have considered attending a program previously. Thus, the discount fulfills the aim of MazelTot to encourage families to “sample” the array of different programs in the community. By way of contrast, a \$500 discount for schooling is greatly appreciated, but it does not appear to have the same effect. Table 14 shows that the top activity for which discounts were used was preschool.

Although the participating organizations heralded the discounts as a way to make their programming more affordable, families needed to be prompted to use their discounts. The following is the text of an email that was sent to registered families in May 2011.

Dear MazelTot Family,

Our records show that you signed up for MazelTot in November 2009. Did you know that all MazelTot families have 2 years to redeem 3 big discounts? In case you haven't had a chance to use all 3 of your MazelTot discounts yet, I wanted to remind you of all the ways you can before they expire in November 2011.

1. Events: *this discount gives your family **free tickets** to attend a Jewish event, like a holiday party or a Tot Shabbat dinner. Use it on an event you've attended before, or try something new.*

2. Classes: *this discount gives you **50% off** of the cost of a multi-session class, or lets you try out a single-session class for **free**. Use it either way.*

3. Independent Celebrations: *this discount **covers the full cost** of a personalized Jewish experience, created for your family. Use it to bring a storyteller to your play group, have a challah baking lesson for your family, have someone officiate at a baby naming or brit milah for your baby... the sky is the limit.*

4. Preschools and Camps: *This discount gives your family **a free month** of tuition at a Jewish preschool or **a free week** of summer camp. To use it on Preschool your family must be brand new to Jewish preschool in Denver/Boulder. To use it on Camp your family just needs to be new to the specific camp you're signing up for.*

5. Retreats: *This discount gives your family **50% off** the cost of attending a retreat, but you have to use it on a retreat that your family hasn't attended before. There are lots of retreats in spring and summer time—have a Jewish mini-vacation with your family!*

Remember, each of your discounts needs to be used in a different category.

The *Non-Discount Users Survey* was administered during May, 2010 to all families who had registered for the initiative, but had not used discounts. The survey was sent to 384 families, of whom 104 responded (a response rate of 27%). Half of the respondents agreed that they did not realize that they only have a year to use their three MazelTot discounts before they expire. In addition, nearly one-quarter agreed that “I haven't found something that's right for my child's age and stage of development.” One-third (36.3%) agreed that “I've been too busy and have not had time to go back to the website since I registered.” Similarly, 27% agreed that “I've gone back to the website for information but I haven't had time to go to an event or program, etc.” Only 1% indicated that they do not want or need the discounts. In response to these findings, in Summer 2010 program designers extended the period of time available to families to use their MazelTot discounts from one year to two years.

The Perceived High Cost of Programs

The perceived high cost of programs create barriers to Jewish participation, especially for families with young children, for whom time and money are often limited, according to MazelTot’s theory of change. It is for this reason that the discounts were offered. It is worth noting that the discounts are not sent directly to the parents. The participating organizations receive grant funds to cover the cost difference between MazelTot discount offers and the full price of activities and services.

Table 14
Top Activities or Events for Which Discounts Were Used

Activity or Event	Count
Preschool (combined all age groups) (preschool/camp)	125
Jewish Baby University for families delivering at any local hospital (class)	48
Hanukkah Happenings (event)	41
Annual Chanukah Dinner (event)	39
Creative Journeys Camp: Stories That Jump Off the Page! (preschool/camp)	38
Jewish Children’s Extravaganza (event)	37

[Source: mazeltot.org]

Table 15
Discount Categories, Discounts Used, Value Range, Average Value

Discount Categories	Discounts Used	Value Range	Average Value
Classes	175	\$23 to \$100	\$71
Events	283	\$6 to \$100	\$48
Independent Celebrations	18	\$150 to \$250	\$188
Preschools and Camps	239	\$80 to \$500	\$341
Retreats	49	\$147 to \$400	\$242

The organizations in which the greatest number of discounts were used were Robert E. Loup Denver JCC, the Hebrew Educational Alliance synagogue and preschool, and Chabad (combined total from all locations).

Table 16
Top Organizations in Which Discounts Were Used

Participating Organization	Count
Robert E. Loup JCC	175
Hebrew Educational Alliance	85
Chabad (combined total from all locations)	63
Boulder Jewish Community Center	59
Temple Sinai	53
Mizel Museum	48
Hillel Academy	41
Denver Community Kollel	37
Aish Denver	35
Temple Emanuel	35

[Source: mazelTot.org]

Organization staff participating in the focus group discussions talked about parents’ confusion with regard to the discounts. They do not understand the discount categories and amounts. One person gave an example of a parent who used his discount in one category for an eight dollar benefit when he could have saved it and gotten a much larger amount of money for another event in the same category. Someone suggested giving examples on the website of how to apply for discounts. One of the schools responded to this confusion by recruiting two volunteers to walk parents through the process of receiving the discount for an upcoming Chanukah event. A few of the more observant families do not have computers and they particularly need assistance in applying for benefits.

Results From the 2011 Follow-Up Survey

Families expressed appreciation for the discounts. In particular, parents described how they benefited from the discounts and the overall initiative. For example, a parent wrote on the *2011 Follow-Up Survey*, “I think that you are doing a great job and definitely appreciate the discounts offered. I would not have been able to have my children attend camp and was able to try one last winter. I’m considering doing a Jewish family camp at the end of the summer thanks to you.” Another parent lamented that MazelTot was not around when her first child was born (13 years ago). In general, the comments were very positive. The following is a typical comment: “I think that MazelTot is a great opportunity to participate. It helps us working, frazzled parents.”

Families offered suggestions about the discount program:

- It would be great if there was an opportunity to have a discounted membership to a local synagogue.
- Expand PJ Library so that kids can get books for many years rather than just one.
- MazelTot did a great job reaching out—I was contacted by phone and prompted to use my discount. I was not able to follow through given my pre-existing association with the [participating organization], but I appreciated the outreach.

Thoughts on the Allocation of Funds

On the quarterly reports required of the participating organizations, representatives voiced their thoughts and concerns. The following are related to the allocation of funds for the discounts.

A representative from a participating organization stated that there is a need for discount programming for families who have children in the 5-12 age group. She writes, “There seems to be more resources and programs for families who are just starting out; however, families who “enter into the Jewish community” later in the game seem to feel like it’s more difficult to meet other Jewish families and get connected after people have generally established friend networks and routines.”

Similarly, another representative wrote, “For my congregation’s circumstances and objectives, it may be desirable to broaden the MazelTot demographic to include more families with elementary-age children as well.”

Another thought on the discounts was expressed by a representative: “From my perspective, it would be very helpful if families could use their discount more than once for the same program. If a family is engaged with a program, I think it is unfortunate not to be able to continue to support them.”

One representative questioned the impact of providing discounts to unaffiliated or marginally-affiliated families. She writes, “I would rather see the funds be distributed to existing institutions to bolster those organizations and the services they are providing to families already involved—hoping to relief [sic] some of the financial burden both the families and institutions are experiencing during these difficult times. With funding resources so tight, spending money on families are in the subjunctive, rather than those who are concrete doesn’t seem to be an effective use of money.”

The research team encourages the designers of MazelTot to consider differentiating between discounts for everyday events or programs and scholarships for preschool. The following summarizes the sense of the participating organizations in this regard: the experience of preschools differs from the MazelTot experiences of other kinds of organizations. Where the discount may encourage parents to attend an event, “People don’t pick a school for the discount.” They also consistently report that families are unaware of the discounts when they come to visit the schools or when they enroll: “No one has come in knowing about it.” One organization that has both a preschool and special events and programs agreed that parents do not come to the preschool because of the discounts, but that they are an important incentive to attend events.

Supporting Organizations in Sustaining Their Existing Customer Base and in Attracting New Clients

Most organizations decided to participate in MazerTot for one of two reasons: they wanted to expand their advertising and their community exposure or they wanted to attract new members, students or program participants. Many focus group attendees reported that they did not have any expectations when the program began. One heard about it from other organizations, which reported good results. One person said her organization participated in order to support the broader Jewish community, “Partnering is really important to us; we were being community-oriented.” The following are typical comments:

- We saw it as another portal for out of state people to find out about us.
- We have a small advertising budget. We heard that lots of advertising would be done. It would help us get the word out.
- We are looking for more exposure to the Jewish community and for additional marketing.
- It is capacity building for us.

The organizations were asked on the quarterly reports to indicate the factors that influenced their decision to participate in the initiative. The item with the highest mean score was “having our information posted on **mazeltot.org**.” This was followed by the “discount funds” and “participating in a network of organizations serving young families.” The item with the lowest importance rating was the convenings.

Most organizations decided to participate in MazerTot for one of two reasons: they wanted to expand their advertising and their community exposure or they wanted to attract new members, students, or program participants.

Table 17

Factors Influencing Organizations’ Decisions to Participate in MazerTot

1 = not at all important to us, 5 = nice but not essential, 10 = extremely important, without this we wouldn’t participate

To what degree do the following factors influence your organization’s decision to participate in MazerTot?	Importance Rating Mean	Standard Deviation
The discount funds	8.32	1.656
The administrative grant	7.32	2.261
Participating in a network of organizations serving young families	8.21	2.131
The convenings	5.64	1.789
Having our information posted on mazeltot.org	8.50	1.551

[Source: February 2011 organizational quarterly reports]

Valued Added

As mentioned earlier in the report [Table 13], the participating organizations indicated that MazelTot added value to their organizations. On the 10-point scale (10 = “a great deal of positive change”), any score greater than 5 indicated that positive change had occurred. All the scores were above this threshold level, with most scores within the 6.0-7.5 range. On the following indicators, the organizations attributed the positive changes to MazelTot:

- Our organization’s marketing efforts
- Overall MazelTot marketing
- Our program’s recruitment of new families
- MazelTot’s help in bringing families to our organization
- Our retention of current families
- Attendance at our programs
- Attendance at our one-time paid events
- Attendance at our free events
- Affordability of our programming
- Our presence and visibility in the Jewish community
- Community awareness of what we do
- Connections among parents in our programs

The participating organizations developed a stronger local network, enrolled new families, and sustained the participation of existing families.

Thus, the participating organizations developed a stronger local network, enrolled new families, and sustained the participation of existing families.

MazelTot was created to sustain a vibrant Jewish community, in part by supporting organizations that serve families with young children. MazelTot aimed to add value to the participating organizations by...

- Supporting organizations in sustaining their existing customer base and in attracting new clients through MazelTot discounts and joint marketing.
- Facilitating organizations in collaborating, thereby making it easier for families to receive services seamlessly.
- Promoting the sharing and implementation of best practices among the organizations.

To accomplish these aims, the initiative required the participating organizations to send at least one representative to quarterly convenings. In describing the convenings, organizations tend to say that they were worthwhile but sometimes hard to attend, given all the demands on their time. To explore this topic more in-depth, the participating organizations were asked to complete a scale on the value of the convenings. In their rankings, the item that elicited the strongest rates of agreement was “The opportunity to meet with staff from other Jewish organizations is important and beneficial to the work I do.” They also agreed at a high rate that they often leave the convenings with a clear sense about the next steps that they should take. Table 18 shows that the participating organizations agreed that the convenings increased their knowledge of how to change marketing/web efforts to be more welcoming.

Table 18**Rating the Convenings**

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

1 = strongly disagree, **5** = neutral, **10** = strongly agree

Aspects of the Convenings	Rating Mean February 2011	Rating Mean May 2011
The opportunity to meet with staff from other Jewish organizations is important and beneficial to the work I do.	7.24	7.50
Networking at convenings has increased my referral of families to other institutions.	4.67	4.96
Participating in the convenings is making me more effective in other aspects of my work.	5.55	5.61
The convenings are making a real difference in the way we serve young children and their families.	4.95	5.36
I learned useful information about marketing, communication and outreach at the convening.	6.78	6.67
The convenings address real issues we face in terms of engaging and serving families with young children.	6.47	6.59
I experience the convenings as being meaningful.	6.79	6.32
I often leave convenings <i>[clear]</i> about next steps we should take.	7.21	7.46
<i>[Despite all the many other tasks I must attend do, I can concentrate at convenings.]</i>	6.21	6.89
We do a lot of talking and <i>[a lot happens in my organization afterwards]</i>	5.63	6.00

[Source: February 2011 organizational quarterly reports; May 11 organizational quarterly reports]

Note: the last three items were originally phrased in the negative, so they were reverse scored and are listed here in the positive.

One of MazelTot's stated outcomes is that "Families feel welcomed at MazelTot organizations." A related outcome is that the level of customer service will improve. In January 2011, a convening on these topics was held. Of the participants, 69% rated the topic of the convening as "excellent" and 31% said that it was "good." When asked about the relevancy of the convening to the work that they do, 54% indicated that it was "highly relevant" and 39% said it was "relevant." On the evaluation form, the participants were asked whether they left the convening with new ideas about welcoming or customer service to implement. The following are typical comments:

- Redesign our building's interior entryway, do a better job of making visitors feel valued and comfortable, spruce up our building's exterior, too, to make it more inviting
- Sharing resources with other synagogues, mentoring for members who are not involved
- Better signage on our doors, staff meeting, once a month, to focus on a new customer service trait we want to embrace in integrate into our staff/volunteer culture
- Training our congregation: how simple it is, what a difference it makes

- Don't wait for people to approach you - greet them before they enter, work to connect newcomers to others, pay more attention to the way your building looks
- For us, signage is critical, as was keeping the "sacred space" comfortable, beautiful and clean. In addition to the common sense things, putting ourselves out first, going to the "new person" and introducing ourselves is critical.
- Treat members like consumers
- Each new member connects with 5-7 long time members within the first year
- Name tags, faces on website make it easy for people to reach you
- Become more aware of all communications and messages
- We need to be customer driven organizations

According to the focus group discussions, the organizations tended to disagree that networking at the convenings increased their referral of families to other institutions, an explicit goal of the initiative. The focus group discussions touched on this point. MazelTot appears to have had limited success in increasing collaboration. There were some anecdotes about referring callers to more appropriate resources, but in general collaboration does not appear to have changed. Some specific types of organizations, e.g. preschools, synagogues, Boulder Jewish organizations, already meet together with their peers. The participating organizations feel that they already referred people to other organizations prior to the initiative. For example, one participant related the following, "We get phone calls all the time. People say, 'I just found out that my mother was Jewish and I was told to call you. What do I do now?' We send them on to appropriate organizations." Also, there were minimal new programs developed geared toward families with young children.

During the last focus group discussion, the facilitator asked what organizations thought about using webinars instead of in-person meetings. The response was mixed. Some liked the idea of being able to avoid travel. Others were worried that the technology might not work well. Someone added: "If the goal is skill building, it is a good solution. If the goal is building community, it is not a good solution."

Another point raised in the focus group discussions was the need for MazelTot to give more recognition to the expertise that already exists within the participating organizations (instead of relying solely on experts from outside the community to lead the convenings). Hence, the May 2011 convenings were peer-led workshops. Also, the format of the convenings was changed in order to respond to feedback received from the representatives of the participating organizations that the convenings were both valuable and difficult to attend, given all the demands on their time and scheduling conflicts. In order to honor the spirit of MazelTot, which is about providing people with options and choice (program designer, private communication), a series of peer-led workshops and discussions were held instead of one convening. In the announcement of these workshops, the designers wrote: "Instead of our usual quarterly convening, we're trying something different in May. With the help of great leaders in our community, we're offering you five different workshops to choose from throughout the month on topics related to the work you're doing with MazelTot. Go to one, two, all five, the choice is yours!" The announcement also noted that the intent was to be more intimate than the usual convenings with fewer participants.

List of May 2011 Workshops

Beyond Welcoming Best Practices: A Discussion about What Really Works with Temple Emanuel

Interfaith Sensitivity: Exploring New Ways to Welcome and Engage Interfaith Couples and Families with Stepping Stones

Bringing the Outdoors into Your Programs: Tools and Resources for Jewish Environmental Education with Hazon

Meeting People Where They Are: Engaging Young Families Outside of the Building with the Robert E. Loup Denver JCC

As with all the convenings, workshop participants were asked to complete an evaluation form.

Of the participants,

- 64% indicated that the topic was “highly relevant” and another 36% indicated that it was “relevant.”
- 36% indicated that the material that was presented was “too complex,” 59% said it was “just right,” and 4% felt it was “too basic.”
- Overall, 55% indicated that the workshops were “very valuable” and 45% felt they were “somewhat valuable.”

The participants were asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions. The following are their responses:

Please tell us how you feel about the idea of peer-led workshops in general:

- I'm happy when the presenter is engaging. I'm not filtering my choice [to attend] based upon where the presenter is from.
- Nice idea and makes sense to draw on the expertise and experiences in the community, also, good way to connect peers.
- I think it is a great idea
- Loved the idea of learning from someone from our community who could directly share
- As long as it is a well-versed peer, it's fine.
- They are fine, it is good to use all resources available
- Good idea
- I like the idea and feel it would be beneficial
- This was great

What do you think of having multiple workshops opportunities instead of quarterly convenings?

- Love it! Thank you!
- Thank you! Much appreciated!
- Thank you. Very interesting.
- Good idea
- It is nice to have choices
- Fine idea
- Much more flexibility to my schedule for attending meetings, etc.
- It's a good idea

With this change to a series of peer-led workshops and discussions, there was a sense of the importance that at least some of the convenings continue to bring the whole group together because the organizations say that they value participating in a network. Thus, whole-group convenings should also occur occasionally.

Outcome: The Families' Engagement in Jewish Life

The *Spring 2011 Follow-Up Survey* was sent to all registered MazelTot families (n=1,131) in May 2011. There was a 30% response rate. This is regarded as a relatively high response rate for a survey of this type. The survey was based on the *Baseline* and *First Discount* surveys that had been previously administered to the families. Specific scales relating to engagement in Jewish life were repeated on each of these surveys. In this way, the research team was able to document change over time.

The families were asked to indicate which features of MazelTot played a significant role in connecting them to Jewish life. The feature that had the highest rating was “Information about things to do and organizations on **mazeltot.org**” (72%) followed by the discounts (70%).

Table 19

Which of the Following MazelTot Features Played a Significant Role in Connecting Your Family to Jewish Life?

	Not at all significant	Somewhat significant	Significant	Very significant	NA
MazelTot discounts	9.8%	21.9%	27.5%	37.3%	3.6%
Information about things to do and organizations on mazeltot.org	7.1%	18.4%	34.7%	36.8%	3.0%
Free PJ Library children's books	11.2%	15.7%	26.9%	34.7%	11.5%
The opportunity to meet other families with young children	12.5%	22.8%	30.1%	30.4%	4.3%
The Family Networker	30.0%	23.0%	11.5%	7.0%	28.5%
The weekly MazelTot email updates	14.4%	37.1%	31.1%	12.3%	5.1%

[Source: Spring 2011 Follow-Up Survey, n = 342]

In the following table, it is seen that 37% attended an event or program at an institution that they had never been involved with before. This item asked the families about an institution in which they had never been involved, and not whether the institution was “new” to them.

Table 20

Participation in Jewish Life Since Signing Up for MazerTot

What has your participation in Jewish life been like since you signed up for MazerTot?	Percent indicating that this occurred
I attended a free event(s) or program(s)	55.6%
I used more than one discount at the same institution	16.7%
I participated in an event or program for which I paid	38.6%
I have become a member/regular user of a Jewish organization as a result of participating in MazerTot	14.3%
I attended an event or program at an institution that I had never been involved with before	36.8%

[Source: Spring 2011 Follow-Up Survey, n = 342]

The families were asked to indicate whether there were changes in their Jewish life since signing up for MazelTot. Of the families, 75% strongly agreed or agreed that since signing up for MazelTot, “I am more aware of the diversity of opportunities at Jewish organizations,” 62% said “Overall, the number of activities my family participates in at Jewish organizations is increasing” and 58% indicated that “The Jewish life of my family is growing at home.” In addition, 53% strongly agreed or agreed that they are increasing their participation in programs at Jewish organizations that were already familiar to them, 51% indicated that they are trying out programs at Jewish organizations that are new to them, and 50% said that they use **mazeltot.org** to make informed decisions when selecting programs. Since signing up for MazelTot, 75% of families tried out a Jewish organization for the first time: 34% attended one Jewish organization or synagogue for the first time, 26% two organizations, 10% three organizations, and 5% four or more.

Table 21
Changes Since Signing Up for MazelTot

	Percent Strongly Agree or Agree
I am more aware of the diversity of opportunities at Jewish organizations.	75%
Overall, the number of activities my family participates in at Jewish organizations is increasing.	62%
The Jewish life of my family is growing at home.	58%
I am increasing my participation in programs at Jewish organizations that were already familiar to me.	53%
I am trying out programs at Jewish organizations that are new to me.	51%
I use mazeltot.org to make informed decisions when selecting programs.	50%
I am connecting more with other Jewish or Interfaith families.	46%
My family participates in more Jewish activities outside of institutions (e.g. at home, with friends, playgroup etc.)	43%

[Source: Spring 2011 Follow-Up Survey, n = 342]

The program designers set a target goal that families would agree or strongly agree in at least 3 out of the 7 items in the “Changes since signing up for MazelTot” scale. Of the families, 73% met this goal.

Moreover, the families indicated that MazelTot increased their understanding of Jewish customs and practices and increased their ability to deepen Jewish living and learning for their families. So, too, the initiative provided them with positive and meaningful experiences at Jewish institutions and increased their engagement in the Jewish community. Also, MazelTot increased families' friendships with other Jewish children/families (44% "a little," 22% "a lot" and 36% no change).

Table 22

Increases in Jewish Living and Engagement in Jewish Community

To what extent has MazelTot increased any of the following?	Not at all	A little	A lot	No change because I was already doing this
Understanding of the meaning of Jewish customs and practices	20.0%	40.3%	11.8%	27.9%
Ability to deepen Jewish living and learning for my family	10.4%	44.2%	25.4%	20.0%
Positive and meaningful experiences at Jewish institutions	10.3%	39.4%	35.0%	15.3%
Engagement in the Jewish community	6.2%	45.1%	36.3%	12.4%
My family's friendships with other Jewish children/families	15.2%	44.2%	22.2%	16.7%

[Source: Spring 2011 Follow-Up Survey, n = 342]

The Families' Engagement in Jewish Life Quotient

The *Families' Engagement in Jewish Life* scale was developed so that the measurement of Jewish identity would not be limited to the performance of Jewish rituals (e.g., lighting candles on Shabbat). The scale, therefore, reflects a far more encompassing way in which one may form a relationship to the Jewish people, past and present. Included in the scale are items that are framed in terms of cognitions, emotions, actions and ways of partaking of community. Because one's relationship to the Jewish people is far more complex than a simple yes/no, the scale measures the intensity of the relationship. For example, instead of asking whether parents light Shabbat candles or not, the parents are asked to indicate how frequently they light candles (never, sometimes, usually, always). Instead of asking whether they celebrate Jewish holidays or not, the scale asks how regularly they celebrate Jewish holidays with other families. Families are asked to indicate the intensity of their attendance at religious services at a synagogue, and not whether they are members of a synagogue or not. An intensity quotient was computed by assigning a number of points to each item on the scale (the items were not weighted):

- Celebrate Jewish holidays with other families
- Sing or listen to Jewish or Israeli music
- Tell stories about Jewish events or holidays
- Attend religious services at Temple or Synagogue
- Wear clothing or jewelry that shows that one is Jewish
- Read Jewish websites, books, magazines

- Celebrate Shabbat (e.g., light candles, special family dinner, say blessings)
- Socialize with other Jewish families
- Use Yiddish, Hebrew or Jewish words
- Attend events and/or programs at the JCC or other Jewish organizations
- Say Jewish blessings
- Attend Jewish cultural events, film festivals, educational lectures, or workshops
- Participate in a Jewish program for families

The intensity quotient can be understood as the summed total of the number of different Jewish experiences that could contribute to the MazelTot participants' connectedness to Jewish life. One person, for example, may have an intensity rating of 10 and another person, 8. The higher the score, the more intensive the participants' connectedness to Jewish life. To examine the degree to which the families experienced change, if any, the scores of the families on the *Baseline Survey* and the *Follow-Up Survey* were compared. Thus, the scores of the families on the quotient prior to participating in MazelTot (n = 738) and now (n = 342) were compared. Improvement that was not due to chance was found on the quotient [Baseline mean = 8.32, Follow-Up mean = 10.13; $p < .001$]. This finding validates MazelTot's theory of change and demonstrates MazelTot's impact on families' engagement in Jewish life.

An analysis was conducted to discern whether those families who had been affiliated with MazelTot the longest had the highest scores on the quotient. Indeed, this was found to be the case. One possible explanation is that the early adopters started off with higher scores. To rule out this explanation, the scores of the families who joined in 2010 were compared to those who joined in 2011. Again, the *Baseline Survey* is completed prior to families' participation in MazelTot. The analysis revealed that the scores from the two years were more similar than different (i.e. a statistically significant difference was not observed: $p = .230$). In fact, an additional analysis—that was conducted on November 2009 data—showed that the early adopters had scores on the quotient that were even lower than the rest of the families who joined during the first year (quotient = 29 vs. 31). Thus, the positive change that was seen in the *Follow-Up Survey* was not due to pre-existing differences among the families.

As mentioned earlier, the percentage of interfaith families on the *Follow-Up Survey* was found to be 31%. The families with two Jewish parents tended to have higher scores on the quotient than the interfaith families [$p < .001$].

A key research question is the role of the discounts. The families were asked the following question on the *Follow-Up Survey*: "One of the features of MazelTot is the offer of discounts at Jewish organizations for classes, events, and more. Have you used a discount?" In general, 67% used discounts. An analysis was conducted to see whether use of the discounts was associated with higher scores on the quotient. Indeed, this was the case: those who used the discounts had higher scores on the quotient than those who did not [$p = .005$].

Of the families, 58% agreed that "Since signing up for MazelTot, the Jewish life of my family is growing at home." These families scored within the bottom third on the quotient at baseline (e.g., they were the least "affiliated" or least "connected" group). If this group of families experienced positive change in their Jewish lives as a result of signing up for MazelTot, then MazelTot's theory of change is validated:

“Helping Jewish families connect with each other to be friends, co-learners, and colleagues will enhance their Jewish lives and the Jewish community.”

The families who scored in the bottom third on the quotient agreed at a higher rate that the MazelTot discounts made it possible for them to afford participation in Jewish life in new or increased ways [$p < .001$]. Furthermore, these families actually used the discounts at a far higher rate [$p = .014$]. The families who indicated that their Jewish life was growing at home also agreed at a far higher rate that “I have become a member/regular user of a Jewish organization as a result of participating in MazelTot” [$p < .001$]. The families who used the discounts at a high rate and indicated that the Jewish life of their families was growing at home had an important outcome: their “intensity” quotient scores on the *Follow-Up Survey* were higher, and the higher scores were not due to chance [$p < .001$]. This is additional evidence of the impact of MazelTot on families who had room to grow in their connectedness to Jewish life. This also speaks of the value of the discounts as a means to engaging families.




MazelTot's Future

In the focus group discussions, it was clear that the organizations were thinking ahead to the end of the pilot phase of the initiative and wondering what comes next. They would very much like to see this as an ongoing program. They value the discounts and believe that the discounts make it possible for families to participate in events that would be too expensive for them to otherwise consider. They also value the way that MazelTot presents the Jewish community in the Denver/Boulder area and makes it appear vibrant and unified.


To examine the extent to which the participating organizations perceive the benefit of MazelTot, the organizations were asked to respond to the following prompt: “As you know, the original funding for MazelTot will end this year. Do you think that MazelTot should continue? If so, why? If not, why not?”

The responses were overwhelmingly positive. The following are the responses of the participating organizations. Please note that all identifying information was removed or the quotes were slightly reworded to maintain confidentiality.

- Yes! I think that with the number of new families moving to Denver, as highlighted in the Denver/Boulder Community Study, it is critical to have a central entity that can help guide families and help them connect Jewishly. Local families can also gain tremendously from this resource that is so easy to use, and accessible, and it allows Jewish families to connect in a manner that they are able to define! The convenience, incentives, and professionalism offered by MazelTot promote connection, which is exactly what it was established to do.
- I think that MazelTot should continue. However, I think that the organizations should be allowed to grant the participants more than 50% of a retreat; and people who have participated in a retreat should be allowed to use the funds. I also think that programs which have a certain percentage of MazelTot-age families attending should be able to use MazelTot funds to offset programming and administrative costs.
- I definitely think MazelTot should continue after August. MazelTot has name recognition. For the first time, a family found us through MazelTot this quarter. Receiving a discount from MazelTot is a positive recognition that the Jewish community cares about families with young children.
- I think that this program has helped connect Jewish families with young children. The investment will continue to pay dividends!
- I feel that MazelTot should continue. . . We are the unknown in our area—we need more time to get our information out there. We are starting to see results from MazelTot. I feel ending will stop this momentum.
- Yes, MazelTot should continue. I think that 2 years is too short a time to gauge impact. If you stop now, we do not, in my humble opinion, have enough knowledge to know if this population really moved into using Jewish organizations as part of their Jewish journey. You have over 1,000 families registered. Are they continuing in Jewish preschool or entering religious schools or camps beyond the motivating factor of discounts? . . . I am glad that we are part of MazelTot. I am also glad that our own members took advantage of MazelTot offerings in other organizations. But it didn't increase our members these past two years for this population.



“The convenience, incentives, and professionalism offered by MazelTot promote connection, which is exactly what it was established to do.”
-Participating Organization



“I think that this program has helped connect Jewish families with young children. The investment will continue to pay dividends!”
-Participating Organization

And I think it is too early to tell whether it makes an impact. I think that this is a time-based population (if their children feel ok, if it fits their schedule in the next 48 hours . . .) and a longer period of time to do a longitudinal (and attitudinal study) would be enormously informative, if the funding is available. What MazelTot has done for us is inspire us to create more programs for this population.

- Yes, we think that MazelTot should continue. It is a very nice, welcoming incentive to let parents know that we want them to be involved in the Jewish community. For some, the grant helps them overcome the decision to participate (or not) because of cost. It gives parents, especially in a small community like Boulder, many options for participating Jewishly with their families in different programming.
- Absolutely! I think it is a wonderful addition—not just financially, although that is nice, but also a great resource to the growing Jewish community.
- Yes, please do! I truly see the amazing impact it makes: if a kid gets involved for a summer camp [due to a discount], it is most likely that we will continue that relationship [with that kid and/his/her family] and take it to a whole new level. So thank you very, very, very, very much.
- I think it should continue because, overall, it had made an impact in the Jewish community more so on a big level than any other organization has in the past. Helping so many different organizations get their message out in one forum is invaluable to everyone.
- MazelTot has been helpful in our recruiting. A few of the families [who participated in an event] with MazelTot discounts participated in our programs afterwards. We would miss that added benefit and thank the Rose Community Foundation for its past help.
- MazelTot will continue to succeed with the momentum already generated. To end the program will leave a void. . . The publicity has been useful in driving new attendees to our free and low-cost services and programs.
- I feel that the community will greatly benefit from continued support through the MazelTot grant. MazelTot has increased our program outreach and participation.
- Yes, we have had families who have enjoyed it in the past.
- We have had families learn about us through MazelTot. . . the discount has been a huge benefit to families. As MazelTot continues to grow, the families that may have joined the website to get a discount for one specific organization may end up finding other organizations through it; In this way, we will continue to see more families come to us via MazelTot.
- We would certainly value its continuation. We think it is a landmark for the community. While our numbers are small in terms of actual families served compared to other organizations, the percentage is significant and we love being part of it all and being seen as an organization that serves young families.
- MazelTot discounts have allowed a lot of families to attend our premiere event as well as smaller programs, and have pointed others to our organization. I definitely think funding should continue.
- I think that MazelTot should continue because it has brought a lot of Jewish families into congregations that might have put it off until the kids were nearing b'nai mitzvah age.
- We all feel that MazelTot should continue as an entry point for young families. There are so many families who are still unaware of the program (who we don't know yet) and it helps families access Jewish programming plus resources/"one-stop shop" essentially to learn about Jewish organizations in Denver.
- Yes, I think MazelTot should continue. I think the economy is still an issue for many families and any financial assistance is greatly appreciated.



“We think [MazelTot] is a landmark for the community.”

-Participating Organization

- I think that MazelTot has been very successful in bringing new families into our community.
- I think that it should definitely continue. It has helped out families in our preschool by exposing them to what is going on around the city with offers for discounts for all programs. Every little bit helps, and I know our families have enjoyed the discounts they have received. Thanks for all your work. I hope it was beneficial to many people in the community, and I hope the program continues.
- I think that MazelTot should continue as it is a great resource for those with young children. . . . MazelTot seems to be very effective and is growing quickly. I think many go onto MazelTot for the discount and are then exposed to many great experiences for their families.
- Yes, I think that MazelTot promotes and facilitates sharing of information and collaboration by the Jewish community to more effectively reach and serve expectant couples and young families in this demographic cluster. MazelTot has definitely boosted our visibility among this constituency.

A consistent theme that emerged in the focus group discussions was that MazelTot is seen to have many benefits for those families and organizations would like to see it continue past the next year. The focus group participants agree that this initiative strengthens the Jewish community as a whole.

The families also urged Rose Community Foundation to continue MazelTot. The following are typical comments:

- MazelTot is a great program and I hope you are able to extend it for more years.
- This is such a great program!
- I've really enjoyed my experiences with MazelTot. I hope the program is able to continue!
- I do think that MazelTot does have a positive impact!
- Thanks for everything you do for the Jewish and mixed families.
- I wanted to express how important I believe MazelTot is for the area's Jewish families with young children. I loved receiving the emails and information that MazelTot provided. We will be moving to the San Francisco bay area this week and I really hope that there is something similar to MazelTot in CA to help us connect to other families. Instilling Judaism and Jewish life is so important to me and my husband, for our children.
- I hope you all continue to get funding for future years, it has helped my family, but I have seen so many other family who have no connection to Judaism become more involved through the programs you offer and sponsor.
- Our kids are living a much more Jewish year now than they ever were, and for that I'm very grateful.



“We will be moving to the San Francisco bay area this week and I really hope that there is something similar to MazelTot in CA to help us connect to other families. Instilling Judaism and Jewish life is so important to me and my husband, for our children.”

-MazelTot Parent



Conclusion

This third-party, independent evaluation appraised MazelTot's theory of change and outcomes among the participating organizations and families. It is clear that MazelTot's theory of change is sound. Indeed, new and expectant parents are searching for resources, information, services and connections in new ways and that this searching creates a teachable moment, an opportunity for parents to explore the array of offerings and choices and to begin or deepen their engagement in Jewish life. MazelTot is achieving its stated goals of connecting families with young children to Jewish life and to each other.

MazelTot is an initiative of Rose Community Foundation. Rose Community Foundation supports efforts to improve the quality of life throughout the Greater Denver community through its endowed grantmaking programs, and by advising and assisting donors who wish to make thoughtful charitable investments to better the community.

Rose Community Foundation's Jewish Life program area supports efforts to create and sustain a vibrant Jewish community. The Foundation funds new ideas that connect Jews to Jewish life and to each other, promoting partnerships and addressing emerging needs, while also strengthening institutions so they can respond to change. Learn more about Rose Community Foundation at rcfdenver.org.